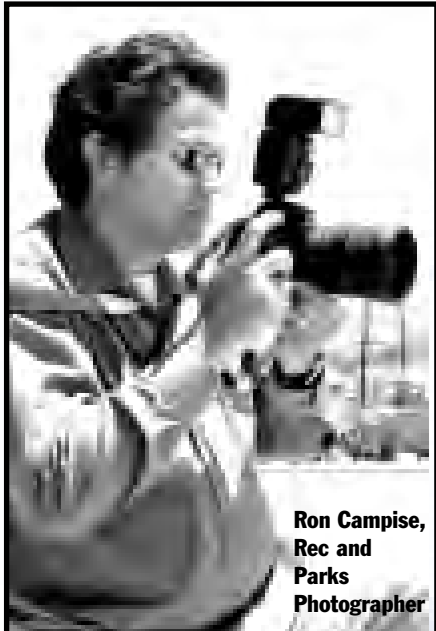


# Rec and Parks Photographer Focuses on the City's Beauty

■ Ron Campise started taking crime pictures for the LAPD. Now he focuses is on subjects that are more beautiful.



Ron Campise, Rec and Parks Photographer

## ALL IN A Day's Work

"I've been a photographer with the city of Los Angeles for the past 10 years," says Ron Campise, a photographer with Rec and Parks. "For the first five, spent with the Los Angeles Police Department Scientific Investigation section as a field investigative photographer. My last year there, in 1998, I was awarded meritorious unit citation along with my colleagues for response to the investigation of a Bank Robbery and shootout in North Hollywood involving two machine gun wielding suspects causing havoc.

"Later, I also received an individual award for 'photograph of the year' of an officer's badge that was severely damaged deflecting a bullet shot at close range. The badge saved the officers life. I made sure the badge was photographically documented to illustrate the dangers of police work."

In 1998 a position opened up in Rec and Parks as the public information photographer. "At first I was offered and then declined the position. Lee Nichols, the Public Information director who has since retired, called me at home and convinced me to take the position. His persuasive argument entailed that both Rec and Parks and myself could benefit greatly. I could benefit from the variety of assignments, duties and level of personal responsibility it entailed. And the Rec & Parks [could benefit] from my wide range expertise in imaging."

Ron soon discovered that Nichols wasn't kidding when he boasted of the variety of assignments with the new job. "Assignments varied from facilities at Point Fermin in San Pedro on the ocean to Stony Pointe Park near the Ventura County line. Assignments including festivals, openings, special events and sporting meets need to be documented in both

stills and video format.

"In the last five years, more than 40,000 images were added to an archive of images going back to 1910 for a total collection, in one form of another, of more than 250,000 on file. One day I'll be at an opening in a coat and tie, and the next in hiking boots tromping through the trails of Griffith Park. In addition to field assignments, I handle the electronic distribution of images to requestors, both the general public and media venues. Including *Alive!*"

Ron contributed not only the photos you see here, but also the pretty pictures of the cherry

**"L.A. City employees, by a vast majority, are great, wonderful, noble individuals who care about the need of the City."**

blossoms in bloom in last month's issue of *Alive!*

Ron loves that he has so much interaction with other City employees.

"In going out to Recreation and Parks locations, you really get to know City employees and the public well, and all I can say is that L.A. City employees, by a vast majority, are great, wonderful, noble individuals who care about the need of the City. These virtues are mirrored by the City's populace as well.

"As an example, a few years ago I had to go to a site check of the unfinished and abandoned, partially completed Imperial Courts Recreation Center in Watts. I was told to be careful in the area due to justifiable community concerns and anger over the delays in the completion of their center. At first, I was approached by community members who wanted to know why I was photographing the abandoned center. They were slightly irate at the progress of local government in restarting the project. After listening to their complaints,

I let them know that I was there to document to condition of the building site, and that my photographs would be used to help re-start the project.

"The community members, seeing that I was there to help them, invited me to have lunch with them. One and one half years later, I attended the grand opening of the newly completed Imperial Courts Recreation and Community Center."

But taking pictures is only part of his story. He's also a budding writer.

"Currently I'm undergoing a metamorphosis into a writer, having completed in 2000 the first in a series of novels, *The Dreams of Ants*. The story entails a national security thriller. The book has been in limited publication since December 2001.

"I'm currently working since December on a screenplay, a dark comedy about a group of misunderstood but good-hearted misfit crime scene investigators who have been exiled to the graveyard shift. I have also started a second novel, a coming-of-age story centered on two friends and their families in a transitioning Boyle Heights."

But he keeps focused on his day job, delivering professionalism and progress. "This year marks the first of a completely digital imaging photographic center in Recreation and Parks," he says with pride. "We are the first completely digital photographic center in any City department. In April, more than 3000 digital images were added to the archives, and the "photo lab" of the public information center was officially changed to the Visual Media Resource Center, or VMRC.

"All in all, it's an incredible adventure working for Recreation and Parks, and I feel incredibly fortunate to have a job that many dream of."

Do you know any City employees with interesting, unusual or unique jobs? Let us know! Nominate them for All in a Day's Work: [talkback@cityemployeesclub.com](mailto:talkback@cityemployeesclub.com)



Tall ships at Winter Berth at the L.A. Maritime Museum.

Korean American Tradition Folk Dance Troop performs at the annual Salute to Recreation at Northridge Park.



The Rose Garden at Exposition Park.



Junior gymnastics performed spontaneously at the Lauren Miller Recreation Center.



Ice Angels perform at the outdoor ice rink set up in Pershing Square in the heart of Downtown Los Angeles.

Feria de los Ninos (Festival of the Children) and its Run for Kids around Hollenbeck Park Lake.



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