



Welcome Fall 2007 Volunteers!

A fantastic 2 week orientation for new VIP's started October 15. Important information was conveyed through fun-filled field trips and classroom time.



David Elkowitz, chief ranger, introduced the group to the park layout and the headquarters improvements.



Ranger Rob Dean shared his knowledge of the East District.



Interpretative Ranger **Many Kay Manning**, above left, led the tour of the Chisos Basin district. The tour was followed by a hike up the Lost Mine Trail and an introduction to lions and bears of the park. This was led by Wildlife Biologist, **Raymond Skiles**, above right. Everyone appreciated the views and the news!



Ranger **Eric Leonard** led the grueling 12-mile hike of the South Rim Trail. No one who joined him will ever forget this hike!

Fall 2007 Volunteers

Persimmon Gap

Mark Kirtley - Visitor Center (12th)*

Sandy & Jay Mengel - Visitor Center

Castolon

Joyce Berke - Camp Host

Bob Douat - Visitor Center (2nd)

Joan & Raymond Kane - Camp Host & Backcountry

AllyCatherine Wild - Visitor Center

Rio Grande Village

Barbara & Bill Baldwin- Camp Hosts (16th)

Royann & Royce Brockett - Camp Hosts (9th)

Wanda and Mike Copeland - Backcountry (2nd)

Glenda & Robert Overfelt - Visitor Center (2nd)

Lynda & Bob Fanning - Visitor Center (4th)

Chisos Basin

Gretchan & Russell Berquam - Visitor Center

Kay & Doug Combs - Nov/Dec Camp Host (4th)

Ed Davis - Nov/Dec Camp Host (2nd)

Ginny & Jim Herrick - Visitor Center (9th)

Jim Herrick - October Camp Host (9th)

James Priddy - October Camp Host

Panther Junction

Susan Buchel - Curation (2nd)

Amanda Evans - SCA Interpretation

Mary Kelling - Pre-school Teacher

Fran Smith - Volunteer Program Assistant

Peter McElroy—Fire Effects

Bob Wirt - Science/Resource Mgt (8th)

Part-time

Judy Brinkerhoff - Resource Mgt (6th)

Angie Dean - Interpretation

Mark Garcia-Prats - Resource Management

Steve Harper - Resource Management (7th)

Dierdra Johnson - Horse Care

John Kelling - Resource Management

Jason Morris - Emergency Services

Howard Smith - Border Patrol

Christian Tillman - Library

Steve Wick- Resource Management (4th)

Reine Wonite- Administration

*Number in () indicates years of service at BBNP



A **River Trip**, this year through Santa Elena Canyon, is a perk included as part of the training. Once again the group left early on Friday morning and canoed down the Rio Grande, with a stop for lunch. Rio District Rangers, **Marcos Paredes** and **Michael Ryan**, led the group. After arriving at Entrance Camp, boats were unloaded and secured for the night. The tents were set up and dinner was prepared. Saturday morning, after eating a hearty breakfast, the canoes were loaded. The group headed down river through the rock slide and stopped for an afternoon repast. After take out and gearing up, one of the loaded vans broke down on the Ross Maxwell Drive and another van came to the rescue! Overall—it was a spectacular way to learn about the river and certainly no one will ever forget it!



October Potluck



Jim Priddy, Chisos Basin Campground Host, was acknowledged for his service.

Everyone enjoyed the first potluck of the season. There were so many choices of great food; including chips of every kind!



Ginny and Jim Herrick, above, received many THANKS for their 9th year of returning service at Chisos Basin VC.

The **Mengels, Amanda Evans, & others** feasted on their choices.



Angelina Yost, right, presented several parting items to the **Ellis Family** who served at Persimmon Gap Visitor Center.

Meet a Few of the New Couples among the Fall VIPs right here!

Sandi & Jay Mengel have spent the last two and one-half years volunteering at national parks, wildlife refuges, and national forests. In addition to staffing Visitor Information Centers, they have given adult and youth nature programs, led interpretive nature tours and developed and administered an interpreter training program. They just completed a summer tour of duty at Yellowstone National Park as VIPs at the Madison Junction Junior Ranger Station. Sandi and Jay are both Mississippi State Master Naturalists. They are originally from Pennsylvania where they were childhood sweethearts. They are now homeless (full-time RVers) having sold their home on the Mississippi Coast only three months prior to Hurricane Katrina. Sandi enjoys reading, sewing, pine needle basketry and hiking. Jay had a nature tour business in Mississippi and likes to hike, backpack, bird, fish and golf. This is their second visit to Big Bend NP but their first tour as VIPs.



Mary & John Kelling visited Big Bend in the spring of 2007 and decided that they'd enjoy another visit in the same year! To help them meet this goal they applied for Mary to teach at the pre-school in Panther Junction and they were selected. Both were raised in southern Minnesota, met in college, and have since lived in eleven states,

courtesy of the U. S. Air Force and another of John's former employers. Mary is a retired elementary school teacher and John retired as an ergonomist. Connecticut is presently where they reside on a permanent basis. They have served as campground hosts at two Minnesota State Parks. They sum up their feelings about Big Bend NP when asked "What is



it about this place that people like?" Their answer: "Trust us, it's so subtle that you don't even realize it's growing on you. But, gradually, you begin to see the parts of the whole, such as the almost invisible rock cactus, with that beautiful pinkish flower, or the fire stones arranged by natives several thousands of years ago, or the 1,500 foot deep limestone canyons carved by the Rio Grande. Piece by piece you begin to grasp the whole mind-boggling complexity of this place called Big Bend. Then, the park is in you, and will be there forever."

VIP Birthdays

October

19 AllyCatherine Wild
22 Jay Mengel

November

4 John Kelling
14 Gretchen Berquam
26 Mary Kelling

December **January**

8 Howard Smith 14 Angelina Yost

Miss anyone? Give Fran a call at x1195 and we'll add you to the list!

SKYWATCHING UPDATE — Who was out and about at 4 A.M. on November 5th to see the space shuttle and exploding comet? On Monday morning, Nov. 5th, space shuttle Discovery undocked from the ISS while the pair were gliding over US towns and cities. And there was an exploding comet! It all added up to "A Fantastic Monday Morning Sky Show." So far we've heard that **Joyce Berke, Joan and Raymond Kane, Bob Douat, Howard and Fran Smith** enjoyed the spectacular view? Anyone catch it from Persimmon Gap? How about from The Basin?



Big Bend Trivia - who likes a contest? What is the website to use to apply for the VIP Program at Big Bend? First person to e-mail Fran at fran12454@yahoo.com or call her at x1195 with the correct answer will receive a special prize!



VOLUNTEER KUDOS

A nice comment received last year regarding one of our many dedicated volunteers:

"We have traveled National Parks for ten years and our respect and appreciation for NPS staff is immense. Host Royann was at registration when we arrived at RGV campground. She took the opportunity to briefly review procedures. We found her to be very professional and personable (upholding the high esteem we have for all NPS personnel which we meet). Later we observed her reminding a camper of the no generator regulation and welcoming two young campers with reminders of Park expectations. In our view, she personifies what a camp host should be. She has our respect and appreciation!" S. Hawkey, Ontario, Canada

Activities & Events

- Flea Market and homegrown native plant sale - Nov. 10 at KKKK (Kathy's Kosmic Kowgirl Kafe) in Terlingua.
 - Potluck Dinner - Mon. Nov. 12, 6:30 pm. PJ Community Room. *Everyone* please come!
 - Casa Grande Holiday Auction - Nov. 29, 6:00pm. PJ Community Room. *Everyone* please come and join the bidding!
 - 2nd Annual Terlingua Intertribal POWWOW - Sat/Sun Dec 1-2 behind Terlingua Store. Admission is a toy for a child age 1 year and up to 12th grade.
 - Potluck Dinner - Sun. Dec. 2, 6:30 pm. PJ Community Room. *Everyone* please come!
 - Casa Grande Children's Party - Dec. 8, 2-4:30pm. and Holiday Social - Dec. 11, 6:00pm. *Everyone* is welcome at both events in the PJ Community Room.
 - Adult Bible Study - Sun. 9-10 am or Tues. 7-8 pm. San Vicente School meeting room. Contact Al Mayton 477-2295 for more information.
 - Big Bend Community Choir - Wednesdays, 5:30 pm, Music room at Terlingua School. For information call Patricia 424-3208.
 - Volleyball - Wed. 7:00 pm at PJ Court.
 - Yoga - Thurs. 6:00 - 7:15 pm. San Vicente School Gym. Drop-in class \$10 or monthly \$30. Instructor: Cynthia Hood (432-371-2877 or cynthiahood1@hotmail.com).
- NOTE: Would you please check the bulletin board at PJ for details and updates? Volunteers are still needed at all Casa Grande events.**

CONCESSIONS OPERATING HOURS (EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 1, 2007)

RIO GRANDE VILLAGE STORE 8:00 AM - 7:00 PM; *No propane on weekends* SHOWERS 8:00 AM - 8:00 PM (\$1.50/5 MIN.); LAUNDRY 8:00 AM - 7:00 PM

BASIN STORE 8:00 AM - 9:00 PM

CASTOLON STORE 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM

CHISOS MOUNTAINS LODGE DESK & GIFT SHOP: 7:00 AM - 9:00 PM; RESTAURANT: 7:00 AM - 10:00 AM BREAKFAST; 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM LUNCH; 5:00 PM - 9:00 PM DINNER

PANTHER JUNCTION STORE & STATION 7:00 AM - 7:00 PM; (Fuel available 24 hours with Visa/Mastercard and PIN number)

CHISOS BASIN LODGE RATES (432-477-2291 or -2292); Check-in - 4:00 PM Check-out - 11:00 AM

EMORY PEAK LODGE [Old units behind the Stone Cottages. 8 rooms] **\$94.00** per night Double Occupancy

RIO GRANDE MOTEL [Older cinderblock motel units] **\$99.00** per night Double Occupancy

CASA GRANDE MOTEL [New wooden two-story units] **\$99.00** per night Double Occupancy

STONE COTTAGES—**\$115.00** per night Double Occupancy; **Additional People - \$10.00 ea; Roll-away-\$10; Cribs-No Charge; Children under 12 - No Charge**

RIO GRANDE VILLAGE RV CAMPGROUND RATES (432-477-2293)

Per Trailer/per night for Two People \$21.00 + tax; Ea Added Person per Site—\$3.