



## President's Report

Peter Witt, Ph.D.

Greetings from Texas:

As you can tell from recent e-mails and letters, there is a lot happening with the Academy. For example, Jane Adams is making some excellent arrangements for a site at which to hold our Academy dinner in Reno; Steve Messerli and his committee have made great progress in securing sponsorship for the Gold Medal Awards and in reaching agreement with NRPA to continue to include the awards as part of the NRPA Congress opening ceremonies; Alice Conkey and her committee are soliciting nominations for the Academy's Extern Program; John Crompton and his committee are soliciting nominations for the 2004 Pugsley Awards; and Geof Godbey and his group are in the process of selecting the 2004 best JRPA paper award. In addition, a number of our other committees are moving forward with their responsibilities.

Among the things that impress me about the Academy is the degree to which things mostly run themselves. We have excellent committee chairs and members who willingly and with great commitment undertake the work of the Academy. My job as President is to get good people in place and let them do their jobs: this is how it should be.

I have been thinking lately about the role of service in our society. It seems to me that people "giving back" something to the system that has supported their development is important for each of us. While most of us are in the "business" of government service, many times the commitments we make, as volunteers, are the most important things we do. It is in this arena that we demonstrate our commitment and energy, beyond those things we are paid to do. Academy members demonstrate these qualities in endless ways. Whether it is Jane Adams taking her

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own time to drive to Reno to check out sites for our Banquet (and being willing to chair the Legends Committee), Karla Henderson continuing to be involved in the research committee despite upheavals in her work setting, or Walt Johnson, Max Ramsey and John Potts giving up some of their well-earned retirement to further the interests of the Academy, Academy members have demonstrated time and again their willingness to make election to the Academy more than an honor.

These first six months as President have helped me get a better glimpse of the commitment of our members and the quality work being done by our various committees. To each of you who contribute in so many ways to moving forward the agenda of the Academy, thank you.

### **AMERICAN ACADEMY FOR PARK AND RECREATION ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCES FINALISTS FOR 2004 GOLD MEDAL AWARDS.**

SCHAUMBURG, IL -- Finalists for the 2004 National Gold Medal Awards program were announced by the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration.

These awards are presented annually to communities throughout the United States for excellence in park and recreation management, in cooperation with the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). The Porter Athletic Equipment Company and MUSCO Lighting sponsor the Gold Medal Awards program.

#### CLASS I (POPULATION 250,000+)

- Austin Parks and Recreation Department, Austin, Texas
- Fort Worth Parks and Community Services Department, Ft. Worth, Texas
- Lee County Department of Parks and Recreation, Fort Meyers, Florida
- Miami-Dade Park and Recreation Department, Miami, Florida

#### CLASS II (100,000 – 250,000)

- Lake Metroparks, Concord Twp., Ohio
- Peoria Community Services Department, Peoria, Arizona
- Tallahassee Parks and Recreation Department, Tallahassee, Florida
- Tempe Community Services Dept, Parks and Recreation Division, Tempe, Arizona

#### CLASS III (50,000 – 100,000)

- Bend Metropolitan Park and Recreation District, Bend, Oregon
- Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department, Bloomington, Indiana
- Plymouth Parks and Recreation Department, Plymouth, Minnesota
- Schaumburg Park District, Schaumburg, Illinois

#### CLASS IV (25,000 – 50,000)

- Englewood Parks and Recreation Department, Englewood, Colorado
- Glen Ellyn Park District, Glen Ellyn, Illinois
- Grand Junction Parks and Recreation Department, Grand Junction, Colorado
- James City County Division of Parks and Recreation, Williamsburg, Virginia

#### CLASS V (LESS THAN 25,000)

- Bloomingdale Park District, Bloomingdale, Illinois
- Breckenridge Leisure Services Department, Breckenridge, Colorado
- Evans Department of Parks and Recreation, Evans, Colorado
- Lake Forest Parks and Recreation Department, Lake Forest, Illinois

Selection of the Grand Award Winner in each class will be based upon service, diversity, continuing development, extent of future planning, degree of participant involvement and citizen support. Winners will be announced at the National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPRA) National Congress Opening Session, October 13, 2004, in Reno, Nevada.

Judges for the 2004 Awards are nationally recognized authorities in the field of parks and recreation management. They are: Chairperson Chris Jarvi (Associate Director, National Park Service, Washington DC); Bertha Cato (Associate Dean, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida); Cindy Messinger (Director Park Services, Fairfax County, Virginia); Richard Johns (Director, Parks and Recreation, Santa Barbara, California); Terry Trueblood (Director, Parks and Recreation, Iowa City, Iowa).

## Pugsley Awards

### John Crompton, Chair

*This is the third in a series of write-ups on current Academy members who have received the Pugsley Award.*

**William R. “Bill” Bird** received the Pugsley Local Level award in 1988. He was born in Austin, Texas. After completing high school and serving two years in the U.S. Army Paratroopers, he set his sights on becoming an administrator in the parks field and entered Texas A & M University, where he graduated with a degree in Landscape Architecture.

Bird’s first professional job was with the Wichita Falls, Texas, Parks and Recreation Department, where he served as superintendent of parks. During the two years he worked there, he carried out a construction program which included the establishment of irrigation systems in four major parks and the construction of parks and sports facilities in 16 other areas. With this background he moved to the desert city of Odessa, Texas, in 1954; when he arrived, there was not a single developed facility in the parks and recreation department. By 1960 Odessa had a model park system—four swimming pools; neighborhood parks within walking distance of every citizen; three major areas which contained band shells, picnic facilities for large groups, creative play areas, and major sports centers for organized games; and a city beautification program was well on its way.

His outstanding work in Odessa received broad recognition and he was approached by A. D. Barnes (winner of the Pugsley Medal in 1958) to join the Metropolitan Dade County Park and Recreation Department as a district supervisor. In 1966 he became assistant director. Then he left Metro for a short time to help build a new town, Miami Lakes, with the Sengra Development Corporation as senior vice president. True to form, Miami Lakes was a community planned and built around lakes, parkways, recreation centers, and more than 100 mini-parks.

After county voters approved a large bond referendum, the excitement of being able to complete ambitious projects for Metro lured him back into county government. First, he was director of the massive General Services Department in 1975, and then director of the Park and Recreation Department in 1977. Since that time, Bill managed to double the acreage of the county’s public parkland making the Metro-Dade County Park and Recreation Department one of the largest and most opportunity diverse urban park systems in the United States. In addition to directing a substantial construction and development program, enabling new parks to be dedicated on almost a monthly basis, he completely reinvented the department’s revenue producing facilities, demanding that newly generated profits be invested back into the park system. His creative approach to proprietary and enterprise operations throughout the park system allowed for growth in an era when most urban park and recreation departments were severely cutting programs and services. He had the ability to combine the recreation needs of the community with a strong emphasis on high quality aesthetics. He was also especially adept at working with other municipal departments to enhance his parks and recreation agenda.

Perhaps his most stunning achievement was the construction of Metrozoo, a cage-less, zoogeographic environment for animals on 750 acres in South Dade County. Metrozoo rapidly became one of Florida’s top tourist attractions and one of the 10 top zoos in the United States. Because the atmosphere is so close to the wild, it became an important international location for breeding some of the world’s most endangered species, such as the lowland gorilla.

A man with a colorful and charismatic personality, Bill Bird was loved and respected by the people who worked for him. He cared for his staff personally and professionally. The organization he built personified his mantra of “team, loyalty, integrity”...and, hard work. His staff were often heard saying: “What are evenings, weekends and holidays for, but to work?!” Bill was quoted as

saying: "I'm constantly looking for doers. Start with the right attitude at the top and it will eventually sift down to the lowest level." He also had many famous sayings, or "Bird-isms". Examples include: "The best is yet to come!"; "The parks needs to sparkle!"; "That's a pregnant idea!"; "If we stop building, we die!"; "We're the damned-ness business conglomerate imaginable"; "Get to work!" and, "Don't waste time swatting boogers in the corner!" [Translation: instead of thinking how something can't be done, think about how it can be done!].

Bird was recognized as a champion of conservation as early as 1965 when he won the Bronze Everly Award, presented to him by Mrs. Lyndon Baines Johnson. Other prestigious awards and appointments include the National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) Distinguished Professional Award, the National Association of Counties Park and Recreation Organizations' (NACPRO) Fellow Award, the Florida Recreation and Park Association's (FRPA) Outstanding Service Award, the National Park Service Southeast Recreation Award, member of the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration, member of NACPRO's Board of Directors, and member of the Urban Park and Recreation Alliance. In 1979 and again in 1987, the Department won the prestigious Gold Medal Award for outstanding park and recreation management from the National Sports Foundation. Other national awards received during his tenure included the National Association of Counties (NACo) Information Officers Award of Excellence, National Arts and Humanities Award, more than 50 NACo Achievement Awards, American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums Awards for captive breeding, American Planning Association Award of Excellence for Park, Recreation and Open Space Planning, and the U.S. Olympic Committee Commendation for Outstanding Service.

Bill Bird was once described by a Miami radio personality as a "roll up your sleeves and get it done man". That comment typified the professional career of a man who spent more than 40 years building and managing park and recreation systems

in Texas and Florida. On the occasion of his retirement in 1994, Bill indicated that rather than list past accomplishments, awards, commendations or accolades, he was most happy with the knowledge that his work – like that of all park and recreation professionals – will be around for many years to come.

### Sources

Written by Howard Gregg, Assistant Director, Metropolitan Dade County Parks and Recreation Department, supplemented with material from *Parks and Recreation*, October 1965.

## NRPA National Forum Goals

After more than three hours of wireless keypad voting and roundtable discussions, members of the NRPA National Forum reached consensus this past Saturday on a set of nine operational goals for the next fiscal year, which begins July 1.

Forum members reached this consensus after considering 83 goals suggested by branches, sections, councils, committees, affiliates, and individual NRPA members. Each of these groups was asked to suggest goals within the context of the NRPA Board of Trustees-approved *Vision 2010* document.

The nine recommended goals are:

**Goal 1:** Establish recreation and preservation of natural resources as core values in society through public policy and legislation that affirms youth development, health, community development, and safety.

**Goal 2:** Enhance the education and development of park, recreation, and tourism professionals as well as citizens and students.

**Goal 3:** Improve internal communication with members through branches.

**Goal 4:** Develop a comprehensive marketing plan including both internal and external strategies.

**Goal 5:** Increase sponsorship and facilitation of research that validates the economic, environmental, educational, and health value and benefits in acquiring and maintaining public parks and open space and in the conservation of land and water resources to citizens and elected officials.

**Goal 6:** Research existing and potential target markets for membership development; decide which target markets to focus on in 2004-05, and develop an integrated marketing and communications plan to cultivate these audiences.

**Goal 7:** Develop stronger relationships among state, local, regional, and NRPA entities.

**Goal 8:** Support more protected open space at local, state, and national levels to provide opportunities for healthy exercise for preventive measures as recommended by the U.S. Surgeon General.

**Goal 9:** Continuously monitor and update critical information needs for professionals, especially by providing a means by which members can make a request.

The forum-recommended goals will now be turned over to NRPA staff members, who will revise them to fit the "SMART" goal format, which means they must be specific, measurable, achievable, results-oriented, and time-bound. Once this is done, they will be submitted to the NRPA Executive Committee for approval. If approved, staff will then develop a budget that provides resources to assure goal implementation. The revised goals and the supporting budget will be presented to the NRPA board for final ratification at its meeting in Bismarck, N.D., on May 22.

NRPA Past President Jonathan Korfhage, CPRP, chaired the goal-setting session. NRPA Director of National Partnerships Kathy Spangler, CPRP, provided staff support.

## Announcements

**Nominating Committee:** The AAPRA Nominating Committee has solicited nominations to serve on the Board of Directors for 2004 – 2005. Nominations were open for the offices of President-elect, Secretary, Treasurer and two Directors-at-large. Those elected will take office immediately following the National Congress in Reno.

**Pugsley Award Committee:** Nominations may be submitted for qualified individuals to be recognized with the Cornelius Amory Pugsley Medal. This is the most prestigious national award to recognize outstanding contributions to the promotion and development of public parks, recreation and conservation. Nominations are due June 16, 2004 to: Dr. John Crompton, Chair, Pugsley Award Committee (979) 845-5320.

**Ethnic Minority Scholarship:** Nominations and applications may be submitted for a scholarship to attend the NRPA Congress in Reno, NV. The goal of this scholarship is to encourage attendance by members of ethnic minorities who would not otherwise be able to attend. Participants will meet with NRPA leadership and will attend various Congress education sessions and Board of Trustees meetings. A primary focus of the program is to inspire future participation and leadership in NRPA, and to develop contacts with NRPA trustees and other professionals from around the nation.

NRPA will provide up to four complimentary full-package registrations to the Congress, which includes all educational sessions, the Career Development Center, entrance to the NRPA Exposition and social events. All other expenses are to be paid by the participant or his/her agency.

Application Deadline: postmarked by July 15, 2004  
All applicants will be notified by August 15, 2004.