THE PINE RIDGE ASSOCIATION • HENRY W. COE STATE PARK •

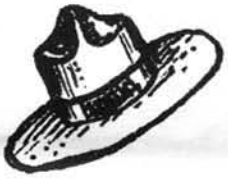
The Ponderosa

The Pine Ridge Association Newsletter
Henry W. Coe State Park

June 1997

From under My Brim

by Barry Breckling



Room to Roam

At the turn of the twentieth century, there were few grizzly bears left in California. The surviving grizzlies inhabited rugged territories that were too remote to be of interest to the endless waves of human immigrants who took up residence in the state. Most of the grizzlies in the Sierra Nevada were wiped out earlier than grizzlies in other parts of the state because of the gold rush and the hordes of people it brought to the mountains. Nevertheless, Tracy I. Storer and Lloyd P. Tevis, Jr., in their book The California Grizzly, *reported that the last sighting of a California grizzly bear was in Sequoia National Park in 1924.*

As the number of surviving grizzlies decreased and the motivation to wipe them out increased, it was inevitable that different stories would evolve about the last grizzly bear in California. According to the story passed down to Sada Coe Robinson, the last California grizzly was killed in a "wild and remote" part of the south Mount Hamilton Range in 1910. The Hamilton Range in the early 1900s was certainly a rugged, isolated area where grizzlies made a last stand.

People may find it ironic that a state with no grizzly bears has a grizzly on its state flag, on its state seal, and on the shoulder patches of state park rangers.

She didn't look like she could move very fast; her massive body didn't look like it was designed for speed. But looks can be deceiving. In her younger years, when she played with her siblings, and even now when she was angry or hungry, she could run as fast as a ravenous coyote pursuing a rabbit.

In her prime, fattened up on a good crop of fall acorns, she weighed over 700 pounds. But now, in October of 1906, she was 20 years old and weighed only 600 pounds. On all fours, she was about three and a half feet tall from the ground to the top of her humped shoulders. But when she was curious or startled and stood on her hind legs, she was over seven feet tall.

She was a gentle, protective mother and had successfully reared many cubs. But when she needed to feed or defend her young, her ferociousness and strength were unmatched. She could break an elk's neck with one swift blow of her powerful arm, and with her three-and-a-half-inch claws, she could rip to shreds any wolf who threatened her cubs.

Inside this issue . . .

Descriptions of more hikes in the Redfern

We have a new acquisition—Hunting Hollow!

Join a moonlight hike around Burra Burra Peak

Calendar of other upcoming events

. . . and more!

She feared nothing in her realm, not even men with guns. But she'd become wise over the years and had learned to avoid humans as much as possible. She was the last California grizzly in the Coast Ranges.

One morning, she approached a familiar meadow, traveling on a hillside trail that she and her ancestors had used for hundreds of years. In areas that stayed wet during the winter months, the trail was marked by evenly spaced holes up to eight inches deep. She and her forebears had formed the holes by putting their feet in the same spots year after year. Her two cubs tried as hard as they could to keep up with her, but they had a rough time of it with their shorter stride.

In the middle of the meadow, not far from the creek, she paused and contemplated a large limb that had fallen from a sprawling old valley oak. She rolled the limb over with her left arm and with her right paw quickly snatched a meadow mouse as it dashed out. She devoured the mouse and then began to rip open the decaying underside of the log. She spotted a succulent white grub, delicately picked it up between two of her claws, and sucked it into her salivating mouth.

She dug deep into the duff close to the limb and unearthed a millipede. Lowering her head, she gently picked up the squirming creature with her lips and swallowed it whole. Following her example, the cubs also dug here and there and ate what they could find, but they were more interested in play and spent most of their time romping around. Every now and then, they bumped into their mother or rolled under her body, but with her thick layers of fat and her concentration focused on finding tidbits to eat, she scarcely noticed them.

After a while, the cubs ran out of energy and fell asleep at the base of the big oak tree, one on top of the other, a position they often took on top of their tolerant mother when she lay down to rest.

As her cubs dozed, she dug deep into moist dark soil and uncovered the broken thigh bone of a human being.

Many years earlier, one of her ancestors had wandered into the same meadow one morning to search for food under the same oak tree. He was an adult male grizzly. He weighed almost a thousand pounds and he feared nothing. He certainly wasn't intimidated by the twelve dome-shaped, grass-covered huts close by. When the people who lived in the huts saw him, they dashed in every direction, and many of them headed for other trees at the edge of the meadow. They knew bears, and they knew that adult grizzlies couldn't climb trees, unlike the smaller, less aggressive black bears that were common farther north.

The people did not revere the grizzly as they did the coyote and the hummingbird. Instead, they regarded grizzlies with superstitious awe. Some of the people believed that grizzlies were actually humans, very evil humans with superior intelligence and supernatural powers.

The grizzly showed no interest in the frightened people as his nose led him from the sparse pickings under the tree to the row of granaries where the people stored their acorns. As he ripped through the first granary, one of the people shot an arrow at his massive body. The arrow lodged in the thick, grizzled fur of his left shoulder and slightly pierced his skin. He brushed the arrow away and began to devour acorns.

Some of the people continued to shoot arrows at him in a desperate attempt to save their acorn harvest. Two arrows penetrated his hide and aroused his wrath. He turned on his assailants, ran one of them down, knocked the man over, and broke his thigh bone with a single swipe. He pawed at the cowering human for a moment or two but soon lost interest and returned to the acorns.

The immense bear lived for many more years, feeling little effect from the two arrowheads that remained embedded in his flesh. Although he continued to have occasional encounters with humans, he lived out his life with plenty of room in which to roam.

When she'd consumed all the edible tidbits she could find in the area, she ambled off to the nearby creek and settled into a pool, not much bigger than she was, for a refreshing bath. She closed her eyes occasionally, but never lost awareness of her two cubs, who were still napping in the shade of the huge oak tree.

She and their father had met around the middle of June in the previous year and had parted in the early days of July. When summer turned to fall, she'd begun to anticipate the birth of her cubs. Each day she stayed a bit closer to a shallow cave beneath a rocky ledge, the site she had used as her den for most of her life.

She spent much of her time resting as fall turned to winter, but she didn't go into hibernation. Her relatives in the high mountains had to hibernate each year to survive the severe winter weather, but she lived in the milder climate of the Inner Coast Ranges, and she didn't have to hibernate.

On a rainy morning in January, she gave birth to two healthy ten-ounce cubs who were clothed in a fine, almost invisible coat of hair. Eventually, when they reached adulthood, they

would be covered with a raggedy-looking mix of thick dark brown fur and long white-tipped "grizzled" guard hairs.

The sleeping cubs now weighed over 45 pounds. They'd taken advantage of the fall's abundance and had put on lots of fat. They awoke from their nap, stretched a little, and then joined their mother. Feeling a bit warm from their snuggled sleep, they tried to nudge their way into the cool water with her. She slowly got up to make room for her cubs. As she stepped out of the pool, one of her paws dislodged something from the bank of earth alongside the creek. It was a tarnished old Spanish spur, with an eight-spoked rowel bent to one side.

Many years back, her great grandfather had dashed down the open creek bed, trying to escape the riatas of six caballeros who pursued him on horseback. He knew that these people were dangerous. The year before, they had shot and killed three of his companions, and he'd barely escaped with a bullet in his hip.

One of the caballeros tossed a riata around the enormous bear's neck. The man's horse skidded to a stop, jerking the grizzly off of his feet and into the air. He landed on his back, creating a huge cloud of dust. Another lasso encircled one of his feet, but he swung a powerful arm with sharp claws and snapped the rope off in an instant. He scrambled to his feet, turned, and ran toward the man at the other end of the 30-foot rope that had brought him down. He covered the distance with incredible speed, catching the man and his horse off guard. With no cue from her rider, the agile horse quickly veered to the left as the angry bear swung at her with one of his paws, just missing her chest and raking across the man's tapadero-covered stirrup.

The bear's claws had shredded the thick leather tapadero, ripped off the man's boot, and left bloody inch-deep lacerations across the side of his foot. Though the blow had lost most of its force when it reached the man's spur, it had torn the spur loose, bent the rowel, and sent the thing spinning into the air. The spur landed about 20 feet away, near the edge of the creek.

The bear's species would one day be given the name *Ursus horribilis*.

The caballeros eventually got three more lariats cinched tightly around the bear's limbs, and they dragged him for many miles before they reached civilization. A few days later he would be pitted against the largest, meanest bull in the valley. With luck, he might defeat the bull, but tethered by a chain, he'd be at a disadvantage, and at best would emerge a maimed and bloody victor.

The wild lands were shrinking, and the remaining bears would have less and less room in which to roam . . . .

She shook the water off her thick coat with a crescendo of shaking that began slowly at her nose, gained speed and intensity as it moved toward her rear, and then tapered off to a little shake of her short tail. Her cubs waded out of the pool and, in unison, imitated her drying technique. The bear and her cubs wandered slowly downstream and then stopped when they spotted a small herd of sheep. The mother bear easily ran down a plump ewe and promptly dispatched her with a blow to her neck. The cubs caught up with their mother, and the three of them feasted on her prey until . . .

I'll let Sada Coe continue the story. In her book *The Pine Ridge Country,* she related the account that had been passed down to her about the last grizzly bear in California.

The Last California Grizzly

> She was the last remaining grizzly in the State of California, and in bewildered fear of her aloneness lived in the wild and remote part of the south Mount Hamilton Range. Slow and lumbering she hunted near her cave for food, never venturing very far from the great rocky ledge that climbed straight up from a narrow creek. Here in a thick timber of pines she made her home.
>
> She had lost her nerve. It happened one year when she and her two half grown cubs were feasting on a tender sheep they had just killed. The old keeper and his dog found them suddenly and without warning slaughtered the two cubs. It was only luck she had been spared, but her heart was broken and old age weakened her strength. All the cattle people knew of her and a price was placed on her head as the last of her species to survive the white man. A horrible fear kept her from roaming the old haunts she once knew. The price was fifty dollars to the first man who brought her head to the valley, but only by shooting would the reward be gained and dogs or poison bait were forbidden in the chase. In spite of her past deeds the old cowmen felt a great respect for the aged grizzly.

A horse trader, however, living in the valley learned of the price of the grizzly's head, and as fifty dollars at the time was considered a small fortune, he set out to gain the prize. He rode far back into the hills until he found the tracks of the old bear where she had been foraging for food. Unable to catch her at a disadvantage, he decided at last to poison the great beast. No one would know, he thought, so taking a freshly killed deer, he applied a few grains of poison to the meat and then waited.

Lumbering along her usual haunt she smelled the fresh blood of the deer and soon came upon its carcass. Hungry and weakened by age, she ate the meat greedily. The poison quickly began its work and the great animal writhed in agony towards her cave, but death was quick and she died within a hundred yards of the deer. Here the horse trader found her, and to make sure that the prize would be his, fired a bullet from his rifle into the dead bear's head, which he then removed and took proudly back to the valley. There was a great excitement over the event, and he flourished for awhile with popularity and fame. Many years passed and after the man's death the true story then became known of the killing of the last California grizzly.

A few years later, the horse trader persuaded a few people to ride along with him on a trip to the meadow so that he could impress them with a reenactment of his story. The small party of horsemen followed the hillside trail and began to descend to the meadow below.

Just above the creek, the horse trader whipped his Winchester from its sheath to demonstrate the "fateful shot." As he raised the rifle, his horse tripped in a set of deep holes and the gun flew into the air. The man was astonished. It seemed that the weapon had been struck from his grip.

He and his acquaintances searched for the rifle for a couple of hours. In their search, they ran across an old brittle piece of a human thigh bone and an old bent Spanish spur, but they never found the gun.

With each passing day, as the wild lands continue to shrink and wildlife disappears, more stories will be told of animals that have less and less room in which to roam.

At Large in the Redfern, Part 3

by Patrick Diehl and Victoria Woodard

Eds. Note: This is the third of a series of articles on hikes in the newly acquired Redfern property, written by Patrick Diehl and Victoria Woodard and illustrated by Ivar Diehl.

The Grizzly Creek–Willson Peak Loop

For our next hike, we were three—Patrick's 16-year-old son, Ivar, joined us. We had decided to look for the waterfall in Grizzly Gulch by heading right up the creek bottom. (The experience of hiking in Coyote Creek the previous month from China Hole to where the road from Mahoney Meadows reaches the creek had encouraged us to get off trail and in the water.)

A Coe creek bottom in June is one of the most beautiful hiking routes one can find. Overhead, the trees form a green arbor, filtering the light and offering shade from the summer sun. Between the banks of trees are gravel bars, bunch grass, and rocks to hop. Tadpoles fan out away from you as you walk alongside the intermittent creek. Frogs jump into the deeper pools. A stillness fills the air as the way winds invitingly onward.

There are also obstacles to overcome, such as poison oak besetting either side of the creek-bed and thigh-deep pools to wade. But the day was warm, and even in the shade the water was a pleasure. More difficult were the places where tussocks of deep grass concealed large rocks and abrupt changes in ground level of up to two feet—our walking sticks were a great help in these sections (Ivar disdained any such assistance, however). The conditions meant that we could only cover about a mile an hour, but they were very beautiful miles, constantly changing, full of a thousand details.

The culmination, as well as the end, of our bushwhack up the creek bed was a 12'–14' waterfall with a magnificent plunge pool below it almost as deep as the waterfall was high. There was still a small flow of water dropping over the fall, even though the summer solstice was near. Patches of stonecrop relieved the bare gray rock faces that rose up sharply on three sides of the pool. It is probably the finest swimming hole in the park—less lovely, perhaps, than the pool below Pacheco Falls, but much deeper, and with less poison oak.

A rock climber would probably have little trouble negotiating the falls (though the rock looked rather rotten), but we contented ourselves with a swim and then a climb out to the north. Our route was **very** steep at first (the descent would require care), and never easy, all the way up to our old friend the Grizzly Gulch road on the slopes below Jackson. There we encountered a huge Sierra Club group whose members were much surprised to see us emerge from the trees and clamber up toward them. The section of the creek above the falls and below the upper valley went unexplored, as we continued up to the junction by the Willson Ranch and then homeward along Steer Ridge.

Our path took us by the turkey bush. Another week had passed, and the turkey was no longer in residence. A single empty shell, and a few soft feathers, were all that attested to her efforts. We went on our way, hoping that her poults had all hatched successfully and were now scuttling along behind her as she paced sedately through the forests and fields of the Redfern.

The Phegley Ridge–Steer Ridge Loop

Feeling satisfied (for now) with what we had seen of the northern half of the addition, we decided to conclude our survey by focusing on the southern half. There were two choices: go over Steer Ridge (twice), or try going up Hunting Hollow. We chose the latter. It worried us a little that our map (we had by now acquired a copy of the "Gilroy Hot Springs" quadrangle) failed to show a road in the upper half of Hunting Hollow, but the terrain looked feasible even with no road there.

The fact is, a perfectly good dirt road goes all the way from pavement into the Redfern, where it intersects another road that goes from Willson Peak over Phegley Ridge and then over the Bill's Hill ridge to Cañada de los Osos, south of the Coe boundary. Hunting Hollow itself is an easy, flat walk along a pleasant but unexciting valley bottom, somewhat the worse from bovine wear-and-tear.

Having traversed Hunting Hollow in much less time than we had allotted for a bushwhack, we decided to try a quick ascent up the north face of Bill's Hill. We were thwarted near the crest by a 200 foot-wide belt of poison oak-infested brush, so we descended and headed up the steep, exposed road to Phegley Ridge instead. As we neared the top, a buck browsed near the road; he barely looked up as we approached and passed him by. The hot climb up Phegley Ridge is well worth it. First, there is the view from the high point a quarter mile or so west of the saddle where the road to Willson Ranch crosses over. It is quite an experience to have Coe reduced, visually, to the region south of Steer Ridge and Vasquez and Rock Springs Peaks, and yet see how large and challenging that region is.

Second, there is the large pond (almost a small lake) just north of the hillock that crowns Phegley Ridge. This impoundment sits at the top of the good-sized canyon that indents the south side of Phegley Ridge between Coon Hunter's Gulch and the road up from Hunting Hollow. The size of the canyon implies the movement of a lot of water down it in the past, which accounts for the size of the pond.

The pond is deep and cool and clean, once one gets past the algae in the shallows, and there are beautiful stands of tall reeds that form a discontinuous fringe along its margins. Fish investigate the swimmer's legs; when one is on the bank they jump for insects. The pleasure of swimming in this pond is enhanced by one's awareness of being up on a ridgetop, high in the air, close to the sky. Other bodies of water in Coe offer the same elevation, physically at least, but this pond is among the best-secluded, relatively unvisited, penthouse-like in its privacy, but without the snobbery or possessiveness of a penthouse.

The final pleasure of Phegley Ridge came when the road reached the base of the northern slope and followed the bed of Coon Hunter's Gulch for a few hundred yards. Where the road turned to climb north out of the gulch, we turned aside to see whether we might follow the creek back down to Hunting Hollow. The first thing we encountered was a lovely deep pool with poison oak on one side and a sheer rock face on the other. Since it was now 7 p.m., we decided not to attempt the creek that day. But we also decided to begin our next hike by ascending it while the day was still young.

First, though, we had to finish today's hike, which meant ascending to over 2,500 feet on Steer Ridge and then dropping immediately all the way back down to the floor of Hunting Hollow. Along part of the descent, a vertiginous slope on our left fell unbroken to the very bottom of Coon Hunter's Gulch, with Phegley Ridge rising up sharply opposite us, across a gulf of air. This view helped whet our appetites for our upcoming exploration of the gulch below. The route also gave us a good look at Braen Canyon to the west (which looks like difficult, but probably very interesting, going).

Halfway down the side of Steer Ridge, the road that was very clearly marked on our map (unlike the very good road up Hunting Hollow) dwindled to a faint trail, at best. Since we were also losing the light (by now, the reader may have deduced that we have a habit of staying out till dark and beyond), we elected to follow the meadows that sloped down to our left (i.e., to the southeast). Trying to follow the spur that bore to the southwest (as our map indicated we should) would have saved us a mile, but we didn't want to deal with the forested areas that lay across our path in that direction. It's hard to see under the trees in the dark, and there is a far greater chance of getting into poison oak than out in the meadows.

It was a relief to reach the floor of Hunting Hollow—a steep, 1,500-foot descent at day's end is a taxing finale, especially for people well past their fortieth year. The walk out along the Hollow, by contrast, was very easy going, even in the dark. One only had to watch out for the rocks where the road forded the creek, as it does several times.

The Coon Hunter's Gulch–Bill's Hill Loop

On our fifth, and (so far) last, hike in the Redfern, we walked in up Hunting Hollow again. Not very far from Gilroy Hot Springs Road, a flock of turkeys scurried up the embankment away from us. We turned left at the mouth of Coon Hunter's Gulch and followed a cattle trail back and forth across the creek for a while. Or was it an Indian trail that the cattle have kept alive?

Coon Hunter's Creek was on a smaller scale than Grizzly Creek and there were no waterfalls (luckily), but it was a pretty spot, cool and well-watered even in July, and a good place to be in the heat of the day. At about the halfway point, there is a large tree that grew up straddling a buried boulder over a yard in diameter. The creek has since eroded the soil out from around its roots, leaving the boulder suspended in mid-air several feet off the ground in the grip of the tree, part of which stands as if on stilts above the creek bed. The person-sized cave underneath is a remarkable testimony to the strength of wood and the tenacity of plants.

It took us a little over two hours to reach the Willson Ranch/Phegley Ridge road, where we turned right. At the top of Phegley Ridge, we took another dip in "Sky Pond." As we headed down the south slope of Phegley Ridge, we looked for the friendly buck where we had seen him before, but instead we saw another (or was it the same?) flock of fourteen turkeys. Remembering the fourteen eggs we had seen a few weeks earlier, we wondered if these flocks consist of one hen and her poults.

To reach our second goal of the day (Bill's Hill), we turned left at the road to Cañada de los Osos, then turned right off that road just below the saddle where it crosses Bill's Hill ridge. This allowed us to do an end run past the belt of poison oak that we had encountered the week before on the north facing slope of Bill's Hill. It also meant, unfortunately, that we had to leave the park and cross private land. We are not recommending that others follow our example, but we do want to report on what we found.

Bill's Hill ridge, you see, is a very special place. One feels, once again, the presence of Native Americans who have gone before, tracing the trail among the rocks and trees along the top. From there, one can look straight along both the westward-trending and the northward-trending sections of the Coyote Creek canyon. Far to the north, one can see (yes!) a much-diminished but familiar scene—Pine Ridge, Middle Ridge, and Blue Ridge, standing at the head (apparently) of Coyote Creek. To the south, there is the beautiful agricultural valley of Cañada de los Osos, flat, wide, and fertile. The ridge on which one stands is definitely the end of the wildlands of Coe; it is right that Coe has reached out this far south and right that it stops here. Farther to the south rise the Diablo Range and the mountains in which Pinnacles National Monument lies, as well as the Santa Lucias, down by Big Sur.

Closer to hand, if one looks to the right into Coe as one glides along the seeming endless ridgetop, there is a fine bird's-eye view of Hunting Hollow and the south side of Phegley Ridge, then Coon Hunter's Gulch, and finally the heights of Steer Ridge and Braen Canyon below it.

Unable to find a way down the north side of the ridge, we ended up walking all the way west along its crest. The ridge

stays at 1,800' or better for at least two miles, and the brush stops just below the crest on the north side, so one can stroll along over relatively easy, unobstructed ground, savoring a slowly shifting set of perspectives on a very wide world. It would be a fine thing if the crest of Bill's Hill ridge could be added to Coe someday, for it has something of the feeling of the hike along Blue Ridge, with a good deal less perspiration, and very different, but very exciting, views all along the way. For those who have explored this area, it is the ideal place to see where one has been, to trace the ranch roads, in use or disused, and to put the landscape together in one's mind.

Using our topo map, we charted a course through the woods where the ridge finally began to fall away toward Coyote Creek. As the map promised, a chain of meadows opened up to the south after a quarter mile of dodging the demon urushiol (in its poison oak atavar) under the trees, and all we had to contend with on the way down was yellow star thistle, which thickly infested a sizable area near the foot of the ridge. Even through long, heavy trousers, its needle-sharp spines, each several inches from base to tip, made themselves painfully felt.

As night fell, we reached Gilroy Hot Springs Road just by the intersection with La Cañada and turned north, following the pavement back to the mouth of Hunting Hollow where we had left our car. It was a beautiful, warm night (summer has its rewards). Both of us remarked, as we walked contently along, on how vast Coyote Creek seemed, after our trip earlier that day up the narrow canyon of Coon Hunter's Gulch. We thought of the many streams we had crossed or followed or sighted in Coe, and how all their waters, united, had shaped the canyon of Coyote Creek and the canyons eastward, and still made their way, slowly or quickly depending on the season, down from the ridgetops and the saddles and on to the sea.

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

Dreamin' . . .

by Kay Robinson
Park Superintendent

Have you ever imagined what Henry W. Coe State Park may be like in the year 2034? Chances are the visitor center will still be in full swing (the expansion will hopefully be completed by then!). Visitors will still be coming to enjoy the quiet trails, the beautiful wildflowers, the dramatic vistas, the wilderness challenge. What other innovations will be out there? Will cellular telephones be in place at remote destinations? Will solar power allow us to provide other interpretive or public safety items? What new sporting events and goods will have evolved? How much impact will there be from changes in society and technology?

When Sada Coe Robinson gifted her 12,000-acre family ranch to the County of Santa Clara in 1953, her dream was to provide a place of solitude, a place to re-create the soul. This dream has continued, and over the last 40+ years, this area for re-creation, now known as Henry W. Coe State Park, has grown to over 80,000 acres. Our visitor base has historically been from the Santa Clara Valley and Bay Area. However, with the acquisitions of the 1980s and 1990s, our borders now invite populations from the Hollister-Salinas-Monterey areas and from the San Joaquin Valley.

Dreamin' . . . of a picnic area and trailhead parking at Dowdy Ranch . . . of a campground in Hunting Hollow . . . of continued support by the nonprofit cooperative association known as the Pine Ridge Association . . . of a vast network of safely designed and maintained trails . . . of adequate parking to serve the increasing public use . . . of a sector office located within the park . . . of a continuing active and supportive volunteer group . . . of a horse and bicycle concession . . . of increased use by educational groups . . . .

The General Plan completed in 1985 revolved around the then-current outlines of the park. Because fee simple ownership of the land at the current entrances at Coyote Creek and Bell Station did not exist at that time, our plans only alluded to future public access at those points. Only 935 acres (of

69,000 at that time) were identified as flat enough for development. Many options are offered in the General Plan; the challenge now is to try to see into the future in terms of visitor demographics, future recreational needs, optimal locations for development, and, as always, the financial backing to see these dreams come to fruition. What are your dreams for Coe?

Fundraising for the visitor center expansion has continued at a less-than-furious rate. The Fundraising Committee (Barbara Bessey, Winslow Briggs, Sheila Flodberg, Page Frechette, Bob Kelley, David Perrin, and me) continues to meet and discuss various events and activities that will establish the capital base needed for this effort. A raffle will again be held this year, and the crème de la crème top prize is the framed painting from which this year's Coe Backcountry Weekend T-shirt was designed. Dave Sellers, local artist and PRA member, has graciously donated this fine work of art. Tickets are now available and will be more widely broadcast as the Fall Barbecue approaches. Another Garage Sale is planned for this summer. Some matching grants have been received by employers of Coe Park volunteers. Another unusual idea for a fundraiser is a triathlon (of sorts). Pledges from the participants would raise funds for the building construction. The participants would form teams of three: a hiker, a cyclist, and a horse rider. On a circuit, each would hand the "baton" to the next after meeting a set of criteria on their "leg." The competition would be similar to a car rally where finesse, rather than speed, is the key to success. We, the Fundraising Committee, are looking for a triad to serve as the steering committee for this event. Page has volunteered for the equestrian part of it; we need leaders for the hiker and cyclist portions of the event. Would you be interested? I would love to have a Pine Ridge Association member, volunteer or not, assist us in this effort. Details are yet to be set, so you could brainstorm your own event. This and many more ideas are actively increasing our bank account for construction: we're up to about $50,000 at this time. Do you have any ideas to help us along our way?

NEW ADDITION!!!

by Kay Robinson
Park Superintendent

Was it only two months ago I spoke to you of the possible acquisition of Hunting Hollow? Now it is reality. Escrow closed on Monday, May 5, on 930 acres of prime land adjacent to the Redfern addition of Henry W. Coe State Park. Sellers Don and Carol Silacci retained a 530-acre parcel and live nearby on another parcel abutting Cañada Road. If only one more parcel could have been added to Coe to enhance its development and use by the public, this is the parcel. Its key features are flat land (hard to believe that in the 1985 version of the park, 69,000 acres, only 985 acres were identified as flat enough for development), immediate access off a paved county road, and within one-half mile of electrical and telephone utilities. This land is about two miles south of the Coyote Creek entrance on Gilroy Hot Springs Road. It is recognizable as the valley to the south (right side of the road when heading for Coyote Creek entrance) where the white bridge railings span over Hunting Hollow Creek. It is our hope that this property be open to the public, with vehicular access some distance in, by later this summer. Many operational issues need to be ironed out (signage, gates, chemical toilets, water, protection of private property, fee collection method, maintenance of the property, garbage removal, removal of "attractive nuisance" problems, etc.) There will be an ongoing cattle lease with the property for a term of ten years. The active lease period will be November through April each year, and only the hillsides will be grazed. This will leave the valley floor fully useable by the public year-round. This purchase was made possible with 1984 and 1988 Bond Act funds, the last available for Coe. Thanks are in order to you and to your neighbors and friends who voted for these bond acts. Spread the word and lend support for the next proposed bond act, scheduled for 1998. Now, get ready to do some more hiking, bicycling, and riding while exploring more of Coe.

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 Coe Park.

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 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, 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 1998 on topics such as wildflowers, bird identification, tracking, and how to plan an interpretive program. Training will be held at the park on a number of weekends from September 13 through December 6, plus one weekend day in January. Graduation will be held on February 7, 1998.

Applications are available now at Coe Park headquarters. **August 17 is the deadline for receipt of applications.** Applicants have their choice of interview dates (August 21, 23, or 29). These interviews will be held at Coe Park, but other arrangements could be made for you. If you have any questions or if you would like to obtain an application, call the park at 408/779-2728.

August 16: 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 16, just two days before the full moon.

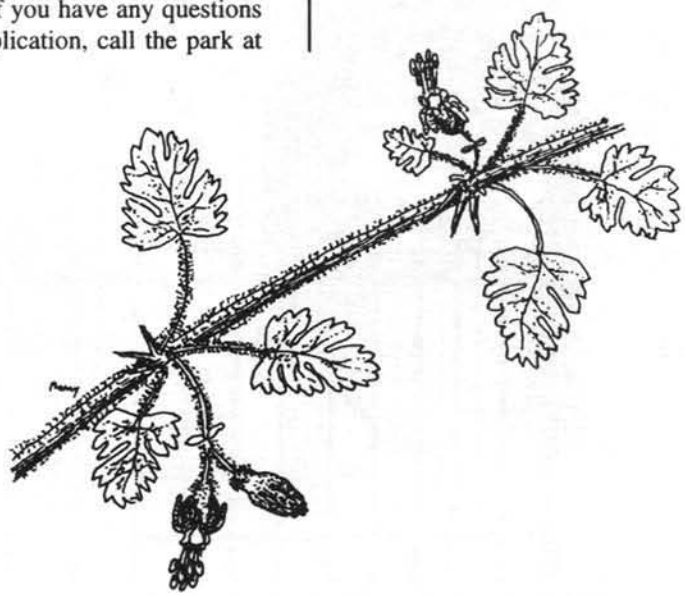
We will hike without flashlights from the Dowdy Ranch buildings around Burra Burra Peak on Saturday night after dark. The total distance is less than three miles, the time about 90 minutes. We also will ascend Burra Burra, a quick side trip, and view most of the Hamilton Range, over to the Gabilan Range 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 a chemical toilet. 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 16.

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.



Gilroy Garlic Festival

Over the past few years, PRA members have been privileged to "work" at the Gilroy Garlic Festival. Their wages are then donated to the PRA. To date, the PRA has received over $2,500 from the Garlic Festival. In 1996, more than 4,000 volunteers from 149 nonprofit groups worked 38,000 hours to host the event. Since its inception in 1979, the festival has distributed over $4,500,000 to nonprofit organizations.

The Garlic Festival has live entertainment, garlic braiding classes, a wonderful selection of arts and crafts, a special area for children, and more than 90 food booths, with some delicious garlic-laced delicacies, including garlic ice cream. This year, there will also be a micro-brewery tent, where beers from local micro-breweries will be served. PRA member Ron Erskine will serve some of his Coast Range brews there.

The PRA will again be able to work at this year's festival, which will take place at Christmas Hill Park, Gilroy, July 25–27. Why not attend the Garlic Festival this year and support the PRA? For more information, please call the Festival (408/842-1625) or check its web site (www.garlicfest.com).

Raffle Prizes Needed!

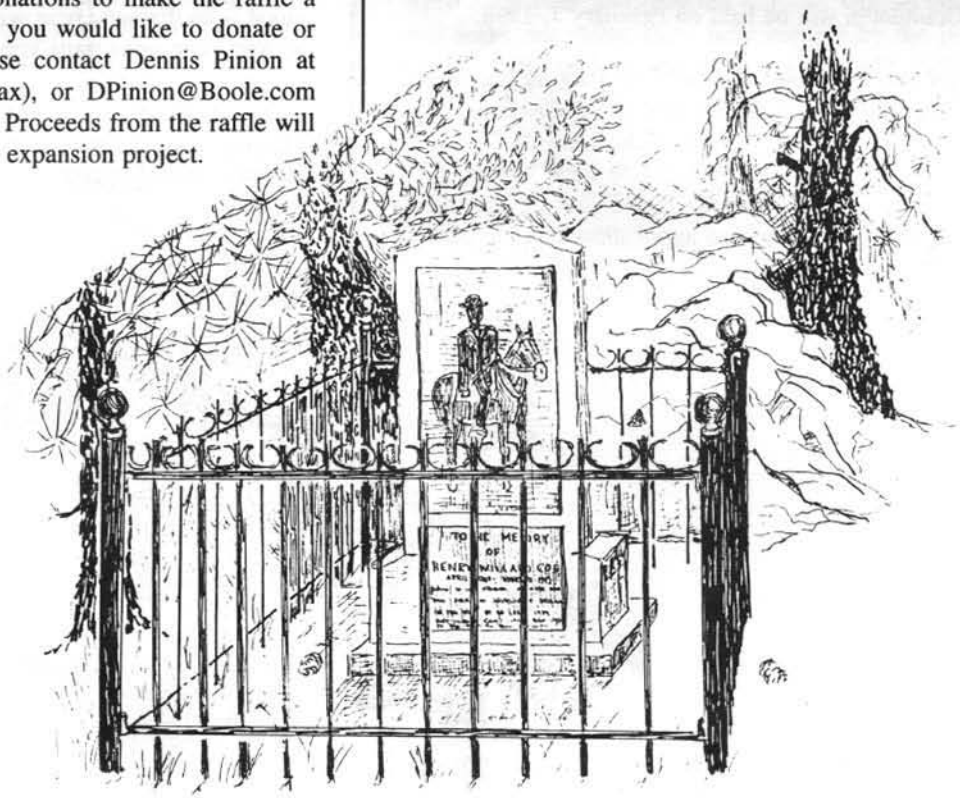
Several great prizes have been donated for our fall raffle. However, we still need more donations to make the raffle a success. If you have something you would like to donate or know someone who does, please contact Dennis Pinion at 408/526-3285, 408/779-4154 (fax), or DPinion@Boole.com (e-mail). No prize is too small. Proceeds from the raffle will be dedicated to the visitor center expansion project.

Webmaster Needed!

The Pine Ridge Association has a Web site with information about Coe Park and upcoming events (www.garlic.com/coe). We are planning to update our web pages. Would you or someone you know be interested in being Webmaster of the PRA site, with assistance from some of our volunteers? If so, please call Dave Perrin (408/683-0415) to discuss the requirements of the position.

Are You a Budding Author?

The Ponderosa would love to consider publishing your article, poem, or drawing. Our membership survey reveals that readers would most like to read articles on special places in Coe, park ecology, mammals, backpacking, day hiking, wild flowers, and Native American history, with some interest in just about any other topic you can think of. (Part 2 of the Membership Survey will be included in the next issue of *The Ponderosa.*) Be creative and informative in whatever format you like, then send your creation to the editors.



Membership and Contributions
by Lee Dittmann

As the yellow and white mariposa lilies bloom in the golden grassy fields of Coe Park, we are pleased to welcome the new members listed below, who joined before May 21. Thank you all for your support and welcome to the Pine Ridge Association! The number of memberships in our organization now stands at 348.

Edith Black, Orinda
Mike Crowley, San Jose
Kate Hager, Patterson
Joe Hardcastle, Gustine
Steven Hatcher, Hollister
The Kenneth Leipper family, Oakland
Bill Levey, Sunnyvale
Roger E. Levine, Redwood City
Ted Nordby, Morgan Hill
Terry & Jane Owen, Morgan Hill
Duane & Barbara Phelps, Cupertino
Brian Schaeffer, Aptos
C. Michael Sundius, Cupertino
Alan & Karen Thomas, San Jose
Gil & Irene Thornberry, Tracy
David Yaksick, Morgan Hill
Michael Zensius, San Jose

New Contributors to the Visitor Center Expansion Fund

Brian & Kandee Adams
Patricia Eubanks
Roger E. Levine
Mike & Sandee McCaffrey
Edward L. Sinz
Nancy Thomas
with a special thanks to **Tiera**, a young Mother's Day Breakfast participant who handed volunteer Libby Vincent a generous cash donation.

Special Contributions

Thanks to **Dennis Pinion & Barbara Radd** for their generous donation of Coca-Cola stock in support of the Visitor Center Expansion Fund.

Thanks to **Sun Microsystems Foundation** for matching the generous donation of **Sun Microsystems** employee **David Hornby.**

In memory of Ruby Coe a special contribution to the Visitor Center Expansion Fund has been made by **Jim & Pat Ferguson.**

Thanks to **Specialized Bicycles** of Morgan Hill for their generous subsidy of new custom Coe Park water bottles, now available for sale at the visitor center. This subsidy enables the PRA to use a much greater portion of the income realized from sales of these bottles for interpretive and educational programs. A special thanks is due PRA Board member and Specialized employee **Thom Parks** for arranging this gift.

PRA Calendar

Saturday & Sunday, June 21 & 22: Join the **Springs Committee** for one of their work weekends to maintain the springs of Coe Park. Call Ruby Domino (408/779-4664) for more information and to sign up.

Thursday, July 3 to Sunday, July 6: **July Fourth Backpack weekend** with Irwin Koff. Call 415/968-3524 to make reservations.

Saturday, July 5: Join the San Jose Astronomical Association members as they view **celestial splendors above Coe Park.** Call the Astronomical Association's events hotline to receive information about upcoming viewings at Coe Park (408/559-1221).

Saturday & Sunday, August 2 & 3: **Garage Sale** to benefit the Visitor Center Expansion Fund (see flyer in this issue of the newsletter). Call Roberta Wright (408/683-2219) if you have items you would like to donate or if you would like to help out for this weekend event.

Saturday & Sunday, August 16 & 17: **Moonlight Daylight Burra Burra Hike Hike.** Camp out at the Dowdy and hike around Burra Burra (see article on page 9). A wonderful opportunity to enjoy Coe by the light of the moon!

Sunday, August 17: **Deadline for applications to become new Coe Park volunteers.** See article on page 9 for more information.

Friday, August 29 to Monday, September 1: **Labor Day Backpack weekend** with Irwin Koff. Call 415/968-3524 to make reservations.

Saturday, September 27: **Fall Barbecue and Tarantula Fest.** More information on this annual event will be distributed later. A raffle benefiting the Visitor Center Expansion Fund will be held during the barbecue.

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David Perrin, Vice Chair
Stew Eastman, Volunteer Committee Chair
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Barbara Bessey
Thom Parks
Dennis Pinion
Libby Vincent

Barbara Radd, Treasurer
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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 at 127 Glenwood Avenue, Woodside, CA 94062; or call 415/851-7813.

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