

NEWSLETTER

California State Park Rangers Association

Volume VI Number 82

June 1997

CSPRA Support by Scott Nakaji

One of the main points that CSPRA Lobbying Consultant Cliff Berg continues to stress is, in order for CSPRA to be at maximum effectiveness and be recognized in the political arena, we need to build "political capital." The CSPRA Board has taken the first step toward making a difference in the political arena by hiring Cliff. The next step in order to build political capital is to generate member action and support. The more member action and support we can generate, (continued on page 3)

Deadman's Gulch Place Name Mystery Solved by Lanny Waggoner, Marin District

Samuel P. Taylor State Park has several place names that have been in use since the park was established. The canyon where our park water supply originates has always been called "Deadman's Gulch". Now, anytime something is named "deadman", it has been my experience that at sometime a dead man was associated with it. But, no tales could be found regarding this name. My best guess used to be that Samuel P. Taylor's grave was on the knoll next to the site.



In February, I was visiting with one of our elder neighbors discussing his cows when the true story came out.

One of the members of a pioneering family in this area borrowed a shotgun from a friend in Point Reyes Station and was last seen walking out of town. Years went by and no sign of that individual was found. Finally after many years someone hiking up that gulch area found a rusty shotgun and nearby some scattered human remains. Forensics hadn't reached the level they have today, so identification came from the old rusty shotgun provided by the friend.

The incident and discovery became part of the local lore and the land acquired a place name that has stuck to this day, "Deadman's Gulch".

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Articles are welcome, 1000 words or less. All submissions become the property of CSPRA and may be edited without notice.

Presidents Message

by Scott Nakaji

The Department of Parks and Recreation is made up of numerous dedicated employees, in all different classifications, each performing essential functions that lead to the success of the State Park System. Rangers are one part of the whole that is California State Parks. With all due respect to the Maintenance and Administrative Services members that CSPRA has, I am focusing this edition of the President's Message on the Ranger series, because it has become the first of a proposed all inclusive study of the job classifications within the State Park System.

I am proud to be a State Park Ranger. I believe that each and every person who has ever performed the job should feel the same way. If there ever was a position that fulfills the mission of the California Department of Parks and Recreation, to "provide for the health, education and inspiration of the people of California," it is the Ranger. Read the poem Ode to a Park Ranger by Russ Hauck which appears in this edition of the CSPRA Newsletter. Aside from the humor that Russ interjects, he has a serious message; although Rangers are underpaid, under appreciated and faced with a variety of tough day to day tasks, it is their dedication to the job and the profession that keeps them going. I believe this poem accurately describe the types of jobs that Rangers may perform at any given moment, on any given day.

I believe that some of the greatest public relations and support we generate as a Department stems from the fact that Rangers are generalists.

The Ranger is an icon, a symbol of what is good about parks, and Rangers play a pivotal role in maintaining parks as safe havens for people to recreate and enjoy. The Department should be proud to have such a competent, professional, highly educated and well trained group of individuals working as State Park Rangers. Because of their dedication, they make many personal sacrifices. Weekends and holidays are spent not with their families, but with the millions of people who visit our parks each year. They are expected to work the long and odd hours necessary to provide public protection and a high quality recreational experience. Visitors have certain expectations of the Department of Parks and Recreation, and when it comes down to fulfilling those expectations, the Department often turns to the Ranger. The job as a Ranger is challenging, yet rewarding, and I believe that some of the greatest public relations and support we generate as a Department stems from the fact that Rangers are generalists.

It disappoints me that there have been so many negative perceptions of Rangers voiced during the Ranger Study process. Perhaps this is a product not so much of the study itself, rather a survival mechanism in response to everyone's shrinking piece of the pie. I believe that, although there are many perceptions held regarding the Ranger Series, good and bad, (Continued on page 3)

California State Park Rangers Association

Who we are . . .

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

What we do . . .

*Provide professional exchange of thought

*Defend State Park System integrity

*Support quality Department efforts

*Comment on park uses

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

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

CSPRA

P.O. Box 292010

Sacramento, CA 95829-2010

Presidents Message (Continued from page 2)

they are just that; perceptions. One cannot fully understand the responsibility and scope of any job unless they possess the practical experience to support their views. I can only hope that if and when the time comes to review other job classifications within the Department we don't see the polarization between classifications, based on perceptions, that has occurred with the Ranger Study. We must work together. Cuts and inadequate staffing levels in one sector only make it more difficult for the others to function.

CSPRA will continue to monitor the process, and we encourage input from members so that we may continue to provide reasoned response to the team and proceed through the study with class. It is my sincere hope that the end result of the Ranger Study will be one that maintains the integrity of the Ranger profession and the dedicated individuals who perform the job.

Support (Continued from page 1)

the more political capital we possess, and this leads to increased effectiveness when dealing with politicians. Now is the time for CSPRA members to become involved and to show support for issues such as Senate Bill 2, the 1998 Bond Act introduced by Senator Mike Thompson.

Here's what you can do as a CSPRA member to support our efforts:

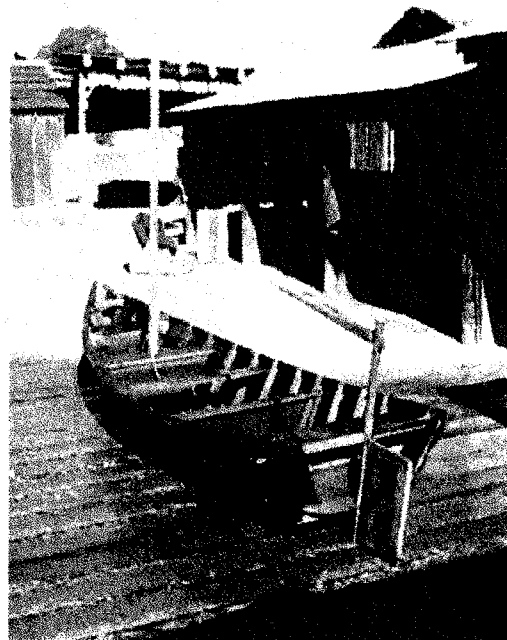
1. Complete the enclosed card and mail it to the State Capitol Building showing your support for SB 2. As an alternative, you may use the card as a guideline and write your own letter of support.

2. Write your local State Senator and State Assembly member urging them to support SB 2. You can review the text of SB 2 and other bills on the internet by visiting the State Senate's homepage at <http://www.sen.ca.gov>.

CSPRA can be effective in the political arena, but only if members get involved and take action.

New Boat At China Camp SP Sam Pan Donated by Jeff Price, Marin District

China Camp State Park was recently the recipient of a new display item for their Visitor Center at China Camp Village.



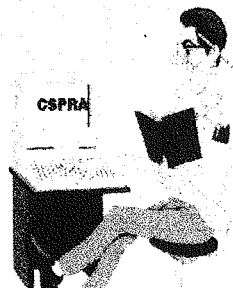
A three-quarters scale replica of a sam pan boat, originally constructed by the Small Craft Section at the San Francisco Maritime National Historic Park (Ships to DPR), was donated to the park last January. Of note, the craftsman who built the sam pan is named John Muir.

Park staff and volunteers, guided by Marin District Interpretive Specialist Tom Lindberg, recently made room to bring the vessel inside the Visitor Center, where it now helps interpret the early Chinese shrimping industry at China Camp State Park. This type of boat was also used in squid and abalone fisheries of Monterey Bay and was built entirely of redwood, fastened with headless wire nails.

You can review the text of SB 2 and other bills on the internet by visiting the State Senate's homepage at <http://www.sen.ca.gov>.

HUMOR IN UNICORN

by Jeff Price



But, if you were dead . . . how?

"I think I just signed my own death certificate."

Devastating tools?

"... you are going to be implemented in the Oklahoma City bombing."

I second that emotion.

"You can't just burn down all the eucalyptus. You have to stay amenable with local groups."

Go ahead OJ, take a stab at it.

"He really skewerd the truth."

Scalp search.

"I know this mountain like the back of my head."

Free lunch, no kidding.

"You pay for what you get . . ."

Pole-ish Redneck.

"... and that put a red flag up the back of my neck."

A bit longer than I remember

"... a toll road like 49 Mile Drive in Monterey."

Ranger Study Letter

April 28, 1997

Dick Troy, Chairman
Ranger Study Team
PO Box 942896
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001

Dear Dick,

The California State Park Rangers Association, its membership and Board of Directors want to thank you for making arrangements to meet with the Board at its April 10, 1997 meeting to discuss the Director's "Ranger Study Team," and the role of the State Park Ranger. Your informative presentation and direct responses to questions were greatly appreciated. Per your request, we have quickly prepared comment and recommendations on the role of the California State Park Ranger and the Ranger Study Team process.

The role of the State Park Ranger has changed, there is no question about it. Society has also changed, becoming increasingly violent with gang problems and drug use on the rise. Increasing population and development have led to an increased demand for interpretive programs and prudent resource management. CSPRA believes, however, that California State Parks has met, and will continue to meet these challenges because of a combination of the type of people we recruit and hire, the high quality training they receive, and the dedication and professionalism displayed by Rangers in the field. CSPRA is proud to have such a professional and competent group of generalist employees in our parks performing the duties of the California State Park Ranger.

We have several comments and recommendations regarding the role of the Ranger in California State Parks:

State Parks. These areas include Resource Protection, Education/Interpretation, Public Safety, and Recreation.

•There is no other classification in the State
(Continued on page 5)

CSPRA is proud to have such a professional and competent group of generalist employees in our parks performing the duties of the California State Park Ranger.

Ranger Study Letter (Continued from page 4)

Park System with such direct responsibility for achieving each and every component of the Department's Mission, as the State Park Ranger. Rangers should continue to have a direct role in providing for the health (public safety), inspiration (interpretive programs, resource management/protection), and education (interpretation, community outreach programs) of the people of California.

- Rangers should maintain their role as generalists. Because of their field experience Rangers possess the knowledge and are leaders in many core areas of operation in State Parks. These areas include Resource Protection, Education/Interpretation, Public Safety, and Recreation.

- The image of the Ranger is tied to the image of the Department. The ability of the Ranger to wear many "hats" and perform many varied functions lends to the positive image of the Ranger as a "protector" of the parks visitors and resources. The generalist Ranger lends credibility, and a positive image, to the Department of Parks and Recreation.

No other classification in the Department can perform the Mission-focused functions with the skill of the State Park Ranger. One of the arguments against the concept of the generalist Ranger is the training and associated costs. There is a cost to doing business, and part of the cost for a professional and competent employee is training. Our department receives a superb return on its investment with the Ranger series.

The California State Park Rangers Association has a number of concerns which rests not so much with the Ranger Study itself as the direction it has taken and its genesis. We cannot disagree that an allocation study of Ranger positions is a sound management practice, however we have yet to hear the data-driven needs identified for the creation of such a study. How was this particular issue worthy of such immediacy, broad investigation and determined executive effort? We wonder if this is an issue best dealt with

by reclassification. Is it a staffing issue, a management/supervision issue, or best dealt with through visitor needs assessment?

The CSPRA Board is very concerned about our membership's widely held negative perception of the process as it has unfolded thus far. The initial secrecy, short time frames, and general objectives have created a perception that there is an unspoken agenda. The apparent lack of data to identify this issue as one of the biggest "nails" to be hammered down is a concern. It is the belief of many CSPRA members that the apparent impetus for the study is being driven by Director Murphy's personal views and agenda not a process directed at better protection of park resources or improving service to California State Park visitors.

There is also a concern with early discussions with groups of employees other than Rangers, beginning four months before there was general knowledge of the process. It is felt that the differences of opinion on how the Department's financial resources are allocated or what services are most valued by our visitors, generated in a meeting of a single classification group, might allow for problematic or questionable results. Perceptions, good or bad, are just that; they are not facts.

CSPRA believes that regional or local discussions with cross-disciplinary participants may have achieved a more tempered and balanced result. This is especially true if we were all working from the same precisely written premise. One cannot meet with competing groups when resources are dwindling, and expect much beyond a homogenous and self serving exchange. This also includes the statewide Ranger-only meetings just completed.

We are interested in the opinions of the park visitors who will be directly affected by the determinations and directions set by the Ranger Study Team. Is there any research, polls or data collection being done on how park visitors perceive their experiences, relative to the role and function of the State Park Ranger? What do the years of statewide visitor surveys have to say in relation to the perception of Rangers? Do visitors want any changes? Are they currently satisfied?

(Continued on page 8)

We are interested in the opinions of the park visitors who will be directly affected by the determinations and directions set by the Ranger Study Team.

Ode To A Ranger by Russ Hauck, PRAC Director

Note: Here's a truly classic poetry piece, first presented at the 1997 California Parks Conference in Concord by Supervising Ranger Russ Hauck, Glendale City Parks, Recreation and Community Services. It fairly well sums up the diverse job of the Ranger. Please note that this is a copyrighted work, used by CSPRA with written permission. The poem may not be altered, sold or printed for sale and must always carry authorship credit when reproduced with permission.

Jeff Price, Marin District.

Ode To A Park Ranger

by Ranger Russ Hauck

(Used with permission, Copyright 1997)

I started my day in the usual way
putting on my uniform and belt;
I climbed in my truck and counted on luck
to be kind for the day I'd be dealt.

The radio sings with multiple things
which one should I choose first;
Problems here, problems there, I really don't care
I guess I'll start with the worst.

"There's a transient down" said the camp host with a frown
as I walked up to check out the site;
I'm not sure he's breathing or if his heart's beating
and it looks like he's been here all night."

I gave him a nudge but he didn't budge
with a harder one he woke with a jar;
My mind was at ease as he started to wheeze,
I won't have to do CPR.

He rose to his feet smelling far less than sweet
I searched him, my hand in a glove;
I asked him some questions, he replied with suggestions
I'm physically not capable of.

He had a real attitude this cantankerous dude
and an evil sinister laugh;
His eyes were shifty, is he fifty-one-fifty?
No, just fifty-one-forty-nine-and-a-half.

So he picked up his stuff, walked off in a huff,
turned, looked and shook his clenched fist;
I said "Have a nice day!" as he shuffled away
I thought "I spent four years in college for this?!?"

I'm back on my way to continue my day
to see what I might see;

I stir up the gravel and continue to travel
wondering what's in store for me.

Communing with nature is quite an adventure
it's entirely what you make it;
Maybe they were communing, but it looked more like
mooning
when they came out of the bushes naked.

I yell "STOP" as they near, "You can't do that here;
There are families, and young and old folk;
Besides, I've a notion you'll need Calamine lotion
'cause those bushes are poison oak!"

So off of the trail and down to the jail
I carted this birthday suit pair;
Booked and confined, one cried and one whined
as I drove off leaving them there.

Now back on patrol, I continue to roll
my eyes searching for suspicious activity;
There are those out there who are likely to share
in this less than noble proclivity.

As I continue to scan, my eyes soon land
on a group with something to hide;
My eyes then fix on an assorted mix
of plastic baggies all open wide.

"I'm not real clear why you're doing that here"
I state as I whiff their strong odor;
"But we all know that's not oregano
and that stuff's not good for your motor."

So back to the station with a stack of citations
and an envelope full of their dope;
A piece of advice to each of these guys:
Next time use your hemp to make rope."

The next call I'm sent on is a mountain biker who went on
a trail that's a challenge to all;
Needless to say, he didn't go all the way
before the terrain caused a spectacular fall.

I pick up the skin that once was his chin
as I shift into medical aid mode;
I hope he's learned his lesson and won't again soon be
messin'
'cause the road rash is more abundant than road.

I do a quick patch job with an alcohol swab
and a package of four-by-four gauze;
I question his sanity, ignoring pain-induced profanity

Ode To A Ranger

(Continued from page 6)

Was this challenge for some worthy cause?"

He says "There's no limit to life while I'm in it
and man's quest to control the earth's elements."
I scoff "When all's said and done, Mother Nature's the one
and you might as well try juggling elephants."

I arrive for my lunch with the service club bunch
to speak of my profession's worth;
Of mammals and bees, and flowers and trees,
and commitment to protecting the earth.

I put on a show to let them all know
of all the good things we do;
I speak of our mission and of our ambition
To the environment we must all be true!

My message is strong, and it isn't too long
'til they listen not making a sound;
They seem to have learned, when my attention is turned
to a table where sits the group's clown.

He raises his hand, I acknowledge the man
he says, "I've a question and I must ask it...
What can you do about Yogi and Boo-Boo
and have you recovered the pic-a-nic basket?!"

The rest of my day goes the usual way
with a little of everything;
Interpretation, education, information, incarceration;
What will my next contact bring?

A lot of the time it's not hardcore crime
that seems to demand our attention;
It's thoughtless actions and other infractions
that arise and are worthy of mention.

Pardon me there, but were you aware
it's illegal for you to pick poppies?
You didn't know? You will now, though,
Sign here, press hard, three copies."

My next assignment is to work on refinement
of people's respect for the land;
The method I like is leading a hike
and discussing the objects at hand.

I've prepared a talk on the red tailed hawk
in flight they're as majestic as religion;
But in this urban lair, the city slickers don't care
you might as well talk about pigeons.

Interpretation is a celebration
of what nature has to offer;
But it's real hard to try when supplies you must buy
and there's no money left in the coffer.

It's quite an obsession this chosen profession
and the giant reward that one gets;
For blood, sweat and tears over so many years
and only being paid in sunsets.

From jacking up hoodlums to preserving rare woodlands
and checking the daily fire index;
From high mountain rescue to planting of fescue
to spraying for harmful insects.

The most peaceful of trails to riotous jails
to relocating an errant bee hive;
From smelly old skunks to smelly old drunks
to patrolling God's country by four wheel drive.

From fallen trees to infectious disease
to contributing to an Environmental Impact Report;
From flowers with pistils to gangsters with pistols
to testifying in Superior Court.

We're enforcers, we're teachers, we even fix bleachers
we fight fires, build trails, protect nests;
The tools of the trade - a field guide, a spade
and even a bulletproof vest.

We're underpaid, we get teased, our budgets get squeezed
and we face our fair share of danger;
But with not one bit of sorrow, I'll be back tomorrow
for another day in the life of a ranger.

New & Improved **Support State Parks** **Bumper Stickers** **by Dave Collins**

they last for years, hopefully we will too . . .

they peel off w/out leaving glue
brighter color

they travel and promote State Parks
they communicate with other
park supporters

they are not political
they will not change their stance during
stormy times

Look For Them Soon!

Ranger Study Letter (Continued from page 4)

We believe that it may be prudent for Department leadership to reclaim some of the credibility that has been lost with their State Park Rangers. Perhaps being open and up front with field personnel would help. Lack of reliable information, the vague unknown, perceptions of hidden agendas and unstated core reason for beginning this study are all frightening to Rangers and are sapping morale.

Our comments here serve as an initial response to the Ranger Study Team and have been in the form of comment on the problems we see having been created by the process, and recommendations that we feel may assist you in your study.

CSPRA recommends the following:

Would place a \$495 million park and open-space bond act on the 1998 ballot...

- Place two State Park Ranger II's on the team. We have already provided several high quality nominations.
- Clearly lay out and describe the options and possible outcomes that are being considered and allow reasoned response.
- Extend timelines to allow reasoned input from Rangers and interested professional associations, such as CSPRA and its membership. The very short notice to respond has caused this to be less of a help than it might otherwise have been, with time to contact members and develop professional rationale.
- Require Districts to hold meetings with all classifications present to discuss issues and those options being considered and to develop feedback for the team.
- Allow a forum for response and comment on draft findings, as is done in preparation of other documents which guide the future of California's State Parks.

The image of the Ranger is inextricably tied to the image of the Department. The California State Park Rangers Association wants the outcome of this study and any resulting

actions to be the best possible for both the Department and the profession of the California State Park Ranger.

Respectfully yours,
Scott S. Nakaji

Senate Bill 2 (Thompson) Park and Resources Improvement Act

I. Would place a \$495 million park and open-space bond act on the 1998 ballot including:

II. Wildlife Conservation Board
\$50 million.
Acquisition, restoration and rehabilitation of wildlife habitat and public access facilities.

- A. Central Valley Wetlands \$ 5 million
- B. Other Wetlands \$2 million
- C. Riparian Habitat \$11.5 million
- D. Deer habitat, migration routes, breeding and nesting areas for upland game birds \$7 million
- E. Endangered Species \$2 million
- F. NCCP Projects \$7.5 million
- G. Fish habitat \$8 million
- H. Wildlife oriented public use projects \$7 million

III. State Coastal Conservancy
\$50 million
Acquisition, development, restoration and enhancement of coastal resources.

IV. Calif/Tahoe Conservancy
\$30 million
Acquisition, restoration, enhancement and erosion control in the Lake Tahoe region.

V. Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy
\$15 million
Acquisition, development, and enhancement of land

VI. Department of Conservation
\$10 million

Agricultural land protection projects through the purchase of conservation easements.

(Continued on page 9)

SB 2**(Continued from page 8)****VII. San Joaquin River Conservancy**

\$5 million

Acquisition, development and enhancement of land.

VIII. Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy

\$2.5 million

Acquisition, development and enhancement of land.

IX. California Department of Parks & Recreation

\$125 million

- A. Rehabilitate State Park facilities, develop new State Park facilities, acquire land next to or in the immediate vicinity of existing State Park lands, and expand interpretive facilities. \$113 million
- B. Natural and cultural stewardship projects at State Park facilities. \$8 million
- C. Build and improve facilities for State Park volunteer programs. \$4 million

X. Grants to Cities, Counties, and Local Park Districts

\$203 million

- A. Grants based on population within each city and county for local park acquisition, development and rehabilitation projects. Each local agency receiving funds would determine which projects to fund. \$100 million
- B. Grants pursuant to the Roberti-Z'berg-Harris Urban Open-Space & Recreational Program Act. Each local agency receiving funds would determine which projects to fund. \$32 million
- C. Improve facilities at State Park units operated by local agencies. \$20 million
- D. Competitive grants for acquisition, development and rehabilitation of historical resources. \$6 million
- E. Competitive grants for:
 - 1. Public access facilities for lakes, rivers, reservoirs for recreation. \$10 million
 - 2. Non-motorized trail projects

\$20 million

- 3. Zoos, museums, aquariums, and cultural heritage projects \$15 million

XI. California Conservation Corps

\$4.5 million

- A. California Conservation Corps Projects \$2.5 million
- B. Grants to local conservation corps \$2 million

More Funny Quotes

More actual comments left last year on U S Forest Service registration sheets and comment cards by backpackers completing wilderness camping trips.

"Need more signs to keep the area pristine."

"The places where trails do not exist are not well marked."

"Trails need to be reconstructed. Please avoid building trails that go uphill."

"Reflectors need to be placed on trees every 50 feet so people can hike at night with flashlights."

"Chairlifts need to be in some places so that we can get to wonderful views without having to hike them."

"Please pave the trails so they can be plowed of snow in the winter."

"All mile markers are missing this year."

"Found a smoldering cigarette left by a horse."

"Instead of a permit system or regulations, the Forest Service needs to reduce worldwide population growth to limit the number of visitors to wilderness."

California Department of Parks & Recreation
\$125 million

Under My Brim

by Glen McGowan

The Hudson House at Point Lobos was fumigated for termites and beetles, and this necessitated my family moving out for five days. This was the first time we had moved in 15 years, and when we finished moving, we were right back where we started. Like all moves, this was an opportune time to dispose of many years' worth of junk. While sorting through an old file, I found a sonnet.

In 1933 Point Lobos became a state park, and the supervising warden was a man named Roland Wilson. In those days, the ranger was referred to as the warden. Warden Wilson's daughter was grown and had children of her own by the time I arrived at Point Lobos in 1980. It was at that time that I received this sonnet. The letter gave no return address, I read it and was somewhat intrigued. I stuck the sonnet in a file and that was the end of it until I moved out and back in this year.

The Warden's Daughter Sonnet Point Lobos Park

"We're working on a master-plan,
" she said,
"A master-plan, to keep the cars from out
The Park, and yet allow the old to tread
The sands, and scan the view,
and walk about."
"It's one and twenty years,"
I said, "since we
Were last here visiting, and
feared that men
Had turned it all to Real Estate." And she
Said, "Has it changed, Oh, has it
changed since then?"
"No, very little," I replied, and saw
A lightning smile, corn hair, thin hand;
a well
And fitting guardian stand,
to mourn their sigh:
Those Indian lotus-eaters on the shore,
Who long ago piled high the
mounds of shell,
Before the day Drake's ships came
sailing by.

Maybe

No Warden's daughter she,
But of the Park, truly,
Happy I shall be
If she read thee
And remember me

Like Warden Wilson's daughter, my daughter Jennifer has been raised in Point Lobos. She is 18 and on the verge of leaving the nest and going off to college. One and twenty years from now, she will return to Point Lobos as the Warden's Daughter, I hope that when she is asked, "Has it changed since then?" she will be able to answer, "No, very little."

And A Good Time Was Had By All!

by Susan Grove

Back in January, a memo regarding a training opportunity came across my desk. The department offered two sessions, one in Santa Cruz and one in Riverside. I attended the Riverside session, which took place at California Citrus SHP. The training was an interpretive workshop with Dr. Sam Ham of the University of Idaho. I love interpretation and am likely to attend any interpretive training that scheduling allows. What particularly pleased me about this workshop was that it was one day (no per diem necessary), midweek (easier for coverage), free (always important!), and most importantly it was of a high quality. Approximately 50 people attended and I think I can speak for the others when I say a good time was had by all.

Dr. Ham is very easy to listen to. This 8+ hour workshop involved very little audience participation. We didn't break into groups and do activities. Believe it or not, Dr. Ham pretty much stood up front with minimum of multimedia and lectured for eight hours, and he kept our attention! He was dynamic, energetic, and knowledgeable. Following are some of the key points and ideas I got from Dr. Ham's lecture.

(Continued on page 11)

Good Time (Continued from page 10)

Interpretation has four essential qualities: Interpretation is enjoyable. Interpretation is relevant (both meaningful and personal). Interpretation is organized. Interpretation is thematic. The first two points revolve around getting your audience's attention and keeping it. The last two points dictate how you should prepare and organize your presentation.

Interpretation often involves technical information and it's our job as interpreters to make that information entertaining and understandable. Some ways to accomplish that include smiling, using active, rather than passive verbs, and linking science to human history. Try showing cause and effect. Which trail would you rather hike — the one titled "Riparian Vegetation" or the one titled "Riparian Vegetation as seen by the Donner Party?" Try using a "vehicle" to make your topic more interesting. Some examples of vehicles are:

- exaggerating size (have kids crawl through the grass to look at it from an ants view)
- exaggerating time scale (describe geologic time using a 24 hour or 1 year time scale)
- use an overriding analogy (compare forest succession to the construction of a house. Some things must be in place before others can happen.)
- use a contrived situation (what would the world be like without predators?)
- use personification (the story of a near extinct race of animals being told first person by the last animal of that kind on earth)
- focus on an individual (follow one water drop through the entire cycle then drink it from a glass, or follow the story of a bear cub as it grows up to become a problem bear that must be shot in the campground).

As interpreters, we will often have to bridge the familiar and the unfamiliar for our visitors. Try using lots of examples by quickly referring to something that is like the kind of thing you're talking about. Analogies work well to show many similarities of the thing you're talking about to something else that is very familiar to the group. Use comparisons; show a few of the major similarities and/or differences between the thing you're talking about and something else which can be related to it. A good example of this is comparing white firs to douglas firs.

Your audience will respond better and learn more if you make your communication personal. Make eye contact frequently with each member of the group. Use self-referencing lead-ins such as "Have you ever . . . ?" or "Think of the last time you . . ." "How many of you have ever . . . ?". Your audience will also be able to retain more information if you keep your main ideas to five or fewer.

Finally, think in terms of themes, not topics. A theme is a complete sentence and therefore has a subject and a verb. Good themes are usually personal, use active voice verbs, and don't use the verb "to be." If you are not sure if what you have in mind is a topic or a theme, look at it carefully. Is it a complete sentence? "Birds" is a topic. Even if you make it more specific, such as "How Birds Fly," you still have a topic. If you're interested in birds' flight, you might choose the theme, "Birds are very interesting animals because of their special adaptations to flight" or "Studying how birds fly led to the invention of early airplanes." Your theme should be the one main thing you want your audience to go away understanding.

I am in the process of developing a twilight hike and a new campfire program at Palomar Mountain State Park right now and I definitely intend to incorporate some of Dr. Ham's teachings in my programs. I am delighted that our department offered such high quality training and I'll be eagerly looking forward to seeing more training of this caliber in the future. I hope to see even more folks attend the next training opportunity.

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June — July



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Retiree's
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3/9-12/98

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