



Park Rangers Association of California

Award For Valor

Public safety personnel are routinely charged with handling emergency situations, and may be called upon at any time to put their own personal safety at risk. Park rangers and other park professionals fight wild land fires, conduct search and rescue operations, apprehend criminals, provide emergency medical services, and perform other duties to ensure the safety and welfare of the public they serve.

Periodically, park professionals will face emergency situations that are so extreme that by engaging in the emergency, they not only jeopardize their personal safety, but risk their own lives.

There is nothing more precious than human life. There is nothing more noble than saving or attempting to save human life.

The Park Rangers Association of California Award for Valor may be presented to any park professional who risks his or her own life to an extraordinary degree in saving or attempting to save the life of another person, or sacrifices him or her self in a heroic manner for the benefit of others. This award recognizes the recipient's demonstration of unusual courage involving a high degree of personal risk in the face of danger. The heroic act does not have to be related to the recipient's official duties nor occur at their official duty station.

Beginning in 2012 the Board of Directors for the Park Rangers Association of California will be seeking nominations for the Award of Valor. If you are aware of any uniformed park profession that you feel is deserving of recognition please go to www.calranger.org for more information. Nominations are due by January 1 of each year. Nominees do not need to be members of the Park Rangers Association of California.

If you are interested in serving as a member of the Award of Valor Selection Committee please contact your regional director.

PRAC Awards

The Professional Standards and Training Committee is pleased to announce that six members have received the Park Rangers Association of California Generalist Ranger Certificate this year. All six are rangers from Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority.

Congratulations to:

David Aceves

Time Pera

Milton Cano

Robert Reiss

Luke Mc Jimpson

Tony Scattaglia

From the President's Desk

March 5th through March 9th had rangers from across California gathering in Agoura Hills, near LA, for the 2012 California Parks Conference. While attendance was light the quality of the programming was superb and the evening social events were a lot of fun. I'd like to take a moment to thank all the members of the 2012 Conference Committee. Representing PRAC were Conference Co-Chair Dave Updike, Silent Auction and Raffle Leads Pat Boyle and Richard Weiner, our Vendor Coordinator Mike Peasland and Mike Jacobs and Steve Forman two of our retired PRAC members who volunteered to help where ever they were needed to keep the conference running smoothly. And speaking of volunteers, I'd like to thank the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) Fire Crew folks that assisted with a lot of set up and break down as well as providing support for our evening social events. A special thanks goes to Kaitlyn Verardo, also from MRCA, who handled our registration desk for all 5 days. Working registration is about the toughest job for conference team member. The registration desk folks frequently miss meals and rarely get to attend sessions. They not only handle all the registration issues but serve as the conference concierge - fixing problems, answering questions and getting groups out to their field trips on time. Kaitlyn has worked with Dave Sterling, our past conference registration desk staffer, and moved to the lead role this year.

A number of companies and non profits provide support to the California Parks Conference each year. Their support allows us to keep costs down and they help make the conference more interesting for our attendees. Supporters of the 2012 Conference include the California Parks Foundation, Life Assist, Bicycle Outfitters, REI, Pro Force, and CAVCO. CAVCO, a new vendor for our conference, even surprised us with the donation of a 32 inch HDTV as a raffle prize.

I hope those of you who attended this years conference had a good time, learned something new, connected with old friends and made new contacts. If you have ideas for next years conference please get in touch with your Region Director, it's never to early to start planning. If you'd be interested in volunteering for the next conference please let me know and we'll get you on the contact list.

Wishing you all a safe and enjoyable summer.

Pam Helmke

M.A.S.H Revisited

Richard Weiner, Region 5



Having just returned from the PRAC/CSPRA Conference, I am sharing one of the outings that we experienced.

The Malibu Creek State Park is where the T.V. show MASH was filmed. For those of you that don't remember the series, it took place between September 1972

and photographs of what the locations looked like during the filming. While traveling along the trails we observed creek beds that were dry but had signs of massive erosion and powerful water movements. After walking about an hour we came upon our first view of the site where MASH was filmed. The MASH ambulance was the first thing we saw. Around the corner from the ambulance was the MASH camp, the camouflaged tent, the Jeep, the signs letting you know which direction was "Home," were the "Swamp" was located, and where Colonel Potter had his tent. A few of us climbed the hill that was used in the opening scene where the helicopter landed and the jeep came to take the wounded down to the surgical/E.R. tent.



and February 1983 and was centered on the Korean War conflict. The series, which covered the three-year military conflict, spanned 251 episodes and lasted eleven seasons. Many of the stories in the early seasons were based on real-life tales told by real Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH) surgeons who were interviewed by the production team. Many of the actors went on to become major Hollywood stars. Over 125 million viewers watched the final episode of the series.



It was a great nostalgic walk into the past and a great walk through one of the pristine parks in the Santa Monica Mountains. I highly recommend the Malibu Creek State Park for a fun day of hiking.

On the Monday of the conference about twelve rangers were led by the State Park rangers through trails, which lead to the site where MASH was filmed. Along the way we were shown locations of where other feature films were made



“Other Duties As May Be Assigned”

by Pam Helmke

On just about every job description for park rangers or other uniformed park professionals I’ve ever seen—somewhere down near the bottom of that long list of jobs they expect you to do—is some variation of the magic words “other duties as may be assigned”.

Those six simple little words have sure had me doing a wide range of jobs I never expected to get involved in. I’m sure every one who reads this has had that special assignment that has your family and friends saying “You did what today? I didn’t know rangers did that?”

For my agency I think the most unusual assignment is the ranger that gets to be the keeper of the City’s Koi collection. Yes—I said Koi, those giant, brightly colored and very expensive carp. The City of San Jose is home to a beautiful Japanese Garden. The Garden was a gift from the people of Okayama Japan in 1965. As a result of President Dwight D. Eisenhower’s Sister City Program, San Jose and Okayama have shared over 50 years of friendship with largest symbol being our 6.5 acre garden.

The garden, modeled after Okayama’s Koro-kuen Gardens, has 3 large ponds. In the original design and for the first few years these ponds were just a water feature. Shallow reflecting pools in a tranquil garden. Then the Koi came. Our friends in Okayama shipped over several hundred small Koi to brighten our ponds. Of course no one in the Parks Department knew anything about raising and caring for Koi but why let that stop progress. Over the years it was discovered that Koi had specific needs, water needed to be filtered, treated and tested. After several years of trials and tribulations the care of the Koi became the

Park Rangers responsibility, after all they are fish and fish are like wildlife—Right?

My current assignment has me taking care of the Koi, monitoring water quality, and maintaining and operating a water treatment plant that has a ozone generator, four 5,000 gallon sand filters, a passel of pumps, pipes, gauges, meters and dials all monitored by a picky computer. Our system makes sure the almost 500,000 gallons of water is just right for our Koi. In addition, we have three 1,500 gallon isolation tanks and a 500 gallon hospital tank each with their own pumps and filtration system.



Our Koi require regular assessment that includes checking for external parasites by taking skin scrapings and looking under the microscope for an assortment of creepy-crawlies. We take blood samples to screen for Koi Herpes Virus and sometimes treat injured or sick fish in our hospital tank. Treatment can be as simple as a mild salt bath to more complex care including anesthesia, tube feeding, and antibiotic injections. If a Koi dies, a cause of death needs to be determined so rangers also become the local Koi Coroner – evaluating the scene of death and conducting a necropsy to come up with an answer. Tissue samples are often collected, fixed and shipped to pathologists for more complex cases.

Working alongside our contract fisheries biologist and veterinarian rangers assigned to the Garden quickly master a wide range of “those other duties.”

I’m sure there are as many unique assignments as there are parks and open spaces. Please feel to share your “other duty” with us and don’t forget to send a photo or two.



EMERGENCY Hollywood Style

Patrick Boyle Region 1

Squad 51 Engine 51.... Fire Alarm, Possible Fire at the Sheraton Hotel, Agora Hills

For those of you who participated in our little real live fire drill at the conference, your certificates are in the mail. Yes at about 5:00 AM on Thursday morning the fire alarm at the hotel started going off and smoke actually filled parts of the building. (Of course this was the only morning we had a scheduled late start.) A small fire started in the wall near the hotel entrance and the Fire Department Responded. (It was not John Gage or Roy De Soto from the TV series in the 70's from Squad 51.) The part that amazes me still, is how many guests did not even bother to evacuate. (This may be partially being due to the hotel telling everyone it was ok.) I am always in line to evacuate first and apologize later, not vice versa. In fact I would say the only people who evacuated properly and timely were us park folks. (Maybe it has something to do with us having to respond to emergencies.) As we were watching the firemen tear out the wall a few guests who were leaving early walked by without even glancing up from

their iPhones until they ran into the fire engine at the hotel entrance instead of their taxi. (There should be an app for that.) By 7:30 the firemen were gone but the fans were still running attempting to get rid of the smoke still in the area where we were holding the conference. I think the best part was Dave Updike was giving a class titled "Wild Land Arson Investigation" later on that day. (Our conclusion was Victor the Duk was smoking a camel cigarette near the silent auction table. He was one of the many smokin hot items at the silent auction.) So the last morning started early and was a little smoky but when it all cleared we went on with the show, "Hollywood Style." And no, Smokey the Bear did not make an appearance...I will say there were a few grumpy ones though....

My wife finally got why I always want to stay on the first or second floor in a hotel and why I count the number of doors to the nearest exit. I do the same thing on an airplane it drives her nuts.... But now she knows why.

Calling all Students

It's that time of year again—break out the pencils, books and the scholarship applications. Don't forget to apply for the PRAC scholarship. It only takes a small amount of effort and hardly any time, and while \$500 bucks isn't a lot there are no strings attached. You can pay rent, tuition fees, food, books, supplies, or any of those other ten essentials that every

student need. (My #1 and #2 were Pizza and Beer). Maybe that's why I was contemplating with the C's get degrees concept.

Information is available online just hop into the members section and follow the link. Deadline for turning in the application is September 30th. Last year no one applied so there is not a lot of competition.

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 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.

Membership Does Have Its Privileges!!!!



Park Rangers Association of California Scholarship Information

Hello PRAC Members, I would like to remind all members that the Park Rangers Association of California offers two \$500.00 scholarships every year to its members. PRAC begins accepting Student Scholarships applications February 1st; all applications and supporting materials must be received prior to September 31, 2012.

This is an excellent opportunity that many full-time, professional Rangers might not need, but as some of us have very large seasonal staffs and volunteers who are comprised of aspiring college students this is a great opportunity to share with them. Students who are members of PRAC, enrolled in a program of study in parks and recreation management, resource management, forestry or a related field and enrolled in 6.1 semester units or the equivalent, during the Fall Semester are eligible for consideration.

An application form and additional information can be found at calranger.org. Please feel free to reproduce and pass on the scholarship information to those interested. The applicants need to be PRAC members when they apply, so for those interested they can access the membership application at calranger.org and become student members. For more information please check calranger.org or contact me at: region6@CalRanger.org or (775) 813-3629 (cell).

Marie Fong

Application Deadline:

September 31, 2012

Scholarships:

Thomas Smith Scholarship—\$500.00
Bill Orr Scholarship—\$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 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 reviewed
and awarded each fall**

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

PRAC Scholarship Committee

P.O.Box 153

Stewarts Point, CA 95480

News

From Behind the Redwood Curtain

by Patrick Boyle, Region 1

Well there have been a lot of things happening here in Humboldt County Parks that are just amazing to me. We are a small department that has been hiding in the shadows of these trees for many years, that has somehow managed to stay afloat in this tough economic era. We are even attempting to expand our realms and maybe our horizons a bit with a couple of partnerships.

We are working with Green Diamond Timber Company, The Trust for Public Land, the City of Arcata, and a combination of public and private organizations to develop a popular tract of land, locally known as the McKay Tract, to be transferred over to the county parks department to be used as a community forest. This will be a tract of 7,000 acres of working timberland that will include multi use trails for recreation and commuting through the backside of Eureka. 2000 acres will be operated as a community forest while the other 5000 acres will be set aside in a conservation easement to prevent possible development and be kept in timber production by Green Diamond. One of the best known models for a community forest program is here in our backyard located in Arcata. If you are new to the community forest Idea check out this link...

<http://www.cityofarcata.org/departments/environmental-services/city-forests>

Community forests provide recreation opportunities while still allowing the land to be used for timber. Funds from timber harvest revenue cover cost of forest operations, habitat restoration, and management of the forest for recreational uses. A combination of working forest areas, special management areas and ecological reserves create a balanced management approach. This project has cleared its first hurdle with approval to move forward from the County Board of Supervisors and is probably close to 5 to 10 years from becoming a

reality. That is if it can continue to jump through all the hurdles and hoops that are required, as well as coming up with the appropriate funds to get the project started.

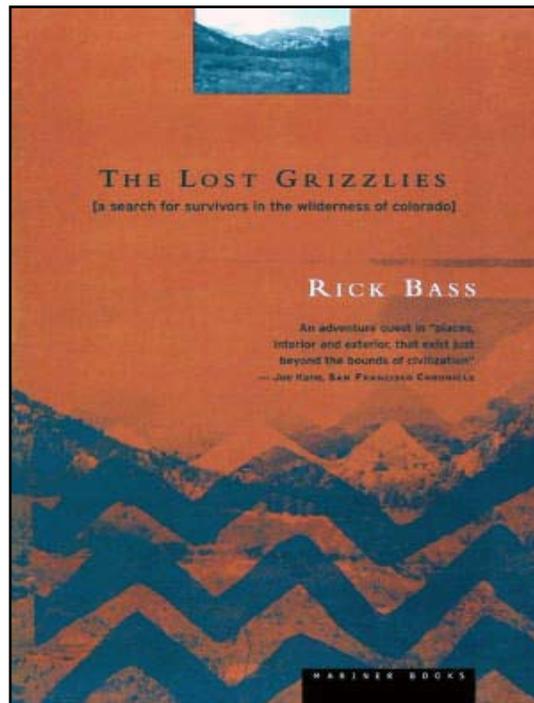
Our second endeavor at the moment is attempting to help out our local state parks. We are attempting to partner with California State Parks and take on the operation of Grizzly Creek, one of the 70 State Parks slated to be shut down this year. The condition on our end is that it has to be a revenue neutral endeavor. In other words we do not have any money spend on operations in our own parks let alone the State Park. However there may be enough money available through alternative funding sources and fee recovery to operate the park to county standards. This is a basic no frills option that allows the public a recreation opportunity but not the state park recreation experience. There would be no evening programs, ranger led walks, Jr. Ranger program or visitor center operations. We do not even have the staff to do this at our parks at this moment in time. The current budget for this one state park is greater than our operational budget for our entire department. But my boss agrees that we owe it to the people to try and keep as many facilities in Humboldt County open and staffed as possible, and so we are pressing forward with the idea. This is by no means a turnkey event. You know how slow government operations can be and how fast summer is approaching. The gun just went off and we have a marathon to complete in the time of a 100-meter sprint.

So even in these tough times it is neat to see some forward thinking, leadership, and support for parks and all that we do. Sunsets, smiles and the occasional pat on the back are all the payment one sometimes receives to go along with all the blood, sweat, and tears. But for me so far—it's enough!

From The Bedside Table of Patrick Boyle
The Lost Grizzlies
by Rick Bass

Whenever I read a book by Rick Bass I find myself asking questions about exactly what wilderness means to me. He wraps this story up in mystery and self-revelation, leading the reader to a path of self-discovery. Rick not only writes from his heart, but is able to give voice and words to those experiences that put the reader on the ground right next to him. This story is no different because if you know your history, you know the

outcome. But it is the journey where the story takes you as a reader that is the real heart and soul of the tale. Rick Bass and Doug Peacock once again take you into the woods in search of something wild and elusive. In discovering the bears we all discover something more about ourselves and the wilderness, that both of our species need to survive. Hope you get a chance to get a little reading in this spring.



Calendar of Upcoming Events

April

- **02** April Scholarship Info to Student members
- **12** April Conference Call
- Critique of 2012 Conference / Begin Planning 2013
- **22** April Earth Day
- **29** April Save the Frogs Day

May

- **04** May Board Agenda Posted Online
- **10** May 7 PM Board Conference Call
- **14** May Board Meeting Synopsis Posted Online
- **31** May Deadline for July *Signpost*

June

- Summer Silly Season Starts

July

- **06** July Board Agenda Posted Online
- **12** July 7 PM Board conference Call
- **16** July Board Meeting Synopsis Posted Online
- **31** July Deadline for Sept *Signpost* World Ranger Day

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SUBMISSION DEADLINES ARE THE LAST DAY OF JANUARY, MARCH, MAY, JULY, SEPTEMBER, AND NOVEMBER.

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME _____		
ADDRESS _____		
CITY _____	STATE _____	ZIP _____
PHONE _____		
HOME _____	WORK _____	
EMAIL ADDRESS _____		
EMPLOYER OR SCHOOL _____		
JOB CLASSIFICATION OR MAJOR _____		

Voting Membership

REGULAR.....\$50 _____
 RETIRED.....\$35 _____

NON-Voting Membership

AGENCY:
 (1-24 PERSONS—6 MAILINGS)..... \$100 _____
 25 PERSONS—12 MAILINGS)..... \$150 _____
 STUDENT.....\$20 _____
 ASSOCIATE..... \$35 _____
 SUPPORTING..... \$100 _____

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