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The

# Catalyst



The Newsletter for Interpretation in California State Parks  
Spring 2007 Volume 9 No. 1

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## Volunteer Training



Henry W. Coe volunteer training class hiking Hobbs Road

Photo by Gena Zolotar

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## Contributor's Guidelines

The Catalyst welcomes your original articles up to two pages in length. We prefer unpublished material, but will occasionally reprint items published elsewhere. Be sure to include information about the publication so we can get permission to use the material. You may submit an article at any time. Please include a photo whenever possible.

### **Summer 2007: Cultural Landscapes**

Deadline: Due now

Guest Editor: Nancy Mendez

Southern Service Center

[nmendez@parks.ca.gov](mailto:nmendez@parks.ca.gov)

We really appreciate items submitted on disk or by e-mail. We can read most DOS/Windows file formats. Please send photos as separate files, not inserted into your document. You may also submit original photos or other illustrations to The Catalyst. All photos and artwork submitted will be returned promptly. We reserve the right to edit all material. Items are selected for publication solely at the discretion of the editor and publisher. We appreciate your suggestions.



**The two basic processes of education are knowing and valuing.**

Robert J. Havighurst: Inspirational and Motivational Quotes about Education

# From the Editor



A year goes by very quickly. Last March I agreed to be guest editor for the Catalyst. For anyone wondering if he or she should become a guest editor - do it. You will find inner strengths, a state full of experts, and a wonderful sense of pride and relief when your copy is complete. Nancy Mendez is

the next guest editor covering Cultural Landscape Interpretation. She can be found at the Southern Service Center ([nmendez@parks.ca.gov](mailto:nmendez@parks.ca.gov)).

This issue showed me that Volunteer Training and Volunteer Management go hand in hand. As a result, articles cover both topics. I hope this newsletter not only informs you, but pushes the norms and expands your ideas of training.

Starting us off is Michael D. Green from the Mott Training Center, [mgree@parks.ca.gov](mailto:mgree@parks.ca.gov). California State Parks is unique in its commitment to training. If you haven't been to class recently, check out the courses available on ETMS.

Margo Cowan ([mcowan@parks.ca.gov](mailto:mcowan@parks.ca.gov)) and I continue with a synopsis of the Volunteer Management class. Even after working with volunteers for over six years, I learned new ideas and had many questions answered about paperwork and legal issues in this class.

Joanie Cahill has always pushed the interpretation envelope and she doesn't disappoint in her article about becoming a Certified Interpretive Trainer. Using the NAI course, Joanie explains what certification can do for you and your volunteers. Joanie can be reached at [jcahill@parks.ca.gov](mailto:jcahill@parks.ca.gov).

Retired Superintendent Frank Padilla ([fpadilla@parks.ca.gov](mailto:fpadilla@parks.ca.gov)) lays out his secrets of success including an attitude of staff support. His list of subjects will help anyone wondering what to teach volunteers.

Barry Breckling's ([bbrec@parks.ca.gov](mailto:bbrec@parks.ca.gov)) long career has seen the rise of the Pine Ridge Volunteers. His article shows us that training never stops. Continuing education and support are vital for a program to flourish.

Nancy Frost, Environmental Scientist, [nfrost@parks.ca.gov](mailto:nfrost@parks.ca.gov), submitted an article that at first glance might have been placed in another issue. Looking deeper, I thought what a unique way to train short term volunteers. Using booths at special days or fairs is a good way to attract and use volunteers and a great method for continuing education.

Sharon McConnell, La Purisima Mission Docent Class 2006, compares her experiences with two very different docent training programs. Sharon states the emphasis on interpretation sets training at State Parks apart from other organizations. She can be reached c/o La Purisima Mission SHP, 2295 Purisima Rd., Lompoc, CA 93436.

The Docents of Sonoma SHP write about their program and how guest speakers and continuing education creates better interpretation. Voices other than park staff and field trips bring a variety of opportunities for learning. Meeting other docents is an excellent way to motivate volunteers to strive for their best.

In her 1994 book, *The Volunteer Recruitment Book*, Susan J. Ellis reminds us why people volunteer and stay with an organization. If we can't keep them, the training we offer is wasted. If you've forgotten a volunteer's main interest in serving, Susan's article will help. This excerpt is reprinted with permission from Energize Inc., (800) 395-9800. Visit their website at: [www.energizeinc.com](http://www.energizeinc.com) for more information.

I conclude the issue following Susan's thoughts on fun. In today's world, playing at work is frowned upon. But if we don't have fun, we don't work well. I was introduced to FISH by retired Ranger Joe McCummins. Try FISH, you'll soon be hooked. And try innovative ways of training and managing volunteers. Remember the Greek proverb, "A civilization flourishes when people plant trees under which they will never sit."

# What's Up?



## Interpreters' Resources

### Electronic Gazettes

**Volunteertoday.com** offers a comprehensive site with links for resources, hot topics, and an archive. They also offer online volunteer training courses.

**Energizeinc.com** is designed especially for leaders of volunteers. They offer hot topics and a bookstore that includes Susan J. Ellis' book (see FUN on page 18). They also offer a referral network.

### Recruitment Resources

The internet offers several sites for volunteer recruitment. Some sites offer free advertising, others have potential volunteers enter their name and interests. To help you locate new volunteers try:

**Craigslist** - the free site that offers listings in regional areas.

**Idealist.org** - allows organizations to post volunteer opportunities.

**Volunteer Match** - one of the largest on-line networks for volunteering.

**One Brick** - a nonprofit that brings volunteers together to support other local non-profits.

**Volunteer.org and 1-800 Volunteer** - allows volunteers and organizations to post listings.

**Dosomething.org** - also has a link for grants.

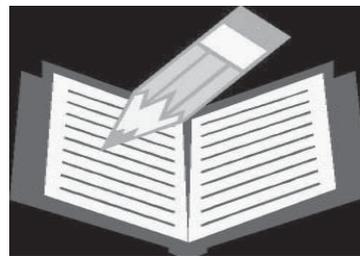
### Recruitment Resources continued

**Californiavolunteers.org** - helps non-profits connect with volunteers.

**RSVP - Retired Senior Volunteer Program** - offers volunteers mileage reimbursements and insurance while traveling to volunteer sites.

### Save The Date

**2007 NAI National Workshop** - Broadening Horizons, Nov. 6 - 10, 2007, Wichita, Kansas. Keynote speakers will be James Loewen presenting "Lies Your Interpreter Told You" and songwriter Erica Wheeler. James Loewen is the author of *Lies Across America* and *Lies My Teacher Told Me*. Early bird registration closes Aug. 7, 2007. For more information and a registration packet, visit: [www.interpnet.com/workshop](http://www.interpnet.com/workshop).



### Member Email Group

Contact Margo Cowan, [mcowan@parks.ca.gov](mailto:mcowan@parks.ca.gov), and ask to be added to [volunteers\\_parks](mailto:volunteers_parks), to keep current with volunteer news and updates.

## Dear Master Interpreter,

We are getting ready for Docent Training and are wondering how to attract a more diverse group of volunteers. Docent Dan

Dear DD,  
That all depends on what you mean by diverse. If your docents all tend to be older, richer and whiter than the California population, maybe you need to target some particular groups you would like to welcome. But "diverse" means just that, diverse, maybe you want to target everyone. Go beyond tacking-up a recruitment poster at the visitor center and get a compelling invitation posted on the web, better yet posted in several different websites. (Is anyone recruiting volunteers on Craigslist yet?) Use the resources of a regional volunteer center if you have one. Check out the resources at [www.californiavolunteers.org](http://www.californiavolunteers.org). And most important, keep trying new things. If you keep recruiting the same way, you will attract the same pool of volunteers. MI

Dear Master Interpreter,  
At my unit, volunteer training takes 11 weeks for a total of 44 hours. New applicants are frightened off by this commitment. How can I squeeze in the necessary information, yet keep training at an acceptable length? Volunteer Vicky

Dear Vicky,  
Most units offer a variety of volunteer opportunities. While we often focus on the docents who receive the extensive training, we also utilize less-trained volunteers for other projects. Perhaps you have opportunities for Camp Hosts, Trails Day volunteer work, or other resource management projects. Offer your candidates a menu of volunteer opportunities while you welcome them to the more "exclusive" group of volunteers that receives the extensive training. And of course, continually evaluate that volunteer training from both the participants and the staff perspective

to assure you are making the best use of every minute of that 44 hours. MI

Dear Master Interpreter,  
Why is it important to have my volunteers fingerprinted? We are in an extremely remote area and it is really not practical. Inky

Dear Inky,  
You know, it is just a different world than it used to be. And for many of our volunteers, this may be the first time they need to be fingerprinted for work. But it is just a sign of the times, please help them understand that. When the minivans pull up for a school field trip, you can bet the parents have all been fingerprinted. You need a fingerprint to open a checking account or renew a driver's license these days. It really should be no big deal. Our volunteers work with children, handle money, and may overhear sensitive law enforcement communications. Make sure you fully understand department policy on who must be fingerprinted and abide by it carefully. YOU are liable if you are not following it, and it is just not worth the risk. MI

Dear Master Interpreter,  
Every year volunteers complete training but never become active. Any ideas for helping new volunteers transition? Coordinator Cal

Dear Cal,  
Well, the basic advice is to get them involved and active quickly. Give them some meaningful work to do right away – even if it might be easier to hand those jobs to seasoned volunteers. Some places have success assigning a seasoned volunteer "buddy" to each new volunteer to help them transition. And be sure to pick up the phone and contact those that drop out. A quick, informal "exit interview" may give you more valuable insights. Good luck, this is important work. MI



## MTC Offers Strategies To Get Your Docents Trained

by Michael D. Green

One popular misconception about training volunteers in State Parks is that we don't train volunteers! Although volunteers don't have access to the Employee Training Management System, and submitting a training request to Mott Training Center is for paid staff, this article contains strategies that can help your volun-

teers get the training they need.



It's no secret that our Department has limited capital and training dollars must be spent judiciously. While MTC pays costs for training,

supplies, housing, and meals for permanent park employees, the job of training volunteers falls to individual districts. Mott Training Center offers some 'train the trainers' courses that can help.

The first is Course Leader Training, designed for participants to structure learning courses in the work environment. Participants work with design formats, visual aids, and learning objectives. Coaching skills and adult learning theory modules help participants to design effective learning experiences. You receive the basic tools to design and lead a training course when you return to your park unit.

For many adult learners, it's "better caught than taught." In other words, discussion rather than lecture is the preferred way to learn. For this approach, MTC offers Facilitation Skills. This training gives participants basic techniques to facilitate a wide variety of group interactions, ranging from meetings to public hearings to training courses. Mastering facilitation skills is a highly effective way to conduct adult learning courses for your volunteers.

For interpreters, MTC offers Training for Interpretive Trainers. Affectionately called T4IT, this course provides interpretive trainers with a foundation for developing and conducting introductory training workshops in interpretive program delivery. Participants receive a model training agenda to use as a guide as they learn to develop a training program tailored to the needs of their district interpretive operations. For the last several sessions of T4IT we've invited well known author Sam Ham to lead a popular segment on Thematic Interpretation.

If you're a District Volunteer Coordinator, Volunteer Management course is required training. This program provides skills and information necessary for successful volunteer management. The course covers specific information regarding legal issues, recruitment, selection, training, and recognition of volunteers. Discussions about supervisory, lead person, and superintendent oversight of volunteer management programs prove extremely valuable.

MTC continues to accept applications from outside our agency, either private parties or other public agencies. An applicant completes a DPR 23 - Outside Agency Participant Registration form, then mails or faxes it to Mott Training Center for approval. When accepted, the participant pays registration fees which can vary depending on the length of the course and the number of participants. Occasionally, cooperating associations offer to pay fees to support non-Departmental participants.

While it isn't feasible for a Volunteers in Parks program with over 16,000 volunteers statewide to have a completely funded training program, Mott Training Center hopes that you can make use of some of these effective alternatives to get your docents and volunteers trained.

## Highlights of the Volunteer Management Class

by Margo Cowan & Nikki Combs

Coordinating volunteers in our parks is more than just signing up a few interested folks, giving them a little training, putting out snacks, and then standing back. Managing a volunteer program effectively, whether it's hundreds of docents or a handful of camp hosts, takes organization and knowledge of DPR policy. Over a four-day period the Volunteer Management class hosted by the Mott Training Center covers the basics that every department volunteer coordinator needs to know.

# GOAL

The class opens with "Introduction to VIPP" (Volunteers in Parks

Program) which identifies the various types of volunteers found throughout the state, what jobs they accomplish, and the value of their commitment to DPR, both qualitatively and quantitatively. The figures are astounding.

Do you ever struggle with where to find good volunteers? And once you have them, do you know what forms they need to complete? Can you name the criteria used to determine if a volunteer needs to be LiveScan fingerprinted or not? In class you will learn that there are as many as 16 different forms a volunteer might complete! The sessions on recruitment and volunteer selection segued into the sessions on registration, recordkeeping, and reporting. "Public Safety and Risk Management" is a session that answers all of your questions and steers you in the right direction. Department staff explain and tie legal issues, accessibility guidelines, and Worker's Compensation requirements together with this session.

Every good volunteer coordinator knows that the "care and feeding" of volunteers is very important. Sessions on "Creating the Right Environment" and "Nurturing the Ideal Volunteer" help set the stage for a good work situation. "Rating your Volunteer Program" and the "Department's Recognition Program" are useful for keeping good volunteers motivated and helping staff strive for excellence.

John Mott is a frequent speaker during the Volunteer Management course and is adept at defining the differences between the Department's volunteer program and the cooperating association program. His charts help coordinators determine if a volunteer is working for the state or the co-op, and very importantly, which entity bears legal responsibility for the volunteer.

The in-class training wraps up with funding ideas and problem solving sessions. Each class brings new questions and lively discussions, so time is allotted for sharing and networking. The course concludes with a field trip to see volunteers in action at a Capital District site.

Volunteer Management packs a tremendous amount of information into four days. Each participant leaves with a VIP Program Guidelines binder, an All Visitors Welcome binder and enough information to organize and maintain a good volunteer program. Managing volunteers is both an art and a science, requiring knowledge of department policy, managerial skills and a passion for working with people. Volunteer Management is a good place to start. If you are new to volunteer management and need to learn the basic principles – or simply wish to refresh your knowledge of DPR policies - check with the Mott Training Center at



## Certify Your Interpretive Staff

By Joanie S. Cahill



Joanie Cahill and Paul Samuelson

Did you know that you can offer your docents a beginning course in interpretation that meets national standards and can earn them professional certification? Called the "Certified Interpretive Guide" (CIG) course, this is available through the National Association for Interpretation when you become a "Certified Interpretive Trainer" (CIT).

Originally, I became a Certified Interpretive Trainer because I wanted to ensure that my teaching was in line with international standards. I was eager to learn about the techniques others were using and appreciated the networking opportunities. Trainers are linked together through a website where lesson plans, advice, resources and stories are shared. Also, once you've completed a CIT workshop, you're invited to audit workshops in the future.

At Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, we offered the CIG course for the first time in 2004. We used the course as the basis for our docent training and participants were offered the option of doing the extra work and paying a \$75 fee (plus membership, if necessary) to gain certification, or completing the course without

certification. Surprisingly, about one third of the class chose to become certified. This percentage was repeated when the course was offered again last year.

Why are volunteers willing to pay to be certified? Many of our docents are retired professionals who want to "master" the skills of interpretation and feel self-satisfied when they are officially certified. Many of them have also told us that they would like to volunteer at National Park or Forest Service areas in the future, and recognize that this certification will establish their credibility at any new venue. Some of our CIGs have been students who wanted certification for future job aspirations.

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*If  
you'd like a personal  
challenge to be your best as an*

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*instructor...*

I decided to implement the CIG course in my park because I liked the idea of my docents learning what is being taught internationally, and NAI made it easy! Each student gets an inexpensive textbook and workbook (\$8 total) that sets the order and tone for instruction. NAI provides many teaching materials, including PowerPoint slides, worksheets, and activity suggestions. (Once you are certified as an instructor, you can teach the class "in house" for no extra

charge to your students. You also have the option of teaching classes for outside groups, charging them a standard instructor's fee.)

At Anza-Borrego, we made the 32-hour CIG course the foundation for our docent training and then added extra hours to cover State Park mission and goals, accessibility, programs (like Jr. Rangers), working with children, RAPPOR, and park resources and procedures. To pass the class, volunteers must pass a written test, get a passing score on an interpretive program outline, and get a passing score on a class presentation or brief guided tour / nature walk.

The CIG course is structured around four areas: Knowing Your Audience, Knowing Your Resource, Program Development and Program Delivery. It is well organized and logical in its presentation. It fits in beautifully with all the materials and objectives you'll receive in our DPR Train the Trainers class.

The main drawback to providing certification is the cost to become a Certified Interpretive Trainer. Right now the course fee is \$575 for NAI members, plus a \$125



CIG Class 2004

certification fee. This doesn't include travel expenses or lodging. It's unlikely our department will be able to support you in seeking this certification, but perhaps your co-op can, or you might seek a CSPRA training grant. There are also several certified trainers already within the Department; there might be one available in your area.

I personally hope that in the future, all of our DPR staff who are providing formal interpretive training to other staff and volunteers will be certified. It is one way to ensure a standard level of knowledge, skills and performance in our instructors. It also will ensure that staff and volunteers who have received formal training have also demonstrated a standard level of basic proficiency before representing the Department to the public.



CIG

If you'd like a personal challenge to be your best as an instructor or if you'd like to be able to offer certification to your seasonal staff

~~Over the years, with much trial and error~~

## Volunteers and Trail Work

By: Frank Padilla, Jr. (Ret.)

### **We celebrate not the trail, but the wild places it passes through.**

As a seasonal park aid at Mt. San Jacinto State Wilderness in the early seventies, I had my first introduction to volunteers. My partner Mike Hamilton and I were going to take eight volunteers to help us with a short reroute project by Round Valley. The trail was just above the valley, and would lead you to Wellman's Divide.

This was something new to both of us, working with volunteers, but they all seemed eager and we needed the help. When we arrived, the trail party went right to work, and after a good half-day we had completed our project. Both Mike and I were impressed with how well the volunteers followed our lead and never complained about the hard digging and rock rolling they did that day. We could tell that they were very satisfied with the work that they had accomplished.

Many years later I became a Supervising Ranger at Pt. Mugu State Park and discovered that there was a small group of volunteers working on the park's trails. There was no formal organizational structure between the park and the group. I introduced myself and began to work with them.

What I realized was they were the same kind of folks that cared about the park trails, they didn't mind giving up their time to help and they all loved the out-of-doors. In their hearts they wanted to do the right thing, help parks! With over 100 miles of non-motorized trails throughout the various park units within the Santa Monica Mountains and with no trail budget, someone had to maintain them. So I went to work and started to organize the volunteers.

and the help of the volunteers, we turned the group into a formalized volunteer organization that now provides trail maintenance assistance almost every Saturday, some Sundays and weekdays for the National Park Service, Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency, Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority and State Parks within the Santa Monica Mountain area.

That this happened was due to the development of a formal program for trail volunteers. It required the necessary paperwork to become a volunteer, training and support from the local trail advocacy groups, and what I believe is very important, consistent representation from State Parks, and later from the other agencies that joined in.

As we know, trails are a key component of park infrastructure. Our visitors use park trails to explore, take pictures, to study nature, to exercise, and so on. We consider trails a facility, but a facility that rarely gets a cut from the maintenance funds. How true is that? Regardless, park staff has an obligation to provide safe trails, but how can park management deal with this? By using trained volunteers.



As park employees we know that we

have the authority to use volunteers. That means if we are going to use volunteers a well-established program that manages and trains them must be in place. This also means that they should have good representation from staff. This part of the job for the park person may not be easy because it's no eight-to-five job - this is demanding work. But if you look at the potential productivity that training trail work volunteers can provide it surely outweighs the time park staff may invest. This is a true win-win situation!

For over 14 years, I have been offering trail training to various park and federal agencies and to trail organizations in Southern California. The Basic Trail Maintenance course has been one of the more popular presentations that I have done over the years. This training was designed to train volunteers in basic trail maintenance including: safety, terminology, maintenance guidelines, tools, and assessments. The training is approximately seven to eight hours and combines lecture and fieldwork. Following is the course outline:

### **Basic Trail Maintenance for Volunteers**

1. Introductions and Orientation
2. Objectives
3. Why we work on trails
4. Environmental Considerations
5. Terminology
6. Trail maintenance guidelines
7. Trail work safety
8. Basic assessments
9. Why people volunteer and volunteer requirements
10. Field exercises (demonstration)

Over the years I have trained many volunteers in basic trail maintenance. The Basic Trail Maintenance course provides them with enough information and skills to meet park guidelines for trail work. When a volunteer completes 100 hours of volunteer time he/she



can be nominated to become a crew leader. This step also requires additional training to prepare them to safely lead trail volunteers on sanctioned trail workday projects. There is also advanced training for those volunteers who want to enhance their trail work skills such as: retaining wall repair and construction, mechanical advantage equipment, and basic layout skills.

During my assignment as the Angeles District Trail Coordinator, I did not hesitate to use volunteers and fully integrate them into my trail program. When I needed extra workers to help on trail repair or construction projects, I would always manage to get help. I have always been grateful for their dedication to helping State Parks. I was truly blessed with the enthusiasm, the can-do attitude and energy that these volunteers provided to keep their park trails open.

I can only encourage park staff to consider the wealth of opportunities that can occur when using volunteers as part of your trail management program. I want to share this final quote that sums up what it's all about; "Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do." –Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe, German philosopher and writer, 1749-1832.

## Uniformed Volunteer Program at Henry W. Coe State Park

by Barry Breckling

I guess I should start by letting you know a little about our park. Although it's the second largest of California's state parks at 87,005 acres (about three times the size of San Francisco), we are not that well known. Most people say "Oh, yeah, I know that park. I've hiked in the redwoods there many times." Well, of course they're talking about Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park.

Coe doesn't have redwoods, but it does have ponderosa pines. Most of the park, however, is oak woodland with scattered savannah, some chaparral, and creeks in three major drainages. The summer weather is usually unappealingly hot for hikers, so people mostly avoid Coe in the summer when other parks get their heaviest attendance.

Spring is a whole different story with spectacular wildflower displays and lots of visitation. Also, fall colors along with pleasant temperatures make autumn a wonderful time to visit the park. People can hike, bike, backpack, horse camp, or car camp in the park. Wildflower hikes are offered in spring along with other longer hikes, and Saturday evening programs run spring through fall.

For many years, this large park had only two rangers and one park aid working from spring to early fall, insufficient staffing to provide more than minimal interpretation. In order to provide better service to visitors, we started a uniformed volunteer program back in 1980. We had eight volunteers that first year (two of them are still volunteering). Now, more than a quarter century later, the program has



grown to over 140 volunteers. The program has been very successful. Two main reasons for its success have been having a visitor center as the focused location for volunteer activities and having funding from the Pine Ridge Association (PRA), the park's cooperative association.

In the early years, the PRA sponsored and administered the program. Later, the state said that the volunteer programs needed to be run by the state. Things didn't really change much. What we had before and what we still have now are three groups - the state, the volunteers, and the PRA, who all work together for the common goal of serving the people who visit the park.

Volunteers have been given a lot of latitude in what they do, but they do have two simple requirements. They must put in a minimum of 50 hours a year and at least 20 of the hours must be in the park's visitor center assisting the public. We have come to really count on having volunteers to give us sufficient visitor center coverage and also to enable us to give a full series of interpretive programs.

Besides visitor center and interpretive duties, volunteers patrol on foot, horseback, and bike. They work on trails, write articles for the volunteer and association newsletters, carry out resource inventories, are involved in

search and rescue, and more. The volunteers are encouraged to come up with projects and follow them through to completion.

Financing projects is not a problem as the PRA generously funds any reasonable endeavor. Volunteers have started a few very popular special events, and also staff them: the Mother's Day Breakfast, the Tarantula Fest and fall barbecue, and the 10K run/walk. Volunteers also provide labor for the park's spring Backcountry Weekend. It takes an excess of 50 volunteers to put on most of these events.

Volunteers have written books and brochures that the PRA has published. These include books on trees, shrubs, human history, ranch buildings, Native Americans, and fishing in the park, as well as a booklet for a self-guided nature hike, a wildflower brochure, and two animal brochures. They have produced their own volunteer manual. We have a school program called Coe Connections, run totally by volunteers, that helped Coe Park win a CALPA award recently.

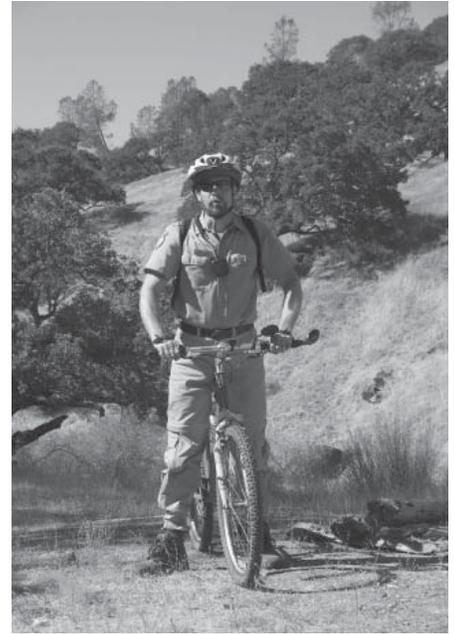
Volunteers receive about 80 hours of initial training that includes geology, geography, natural history, human history, dealing with the public, registering visitors, and much more. Two days of the training are a ride-along into the park's



Volunteer Don Savant at the Tarantula Fest

backcountry. Volunteers are required to be first aid certified.

There is also ongoing training. CoeEd Day, which is offered each year, generally has three different classes going on at the same time, and there are three or four sessions through the day so volunteers have up to a dozen different classes to choose from. The various classes include general interpretation, interpretation for children, cats and dogs (mountain lions and coyotes), birds, trees, animal tracking, trail building, nature observation, insects, and radio use.



We expect a lot from our volunteers and they consistently produce quality results. We treat them with respect and they, in turn, value their service to the State of California and regard visitors with respect. We have learned that we should never jokingly call them uninformed volunteers (even if they don't have all the answers), and we should never call volunteers who have been around a while "old volunteers"; we call them "wise and experienced" volunteers.

There are occasional problems with the volunteer program but, all in all, it runs smoothly. The program consists of a group of people with very diverse interests and abilities. Some are the arms, some the eyes, some the feet, but together, they work as one organism to provide great service to park visitors.

## Ocotillo Wells SVRA Earth Day 2006

by Nancy Frost

The Ocotillo Wells SVRA Earth Day 2006 was a success. On the eve of Earth Day, we had a campout that was attended by 50 girl scouts and their leaders. Our rangers, Jessica Murany, Mike Howard, and Keven Harder put on an excellent campfire program with songs and amusing stories. After the sun went down, they led the group on an adventurous nighttime hike through our park. The girls had fun using a black light to locate scorpions, which fluoresce under ultraviolet light.

Approximately 120 people, including the girl scouts, participated in the Earth Day campground cleanup and attended the Earth Day booths.

We thank the California State Parks Foundation for donating trash and recycling bags and an Earth Day banner. In the morning, the cleanup volunteers were energized with donated Starbucks coffee and Blu-In Cafe sticky buns. After the cleanup, they were able to cool off with water donated by Borrego Springs Bottled Water, and ice donated by Desert Ironwoods. Badlands Cafe generously donated turkey wraps and watermelon to provide lunch for all of the hungry volunteers.

After lunch, the girl scouts and other park visitors attended a variety of Earth Day booths. Ranger Murany's parents, Sally and John Sanderson, representing the Palomar Audubon Society, presented a video on barn owls and made a great interpretive poster of the birds that inhabit our park.



Eric Hollenbeck displayed reptiles native

to our park, and discussed their ecology. ESI Suzanne Granger gave native plant garden tours and handed out native desert plants, which will be fostered for the next six months and brought back to be placed in our native plant garden.

The history of our park was recounted by Senior Park Aide Arnie Mroz and retired Ocotillo Wells SVRA Ranger John Ruddley. Karen Larsen Gordon, with the San Diego Tracking Team, discussed using tracks to identify wildlife use of an area and led mammal tracking hikes in the park.

State Parks archeologist Leslie Steidl, local archeologists Pat and John Butcher, and Kwaaymii Laguna Band of Mission Indians Elder Carmen Lucas discussed the archaeology of the area and led the kids on a guided exploration and scientific data collection of a staged archaeology site. The Anza-Borrego Desert Natural History

Association relayed information on the natural history of the area.

The American Sand Association provided information on responsible off-roading and the Ocotillo Wells Citizens Alliance for Responsible Energy (CARE) discussed the Sunrise Powerlink project, which is proposed to run adjacent to Ocotillo Wells SVRA and through Anza-Borrego Desert SP.

We very much appreciate the generous support of our many sponsors and volunteers, without whom this event would not have been possible. We are happy to report that we received glowing reviews from the girl scouts and plan to have them back for Earth Day 2007.

## Docent Training Programs Compared: La Purisima Mission SHP and the Oakland Museum of California

by Sharon McConnell

La Purisima Mission is a completely restored mission. Originally established by the Spanish beginning in 1769 and ultimately ending in 1834, twenty-one missions ranged from San Diego to Sonoma. La Purisima is one of three owned by California State Parks. The park portrays the mission and its life from its beginning up to 1822.

The Oakland Museum of California was established in 1969. It houses a California History Gallery, a California Natural Sciences Gallery, and a California Art Gallery. My docent training was in the California History Gallery, which covers California history from its Spanish beginnings to the present day.

La Purisima Mission is a living museum; the Oakland Museum of California is a traditional museum. A living museum portrays a "moment in time," with the buildings being an integral part of the exhibit; everything is arranged as it was originally, or as close as can be determined.

When I first walked into the La Purisima Mission docent training class, I knew there was a big difference between this program and the one I had completed a few years earlier at the Oakland Museum of California.

For starters, the Mission training emphasized interpretation right out of the gate. We were asked to define interpretation, which has varied meanings. The definition that

means the most to me is that interpretation is education aiming to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of objects and firsthand experience. Given that La Purisima Mission is a living museum, the emphasis on interpretation made a lot of sense. There was much less emphasis on interpretation in the Oakland Museum training program.

Another big difference between the two training programs is that La Purisima's training was eleven weeks long, as opposed to a year and a half for the Oakland Museum. The considerable length of the Oakland training can be attributed to the fact that training included an academic course in California history. La

Purisima's training in history only covered the time period from the Native Americans, through the Spanish exploration and colonization in the New World, the decline of the missions through secularization and the rebuilding of the mission by the Civilian Conservation Corps.



Finally, the training at La Purisima provided a great deal of guidance on how to conduct and structure tours and how to use objects to demonstrate how mission life was for the inhabitants. Examples of skills and crafts were weaving and pottery. Again, this difference can be traced back to the fact that one institution is a living museum while the other is a traditional museum.

Although both institutions provide tours for schoolchildren, the focus of each is radically different. The mission's emphasis is on a limited time period (the mission system); Oakland's focus is broader, covering a time period of over two hundred years.

I enjoyed both training programs and

# DOCENT PROGRAM OF SONOMA STATE HISTORIC PARK

by the Sonoma Docents

In 1992 there was a consensus that there should be an "advanced" training program specifically for Sonoma's local historic sites. Prior to 1992, volunteer training was combined with other volunteer opportunities that existed within the state parks in the Valley of the Moon.



A dynamic group of volunteers led by Bettie Allen began visiting and investigating similarly based programs. They took what was applicable, adapted a number of ideas, came up with a plan, and finally in April of 1994 the first training was held. The training program has since been refined, but the basics remain

the core of our program. From a small group of 15 dedicated docents we have grown to almost 60 strong.

Docents come from all walks of life: educators, business people, law enforcement personnel, firefighters, and retired "history buffs" to name a few. They all bring a love of history combined with the joy of bringing history alive for the visitors. Five of our current docents were in the very first class and we have at least one active docent from each of the subsequent classes.

For the past 5 years, in addition to our tours for the general public, we have given special tours to such groups as Elderhostel, Globus, and Tauck. In addition, we give tours to the ever-energetic fourth graders who visit the mission as part of their Social Studies program.

These really keep our retired teachers on their toes. The children especially like to see the large vat that holds candle wax. Of course they are reminded that in mission times it would have been very smelly tallow. They also enjoy seeing the Barracks where the soldiers slept and the boys all want to see the cannon fired. (Unfortunately, that is an infrequent event.)

We are lucky to have varied and rich resources available to call upon for our training program. Our lecturers come from California State Parks, nearby colleges and universities, and local historic sites and organizations.

*These enriching opportunities give our docents a wider knowledge of what*

*life was*

*like...*

This year, besides our state park's staff, we will have Martha McGettigan, a great-great granddaughter of Gen. Vallejo, Ben Benson, who will speak on Pre-European California Indians, Andrew Galvan, a descendant of mission Indians, and Gerald Hill, author of guides to Napa, Sonoma, Vancouver and Monterey. Established docents can also come to these classes as part of their

required Advanced Training.

This year we will expand our mentor program. Each docent trainee will have a mentor to help guide him or her through the program.

In January, we were given a very special gift from the Sonoma State Historic Park...our own office. Not only do we now have a place to do "business", but we have our very own professional library where docents can come and check out resource material.

In addition to our yearly training classes, the "old" docents are invited to go on field trips to other California historic sites. In the past we have visited: La Purisima Mission, Monterey, Sutter's Fort, and Fort Ross as well as mining towns and mines.

At Sutter's Fort, we experienced a smoke filled evening with docent "actors" trying to read and work in the late evening light. This year we visited Columbia and Indian Grinding Rock State Park. At Indian Grinding Rock we were introduced to Miwok spiritual beliefs by a ranger of Miwok ancestry. At Columbia State Park, the docents gave

us a taste of what a mining town felt like in the late 1800s. We even learned how to play Faro.

These enriching



opportunities give our docents a wider knowledge of what life was like in our state in the 1800s, and we have the opportunity of seeing how other docents engage visitors. This, in turn, helps us improve our tours.

As docents, we feel gifted that we can be part of bringing the richness of California history alive to its citizens and visitors, both young and not so young. So as we start our new training year, we are excited and hopeful that we can



## Fun

by Susan J. Ellis,  
**The Volunteer Recruitment Book**

When you examine the list of reasons why people volunteer, you will see that "fun" is on the list. Sometimes we in the volunteer world get so caught up in following the model of the world of paid work that we forget that volunteering is essentially a recreational activity! People can only volunteer in their discretionary time, when they are not committed to their livelihood, family or other obligations. So when you recruit, you are not competing with a paying job. Rather you are asking people to give up time with their own family or friends, time they have to do what they find relaxing. Your real competition is golf, going to the movies, driving the kids to and from the soccer game, and taking a nap!

So volunteering at your organization better have some social, enjoyable aspect to it. This does not mean you can't ask people to work hard as volunteers or to do projects independently. But there should be some pleasure in the task itself, in meeting the others who will be participating, or in the sense of accomplishment at the end. For some of you, the word "fun" can actually be used



openly. If you are recruiting for a cultural arts group, outdoor facility, or any type of organization that people might think of as a free time activity, why not play it up? For

example, the National Ski Patrol knows full well that its members gladly patrol the slopes in exchange for the pleasure of skiing more often with less guilt.



Even the most mundane of tasks can be made appealing if the "recreational model" is applied. So instead of begging people to grit their teeth and clean up a vacant lot, add a "song fest" and make it an event. The same holds true for that much maligned yet vital task of envelope stuffing. I maintain there's real potential for an "Executive Envelope Stuffing Circle," open by invitation only to the top CEOs in town, with the promise of giving participants three hours in a room with their peers-without telephones or other interruptions. Add some croissants and - viola - a new recruitment pitch!

The recreational model also leads to creative approaches to recruitment. Why not tap into the desire of working women to spend more time with their friends by recruiting friends together to volunteer as a team - or families who want to find ways to develop their relationships? Ivan Scheier notes that we might occasionally recruit by pointing out that "we give you all these chances to have fun and we don't even charge admission!"

In all-volunteer associations, the social element is vital. People join groups if they think they will make friends with other members and will enjoy the various activities - including service projects.

## FISH! Catch the Energy, Release the Potential

by Nikki Combs

Can a video about the Pike Place Fish Co. in Seattle, Washington be congruent with volunteer training in California State Parks? A quick peek will show that no other video comes close to teaching the principles of customer service and work enjoyment. This 18-minute film is available from the Mott Training Center in VHS or DVD format. Produced by Chart-house Learning, [www.fishphilosophy.com](http://www.fishphilosophy.com), the video is high energy and fun to watch.

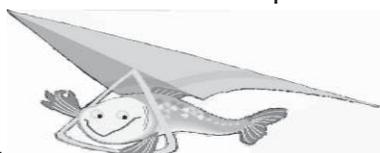
The film begins with the crew of the Fish Co. throwing fish and yelling. This is not occasional sophomoric behavior, but part of their work day. As the film states, "Energy, Passion, Fun. . . Everyone brings these to work. This video shows how they do it in 18 steps - Just Kidding! How about 4 principles!" The principles of FISH are: Play, Make Their Day, Be There, and Choose Your Attitude.

As one of the managers states, their philosophy has nothing to do with fish. The fish are a by-product, they are selling a service. At State Parks, we too are selling a service. When visitors see staff and volunteers enjoying what they are doing, the visitors relax and enjoy themselves. Isn't that what we want them to do? Isn't that why they come to state parks? Every day, we need to make a commitment to have fun and enjoy our work.

When people are having fun, a "feeding frenzy" occurs - everyone wants to join in. Staff and volunteers need to let the visitors in. Different customers/visitors will respond differently, but everyone's day will improve if we make their day. We can change someone's mood just by being friendly and helpful. Spending an extra minute really listening, showing someone the best trail, letting visitors

gently touch something old, or kindly explaining why it's a good idea for them to help care for an area can make a huge difference. Help visitors feel that they are the most important person to be at that site, and you'll make a friend for life.

Being there for the visitors helps make their day while cementing that friendship. When you focus on the people you're with, you acknowledge them and give them value. If you act impatient, you will be perceived as impatient. But if you happily answer where the rest room is, you help the visitor feel welcomed and accepted. They will know that everyone working at the park cares for them and is willing to help them.



Caring for visitors comes easier when we choose our attitude. At some point in the past, each of us chose to serve the public by working for California State Parks. Don't loose touch with that attitude, readjust it every morning if need be. If you choose to be upset, soon you will be upset. If you choose to have a good day and enjoy your job and co-workers, things will be better. This is not to say that nothing bad will happen. But, if you have your good attitude on, the bad times will roll off a bit easier. When 500 fourth graders are running around you, or when hundreds of cars are sitting in the summer sun waiting for a parking place, think about how you are behaving and how that makes the visitors feel. Make the choice to have a little fun, make someone's day, be there for the visitors, and you'll go home a happier person. You'll also get up the next morning ready to do it all over again.

I have used the FISH philosophy for the past seven years. I show this video during docent training, as a refresher to seasoned volunteers, and as a pick-me-up for staff. It incorporates many of the principles of interpretation and reminds each of us why we chose to serve the public (whether paid or not).

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