

Redbud Festival
and
Woodlake Rodeo
and so much more
this weekend!

THE Kaweah Commonwealth

A JOURNAL FOR THOSE WHO LABOR AND WHO THINK

50¢

PRESORTED STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
THREE RIVERS, CA
PERMIT NO. 20

Volume 18, No. 19

www.kaweahcommonwealth.com

May 8 - 14, 2009

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

Lake Kaweah is crime scene

By JOHN ELLIOTT

When it comes to petty crime, Lake Kaweah park rangers have just about seen it all. The remote location, especially at night, has numerous areas that invite criminal activity.

On the morning of Wednesday, April 29, shortly after sunrise, a lake employee discovered the burned-out hulk of an automobile at Kaweah Recreation Area No. 2. Apparently, the barely recognizable Chevy Cobalt was stolen in Visalia and ditched near the boat ramp.

After a joyride, it's not uncommon for the thief or thieves to torch the vehicle in an attempt to destroy any evidence that might be obtained from the scene.

A CHP officer was summoned and filed the standard accident report. Anyone who might have seen something suspicious that morning is asked to call the Visalia CHP at 733-6767.

In a separate incident, a thief broke into the construction trailer in the parking area of the new boat ramp east of the entrance to

Slick Rock. A number of tools, including a new leaf blower and construction materials worth several thousand dollars, were stolen in the heist.

The break-in occurred sometime late Saturday night or early Sunday morning, May 2 to 3. According to a report filed by Valerie McKay, park ranger, the hasp with the lock still locked was ripped off and tossed away nearby.

On Wednesday, May 6, a Lake Kaweah visitor was parked alongside the road near Horse Creek. He told a sheriff's deputy that while he was away from the vehicle someone broke in and removed a laptop computer and XM satellite radio receiver. The police report estimated the loss to be \$1,100.

Park rangers are reminding all visitors to always use caution and be extra vigilant in the busy summer season. If you have information in these break-ins or to report suspicious activity at Lake Kaweah, call 597-2301.

Town Meeting addresses local, county issues

By JOHN ELLIOTT

Regular attendees of the monthly Town Hall sponsored by the Three Rivers Village Foundation have known for some time they can count on learning about a variety of topics. Last Monday night's forum at the Three Rivers Memorial Building was no exception.

The agenda featured an array of topics from fire safety to septic system maintenance tips. Lt. Dave Galloway of the Tulare County Sheriff's Department was first among a procession of speakers.

Lt. Galloway reminded the audience that this is river rafting season and there is the usual group of rafting companies that

are licensed to operate on the Kaweah River. With more river use comes an annual rise in crime so more deputies will be assigned to patrol throughout the busy summer season.

Arlin Talley, who spoke on behalf of the local chamber of commerce, said the group has a new slate of officers. He also said that Lake Kaweah is planning a grand opening for the Slick Rock boat ramp in the next couple of weeks.

Deb Schweizer, fire education specialist, spoke for Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. In addition to her announcement that the park planned 17 prescribed burns this season, she introduced

YUCCAS IN SEQUOIA



IT'S EASY to see why Mormon settlers referred to the yucca as "The Lord's Candle." The tall, showy blooms are currently resplendent in various shapes and forms just above the park headquarters at Ash Mountain. Soon they will truly light up the hillsides on both sides of the Kaweah canyon as they reach peak bloom, attaining heights of 10 to 20 feet.

Kevin Hendricks, the new chief ranger, who assumed the duties of J.D. Swed. Ranger Swed retired at the end of last year.

Supervisor Allen Ishida said that an Oak Preservation Plan is currently being drafted by county planners. A discussion item on the project is scheduled to be part of the next Planning Commission meeting on Wednesday, May 13.

Supervisor Ishida also reported that the expansion of the county's

new ag museum is moving forward. The focus of the new exhibit and research center is the history of agricultural laborers in Tulare County.

Next up was a panel of fire experts including Kaweah Battalion chief Robin Peretto of Cal Fire and Tulare County Fire Chief Steve Sunderland. Chief Peretto said Cal Fire has developed a sample vegetation patch near Highway 190 that helps determine when seasonal

vegetation becomes volatile fuel.

Though the announcement was low-key, he said, no more hazard-reduction burning will be permitted in the current season effective May 1. The official onset of fire season is just around the corner and the foothills face some serious risk in the already drought-like conditions.

Tulare County Fire Department

—see MEETING, page 7

KAWEAH COUNTRY OUTLOOK: three rivers • lemon cove • woodlake

Saturday, May 9	Sunday, May 10	Monday, May 11	Tuesday, May 12	Wednesday, May 13	Thursday, May 14	Friday, May 15
Sunny Hi 90 • Lo 58	Sunny Hi 90 • Lo 59	Sunny Hi 91 • Lo 59	Sunny Hi 89 • Lo 60	Sunny Hi 85 • Lo 58	Sunny Hi 88 • Lo 58	Sunny Hi 88 • Lo 58

LAKE KAWEAH as of May 7, 2009

689.49 feet pool elevation
134,450 acre feet
1,787 cfs inflow
72 cfs outflow

Lake Kaweah is currently rising approximately two feet per day in elevation.