

# The Signpost

September–October, 2010

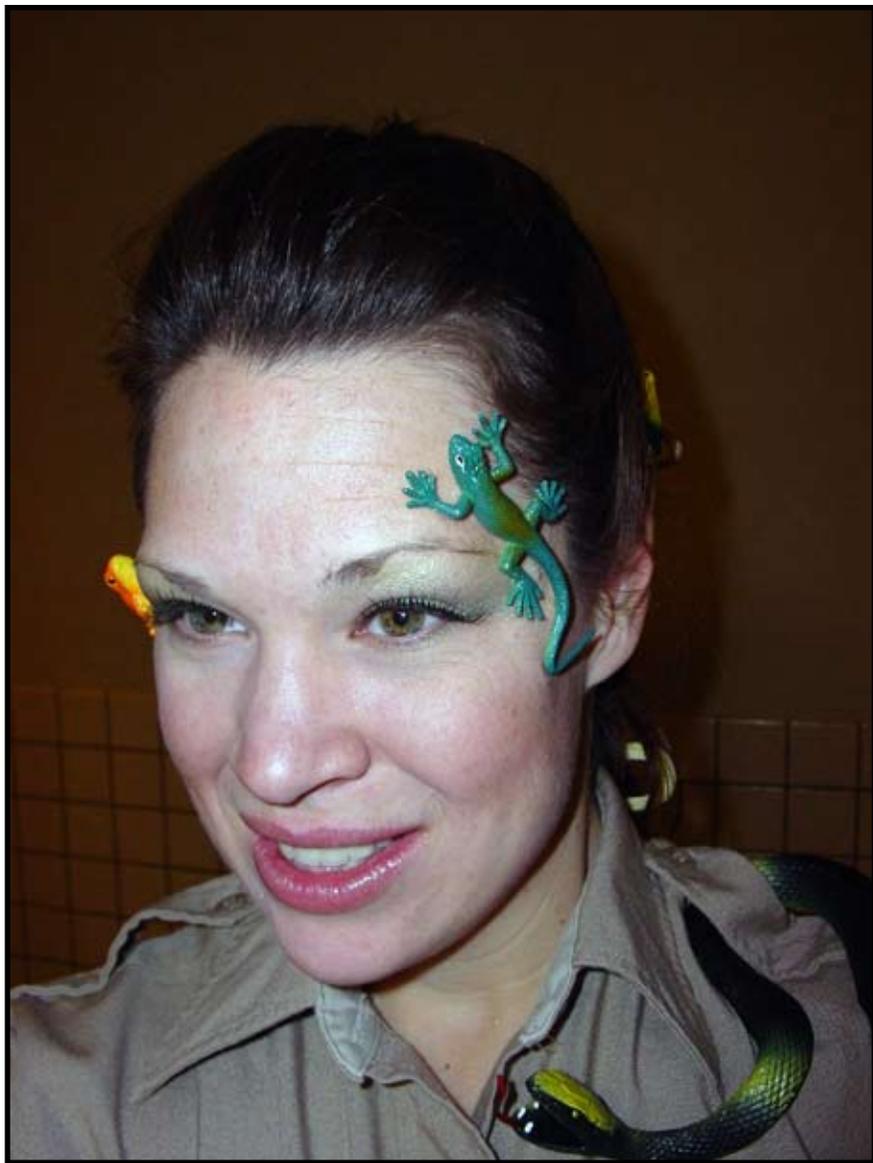


## PRAC Photo Contest!

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](http://calranger.org). From helpful how-not-to's to endearing environmental education moments, your photos will serve to represent the gamut of responsibilities and rewards our jobs offer.

Please send your photos to [region6@calranger.org](mailto:region6@calranger.org) or for larger quantities please mail the images on a C.D. to Marie D. Fong at 5365 Mayberry Drive Reno, Nevada 89519. Membership will be able to vote for their favorites and the winner will receive bragging rights and a PRAC coffee mug! Photos are due by November 15, 2010.

And just to get you inspired.....



For a full description of the above action, you'll have to send me some of your photos as payment. ~ **Park Ranger Marie D. Fong**

# News From Region 1

by Ken Wong



On June 21, 2010, Mike Chiesa (Sonoma County Regional Park) and I presented the PRAC President's Award to Steve Mejia and Chris Peak from the Petaluma Parks Department for their life saving action.

On February 26, 2010 at Lucchesi Park, both park employees were on duty when they encountered a

man attacking a woman by a nearby creek. Though threatened by the suspect with death, both employees held their ground and the suspect fled the scene. One of them called 911 while the other ran to the woman's aid. The victim was taken to Petaluma Valley

Hospital for her serious injuries. Police later arrested the man, who was later identified by Mejia and Peck as the attacker.

The presentation was made at the Petaluma City Hall at their city council meeting. Also present were families, friends and co-workers of the recipients. Both men were thanked by the Mayor for their action and each had an opportunity to give a small speech prior to the city council resuming their business.

Chris Peck is a 27 year Petaluma Parks employee and Steve Mejia is an 11 year employee.



(L-R) Mike Chiesa, Steve Mejia, Chris Peck, Ron DeNicola (Petaluma Parks Dept. Supervisor) and Kenneth Wong (Region #1 Director)

## California Roadkill Observation System

by Pamela Helmke

One of the more mundane tasks of the average park ranger is the removal of deceased wildlife from park lands and roads. These poor creatures are often the victims of traffic accidents. Up until recently I would typically remove the remains and bag it for our local Animal Services Officers to pick up for proper disposal. If the animal was in relatively good shape and of an interesting species I might harvest the skull or freeze the body for taxidermy. I had never given much thought to the scientific value a road kill could provide until I stumbled on the University of California Davis' Road Ecology Center and Information

Center for the Environment and their "Roadkill Reporters." Becoming a Roadkill Report is simple and easy just pop onto the official website: <http://wildlifecrossing.ucdavis.edu>.

Using this web site, you can report road kills observed anywhere in the State of California. The information is collected, evaluated and used to help understand the causes of road kill and what steps can be taken reduce the conflict between animals and vehicles. The Road Ecology Center is working with Caltrans to make changes in our roadway system that will make life bit safer for wildlife.

(See next page for more)

# P.R.A.C. Scholarship Guidelines

**Application Deadline: September 31, 2010**

**SCHOLARSHIP AWARD AMOUNT: \$500.00**

## **Selection Guidelines:**

1. The President shall appoint a Committee to review Scholarship Applications and select the top candidate(s).
2. Confirmation of the candidate(s) shall be approved by the Executive Board.
3. Selection will be based on GPA, letters of recommendation, relevant work experience, quality of application, need and extra curricular activities. Preference will be given to applicants pursuing a career in the park ranger field.
4. Upon selection the candidate(s) must submit an article to the *Signpost* describing their usage of the scholarship and why it was needed.

## **Eligibility Guidelines:**

1. Applicants must be a Student member or Regular member of the Association.
2. The applicant must be an undergraduate enrolled in a minimum of 6.1 units or the equivalent for the semester in which the scholarship is awarded.
3. The applicant must be enrolled in a program of study in parks and recreation management, resource management, forestry or a related field.
4. The applicant must have a minimum 2.50 GPA for all college level course work completed or have shown significant improvement during the previous two semesters.
5. Submit two letters of recommendation-letters should be directed to PRAC and be specific to this scholarship.

Scholarships are awarded in **September**

***Return completed application, statement of interest & two letters of recommendation to:***

PRAC Scholarship Committee, P.O.Box 153, Stewarts Point, CA 95480

***For More Information:***

Professor Bill Hendricks, Cal Poly–San Luis Obispo, (805) 756-1246

## **California Roadkill Observation System**

*(Story continues from previous page)*

The Road Ecology Center urges any interested person to sign up, log your observations, and help reduce the thousands of deaths of wildlife on our highways every year.

On the site you can look up locations or species (broken into groups such as large mammal, bird, amphibian) and see which animals are most vulnerable and where the incidents are occurring. A quick review of my area and I'm beginning to think more Mule Deer are "taken" by car than by hunters in my county.

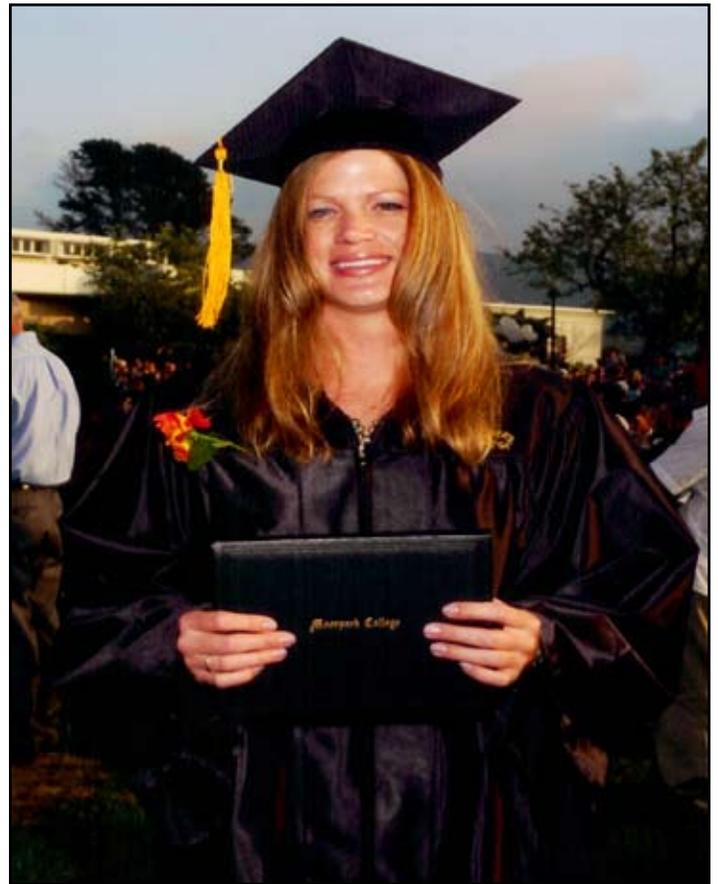
As with any database, generating a significant and accurate sample size is the key. While it may sound silly, I will be contributing to the data base. Anything we can learn to make our transportation system more "user friendly" for wildlife is an improvement.

Just in case you are need of a suitable field guide to help you accurately identify road kill I strongly recommend ***Flattened Fauna, Revised: A Field Guide to Common Animals of Roads, Streets, and Highways*** [Paperback] by Roger M. Knutson.

# Meet Our Latest Scholarship Winner

by Park Ranger Marie D. Fong

As part of PRAC's ongoing commitment to support up and coming park professionals the annual scholarships are awarded by PRAC to assist those who are completing their schooling needed to further their park's career. For most all of us currently in the field as full-time employees it is easy to recall those days when we were working as seasonals, just lucky to be getting paid and living on Ramen noodles, trying to afford school. Well, our latest scholarship winner, Kari Tam, fills those shoes well. We are fortunate to be able to assist her on her path towards a career in parks. The following is her letter of interest used in her scholarship application. These are posted annually to introduce the PRAC membership to the winner(s). Peruse this issue of the *Signpost* for scholarship application details or visit [calranger.org](http://calranger.org). Again Congratulations and Good Luck this fall semester Kari!



*Kari Tam Graduating from  
Moorpark College*



*Kari Tam in uniform at Channel Islands National Park*

Dear PRAC Scholarship Committee:

I was born in Thousand Oaks, California and I have resided here all of my life. I enjoyed growing up in this beautiful area, full of grassy rolling hills and wide-open spaces.

Throughout my childhood, I was lucky to spend my summers in the glorious foothills and mountains of the Sierra Nevadas at my Grandmother's house in Murphys, California and my Aunt's house in nearby Hathaway Pines. My love of the outdoors was strongly encouraged and developed quite naturally. I was given a lot of freedom to discover adventure as I pleased. Being an energetic child with lots of curiosity, I enjoyed splashing in the Stanislaus River, Murphys Creek, New Melones Lake, hiking Big Trees State Park, exploring the natural caverns—and avoiding mineshafts! At the age of 13, it was there that I got my first job at Creekside Sports. I would put on my "creek shoes" and walk to work with a tube over my shoulder. When work was over I would tube down the creek, home to Grandma's. I worked there for three summers, and appreciated every minute.

I graduated from Thousand Oaks High School in 1998. During my senior year I spent a week as a volunteer counselor at the sixth-grade Outdoor Education Camp. Since then I have been steadily employed working with children. I am currently working part-time for a local church as a preschool teacher, where I have been the master teacher since 2001. I attended night classes at Moorpark College, obtaining my Associate of Science degree in Early Childhood Education and completing the general education classes needed for transfer to California State University Channel Islands. My goal is to achieve my Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Science Resource Management. I am now a junior at C.S.U.C.I. majoring in E.S.R.M. (resource management emphasis) with the dream of becoming a Park Ranger. I love what I am learning, both in the classroom and in the field.

Through my classes at C.S.U.C.I., I was introduced to the Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency (COSCA). I began volunteering for them in 2007 in various capacities, including trail work and public education. In April of this year, I was given an outstanding opportunity by COSCA and the Conejo Recreation and Park District, to work 10 hours each Saturday with the Conejo Park Rangers. This chance from these wonderful joint organizations has given me more joy than I could ever imagine. I have already learned so much from the Rangers, the parks, the open space, and the community and can only hope to learn so much more. When I become a Park Ranger I look forward to bringing together my devotion to educating and my love of nature.

While I was able to meet the tuition expense at Moorpark College, the cost of attending C.S.U.C.I. is significantly higher, especially since a decline in state funding has resulted in additional increases in tuition. While I work 2 jobs, due to the current recession my teaching hours were recently cut by 24%. The opportunity to apply for the PRAC Scholarship could not come at a more critical time. If I am awarded this scholarship, every dollar will go directly towards my tuition and books, assisting me in continuing my education and moving forward to a lifelong career. Thank you very much for considering my application for the PRAC Scholarship.

Very Sincerely,

**Kari Tam**

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SUBMISSIONS CAN BE MAILED TO DAVID BROOKS, 560 HILLCREST DR., BEN LOMOND, CA, 95005. INFORMATION CAN ALSO BE SUBMITTED BY TELEPHONE AT (831) 336-2948.

**Submission deadlines ARE THE LAST day of JANUARY, MARCH, May, July, SEPTEMBER, AND NOVEMBER.**

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NAME _____		
ADDRESS _____		
CITY _____	STATE _____	ZIP _____
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JOB CLASSIFICATION OR MAJOR _____		

Park Rangers Association of California  
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**First Class**

**Voting Membership**

REGULAR.....\$50 \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Non-voting Membership**

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25 PERSONS—12 MAILINGS)..... \$150 \_\_\_\_\_  
STUDENT.....\$20 \_\_\_\_\_  
ASSOCIATE..... \$35 \_\_\_\_\_  
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