

“Oh the shark, babe, has such teeth, dear, and it shows them pearly white.”
(Bobby Darin - “Mack the Knife”)

I was attending an event at the Lott-Sank Park last year when a gentleman came up to me and asked, “Are you Bob Starkey?”

“No,” I said. “Do you mean Stan Starkey?”

“No, I mean Bob Starkey,” he replied, “the general manager of Parks and Rec.”

“Yes, I am the general manager of FRRPD, but my name is Bob *Sharkey* and I spell my name Bob with one ‘o’, not two.”

“Well, you’re an S.O.B.,” he said. “Did you hear me? You’re an S.O.B.”

“Well, thank you. That’s very nice of you,” I replied. “Thank you.”

He paused for a moment and then said, “I guess you didn’t hear me right. You’re an S.O.B.”

I said, “No sir, I did hear you. And S.O.B. stands for Sweet Ol’ Bob. May I ask you your name, sir?”

“Yeah,” he said. “It’s Bob.”

“Well, sir, then that makes you an S.O.B. as well,” I responded. “And from one S.O.B. to another it’s been a pleasure meeting you. Have a good day. And better yet, have a really good life. By the way, if you need any help with off-highway vehicle recreation in the U.S. National Forest Service, send an S.O.S. That stands for Sweet Ol’ Stan, as in Stan Starkey.”

There are a lot of Sweet Ol’ Bobs in Oroville. There’s Bob Post, Bob Jackson, and Bob Hewitt, to name just a few.

My family and friends sometimes call when they hear something not so nice being said about me. I tell them that sticks and stones may break my bones, and my name is important to me. When I was growing up most of the people I knew really liked my name Sharkey. I’ve heard all the shark jokes. I must admit I like my name a lot, too. I think it’s pretty cool. The Sharkey clan comes from Cork County, Ireland. There is a famous Bob Sharkey I really like. He has a musical quartet in New York City. I had to buy his latest CD, *Foolish Nightmare*, because a certain Fiona Sharkey has adopted my iPod Nano. My favorite song is “Paid the Price.”

There are a lot of Bobs, and there are a lot of Shark-eyes, and they’re not to be fooled with. You can fool some of the people all of the time, and you can fool all of the people some of the time. But you can’t fool Bobs or Shark-eyes. As the Park Shark, over the years I’ve learned how to swim with the sharks without being eaten alive. It’s simple, really. It’s like trying to find Nemo. You have to be patient, positive and stay focused on your goal. You have to swim past the feeding frenzy of the elite negative nay-Bobs of negativity because they will ultimately lead you into the scarlet billows of

the abyss. Eeee! That's scary. I've also found that a cup of English Breakfast tea and an oatmeal chocolate chip cookie help as well.

And as far as S.O.B.'s, one of my favorite Sweet Ol' Bobs is Bob Hedrick. Bob and his fiddler friends are coming to Oroville for the Open Fiddle and Picking Championships. They're going to play at their old stomping grounds, the Municipal Auditorium, on March 26, 27 and 28. Yes, the fiddlers are coming, and it's sure to be an event you won't want to miss.

Quote

"While one who sings with his tongue on fire
Gargles in the rate race choir
Bent out of shape from society's pliers
Cares not to come up any higher
But rather get you down in the hole
That he's in.

But I mean no harm nor put fault
On anyone that lives in a vault
But it's alright, Ma, if I can't please him."

Bob Dylan, "It's Alright, Ma"

Fun Facts

There are about 350 different types of sharks, but researchers think there are other sharks that haven't been discovered yet.

Sharks do not sleep. Rather, they experience alternating periods of activity and rest.

Sharks have been around for about 400 million years - long before dinosaurs even existed.

Upcoming Events

March 26-28. California Old Time Fiddlers' Open Fiddle and Picking Championships at the Municipal Auditorium.

April 4. Third annual Wildflower and Nature Festival. Booth space is still available! Call FRRPD at 533-2011 for more info.

See you in the parks!