

Subject: Fwd: To report harassment at the Children's Pool
From: Perrys <thedjperrys@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, 30 May 2007 17:10:17 -0700
To: harassed@san.rr.com

>From an ordinary Mom , Amy that we talked to at CP

Thank you for all the Children's Pool info. I have been meaning to respond with some personal thoughts but got busy-----I apologize because the matter at hand is so very important.

I have two children, a daughter, 9 years, and a son, 8 years. We have been in San Diego for two years and the tide pools, caves, beaches, parks, and recreation at the Cove were such a joy for us.

Last summer, while visiting the Children's Pool, we noticed a father and son snorkeling. I was surprised and asked the guards if we could go down to the beach as well. He (don't recall his name) said it was absolutely fine and that people were allowed to share the beach with the seals. We were soooo excited! We went down to the beach and I was in awe at the sight of seals popping their heads up not so far away from where the children were swimming. And when my children were building castles in the sand, the seals were creeping in closer and one ventured a little further down from us and came up onto the beach. A lady walked up to me and told me that my children were selfish and that I should teach them manners and to respect animals. I was shocked and speechless. We love animals and my son has picked up injured birds and rabbits and tried to nurture them. I went to the lifeguards immediately; perhaps I had misunderstood? But no, the lifeguard said that we were fine. I went back down and assured my children that we were okay. This lady stayed near us and kept shaking her head at my children. She left briefly...a few moments later the lifeguards announced something over the speaker. I couldn't hear so I went up to ask what they said (we were the only people swimming on the beach). They said that someone told them my children were throwing rocks at the seals. I told them that was not true. I asked them if we should leave...they only said that we had every right to be there but that they could not get in the middle of the situation (unless it escalated and police had to be called).

I was saddened and angered that this person should villainize my innocent children. I went back down to the beach and noticed that in my absence, she had been making her rounds through the groups of sightseers. We were getting disgusted stares from some.

So, I explained to the children the situation. And we stood our ground. We tolerated comments, jeers, and our own fear (this lady seemed to be unpredictable), for about an hour. But it was a Sunday, it was getting colder towards sunset, and we packed up to leave. The woman continued with her mission and started clapping and walked quickly around to get people to clap at us as we left. As I walked by her, she said that I was teaching my children awful things.

I vowed that we would come back every Sunday. My daughter thought we should stand up for ourselves, but my son, well, he's a little sensitive and thought we would only make them more mad. We never went back.

Two weeks ago, I brought my grandmother and mother, who were visiting, to the Cove. I was surprised again to see that there were people on the beach, and people snorkeling. As we were standing there, a man next to us started yelling to a man snorkeling, "Leave them alone! Get out of there! Leave them alone!" The man snorkeling? A seal had swam up about five feet away so the man stood up to look at the seal. I would too! What a fantastic surprise right there, live, in nature! The seal turned and swam away. To the belligerent man next to us, I guess that constituted harassment. The man in the water resumed his snorkeling which angered the man standing next to us even more and he started looking for rocks to throw! He asked people to help him find rocks to throw at the man in the water!!!!

I went to ask the lifeguards about the situation which obviously hadn't changed. He was courteous and once again, reassured me that people and seals were sharing the beach. A seal "sympathizer" was standing

there and told me that she "couldn't believe humans would not let these poor seals have a small part of this vast coastline---making the baby seal out there swim and swim, getting tired and---oh how pathetic....." The guard was diplomatic, but excused himself because he needed to concentrate on watching the swim area.

I later noticed an umbrella, "Beach Open" and I got such a smile! I don't recall the lady's name but she gave me your e-mail address and encouraged me to let you guys know that there's more support out here.

I would like to bring my children back but these angry people cause me to fear for my children's safety. I don't believe these people even have a real knowledge of the nature of these seals. They seem to be basing their emotions and judgments on presumption. These "protesters'" actions are appalling, and really, by definition, ignorant. That they resort to violence and to humiliating children is uncalled for. The swimmers on the beach are not out there hunting seals! I mean, doesn't the trust outline that FISHING is allowed? We aren't even talking about seals getting hooked and caught up in lines! We are talking about what seems to me to be an historical complimentary and mutually curious relationship between the seals and the swimmers at the Children's Pool. Can anyone refer to any deliberate and ill-motivated harassment of a seal by a visitor? What if that man had thrown the rock and hit a seal by accident? Then what?

I will write a letter to all of the city council members tomorrow. Thank you so much for their addresses and phone numbers. I hope that there will be a peaceful resolution. But somehow, I don't think the seal people will be happy with any compromise. It's a shame. Nature and animals are so amazing---and so are humans. Excuse me, but aren't we already sharing this planet?

I have to add that the lifeguards have a tough job and they have always been gracious in their handling of "both sides".

Thanks and take care.

Amy D. de Leon

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