



# John Muir Charter School Pomona CCC **GRIT**

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California Conservation Corps—Pomona Satellite



## POMONA SATELLITE SENDS THREE TO BACKCOUNTRY

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Ride Of The Month

For some April 20<sup>th</sup> is just another regular Monday, which means class A uniforms and another work week ahead. However for a chosen few April 20<sup>th</sup> signifies the beginning of the 2009 Backcountry Trails Program. To these corpsmembers this means the beginning of a five and a half month physically and mentally challenging experience. Our Pomona center is fortunate to have three of our best chosen for the Backcountry program. These include Joey Brooks from crew one, Luis Garcia from crew two, and Colton Kegeler from crew two. Everyone is very much aware of the challenges that await these three gentlemen, but not everyone knows what it is like to be committed to tackling these challenges. There must be plenty of emotions building up knowing that civilization will be nothing but memory for five and a half months. I had a chat with the chosen three and asked about their thoughts toward their upcoming challenges.

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### BACKCOUNTRY BOUND

From left

Joey Brooks, Luis Garcia, Colton Kegeler



Josh Behrens-Javier Gallardo From CM to C-1

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

Once upon a time, Javier Gallardo and Joshua Behrens, sat here in Pomona as corpsmembers. Today, Javier is a Conservationist 1 at the Inland Empire center and Joshua Behrens is a Conservationist1 at Camarillo. Both reported to their respective centers in Mid-March

“Hi, I’m Josh” Mementos...

### Contributors

John Berge; Advisor

Carol Aguayo; Features

James Burthe; Gamer Review/Commentary

Andrew Coll; Ride-of-the-Month

Harvey Piggee; Music/Concert Reviews





## Backcountry-cont.

Joey Brooks was selected to go to Kings Canyon National Park. Kings Canyon National Park is about 272 miles away from our Pomona Satellite Center. Don't think however that anyone in the program stays in one spot. Joey, along with everyone else in the program will travel to different locations. A question that many are probably asking is why? So, I asked Joey why he decided to apply for a program that is notorious for being extremely challenging. His answer was simple. He said that he wants to go out there to test his limits. He wants to challenge his body and his mind to the core. Joey also said that the things he is going to miss the most are his family and friends. Once he is out in the Backcountry he won't be seeing his family and friends for another five and a half months. I asked him what he expects from the program. "I expect the worse," Joey stated. "If I prepare myself for the worst conditions possible, then it won't be that bad." I guess there is no way to fail if you ready yourself for the absolute worst conditions out there. I asked him if he feels nervous about having committed to such a program. He said he is nervous because he has to leave his family behind. He is also nervous about the hard work. Joey said he does not want to fail himself out there. For the most part, however, Joey is excited to begin his adventures in the Backcountry.

Luis Garcia has been in the CCC for over a year now. However, the time has come for him to join Americorps for five and a half months. Luis was placed on the Stanislaus National Forest crew. Stanislaus is a whole 385 miles away from our center. That is a long way from home. Luis knows that he will have to call Stanislaus his new home, so home won't be far away at all for him this summer. When asked why he applied, Luis said that he wants a new experience, a new adven-

ture. I'm sure that the Backcountry program won't let him down. He said that he expects the program to be similar to another spike, like the many that he has been on with his crew (crew #2). He also feels that the work shouldn't be too hard. He feels absolutely ready for the physical challenges that await him. His biggest fears about the program are being stuck out in the wilderness. He fears the dangers of wildlife. Luis said, "I don't want to be eaten by a bear." I hope the same for him and I'm sure he'll be okay. When asked what he is going to miss the most about his home in Pomona, Luis said that he is going to miss his family, friends, girlfriend, and his crew here at the CCC. Luis said that he expects to learn how to survive on his own out there. He also said that he wants to learn the best ways to get along with the new people that he will encounter out there. Luis said that while out there he is going to have the time of his life. He is going to make the best of the experience. He ended by saying, "No regrets!"

Colton Kegeler from crew #2 is going to the furthest Backcountry location of all. He was placed on Klamath National Forest crew. The Klamath National Forest is a whopping 665 miles away from our CCC center. This is an extremely long way from home. When asked the million dollar question: Why? Colton said that he knows the program has a lot to offer and that he has a lot to learn from it. He said that he has heard that the Backcountry Program is the experience of a lifetime. Colton feels that this program will be the best way for him to learn about himself. When asked what he expects from the program he replied that he expects for the work to be challenging. However, he feels prepared enough to handle it. Because of the crew he has been with, he feels that he can overcome the challenges that will be thrown his way. Colton

said that his biggest fears about going to the Backcountry are being injured out there, the different personalities that he will meet (he wants to be able to get along with everyone as best as he can), and being away from home for so long. "A lot can change in five and a half months," he said. The things he is going to miss the most are his friends, the camaraderie of his crew, his dad, his cat, and the company of those that he already knows. He said that he isn't going to miss any of his material possessions. Colton said that while in the Backcountry Program he wants to learn new PT exercises, he wants more experience with hand tools, he wants to learn more about trail and rock work. Most importantly, however, Colton wants to learn about himself. He said he wants to fix any character flaws that he might have. Colton said he has no regrets about joining Backcountry. He will miss his loved ones, but that is a sacrifice he is willing to make in order to have the experience of a lifetime.

Well, you three gentlemen will definitely be missed. I think I speak for everyone at the CCC when I say good luck to you in your adventure in the Backcountry. For those of you who are staying here at the Pomona Center, don't forget to say your goodbyes and good lucks to Joey, Luis, and Colton. Next week these guys will no longer be in Pomona. Instead, they will embark on their separate adventures somewhere up north in the mountains. I hope that all of your expectations are met and that you truly have the time of your lives out there. Be safe out there and don't forget about those that you are leaving behind. Good luck!

*~Carolynn Aguayo*

## Writers Block

Are you one of those who believes that when your hand itches, you will be coming into money? Have you been somewhere and think to yourself, "I have been here before." Do you, like 40% of Americans believe that you have been abducted by aliens?

How about premonitions? You are thinking of a song and turn on the radio and the exact song is playing.? You are thinking of a friend and within minutes receive a text message from the same friend you were thinking about?

A recent Newsweek article by Sharon Begley, discusses these and other phenomena. The premise of science is that a belief in the paranormal reflects normal brain activity, carried to an extreme. In other words, it is the small group in society that has no belief or inclination toward these phenomena.

I recall a neighbor, a beautiful, older, successful engineer. Frank was very witty, appropriately cynical, and a grand

## Gamer Review

Hey there, all three of you! I'm back again this month to review one game from a series of games that I can proudly call my personal favorite game series ever, period. That series is the Metal Gear Solid series. The game is the first in the series, Metal Gear Solid: Tactical Espionage Action by the genius Hideo Kojima.

In 1998, Hideo Kojima and Konami released a game that would change the gaming community forever. That game is Metal Gear Solid: Tactical Espionage Action for the Playstation entertainment system and PC. It is the first in a line of games and spin-offs that span from Playstations 1, 2 and 3 to the Gameboy. In terms of canonical games, it is followed by Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty, Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater and Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots. Some spin-offs include Snake's Revenge, Metal Gear Ac!d 1-2 and Metal Gear Online.

Mentor to many. Frank was at Home Depot on a Saturday morning when he had an unfortunate massive heart attack. The Home Depot was directly across the street from an area Trauma Center. He was hurried there by ambulance, but sadly he expired. I got the news from his devastated wife the next day. A few days later, a friend came to my house and said, "hey, I just saw Frank walking his dog down there on the corner, what a great guy, we smiled and waved at each other." I reluctantly told my friend that Frank had passed away the prior Saturday. To this day, my friend still believes that he saw Frank three days after his passing.

Some years ago, my grandfather's health took a drastic turn for the worst. He was admitted to the hospital with a heart condition. After several days, he was transferred to a convalescent facility. I went to see him and sitting by his bed we talked—I more than him. It was small talk mostly; "Remember when you took us to the circus that time...?" "I always had fun watching

Metal Gear Solid: Tactical Espionage Action is a Stealth action video game that heavily focuses on using stealth to reach your objective, rather than use brute force. Enemies, called Genome Soldiers, are genetically enhanced using Nanotechnology. They react to everything from sounds the player makes, the sight of the player (granted they're in the view of the enemy's extra limited eyesight) or even the player's footprints. You have a variety of distractions, from being able to knock on walls to loud weapons like handguns, rifles, grenades and rockets.

The story takes place in 2005 on a fictional island called Shadow Moses, southwest of Alaska. It follows the retired soldier, Solid Snake, in his infiltration of a Nuclear Weapon disposal facility to stop the terrorist organization, and renegade Special Forces unit, "Foxhound" from launching a nuclear strike, as well as rescuing two hostages; The head of DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency) and the president of a major arms manufacturer. The real fun is facing off against eponymous super-weapon known as "Metal Gear (codenamed Rex)", a bipedal walking tank with nu-

You shovel snow off your walk when I was a kid." His responses were labored at best so I just sat with him, holding his hand. Suddenly, in a moment of apparent clarity, Grandpa looked at me with clear-focused eyes and stated matter-of-factly; "Johnny, I am really looking forward to Friday (then two days away) Everything is going to be better on Friday.." I was startled but simply nodded in agreement - clearly taken aback by this burst of spontaneity. I spoke with my father later that day and asked what grandpa meant by his declaration that Friday would be a better day for him. My father was puzzled because he was sure his prognosis was worsening.. I received a call from my father on Friday morning that my grandfather had passed away peacefully in his sleep earlier that Friday morning.

Research into the paranormal has its champions in science and in philosophical circles. The paranormal also has skeptics. Regardless of where you stand, it is at least interesting and intriguing to consider the possibilities.

clear launching capabilities.

The game is famous for its pioneering and innovation within the stealth genre, its lengthy cut scenes and intricate storylines exploring the nature of Politics, warfare, censorship, genetic engineering, artificial intelligence, loyalty, reality, subjective versus universal truths and other philosophical themes. My personal view of the message the game provides is this: We have the power to stop the world from heading down the road it is now and turning war into legitimate business (i.e. proxy battles with ID'd soldiers, who have ID'd weapons and gear that only respond to that specific individual's Nanotechnology), yet many of Earth's brightest minds are suppressed by censorship, fear and nationalist propaganda.

*James Burthe*

## Do You Like Good Music...

What's up corps member, hopefully everything is nice and gritty on your side. Well with no hesitation let's kick it off with a review that I've been hiding up my sleeve for a while. Ash, Australia, home of the cute koalas, crocodile Dundee, Steve Irwin, and Byron Bays own Parkway Drive. Now this band has only released two albums, both have never ceased to kick me in the face, and make me head bang the whole time listening. Their debut release 'Killing With A Smile' hit the scene with full metal jackets and stunned Americans who never thought hardcore can rip over seas. The hit track 'Romance Is Dead' explains how the human heart can break but how the strong will survive it. Trust me this is not a band

for the weak of ears. Their sophomore album release 'Horizons' tamed those wicked Aussies and definitely put them on the charts. Not much has been said yet about a new release, but you can bet that it will be nothing but blast beats, melodic riffing, and apocalyptic type vocals. Some people may not read this review because it's "different" or something you'd never want to listen to, but to me if you can really say you love music, you would have no boundaries on what your preference is. Well signing off for this month, this is Harvey saying "shut your eyes and open your ears, only then will you find beauty".

*~Harvey Piggee*



*MUSIC REVIEW*

**The CCC is what a corpsmember makes of it, and each can take away something different from the experience.**

**Many of the Corps' alumni cite their time in the Corps as the experience of a lifetime, the best time of their lives.**

**Some of the work the CCC accomplishes will provide memories that last a lifetime.**

**Some projects will prompt corpsmembers to bring family members back to their worksite years later, to share in their achievements. (CCC Website)**

## Ride of the Month

As this reporter looks at the array of vehicles parked in the Corpsmember parking area, one thing strikes me. That one thing is the absolute pride that the owners have for their rides. Take for example, the second generation B-12 1990 Nissan Sentra XE Sedan (the XE badge means that it is the next-up model from the base "E" badged model) owned by Renae "R-Dawg" Perez. The car has a front wheel drive and front engine set-up, as well as a 1.6 Liter, 90 Horsepower GA16i 12-valve Single overhead cam four cylinder engine. Other interesting facts on the car are that it has a 13.2 gallon gas capacity, a length of 166.5 inches, a width of 65.6 inches, a general weight of 2,500 pounds and a height of 52.2 inches. Renae, as you may have recalled, is a Red-Hat who was featured in an earlier edition of The Grit. Now, you may not be able to tell from the photo image that the roof and the hood of the car are faded and the paint is slightly chipped. That paint-fading is a testament to the many wax jobs that this car has endured over the long years. The car still runs extremely well, considering the fact that Renae bought this car around 8 years ago, for \$1,500. Not a bad price for a car less than 10 years old (at least, when she purchased it!). She said she bought this car because she needed cheap and reliable transportation. It has served her, as well in that purpose, very well. Interestingly enough, Renae was a victim of auto theft. When the car was returned to her, there was no damage to speak of to the vehicle or the engine. *~Andrew Coll*



Renae "R-Dawg" Perez's 1990 Nissan Sentra XE