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164 West Main Street
Bridgeport WV 26330

West Virginia Recreation and Parks Association
Professional Publication



Issue 1, 2006
March 2006



All meetings begin at 1:00 PM

April 28* New Martinsville City Hall, New Martinsville
*(*Please note date change above)*

July 21 Benedum Civic Center, Bridgeport

September 15 Radisson Hotel, Morgantown

November 7-9 **WVRPA Conference, Radisson Hotel, Morgantown**

Officers:

President: John Cooper
President Elect: Beverly Gibb
Past President: Joe Shuttleworth
Secretary: Mark Wise
Treasurer: Don Burton

Board of Directors

First Year: Steve Catlett
Second Year: Tom Raker
Third Year: Jim McClelland
NRPA/Citizen Representative: Robert Clonch
NRPA Southern Regional Rep.: Jim McClelland
Student Liaisons: Marshall Casey Steele
WVU Jennifer Chamberlain

Committee Chairpersons

Annual Conference: Bruce Miller
Programming Exchange: Don Burton
Site Selection: Joe Shuttleworth
Workshops: Paula Martin
Legislative: Jim McClelland
Finance: Don Burton
Fund Raising: John Cooper
Newsletter: Joe Shuttleworth
Archives: John Cooper
Hershey Track&Field: Ethel Lou St. Clair
Membership: Rick Abel
Nominating: Beverly Gibb
Outreach: Rick Abel
Professional Awards: Craig Pyles
Professional: Owen Walker
Certification: Owen Walker
Board Members & Commissioners:
Audit: Ralph LaRue
Constitutional Review: Beverly Gibb

President's Message

The WVRPA Board of Directors have been hard at work in several aspects of the organization.

Jim McClelland and other representatives of the WVRPA attended the NRPA Mid Year in Washington, DC in February. Jim's report is in this issue of the review.

The WV Department of Transportation has agreed to house the State Trail Director. It is my understanding that the position that has been created by Governor Manchin and is in the process of becoming a reality. My thanks go out to Jim McClelland, Ralph LaRue, Rick Abel and all other from the WVRPA who have worked long and hard on this project. Also, thanks to Martha Ballman of the WV Trail Coalition and Pete Williams of the West Virginia Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects who helped make this position a reality. The group continues their hard work in shaping this position as well as an advisory committee.

The NRPA Southern Regional Conference will be held in Louisville, Kentucky April 9 -13, we hope to have a strong representation from West Virginia at this conference.

Thanks go out to Paula Martin for her organization of the NRPA's Aquatic Facility Operators course in Charleston on March 23 & 24. Also, a thank you to Ralph LaRue our own AFO Instructor, Ralph completed his AFO Instructor's Certification recently and was an instructor in Charleston.

Please find enclosed in this issue of the review, the 2006 WVRPA Pool Survey. This survey which was composed by Paula Martin, Joe Shuttleworth and my self will be used to gather a database of WVRPA members and non-members. Please complete and return them at your earliest convenience. The survey results will be published in an upcoming issue of the "Review".

I would like to wish all of you success and happiness in the upcoming season and remember that Labor Day is only a few month away!

Yours for better parks & recreation,

John Cooper

President



EDITORS NOTE: WVRPA "In the Spotlight" will be a new feature in the Review. It will feature bio's on different members in each edition. You will be asked to include personal and professional information such as family information, hobbies, interests and other interesting items that will allow others to get to know you better. Pictures will also be needed. Either a digital headshot or a picture that I can scan. Smaller departments can include multiple staff members if they choose. Anyone wishing to submit their information, please email Joe Shuttleworth at joe.shuttleworth@bridgeportwv.com. AFFILIATE BUSINESS MEMBERS AND STUDENTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO PARTICIPATE.

Owen Walker, MBA, CPRP, CTRS

Born: 6 January 1959 in Charleston, WV. One younger brother, Eddie.

Education: Graduated South Charleston High School 1977
 Shepherd College May 1982 B.S. in Park Administration/ Minor in US History
 WV State College May 1983 B.S. in Recreation Administration
 WV State College December 1995 in Therapeutic Recreation
 University of Charleston MBA August 2005



Married: Martha Stiwwinter 10 May 1986 No children. We met at church.

First WVRPA Conference attended was as a student while attending Shepherd College in 1981. Have attended conferences and have been an active member ever since, serving on various committees. Received CPRP in 1984 and CTRS, Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist, in 1996.

First paying job in the field of parks and recreation was with the now defunct South Charleston Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners, presently the South Charleston Parks and Recreation Department, as a part time gym/health club worker in July 1982. First full time job was with South Charleston as an Administrative Supervisor at the South Charleston Community Center June 1983.

Other positions held over the past twenty twenty-five years included two summers as a shift supervisor in Yellowstone National Park Canyon and Lake Lodge Hotels, Certified Recreational Therapist at Montgomery General Hospital, Manager of Cato Park Pool, Special Projects Coordinator and Adjunct Professor at WV State University. Present position Certified Physical Therapy Technician at Thomas Hospital.

Hobbies: enjoy being outdoors, fishing, camping, and hiking, sports, working in my yard, and filling out job applications.

Besides being involved with WVRPA I serve on various committees at my church, past president and active member of the WV Therapeutic Recreation Association, WV Gerri Olympics, plus various other civic activities.

WVU Offers Sport Management Degree Online

West Virginia University offers a master's degree in Sport Management that gives students the flexibility of online classes throughout the year with a two-week onsite campus experience in the summer. The program can be completed in two years.

The program is designed for professionals currently working in a sport-related field. The curriculum will provide additional skills in the administrative and management of large scale events, governance and staffing of multi-mission agencies, and expertise in fundraising, marketing, and resource development. The faculty includes both practitioners and scholars, and the students benefit from the professional expertise of their fellow students.

Classes begin this summer. The application deadline is May 15. For details, contact Dr. D. Floyd Jones at floyd.jones@mail.wvu.edu (304) 293-3295 ext 5243 or visit http://www.wvu.edu/~physed/sportman/masters/sm_masters.htm.

WVRPA Review Deadlines

Mark your calendars!

Deadline

February 24, 2006
 May 19, 2006
 August 11, 2006
 December 1, 2006

Publication

Mid March 2006
 Mid June 2006
 Early September 2006
 Early January 2007

Please submit your articles to joe.shuttleworth@bridgeportwv.com. Please include digital pictures if possible. Articles are open to any WVRPA Members for announcements, news or anything else you wish to share with the organization. Regular pictures can be scanned - mail them to 164 West Main Street, Bridgeport WV 26330. Should you have any questions, call Joe Shuttleworth at 304-842-8240.

"Foursome On the Hill" - Submitted by Jim McClelland, WVRPA Legislative Chair

Raymond Busbee, Steve Catlett, Roger Engle and Jim McClelland visited each of West Virginia's legislative offices on Thursday, February 16, 2006 during the National Park and Recreation Association's Mid-Winter Forum. Although appointments were made well in advance, due to a hastily called recess, it was the first time in two decades that the WVRPA contingent was unable to meet personally with any Senator or Congress Person. However, more than ample time was provided by each of their Legislative Assistants. During some visits, more than one person met with us WVRPA.

Packets provided by NRPA and the National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils (NARC&DC) were distributed to each of the offices, and their contents were carefully reviewed with the Legislative Assistants. High among the priorities requested by the visitation committee for Fiscal Year 2007 were: (1) saving the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF); (2) saving HUD-CDBG programs both in the large cities and small cities; (3) asking full support of the existing 375 RC&D Councils and the additional 35 applicant areas pending at USDA by appropriating \$77.9 million to the USDA National Resources Conservation Service's RC&D appropriation; and (4) a variety of programs related to health issues.

If there was one message that the visitation committee took away from its meetings on the "Hill" it was, "Keep us informed through having constituents contact us about the impact and benefits of these programs. Give us clear examples of projects that have been of assistance and of proposed projects and how they will affect the quality of life, health, and economic improvement in your communities." That is a clarion call! It simply is imperative for the folks at home to take the time to lobby our Senators and Congress People. While they certainly are our friends, and it's safe to say our "choir," just like any good choir they need constant rehearsal, need reminders on what notes to sing, what timing to use, and how to harmonize effectively. The only way a congressman or senator knows how well he/she is serving is to have feedback, and lots of it.

So, the challenge your legislative committee places on your desk is that of getting your constituents who recreate on areas and in facilities that have been partially financed through LWCF, HUD-CDBG, RC&D, and other federally supported programs to email, fax, call, and meet with our senators and your congress person. For those of you that plan and/or provide services to park and recreation agencies, school districts, cities, counties, and our state, you, too, can make a difference by plugging away for these programs.

On an affirmative note, Congressman Rahall signed onto the congressional "Dear Colleague" letter supporting LWCF and asking for an appropriation of \$100 million. Our President and his administration suggested that LWCF be unfunded, which would be tantamount to permanently killing the program. Congressman Rahall joined 151 other congress people in calling for the program's preservation.

During the last session he emphatically backed the RC&D program.

As this report is being written WVRPA is trying to convince Senator Rockefeller to sign onto the Senate "Dear Colleague" letter.

Speaking as legislative chair for WVRPA I thank Raymond, Steve, and Roger for taking time out of their busy schedules to attend the NRPA Mid-Winter Forum, to stomp around the "Hill," and to be great overseers and superb company for this senior parks and recreation director. The four-part harmony, while not musical, was close, had good production, and was delivered with positive resonance. WVRPA's positions on legislative affairs were well represented as were our parks and recreation movement in general. Expression of appreciation also goes out to Senators Byrd and Rockefeller, Congressmen Mollohan and Rahall, and Congresswoman Capito for having their representatives meet with us.

Respectfully submitted,
 Jim McClelland, CLPC



2006 WVRPA POOL SURVEY

The West Virginia Recreation and Parks Association - Aquatics Section is conducting a survey of pools in our State. Please fill out a survey for each pool that your department operates and return to John Cooper, President, WVRPA, 222 W. Main St., Clarksburg, WV 26301 by April 30, 2006. Or fax to 304-624-1684. Results will be listed in the next WVRPA Newsletter or upon request.

Pool Name _____ City _____

___ Indoor ___ Outdoor Gallons of Water _____

Does your pool have: ___ Water Slides ___ Diving boards ___ Spray Ground ___ other water features (Please list) _____

Please list rates for the following age groups:

Group	Daily Admission	Season Pass
Under 6 or U _____ (Age)	_____	_____
Child (Ages _____)	_____	_____
Adult (Ages _____)	_____	_____

Please list attendance for 2005: _____

List number of pool staff hired & rate of pay

Outdoor/Indoor:

___ Lifeguards	\$ _____	___ Pool Managers	\$ _____
___ Cashiers	\$ _____	___ Concessions	\$ _____
___ Con. Manager	\$ _____	___ Slide Attendants	\$ _____
___ Locker Room Att.	\$ _____	___ Other (please list)	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____	_____	\$ _____

Lifeguard Certifications: (please list the % of your guards certifications)

___ Red Cross Lifeguard Certification ___ YMCA Lifeguard Certification
___ Ellis Lifeguard Certification ___ Other (please list) _____

Certified Pool Operators: (List the number of certified operators)

___ AFO (NRPA Aquatic Facility Operator) ___ CPO (U.S. Pool and Spa Certified Pool Operator)

Does your pool offer swimming lessons? ___ Yes ___ No Lifeguards Instruct? ___ Yes ___ No ___

Are you swimming instructors certified? ___ Yes ___ No
(list the certification)

___ Red Cross Water Safety Instructor ___ YMCA Swimming Instructor

Are you a member of the West Virginia Recreation & Parks Association? ___ Yes ___ No

Are you interested in membership information? ___ Yes ___ No

If yes, please list name and address: _____

Hershey Track and Field - Submitted by Jim McClelland

Thanks to very generous support of time and money the Hershey Track and Field program will continue this spring and summer. Ethel Lou St. Clair, who has been WVRPA's State Coordinator for the meet for years, and Cabell Midland Coach Chris Parsons, along with enough donors to finance administrative expenses have insured the continuance of the program. The Great Kanawha RC&D Council was one of several donors who has contributed \$500.00 toward the meet, and it has budgeted a like amount for FY 2007-2008.

With the emphasis being placed on youth health issues programs such as Hershey Track and Field are ideal. It involves youngsters nine to 14 years of age. While it is competitive the emphasis is upon exercise, it provides opportunities for rural as well as urban youngsters to be involved, and it is a fine family-oriented pursuit, for moms and pops, granddads and grandmothers, brothers and sisters, and aunts and uncles gather at the meets to cheer on their favorite runner.

Co-sponsored by WVRPA with NRPA the State Meet will again be held June 24 at Cabell Midland High. This meet, too, has been given the benefit of Ethel Lou's and Chris Parsons' volunteerism. Chris, one of our state's finer track coaches, has dedicated his track team as volunteer workers at a regional and the State meet.

Did you know that Hershey Track and Field started in West Virginia? It did! The founder was Dr. Donald Cohen of Charleston who was concerned about the alarming reports prepared by the President's Council of Physical Fitness and Sports. He envisioned a public playground activity aimed at introducing youngsters to physical fitness through basic track and field events. The program was first conducted on 36 playgrounds in Charleston, followed by a state-wide program in 1976, a 10-state regional competition in 1977, and then by a national meet in 1978 that was held at Marshall University. The Hershey Foods Corporation has been the proud sponsor of the North American program for years which is the largest youth sports program of its kind in the United States and Canada.

WVRPA park and recreation agencies who have not participated in the program need to do themselves a favor by putting forth the effort to get organizers and then the youth involved. It clearly is a quality re-creative opportunity. For information contact Ethel Lou St. Clair at (304) 528-5183 or 696-5954.

Let's make the 2006 Hershey Track and Field program our best yet!

KANAWHA COUNTY PARKS COMMISSION IS PROVIDING FACILITIES AND ASSISTING WITH THE 2006 SPECIAL OLYMPICS WEST VIRGINIA SUMMER GAMES!!

June 2nd – June 4th

Some of the events being held at park commission facilities will be Golf (9 hole event), Golf (skills event), tennis and cycling.

The Park Commission is excited to be able to participate in this great event. This will be the first time the State Games are not held on a college campus. As everyone knows this is a event that takes a lot of volunteers so if anyone is in the Charleston Area on this June weekend we are sure we can find something for you to do.

BIG PLANS FOR CLARKSBURG??

A new Family Aquatic Center and Amphitheater are in the plans of the City of Clarksburg Board of Park Commissioners according to John Cooper, Superintendent.

The Board has contracted with Brandstetter Carroll, Inc. to perform a feasibility study and design work for the new family aquatic center. The new facility would replace the existing 50 meter municipal pool at Veteran's Memorial Park. The first of its kind in West Virginia, the new aquatic center will have waterslides, lazy river and incorporate the existing children's interactive water play pool as well as a spray ground and new bath house. The funding for the \$3.6 million dollar facility is underway with several options available.

The amphitheater is also being designed by Brandstetter Carroll, Inc. It will also be located at Veteran's Memorial Park and will seat 1,000 to 1,500 people. The design is in the early stages and hopes are for a fall construction date.

A Monster of A Playground - Submitted by Jim McClelland

By Memorial Day 2006 the Greater Huntington Park and Recreation District's Milton's April Dawn Park Monster in Milton, West Virginia will be spitting forth water on youngsters and the young-at-heart in a new, unique playground. Helping the park district to design the facility is the Floyd-Browne Group. The monster was in turn created by Cherry Lion Studios near Atlanta, and the water elements were planned, manufactured, and supplied by one of the World's premier fountain companies, Crystal Fountains of Concord, Ontario, Canada. The park district has been working on this project for nearly a decade, and the construction has extended over the better part of two years. It remains to be seen how effective this design will be and what resources will be required to properly maintain it. The playground will be open to the public without charge and without barriers of any kind. More on this in the next issue of ReView.

Did You Know? - Submitted by Jim McClelland, Legislative Chair

Many are aware that singing barbershop harmony has been a creative recreation activity for men and women for many years. Some know that there are barbershop chapters serving harmonizers in the Morgantown-Fairmont, Charleston, Point Pleasant and Cabell County areas. However, not many know of the important role public parks played, and still do, in furthering the activity as a popular pursuit. In his book "Four Parts, No Waiting" Gage Averill tells of the quartet competitions sponsored in Central Park in New York City and in the Chicago Park System during the late 1930's, through the 1940's, and extending into the early 1950's. New York City, particularly championed the art of barbershop singing, and interestingly quartets back then were sometimes interracial. In fact, many quartets on the professional entertainment circuits of America during the latter part of the Nineteenth Century and early Twentieth Century were singers.

Anyway, great quartet competitions were sponsored by the New York City Parks Department with the strong backing of Mayor La Guardia and Robert Moses. As many as 10,000 to 15,000 people crowded into Central Park to listen to quartets compete for the championship. Certainly never before, and probably never since, have so many people attend such four-part harmony affairs. S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A. Inc. (now plugged as the Barbershop Harmony Society) along with the Sweet Adeline's have organized and promoted "barbershop" effectively through the years, but for one-time attendance events, and shows that caught the imagination of the public-at-large and the press, it was the park and recreation promotion that set the records. And, today that promotion continues, for hundreds, if not thousands, of quartet and chorus appearances take place in public parks throughout the U. S. and Canada.

If you haven't already, consider contacting your nearest barbershop chapter to have a quartet or chorus sing at one of your sports events this summer the National Anthem or "Take Me Out to the Ballgame", or invite them to participate in your next festival, or just ask them to stroll around your park singing "In the Good Old Summertime" or "I Was Strolling in the Park One Day." Better yet, organize a fundraiser around barbershop singing, and by all means encourage young and old singers in your community to participate in and enjoy the really fun and worthwhile recreational activity.

Online Off-Highway Vehicle Course -- Marshall University

Summer 2006 May 15-August 4

Planning and Design of OHV Trails

A course for graduate or undergraduate credit (3 semester hours) covering state-of-the-art planning and design of OHV trail systems. Taught entirely online -- no class meetings.

Instructor: Raymond Busbee

Enrollment Information: www.marshall.edu/muonline.ohv.asp

Statewide Trails Coordinator - Submitted by Jim McClelland

Bill Robinson who has handled federal trails applications submitted to the West Virginia Department of Highways has been appointed to the position of State Trails Coordinator. He started in his new position April 1, 2006.

WVRPA has been active in setting the stage for the creation of the position for two years. It retained the legal services of Attorney Fred Williams to draft bills for the creation of a state-wide coordinator, and the effort became a dynamic partnership with The West Virginia Trails Coalition (WVTC), the West Virginia Resource Conservation and Development Association (WVRC&DA), and the West Virginia Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects (WVASLA), all of whom helped pay for the services of Attorney Williams. During the past two legislative sessions a number of meetings were held to receive input into the drafting of the legislation. During the current session meetings were held with the Governor's Office, and early in the year Governor Manchin decided to create the position within WVDOT. After advertising the position within the department and making the candidate selection, an email was sent the last week of March to a variety of folks announcing the appointment of Mr. Robinson.

Time will tell whether the coalition did the right thing in refraining from pushing the Trails Coordinator Bill on the Legislature this year. We refrained at the suggestion of the Administration. But, for sure, Governor Manchin and the Legislature became aware of the need for a State Trails Coordinator because of the coalition, and this has resulted in positive action. The partnership's job is far from over. It must continue to grow and it will need to monitor the activity of the coordinator to provide assistance and see that state-wide trails issues are pursued. We all wish Bill the very best as he wrestles with his new-found responsibilities.

Our thanks go out to: Governor Manchin and his staff for their leadership in this cause; a variety of state legislators who stood ready to move the bill; Attorney Williams for his legal expertise and constant legislative input; Martha Ballman, President of WVTC, for her never-ending monitoring of the movement; Pete Williams, President of WVASLA for his support; Dr. Raymond Busbee for his efforts to enlighten all to the role and responsibilities of the state-wide coordinator; John Cooper, our very own president for his support; and Ralph LaRue for his insights and deft handling of some of the meetings. These, and many more, have been active partners.

WVRPA can take comfort in knowing that it played an important role in having this very important position created. However, it may not become comfortable now that the position is secure, for, the real work of developing state-wide trails and maintaining them properly remains the challenge.

Martinsburg-Berkeley County Parks & Recreation – Looking Ahead

It is sometimes difficult to keep up with the growth in the Eastern Panhandle, but the staff and board at Martinsburg-Berkeley County Parks & Recreation are certainly doing their best. During December, a group of park representatives met with state, county and city officials. Their target of discussion: adding three wings to the Berkeley 2000 Recreation Center which, according to Executive Director Steve Catlett, "was too small the day it opened in 2002." County and City Officials have agreed to dedicate \$500,000 each toward the project which is estimated at \$2 million. State and federal officials have been challenged to provide funding as well.

The primary purpose of expansion is to provide a permanent facility for the year-round gymnastics program which currently nets over \$34,000 per year and occupies one-half of the current gymnasium space. During the winter, the gymnastics program scales back class offerings because they are competing with boys basketball for gym space. In addition to a gymnastics wing, Catlett and the Board of Directors would like to add another basketball court. "With the reintroduction of middle school sports, gym space in Berkeley County is extremely tight," says Facility Coordinator, Bob Showe. An additional gym would help Berkeley-County Parks & Recreation expand tournaments, basketball, tennis, summer camps, adult fitness, open gym, volleyball and a myriad of other programs. The third wing would be dedicated to the tennis program which currently generates \$18,600 per year even though it operates primarily at outdoor courts during the warm weather, is squeezed in before basketball games during the evenings in the winter, or leases an indoor court for limited programming during inclement weather.

Although the need for the wings is obvious for an organization that generates nearly 70% of its operating budget, finding \$2 million for the project can seem like a daunting task, but Catlett is optimistic, "with the County and City officials supporting us, I feel confident that the expansion will happen."

CHESTNUT RIDGE PARK

Chestnut Ridge Park & Campground is surrounded by Coopers Rock State Forest and the West Virginia University Forest, creating a outdoor recreational area of over 16,000 acres. Open year round, the park offers visitors a variety of recreational facilities, activities and events Located 10 miles east of Morgantown, West Virginia on Interstate 68 (exit 15 / Coopers Rock).

Chestnut Ridge Park and Campground, Rt. 1 Box 267 Bruceton Mills, WV 26525
Phone: 304-594-1773 Toll Free: 888-594-3111 Fax: 304-594-1711
E-mail: mail@chestnutridgepark.com

Chestnut Ridge Park & Campground will be sponsoring its Annual Kids Fishing Rodeo and Picnic on Saturday, April 22 / 9:30 am to 1:00 pm. Boys and Girls will be competing for prizes in three age groups: 3 – 6; 7 - 10 and 11 - 15. The three longest fish in each age group wins a prize! In addition to the fishing rodeo, each participant and paying parent will be served a picnic style lunch, which includes a hotdog, drink and snack. Cost is \$2.00 per child (includes derby and lunch) and \$2.00 for any parent eating lunch For more information please see www.chestnutridgepark.com/events.html or call the park office at 594-1773.

Chestnut Ridge Park & Campground proudly presents our 3rd annual West Virginia Mountain Music Concert Series.

Our outdoor stage, next to Feather Lake and surrounded by wooded hills, provides an ideal setting to enjoy the music these mountains are famous for. Lawn Seating: Bring your own blanket or chair.
Cost : \$5 general admission / \$3 campers / 12 and under free. All concerts will be begin at 6:00 pm and end at approx 8:30 pm .Dogs are welcome ONLY if leashed & friendly.
Free Raffle at each concert from: Circle H Outfitters & Pizza Pro

Saturday, June 17th - The Hillbilly Gypsies
Saturday, July 1st (two shows) - The Back Porch Trio & The Strung Out String Banned
Saturday, July 15th - Halftime String Band
Saturday, July 29th - Mike Morningstar
Saturday, August 12th - 85 Flood
Saturday, August 26th - Rachel Eddy & Mo'town Rounders
Saturday, September 2nd - From The Hip

News from Bridgeport

The Bridgeport Parks and Recreation Department has some exciting upcoming plans. The Bridgeport City Council has recently supported plans for many upgrades to the Bridgeport Pool. The first step will be the addition of a Splash Pad feature. This unit will set adjacent to the pool facility and will serve as an attraction for families and young children. To see conceptual plans visit: <http://www.bridgeportwv.com/parksandrec/splashpad.cfm>. Other improvements include the addition of a water slide, a picnic pavillion and replacement of the pool fencing.

Winter activities are beginning to wind down including basketball leagues and much more. We are now gearing up for the busy season and have a complete line up of events planned for the upcoming months. Visit our website at: [http://www.bridgeportwv.com/parksandrec/2006 Summer Brochure.pdf](http://www.bridgeportwv.com/parksandrec/2006%20Summer%20Brochure.pdf) to view our summer activity guide.

Position Your Park District for Success

by Stephen Mongelluzzo

NEWS FLASH!!! Because you have a good working relationship with the news media doesn't mean that you successfully deliver your park district's messages. It means that you have a good working relationship with the media. Because you are relaxed during media interviews doesn't mean you successfully deliver your messages. It means that you are relaxed during media interviews.

Failing to prepare is preparing to fail.

It always amazes me how many park district spokespersons (and other government officials) who are very successful in their careers, who meticulously prepare for a board meeting, or who will anguish over every word as they prepare a speech, will just "wing it" when they do a media interview.

Do you usually drop everything to do an interview when a reporter calls? Going into an interview, do you feel you are the best person to do the interview because you know more about the park district than any one else? Do you think to yourself, "I've done dozens of interviews; I don't need to practice for media interviews?"

Do you develop messages for every interview? Do you develop messages for each program or service you publicize? Do you have talking papers with messages on recurring issues? Do you anticipate sensitive issues you will be asked to address, and prepare messages for each?

Failing to prepare is preparing to fail.

Yes, as famed UCLA basketball coach John Wooden constantly told his players, "Failing to prepare is preparing to fail." Did he mean that UCLA would lose every game? Of course he didn't. What he did mean was that in the close ones against good teams, his team could lose if they were not prepared. His teams had great talent, but how many teams and athletes with great talent don't win. UCLA won 10 NCAA titles in 12 years because they were also the best-prepared team.

Yes, failing to prepare is preparing to fail.

There are some very simple things you can do to position yourself and your park district for success when dealing with the news media. Some can be done right now—before your next interview. Others should be done each time a reporter calls for an interview.

The following are a dozen steps you can take to ensure that you and your park district will shine in interviews.

1. **Develop a media policy.** Most park districts have some kind of media policy. But does your media policy exist in writing? It should. Your policy should specifically identify who may talk to the media, what issues they can address, who handles sensitive and controversial topics, and who talks to the media in the absence of these individuals. If you have some employees who can talk to the media on certain issues but not on others, include examples in your policy. For instance, if managers at athletic facilities can talk to the media about the programs they supervise, but not about budget issues, specifically mention this limitation in your policy.

Finally, you should communicate your policy to all employees regularly (at least once every year). Emphasize to your employees that they should immediately refer all inquiries from the media to the designated person(s). Even seemingly innocent questions can become full interviews for the unsuspecting.

2. **Identify issues that the media may call you about.** Which issues, especially controversial and sensitive ones, might the media contact you about? The time to identify and prepare for these issues is not when a reporter calls, but when these topics are identified. Are you prepared to talk about safety at your facilities or a decrease in the programs you will offer right now?

3. **Identify issues you want to discuss with the media.** Which programs and services do you want to talk to reporters about? Many of these are ones that you talk about every day. Others might be one-time priorities. If providing a wide variety of high-quality services to local residents is an important goal for you, be prepared to discuss these services and your goal at every opportunity, not just when specifically asked about them.

4. **Develop messages for these issues.** Generate messages for each of the services, programs, or issues you have identified, and put them in writing. What actions do you want local residents to take, and how will they benefit or prevent a negative consequence by taking these actions? Think of each message as the headline you want for the story.

5. **Develop talking papers on recurring subjects.** Write talking points for those issues and programs that you will be discussing on a recurring basis. The talking paper should be a simple, one-page sheet with a bulleted list outlining the key points and your messages. You will find that many of these talking papers can be used from year to year with only minor updates.

6. **Gather "memory hooks" on a regular basis.** Do you have a file of success stories, quotations from authoritative sources, examples, analogies, and other "memory hooks"? You and each department should gather these on an ongoing basis so you will have them ready to use at a moment's notice. Tell your front-line employees what you are looking for since they have the most contact with park district users.

7. **Train your spokespersons, and this means you, too.** Have you and other park district spokespersons had media training? Or do you rationalize, "I've done dozens of interviews. I don't need training"? The best way to identify problems and to see if you successfully deliver messages is to be taped during training.

8. **"Buy time" when a reporter calls.** There is no rule that says you have to drop everything when a reporter phones. However, this is just what many park district spokespersons do. Unless you have recently talked about an issue and have your messages already prepared, buy time. Even 10-15 minutes will help you to be better prepared.

9. **Develop messages and anticipate questions for every interview.** Obviously, you will not anticipate every issue the reporter wants you to discuss. After you buy time, use it to develop messages for these one-time issues and put them in writing; then, anticipate the questions the reporter will ask. Also, have you saved any "memory hooks" you can use?

10. **Practice.** Sounds like the obvious next step, but how many spokespersons actually practice before an interview? After you have developed messages and anticipated questions, have someone ask you the questions, and see if you deliver your messages. Keep a cassette recorder handy in your office. Critique your practice.

11. **Know what you can and cannot talk about.** There are some issues you should not or cannot talk about. Do you have privacy rules, legal restrictions, political issues or policy questions to consider? Be familiar with them. Tell the reporter up-front if you cannot respond to certain questions. Don't be swayed from this position.

12. **Have your messages in front of you during interviews.** Once you have made the effort to develop your messages and to put them in writing, use them. Keep messages in front of you while talking to the reporter. Briefly glance at them from time to time. The only exception would be during a live TV interview, when you want to maintain good eye contact. Most spokespersons forget to deliver their messages because they don't refer to them during the interview. Also, don't deliver your messages only once. Repeat them.

Yes, following these 12 steps will take time, and we all seem to be short of time these days. However, the up-front time that you spend in preparing for media interviews can save you time in the future and, more important, can help you successfully deliver your park district's messages. Remember, **failing to prepare is preparing to fail!**

Stephen Mongelluzzo (stevemong@poweruser.com) is the founder of *FIRST* Communications, Mundelein, Illinois, and served as a public relations officer for the Internal Revenue Service for 23 years. He spoke at the 2001 NRPA Convention and has worked with many government organizations. In 2005, he published *Winning Media Interviews: Sure-Fire Tactics to Get Your Messages Out* (www.winningmediainterviews.com). His web page includes a "Media Tip of the Month."

“What’s Happening at BOPARC”

Dorsey Knob Park

Dorsey Knob Lodge- Inside renovations of the Lodge are nearly complete! The Recreation room will be finished soon and will feature a foosball table, air hockey table, big screen TV video games, refreshment machines, couches and chairs as well as a kitchenette and handicap bathrooms. The Lodge accommodates up to 16 overnight guests and features 8 bedrooms, 5 bathrooms, a commercial kitchen, fireplaces, master suite and a more than 100 square foot deck overlooking Morgantown. The Park was purchased for 1.3 million in 2002 and will be completely paid for in 2006.

Observation Deck Project at Sky Rock-

The observation deck that will surround “Sky Rock” at Dorsey Knob Park has been put out to bid. Completion date is unavailable at this time.

Conceptual Plans for the Gateway Center, Picnic Pavilions and Bathrooms are in the final stages!

Metropolitan Theatre

Air conditioning of this Historic theatre is on schedule with an anticipated completion date of May 1. BOPARC assumed administration of this facility in 2004.

Wiles Hill Community Senior Center

The BOPARC Senior Center will soon find be relocated from its current home in the Old Sabarton School to the New and Improved Wiles Hill School. Work continues to rehab the Wiles Hill building. The anticipated moving date is sometime in late June or early July!

Playground Upgrades

All of BOPARC’s playgrounds are receiving a face-lift! New fall zones, borders and play equipment have already been installed at several parks with the remaining to parks to be completed this summer

Ice Arena

The ice arena is now an all sports complex with the addition of a sports floor utilized in the summer months. A New Zamponi was delivered last October and a new Dasher Board System will be installed in August.

Dog park-

Morgantown’s first Dog Park was opened in September of 2005 along the Decker’s Creek Trail and is being enjoyed daily by local pet owner’s!

Summer Programs-

Summer Camp, Swim Lesson registration and Private Pool Party Rentals begin May 1st at BOPARC. This is typically a very busy day as the administrative office serves over 200 people before Noon! This year BOAPRC has added online registration to hopefully shorten lines and become more consumer friendly!

2006 Summer Concert and Movie Series Announced

The 2006 series is available online at www.boparc.org as is all of our upcoming summer camps and events.

Southern Region Conference -

Submitted by Jim McClelland

April has traditionally been the time for exciting educational and social experiences for we in the NRPA Southern Region. This year’s meeting in Louisville, KY will be no exception. In fact, that fair city being so close to we Mountaineers, there is no excuse for West Virginia not to be well represented in the conference. While there, attendees will want to take advantage of visiting some of the city’s Frederick Law Olmsted parks and its riverfront park. They are outstanding.

There’s talk about this being the last Southern Region Conference. Hopefully, NRPA won’t encourage this, for our region has been one of the strongest (we think the strongest) and one that has provided incredible national leadership. Pack you bags and head for Louisville, April 9 through 13.

National Youth Leadership Training



Looking for a simple but effective way to train your staff who work with youth? Start using the tool that agencies all over the nation are raving about: the National Youth Leadership Training! The training has been reviewed by hundreds of agencies in 18 states and their response is clear... this training tool is fantastic!

About the Online Training

CONTENT: Job-specific training for staff who work with youth of all ages. The 3 major topics include: Stress Management, Leadership Skills, and Communication/Conflict Resolution Skills.

TIME: Training requires 2 hours to complete, but does not have to be completed all at once. Staff may access the training for a week to complete it. Once they pass, they will receive a Certificate of completion.

COST: \$3.00 per staff member; a cost so small that it can be withdrawn from staff paychecks.

Previewing the Training

Get your FREE PREVIEW to evaluate the training. Sign up on the website or contact SIM directly at: info@youthleadercert.com

Testimonials

It is very informative and would be a great tool to use during the Summer Day Camp Counselor Orientation. It gives specific examples and guidelines on how to relieve stress, be a leader, maintain discipline prepare for work, work with others and manage your emotions.

- Jessica Campbell, City of Aiken, SC

I went through the entire course myself and I was pleased from an educator’s perspective by the way it engages people of all learning styles. It was simple and straightforward without being cheesy or insulting. The content contained good reminders for anyone who works with children on a regular basis.

- Amanda Zoellner, Massachusetts Audubon Society

The response from the staff has been tremendous! They found the training to be invaluable, especially the stress management piece!

- Michelle Park, Executive Director, OH

This was the smoothest, easiest summer that the staff could ever recall! Thank you.

- Mike Svetz, Charlottesville, VA

www.youthleadercert.com



Leaders Who Care...



Happy Kids...

For More Information or to Purchase the Training

Contact Sonia Bowie
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