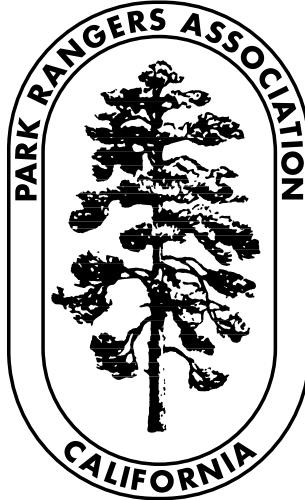


The Signpost

July - August, 2008



Wanted!

by Park Ranger Marie D. Fong

Best or worst, inspiring or incriminating, hilarious or wholesome, new or old: PRAC wants your park photos to create a digital album at calranger.org. From helpful how-not-to's to endearing environmental education moments, your photos will serve to represent the gamete of responsibilities and rewards our jobs offer.

Please send your photos to region6@calranger.org or for larger quantities please mail the images on a CD to Marie D. Fong at 5365 Mayberry Drive Reno, Nevada 89519.

And just to get you inspired.....



a little photo we call **Sunflower S.W.A.T.**

For a full description of the above action,
you'll have to send me some of your photos as payment.

Congratulations!

by Senior Park Ranger Sara Girard

Training and education, you can never have too much. We all have our recertifications that are mandatory. It is a time to review, fulfill a legal obligation and catch up with colleagues. When the training and education is a choice it makes it that much sweeter. We know that we have the best careers on earth when training and education are enjoyable or they give us a sense of accomplishment.

May 12–16, two Orange County Park Rangers successfully completed the annual Wildland Fire Academy hosted by MRCA. Each trainee received the NWCG certifications: S-190, S-130, L-180 and ICS 100. Congratulations PR II **John Gump** and PR II **Raul Murillo**.

Two Orange County Park Rangers were honored with graduate degrees from Cal State Fullerton. PRII **Jacky Velasquez** received a Master of Anthropology with an emphasis in Archaeology. PR II **Ryan Cordero** acquired a Master of Science in Environmental Studies.

Enthusiasm and pride comes with perseverance and achieving goals.

From the Oval Office in The Double Wide..

This is a piece from the LA Times regarding our friends at the LA City Parks and Rec. Ranger Pete, Doug and Anne came to PRAC looking for some support to aid in their budget crisis. This is how PRAC is here to help.....

The Daily News today reported that a result of the [Mayor's all-out assault on Los Angelenos in the form of budget cuts and fee increases will result in serious losses of vital services in City parks.](#) The paper points to two Rec and Parks losses in particular—less clean restrooms and a 50% cut in Park Rangers.

Most people jump right on the mental image of an unclean restroom, but the reality of this Citywide cut is that the far greater loss of the two is actually the Park Rangers.

Park Rangers are perhaps the most recognizable image of any parks service in the United States. However, [LA City Park Rangers](#) are far more than an icon. With the increased gang violence and general unrest throughout the City, more specialized park security is a must. L.A. City Park Rangers are fully qualified, POST-certified peace officers. Perhaps even more importantly, Park Rangers are also firefighters, search and rescue professionals, emergency management specialists, paramedics, wildlife specialists, educators, mediators, and community policing specialists. For those who are unhappy with the generous salaries some City employees pull down, [Park Rangers are also underpaid relative to other City jobs requiring full peace officer standing.](#) This, plus the fact that there are tons of open peace officer positions in this City, just about guarantees that being a Park Ranger in Los Angeles isn't just a job, but it must be a vocation.

On any given day in at least one of this City's 400-plus parks, Rangers put their unique combination of specialized skills to use on the public's behalf. During the Griffith Park

fire, every Park Ranger in the City demonstrated extreme dedication to their vocation by working more than 95 hours straight. The Rangers' intimate knowledge of the park was absolutely vital to controlling the May 8, 2007 inferno. It isn't discussed much in the wake of the usual, well-deserved accolades given to the LAFD, but those closest to the situation know that it was [a heroic stand at Bee Rock by Park Ranger firefighters that halted the north-eastward advance of that fire.](#) Park Ranger/firefighters used their intimate knowledge of the park to determine that this physical location was absolutely key to stopping the fire, and they made the stand that did it.

So here we are with a summer fire season widely predicted to be one of the worst on record nearly upon us. Cutting almost 50% of a single division that is as important to this City as the Park Rangers are not only makes no sense, but it may seriously endanger the lives of the 20 million people who visit Los Angeles parks annually.

The recent [mauling of patrons by a Siberian Tiger at the San Francisco Zoo](#) brings up another point. The Los Angeles Zoo is inside of Griffith Park, and the Zoo is far from impervious to animal escapes. The combination of emergency management and wildlife expertise that Park Rangers possess would make them invaluable if such a thing ever happened here. As an aside, it is interesting to note that current SF Zoo Director Manuel Mollinedo, under whose watch the horrific maulings occurred, was a past General Manager of Recreation and Parks in Los Angeles as well as a Director of the Los Angeles Zoo during a time that many of the

(Continues on page 3.)

From the Oval Office in The Double Wide..

(Continued from page 2.)

exhibit enclosures were upgraded, ostensibly to code. Hmm...

Since they have all the money and resources, I guess the Mayor is assuming the Office of Public Safety will take care of us all. But as was [pointed out in an earlier article detailing the creation and performance to-date of OPS](#), their promise was enticing but their carry-through has been far from optimum, or even adequate for that matter. And Rec and Parks, who is legally mandated to provide security in City parks, has little to no control over OPS which is organized within an entirely different City department.

On May 1st, there will be massive immigration demonstrations in downtown Los Angeles. If they repeat what they did in 2005, 2006, and 2007, the Office of Public Safety will pull every single officer to a man from City parks, libraries, and the Zoo and deploy them all downtown. This means that on May Day, a traditional day to celebrate the coming

Region 4 director David Sterling stepped up to the plate and came to the aid of the LA City Parks writing to council members and attending meetings....here is the current out come....Good job Dave.

The City Council passed it on Monday. It's official.

Rec and Parks was given all of the Ranger positions including the Chief back, a couple hundred maintenance positions back, and \$3 million returned to their budget.

Now there is only a \$13 million hole in RAP's budget instead of \$16 million.

The GM will have to use the restored \$3 million where the need is greatest.

People want parks, although we maybe under staffed and under funded—at times feel under appreciated when it comes down to it the people know the dedication and level of professionalism it takes to keep our parks safe...

Congratulations to the LA City Parks and Recreation!

David Updike

of Spring, the only peace officers protecting the public in 400+ City parks will be Park Rangers. 50% less Park Rangers, that is, if no one challenges the Mayor's budget.

It's ironic that also on [May 1st, the City's Budget and Finance Committee will hold the hearing on the Mayor's Budget for the Department of Recreation and Parks.](#) So y'all come on downtown May 1—skip work, see the protesters and OPS in action firsthand, and give the committee your input on the \$cut\$ to Rec and Parks while surrounded by a hundred thousand or so of your fellow Angelenos. ...Democracy in action! WooHoo!

Labels: [Budget Cuts](#), [Griffith Park Fire](#), [Los Angeles Zoo](#), [Office Of Public Safety](#), [Park Rangers](#), [Recreation And Parks](#), [San Francisco Zoo](#)

Posted By Petrafried In The City @ [4/24/2008 11:50:00 AM](#) -LA Times

Endangered Species: The Disappearance Of Youth From The Wilderness

by Greg Jones

Over the past 20 years our children have become increasingly alienated from the natural world. They have abandoned our open spaces and wilderness where unstructured imaginative play has existed for as long as the human species. Youthful expeditions that discovered shortcuts to school and secret hiding places are being eradicated by societal fears and impending litigation. Days spent building forts in the woods and swimming in ponds are quickly fading from our social history. At best, the constricting radius children are allowed to travel around their homes limits them to the trusted patches of grass and concrete in the front yard.

The effects of this nature deficit on the physical, emotional, and spiritual health of our youth are popular topics in the social laboratory. Sacramento State University offers a course solely examining the effects of television on our youth. It is considered a likely contributor to childhood obesity, aggressive behaviors, and Attention Deficit Disorder. It is a curious abandonment from a parenting philosophy that once produced some of the best lessons of childhood.

The Electronic Nanny

What is blamed for the disconnect? The ever-rising popularity of video games, television, and computers are obvious targets. For the first time in history, early life experiences are formed more by LCD pixels and cartoon characters than insect collections and tree houses. A study conducted by Kaiser Family Foundation found that US youth now spend an average of five hours a day—40 percent of their awake hours—in front of electronic devices. And the behavior starts young. Children under the age of two years old will spend over two hours daily in front of a media screen.

But researchers aren't ready to say that digital and media entertainment are completely to blame. They may only be symptoms of greater challenges; something to fill a child's time due to lost options.

The Criminalization Of Play

In today's communities, money has become a powerful source of retribution. Mental anguish, embarrassment and disrespect all have a price. We sue over ruined pants and a neighbor's blowing leaves. Nervous homeowners dissolved any play in their yards, fearful that a slip on wet grass could lead to losing their home, their retirement, or their own child's college fund. Our agencies are not exempt from this system either. The fear of litigation from a child falling from a tree or tripping at a creek crossing is always on the mind of our park managers. We install signs for our own protection just as much as the public: Slippery Rocks. Loose Soil. Steep Road Ahead.

Outdoor Education

Public education once took an interest in getting children outdoors. Now only one third of children in the US have daily physical education in school. With budget cuts and our narrowed focus on specific subject criteria, teacher shortages and overcrowding, academic courses are forced to abandon the wilderness as a classroom. Nature once brought inspiration for literature and poetry. It provided practical illustration of physics experiments. It is how we first grasped the concept of an ecosystem. Now, the purpose of the field trip has been degraded to a distraction.

The Parent Trap

Parents play a significant role in how their children connect to the outdoors. Well before the beginning of formal education, parents teach lessons that build self-esteem and confidence. They introduce the life skills of safety and awareness. They show how to interact with their surroundings. Yet sometimes modern day realities dilute these lessons. Expanding work schedules can leave little daylight for shared exploration. In its place, a growing unfamiliarity with nature now breeds modern-day neuroses; fear of insects, of the sun, of dirty water, of snakes, of coyotes, murderers and rapists all lurking just beyond the front yard.

Heather Quall, mother of two and organizer of a local Ventura Mom's group expresses common parental fears. "I think there is a generalized feeling that the open spaces are wonderful in a supervised situation, but that unsupervised there is too much potential for a predator to be lying in wait, whether it be one of the human or animal."

Nature Cures

What is generally agreed is the effect this nature deficit is having on our youth. The responsibility to nurture healthy, confident and curious children hasn't changed. Childhood obesity has tripled since 1960. In addition, Type 2 diabetes, mellitus, hypertension, and obstructive sleep apnea are all conditions that can carry directly into adulthood. Nature experiences have been increasingly abandoned as one of the most effective cures to these conditions.

In his book *Last Child in the Woods*, Richard Louv acknowledges the challenge. "Parents already feel besieged by the difficulty of balancing work and family life. Understandably, they may resist the idea of adding any to-dos to their long list of chores. So here is another way of viewing the challenge: Nature as an antidote. Stress reduction, greater physical health, a deeper sense of spirit, more creativity, a sense of play, even a safer life—these are the rewards that await a family when it invites more nature into children's lives."

(Continues on page 5.)

Region 5 BBQ 2008

PRAC Region 5 would like to invite all park professionals to join us for the 2008

BBQ. We will honor World Ranger Day with our BBQ on **July 31**, show up anytime after 4 PM. I have reserved group area 2 at Irvine Regional Park, Orange, CA. The softball game is on, so bring your gear and let's play ball. BBQ grills and picnic tables are available. Stay late and there will be a viewing of *The Thin Green Line* on the large outdoor screen. Supplies for smores will be provided. **See You There.**

Questions? Call or email [Sara Girard](#).

PICNIC



"A small group of thoughtful people could change the world.
Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

Margaret Mead, cultural anthropologist

Endangered Species: The Disappearance Of Youth From The Wilderness

(Story continues from page 4.)

Park Rangers are on the front line of a dwindling force, struggling to keep our communities aware of the natural world surrounding them. As our funding ebbs, we will have to choose what "essential services" means to us. We all know the standard answers. But to reverse the youth's abandonment of the wilderness, we need to embrace our roles as educators and eco-cheerleaders. If we don't, the land we protect will hold little value to them in another ten years—when they are taxpayers and voters.

We also have to address the current fears of parents, so their children are allowed to experience these outdoor les-

sons freely. We have to encourage play in mustard fields and creek beds; support muddy shoes and grass-stained jeans as a healthy part of growing up. From this, our community's children will learn about a world of mysticism and surprise, amusement and challenge that exists beyond their electronic world. A world that is waiting for them outside the screen door.

For the full article or to leave a comment, visit:

<http://www.vcreporter.com/cms/index/>

A Yellowstone Honeymoon

by Matt Cerkel and Heather Hill-Cerkel

My wife and I recently had an opportunity to honeymoon in Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks. We were engaged in Yosemite last year and as two park professionals and wildlife lovers visiting two of the Crown Jewels of our National Parks only made sense. It was also a nice break to see the Parks as a visitor for a change. The trip was incredible and will stay with us for a long time

We first went to Grand Teton National Park and the Jackson Hole area. The region experienced a late winter, so there was still plenty of snow on the ground. For the most part, we avoided the tourist traps in the town of Jackson. However, we did have four recommendations in Jackson. First stop at Images of Nature which is the gallery of well known wildlife photographer Tom Mangelsen, his photographs are breath-taking, the staff friendly and extremely helpful and perhaps you will get tips on where wildlife is currently being seen in the region (we did, but more on that later). For a good dinner, go to The Merry Piglets Mexican restaurant, simply outstanding! If you need a lunch on the go try Backcountry Provisions for a good deli sandwich. For groceries, try the Jackson Whole Grocery. Finally, as a side trip before getting to the parks visit the National Museum of Wildlife Art, just outside of Jackson.



We made the most of our time in the Grand Teton area. The first stop was the National Elk Refuge. The wildlife viewing there is great, in the space of two hours we saw elk, bison, big horn sheep, and moose. Then it was on to Grand Teton, the staff at Images of Nature recommended that we make a loop on Teton Park Road and US 191. They also told us to check the Oxbow Bend area, since Grizzlies had been seen there recently and check the

Snake River Overlook where wolves can be seen sometimes.

The first stop in Grand Teton Park was the new Moose Visitor Center at Park Headquarters, which was one of the best Visitor Centers I have ever seen as a ranger. The Teton Park Road had just reopened for the season, the lakes were still frozen, but the scenery was amazing. When we got to the Oxbow Bend area, we soon saw a traffic jam, which is a good sign for wildlife in Grand Teton or Yellowstone. We stopped and soon saw the source of the jam, four grizzly bears, a sow and her three 3-year-old cubs! I've seen a fair number of black bears over the years and grizzlies in Zoos, but to see grizzlies in the wild is amazing and having the opportunity to see four at one time in the wild was almost beyond words! We watched them for well over half an hour. Seeing these bears was one of the highlights of the trip. On the way south on, US 191 we spotted moose, sandhill cranes and elk migrating north along the Snake River.



After Grand Teton, it was on to Yellowstone National Park and the main purpose of our trip, the Spring Wolf and Bear Discovery Program with the Yellowstone Association (YA). The program was a three day guided trip lead by YA wildlife biologist, Brad Bulin. While the focus of the trip was wolves and bears, Brad also taught us about other wildlife in the northern range of Yellowstone, which includes the Lamar Valley also known as the Serengeti of North America. Wolves were reintroduced to Yellowstone in 1995 and it has been one of the most successful wildlife reintroduction programs in the history of the Endangered Species Act. The wolves were the only major part of the

A Yellowstone Honeymoon

(Continues from page 6.)

Great Yellowstone Ecosystem missing and since their reintroduction the balance has been restored and is one of the few places in the lower 48 to have an ecosystem that resembles the one that existed in pre-settlement times.



Due to the success of the reintroduction efforts wolves were recently de-listed and now are no longer considered "endangered" in the Great Yellowstone Ecosystem. However, their future remains uncertain in Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana. It is a complex issue that deals with ranchers, hunters, a cultural bias against predators (especially wolves), environmentalist and doing what is best for a healthy ecosystem and restoring a vital part of that ecosystem. Defenders of Wildlife and eleven other conservation groups are challenging the de-listing in Federal Court on the grounds that the de-listing was premature and the current state management plans are biased and inadequate. Additionally there is a lack of connections between largely isolated state wolf populations. Hope remains that state governments and their wildlife agencies can develop management plans for wolves that can handle them in a "humane" fashion that allows for healthy and sustainable wolf populations.

Over the next few days we had many memorable experiences, viewing approximately nine wolves from three or four different packs, two black bears, two grizzlies, numerous elk, bison, pronghorns and coyotes. As an added bonus we also visited an old wolf den. During a lunch break in the northeastern side of Yellowstone in the Absaroka Range we watched several avalanches. Our guide was very knowledgeable and passionate about Yellowstone. During another lunch break in the Lamar Valley a

bison calf, separated from its mother decided our group of wolf watchers was part of its herd. We tried to keep our distances from it, while our guide called for a ranger response. Sadly, not all the wolf watchers showed the best judgment, several tried to pet it and one well meaning, misguided soul tried to act like a bison to guide it away. Luckily, an NPS protection ranger showed up and "Dances with Bison" returned to being a "regular" tourist.



The trip to Yellowstone was awe-inspiring, even for two park professionals like my wife and I. Seeing grizzly bears and wolfs in the wild has been one of the most memorable experiences we have ever had. The ranger staff (both protection and interpretation) at Yellowstone is outstanding, whether dealing with typical park issues or Yellowstone issues like "bear" or "wolf" jams on the park roads or when "hazing" wolves and other wildlife so they don't become habituated to people. We could only imagine what the summer season is like. The NPS also put together a booklet called "Yellowstone Resources & Issues 2008" for park staff, which cover frequently asked questions, history of the park and current issues facing the park, it is a fascinating read and is available through the YA. The staff at the Yellowstone Association is also outstanding and contributes a great deal to Yellowstone. My wife and I would recommend taking a YA program if you ever go to Yellowstone.

The Yellowstone Association:
[HTTP://WWW.YELLOWSTONEASSOCIATION.ORG/](http://www.yellowstoneassociation.org/)

Defenders of Wildlife:
[HTTP://WWW.DEFENDERS.ORG/](http://www.defenders.org/)

“Kill Zone”

...A Concept That Can Mean Life or Death To Those Who Use It And Those Who Ignore It.
By Gregory Klein, USCCA Inner Circle

WASHINGTON D.C. - “The Art of War” was written by the ancient Chinese warrior-philosopher Sun Tzu over two thousand years ago. Today it remains one of the foremost authorities on conflict and strategy and is studied not only by military leaders but also by politicians and top executives

In essence, “The Art of War” teaches that the ultimate goal is invincibility. It tells us that we should strive for victory without battle. Put another way, Sun Tzu’s advice encompasses the idea that battles should be won before the actual engagement begins. The ambush is the perfect illustration of putting this advice into practice.

Ambushes have been used for thousands of years. It is one of the oldest tactics known to man. It was most likely a hunting technique that made its way into battle early on in the development of warfare. Throughout history it has, at times, been viewed with disdain as being a less-than-honorable way to do battle.

Nevertheless, it has remained a staple of military tactics for one reason - it works. And as long as the object of war continues to be to take out the enemy, it will continue to be used.

The Kill Zone

By definition, an ambush is a tactic whereby cover and concealment are used to surprise the enemy in a Kill Zone. Of course, it takes all of these elements to carry out a successful ambush. However, the Kill Zone is what can make the difference between it being a surprise harassment or a surprise victory.

The Kill Zone is the area the target is in when the ambush is sprung. It is an area that the target is either induced or naturally channeled into by means of terrain, obstacles or deception. Furthermore, a good Kill Zone has barriers, either natural or devised, that hinder the target’s ability to flee, and it provides a good field of fire for the ambusher. As part of the ambush tactic, Kill Zones have been used for centuries.

Knowing how to select and set up a Kill Zone is an intrinsic part of guerilla warfare. Nothing demoralizes an enemy quicker than to come under sudden, heavy attack with no quick or easy way out. In this sense, the ambusher relies as much on the shock value and confusion created as on the actual destructiveness of the attack. The ambusher is banking on the idea that, inside a good Kill Zone, the target will panic or freeze or both.



The ambush is the perfect illustration of the desire to win before the engagement begins. It is smart to go through your house or office and identify potential kill zones like this staircase.

Not just for Soldiers

While the concept of Kill Zones developed out of the ambush tactic, their use is not restricted to ambushes, nor are they used only by the military anymore.

Kill Zones are used by terrorists all the time as well as by common street criminals. Targets of

ambushes now include ordinary citizens along with government officials and corporate executives. And many violent crimes are committed in what could be classified as Kill Zones. (We will continue to refer to them as “Kill Zones” even though the street criminal may more often use them for robbery, rape or assault.)

Kill Zones are a subject you should know about if you are serious about tactics and survival. It’s the last place you want to be if you are the target of an attack. Conversely, it’s the place you want to draw potential threats into.

How to recognize Kill Zones

To avoid being caught in one, the first thing you have to be able to do is recognize a Kill Zone. In simplest terms, these are areas where you would or could be trapped if you were attacked.

Some good examples include one-way streets or cul-de-sacs, elevators, stairwells, parking structures, construction zones, structures or rooms with only one entrance/exit and so on.

Of course, much depends on what preparations the threat to you has taken. You may think you have a clear avenue of escape or retreat only to find that the attacker has planned in advance and has you completely covered. To this end, you have to look beyond the obvious in assessing the potential danger of a location.

This means looking at a location in its entirety. You want to be aware not only of pathways or routes in and out, but also objects and features that can provide concealment and cover for the attacker. At the same time, there will be a noticeable lack of objects and features which can provide you with such protection. This kind of setup indicates a good field of fire for an attacker.

Be aware of being forced into an area or direction by virtue of obstacles, both natural and man-made. For example, maybe a crowd or a design feature blocking your path forces you to take an alternate and more vulnerable path.

The bottom line in recognizing Kill Zones is to think about where you are going, both walking and driving. Be on the lookout for areas that force you to become isolated and that limit your options as to ways to enter and exit and seek

cover if necessary. Also be aware of persons that try to maneuver or induce you into a position or location.

How to avoid Kill Zones

Being deceptive and being aware can go a long ways toward preventing you from walking into a Kill Zone.

Being deceptive in this case means becoming unpredictable. Many victims of crime wind up that way because their attacker is able to set up and wait for them. They do this based on the knowledge of the victim’s regular routine or patterns of movement.

It is always a good idea to vary your schedule somewhat. Also take different routes to work and home.

Being aware simply means being vigilant and always on the lookout for settings, locations, persons and situations like those mentioned above. You should also always be checking your surroundings before committing yourself to them.

Check the area surrounding your home before you walk out the door. This is easy to do from a door peephole or through the blinds. Look for things that are out of the ordinary like loiterers, door-to-door salesmen, parked cars and so on. When you step out, look around again and listen.

In office buildings and such, use elevators whenever possible. But avoid getting into elevators with suspicious people or people holding the door for you, and always push your own floor button.

Avoid stairwells as much as possible. The numerous door and hallway access points, along with numerous blind spots make them excellent Kill Zones. If you have to use a stairwell, try to use one centrally located in the building to cut down on isolation.

Look around when you enter lobbies of buildings. Make mental note of the people there as well as the layout. Do the same in parking structures and every place you move about. Stop, look and listen. Above all, never dismiss your own gut feelings about safety at any given time.

(Continues on page 10.)

“Kill Zone”

(Story continued from page 9)

If you’re caught in a Kill Zone

Military and civilian security experts agree, if you get caught in a kill zone, the advice is this: get out of the Kill Zone any way you can. Do whatever it takes—drive, run, crawl—to get out. It doesn’t matter how courageous you are, or want to be, your first objective is always to survive. When you’re trapped in a Kill Zone, your attacker has the advantage.

Remember that Kill Zones provide cover and concealment for the attacker while limiting the amount of cover and concealment available to the target. The only way you can turn that around is to first get yourself out of the Kill Zone.

It is vital that you are conditioned to react immediately. Part of being in the proper state of awareness should include thinking ahead. As you go about your day encountering new surroundings and situations, learn to recognize potential Kill Zones, and have a plan as to what you will do if there is trouble.

By constantly going through these kinds of mental rehearsals, you will gradually condition yourself to where the correct response becomes second nature. At that point, your reactions can be counted on to occur immediately.



To avoid being caught in one, the first thing you have to be able to do is recognize a Kill Zone. While this image may seem a little dramatic, it serves as an illustration of what can happen when trapped in a staged kill zone.

Turning the Tables

While an attacker’s Kill Zone is the last place you want to be, a Kill Zone you control is your first choice of places to encounter a threat. Planned for and used properly, a Kill Zone will give you an enormous advantage in dealing with and taking out a threat, even when they have a firepower advantage. What would otherwise be a decisive win for the attacker can be turned into a complete and utter defeat.

But first you have to have a Kill Zone to get them into. Start thinking of the settings and environments you control in terms of how they can be used for cover, concealment and field of fire. Your home, your office, your travel paths to and from your car, your walk to the mailbox, your favorite restaurant—all the places you appear or occupy on a regular basis should be examined for ways you can set them up to control them.

Planning a Kill Zone

You need to set up excellent cover and concealment for yourself in planning a Kill Zone. In addition to providing you with protection, these elements can also give you the advantage of surprise over your attacker.

You also need a good field of fire to have an effective Kill Zone. This is the area where you can open fire upon the target at will, using the advantage of cover and concealment, with minimum risk to anyone other than the intended target.

Keeping these elements in mind, start trying to arrange your environments in such a way that potential threats will be forced into your Kill Zone. This can be accomplished by assessing from which direction a potential threat would most likely come. It could be a back door, a window, a lobby, down the hallway, whatever. Having made this assessment, you can then strategically place barriers or devices in the threat’s most likely path which will force them into your Kill Zone.

Tactical interior design

When it comes to arranging our homes and offices most of us place a priority on appearance alone. The suggestion is that you start to look at

these areas from the perspective of a potential battlefield. Then consider how you can arrange things for an optimal strategic advantage.

What do you have to work with in your environments like your home or office? Consider your couches, chairs, desks, end tables, plants, floor lamps, and decorative objects. What are they constructed of? What can be used for cover, for concealment? Also think of them as chess pieces that can be moved to force someone to take a particular path or stand where you want them to.

Look at the construction elements involved. How is the room laid out? Is there a wall, partition or supporting element like a column to work with?

The variables to consider are virtually endless. The possibilities are unique to each individual’s environments. Summarily the points to be made are these:

- You want to be able to channel the target into your Kill Zone.
- You want to have good cover and concealment and a good field of fire.
- You want to be able to strike and withdraw quickly.
- You want to deny or restrict the target’s freedom of movement or escape.

If you can set up the environments you control so that these things are accomplished, you will have established an effective Kill Zone. As far as we know there aren’t too many “Kill Zone designers” out there, but perhaps some day It might just be an idea whose time has come

Lance Thomas, a merchant in Los Angeles, survived four gunfights, killed five men and wounded three others. How did he do it? He was heavily armed. He was prepared mentally and physically. And his store was laid out in such a way as that all who entered were channeled into a restricted area with no cover. Plus, Thomas had access to reinforced barriers such as counters and walls.

So when the bad guys pulled their guns and the fight was on, they were sitting right in Lance’s Kill Zone.

—Inner Circle—

Tim’s Thoughts...

The Kill Zone principle has two primary applications. The first is Kill Zone avoidance and the second is Kill Zone creation.

I challenge you to apply the concept of kill zone avoidance the next time you eat dinner with your family in a nice restaurant.

Sound crazy? Well, here are the thoughts that go through my head whenever I walk into a restaurant.

- I select a table with equal access to at least two exits.
- I always sit with my back to a wall. (So I can see anyone coming towards my table.)
- I locate at least one item that would provide cover and concealment. (Cover = hidden & bullet resistant, Concealment = hidden only.)

This may sound crazy to you, but those three thoughts happen in less than 5 seconds and it’s practically automatic.

Doing this doesn’t make me feel paranoid, it simply makes me feel secure and prepared!

Tim Schmidt

This article was reprinted with the generous permission of Tim Schmidt from the USCCA Inner Circle, check out more great articles at usccainnercircle.com.

Thanks again Tim ~ Marie D. Fong

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