

NEWSLETTER

California State Park Rangers Association

Volume VI Number 78

November 1996

How About India?, He Asked

by Steve Hill

Fifteen years ago the Rotary District of Northern California/Nevada selected me to be a member of an exchange study team to India. Team members lived with Rotarian families, learning their history, culture and ways of life. We were also privileged to visit many of India's incredible parks, museums and religious places. On the return trip I took pause to dabble my feet in the ponds at the Taj Mahal. A totally fascinating experience, it was, and I thought about returning someday.

(Continued on page 3)

Politics and Parks?

Jill Dampier

When I was hired by the Department as a Ranger in 1980, I never imagined I would ever have to get involved in politics. My job as a Ranger was to protect the resources, provide a safe place for visitors to pursue quality recreational opportunities and to help instill in visitors a positive and sensible stewardship philosophy. I felt strongly that the general public instinctively knew they needed parks and would automatically support any legislation that would enhance parks. I also never thought my job could be

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Photo:
While walking past
her sales display,
Laxmir made my son
promise to return.
This charming girl
sold him a blanket.
Goa, India

Presidents Message

by David A. Nelson

I recently attended a Planning and Conservation League board meeting. PCL is one of the leading conservation organizations in the state. The biggest impact they have had on state parks is their sponsorship of past park bonds. CSPRA holds a spot on the Board of Directors, joining groups such as the Audubon Society, Cal Trout, Greenbelt Alliance, Native Plant Society, League To Save Lake Tahoe, etc. Conservancies are also represented by individuals on the board.

Anyway, the agenda was interesting. First on the agenda was the "Jack Lemmon" letter and the Director's response to it. Also on the agenda was a possible bond act, tax break legislation for property donors (1280), and the upcoming elections.

One of the recent concerns about PCL is that it has become an executive driven organization, not a board or membership driven organization. Although I haven't been active enough to make such a conclusion, I did see signs that this may be the case. The first evidence was the board's reaction to the "Murphy Letter," and also their comments about the letter. Executive Director Jerry Meral wrote back to Director Murphy. The initial reaction of board members was that Director Murphy was "making a mountain out of a molehill" and had "overreacted." They also praised the letter that Jerry Meral had sent in response.

As my favorite philosopher once said, "I can take so much, and I can't take no more." After listening for awhile, I felt like I had to respond. My goal was not necessarily to protect the Director, but I think the board, and Jerry Meral, were missing the point. And that point is, parks do have problems, and parks do need help. Exaggerating the problems, such as the "Jack Lemon" fund-raising letter did, does not help. Not supporting our budget because it draws on special funds does not help. The reason it has drawn on special funds is our general fund allotment has been cut. And to introduce legislation such as 1280 that competes for that general fund money to give tax breaks to donors does not help. And finally, to push a "park" bond that weighs heavy on the side of acquisition does not help parks, and makes it more difficult to pass.

The discussion that followed was enlightening. Most of the board voiced support for parks, and I sensed that most members were not aware of our concerns with the direction PCL was going or were not aware of the real problems parks were facing. Whatever the case, I feel it was a fruitful exchange and I plan on being more active with PCL in the future. The bottom line is, concerns were raised, an educational dialog followed, and it was agreed by all that we need to work together to solve some of these problems. Time will tell!

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Parks And Politics (Continued from page 1)

jeopardized by lack of funding, or that I would have to become politically involved to help preserve the integrity of our Department's mission statement. But, have times changed in the last several years! My "nevers" have become realities and I have had to swallow the bitter fact that many members of our general public do not understand the value of parks. The almighty bureaucratic dollar is being stretched ever so thinly these days, and everyone feels their cause is the most important and most

worthy of funding. Therefore, those things considered "non-essential" are being left to the wayside. And parks appear to be in the "nonessential" category now.

How can we, as Rangers, help get parks back in the "essential" category where they belong? By first changing our attitude towards our role in preserving parks. Not only do we have to take responsibility for promoting parks and their impact on an individual's and

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How About India (Continued from page 1)

Recently, my eldest son graduated from college and I asked him what he would like as a graduation gift. Perhaps he would like a computer, or a new suit, or . . .

"A trip," he said.

Inquired I, "and to what spot on this planet would you like to go?" All the while thinking, "yeah, right . . ."

"How about India," he asked?

We decided to visit two places I had visited before, the State of Goa, a former Portuguese colony on the west coast (renowned for its sea food), and Delhi, the seat of Government. From Delhi we could catch a tourist bus to the city of Agra and the Taj Mahal. Between these cities we added Bangalore, a cosmopolitan city that will be the site of the 1996 Miss World contest in November, and the historic south eastern cities of Mysore and Hyderabad, where sites dating to the Mogul empire could be viewed, including a Maharajas palace and the expansive Golconda Fort.

We saw those magnificent sites, and we found a changing India. Fifteen years ago horse or bullock (ox) drawn carts were everywhere, and human powered rickshaws were very common. Though still present, they have been largely replaced by multitudes of small cars, motorized rickshaws and scooters. Imagine seeing a family of five riding together on one scooter.

Years ago I found the air enveloping India's cities to be hazy and carrying a distinctive odor from cooking fires fueled with dried cow dung. The fires provided very adequate cooking, but with obvious drawbacks.

In her major cities at least, electricity and gas have now largely replaced the old fires. The air is not cleaner, however, as it still carries a distinctive haze and odor. The difference today is that the haze and odor comes from the product of tens of thousands of unbridled auto and scooter exhausts. Cough, cough, choke, gasp . . .

India is noticeably different in a number of other ways as well, some of which are much more pleasant. She appreciated the value of

tourism, but today, poor though she might be, India is showing serious commitment to preserve, restore and make available its historic, cultural and natural resource treasures. Tourism has been recognized for its ability to bring valued foreign currency into the country. What is particularly intriguing is the strength of India's commitment to make its heritage sites attractive and accessible to her own people.

(Continued next issue)

Parks & Politics (Continued from page 2)

communities' quality of life on duty, but we must take responsibility for promoting parks off duty as well through supporting what is best for parks in the legislative arena.

The value of parks can be neatly woven into an interpretive presentation. Information on the economic benefits of parks should be shared during a presentation to a local service club. Information about the park and park activities need to be provided to local tourist information centers and the Chamber of Commerce. The basic idea is to get people into our parks. If the magic of the park does not capture their hearts, than we need do capture them through their minds with data that support the value of parks.

What can be done in the legislative arena? Lots. Generally, members of the Legislature are not against parks. But, Legislators don't know much about parks either. So we need perform basic interpretation through letter writing and testifying for or against a park related bill. When we write letters and testify, we are basically attempting to educate through example and reason, and to promote a deeper understanding and appreciation of the issue. We are the best park advocates and lobbyist because we have the knowledge, experience and stewardship philosophies necessary to lobby for or against a bill effectively.

Through CSPRA, we have always been able to lobby for or against bills in the Legislature, but our presence in the Capitol has been limited. Mostly because testifying and writing letters takes time, and most of this effort has

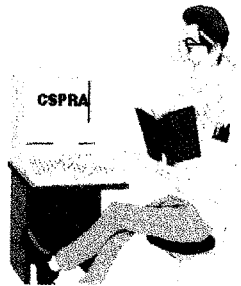
... but we must take responsibility for promoting parks off duty as well ...

We are the best park advocates and lobbyist because ...

(Continued on page 4)

HUMOR IN UNICORN

by Jeff Price



There will be a session on lobbying at the next conference.

But it was in an orderly fashion.

"My plan just deconstructed right before my eyes."

Just a little short of a mile

"He should have just gone the nine extra yards."

Mesozoic or Jurassic?

"That's it! End of period."

Can you bail me out?

"That's it! Cut or fish bait."

Sure, and the guy had a beer gut.

"He almost choked to death, but someone knew the Heineken maneuver."

Interesting viewing

"What ever happened to that OJ video recreation?"

Everyone in the pool

"With this Furhman thing, LAPD is really up the against the eight ball."

New motto?

"Remember, Rome wasn't burned in a day."

A Jocelyn Elders recruit?

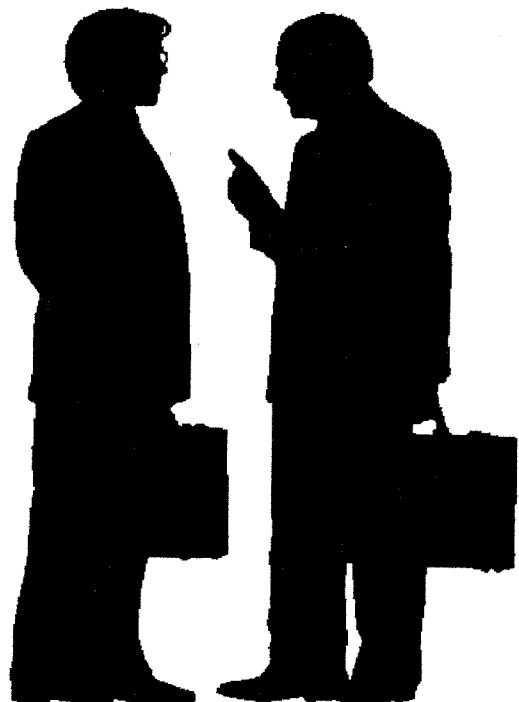
"He just makes it worse . . . always exaggerating the problem."

Parks & Politics (Continued from page 3)

been undertaken by board members and/or local members. CSPRA recently asked if you would accept an increase in dues to help fund a part time lobbyist. Having a set of eyes and ears in the Capitol would really help give us direction and help make any and all lobbying efforts worthwhile. This type of activity is within the scope of CSPRA's purpose and capabilities.

I don't know how comfortable I am with the idea of politics being necessary for the preservation of my livelihood, but it is a reality I must accept. I see CSPRA as the vehicle we can use to help deem parks "essential" to Legislators and the general public. All we need to do is accept our responsibility to this effort and get involved.

P.S. There will be a session on lobbying at the next conference.



Celebrate Parks '96

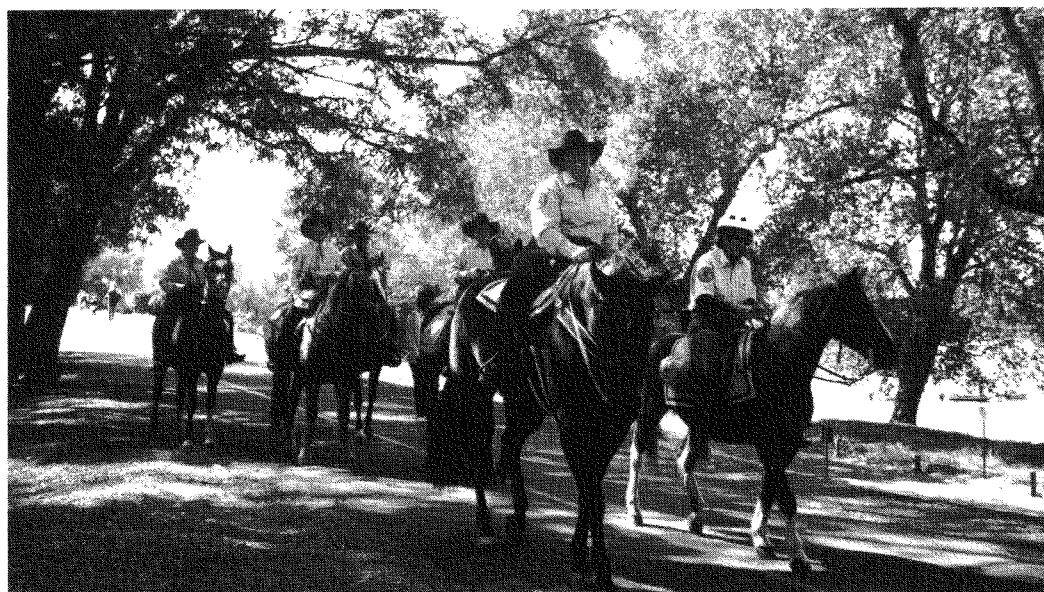
by David M. Collins

Celebrate Parks '96, a unique public outreach event designed to show support for parks, brought out several hundred people on Sunday, Oct. 20th. California State Parks were represented by staff and park volunteers from the American River and Gold Rush districts. A variety of cultural and natural history displays and recreational opportunity exhibits were provided for the visiting public.

The focus of this event was to point out the social value of parks to the community, the personal benefits gained by those who enjoy them and the environmental and economic contributions parks provide. Califor-

nia State Park employees and volunteers were joined by National Park Service staff, Sacramento County and City Parks professionals and park advocacy representatives from California State Park Rangers Association, Friends of California Parks, California State Parks Foundation and several other supporting agencies.

Celebrate Parks '96 organizers and participants plan on making this an annual event, with a few modifications, and hope that interested groups in the San Diego and Los Angeles areas will also organize pro park celebrations.



Folsom Lake Trail Patrol from American River District at Parks '96 Celebration.

Homer Hangs Up His Stetson

by Laura Van Etten-Collins

Chief Ranger Homer Townsend went 10-10 (off duty), for the last time October 12th, 1996, after 25 years of service. He was joined that evening for a Mexican dinner by friends and coworkers at the Roadrunner club in Borrego Springs. David Collins presented Homer with a plaque of appreciation on behalf of C.S.P.R.A. The crowd was entertained with "Homer Stories" and a song written and performed by District Superintendent Dave Van Cleve. The Borrego staff presented him with a remote control boat (In Anza Borrego ???). The next morning a brunch was hosted by Homer's wife and DPR employee, Tina, at their home. A fun time was had by all.

Homer will be remembered as a dedicated ranger, a talented interpreter, and a friend. He helped to mold and train many new rangers and his training and influence will not be forgotten. Homer we salute you! (Be careful with that boat—keep the sand out of the motor.)

District Reps

Name	District	Work Phone	Home Phone
Muetz, M	American River	916 988-0205	916 622-9133
Padilla, F	Angeles-Coast	805 986-8484	818 880-4510
Crossman, J	Angeles Inland	805 945-1323	
Edgemon, C	Bay Area-Coast	415 726-8800	415 879-2025
Nielson, C.	Bay Area-Inland	510 673-2891	
Harrison, W	Calaveras	209 795-3488	209 795-5342
Vacant	Channel Coast		
Zemon, J	Colorado	619 767-5311	
Stokes, M	Four Rivers	209 826-1196	209 632-1627
Simmons, K.	Gold Rush Dist	916 445-7387	
Redoble, J	Los Lagos	909 657-0676	909 943-5119
Whitehead, M	Marin	415 435-5390	415 435-3082
Rath, L	Monterey	408 667-0148	408 667-0567
Vacant	Northern Buttes		
Jones, R	North Coast	707 946-2409	707 725-4920
Vacant	OHV		
Serpa, J	Orange Coast	714 496-6172	714 493-0773
Vacant	Pismo Dunes	805 473-7230	
Joe, K	Russ-Mendocino	707 937-5804	707 877-3592
Broderick, K.	Russ-Mendocino	707 847-3286	707 785-3432
Kerbavaz, J	S.D. Coast		619 575-3613
Vacant	San Joaquin		
Knapp, E	San Luis Obispo	805 772-7434	805 927-3516
Van Schmus, J	San Simeon	805 927-2020	805 772-9648
Oka, S.	Santa Cruz	408 338-8860	408 336-0822
Lindsey, T	Sierra	916 525-7232	
Nixon, V.	Silverado	707 279-4293	707 277-7713

If your District
doesn't have a
Rep give us a
call and volun-
teer.

The District Reps are your best connection with the board. Give them your ideas, suggestions, questions and complaints.

California State Park Rangers Association

Who we are ...

*Support quality Department efforts

The California State Park Rangers Association (CSPRA) has been dedicated to protecting and preserving features of the California State Park System for more than three decades.

*Comment on proposed park uses

The Professional organization
that cares about protecting and
preserving the values of the
State Park System.

CSPRA actively promotes advancement of the ideals and philosophy for which state parks were founded.

For more information about CSPRA
and how you can become a member
write:

What we do ...

*Provide professional exchange of
thought

*Defend State Park System integrity

CSPRA
P.O. Box 292010
Sacramento, CA 95829-2010
(800) 994-2530
(916) 558-3734

CSPRA Finances

Checking
Balance
\$3,544.73

General
Savings
Balance
\$8,660.54

SAVE
BODIE!
Savings
\$1,268.20

Total Assets
\$13,473.47

A Rally That's Truly A Walk In The Park 200 Gather at Capitol to Back Public Areas

by Jan Ferris
Bee Staff Writer

(Copied from the 10/21/96 *Sacramento Bee*)

In her shimmering purple sheath and black tap dance shoes, 16-year-old Amanda Lusk of Carmichael hardly looked the part of an activist Sunday as she gathered with some 200 people on the steps of the state Capitol. Ditto for Robert and Carol Davis, a Newcastle couple who spend their free time patrolling around Folsom Lake on horseback, watching out for injured animals, lost hikers and other mishaps.

It was an eclectic group that rallied in the brisk morning shadow of the dome. But in a setting more often reserved for impassioned protests, their cause was inarguably upbeat: pro-parks.

All public parks, from the one-city-block Roosevelt Park south of the Capitol to the 23 miles of the American River Parkway, from Sacramento County's 22 individual park districts to the sweeping state and federal holdings. "Celebrate Parks '96" brought together more than two dozen agencies, a variety of support groups and the people who benefit from them. The event was both to showcase a variety of park services and to underscore the toll that several years of budget cuts have exacted on them.

Following the rally, park enthusiasts marched to — where else — Discovery Park for entertainment and games, as well as to browse through some 100 recreation-related information booths.

"That's one place they can cut — parks," said Kimee Lusk, whose daughter, Amanda, dances at Carmichael Park each year as part of the Founders' Day festivities. "We need parks. It's one place families can gather like they used to."

Gene Andal, Sacramento County regional parks director, has witnessed the cuts firsthand, having shaved \$4 million from the

parks budget over the past four years. Had state legislators placed a \$300 million parks bond on the ballot earlier this year, Andal said, \$4.5 million would have come back to the county district, which oversees 13,000 acres of land. Ranger services and maintenance have slipped as a result of the shortfall, Andal said. That's where folks like machinist Robert Davis and his wife, Carol, fit in. The two belong to the Folsom Lake Trail Patrol, an all-volunteer equestrian unit whose members are issued radios and help supplement the area's state ranger staff.

"They call us the eyes and ears of the park rangers," said Carol Davis, a school bus driver.

Neither resents picking up the slack. "I consider the park partly mine," Robert Davis explained. "I want to take care of it."

Tamitha Breshears, whose 7 year-old daughter swims at the park pool near their North Highlands home, sees a connection between parks and crime.

"If you don't give young people something to do, they'll get into trouble," Breshears said. "There are just so many things we do at the park."

Don't Be A Hitchhiker

With his thumb up, a hitchhiker says: "You furnish the car, supply the gas, attend to repairs and upkeep, pay for insurance and license and I will ride with you. But, if you have an accident, I will sue you for damages." Sounds pretty one-sided. There are some association members who appear to say: "You go to the meetings, you study the issues and contact the legislators and do anything that needs to be done. Let me know what's going on and I will go along for the ride." "If things don't suit me, I'll complain, ridicule, and probably get out and hitchhike with another group." Don't be an association hitchhiker — get involved!

November



1996

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(916) 777-7701**

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San Joaquin District
(209) 822-2332**

**Secretary/Treasurer
Adrian Itaya
State Park Ranger I
Four Rivers District
(209) 826-1196**

**Directors
Susan Grove
State Park Ranger II
Colorado Desert — Palomar
(619) 742-3462**

**CSPRA
Calendar**

**Honorary
Member
Nominations
Due 12/15/96**

**California
Parks
Conference
Concord
3/13-16/97**

Directors (Continued)

**Steve Hill
Assoc Pk & Rec Spec
Four Rivers District
(209) 826-1196**

**Jill Dampier
State Park Ranger II
American River — Auburn
(916) 885-4527**

**Dave Collins
State Park Ranger I
American River District — Auburn
(916) 885-5821**

All committees use CSPRA address.

**For additional information on the
association, write to
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