

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Coming this month: Annual Year-in-Review Trilogy

THIS WEEK: The FACES JANUARY 8: The PLACES JANUARY 15: The STORIES

Welcome to 2010!

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WEEKLY NEWSPAPER OF THREE RIVERS AND SEQUOIA~KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARKS

The 2K decade

TELLING IT
LIKE IT IS

BY SARAH ELLIOTT

No matter when you think the recent millennium began, there is no denying that there are 10 years of the 2000s that are now in the past. As of today, we enter 2010 (pronounced twenty-ten, not two-thousand-ten or two-oh-ten).

But let's look back over the decade, which started when gas was \$1.25 a gallon, but at least didn't end with it eclipsing \$4 per gallon, as it did in '06. Way back when, when postage stamps were 29 cents and lickable, and now are 44 cents and mostly self-adhesive.

We've bid goodbye to floppy disks, cassettes, yellow pages, and our rolodex, and embraced iPods, Blackberries, and iPhones. We are now entertained by reality TV, social networking, weblogs, and YouTube. CDs have come and mostly gone; DVDs and downloads have replaced VHS.

We've added new verbs to our vocabulary: googling, blogging, texting, friending, and tweeting. We have new "conveniences" in our lives like automated phones (press 1...) and online banking. But use those wireless devices

—see **DECADE**, page 9

Three Rivers and its chain stores

Tire chains must be in vehicle to be allowed entry into Sequoia-Kings Canyon during winter months.

by JOHN ELLIOTT

Every city in America is indistinguishable from the next due to its corporate-owned chain stores. But Three Rivers has chain stores of a different kind...

While most local tourist-related businesses are expecting to end the year slightly down from 2008, tire chain sales and rentals are booming. Visit any of the three area outlets during a winter weekend – Kaweah General Store, Three Rivers Chevron, and Totem Market – and you'll

see a morning lineup that by mid-afternoon has local tire chain inventories maxed out.

The boom in the tire chain rental business is weather-related so when there's even a threat of snow in the nearby mountains, Sequoia National Park rangers require all vehicles to carry chains. All but the 4x4 vehicles with mud/snow tires will generally need to use the chains to visit the popular attractions and snow play areas around Giant Forest and Wolverton.

Most visitors arrive knowing



CHAIN GANG: In this 2004 file photo, Dick Martin (right), then-superintendent of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, assists a park visitor with the installation of his tire chains.

they might be required to carry chains but where to get them and how to use them is a new experience for many and often adds to their mountain adventure. Each of the three local outlets has some subtle differences in their prices and rental policies.

Kaweah General Store's policy has been the same for the past several seasons and makes

and two in the 1980s — were within a half-inch of the current season's Dec. 31 total of 7.40 inches. Two of those seasons (1984-85 and 1967-68) ended below normal and two (1985-86, 1968-69) ended above normal.

Any way you crunch the numbers, this year the handwriting is in the proverbial logbook — Kaweah Country is on track for a normal precipitation season and plenty of snow in the nearby mountains.

some chain sizes available for purchase. The basic cable-style tire-chains rental for the day user with a smaller vehicle is \$20 per day; deposit on the rental of tire chains is \$50, refundable upon return of the chains.

If a longer rental period is needed, or if the motorist simply wants to purchase a set of chains,

—see **CHAINS**, page 10

The year in weather

by JOHN ELLIOTT

So what kind of weather year was 2009 and what does it say about the next six months that remain in the current precipitation season?

In a word, Kaweah Country is on track toward "normal" — meaning normal rainfall in Three Rivers that for the past 50 years has been 20 inches. The current figure as of Dec. 31, 2009, is 7.40 inches.

Here's some historical rainfall data, which lends some interesting evidence that the 2009-2010

season will be a normal one.

The lowest total in the last 50 years on a December 31 occurred in 1990 (also the last blue moon on a Dec. 31) — 1.45 inches. From the start of the season on July 1 until the end of the calendar year there were four rain events. The entire 1990-91 season ended with a total of 16.57 inches.

The highest total by New Year's Eve occurred in 1982 — 14.13 inches. The season's total for 1982-83 was a drought-busting 44.25 inches.

Four years — two in the 1960s

FOR THE RECORD

We might as well start the New Year off with a correction. In the December 25, 2009, issue, the "Kaweah Country Christmas Card" that featured Three Rivers Bed & Breakfast had an incorrect address and street number. It should have been 42490 Kaweah River Drive and 561-4270.

While we're at it, in the December 19, 2008, issue, the Donald Mosley, DDS, Kaweah Country Christmas Card had the wrong phone number (but we're making progress, as it was correct this year!).

Can you guess one of our New Year's resolutions?

• KAWEAH COUNTRY OUTLOOK: three rivers • lemon cove • woodlake •

NEW YEAR'S SKY WATCH

Saturday, January 2	Sunday, January 3	Monday, January 4	Tuesday, January 5	Wednesday, January 6	Thursday, January 7	Friday, January 8
Clouds and sun Hi 59 • Lo 38	Clouds and sun Hi 60 • Lo 40	Clouds and sun Hi 59 • Lo 40	Clouds and sun Hi 59 • Lo 41	Cloudy Hi 56 • Lo 39	Chance of showers Hi 56 • Lo 39	Chance of showers Hi 58 • Lo 39

It happens only once in a blue moon, and scientists say a blue moon is exactly what we saw in the sky on New Year's Eve. The term "blue moon" doesn't in anyway relate to the moon's current color, it simply refers to the second full moon in a calendar month, something that hasn't happened on a New Year's Eve since December 1990. It is also the 13th moon of 2009. The next New Year's Eve blue moon will rise in 2028.