



Part of a Tradition

by Lee Hickinbotham Jr.

To be or not to be a *park ranger*. I am frankly tired of talking about AB1935. This bill is tearing the camaraderie between us apart. It doesn't really matter if we are in favor or opposed to the bill. What really matters is that we are *park rangers*. We are part of a profession that goes as far back as the 1800s.

I did a little research and found out that the first NPS ranger/caretaker was a gentleman named Harry Yount. This individual was hired in 1875 to protect park wildlife. He was also one of the first white men to spend an entire winter in Yellowstone, he resigned in frustration over the difficulty of trying to do his job alone. In 1886 the Cavalry was brought in to Yellowstone. It was then that the government

finally took an active interest in protecting park resources from rampant overuse.

In 1866 the first State *park ranger* or guardian as they were called back then was a man named Galen Clark. His duties included protection and care of the parks, combined with helpful service to the visitors. In 1916 the Government adopted the title *park ranger* and so started a great profession.

Times haven't changed. We are still providing protection to the parks, service to the visitors and we are still doing all this mostly alone. We are part of a tradition. As I scan through the Ranger Directory I see that many different agencies do many different things. It varies from only doing law enforcement to only doing maintenance. However the thing that is consistent is that we are all protectors of the resources and provide services to the public. We protect and provide service in many ways. We issue citations to violators, we maintain trails and we manage the resources but most of all we educate.

We need to standardize our profession. The public needs to know that the ranger they are talking to in one park has the same training as a ranger in another park 100 miles away. Taking a few sentences out of an existing bill is an easy way out. As *park rangers* you know that there really is never an easy way. Why don't we take the time to do it right? PRAC has spent over two years creating a set of standards that will elevate our profession. Why don't we take that to legislation? This way we can all keep our title and do the job that we worked so hard to get. Let's not get frustrated like Harry Yount and quit, or worse yet let the government tell us who is and who isn't a *park ranger*. I am proud to do this job and I proud to call myself a *park ranger*.

However, if this bill passes, many of us will have come full circle since the 1800s when we have to take the title once again of guardian or caretaker.

“Turkey Attacks” More Tales of the Urban Ranger

by Terry Rogoway

It was a quiet day in Alum Rock Park when the dispatcher came over the radio asking for a ranger. The ranger to be unnamed answered. Dispatch said there was a 911 call coming from the parking lot. There was a pause. She went on to say that a person was reporting having been attacked by a turkey up on Eagle Rock. They were requesting a ranger respond to investigate. The ranger put himself out on the call and went to investigate. The suspects were GOA.

It was becoming a commonly known fact that indeed, there was a turkey. To make it worse, there were two. Two delinquent turkeys: Bert and Ernie, so named by a second, unnamed ranger. Bert and Ernie had been hanging around Alum Rock Park for a few months before the rangers could catch them in the act of harassing local visitors. It had all begun innocently enough.

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From the President's Desk

Greetings Fellow PRAC Members,

I hope you all are ready for summer because it is almost here. It is hard to believe Memorial Day weekend is already upon us. For the next several months we will be busy keeping our parks patched together and helping our visitors enjoy our parks. When we enter the traditional busiest time of year for parks it can be easy for us to become less involved with the Association. Although our parks are busy the Association business goes on. We will still count on our members to be advocates for the Association and stay involved with the various projects we are working on.

Your Regional Directors are working on planning workshops and social events to offer the membership. It is hoped that some of these workshops will be included in the PRAC training standards learning domains. If you have any thoughts or ideas on workshops that you would like to see PRAC offer please let me know. I also encourage you to consider hosting a PRAC event in your park. It can be a great way to network with other members and maybe learn something new too. If you are interested in hosting a PRAC event, please contact your Regional Director or myself.

Recruitment and retention is a big issue these days. I am not just talking about recruiting and retaining PRAC members but also employees in our own organizations, seasonal and permanent. Is your agency experiencing difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified employees for vacant positions? If you are, you are certainly not alone. If you are not having problems, then what is your agency doing that can help others? There has been a healthy discussion going on the PRAC e-mail list about this issue. It was suggested that we have a session to discuss this issue at the 2003 conference in Tahoe. I think that is a great idea but why wait until next year? I think it might be beneficial to have a workshop on the recruitment and retention problem where members can get together and exchange ideas on this issue. We can even make it a social event as well. This is an issue that is near and dear to us all. If anybody is interested in helping with setting this up or hosting the event, please contact me. I would like to have a northern and southern one to reach as many members as possible.

The 2003 South Lake Tahoe conference planning has already begun. We had our first planning meeting at South Lake Tahoe in April. The conference planning team is pulling together. There is always room for more volunteers. If you are interested in helping out with the 2003 conference or have any suggestions for it, please let me know.

The other news item, which many of you are already aware of, is AB1935. This assembly bill deals with removing the grandfather clause from Public Resource Code section 4022, which would reserve the title ranger for employees who are peace officers only. This bill was sponsored by PORAC. PRAC has had nothing to do with sponsoring this bill. At this time your board has decided to remain neutral on the issue. If the members would like PRAC to take a position on the issue, a vote will be taken of the membership and PRAC will then take the position that the majority vote dictates. I realize that this is a very controversial issue that has been around for quite sometime. I have been involved with the bill as information provider only. PRAC has been available to answer questions for involved parties as to the many different duties rangers perform, how many agencies have rangers that are not peace officers, etc. The other information PRAC has been able to provide is what our minimum recommended training standards are for a ranger. I will be following this bill closely so I can keep the membership apprised. Whatever the end results of this bill are I would like the membership to remember that PRAC is a professional association for professional, uniformed park employees, regardless of title. Any uniformed park employee is eligible for regular membership; park aides, interpreters, naturalist, park caretaker, park police officer, deputy sheriff, maintenance worker, park attendant, rangers, and other titles are all job titles of our members. Whatever our job titles maybe, PRAC will always be there for us.

I hope you all have a safe and productive start to the summer season.

Mike Chiesa

Conference Exhibitors

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Rob Roy

More Tales of the Urban Ranger

by Terry Rogoway

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A nearby resident had decided to raise a wild strain of turkey, meant to be domesticated and someday eaten. Then Bert and Ernie escaped. Either fearing for their lives or perhaps their inability to amass enough brain cells to know how to get home, they ended up in the park. (Next door!) It gets better.

It so happens that Bert and Ernie were imprinted on feet. Especially male feet, since their owner was a male rancher. The first disturbance calls regarding turkey attacks involved mountain bikers. Having reached the peak of Eagle Rock, they were in the process of coming back downhill when a wild squawking occurred and a fat feathery mass landed over enthusiastically on their foot. Those who did not fall, escaped. Those who did fall were startled to find a turkey that seemed to chase them, infatuated with their feet. Imagine trying to get back on a bike with an enamored turkey making unwanted advances. Most people were intimidated. One rancher was not. He met the rangers on the top of the hill and as soon as Bert approached him he

swooped down with one arm and grabbed a handful of butt feathers. Perhaps they were tail feathers. In any case, Bert went feet over head with a whoop and was immediately controlled. Figuring there birds were harmless enough, Bert was released.

It all goes down hill from here. Bert and Ernie continued their life of crime, migrating down to the parking lot. They began chasing visitors there, but only occasionally. And finally, one dark night, Bert was eaten by a coyote. That left Ernie to his own devices.

Ernie became very territorial and started attacking people in a less than amorous way. The third time drew blood. The ranger to be unnamed got fed up and grabbed him. Stuffing him squawking into a potato sack, Ernie was taken for a long ride. Fortunately for him, he ended up at the dam behind the park. With acres and acres of free land to roam and few people to attack, Ernie was exiled. To this day, residents claim to have seen him, but none are willing to get close enough to “bond” and find out.

Rangers Save a Life Using a Defibrillator

by John Havicon

On March 14, Park Ranger Bill Wetzel was waived down by a park visitors saying their dad was having problems breathing. As Ranger Wetzel was checking the victim, the 52-year old victim stopped breathing and was pulseless. He contacted dispatch and began C.P.R. Rangers Morris McGee arrived and assisted with two-man CPR.

Park Ranger Chris Kemp had a Automated External Defibrillator in the back of his truck and was not far away. He and Ranger Chris Vesey arrived on scene with the AED. They placed the electrodes on the victims chest but had problems getting the electrodes to stick because of the victim's hairy chest. After several attempts to shave a spot for the electrodes, they managed to clean a spot for a good connection. They delivered two shocks. Both shocks brought the heart back to a normal sinus rhythm but was not enough to keep it going. They had to continue with more CPR. The paramedics arrived and delivered six more shocks to the victim. The victim was transported to the hospital. The victim survived the heart attack but had to remain in the hospital because of the reason his heart stopped in the first place, an overdose of methamphetamines.

This is the first time we have used the AED. It is very unlikely this man would have survived without it, even with the ranger's quick response. Congratulations to Rangers Wetzel, McGee, Vesey and Kemp for their swift and professional action.

Tales of the Urban Ranger “When Geese Attack”

by Terry Rogoway

There are all kinds of reasons why we ask park visitors not to feed geese. I find it interesting that the only reason that has any chance of changing their behavior is to point to their own child and say “We don't feed geese here because they become aggressive and bite small children. In fact, Jonny here is the exact age of a child that got bitten because a goose thought it had a right to the cracker in his hand.” Believe me, I've seen people mugged by avians for cheetos. The sad thing is, it is not the feeders who get mugged. It is usually the next unsuspecting visitor coming down the trail.

If it isn't the food, it's their territorial behavior that makes things interesting. In my park, we have some very fat, very confident, resident, domestic geese. By comparison, the Canadians are polite. I have seen some very dignified men, complete with \$ 300.00 suits, running across the lawn to get away from an over protective goose. I am waiting to see what happens when they have young. I am sure the first thing that springs to mind is: depredation. However, these four geese seem to have become a part of the community and they have quite a following of admirers. Besides, the humungous fish in the ponds seem to control the population. I am told there is a great sucking motion and the last gosling just disappears. I guess that will be less traumatic for the visiting school kids than some alligator they'd see on the nature channel. Nature at it's finest.

The highlight of my goose experience revolves around a sunny Sunday afternoon. I was watering our fragrance garden when I heard a woman screaming. Only just be-

ginning to get used to the mellow nature of this park, I was quite surprised. I ran to see who was being killed.

I found a woman, standing on a small pedestrian bridge, being menaced by a hostile goose. She had her child in her arms and the goose was standing in her way, neck craned, hissing. As I approached, confident I could handle the situation, I smiled broadly and said,

“I'll save you!”

I clapped my hands and shook my finger at the goose, telling him how bad he was and how he should be ashamed. He was not amused. He turned, hissed, and charged right at me. Had it happened a few weeks ago, when I'd first arrived, I would have run away, shrieking like a girl. Instead, I reared up, got really offended and let out a...

“Oooohhhh, It's ON now!”

I whipped my ranger hat off my head and swooshed it right past the beak on that goose. It made a startled “hiiiink?” sound and stepped back, unsure as it's feathers felt the air current. It turned and I did exactly what I've seen that goose do a thousand times... I chased him. I ran him back into the water, scolding him the entire time.

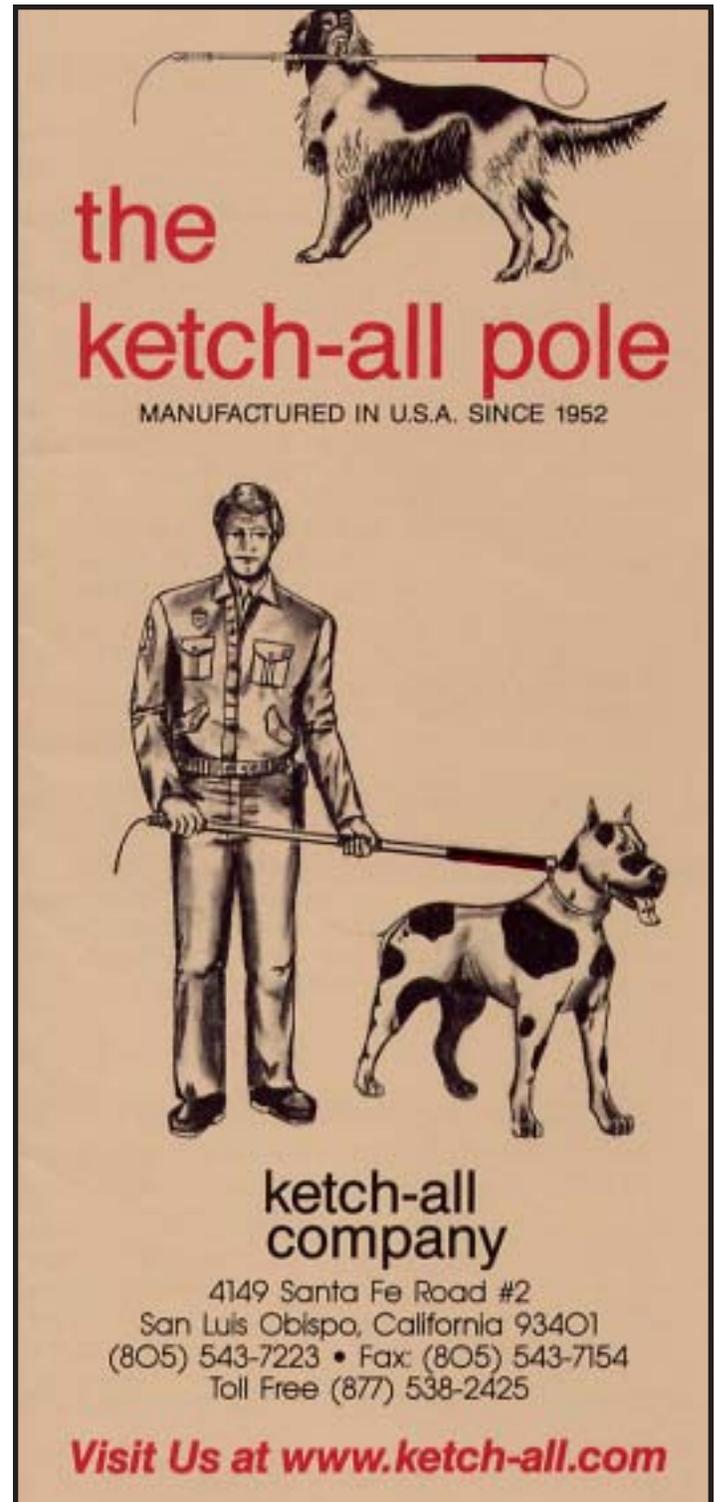
I was glad to see the mother and her child were laughing. I let her know that while this park is their home, geese are not allowed to be rude. You must never show them fear because just like bullies in the outside world, they will take advantage of the moment.

Altogether, this park is a kinder, gentler place, but it still has it's moments. It's only a matter of finding them.

15 Discoveries

Made at the 2002 Conference in Beautiful San Diego as supplied by Steve Hogue

1. Anza-Borrego is made up of the stuff that used to fill the Grand Canyon.
2. Many rangers are terrified of the idea of going to Tijuana.
Conference Tip: *You may encounter wimps at conferences.*
3. There is a WWII era P-51 airplane off the coast of Torrey Pines.
4. The sight of a Gray Whale in person is awesome and people like to say “ooh” and “ahh” for hours on end on whale expeditions.
Conference Tip: *Take advantage of conference recreational activities.*
5. There is a possibility that corn was grown in the San Diego region by Native Americans, which would be amazing if verified.
6. Rangers from the City of Glendale are referred to as “The Glendale Boys.”
Conference Tip: *Hotel security does not tolerate late night parties.*
7. The endangered Pocket Mouse lives in a 5 acre plot along the Orange County line.
8. Wolves are just as freaky looking in person as they are on TV.
9. I do not get sea sick (whale watching trip). John Havicon does.
Conference Tip: *On sea trips, do not sit near small children who are puffing their cheeks.*
10. Resident Canada Geese can deposit a lot of poop in a municipal park.
11. Sangra is pretty tasty.
12. Rangers from MRCA are pretty cool to hang out with.
Conference Tip: *Ask one of these rangers about celebrity encounters.*
13. You can get to the buffet line more quickly if you attend the general membership meeting.
14. President Mike Chiesa really likes his gavel.
15. You can either get one of the new PRAC hats for \$13, or get two for \$26.
Conference Tip: *You can save on the shipping costs of PRAC merchandise by purchasing at conferences.*



The advertisement features two illustrations. The top illustration shows a dog standing and holding a long, thin pole horizontally in its mouth. The bottom illustration shows a man in a uniform standing next to a dog, holding a similar pole horizontally. The pole has a red and white striped section in the middle.

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Board Officers

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President

Mike Chiesa
(707) 847-3245
Fax: (707) 847-3325
E-Mail: mchiesa@mcn.org

Region 1 Director

Mike Nicholson
(925) 373-5775
E-Mail: syncamoreranger@aol.com

Region 2 Director

Lee Hickinbotham Jr.
(650) 617-3156
Fax: (650) 858-2659
E-Mail: lee.hickinbothamjr@yahoo.com

Region 3 Director

Steven Hogue
(530) 895-4758
Fax: (530) 895-9825
E-Mail: shogue@ci.chico.ca.us

Region 4 Director

Walt Young
(310) 858-7272 ex 102
Fax: (310) 858-7212
E-Mail: young@smmc.ca.gov

Region 5 Director

Tom Ash
(909) 926-7416
Fax: (909) 926-7418
E-Mail: tash@co.riverside.ca.us

Past President

John Havicon
(916) 875-6672
Fax: (916) 875-6632
E-Mail: ondelay@innercite.com

The Signpost Editor

David Brooks
(831) 336-2948
Fax: (By Arrangement)
E-Mail: prangerd@ix.netcom.com

Scholarship

Bill Hendricks
(805) 756-1246
Fax: (805) 756-1402

Office Manager

Carol Bryce
Office: (916) 558-3734
Fax: (916) 387-1179
E-Mail: prac2000@earthlink.net

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Park Rangers Association of California
P O Box 292010
SACRAMENTO, CA 95829-2010
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P. O. Box 292010
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