

Dalton Caldwell
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"Good evening, I know that the Mr. and Miss speeches are everyone's favorite part of the night, second only to the dancing, so I thought I might present some of my own lyrics, albeit they aren't quite so musical.

And on the eighth day
God looked down upon the world and said I need a leader
So God made a Ranger

God said I need someone willing to rise before the sun
Toss hay
Ride a bucking horse
Clean stalls
Clean Tack
And bring the day's chores home to teach the young the skills of our trade
So God made a Ranger

God said I need someone willing to work for months gilding a glistening a dream
And watch it die
Breathe a sigh
And then reply
Maybe next show

I need someone who can fix a footman loop with epoxy and tooth picks
Rig a banner across a barn aisle
Who can make a suitable steed of a hard-nosed horse
Through practice heat and show day weary put in every ounce of energy until he rides out the arena only to put the energy he no longer has into packing prizes and hauling home, So God made a Ranger

God said I need somebody aggressive enough to conquer drill and command respect
Yet suitably humble to still put their own needs after others
Who'll remit their tasks to salute the sound of the National Anthem in the nearby arena
So God made a Ranger

It had to be somebody who would track straight and true and not cut corners
Somebody to feed weed bleed and lead
And drill and buff and press and polish
And rake the aisles
And pick the hooves

Someone who could unite a team to fight for a dream
As only a family could fondly bond
So God made a Ranger

You may have recognized this poem; It is a rendition of Paul Harvey's speech, "The Farmer." It presents the idea that each person has a very special niche in this world. I am entering my seventh year in this organization. I began with little structure and little direction in life. I couldn't ride a horse. I didn't know the real meaning of respect. I didn't have much of a work ethic. The California Rangers helped me define myself and find my place in this world, giving me real chance at success by challenging me to go beyond my comfort zone, beyond what I considered within my realm of possibilities.

We all know that a Ranger is more than just an equestrian. A Ranger has a very unique position in this world; a position of leadership, a position of responsibility, a position of respect. And my goal, whether or not chosen to be Mr. California Ranger, is to help every cadet develop themselves, bringing their abilities in each of these areas to an apogee, and giving them the foundation to follow any pursuit they choose in life with confidence.

Lastly, I implore every cadet, young and old, of high rank and low: face life's challenges. Do not simply circumvent them but approach them head on. As Neil Armstrong said of his mission to the moon, "It is within the nature of human beings to face challenges. It's by the nature of his deep inner soul... we're required to do these things, just as salmon swim upstream."

Thank you."