

Nostalgia Corner

30 Years Ago ... by Paul
Davison

The **Pasadena Roving Archers** (PRA) club has a long, interesting, and very colorful, history. Being close to Hollywood, it naturally attracted several people from the movie and TV industry to participate in club activities. One such activity was featured in the April 1972 *Archery* magazine article, "School for would-be archers." The PRA had just started a free, four-session, archery school; and the article principally described how actor and stuntman, Paul McWilliams, managed to acquire donations for equipment.

McWilliams, was one of the five NFAA instructors at PRA's school. His "day job" in 1972, however, was stuntman and stand-in for Efram Zimbalist, Jr., on the TV show, *F.B.I.* Fifteen years earlier, during *77 Sunset Strip*, Zimbalist got McWilliams started in archery, and as a result of their close friendship, he had the inside track in soliciting donations from the *F.B.I.* cast.

This story is typical of the "good press" PRA has experienced since 1935. The location of the their range certainly doesn't hurt. It's been used as a set for several movies, TV shows and commercials, and as well as for still photo backdrops. The Lower Arroyo Park in Pasadena remains rustic and quite scenic.

Started in 1935, the Pasadena Roving Archers hold claim to being the oldest NFAA club. Alabama's Vulcan Archery Club, of Howard Hill fame, is older, but its NFAA affiliation is not continuous. [It's interesting that Howard Hill also spent some time at PRA during his movie heyday.]

PRA has never claimed to be the biggest club. They've seemed to concentrate more on quality than on quantity. PRA's membership roster could be a Who's Who in Archery. Henry Bitzenburger was president from 1935 through 1939, while Doug Kittredge

presided during 1956-57. Hugh Rich, master arrowsmith and archery historian, was also a member, as was master bowhunter, Bob Jensen. PRA had "working" and "non working" memberships, and, quite frankly, a few of their more prominent archers joined PRA only as a convenient place to practice, or for the prestige of citing "PRA" as their "home club". Maybe it was the California climate, but a majority of PRA's national champions during its first 36 years were female; for example, Babe Bitzenburger, Lu Shine, Eva Troncoso, and Nancy Davis (now Gordon).

The Pasadena Roving Archers' free, "School for would-be archers" continues today essentially unchanged from its inception 30 years ago. There are still four lessons held on four Saturday mornings. The way one learns more about the school, however, has changed somewhat. Today you just look on the Web for:

www.socalarchery.com

and follow the links to **Pasadena Roving Archers**.