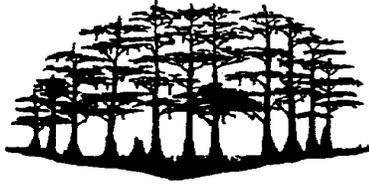


# OLD RANGER'S JOURNAL

## FLORIDA PARK SERVICE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



No. XXX

[www.FPSAA.org](http://www.FPSAA.org)

February 2010

### 1<sup>st</sup> Annual FPSAA Fishing Tournament Small in Numbers but Big in Fun

Many of our FPS Alumni members are getting older and it takes longer to recuperate from swinging a hammer all day on a service project. So the idea of swinging a fishing pole and spinning a yarn sounded less stressful. Thus the idea of a fishing tournament to raise funds for the James Cook Memorial Relief Fund was born.

Credit needs to be given to the park staff for going beyond the call of duty to support the event. Park Manager Andy Nolan and his staff really "got into" this event. Programs on animal tracks and the cow camp were made available for folks who were not quite as serious about fishing. They made arrangements for accommodations, assisted with logistics and, I believe, everyone on the staff stopped by to ask if there was anything we needed. Many of the Alumni board members commented on their good old fashioned FPS hospitality.

Although the event was billed as a fishing tournament, the fishing was primarily an excuse for a get-together. Some folks, however, were serious about fishing. Theresa Carter came bound and determined to win. She took second place in most overall weight and most weight in the bank fishing category. She said she was getting in shape to out fish her father-in-law, Harvey Carter.

Josh Herman and his daughter, Caleigh, racked up the awards. Josh won biggest fish and most weight and Caleigh won biggest fish and most weight in the children category. Of course, Josh is the APM at Lake Kissimmee and probably knows all the secret spots. Maybe next year we will tie one hand behind his back (Just kidding, we were glad they participated).

Other winners were John Roche and his son John IV. Now any of you FPS folks who have been around John are probably aware that fishing and cooking are two of his favorite activities. Years ago during a Promotion Review Board (get an old timer to explain to you) John had a little down time before his interview. So he grabbed his rod and went fishing for a short spell to kill some time. Most folks would spend their time wringing their hands and being nervous. It must have worked for John, he was promoted. Back to the tournament. John caught the second largest fish and his son won the Junka-Lunka award with the largest non-edible fish, a gar. John also took the award for the tallest fish tale (see story page 3).

As with any FPS gathering the food was great. The Pot Luck dinner on Friday brought out a variety of food with some scrumptious deserts. There was plenty to go around for the fish fry on Saturday. Sandy & George supplied fish from their freezer to supplement the catch of the day. When asked "What kind of fish is this?" the response was fried fish (The pan contained Bass, Bream, Redfish, Grouper, Flounder, Basa, Catfish, Mullet and Speckled Trout). All the food was donated for the weekend so there was no cost to attendees and all the registration fees will support the James Cook Memorial Relief Fund. (cont'd on page 3)

# President's Message

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Dear Fellow Alumni Members,

I hope this newsletter finds each of you having a good year and doing well. I encourage you to join us at the annual gathering which is rapidly approaching. This year's gathering will be a special one and I know you will enjoy visiting with old friends.

The 2010 gathering will be held at O'Leno State Park April 22 through April 25. The gathering will be in conjunction with one of the Florida Park Service's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events. The weekend will begin with a work day on Thursday April 22<sup>nd</sup>; we will be rebuilding the historic Wire Road Bridge on one of the park's hiking trails. The bridge was originally built by the CCC. On Friday the 23<sup>rd</sup> there will be a ceremony recognizing the 75 years of accomplishments of the Florida Park Service, culminating with the burial of a time capsule. The annual FPSAA Board Meeting will be held at 3:00 PM that day. On Saturday morning will be our annual meeting followed that afternoon by the auction to raise money for the James A. Cook Memorial Fund.

See page 4 for additional details.

Again I encourage you to attend and I look forward to seeing you there.



Larry Perry

## **Florida Park Service 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**



On December 8, Mike Bullock and the Florida Park Service was presented with a Resolution by the Governor & Cabinet recognizing 2010 as The Year of Florida State Parks. This was a fine way to kick off the 75th Anniversary. With the can-do spirit of FPS employees and volunteers, the budget constraints will not likely greatly diminish the activities throughout the year. Twenty-five existing park special events will be designated as signature events and will add a 75th Anniversary flair to the event. This is a great opportunity for our retired Alumni

members to provide assistance with these special events. Call your nearby park and ask if they could use your help. For a list of the events and other information visit the 75th Anniversary web site <http://www.floridastateparks.org/history/default.cfm> Park Manager Pat Wells has asked everyone, especially folks who worked at Pennekamp, to mark your calendars for the 50th Anniversary of John Pennekamp Coral Reef SP on Dec 11.

The 75th Anniversary website also contains historical information and photos of the Florida Park Service and on individual parks. It also gives visitors to the site an opportunity to submit their photos, experiences and stories.

Mark Baker with Public Television station WPBT has completed the documentary entitled "The Story of Florida's State Parks." It was very well done and is fun to watch. Copies of the DVD are available for \$29.95 plus \$4.00 for shipping. Call 1-800-222-9728 to order. You might even see some folks you recognize.

# Happenings

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## Fishing Tournament (Cont'd)

Saturday evening was capped off with music by the band without an official name but sometimes called the FPS band. It is hard to tell who was having more fun, the musicians or the folks enjoying their music. But their music certainly capped off a great weekend. Thanks go out to the band members; Clif, Emory & Bryon Maxwell, Lindsay Whelan, Donald Forgione and Larry Fooks. You guys rock!

Be sure to mark your 2010 calendars for October 2 when we will be doing this again. This year's event will be an unofficial part of the FPS 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. It will be an opportunity for current and retired employees to reflect on the great traditions of the FPS and have some fun.

## Best Fish Tale

By John Roche

I was talking with a gentleman that had retired and had moved to waterfront property so he could fish all day, everyday. One evening, his wife asked him to attend a Homeowners Association meeting and he begrudgingly agreed. As the evening progressed she became annoyed that whenever she looked over at him, he was on his cell phone. Then later in the evening she looked for him and he was gone. He had run home to catch a fish. He had set a bait out and tied the line to the home phone receiver. When he would call home and the phone rang he knew nothing had happened, when he called and got a busy signal he knew he had a fish on the line and had to go.



# Looking Back

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## Memories....

The following is a reprint of an article from the March 1994 Old Ranger's Journal written by Kim Crouch, Assistant Park Manager at Long Key. Like many of today's park employees Kim grew up living in state parks. Her father, Arnold, worked at several parks and retired as District Manager.

As I sat in my yard at Long Key, I watched a broad-winged hawk in the tree above me. My 3 year old son stops his play to ask "what's that mommy?", and old memories from my own childhood come flooding back. I was a small child growing up in and around the Florida State Parks too, and asking questions like him right now.

- Why is this place called Gold Head when the water is so clear? Oh! so where is all the gold at now?
- Why is that woodpecker called a red-bellied when it's his head that's red?
- Why can't I keep the snake in my bedroom?
- Mom, why is dad burning the woods down?

I tell my son that it's a hawk and he is hunting for his dinner. Be real still and watch what he does. Then I drift off into my memories once again.

- My first fish caught at Gold Head and making my mother cook the whopping two incher.
- Helping my father give an interpretive talk on snakes in my class at school.
- Having to ride a boat to school.
- Making lifetime friends that are so important to me, and my family.

A squeal of amazement from my son snaps me back to reality in time to see the hawk swoop down to catch a small rat snake. As my son looks up at me with wide eyes that are full of wonder, I realize that I'm right where I want to be - raising my family in a Florida State Park.

# FPSAA Annual Reunion

## April 22 – 24, 2010, O'Leno State Park

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The 2010 Annual Reunion will be one you won't want to miss. The Alumni is partnering with the Division to celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Florida Park Service. Below is an itinerary for the scheduled activities.

Apr 22, Thursday

1pm to 5pm - Commemorative Workday project

6pm - Dinner– Compliments of **Friends of O'Leno**

Apr 23, Friday

8am to 11am - Continue Commemorative Workday project

Lunch - On Your own

1pm to 2pm - FPS Time Capsule Ceremony

3pm to 5pm - Board Meetings

6pm - Dinner

7pm - Program by Jim Stevenson

Apr 24, Saturday

9:00am - Registration & Get Re-acquainted

9:30am - Annual Business Meeting

12:00 -2:00 - Lunch, visiting & Silent Auction

2:30-4:30 - **Live Auction** - Remember to bring your hand made & collectable items for the Auction.

This is the primary fundraiser for the James Cook Memorial Relief Fund. Also come prepared to buy some of these treasures and support the cause.

6:00pm - Dinner

The park has set aside some campsites and the rustic cabins at the group camp. In order to reserve either a cabin or campsite, call the O'Leno Administrative office at (386) 454-4201 ask to speak to Suzetta or Morgan. Please identify yourself as being involved with the Florida Park Service Alumni weekend event. For those of you that prefer more comfy accommodations, here are a few nearby motels.

### **High Springs Country Inn**

520 N.W. Santa Fe Blvd., High Springs, FL 32643 (386) 454-1565

Room Rates: \$42 + tax for a single room; \$57 + tax for a double room

Located on 441 in High Springs across the street from the Fleetwood diner. Six rooms (4 double and 2 single) are blocked under the name of "Florida Park Service". Reservations need to be made by March 31<sup>st</sup>. They are often full on weekends.

Two other motels but rooms have not been blocked:

### **Red Carpet Inn**

14113 S. US Hwy 441, Lake City, FL 32024 (386) 755-9311

Room Rates: \$40 + tax for 2 people

Located on the south side of I-75 exit #414 (441/41 Lake City/High Springs). Next door to Subway and across the street from a Huddle House. If calling for reservations, mention "Florida Park Service" for \$40 rate.

### **Travelodge**

Hwy 41/441 Lake City, FL (386) 752-7582

Room Rate: \$50 + tax for double room

Located on the north side of I-75 exit #414 (441/41 Lake City/High Springs).

They are usually not full.

# FPSAA Annual Reunion

## Registration Form

### April 22 – 24, 2010, O’Leno State Park

Thank you for taking a few moments to register so we have a head count for food. Please provide the requested information below and mail the form along with your check, payable to FPSAA, no later than April 16<sup>th</sup> to:

Tom Linley, FPSAA Treasurer  
 2015 Chowkeebin Nene  
 Tallahassee, FL 32301  
 (850) 878-7959  
 E-Mail: tom@linley.us

After April 16<sup>th</sup>, please bring check or cash to the gathering.

You can also register online at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/JSQTSCQ> or by going to [www.FPSAA.org](http://www.FPSAA.org) and click on the Annual Gathering page.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate number in party for each activity below.

Thursday, Workday Dinner	# of Adults _____	X	\$0.00	\$ _____
	# of Children _____	X	\$0.00	\$ _____
Friday, Dinner Spaghetti, Salad & Bread	# of Adults _____	X	\$10.00	\$ _____
	# of Children _____	X	\$6.00	\$ _____
Saturday, Lunch Cold cut sandwiches & fixins	# of Adults _____	X	\$8.00	\$ _____
	# of Children _____	X	\$6.00	\$ _____
Saturday, Dinner Barbeque & other stuff	# of Adults _____	X	\$12.00	\$ _____
	# of Children _____	X	\$8.00	\$ _____
			<b>Total</b>	\$ _____

We look forward to getting connected and having fun!

Thank You

**Florida Park Service Alumni Association, Inc.**  
**Dues Notice**

To renew your membership in The Florida Park Service Alumni Association, please complete the following information. Send the completed application along with a check made out to Florida Park Service Alumni Association, Inc., for the \$15.00 annual membership dues to: (or better yet, join us at the annual gathering and pay your dues there)

Judi Maxwell, FPSAA Secretary  
558 S.W. Maxwell Court  
Fort White, Florida 32038  
(386) 497-4750

Personal History Information:

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: (HOME) \_\_\_\_\_ (WORK) \_\_\_\_\_

(Email) \_\_\_\_\_

If spouse of Division of Recreation and Parks employee:

Give employee name: \_\_\_\_\_ years service \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Status: (check one of the following)

Regular Member

Current, retired or past Division of Recreation & Parks employee who has attained permanent status employment. Spouse of current, retired or past Division employee who is or was previously in a permanent status.

LIFETIME MEMBER

A regular member who has paid a lump sum equivalent of 20 years of annual dues in advance. Spouses, widows, and widowers of Regular Members are also eligible.

Current or past District or Park where employed with the Division of Recreation and Parks:

\_\_\_\_\_

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FOR FPSAA BOARD USE ONLY!

Regular Member  Life Membership  NOT ELIGIBLE

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary, FPSAA

# Member News

## Meet Your Board Member **Thelma Proctor**

Thelma joined the Florida Park Service in 1974, as a Park Ranger at Oscar Scherer State Park. She was looking for a job and the Osprey Post Mistress told her about a job opening at the local state park. She applies and was hired by Park Supt. Dick Miller. Roland Lamper was the Assistant. She attended the 6th Ranger Academy at O'Leno.

She has two sons; Arnie is a computer technician and owns his own business in Sarasota & Tim is a Chief Analyst for Policy & Incentives with the Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development in Tallahassee. She has a black border collie mix named Smokey that is a good hiking buddy. Her husband, Gene, passed away in 1990.

Shortly after her husband died, a new position was created at the District Office; Education & Training Specialist. She thought it sounded like her dream job because its responsibilities were many of the things that she really enjoyed doing. Her Park Manager, Joe Smyth, encouraged her to apply. She applied and was hired by District Manager Robert Dye and is still in the position. (continued on page 8)



**Thelma and her 2 sons-1977**

## New Members

New members are always needed to keep an organization growing and strong with new ideas and support. We welcome the following new members to the Alumni Association:

- Bonnie Allen
- Randy Brown
- Mike Garrison
- Bryon Maxwell

## Retirements

Congratulations to these folks for a career with the FPS. As they begin the next phase of their life and enjoy retirement, we invite them to become active members of the FPS Alumni Association.

Margaret Bentley, Sebastian Inlet  
Thomas Brenenstuhl, Cape Florida  
Charles Dutoit, Tomoka  
Judith Gregory, John U. Lloyd Beach  
Jeffrey Griggs, Bald Point  
Kimsey Helms, Design/Construction  
Linda Hood, Oscar Scherer  
Sonia Khalil, Cape Florida  
Debra Klein, Highlands Hammock  
Mark Latch, Natural/Cultural Resources  
Linda Lewis, Wakulla Springs  
Marilyn Mitchell, St. George Island  
Nedra Phillips, Gold Head  
William Roberson, Suwannee River  
Harry Smid, Fort Taylor  
Stephen Watson, Design/Construction  
William Wright Sebastian Inlet

## In Memory

We have lost several members of the FPS family since our last newsletter.

In October Bob Perry passed away after an extended illness. Bob retired as Park Manager from Gamble Plantation. Although Bob was unable to attend Alumni gatherings he maintained his membership in the Alumni and was always supportive of the FPS heritage.

In November Park Ranger James "Krueger" Nicholson passed away while at work.

In February Joe Henderson died unexpectedly from a heart attack. Joe served as the Chief of the Florida Park Patrol when the Law Enforcement function was in the Division.

# Looking Back

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## Ode to The Shop by Bob DeGroff

The following is a poem  
written in 2008 by Bob  
DeGroff about the old park  
shop at Jonathan Dickinson.

Searching for sockets  
Or 5/8 inch wrenches  
Or happily loafing  
On old picnic benches

To Jupiter Islanders  
Laying just off the shore  
It offended their senses  
It was just an eyesore

The Army first built it  
Back during the War  
When the old Nazi U-boats  
Lurked just off the shore

Cussing at flat tires  
Or one thing or other  
And not infrequently  
Cussing each other

And at last mother nature  
One cruel September  
Threw a hurricane haymaker  
And shivered it's timbers

Built of solid slash pine  
And Asbestos tile  
It was only supposed to last  
For a short while

Once a mighty roof truss broke  
With a terrible crack  
And gave the old building  
It's famous sway back

It stood as a relic  
For whatever that's worth  
Till the day it gave up  
And sank to the earth

But it lived on for decades  
No one really knows why  
Maybe cause it was just  
Too damned ugly to die

Twas all things to all people  
Gave refuge from storms  
It served as a ballroom  
And a bachelor dorm

But we few old relics  
Who remember the Shop  
Will remember the days  
When the rain wouldn't stop

The old shop, the old shop  
How sad was the day  
When they tore it all down  
And returned it to clay

From Hobe Mountain it looked like  
Something ugly and huge  
But sometimes in the moonlight  
It was a refuge

And we huddled together  
To wait out the storm  
In shelter and friendship  
Safe, dry and warm

Some old rangers cried  
Because it's the truth  
They spent many days  
Of their long ago youth

Beckoning rangers on  
Late night patrol  
To swig down some coffee  
And a sticky sweet roll

And that ugly old building  
No great piece of art  
Will somehow live on  
As a piece of our hearts.

## Thelma Proctor (cont'd from page 7)

While working and raising two sons, she went back to college. Years later she earned her BS Degree from the University of South Florida in Tampa. It was doubly exciting because her youngest son, Tim, graduated with a bachelor's degree from USF...**on the same day!**

Thelma is a Florida native and enjoys going to the beach, hiking, kayaking, visiting state parks (Florida and other states), traveling and teaching a children's Sunday School class. Her sons gave her a Dremel for her birthday and she is learning to do wood carving.

She has traveled to many of the states in the Eastern U.S. plus a couple of states out west - Alaska and Arizona, and has visited a few foreign countries (Bahamas, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Guatemala, Mexico and the Netherlands). When traveling she enjoys visiting state and national parks but feels Florida has some of the most beautiful parks.

Thelma is a charter member of the Florida Park Service Alumni Association.

# Images from the Fishing Tournament at Lake Kissimmee



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