



# NEWSLETTER



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PRIME 'GATOR HIDES BRING \$6.00 A FOOT

## WAR DECLARED ON POACHERS



"We're declaring war on poachers," Secretary of the Interior Walter J. Hickel announced, March 8, in reference to rampant 'gator poaching that has long been a highly lucrative business in the Florida Everglades. He then authorized an additional \$100,000 to be used by Everglades National Park this year to help in law enforcement.

Seven park rangers have already been transferred to Everglades from other park areas to work exclusively on the poaching problem. In addition, local long-time residents of the glades area are being hired by the park to work with the rangers in what the Secretary has called a "conservation posse." Poachers have often had the upper hand and have been able to avoid detection because of their intimate knowledge of the glades. The Secretary hopes that others just as knowledgeable will help in their apprehension.

Once there were more than a million alligators in the park's 1,400,000 acres. Now, there may not be as many as 20,000. According to Dick Holland of the Miami News, "Alligators come of breeding age at about six years. Poachers like to take them—with a bullet in the brain, a sledgehammer on the head or a machete in the neck—when they're about five or six years old. That's when the hides are prime and fetch as much as \$6 a foot."

In order to acquaint himself personally with the problem of alligator poaching—and also to investigate the water shortage problems of the park, Secretary Hickel went on a fact-finding trip to Everglades National Park March 13 and 14.

The Secretary, Governor Kirk, and Florida Congressman William C. Cramer arrived at Homestead Air Force Base at noon on the 13th, where they were met by Superintendent Raftery.

Following a brief news conference, the Secretary's party proceeded to the Anhinga Trail to get a first hand glimpse of alligators. An unusually cool and cloudy day unfortunately kept most of the 'gators from view.

The party then drove to Flamingo where they boarded

boats for a two-hour trip to the Lostman's River Ranger Station in the heart of the park's mangrove wilderness, for the evening's activities. Following dinner, the Secretary was given first hand experience in the difficulties of apprehending poachers. Assistant Chief Park Ranger Richard Stokes and the Secretary assumed the role of poachers in the exercise. They were given a 15-minute head start and were then followed by several rangers who attempted, unsuccessfully, to find them in the maze of meandering water courses amongst the mangroves.

Secretary Hickel has announced that he plans to give pending legislation, which would prohibit interstate shipment and possession of alligator hides, his full support. Representative Cramer predicted early action on the measure.

The Secretary's visit not only dramatized the plight of the alligator but resulted in discussion and agreement which should lead to the resolution of the water problem.

Full attention was also given to the matter of establishing a workable agreement for the supply of needed amounts of fresh water from the Central and Southern Florida Flood Control Project, which now controls, in large measure, the water supply to the park. Presently under an interim plan, the park receives water only when storage conditions in Lake Okeechobee and the Flood Control Project's Conservation Districts warrant such release. There is no guarantee that the park will receive enough water to meet its minimum requirements and in the past few dry years, park wildlife, and the entire ecology of the park, have been adversely affected by an abnormally low water supply.

Secretary Hickel and Governor Kirk stated during their visit that a plan is needed which will supply the park with sufficient water, and they agreed to work together to implement such a plan. The park presently estimates its minimum water requirements at 315,000 acre-feet per annum from the Central and Southern Florida Flood Control District. It is also vital that any mutually agreed upon plan will provide for the release of water on the seasonal schedule needed to maintain the complex ecological systems operating in the park; a schedule simulating the historic wet-dry seasons existing when the "River of Grass" flowed naturally from Lake Okeechobee.

The visit of Secretary Hickel and the interest he has shown in resolving the problems which threaten Everglades National Park have brightened prospects for the future of this unique natural wilderness.

## Widening Horizon

On March 12 in the Director's Conference Room, the N.P.S. wives from Springfield, Virginia, met with Mrs. Walter Hickel, the Secretary's wife and board member of the Widening Horizon program, to plan summer trips to N.P.S. areas. The Widening Horizon program consists of summer trips for inner city children to interesting places in the Washington area.



photo by Cecil Stoughton

Seated from left to right are: Mary Oschner, Mrs. Walter (Ermalee) Hickel, Becky Hummel, Jean Howe, Phil Jacobsen; standing, Marion Griswold, Betty Cattanack, Margaret Sheeley, Nattalie Bradley, Mary Gibbs, Betty Phillips, Fran Hubbard, Doris Reid, Carol Carlin.

## NPS To Continue Operating Own Public Campgrounds

It has just been announced by Director Hartzog that the National Park Service will continue to operate its own campgrounds this year pending an analysis of experimental operation by concessioners in selected areas. The one exception is Everglades National Park where the Everglades Park Company, Inc., has a one-year contract to run the Flamingo and Long Pine Key campgrounds on a fee basis. The experimental operation of the campground at Crater Lake National Park last year by a concessioner is now being analyzed, and the park has already resumed operation of the facility.

The decision to continue NPS operation of its own campgrounds was based in part on difficulties in attempting to complete—in time for this season—separate contract negotiations with concessioners in many of the 87 areas of the System that have public campgrounds.

Meanwhile, campground policy will be reviewed by the Service and the Department of the Interior in the light of test operations by concessioners.

Concessioner operation of National Park System

**See Campgrounds, Page 4**

Aram Haig Mardirosian, in the words of Associate Director J.E.N. Jensen, came to the National Park Service as a design consultant "to look at what we're doing, to criticize to a certain extent, and to help to a great extent." As chief architectural advisor to the National Park Service, Mardirosian will be concerned with many varied assignments involving overall design philosophy and architectural as well as artistic excellence of National Park Service developments.

Mardirosian brings to his job an amazing understanding of the National Park Service and its problems. He also provides a fresh point of view. He is particularly impressed, for example, by the fact that the NPS is really doing something unique, in which the word "quality" has a great deal of meaning. "Most other activities," he says, "talk in terms of quantity and in terms of action. The NPS remains, in a sense, the one body that is talking 'quality' across-the-board." He observes that many in powerful positions talk about conservation problems at a very high level and with a very high purpose. "This is fine," he says, "and precisely where we begin. But what good does it do to talk with lofty purpose if you produce junk? So you have to project the idea downward toward reality—to physical action—and it is imperative that the man who actually does the drawing must be as inspired as the man who conceives the idea—so that his full talents may be brought fully to bear on the ultimate design objectives. In short, there must be a meeting of the minds."

He is also deeply concerned about design decisions that may affect resources in a permanent, non-correctable way. "We really cannot look upon a park or an area of the National Park System as being a fixed thing," says Mardirosian, "when, in fact, it is fluid—always keeping in mind that nature itself is changing. We must always keep in mind that the quality of what we're doing is judged by people at a given time."

He believes, therefore, that we should keep in mind that—regardless of what we do—there should be a kind of 99% chance—that what we do over a long period of time is correctable and is then totally preservable—just as it was when we inherited our trusteeship of America's irreplaceable resources. This allows for the fact that we might be wrong or that purposes might change in the process of transferring our stewardship from one generation to another.

Mardirosian does not view today's environmental crisis as a case of nature vs. man, because nature has to be taken to include man—and you can't reject him. He calls for a qualitative response to life and to the environment.



"Man shouldn't prejudice things too much. It seems to me that man quite often has been able not only to accept nature but to introduce things which are an asset. It isn't necessarily true in all cases that nature itself without man is better. For example, we can look at a certain hill in Athens and say 'well, that's a marvelous hill, let's not build anything on top of it.' And if you were to build a gas station on top of it, I'd say you were probably better off with your earlier decision. You shouldn't have built anything. But if the

## of an NPS Design Consultant

## Aram Haig Mardirosian

people—collectively and individually in terms of the architect and the designers working on this thing—can produce a PARTHENON and put it on top of the hill, then, I'd take the Parthenon. I think we should allow for this kind of achievement and not prejudice.

"I think that what we really should not allow is ugliness and lack of quality. It doesn't make much sense if you put a building in a park if it doesn't look right, it doesn't work right, the people can't get in or out of it right, you don't quite know how to use it—sitting on a stupid road in a stupid place."

As an architect and as a design consultant to the Service, Mardirosian draws an interesting analogy between good park design and the production of a play. "Like an actor, the designer must not only know his lines, he must live the part. Just by his own talent, just by the quality of his performance, he may indeed make more of a part than is really there. While the actor's lines are set, there is still an opportunity for tremendous creativity.

"The important thing to remember is that there is a play and there is the actor and they are not synonymous. They are related to the design—to the whole idea. If the play makes sense and the play is the context of the thing, the whole dialogue—the play—in a sense can be the counterpart of all the factors that go into establishing a national park—its purpose, its interrelationships, and its design. At any particular point in time many actors may enter and leave the scene. The actor happens to be a particular individual performing at a particular moment. You would also have to say that surely the quality of the actor's performance depends a great deal on the play itself. If the play is awful, then I don't know what kind of quality performance you could expect from the actor. There are exceptions, of course. Depending on the superior talents of the actor, he could perhaps rise above the mess—so to speak—and still give a creditable performance."



From the time Aram was a small boy attending Public School 86 in New York City, we suspect he always knew that he would one day become an architect. And why not?—with the inspiration of a father who, as architect for the New York Port Authority, worked on such magnificent design achievements as the Holland Tunnel and the George Washington Bridge. After graduating from New York's DeWitt Clinton High School, Aram entered Harvard College, where he majored in mathematics and was also an NROTC student. Receiving his AB in Mathematics in 1953, Aram accepted a commission as Ensign in the U.S. Navy and thoroughly enjoyed his next four years, rising to the rank of Lieutenant, U.S.N. and winning his wings as a Naval aviator.

In 1957, he left the Navy to study architecture for the next four years at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. During this time he also continued his Navy career as a Lieutenant (USNR). Following graduation as a Bachelor of Architecture in 1962, his first design commissions were a house on Lake Hopatcong and a garden apartment project, both in New Jersey.

From July 1963 until July 1967, Mardirosian was

with the firm of Kevin Roche-John Dinkeloo and Associates (formerly Eero Saarinen and Associates), with experience on several multi-million dollar projects including the Administration and Student Union Buildings at Rochester Institute of Technology; Classroom



photo by Jack Rottier

Building at Concordia College; and Ford Foundation Headquarters, New York City. He was later senior designer for the Athletic Building Complex, Rochester Institute of Technology and for two Women's Residence Houses at the University of Pennsylvania. Just before joining the National Park Service, Mardirosian was deputy director for design for the Redevelopment Land Corporation in the District of Columbia.



Aram and Johanna Mardirosian have three children—Amanda, 7; John, 6; and Katherine, 3. There are no indications yet that they will follow in their father's footsteps, "but," says Aram, "they all take a keen interest in what I am doing." This is especially true of their interest in Aram's leisure-time preoccupation with the design of their future home in McLean, Virginia. Will it be a Frank Lloyd Wright house? Well, no. More likely it will be a Mardirosian "exclusive," modern in design with simple lines and plenty of emphasis on privacy—but still blending nicely into the local environment. One exciting feature of the new house: every room will have direct access to the outdoors.

And now that our urban-oriented consultant has tasted of the fruits of national parks, we detect a gleam in his eye that says "now that the kids are growing up, maybe we'd better look into this camping-out business and really get to know the parks."

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## People on the move~

### NEW FACES

Cannon, Hugh C., to Ch., Div. of Concessions Mgmt., WASO  
Wheeler, Larry M., to Leg. Coordinator, WASO

### NEW PLACES

Crummey, Dayton C., from Pk. Ranger, Zion NP, to Supv. Pk. Ranger, Great Sand Dunes NM  
De Mers, Evelyn K., from Sec. (Steno.), SFSC, to same, WRO  
Dezendorf, Esther A., from Sec. (Steno.), SFSC, to same, WASO  
Dierks, Ralph G., from Civil Engr., Glacier NP, to same, MWRO  
Ellis, William P., from Supv. Pk. Ranger, Colorado NM, to same, Curecanti RA  
Garland, Hafford L., from Gen. Supply Spec., Mammoth Cave NP, Great Onyx JC CCC, to Admin. Off., Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania Co. Bat. Mem. NMP  
Gibson, William (NMN), from Pk. Ranger, Gila Cliff Dwellings NM, to same, Glen Canyon NRA  
Graham, James T., Jr., from Pk. Ranger, Blue Ridge Pkwy., to same, Cumberland Gap NHP  
Raymond, William J., from Archeologist, Mesa Verde NP, to same, Gila Cliff Dwellings NM  
Rogers, Lyle I., from Pk. Ranger, Saguaro NM, to same, Platt NP-Arbuckle RA  
Smith, Agnes B., from Accounting Tech., WRO, to Admin. Clk., Craters of the Moon NM  
Tinney, Edward H., from Supv. Hist., Shiloh NMP, to same, Chickamauga & Chattanooga NMP  
Townsend, Curtis K., from Supv. Civil Engr., Yellowstone NP, to Civil Engr., MWRO

### JOINING THE ALUMNI

Caywood, Louis R., from Archeologist, WASO  
Dodd, Jack B., from Asst. Supt., Glacier NP  
Farwell, Alfred G., from Gen. Accounting Clk., Shenandoah NP  
Griffith, Philip L., from Pk. Guide, George Washington Birthplace NM  
Hammons, Vernon L., from Admin. Off., WSC  
Quinn, James (NMN), from Bus Driver, NCR  
Rohn, John F., Jr., from Supt., Homestead NM  
Weems, Samuel P., from Parks Advisor, WASO  
Veihdeffer, James R., from Supv. Equipment Spec. (Gen.) (Reg. Ch., Div. of Equipment Maintenance), NCR

## Campgrounds

Continued from page 2.

campgrounds has been part of a nine-point program proposed last year to enable the Service to adjust to manpower cutbacks imposed by the Revenue and Expenditure Control Act of 1968.

The Act limited filling of existing vacancies to three out of four permanent positions until the June 30, 1966, employment level of 5,998 positions had been reached.

## Silhouette

## Stella Johnson



Mrs. James R. (Stella) Johnson has been selected by the Shenandoah National Park Wives organization as an appropriate silhouette for this month. A native of Fairfax County, Virginia, Stella moved to Rappahannock County at the age of nine, and has kept one of Shenandoah's eight adjacent counties as her legal residence ever since. Husband "Bob" is presently the Central District Ranger of the Park where he started as a seasonal at Big Meadows campground.

Stella received her degree in Home Economics from Madison College, Harrisonburg, in 1942, and was then prepared as of January 1, 1947, to accompany her husband to Virginia Polytechnic Institute where she worked for four years as a dietician for the faculty and the girls' dorm, while he pursued a degree in Forestry. During these school years, Stella and Bob spent the summers at Shenandoah assisting staff and visitors in their own inimitable, friendly way.

Stella has been a teacher for sixteen years and for the past five years has been teaching retarded children, a profession for which she received special training at the University of Virginia. She promoted this Special Education program in Warren County and is now teaching it in Page County. She is a past president of the Warren Council for Retarded Children, having served in that capacity for four years, and is still social chairman of that group. She is a life-long Baptist, but not "hard-shelled", for she loves dancing and entertaining. Stella is a member of the Luray Women's Club and currently is serving as chairman of its Education Committee. And, ladies, she is a past president (now vice-president) of the Valley Ladies Chapter of the Isaac Walton League of America — the only such chapter in the state, we're told! She enjoys hiking and camping with her family, and each summer finds them wending their way to Canada and the bush country.

A charter member of the Park Wives of SNP, Stella has held about every office in the organization, so naturally names sewing, knitting, and arts and crafts among her favorite hobbies.

And, 'midst these community, church, and social activities, Stella became the mother of two sons and has certainly put homemaking first. Her unbounding energy and jovial disposition are contagious.

Bob was "born and bred in the briar patch" — actually on land now part of the Park — and he has served in each of our three districts, so both he and Stella are really "natives" of Shenandoah National Park.