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## LETTERS

### MESSAGE FROM THE PAST PRESIDENT, FEBRUARY 1990

Dear Friends in RRF,

When our Editor, Joe Schmutz, asked if I'd like to include a statement in the spring issue of *The Journal of Raptor Research*, my first thought was that all I have to say is I'm still relieved to have completed my term as President and pleased to have "passed the torch" to the capable hands of Dick Clark. After a few moments of reflection, however, I decided that there were a number of things I would like to say. Joe may learn not to tempt professors with a free soap box.

Since 1975, I have been Treasurer, a Director, President-elect and President of the *Raptor Research Foundation, Inc.* I'm both pleased and proud to have had the opportunity to serve. The organization has grown in membership and budget, but more importantly, in prestige and maturity. I'm pleased to have been a part of that too. I hope you all are equally pleased, both to be members and to have supported the *Foundation*. The growth is not over, however, and never will be until all aspects of natural history, physiology, etc. of every raptor is thoroughly understood and until no raptors are endangered. So, I urge you to continue your moral and financial support of our organization; volunteer to serve on a committee, run for an office, and ask your friends to join us.

On a final note, I also urge you to become active in environmental protection. The ozone holes are increasing in size, 100 acres of rainforest are lost every minute with still undiscovered species becoming extinct, human populations are increasing, and we continue to suffer air pollution, water pollution and massive soil erosion. Our "leaders," to avoid facing the inevitable, want to study the situation further. We may be witnessing the best-researched environmental disaster in history. In connection with *Earth Day*, I've been asked to speak on endangered species. My message is that we must act now or we will all be endangered species.

Thanks again for your support during my Presidency. Please continue or increase your support of Dick Clark. He will lead us to even more growth.—**Gary E. Duke, Past President.**

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT, JANUARY 1990

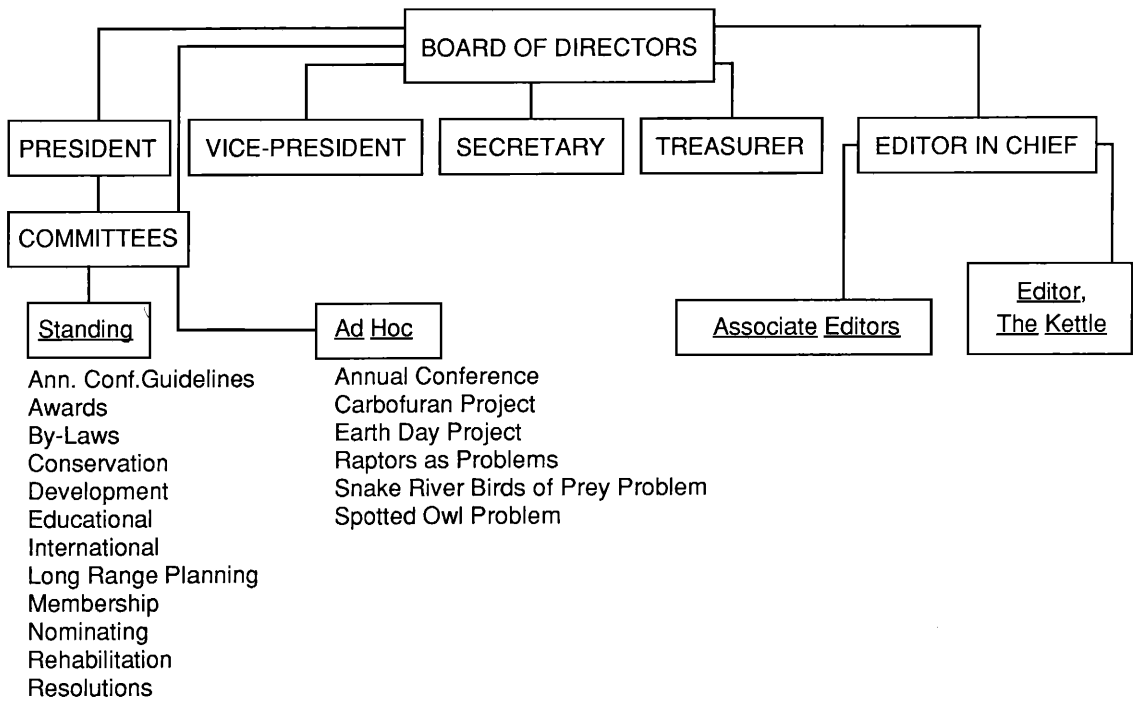
Happy New Decade! And greetings from your new President. Gary E. Duke was the current President when he asked me to write this as incoming President. This is a very typical gesture for Gary, i.e., passing up an opportunity to see his name and message in print to nudge me to develop the necessary habits for my stint as President of *The Raptor Research Foundation, Inc.*, hopefully for the good of the organization. This not only provides me with the opportunity to laud his and your efforts (not a difficult task at all), but to promote continuity and share some of my ideas of where RRF is strong as well as where we can improve and concomitant with that, some ways that we may accomplish improvements.

I shall summarize the 1988-1989 years, i.e., those years of Gary Duke's term, which might be characterized by the phrase "tightening up." Gary's predecessor, Jeffrey L. Lincer, brought a new level of professionalism to RRF and made provision for committees to function formally. Gary established the policy of developing formal calendars, of defining much more formally the roles of officers, and committees via "job descriptions" and added six new committees (By-Laws, Development, International, Long-Range Planning, Membership, Nominating and Rehabilitation). He has also brought into being *ad hoc* committees. Thus, we now have structure within the RRF which is formal enough that a meaningful organizational chart seems to be in order and is included at the end of this letter.

A personal goal of Gary's (along with others within RRF) has been to broaden the activities of the organization regarding environmental matters that touch raptors either directly, or indirectly. He tried to promote the idea of revising *Earth Day*, to focus attention, once again, upon our dependence of this limited ecosystem which we call *Earth*. He informally polled the "top ten" conservation oriented organizations of the U.S. and found that "they did not appear to be very interested." In spite of this, "*Earth Day 1990*" led by Denis Hayes, the Chairman of the original "*Earth Day 1970*," occurred. This reminded me of a statement made at a conference held at a nearby university on Pennsylvania's involvement in the Chesapeake Bay "clean up," i.e., if the people will lead the leaders will follow. Thanks to Gary, RRF was listed as a Co-Sponsor which meant we are on record as supporting the idea and will try to continue to promote the idea.

The idea of RRF venturing from the traditional North American sites for an annual conference has been talked about for some time, but by the time you read this it has happened. A major portion of the responsibility for this is borne by Sr. Mario A. Ramos (chairperson, and Director of Mexican Projects for the World Wildlife Fund to whom we also owe thanks for their generous "loan" of Mario Ramos) and Michael W. Collopy (At Large RRF Board member) and Sr. Eduardo E. Iñigo-Elias. I would also like to personally thank Sr. Romeo Dominguez-Barradas for showing us Aplomado Falcons. Briefly, 93 scientific papers were presented and about 130 people registered and attended. Registrants included raptor people from Canada, England, France, Germany (West), Mexico, the United States, and Venezuela. Well done Señores! Currently the abstracts are being reprinted so that they and a single page index of the approximately 160 authors can be distributed to the International Members of RRF. This was the second joint conference with the World Working Group on Birds of Prey (Western Hemisphere Meeting) and hopefully this cooperation will continue and grow and include other organizations. Along these lines, Lynn W. Oliphant (former Western Canada RRF Board member and formerly Chairman of the RRF Development Committee [this post has been taken over by Walter Crawford] and Lynn has become Chairman of our newly organized Conservation Committee) has been very active in promoting a World Wildlife Fund project to protect the Calakmul Biosphere Reserve in Mexico. This is a 1.5 million acre area of humid tropical forest on the Mexican/Guatemalan/Belize borders. For a mere \$25 (tax-deductible in the U.S.) you can ensure the protection of an acre (0.4 ha) of this reserve against future development. Cheques or money orders payable to: World Wildlife Fund can be sent to: Lynn W. Oliphant, Veterinary Anatomy, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 0W0, CANADA and it will be forwarded for this project. The donor will receive a certificate for the protection of Tropical Raptors. Of course larger donations are also welcomed! Perhaps RRF, and other raptor organizations, could be active participants in the Third World Congress on National Parks (First held in Grand Teton National Park in 1972, Second held in Bali, Indonesia in 1982) scheduled to be held in Venezuela in January of 1992? For the near future plans are well underway for the 1990 Annual Conference to be held in Allentown, Pennsylvania (October 10-14) and as our 1978 conference there was the largest one in the history of RRF, outside of the "mega-conference" in Sacramento, we are looking for another large and successful meeting there.

Again, thanks to Gary and Stuart Porter, RRF was one of only two professional ornithological organizations to respond to the EPA's Office of Pesticides and Toxic Substances request for comments on their proposal to cancel the registrations of granular pesticides containing carbofuran. RRF has been active in attempts to get the Idaho National Guard and the Department of Interior's Idaho unit of the Bureau of Land Management to incorporate a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement into their development plans for the area which includes the Snake River Birds of



Prey Area *in toto*. Unfortunately Gary's summarization of the situation in a letter to me dated 21 June, i.e., "the National Guard will continue their development, BLM will do little to interfere, and all of the biologists disagree on what course to follow" seems to be all too true. Gary and I did respond to a kind invitation by Stan Senner, Executive Director of the Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association and Chairman of the U.S. Section of ICBP (of which RRF is a voting Society Member), to provide RRF input into Subcommittee hearings to authorize appropriations for the BLM for fiscal years 1990-1993. The House did adopt an amendment for their bill which sets down terms and conditions which apply to future uses of public lands by National Guard units. This does not, unfortunately, have bearing on the SRBOPA situation.

Membership numbers for the RRF are showing some healthy signs, e.g., the attrition rate has come within the bounds of many other professional organizations, i.e., about 25 percent. The number of international members continues to remain at a healthy level and the Board of Directors and General Membership voted in a plan redistricting Board of Directors to provide greater flexibility so representation on Board might become more equitable with regard to membership distribution in RRF. The plan calls for three Board members representing U.S., one for Canada, two for International membership and then six At-Large Board members who will be without geographic constituencies. This is also designed to increase voting membership by increasing the number of board members that a single member is eligible to vote for each year. The success of this plan relies heavily on an active, timely nomination process which I have asked Gary Duke and James Fraser to co-chair.

Publications of the RRF have continued to be a most important visible product and hopefully have contributed to the betterment of life for raptors. Thanks to the long-term efforts and expertise of former RRF President, Richard "Butch" R. Ollendorf RRF has produced a 20-Year Bibliographic Index to publications of the RRF. Also, by the time this is read, RRF will be working with a new editor. It is with warm thanks and wishes that we acknowledge the splendid efforts of Jimmie R. Parrish. Under his editorship RRF publications were moved to Allen Press, several Reports were produced, consistency has been incorporated into RRF publications and the Editor's responsibility is moving from his capable hands to that of his successor Josef K. Schmutz (Department of Biology, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 0W0 CANADA). Jimmie was largely responsible for securing the services of Joe Schmutz. Thank you Jimmie, well done, and welcome aboard Joe!

Areas where, it seems to me, we might apply some additional efforts are a) in education, b) involvement and visibility

of the RRF Board and c) interorganizational involvement with those working toward common goals. In the realm of education we have been making some progress, e.g., poster production but perhaps we are ready to take on a formal project involving schools on a pilot basis or perhaps even on a national scale?! An idea might be to hold a poster contest for school children with Raptors in our World or some appropriate theme. Children applying for entry forms might be provided a booklet with basic information on raptors (to be produced as a part of this project) and specifications with regard to the poster dimensions, etc. Prizewinning and Honorable Mention posters might be annually displayed as a part of our conference. Awards might be something like an expense paid trip to some area having special importance with regard to raptors, e.g., the Snake River Birds of Prey Area, Hawk Mountain, the California Condor captive-breeding projects in California or Laurel, Maryland, etc. This would require special funding for the awards which would also be a part of this project. This is just one idea to get you thinking and challenge you to submit an idea of your own. With regard to increasing involvement of the Board it seems only fair that candidates for Board elections must be informed of their expected involvement prior to their becoming Board members. Perhaps all candidates for Board membership should be asked to reply to a question such as, "If elected to the RRF Board how would you increase your efforts to work for the purposes of *The Raptor Research Foundation, Inc.*?" This should not be construed as a criticism of past or present Board members but an indication that perhaps the organization could further benefit by increased efforts "across the board." I have already indicated one area where we might achieve increased interorganizational effort and that would be by joining forces with sister organizations and promoting appropriate activities at large meetings such as the one to be held in Venezuela.

One of my predecessors, Jeff Lincer, once pointed out in the acknowledgments of one of his publications that we all stand on the shoulders of those before us and, as your new president I will be standing most directly on Jeff and Gary's shoulders. They have provided solid footing (thank you gentlemen), I only hope that I don't get "light-headed" from the altitude. With your friendly, constructive criticisms, your suggestions for new endeavors and your willingness to help, our organization will continue to grow in numbers and its positive impact on raptors. With your input we will increase the opportunities for **you**, the RRF member, to become more involved in the operation of **your** organization at all levels! If this letter prompts any specific ideas on your part why don't you drop your respective Board member and me a line about it. As a teacher has no reason for being without students, the organization has no reason for being without its members (and the raptors)!—**Richard J. Clark.**