

HOW THE PARKS WENT DIPS

By Loretta DeLozier



Friend or Foe?

Last year, a whole group of Irishmen were kicked off the Park Service's payroll.

The optical scanner on the new computer kept rejecting their names, and it took our people some time to find out why. ("Must be a Polish machine," one concluded.) Then they discovered that the computer rejected every name containing an apostrophe. As soon as the offending punctuation mark was removed (turning O'Malley into Omalley), the Irishmen were "acceptable" again.

That's only one of the many problems that have been faced in setting up the new Departmental Integrated Personnel/Payroll System (DIPS) in the Park Service. Others aren't so funny. Employees have been under-paid, over-paid, or not paid at all. Retroactive checks from the recent pay raise were delayed, and many hours of overtime have been spent cleaning up errors on personnel and payroll records.

Although DIPS is the most controversial use of computers in the Parks, it is only one part of our over-all Automatic Data Processing (ADP) system.

Much work went into developing the DIPS system. In 1967 a Departmental policy committee was set up to coordinate with the Washington Computer Center. The chairman of the committee, until 1969, was Richard Miller, former

WASHINGTON REPORT

PRESIDENT SIGNS BILL

President Nixon signed the bill to continue the unified system of annual and user fees for Federal recreation areas (golden eagle program). He also signed a bill providing salary increases for D.C. police, firemen and teachers (includes Park Police).

COMMITTEE FILES TRAVEL REPORT

The joint committee on international travel filed a conference report on the differences between the Senate and House passed bill to encourage foreign travel to the U.S. As approved, the bill will:

1) Authorize appropriations of \$15 million for the U.S. Travel Service for FY 1971, 1972 and 1973.

2) Start a 15-member National Tourism Resources Review Commission with four representatives from four Federal agencies (Commerce, Interior, State and Transportation), and 11 representatives appointed by the President.

3) Create an Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Tourism, who would head the U.S. Travel Service.

See Here Ladies

NEW OFFICERS ON PADRE ISLAND

The Padre Island Wives Club recently elected Charlotte Hurley, president, and Sina Martin, secretary-treasurer. The group is looking into the possibility of supporting a needy Corpus Christi family which is unable to get help through the usual welfare, church or civic organizations.

ADDRESS CORRECTION

The address listed in the July 23 NEWSLETTER for the Western Region's "Lava Flow" is incorrect. The address of this publication is c/o Jean Warner, 160 Bay Street #319, San Francisco, California. 94114. Price is one dollar for four issues.



Under our hat

REVIEWING HEALTH BENEFITS:

Employees covered by the Health Benefits Program should check their health benefits brochures for enrollment changes that must be made within certain time limits—for example, changes in marital or other family status that permit a change from self-only to family enrollment. Enrollments may be cancelled or changed from self and family to self-only at any time. For more information, refer to your copy of "The Federal Employee Health Benefits Program" (SF-2809) and your plan's health brochure. Copies are available at your personnel office.

REPRINTS AVAILABLE:

Park employees may order free copies of articles on environmental awareness from the Departmental library. A bimonthly reading list produced cooperatively by NPS and the library may be obtained from the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Library Service, E.A.R.L., Washington, D.C. 20240.



NEW LEADERS:

Lemuel A. "Lon" Garrison (left) is the new director of the Albright Training Center; Henry G. "Hank" Schmidt (right) superintendent of the New York Group is succeeding him as director of the Northeast Region.

USING RETIREES AS SEASONALS:

A recent NPS survey shows that few reemployed retirees have recurring seasonal positions, and that a major obstacle to increasing their employment as seasonals is that many retirees receive annuities higher than the grade level for these positions. The consensus is that retirees are most effectively used in positions comparable to the grade level at which they retired. Area managers indicate that they are effective to head small construction projects, to man entrance stations after Labor Day when the regular seasonal must return to school or to provide backup service during high-fire danger and hunting seasons.

FOREIGN VISITORS:

Entrance fees to our parks have been waived for foreign travelers who show their passport at the point of entry. This also applies to nonresident alien border crossing cards, such as those held by Mexicans. (It does not apply, as yet, to Canadians.) The waiver is for entrance and admission fees only; it does not apply to special use (campground) fees.

EEO PLAN:

The equal employment opportunity *Affirmative Action Plan* has been distributed to all field directors. It is designed to increase the employment of women and minority group members throughout the Service in middle and higher levels of management and in all occupation categories. The plan covers organization of the EEO program, recruitment, training opportunities, community participation, program evaluation and processing of complaints. All field offices should have copies of the report.



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Betty Colton: "It's like repairing a road or getting married. There's always going to be some trouble and inconvenience at first."



Richard Miller was chairman of the Departmental policy committee set up to coordinate with the Washington Computer Center.

PROFILE

The Fix-It Man of Natchez Trace

Co-workers say with pride, "If anybody can fix it, Swinney can." And for 27 years, electrician Maynard M. Swinney has been "fixing things," from the



Maynard M. Swinney

tinest electric motor to the largest air-conditioning system, throughout the entire length of the Natchez Trace Parkway.

Although you would never know it by his many accomplishments, Swinney lost one of his legs while serving in the Navy during World War II. After his discharge he entered NPS as a handyman at Natchez Trace and was soon promoted to general mechanic. Within less than a year, he was promoted to his present position as electrician. He has received a superior performance award and several awards for work improvement suggestions. In 1968, he was nominated for "Outstanding Handicapped Federal Employee of the Year."

Admired by his co-workers as "The only one of us who can stand on his right leg on a wet floor and work in a fuse box with his bare hands," Swinney is equally respected by members of his community. Says one, "The children in the neighborhood have also learned that here is a man that they can count on and bring him their problems whether it's a broken toy, a piece to be learned on the guitar or just conversation."

Swinney and his wife, Annie Bell, reside in Tupelo, Mississippi. They have three grown daughters.

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Cont'd. from page 1

acting director of ADP for the Federal Water Quality Administration, now chief of Systems Development for NPS.

Dick's committee formed task forces, one for personnel and another for payroll and finance, to draw up specifications for the program. Each task force analyzed every kind of action that would happen and left space for unusual things that could arise later. Also, Craig Swanson, management analyst, developed procedures for converting labor cost information, which is an output of DIPS, into information usable by our Regional accounting offices.

So—with all that preparation—why the problems?

"One of our difficulties was in coordinating the payroll and personnel offices," explains Samuel V. Moore, chief of the Division of Management Analysis for NPS and new chairman of the Departmental policy committee. "After all, these were two entirely separate offices with different ways of doing things. DIPS is a complicated, large-scale operation, and it just took time to learn it."

Representing NPS on the personnel task force was Elizabeth Colton, personnel management specialist now on detail to the

Department. "The Park Service was the guinea pig for the Department," she explains. "We went, for the most part, from a totally manual to a totally automated system. We were the first to try it, so we ran into all kinds of problems that any new system would have. Personnel had to learn a whole new language; payroll, another way of working; superintendents, a new time schedule.

"We only became operational this January, and we're still having growing pains. It's like adding a room to a house or repairing a road or getting married. There's always going to be some trouble and inconvenience at first, but when the job's done, it's worth it."

To further ease the problems, Betty wrote a simple but comprehensive brochure on DIPS. Also, she and Thomas Gregory, personnel staffing specialist, went to all the regional offices to explain the system. "The cooperation of our field people has been splendid. Most of them learned it in a few days. We've already had a 100 percent audit of personnel actions and many mistakes have been picked up. One man got \$900 in back pay and another was credited for leave he would have lost."

Representing NPS on the payroll task force was management analyst Bernard Chotiner, who helped coordinate payroll operations with the personnel office. "The Park Service has one of the most complex payroll systems going," he explains. "The average Government worker just works a 40-hour week. Ours is a seven-day, dawn to dusk setup,

and we encounter all types of pay rates and schedules. As a result, we probably tax the system the most. However, the payroll office realizes that the employee's check is one of the most important things involved, and we're really working hard to get it done."

Steve Lynch, personnel management specialist, is the new



Bernard Chotiner (left) and Steve Lynch coordinate the payroll and personnel operations for the DIPS system.

Getting to Know You!

The NEWSLETTER has been sporting its "new look" for over two months now, and we're continuing to seek more ways to improve. However, this is *your* publication, and we need your help to evaluate our progress and to help plan future issues. So—would you please fill out the coupon and send it back to us as soon as possible? You don't need to sign your name, if you don't want to. We'll publish the results of our survey in a future issue of the NEWSLETTER. Thank you!

Please give us your opinion of the "new" NEWSLETTER (format, content, special subjects you would like covered, etc.):

Return coupon to: NPS NEWSLETTER, Room 104, 1100 Ohio Drive, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20242. (You can use a blue or franked envelope.)

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The following articles have appeared in the past five issues of the NEWSLETTER. Check the box that applies to each article.

	READ SOME	READ OVER HALF		READ SOME	READ OVER HALF
1) Up the Organization	☐	☐	6) NPS Shutterbugs	☐	☐
2) DPM Story	☐	☐	7) FOST in Action	☐	☐
3) Tiptoeing Through 385,000 Tulips	☐	☐	8) Behind the Seams	☐	☐
4) A Merry Safari to Harpers Ferry	☐	☐	9) Incentive Awards Changes	☐	☐
5) Per Diem Rates Change	☐	☐	10) We Saw You on Television!	☐	☐

Considering the past five issues, please check the frequency with which you usually read the following columns:

	REGULARLY	OCCASIONALLY	SELDOM
1) Under Our Hat	☐	☐	☐
2) Washington Report	☐	☐	☐
3) Silhouette	☐	☐	☐
4) Profile	☐	☐	☐
5) See Here, Ladies	☐	☐	☐
6) People on the Move	☐	☐	☐

SILHOUETTE



Bus driver Janet McMahon at the wheel: "Don't say oops unless you mean it!"

Beauty in the Bus !

Drivers stalled on a busy freeway leading into Washington, D.C. were startled recently when a slim, blue-eyed blond leaped out of an old white school bus, trotted over to the next car and said, "May I get in here?" The surprised driver nodded, and the girl jumped back into the bus, revved up the engine and chugged her way into the next lane.

The girl was Janet McMahon, one of the two female bus drivers for the Summer in the Parks program at National Capital Parks. They take groups of inner city children on "fun trips" to local sites including tours of historic areas, rides on a boat and a fire truck (complete with siren and whistle), a picnic and swim at a local park.

"There weren't enough guys to drive the buses, so we volunteered," explains Gail Shelton, the other girl driver. "They took us out to an old airstrip, gave us a bus and said, 'Here start driv-

ing.' After a couple hours they tested us and gave us a license. It was appalling. The buses have five gears, no power steering and are monstrous. But it's easy now."

A 20-year-old junior from the University of Wisconsin, Gail majors in political science. A native of Washington, D.C., she has had several office-type jobs during previous summers and enjoys the chance to work outdoors. Serious and articulate, she has a warm and gentle rapport with the children on the tours.

Janet McMahon is a 21-year-old senior from the College of William and Mary in Virginia and has been with NPS for the past three summers. An English major, amateur playwright and former member of the school's diving team, she sports a quick smile and an easy, direct manner. She also stays cool and unruffled despite jammed brakes, stripped gears and an occasional shriek from an anxious passenger. "Don't say oops unless you mean it," she replies calmly.

Janet would like to help set up a Summer in the Parks program in another city. According to Ted McCann, assistant chief of the new Office of Urban Programs, a full-scale national program is planned for the summer of 1971 and will involve several National Parks within busing distance of several major urban centers.



Gail Shelton: "They took us out to an old airstrip, gave us a bus and said, 'Here, start driving.'"



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