The **Ponderosa**

The Pine Ridge Association Newsletter
Henry W. Coe State Park

July 1996

From under My Brim

by Barry Breckling

RATTLESNAKE!

Fear struck deep into Jack's heart as he skidded to a stop not five feet away from an eight-foot-long rattler. He and his son froze in their tracks, hoping the snake hadn't noticed them. Jack's nostrils flared open as his breaths turned to gasps. His whole body tingled, and the rushing blood pounded in his neck. Sweat immediately began to pour down his face. Even in his panic, Jack realized that the snake was an old one—ten rattles, ten years old.

As he and his son stood frozen in fear, the ferocious snake reared up and turned toward them. The trail was narrow, and Jack knew that their only hope was to retreat, but they were too slow. Just as they turned to run, the enormous viper sprang through the air and struck Jack's hiking boot, driving its fangs through the boot and deep into his leg.

Jack collapsed in agony, and his son immediately headed for the ranger station to get help. Jack fumbled in his daypack, found the half-full bottle of whiskey he always carried for such emergencies, and quickly consumed the fiery liquid. He knew that whiskey sometimes saved the lives of the stronger victims of rattlesnake bites. In just a few minutes, his leg had swelled to nearly twice its normal size, and the pain had become unbearable. He tied a tourniquet tightly around the leg, above the bite, to keep the poison from traveling through his blood. All he could do now was wait and hope.

When two rangers arrived at the scene less than an hour later, Jack was near death. A rescue helicopter arrived minutes later and rushed him to the hospital, but he died in route. Unfortunately, his death was not the end of the story. About a year later, Jack's son decided to try on his father's hiking boots. He pulled one on and suddenly screamed when something sharp pierced the bottom of his foot. He jerked the boot off, looked inside, and found one of the snake's fangs. He jumped in his car, rushed to the hospital, and was treated for the bite less than 30 minutes later. Fortunately, he survived, but many weeks went by before he fully recovered.

A nightmare? Maybe. But certainly not a true story, far from it. People fear rattlesnakes more than anything else, more than tornadoes, spiders, earthquakes, rabid dogs, and charging rhinos all rolled into one. However, our fear of rattlesnakes is

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recycled paper

often based on myth and misinformation. In North America, there are probably more fear-filled, untrue stories told about rattlesnakes than about any other animal.

There are about 30 species and 70 subspecies of rattlesnakes in North and South America. The most common species in California is the Western Rattlesnake (*Crotalus viridis*), which occurs throughout the state except in the deserts and the southern mountains. The most common subspecies of Western Rattlesnake in California, and the only one found in Coe Park, is the Northern Pacific Rattlesnake (*Crotalus viridis oreganus*). As rattlesnakes go, Northern Pacific Rattlesnakes are relatively small. Although they can reach a length of five feet, most adults never exceed three feet in length. Rattlesnakes, copperheads, and water moccasins belong to a group of snakes called pit vipers, all of which have a pair of heat-sensing pits near their nostrils.

Since rattlesnakes are cold-blooded animals, they have to regulate their body temperature by moving to cooler spots when it's hot and to warmer spots when it's cool. When it's hot out, they curl up in the shade, and during the colder months of the winter, they hibernate.

Rattlesnakes can hunt during the day or the night, but their hunting activity is totally dependent on the temperature of the air and the earth. When the daytime temperatures are high, they avoid the sun during the hotter part of the day, warm their blood in the lower rays of the evening sun, and hunt during the night. When the nights get cold, they hide away during the dark hours, warm themselves in the early light of dawn, and hunt during the day.

Although they often stalk their prey, rattlers also lie in ambush, waiting for a rodent, such as a mouse or a ground squirrel, to come by. They can spot their prey visually, but they also use their heat-sensing "viper" pits, which help them to locate warm-blooded prey and strike with accuracy. Their eyes are well equipped for the low light of the night; their elliptical pupils can open quite wide, like the eyes of other night creatures, such as the cat.

Rattlers have two venom glands, one in each cheek. The glands are connected by ducts to the base of two long hollow fangs, which lie folded at the roof of a snake's mouth. When a rattlesnake strikes, its jaws open wide and the fangs unfold.

Rattlesnake venom contains several protein-based toxins, and when a prey animal is bitten, the venom begins to work immediately. Some of the toxins can cause failure of major organs, such as the heart and the lungs. Other toxins begin to digest the victim's tissues before the snake swallows it.

When an animal is bitten by a rattlesnake, it usually runs off. The animal's fright and rapid movements increase its heart rate, which accelerates the distribution of the snake's venom through its bloodstream. Another substance in the venom causes anxiety, which also boosts the heart rate and keeps the animal frightened and fidgety.

After it strikes, a rattlesnake doesn't dash off in hot pursuit of its victim. Instead, it slowly and deliberately follows the path of the fleeing animal, using its nose and its forked tongue to find the way.

When a snake exposes its tongue to the air, chemical particles from the air adhere to the tongue's moist surface. When the snake draws its tongue back in, it presses it against a pair of structures on the roof of its mouth. The structures are called Jacobson's organs, and they transmit chemical information from the snake's tongue to its brain, where the information is processed.

When a rattlesnake locates its dead or dying victim, it opens its mouth around the animal's head, unhooks its upper and lower jaws, and slowly begins to swallow the animal by inching forward and engulfing it.

Although their adjustable eyesight, heat-sensing pits, chemical-sensing tongue, and unhinging jaws give rattlesnakes distinct offensive advantages, the feature most familiar to us, and the one they're named for, is their unique early-warning system . . . their rattles. Rattlesnakes use their rattles to warn or frighten off larger animals, including humans. If you've heard a snake's rattle, you'll probably never forget what it sounds like. The sound is more like an intense, high-pitched buzz than a rattle, but it's very difficult to describe and has been compared to all sorts of other sounds, such as the sounds of cicadas, a knife being sharpened, and steam escaping under intense pressure.

Baby rattlers are born without rattles (which doesn't seem quite right). Instead of rattles, they have a little button, which is made of the same material that rattles are made of, a material similar to our fingernails. A baby snake acquires its first rattle the first time it sheds its skin.

It is estimated that rattlesnakes can live to be over 20 years old in the wild. As they age, they grow larger, but their skin (like the exoskeleton of spiders and insects) does not expand to fit them. As rattlers get bigger, they continually grow new skin and shed the old. And each time a rattlesnake sheds its skin, it keeps its old rattles and acquires a new one. Although rattlesnakes have been known to shed their skin as often as six times a year, they more commonly shed about two or three times per year. The folk myth that the number of rattles on a snake is equal to its age in years is widespread, but untrue.

Jack's imaginary nemesis, with its ten rattles, was probably no more than three years old.

As a young rattlesnake grows and sheds, its new rattles get progressively larger. After a snake reaches adult size, however, its new rattles are all about the same size. For that reason, if you see a snake with a set of rattles that is more or less wedge shaped, the snake is undoubtedly a young one, and if you see one with many rattles of the same width, the snake is probably old and experienced.

Northern Pacific rattlesnakes are rather common in Coe Park, but they are also relatively docile, and a hiker's or biker's chances of being bitten by one are very slim. My close encounters with these snakes are similar to the encounters other people have related to me.

Bob Patrie, one of the founders of the Pine Ridge Association, used to visit the park frequently. One afternoon, we were hiking together in single file. He was ahead of me, and he apparently stepped right over a medium-sized rattlesnake without noticing it. I was only a few steps behind him and was just about to step right on top of the rattler, but spotted it just in time to put my foot elsewhere. It was lying quietly on the trail, obviously hoping that its brownish-green camouflage would keep it from being seen.

Several years earlier, shortly after I moved to Coe Park, I was hiking up the Little Fork with my son and daughter. All three of us unknowingly walked over a rattlesnake. One of us looked back and spotted the snake moments after we'd passed over it. We figured that my daughter probably stepped right on the snake, since her stride was shorter than its coiled width, and we were quite surprised that the snake had remained still. We continued on our hike, and on the return trip we found the snake still coiled in the same spot. I nudged it softly with a stick, and the snake slowly slithered away.

A few years later, my son joined the Coe Park volunteers on one of our annual ride-alongs. He was walking barefooted through some low grass along the Orestimba Creek, and accidentally stepped on a very large rattlesnake. The snake didn't try to strike—it didn't even coil!

What's the matter with these fearsome vipers? Don't they realize that they're supposed to attack all humans on sight?

Our rattlesnakes, like most species of rattlesnakes in North America, are not aggressive. They simply want to live their lives in peace. Although they will defend themselves if they feel threatened, they have no interest in attacking human beings or any other large animals.

Only three people have been bitten by rattlesnakes in Henry Coe State Park during the 43 years since it first became a park. The most recent "victim" was a guy in his twenties who was waving his hand just inches in front of a rattlesnake's head. He claimed he was showing his girlfriend how rattlesnakes strike. The first "victim" was a Boy Scout leader who was demonstrating proper rattlesnake handling techniques to his scouts. The second "victim" was a man in his thirties who picked up a rattlesnake to impress his girlfriend. As the story goes, he'd been told that when you put a rattler down you must be sure to put a particular end of the snake down first. His memory failed him though. He put the snake's head down first, and you can guess the rest.

The three Coe Park rattlesnake victims had several things in common. All three survived, of course. All three were aggressively fooling with rattlesnakes. All three were trying to show off. And all three probably have similar I.Q.s.

Over a third of the people in the United States who get bitten by rattlesnakes have been bitten because they were intentionally fooling with rattlers. Although the bites are very painful, very few people die from being bitten. In fact, less than two percent of the people recorded to have been bitten by rattlesnakes nationwide have died as a result. That statistic includes bites by species and subspecies that inject much more venom than our Northern Pacific subspecies and others whose venom is much more toxic. It also includes bites that received no medical attention and bites received by small children, older adults, and people in poor health, all of whom are more adversely affected by rattlesnake venom.

The low incidence of deaths from rattlesnake bites is probably the reason why so many cures are believed to work. The liquid "cures," for example, include everything from a fifth of whiskey to an ounce of toad urine. A more realistic reason for the low mortality rate is the fact that more than 20 percent of rattlesnake bites are venomless bites. Snakes sometimes deliver "dry" bites because they've used up all their venom acquiring a recent meal. More often, however, a snake probably withholds its venom for more profitable use and hopes that the strike alone will discourage its perceived aggressor.

There are several rattlesnake facts that we should all know and remember. The most relevant fact is that rattlesnakes have absolutely no desire to bite us because we are simply too big to swallow. Rattlesnake fangs cannot penetrate good leather boots, and the bite of a snake is less effective through clothing if the clothing is loose fitting. It's also important to remember that rattlesnakes can be dangerous even after they're dead. They can strike and inject venom by reflex action up to 45 minutes after they die.

In 1861, William Brewer and a traveling companion beheaded a rattler that was threatening one of their pack mules. After they traveled on for a short distance, Brewer decided to go back and measure the dead snake. When he started to straighten out the snake's headless body to measure it with his tape, the body coiled and struck him on the wrist with its headless stump. That chilling story is related in Brewer's educational and entertaining book *Up and Down California in 1860–1864.*

There must be hundreds of rattlesnake myths and tall tales that are totally untrue. One is the myth of the fatal fang in the boot (remember Jack's son?). Here, just for fun, are a few more:

- **Rattlesnakes can suck milk from cows.**
- **It's easy to shoot a rattlesnake because they're so fast that they'll see the bullet coming and strike at it.**
- **Rattlesnakes can mesmerize their prey with their penetrating stare.**
- **Rattlesnakes and gopher snakes can interbreed; their offspring have a poisonous bite but no rattles.**
- **To get places faster, a rattler can take its tail in its mouth and roll like a wheel.**

Over the years, the treatments recommended for snake bite have changed. For example, making incisions around the bite area and then attempting to remove the venom by suction is now discouraged, since the procedure tends to do more harm than good in most cases and can result in serious infection. A tourniquet should **never** be used on a snakebite victim. If you were to tie a tourniquet around a person's limb above a snakebite, you would definitely reduce the spread of venom, but the person's limb would most likely have to be amputated. Contrary to popular belief, a snakebite victim should not ingest alcohol or aspirin. Nor should ice packs be applied to the bite area. Alcohol, aspirin, and ice would make the victim's blood thinner and hasten the spread of the venom. Although electric shock treatment has received a lot of attention as first aid for all venomous snake bites, further study and more widespread acceptance are required before the treatment can be generally recommended.

So much for what you shouldn't do. What are the things you should do to help a snakebite victim? Let's say you're out hiking and you come across a man who tells you in a panic-stricken voice that he was just bitten on the ankle by a rattlesnake. Your first priority is to try to calm him down and keep him still to prevent his heart rate from accelerating and distributing the venom more rapidly. Remind him that rattlesnake venom has a toxin that may cause him to be anxious and jumpy. Have him immobilize his leg and keep the bitten area below the level of his heart. Then, if at all possible, find someone who you can send for help. Determine where the man was bitten and apply a constricting band, such as a bandanna or another article of clothing, above the bite.

Although tourniquets are out of the question, constricting bands are recommended, but only around a person's limbs—never around a person's trunk or neck. The constricting band should, if possible, be at least two inches wide, it should be tied a few inches above the bite, and it should not be so tight that it cuts off the flow of blood. If you are unable to slip one or two fingers comfortably under the band, the band is too tight.

Although cutting and suction are no longer recommended, suction without cutting is an accepted method of removing venom, if the suction is applied within 15 minutes after a bite. There is at least one snake bite kit on the market that is based on suction treatment without cutting. If you had such a kit and your timing was right, you might want to try removing some of the venom.

Snakebite victims should be transported to a medical facility as soon as possible so that they can be given antivenin and other treatments to reduce their pain and swelling and prevent further tissue damage. The most lasting affect of a rattlesnake bite is the tissue damage that occurs from the digestive enzymes in the venom.

Even though the thought of rattlesnakes may send chills up and down your spine, try not to think of them as loathsome, aggressive beasts. Like butterflies and wildflowers, rabbits and squirrels, rainbows and oak trees, rattlesnakes are natural, beneficial inhabitants of this wild place we call Coe Park. If you think you're afraid when you hear that unforgettable buzzing at your feet, think of it from the snake's point of view. Imagine a snake-sized you lying on your belly and then imagine a creature something like a 400-foot tall, 20-ton *Tyrannosaurus rex* tromping around nearby. I'd rather be that big creature, myself. Wouldn't you?

How'll I Recognize a Rattler When I See One?
by Barbara Bessey

Some people try to kill any snake that looks like a rattlesnake. However, there are many snakes in the park, like gopher snakes, that can look and act very much like rattlesnakes but are nonpoisonous. Gopher snakes can hiss loudly if surprised. They can also flatten their heads and move their tails in such a way as to act like a rattler. Take a look at the colored plates in *A Field Guide to Western Reptiles and Amphibians* by Robert C. Stebbins to see how gopher snakes differ from rattlesnakes. This field guide, which is part of the Peterson field guide series, is available for sale in the visitor center.

Interview of Peter Enos
by Teddy Goodrich

Several years ago I had the privilege of interviewing Peter Enos. Mr. Enos's personal experiences give an entirely new perspective to the history of Coe Park. Though he eventually graduated from UC Berkeley in 1940 with a bachelor of science degree in agricultural economics and farm management, his education was interrupted several times, once when he decided to take a job taking care of Henry Coe's cattle, another time when he and a friend ran trap lines out of Cold Flat. His words offer rare insight into life "in the hills" in an earlier time.

Well, you know, working on these ranches is not all whoopy-doo cowboy stuff. There's a lot of pitching hay, and digging ditches, and digging out springs. Oh, I shoveled manure 'til you can't believe! They had a barn where they fed cattle all winter. And I did riding. That's an incidental part of the job on a big ranch.

In 1936 I dropped out of school. I got disgusted and ran out of money. I went up to see Henry Coe. I'd known him for a long time.

"You want a job? Sure, I'll give you a job." Pitching hay, ranch work, for thirty-five, forty dollars a month. That was standard in those times. And then this fellow up at Pine Ridge, he got fired or something, and I saw Henry Coe's mother coming on the road on horseback. And I said, "How's about that job up on Pine Ridge?" So the next day, they told me, OK, go up to Pine Ridge. So I went, and I was up there for three years. And no automobile, no telephone, no nothing. I was there all alone, me and four or five head of horses, plus people passing through, homesteaders and game wardens.

Other than that, I had my supplies. Brought them up on a pack horse. In the morning, we'd leave about three o'clock and go down across Los Huecos and Pine Ridge and across Cow Hill and down the side and come into the back way of San Felipe Valley. There's a gate down there. It's about six o'clock, and I can hear the breakfast bell ringing. I'd eat breakfast, and they'd take me to town and buy some groceries.

We didn't go to Morgan Hill. We went to San José for hardware and groceries. If I needed a shirt or jeans, there was the Working Man's Store. You could get a nice blue shirt for fifty cents. A pair of Levi's for seventy-five cents. Isn't that amazing when you stop and think of it?

You don't run cattle up there; you just summer them up there. The grass dries up; it burns up fast. You let them up there in the fall after the rain, and they live on the green grass until May, and then gather them up and take them down to the home ranch and put them on pasture or feed. I used to gather them up by myself. I had a dog. I was riding all the time.

The cattle are gentle. You'd turn them loose out there and not see them for two or three months. I used to be with them all the time, riding, so when they told me they were going to come get the cattle in a couple of weeks, I'd start out there and I'd see a bunch, fifteen or twenty head. I'd take them to the holding field, the Arnold Field, and the next day I'd go out, ten or fifteen more, bring them home. In a week or so, I'd have them all in the holding field, and they'd come up and take them down to the ranch.

There were no fences. I've had to go as far as the San Antone Valley for cattle, through Devil's Gate and clear around to the Gerber Ranch.

I used to shoe my own horses and all that stuff. I did all my own washing and dishes. Going out, leaving before daylight and getting back after dark. Sixty dollars a month. I was getting big wages, too, 'cause ranches around for that same kind of job were paying about forty dollars.

I trapped at Laurel Springs. At that time, it belonged to a friend of mine's uncle. This friend and I got tired of school. We wanted to go trapping. So we got permission from these people that owned it and bought ammunition, food, beans, and what have you, enough to last for six months. We had to pack it all up from Madrone Soda Springs. Pack it all up the fork up there [Los Cruzeros] and up the Jackass Trail to the side of Blue Ridge. Because of the packs on our backs, we had to lean on a tree to rest; we couldn't sit down because we couldn't get up. For a change from Laurel Springs, we'd go down the Rock House to the Miller Field. For six months, for ammunition, food, and transportation, it cost us fifty dollars. That was about 1933. We packed out of there in March. We sold our furs to Montgomery Wards for about fifty dollars.

Mr. Enos told me they trapped bobcats, skunks, and foxes. They also wanted to trap coyotes, but in his words, "they were too smart for us." They walked a fifteen-mile trap line every morning.

Once on the Widow's Trail (the trail to Widow Hobb's cabin) he caught a golden eagle. As he came down the trail, he saw something flopping around in the trap and wondered what it could be. A closer look revealed a golden eagle that had apparently been attracted to the bait and had been caught trying to steal it. Mr. Enos threw a gunny sack over the bird, freed it from the trap, and turned it loose.

The next day while he was walking the same trail, he found another golden eagle—or was it the same one?—caught in the same trap!

He had yet another encounter with an eagle:

One day I was packing stuff up the side of the Rock House toward Laurel Springs. I had a big pack on my back. All of a sudden, there was a whistling sound, like an airplane, and there over my head about twenty or thirty feet was a golden eagle with a squirrel in its beak. It was the darndest experience I think I've ever had!

Too Much Solitude

by Sandi Garrett

So there I was. Hiking down the Northern Heights route, within sight of Red Creek. It was Wednesday, the second day of what should have been an eight-day trip of many scenic vistas and cool creeks. The weather was forecast to be perfect—cool mornings for hiking and warm afternoons for lounging at the creek of the day's destination. Coe was in all of its splendor: the creeks were still running, the grass was still a lively green, and, oh, the wildflowers!

The first two days of the trip were filled with that energy and excitement of adventure. Sure, I had been over most of the trails before (keeping with my solo trip policy of not trekking over new terrain while by myself). But the excitement of being out there was incredible. It was Coe after all—my best friend, the one with whom I had shared my innermost thoughts, the one with whom I had sweated and toiled for spectacular views, the one that had taught me to be at peace with being by myself while the world progressed in turmoil. And, oh, the times we were going to have! East Fork Coyote, Bear Mountain, Red Creek, Mt. Stakes trail, Pinto Creek, Robinson Creek, more Red Creek, Mustang Pond, Orestimba Creek, up the Hartman trail (for the masochist in me), Mississippi Lake. It was shaping up to be a fabulous trip—I was like a kid in a candy store.

I had left the East Fork of Coyote Creek early that fateful day to avoid the heat on the exposed Northern Heights route. It was lunch time as I approached Red Creek. I was thinking about how good soaking my feet in Red Creek would feel as I ate lunch, when it happened. The steep approach down to the creek transitioned from loose gravely rock to green grass still wet with the dew. Unfortunately, as I placed my right foot into the grass, I did not note the change in terrain, and my right foot slipped out from under me. In falling, my pack and I came down on my left leg, which curled up underneath me causing the weight to pivot on my left ankle.

I heard the "snap" as I went down, but did not feel the pain until I off-loaded the pack and got the left leg out in front of me to assess the damage. "Good, no bleeding," then the pain crashed over me like a wave. When I came to, I realized that I could not put any weight on the foot at all. I remember my first thought being, "Well, this certainly changes my plans." Thus the checklist began—if I can make it to the creek, I have water and a means to purify it, I have plenty of food, if I can get the pack to the creek I will be okay.

The trek to Red Creek began. I found that I could use gravity to help me drag the pack down the slope as I did the "wounded crab crawl" in front of it. Once I was off the slope,

though, dragging the pack took more strength than I could muster. Thus I found that an external frame pack can be used as a "walker" by angling first the right side and then the left out in front of me while I hobbled behind it.

The pack made it as far as the shady spot under the oak, while I hopped on toward the creek. My concern at this point was to keep the ankle from swelling up and I thought soaking it in the creek would be the best way about this. I got the boot off fairly easily, but due to sloppiness in the ankle joint I had to stabilize it by resting my foot on the ground to remove the sock. Some swelling over the ankle bone (I now know this is the fibula) had already occurred, but otherwise it didn't look too bad. The water felt wonderfully cool. Having achieved the destination of the creek, I could now relax and determine my next task of focus.

Ah, but the body had different thoughts. It wasn't that easy. I noticed the surrounding area starting to fade into an over-exposed photograph. I don't know why they call it "blacking out." It really seemed to me like I was "whiting out." As I fought it, I crawled away from the creek—just in case I did pass out, I didn't want to be one of the first drowning victims in Coe Park! Then the nausea hit and the body did multiple orifice purging (I'll spare you the details). And if all of this wasn't enough to deal with, I then proceeded to get a bad case of the chills. Having taken Jim Mason's first aid class, I deduced that this was probably shock and should be treated as soon as possible.

The universe becomes very small when all of your focus and effort is required for the simplest of tasks. I remember individual blades of grass, broken twigs, and creek bed rocks that I crawled over on my way back to my pack. I immediately stripped down and put on my polypro/wool long-johns, got into my sleeping bag, and then laid down with my feet elevated on the pack.

Slowly things came back to normal. Over the next several hours I was able to set up camp, crawl to the creek to pump some water, eat a little, find a sturdy walking stick, and assess my options. By this time the ankle was pretty swollen and starting to do the green/blue/purple stuff. I kept it elevated on my pack as I considered my options.

I had left a detailed itinerary with my husband and knew that once I was overdue he would apprise headquarters and a search party would no doubt find me. Of course, that would be in another seven days. A quicker plan was more to my liking, though. If I could hike (ok, hobble) down Red Creek another half mile, then I would be along Red Creek road where it meets the Roostercomb Loop trail. Since I knew that the Backcountry Coe weekend would be occurring in several days, I might be able to decrease the number of days I had to wait for rescue.

So Thursday morning found me with ankle wrapped in my bandannas then placed into the tightly laced boot with branches splinting it on either side. With some difficulty I was able to get the pack on my back (if it didn't go, I didn't go) and with walking stick in hand I hobbled down the creek. Of course, the pain was bad and progress very slow. It took many iterations of Psalm 23 and some yelling at the cows that "yes, indeed, I really was moving" to occupy my mind over the couple of hours that it took to cover the distance.

I found a perfect spot to camp: shady most of the day, within hopping distance of the creek, relatively flat, with a commanding view of both Red Creek road and Roostercomb Loop trail. The ankle as well as the foot had taken on that tight, shiny, no definition of the joints look—not to mention the rainbow of colors! Thus I splinted it with my towel and created an elevated sling on the front door of the tent (every tent should have one!) fashioned out of my long-sleeve shirt.

Thursday (after setting up camp), Friday, and Saturday all had pretty much the same agenda. Awaken, hopeful of being found, soak the ankle in the creek while pumping two quarts of water for the day, rinse face and hair, signal planes with mirror, talk to frog and assure him that everything would be okay. Then it was back to the tent for a nap, strain my way through a page or two of Walden (not recommended reading), swat the flies, another nap, write in my journal, watch the turkeys, another nap, swat some more flies, talk to the hummingbird (Fri)/snake (Sat), despair that no one would find me that day, and then rest up before dinner. After napping most of the day, I was only able to sleep for about 12–13 hours each night.

The nights were eventful only in the pigs coming down to the creek each evening and the delightful audio show put on each night by the coyotes. The performing group sounded like it consisted of a mom and her two pups. I envisioned that she was trying to teach them to hunt, but all they were interested in was playing. Their progress along the hills could be tracked by their playful yelping, aborted howls (interrupted by a tail bite or being pounced upon by the other pup), and mom's correcting growls. I suspect that they were all a little hungry by the end of the week.

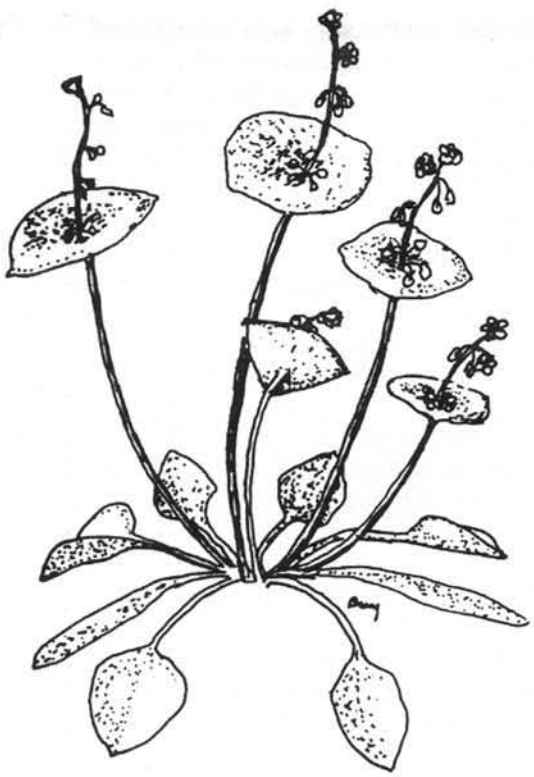
Saturday the pain and effort put into moving my camp down Red Creek was rewarded. Within a half an hour of each other, two parties came by. Two backpackers, Rick Thurber and his cousin, Josh Freifield, came by first. Words fail me in describing the elation I felt at having my solitude broken. Then Tori Woodard and Patrick Diehl came by on their day hike around Roostercomb Loop. I would like to express sincere

thanks to all four of them for stopping by and carrying notes out that led to my rescue.

Sunday I awoke with soaring spirits knowing that I would be leaving my 30-foot-diameter universe in the wilderness. I had gotten the solitude that I had been in search of. However, it was on much different terms than I had anticipated. When my rescuers, Jim Mason, Jim Tuomey, and ranger Clark Dooley arrived, I must admit I was ready to end my backpack trip early. To the three of them, I would like to express thanks for the medical attention, the ride out, and for making the paperwork relatively painless.

As the spiral fracture in the fibula and the ligament damage on the tibia side of the ankle mend, I find that I am thankful for many things that went right after the one dramatic wrong. I am thankful that I always leave detailed itineraries behind for my solo trips, as that allowed me never to give up hope of being found. I am very thankful that I was near water when it occurred and that I had plenty of food—again allowing me peace of mind.

But most of all, I am thankful for all of the people who helped me out: for those whom I actually met, for those who offered morale support, for those of you who worked behind the scenes (on the radios, etc.), and for those of you who have expressed concern during my healing. To all of you, I would like to offer heartfelt "THANKS!"



Park News

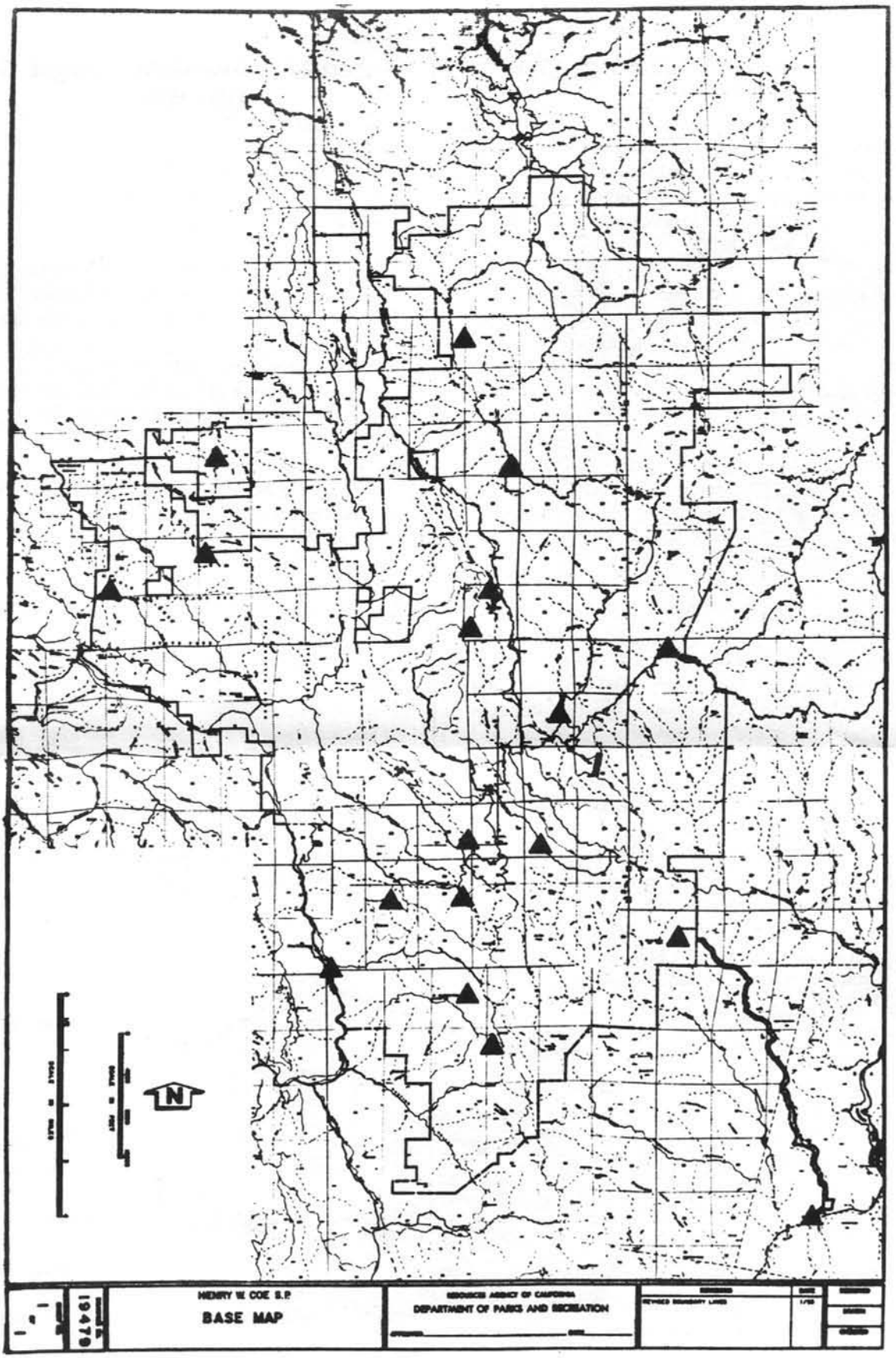
by Kay S. Robinson
Park Superintendent

"Coe is a mighty big place"—Joe Hardcastle, new District Superintendent. This statement started me wondering about how much many of our PRA members know about Coe. Many of you are volunteers at the park, many are frequent hikers and users of the park. But, maybe, some of you are new to the organization and to Coe and are curious about the place names that crop up in various articles about the park. Using the map on the next page, see if you can place these location names into their proper positions. (If these are too easy, I can always find more obscure locations!) Stay tuned next month for the answers.

Mustang Peak
Mt. Sizer
The Rock Towers
Caviata Spring
Willson Camp
The Redfern Addition
Mississippi Lake
Orestimba Corral
Red Creek
Coit Lake
Kelly Lake
Coyote Creek Entrance
Bell Station
Hatch Spring
Dowdy Ranch
Pacheco Falls
The Thomas Addition
Frog Lake

Other tidbits of news from the park: two fundraising efforts are coming up, the Coe Garage and Bake Sale on August 3–4 and the Fall Barbecue with associated raffle on September 28. Donating garage sale items or baked goods and helping sell a few raffle tickets are a couple of ways you could help support the visitor center expansion.

Yes, we have a new District Superintendent, Joe Hardcastle, a veteran of state parks, having served from the redwoods to the beaches to the sequoias. Maybe you'll meet him soon at one of the next PRA functions. If you would like to help support state parks on a statewide basis, perhaps you would be interested in Friends of California Parks, a tax-deductible nonprofit grassroots organization, dedicated to establishing a base of support for state parks. Find out more on their web page at *www.parkfriend.org* or call Friends at 916/452-8783.


HENRY W. COE S.P.
BASE MAP
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
N

An Invitation to Join the Volunteer Program

Would you like to learn more about Henry W. Coe State Park—its history, interesting animals, beautiful wildflowers, singing birds—and share your knowledge with park visitors? Then consider joining approximately 120 others who donate some of their time to the Volunteer Program of the Pine Ridge Association.

The Volunteer Program adds to the park visitor's knowledge, interest, enjoyment, and safety by assisting regular park employees through interpretation, operation of the visitor center, patrolling the park trails, and by carrying out special projects. Volunteers receive free admission to Coe Park and the other parks in the Four Rivers District, receive discounts on purchases from the PRA, and, more importantly, receive the satisfaction derived from doing a job well and providing a necessary service to the public and to the park. In addition, most volunteers find that the initial training and the continuing workshops and classes offered for volunteers each year are of significant value.

Topics tentatively scheduled for inclusion in the next series of training classes are geology and map reading, plant communities, ecology and animals, birds and wildflowers, history of Coe Park, being a volunteer, interpretive techniques, and first aid. Additional optional training classes will be held throughout spring 1997 on topics such as wildflowers, tracking, and how to plan an interpretive program. Training will be held at the park on weekends from September 14 through December 7, 1996; graduation will be held on February 8, 1997.

Applications are available now at Coe Park headquarters. **August 18 is the deadline for receipt of applications.** Applicants have their choice of interview dates (August 24, 25, or 29). Some interviews will be held at Coe Park, while others will be held at a location in Morgan Hill. If you have any questions or if you would like to obtain an application, call the park at 408/779-2728.

August 24: Moonlight Daylight Burra Burra Hike Hike

by Lee Sims

The August moon and Coe Park—experience the pristine land and a mystical experience on Saturday, August 24, just four days before the full moon.

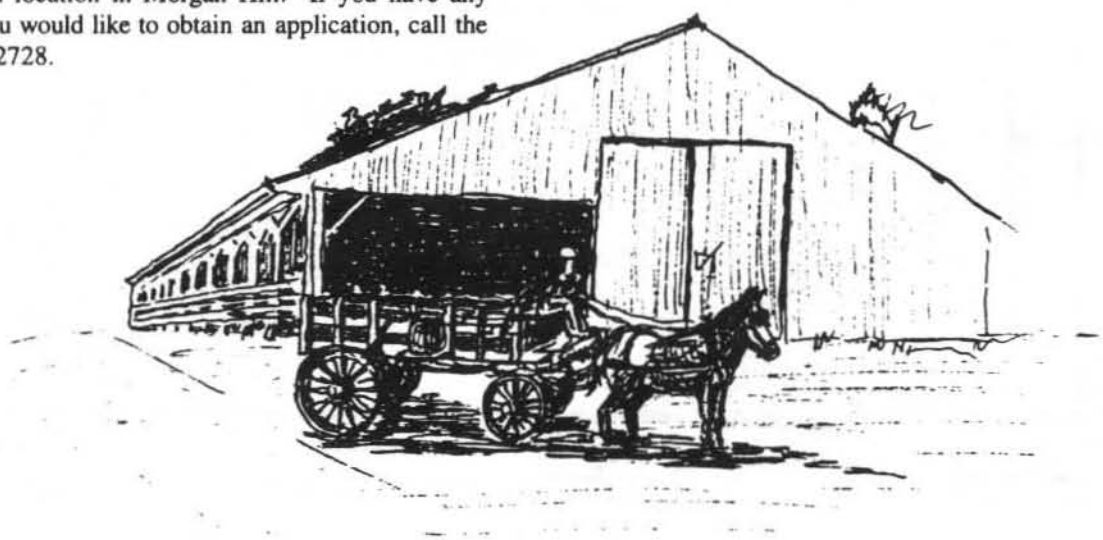
We will hike without flashlights from the Dowdy Ranch buildings around Burra Burra peak on Saturday night after dark. The total distance is less than three miles, the time about 90 minutes. We also will ascend Burra Burra, a quick side trip, and view all of the Hamilton Range, over to the Gabilan Range and beyond towards Big Sur, and also south beyond Pacheco Pass in the San Carlos range: spectacular under moonlight!

The following morning we will repeat the hike and observe the differences between night sounds and scenes and those in the daytime.

The Dowdy Ranch has toilet facilities. For camping (which is recommended), bring your own food, drinking water, camping gear, and a chair. Stoves but not utensils will be available. Plan to arrive after 1 p.m. and no later than 8:30 p.m. on Saturday, August 24.

If you are afraid of your shadow, you might not want to come. The moon is so bright, you will see your own shadow; the mood is so dramatic, you will feel the shadows of people who walked these same trails hundreds of years ago.

A wonderful summer evening in Coe Park. Call me at 415/726-4958 or Roberta Wright at 408/683-2219 for more information and to sign up.



PRA Calendar

Saturday and Sunday, August 3 & 4: **Garage and bake sale** to raise funds for the Visitor Center Expansion Fund will be held at the old Morgan Hill School from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Call the park headquarters for additional information (408/779-2728).

Monday, August 12: The **Perseid meteor shower** will peak around 3 a.m. here in California. Averages of 50 shooting stars per hour are not uncommon for this meteor shower.

Sunday, August 18: The deadline for submitting an application to become a member of the **1996 class of Coe Park volunteers**. Interviews will be held on August 24, 25, and 29. See the article on the previous page for more information. To receive an application and additional information, please call the Coe Park headquarters (408/779-2728).

Saturday and Sunday, August 24 & 25: The **Burra Burra hike** in moonlight on Saturday and a repeat of the same hike during the day on Sunday. This is a wonderful opportunity to explore a lesser-known part of the park. Hike the three-mile loop without flashlights from the Dowdy Ranch and enjoy the natural light on Saturday night. See the article on the previous page for more information.

Wednesday, August 28: The **full moon**. Also called the Grain Moon or Green Corn Moon by some of the Native Americans.

Saturday, September 21: The fourth annual **California Cleanup Day at Coe**. Join the effort to beautify several highly used areas of Coe Park: the areas around Coit Lake, Kelly Lake, and Mississippi Lake. Meet at the Coyote Creek entrance and car pool to each of the lakes. To receive additional information or to sign up, please call Kay Robinson at the sector office (408/848-4008).

Thursday, September 26: The **full moon.** Also called the Harvest Moon. This year, there will also be a **total lunar eclipse**. The moon will rise with the earth's shadow already starting to move across its face. Totality will be at 7:19 p.m., and the eclipse will end 70 minutes later.

Saturday, September 28: The annual Coe Park **Fall Barbecue** at the park headquarters. This year, back by popular demand, there will also be a raffle. The proceeds will go towards the Visitor Center Expansion Fund. You do not need to be present to win. A flyer containing more information about the barbecue will be mailed separately.

Periodic weekends during August–September: Join the San José Astronomical Association members as they view **celestial splendors above Coe Park.** The public is invited to attend. Call the Astronomical Association's events hotline to receive information about upcoming viewings at Coe Park (408/559-1221).

On Saturday, May 18, Coe Park Ranger Barry Breckling and Coe Park Volunteer Judy Robinson exchanged marriage vows at the top of Pine Ridge. Irwin Koff, also a Coe Park Volunteer, officiated at the ceremony. Judy, who became a volunteer in 1988, is especially interested in wildflowers and has led a number of the weekend wildflower walks during the past several spring seasons. A technical writer by profession, she has been Barry's editor since May of 1994. She and Barry have been working on a collection of his From Under My Brim stories which will be published by the Pine Ridge Association. Barry is well known to most visitors as the tall ranger. He was the creator of the Coe Park Volunteer Program and is an inspiration to the more than 120 volunteers who currently donate time to assist with staffing the visitor center and working to help the public enjoy the wonders of the park. After the wedding, the couple and wedding guests returned to the ranch house at the headquarters where they all enjoyed a delicious dinner that was specially catered by several of their friends.

Barry and Judy, all of your friends in the Pine Ridge Association wish you a very happy marriage!

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The Ponderosa is a periodic publication of the Pine Ridge Association. The PRA's mission is to enhance and enrich the public's experience at Henry W. Coe State Park through education and interpretation. Articles and artwork relating to the history, natural history, and management of the park are welcome. Please send submissions to the editors care of Henry W. Coe State Park, P.O. Box 846, Morgan Hill, CA 95038; or call 415/851-7813.

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