

Ranger **Public Relations 101** **by Tom Maloney** **Senior Park Ranger**

There you are having a great time performing a foot patrol in your park or on the trails.

Maybe you are really patrolling or maybe you are just trying to “blow off some steam” built up by the bureaucracy.

Inevitably you come upon a park visitor (usually a male) who when they get up close, spits out some snide remark such as “It must be nice to have an easy job like yours...you get paid for walking around all day!” A dozen rebuttals come to your lips, however only 2 or 3 are suitable for family conversation.

You all know the right answers and probably have given them on numerous occasions with varied amount of success.

Want to know how to cut down on negative encounters and disrespectful comments such as these?

Personally, I like to say take the “theatrical” approach. No, I don’t spout Shakespeare. (Unless I really want to scare them !)

What I do is carry with me a real honest-to-goodness “ranger type prop.”

There are several to choose from. In wilderness or open space settings, trail tools are a great choice: a shovel, McCleod, Polaski, loppers or hedge trimmers work well. (These also work as personal protection devices as well.)

In urban parks a clipboard (with paper), a hand picker (with trash bag) or pruning shears work well.

What these props do is provide a positive visual image of a ranger at work.

I have noticed when I carry my “props” (which I really do use by the way) that folks never make snide comments. But they will say more friendly things like: “Thank you for being here and

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It’s Election Time!

The election for the Regions 1, 3 and 5 Directors are coming up again this fall. I am seeking the individuals in our membership that can keep this energy going that we have in the PRAC board. If you are a member in one of the three regions, you are qualified to run as a Director. All voting members are qualified to run. We have done a lot to cater to our parks professionals through conferences, workshops and social events and have taken great strides to better the park professional. We are not finished and have much to do. We need help from our great members keep making this happen. We need our members to get involved.

Region 1 consists of members from Alameda, Contra Costa, Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, Marin, Mendocino, Napa and Sonoma counties.

Region 3 consist of members from Alpine, Amador, Butte, Calaveras, Colusa, El Dorado, Fresno, Glenn, Lassen, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Modoc, Mono, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Solano, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity, Tuolumne, Yolo and Yuba counties.

Region 5 consist of members from Imperial, Orange, San Bernardino, San Diego and Riverside counties.

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From the President's Desk

Here we are in September already I don't know about you but my summer seemed to fly by. I am really looking forward to the fall and hopefully some rainfall soon. The 2005 Conference Planning Committee has been working diligently through the summer on putting together the 2005 Conference that will be held at the Double Tree Sonoma Wine Country, March 7-10. The team has a challenge to meet the high standards conference attendees have come to expect but I know we can rise to the occasion. If you would like to volunteer for to help with planning, please contact Lee Hickenbotham.

PRAC has been conducting a study for the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) on their park operations and usage. The MRCA contacted PRAC in the hopes to obtain an outside opinion from park professionals on what types of problems they are having in their parks and where additional park staff efforts should be focused. Lori Charett and I have been working on the study in cooperation with our liaison from MRCA, Amy Lethbridge. We found it refreshing that an agency would seek assistance and advice from park professionals instead of hiring a consulting firm with no knowledge or expertise of park operations.

Denise Edwards has set-up a Certified Interpretive Guide class that will be taking in September in Santa Clara County. This is an excellent class that will hone your interpretive skills and not only satisfy all of the PRAC Interpretive Domains for the PRAC Generalist Ranger Certificate but you will also earn the status of being a National Association for Interpretation (NAI) Certified Interpretive Guide. Amy Lethbridge will be the lead instructor on this class and I highly recommend this to anyone seeking further interpretive training.

Elections are coming up this fall. We will be seeking candidates for the Regional Director positions for Regions 1, 3, and 5. Candidates must be current Regular, Retired, or Honorary members of PRAC to be eligible. John Havicon is in charge of the nominating committee and will be seeking nominations of candidates. If you or someone you know would like to run for one of the offices, please contact John Havicon with your name or the name of the person you are nominating.

I am working with Dave Updike on holding a Wildland Firefighter class in Northern California that will help people meet the PRAC Firefighting Domain for the PRAC Generalist Ranger Certificate. The location and exact dates will be announced but we are looking in the East Bay area.

All right, that is all I for now. If you have any questions, comments, or ideas, please feel free to contact me. Remember that PRAC is your organization and we need as much member involvement as possible.

Stay safe,

Mike Chiesa

About Bears

by Don Pearson

Black bears, like any wild animal, have their own territory. For their most part, bears live peacefully with little or no contact with humans.

Unfortunately, this has not been the case in the Sierras this year. A lack of available natural food has caused the bears to look elsewhere for their daily intake of tasty nourishment. What better place than with the untrained and uninformed camper.

In the past month our agency, which operates one of several campgrounds in the Caples/Silver Lake area along Highway 88, has experienced an unusual number of bear encounters. Encounters were numbering two to five incidents per night involving bears breaking windshields, removing complete doors from vehicles, to tents being ripped apart.

The first response from our attorney and safety officer was to close the park until new, bear-proof food lockers could be installed. However after several brainstorming meetings, a compromise was reached that we would try and educate the campers (what a novel idea) on how to store food and scented items while staying in our park. Oh yes, we still had to order the food lockers at a cost of \$50,000.

After two weeks of personally contacting each new camper who entered the park, we have reduced the number of bear incidents to four.

Despite warnings, the last 4 incidents all involved improper storage of food by the campers.

What have we learned from this? Well.....

1. Bears don't need to always smell food, the sight of a cooler is enough to trigger past memories.
2. Making the public aware of bears and their habits takes an ongoing commitment from an agency.
3. Bears are easier to train than campers, but with a little work it can be done.

Bears, like other wild animals, can share the same environment with people if everyone follows these 14 simple rules while camping in bear country.

1. Supervise all children closely.
2. Keep your camp clean. Do not leave any food, scraps or litter in your fire ring, barbecue, or around your camp.
3. Wash the picnic table after use, and clean your cook stove and barbecue.
4. When not in immediate use, store all food and beverages in a closed ice chest or metal storage box (preferred) in the closed trunk of your vehicle.
5. When not in immediate use, store all coolers, stoves, grills, cooking utensils and food containers in the closed trunk of your vehicle.
6. Store all toiletries and other scented items—including lip chap sticks, sunscreens, first-aid kits, window cleaners, baby wipes, scented tissues, air fresheners, insect repellents, tobacco products, hairspray, and toothpaste—in the closed trunk of your vehicle.
7. If your vehicle does not have a trunk, store all of the items listed in 2, 3, and 4 above in the vehicle and cover them with a blanket or tarp. Bears know what a cooler looks like and will smash windows, or tear your vehicle door off its hinges to get at what they see.
8. Deposit all garbage, and used tampons and sanitary napkins in designated refuse containers. Never bury or burn any garbage.
9. Never cook in or near your tent
10. Keep packs, sleeping bags and clothes free of food odors.
11. To protect against food odors, do not sleep in clothes worn while cooking. Wash your hands and face before going to bed.
12. Never use your tent and sleeping bag stuff sacks to store food, garbage, cooking gear or cosmetics.
13. Keep pets leashed and under your control at all times. Do not leave pets tied up or caged at your campsite
14. Store all pet food in the same manner as human food.

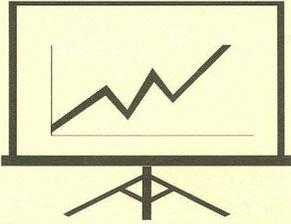
It's Election Time!

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Duties of the Board of Directors are to attend quarterly Board meetings and provide direction to the organizations affairs; Plan future activities for their region members, including training workshops and social events; Write articles for the *Signpost* newsletters; Provide support for individual members; Provide PRAC's direction with state legislative issues; Attend job fairs or environmental fairs. Terms of office last two years, starting January 1, 2005. Travel expenses are reimbursed for the Board functions

If you would like to be a candidate in you region, please contact me, John Havicon, at on_belay@comcast.net or (916) 875-6672. I will send you a candidate application. Election ballots will be sent out in November. If you know of someone in your region that you think would be an excellent candidate, let me know. I'll contact them for you and ask them to run.

Thank you,
John Havicon



Announcement!

Natural Resources Communication Workshop

January 3-7, 2005

The *Natural Resources Communication Workshop*, sponsored by the Western Section of The Wildlife Society, is designed to help natural resource workers more effectively communicate with general as well as technical audiences through personal presentations using good visual aids. The workshop focuses on the use of computer-generated images (i.e., PowerPoint images). The workshop is practical-oriented and enhances participants' communication skills in planning, preparing, presenting, and evaluating presentations. Since many of the problems in natural resources management are people-oriented, more effective communication can significantly improve many management programs.

Workshop Content:

1. Discussion topics include:

- Planning: communication principles, audience analysis, graphic design
- Preparing: creating computer-generated graphics, photographic composition, rehearsal tips
- Presenting: equipment setup, speaking tips, dealing with difficult audiences
- Evaluating: evaluation of performance

2. Each participant will bring a selection of computer-generated images (ex., graphics created with PowerPoint or other presentation software programs) for organization into an illustrated talk.

3. Each participant will prepare graphics (titles, graphs, charts, maps, cartoons, etc.) to be used in their presentations.

4. Each participant will give a 5 and 15-minute presentation (which will include graphics prepared during the workshop). These presentations will be evaluated by the class and the instructors.

Instructors: Dr. Jon K. Hooper, Professor, Calif. State Univ., Chico (Certified Wildlife Biologist, Ph.D. in Wildlife Ecology, 30 years teaching communication workshops around the country) and Mr. Ethan Rotman, Calif. Dept. of Fish and Game (Coordinator, Fishing in the City in the San Francisco Bay Area, 20+ years professional experience as an environmental interpreter and communicator).

Location: California State University, Chico (90 miles north of Sacramento).

University Credit: Participants receive 1-unit CSUC Continuing Education credit; the workshop is worth 32 hours of continuing wildlife education credit through The Wildlife Society's Professional Development Program (Category II).

Application Procedure: The initial deadline for applications is **Friday, October 29, 2004**. Late applications are accepted (such applicants will become participants if the workshop is not yet full; otherwise, they will be placed on a waiting list in case of cancellations). The registration fee is **\$645**. The workshop will be limited to 16 participants. To apply, send a letter, fax, or email describing: (1) your current position within your agency or organization, (2) how you will use the training, and (3) any special reasons why you feel you should be chosen as a participant. In your application, include your address, phone number, fax number, and email. To apply or for more information, write or call:

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FLASH!!! Participants in the 2005 workshop will not only learn professional tips for using PowerPoint, but also will gain exposure to Photoshop Elements (photo editing software) and Photoshop Album (digital cataloging software).

El Dorado Irrigation District Donates Laptop To PRAC

by Mike Chiesa

I wanted to take a moment to say, "thank you" to the El Dorado Irrigation District (EID) for the donation of a Dell laptop computer to PRAC. PRAC has been working on updating our office equipment and we wanted to obtain a laptop computer for the Executive Manager and the President. Don Pearson, Region 3 Director and a Recreation Manager for EID told us that he might be able to get his agency to donate a computer to PRAC. Well, I am happy to say that Don has accomplished this goal. He worked with the EID Board, management, and I.T. people to get the very nice laptop computer with accessories donated to PRAC. This computer is being put to good use by our Executive Manager Heidi Horvitz to help her efficiently manage our organization. I hope you will all join me in giving a big note of thanks to Don Pearson and the EID.

Changes In Defibrillator Policies Make Way For Use On Children

by John Havicon

The next time you take your CPR for the Professional course, you should expect some new training when it comes to the use of AEDs on children between 1-years old and 8-years old. The American Heart Association is now providing guidelines for AED use on children.

Previous training did not provide AEDs for children as studies were inconclusive. One concern was a defibrillator designed for adult use may provide too much shock to the pediatric patient. Another concern was, since the child's heart beats at a substantially higher rate than an adult, the defibrillator may recognize the fast heartbeat as a shockable rhythm and provide an inappropriate shock? After much data collection by the experts, (The International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation), they determined that these concerns would not occur and today's biphasic defibrillators would be safe and effective on children, however they recommended that owners of older defibrillators, check with their manufacturers before using them on children.

Most manufacturers today are providing two types of pads and cables with their new defibrillators. One for children, that carry a lower shock dosage, and one for adults with the maximum shock capacity. Check with your manufacture to see if they have pediatric pads available. If not follow their recommendations. General recommendations for defibrillators without pediatric pads is to use the adult pads.

The steps in using the AED on a child are the same as before, except after providing one minute of CPR to the child, you attach the pads and activate the defibrillator. Evidence for infants less than 1 years old still remains inconclusive and defibrillators are still not recommended.

Wildland Fire Chain Saw Training

by David Updike

**Supervising Ranger, Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority
PRAC Region 4 Director**

The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) is an agency invested in progressive practices and training. In its continuing effort to remain on the cutting edge of training the MRCA in coordination with its internal Park Training Institute (PTI) offered a specialized three-day training course on Wildland Fire chain saw usage. David Updike, a Supervising Ranger at the MRCA spearheaded the training and recruited Dan Hull the Western United States Field Application Manager from Stihl Inc., to co-teach this course. Stihl Inc. is the leading seller of chainsaws in the world, and Dan Hull has over fifteen years of experience working with the company, and training firefighters, fire departments, park and forestry agencies, along with the consuming public for enhanced safety and operational usage.

While contemplating the construction of this course it became apparent that this type of training is not commonly offered. The course is comprehensive, time-intensive and generally cost-prohibitive because of the in-depth subject matter and amount of supplies needed to conduct the practical portion of the training. The MRCA was able to put together the training in a condensed yet efficient three-day training course at an affordable cost, and offered it to all agencies through the PRAC website. General class participation was offered at a cost of \$100.00, and PRAC members were extended a discount for participation at a cost of \$75.00. In order to participate members had to be CPR, first-aid and Wildland firefighter certified.

Class participants were subjected to a rigorous three-day course combining classroom lessons and practical field experience covering maintenance, approved operation, and safety precautions for usage of chain saws. Students participating in the training gained valuable personal knowledge that will ultimately become an asset to their organization. The training enables each student to more efficiently utilize their chain saws, limit the amount of wear and tear on their saws, cut down on the replacement costs, and enable them to repair and maintain their own saws. Additionally, their enhanced knowledge regarding safety will limit their respective organization's level of liability incurred from on the job injury.

Students completing this course had the opportunity to test for certification as a Class A Faller, and S-212 Wildland Fire Chain Saw operator. The MRCA provided the oversight for the certification process, and the certificates were presented from the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG). Students who completed the course successfully return to their organizations with a valuable skill set that will limit the amount of money typically spent on hiring external contractors to complete brush clearance, falling trees up to 20 inches in base diameter, and fire/trail clearance.

The positive response received as a result of students participation in this training course has inspired the MRCA to construct future training on other important subject matters. The MRCA is currently formulating a plan to offer training that will cover portable pump operations, water usage, class-A foam including CAF systems, advanced firefighter training and basic firefighter training.

What You Need to Know about West Nile Virus

by Lori Charett

With all the media attention on the West Nile Virus (WNV) and questions being raised about it, I thought I would take this opportunity to find out more about it and share it with you. It is important to protect ourselves, families and pets as well as be able to intelligently respond to the public's inquiries and concerns. I obtained much of the following information from the Center for Disease Control web site. There is a wealth of information on their website and I recommend visiting it, go to: www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm.

What is West Nile Virus? West Nile Virus is a flavivirus commonly found in Africa, West Asia, and the Middle East. It is closely related to St. Louis encephalitis virus which is also found in the United States. The virus can infect humans, birds, mosquitoes, horses and some other mammals.

How is it transmitted? The West Nile Virus is spread to humans by mosquitoes infected with the virus. The virus is located in the mosquito's salivary glands. During blood feeding, the virus may be injected into the animal or human, where it may multiply; possibly causing illness. The virus is not normally spread from humans to humans, birds/or animals to humans. Other animals that can be infected with the West Nile Virus include dogs, cats, horses, and rabbits.

What are the symptoms? Most people infected (4 of 5 people) show little or no symptoms. Symptoms usually develop 3–14 days after being bit and can range from a mild headache, low fever, rash and conjunctivitis to high fever, severe headache (viral encephalitis), stiff neck, disorientation, muscle weakness or coma. Permanent neurological damage (paralysis, tremors) or death can result. If you experience these symptoms, contact your physician immediately. It is assumed that immunity will be lifelong if a person contracts WNV; however, it may wane in later years.

Who are at greatest risk? Elderly people or people who are immunocompromised are at greatest risk for developing severe symptoms. One has a 1 in 150 chance of having serious symptoms if one acquires the virus.

What is the treatment? There is no medication or vaccine that can counteract the virus. Only the symptoms and complications can be treated. Currently there is no WNV vaccine available for humans. Many scientists are working on this issue, and there is hope that a vaccine will become available in the next few years. WNV infection can be suspected in a person based on clinical symptoms and patient history. Laboratory testing is required for a confirmed diagnosis.

Mosquito Prevention and Repellents (Important!):

Here are preventive measures that you and your family can take:

- Protect yourself from mosquito bites:

- Apply insect repellent sparingly to exposed skin. The more DEET a repellent contains the longer time it can protect you from mosquito bites. A higher percentage of DEET in a repellent does not mean that your protection is better—just that it will last longer. DEET concentrations higher than 50% do not increase the length of protection. Choose a repellent that provides protection for the amount of time that you will be outdoors.

- Spray clothing with repellents containing permethrin or DEET since mosquitoes may bite through thin clothing. Do not apply repellents containing permethrin directly to exposed skin. If you spray your clothing, there is no need to spray repellent containing DEET on the skin under your clothing.

- When possible, wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants whenever you are outdoors.

- Place mosquito netting over infant carriers when you are outdoors with infants.

- Consider staying indoors at dawn, dusk, and in the early evening, which are peak mosquito biting times.

- Install or repair window and door screens so that mosquitoes cannot get indoors.

- Help reduce the number of mosquitoes in areas outdoors where you work or play, by draining sources of standing water. In this way, you reduce the number of places mosquitoes can lay their eggs and breed.

- At least once or twice a week, empty water from flower pots, pet food and water dishes, birdbaths, swimming pool covers, buckets, barrels, and cans.

- Check for clogged rain gutters and clean them out.

- Remove discarded tires, and other items that could collect water.

- Be sure to check for containers or trash in places that may be hard to see, such as under bushes or under your home.

What can be done to prevent outbreaks of West Nile virus? Prevention and control of West Nile virus and other arboviral diseases is most effectively accomplished through integrated vector management programs. These programs should include surveillance for West Nile virus activity in mosquito vectors, birds, horses, other animals, and humans, and implementation of appropriate mosquito control measures to reduce mosquito populations when necessary. Additionally, when virus activity is detected in an area, residents should be alerted and advised to increase measures to reduce contact with mosquitoes. Details about effective prevention and control of West Nile virus can be found in the CDC's Guidelines for Surveillance, Prevention, and Control.

Rattlesnakes

by Denise Edwards

Symbolically, rattlesnakes and snakes in general have known many meanings and have been the center of many stories and myths throughout history among numerous cultures. Christianity used the snake to represent Satan while many other cultures including Native Indians, have portrayed snakes as symbols of wisdom, healing, fertility, and even eternal power. Today the image of the snake is used to represent modern medicine and the profession of pharmacology. This stems from the Greek Mythological god of medicine, Asclepius, who was depicted as holding a staff with a snake coiled around it. Maybe these grand tales and mythical stories are why we all seem to be fascinated with these slithering creatures, or maybe its just because they have the potential to deliver a fatal dose of venom into unsuspecting hikers.

Well, whichever the case there is no doubt that we find, or at least I find myself dealing with the occasional frantic visitor who spotted one of our legless friends or the picnicker who demands that something be done about the rattlesnake that invaded *their* picnic area. (Okay, just a little bitterness coming out there).

There is nothing more powerful than understanding the nature of the beast in this case, the rattlesnake (genus *Crotalus*). The rattlesnake is the only venomous snake native to California. Although there 16 different varieties, only about 6 or 7 species dwell in California including the Pacific, Great Basi, Sidewinder, Panamint, Red Diamond, Western Diamondback, Mojave Desert, and Speckled Rattlesnakes. Further some of these varieties tend to have territories that they prefer to stay close to due to weather conditions, etc.

Rattlesnakes tend to share some similar physical characteristics. First is the broad triangular shape of the head. Next is the elliptical shape to their pupils versus a perfectly round shape common with other non-venomous types of snakes. Then of course is the obvious physical characteristic of the rattle on the tail helps to identify these snakes. However, you cannot rely on the sound alone to verify that it is rattler. Baby rattlers are born with a button that sheds and is replaced by the first segment. The design of the rattle takes at least two segments for a sound to be produced. Each time the snake sheds a new segments is

added. Shedding can occur up to 3 times per year, which would eliminate the theory of predicting age by counting the segments. Over time with wear and tear, the segments can be damaged and may break off. It is unusual to find a rattler in the wild with more than 8 or 9 segments.

Another interesting aspect of the rattlesnake is its fangs. Baby rattlers are born with functioning fangs. According to the American International Rattlesnake Museum, rattlesnakes are given an unlimited supply of fangs. Concealed in the roof of its' mouth new fangs are being created, growing and moving forward to take the place of the old fangs that are soon to shed off. Oddly enough rattlesnakes have control over how much venom is injected during a bite. This is why some experts believe it may be more harmful to be bitten by an immature snake that is less experienced and may have less control over the venom amount.

Rattlesnakes generally mate in the spring. In the fall most baby rattlers are born. Female rattlers will start out with up to 25 eggs which will hatch in the body so that the babies are born live. Usually only about 9 or 10 will survive birth. Then the healthy babies are on their own to fend for themselves, search for food and avoid becoming prey to hawks, coyotes and other snakes. In turn the baby rattlers will find nourishment from small birds and rodents, lizards, frogs and young rabbits. They will have to find a suitable den in which to hibernate for the winter and are often spotted again once the temperature increases again in the springtime. In the summer, they will not travel far from their winter dens, but must seek out food usually in the evening and night hours. They have little heat sensing mechanisms located between the eye and nostril that are used to help locate prey. (Because they feed on rats and mice, snakes are extremely beneficial for keeping the rodent population down in the area).

Although you are more likely to encounter a rattlesnake in the spring and summer months, remember that they are not aggressive and will try to retreat if they are noticed. Most bites are the result of the snakes being teased, handled or surprised in some way. The best thing to do is to stay calm, and move away from the snake slowly. In all snake bites that do occur, only 1% result in death.

Ranger Public Relations 101

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thank you for taking such good care of the park," or "the park looks great, the trails are in good condition!" "I have always wondered, how does one become a park ranger?," or my favorite, "do you need any help?"

No (fertilizer!) this has worked for me like a magic potion. I have recruited many helpful and valuable park volunteers

who have also become good friends and supporters of the parks this way.

So, next time you go out on foot patrol and want to make the best public impression possible, remember to always carry your ranger props.

The effort is minimal, but the pay off may be great!

**Park Rangers Association of California
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Submission deadlines ARE THE LAST DAY OF JANUARY, MARCH, MAY, JULY, SEPTEMBER, AND NOVEMBER.

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Membership Application

NAME _____		
ADDRESS _____		
CITY _____	STATE _____	ZIP _____
PHONE _____	HOME _____	WORK _____
Email Address _____		
Employer OR School _____		
Job Classification OR Major _____		

Voting Membership

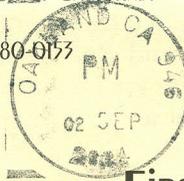
REGULAR.....\$45
RETIRED.....\$35

Non-voting Membership

AGENCY:
(1-25 PERSONS-6 MAILINGS).....\$100
25 PERSONS-12 MAILINGS).....\$150
STUDENT.....\$20
ASSOCIATE.....\$35
SUPPORTING.....\$100

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