

Voices In My Head: Look Away Wavers

By P.J. O'Leary

Does it seem to you that there are more "look away" wavers these days?

Look aways are the people who know that because they live in a small town they are, in their minds at least, bound by an expectation of familiarity.

Look aways fall into two distinct categories, and I suspect that neither would want to be confused with the other. The first group is primarily male, and could be best described as painfully, begrudgingly friendly if push comes to shove. For them, eye contact and a smile are a signal of genetic weakness. Better to avert the eyes and prepare for battle while lifting two fingers above the wheel.

The second, and considerably

larger group, consists of those who look away as they wave because of the very real fear that they may wave and smile and get NOTHING back.

If you're new to Vernonia, allow me to toss you this piece of advice. You cannot lose with a look and wave. At worst, the person passing the other way sees the wave too late and feels like a dink. That's a win/not lose situation, so don't be the one left holding the bag.

I should add that there are people in town who, while wonderful people, are "absolutely under no circumstances" wavers. Some are just incredibly focused individuals, while others are legally blind and have not had an "actual" driver's license in many years.

Still best to wave though. What could it hurt?

Internship Program Earns Two Ranger Jobs *continued from front page*

restrooms, mowing and weed eating, opening and closing day use areas, and even presenting interpretive programs. Steward is working this season as the assistant to Jim Addington, the Park Operations Manager. Skanes is working on camp duty on the night shift this season and enforces rules and performs other duties in the campgrounds. Miller says that the park usually rotates the PRAs so they gain experience working in a variety of positions with different responsibilities throughout the season. "They never do the same thing in a day, there is always some variety," says Miller.



Bridger Steward performing park maintenance at Stub Stewart State Park

including safety training on equipment, learning how to properly and efficiently clean rest rooms, and learning "verbal judo" where they acquire the skills to present a standard message to visitors and deal with difficult guests.

Skanes says his experience as an intern has really helped prepare him for the job world. "The training is great and they really teach us how to do things the right way and up to state standards. They teach us to work hard and teach us a great work ethic."

Steward says he has really enjoyed seeing the park change and mature over the several years he has worked there. In fact

he was part of the color guard as a cub scout for the grand opening ceremony at the park back in 2007. "It's been really interesting being here for the grand opening, then getting hired for the internship, and coming back now and seeing the full spectrum of what goes on here," says Steward. "I've really had a chance to see how the park has changed over the years. It's been an awesome experience."

Miller says if a PRA comes back for another season, normally they will be put in a different position so they can cross train and gain more skills. "If they show an interest in developing a certain skill or working in a certain area of the park, like trail building, we try to give them that opportunity."

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