

NEWSLETTER

Alcatraz Has New Head Ranger of Interpretation

Starting this month Alcatraz has a new head of interpretive rangers on the island. Her name is Kathryn Deskal, and she has been with the National Park Service for 25 years. She has worked previously at Grand Canyon National Park in Arizona, and at the Maritime Museum in San Francisco. Her jobs have included interpretation, outreach, fee programs, and education. We will be setting up a FOCWA board meeting with her to introduce ourselves, to acquaint her with the goals of FOCWA, and to do some planning for projects and events for the coming year.

Living History Day on Alcatraz

Living History Day - also known as Civil War Day - was held on October 11th and it was special for a couple of reasons. That same day was the Blue Angels Air Show, as part of the Fleet Week celebration in San Francisco, so the Civil War re-enactors were able to watch the show along with the hundreds of visitors on the island. And for a small group of re-enactors and FOCWA members, there was the opportunity to have a sleep-over in the cells that night. Ranger John Cantwell was a fine host, giving a night tour of the island, with the sparkling lights of the city providing a beautiful cityscape to the group as they walked the agave trail. They also viewed the casemate on the north face of the island and visited the hospital, which has a whole different aspect at night. The night was unusually balmy so the overnights were not as cold in their cells as they thought they would be. Our own FOCWA member, Constance Smith, slept in the Birdman's Cell in D-block and mused how would Stroud have reacted had he known that years later people would be sleeping in his cell - as a treat! She also realized what a special event this was, since the Park Service may not be doing sleepovers like this for some time to come, so after 20 years as a volunteer on Alcatraz she jumped at the chance. Our thanks to John Nevins for organizing the event, Brad Schall for getting the lunches, and the rangers for helping to make this bi-annual event a success.