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

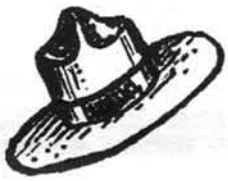
The Ponderosa

The Pine Ridge Association Newsletter
Henry W. Coe State Park

March 1997

From under My Brim

by Barry Breckling



As Perennial as the Grass

The morning sun brought a bright hazy blue sky, but as the day progressed, clouds began to stack up, one against another. The sky slowly grayed, the air turning still and silent below the billowing blanket, and the ground seemed to be waiting patiently for what was to come.

A single large raindrop, the first moisture of autumn, struck a warm rock in a dry creek bed, but in less than a minute, the heat of the rock turned the moisture into an invisible vapor that vanished in the air. Through the hot months of summer, the ground had grown warmer and drier with each passing day, but the earth could not quench what was soon to come.

A second large drop landed on a leaf of dead grass and then fell to the earth, pausing on top of a tiny grass seed buried just below the surface. The seed was drenched by the enormous raindrop, but it remained still inside. It knew it was not time. More large drops began to fall, the drops rebounding, splitting, and falling again, some hitting trees, some hitting rocks, others landing on dry leaves, still others meeting bare earth. The still and silent air had become alive with motion and sound.

A coolness in the air followed the first wave of rainfall, foretelling the end of long, sultry days. The air was not cold, just pleasantly chilled. And the dry, dusty-attic smell of the woods for a few moments turned to the fresh dusty smell of newly dampened earth. But the smells of dust soon gave way to the many smells of wet.

Every pine needle was tipped with a shiny wet gem, and the live oak leaves took on a sheen reminiscent of last year's new leaves. Still, a dry spot could be found here and there beneath a large pine or a live oak tree, at least for a while.

Soon all creation would be dampened and in time it would be drenched. A flood would bring drowning, and slides would bring death. Animals who could swim calm water now struggled for life, and mighty oaks and tiny grasses were uprooted by sliding earth.

I question all that has happened and what lies ahead. The rocks seem oblivious, the rain participates without caring, the oak does not ask. But the grass seems to know, for the grass dies and is born again with each new year. I will wait patiently and ask the green grass.

Inside this issue . . .

Viewing Coe Park from above

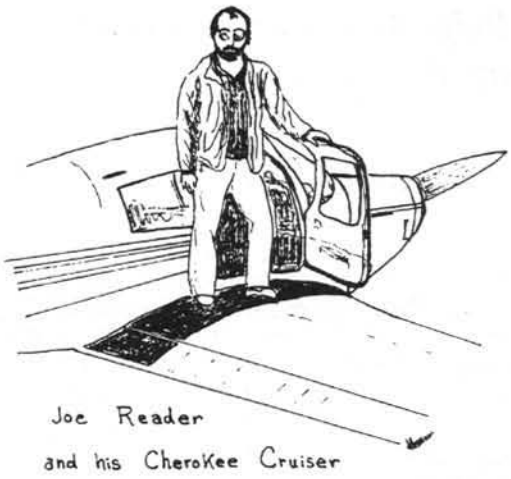
A hike in the Redfern

Results from a survey of PRA members on priorities

Calendar of upcoming events

. . . and more!

I will seek my answers in the rainbow, in a robin's new song. In two screaming hawks in flight, in the fragrance of flowers. In puffy white clouds, in clear flowing creeks. In bright orange petals, in a new sprouted seed. And I will rejoice with the grass, for now it is spring.



Coe Park from the Sky

by Rosse Hemeon

It only took a few seconds for Joe Reader's Cherokee Cruiser to rise off the runway at the San Martin South County Airport and head northeast to Henry W. Coe State Park. It was the day before Christmas, the skies were clear, and I had won the airplane ride over Coe Park. Joe Reader had donated the ride at the annual Fall Barbecue to help raise over $2,200 for the expansion of the visitor center at the park. Kay Robinson had written me in October to inform me of my good fortune.

When I arrived at the airport, Joe was waiting for me, and he told me that there was ice on the wings, and that it needed to melt before we could take off. So he invited me into the cockpit of N16410 and explained the workings of his aircraft. Joe covered the eight radios, the automatic direction finder, turn coordinator, air speed indicator, compass, horizon, altitude, and exhaust gas temperature instruments along with an entire array of other devices and controls. Then Joe took the plane up and made several patterns by himself before he let me on board, just to be sure everything was safe and sound. He's a very thorough guy.

Once up and over Coe Park, we were cruising at 105 knots and about 3,800'. His plane is powered by a 150-horsepower, four-cylinder, four-stroke Lycoming engine. The flight was smooth, and we had 50 gallons of gas for our almost four-hour flight.

We went out over Anderson Lake and on to park headquarters. I took 24 photos of various locations in the park including the headquarters and Barry's and Judy's new home. Photos included Frog Lake, Los Cruzeros, Coit and Kelly Lakes, Mississippi Lake, Coyote Creek, and Rooster Comb. As we flew over the ridges and canyons, we were in awe of the lovely array of blues, deep greens, and light greens. The tops of the ridges were like green velvet, and the deep canyons were almost black with silver creeks cascading through them. Joe said this was a good time to see the park from the air, but it is even more spectacular in March and April, when the wildflowers bloom.

After getting a grand overview of Coe, we headed out to see the surrounding environs. Joe flew me over the homes of three of my five children who live in Gilroy. We were on our way to Mesa Del Rey (King City) and we passed San Luis Reservoir, Hollister, San Juan Bautista, Salinas, and Soledad. Just before we arrived at King City, we caught up with the Goodyear blimp and gave them a waggle. As Joe landed, the blimp folks asked him about the wind conditions. I really felt "cool" with my radio earphones and aviator dark glasses. I wished that I had brought along my white silk scarf and leather helmet. Mesa Del Rey airport is very interesting because that is where they trained hundreds of pilots during World War II.

On the way home, we went over Pinnacles National Monument and up over Bell Station and the Dowdy Ranch. On the way north, we flew over two red-tailed hawks. Before returning to San Martin via the park, we circled Mount Hamilton (4,400') and observed snow at the peak. We always had a great view of the Sierras.

Joe had given me an aeronautical map (to keep) so I could follow our entire journey. Joe is a very safe pilot and explained what he was doing throughout the trip. He knows the area well and is always watching for other airplanes and helicopters. After landing and tying down the plane, Joe treated me to a beer at the San Martin Inn. It was a nice way to cap off a grand day. Joe's a great guy, and this old volunteer had a splendid experience. Thanks, Joe Reader!

At Large in the Redfern, Part 2

by Patrick Diehl and Victoria Woodard

Eds. Note: This is the second of a series of articles on hikes into the newly acquired Redfern property, written by Patrick Diehl and Victoria Woodard. The Redfern officially opens June 1.

The Cañada de la Dormida–Wasno Ridge Loop

That same weekend, we were back. This time, two volunteers kindly awaited the public under the picnic shelter with a tableful of literature, including a photocopy of the part of the USGS "Gilroy Hot Springs" quadrangle occupied by the Redfern addition. The volunteers had their jackets on—the fog was reluctant to leave the canyon bottom, and the air was chill in the gray light. We discovered that the addition continued two ridges south of Steer Ridge—Coe had grown even more than we had thought! Emboldened by the map, and wanting to investigate the connection to Willson Field Hill, we set out on a much more ambitious hike than our first, with the depths of Cañada de la Dormida, off in the Pacheco drainage on the eastern edge of the Redfern, as our goal. Our shortest route led up Steer Ridge and east to the five-way junction near Willson Ranch.

Today we turned right at the fork in the brush above the picnic area and walked uphill—quietly, we hoped—along the trail. We knew that not far ahead lay the bush under which the turkey had made her nest, and we didn't want to scare her away again. The first bush we thought was the one turned out not to be, but under the second one, sure enough, there she was. We tiptoed past, looking down at her out of the corners of our eyes as she looked back at us, twisting her head round so she could see upslope. To our relief, this time she stayed on her eggs.

By now we had climbed out of the fog; the air felt as if it had left the slopes we were ascending an hour or two before. But where we stepped over the half fallen fence, Tori noticed that the dead leaves that lay under the big coast live oak from which they had fallen were spattered with drops of water. A closer look showed that water was actually standing in the leaves whose concavity was upward. We remembered what a volunteer had told us during the Coe Backcountry Weekend: in the Redfern, the fog condenses out on the underside of the leaves and keeps the ground under the trees moist until long after the fog itself has left. This, along with the usual effects of shade, was the reason for the dramatic difference in vegetation under the trees and out in the sun.

Once we reached the crest of Steer Ridge, we had a good look south. That ridge to the southwest we had seen in the foreground a few days before was Phegley Ridge, and the road that crossed it between its two high points was in the park—another route to explore! Between Phegley Ridge and Steer Ridge was a canyon with the evocative name of Coon Hunter's Gulch. Beyond Phegley Ridge and to its west, leading down to Coyote Creek, was Hunting Hollow—another name to conjure with. And beyond Hunting Hollow was the farthest outpost of the Kingdom of Coe, a high ridgetop knob called Bill's Hill. Truly the Redfern took in much more than we had ever imagined it might.

At the junction near Willson Ranch, we turned left, dropped steeply, curved round to the east, and climbed up first Vasquez and then Rock Springs Peak. Our little map showed a 4-wheel drive route from just east of the second peak down into Cañada de la Dormida and then back out again, connecting with the circuitous route along the ridges between Burra Burra Peak and Willson Field Hill. Once we reached Rock Springs Peak, we were in some doubt about just where our route dropped into the canyon north of us, but it turned out that all we needed to do was continue east on the ranch road. At the fence line that bars one's way to the next high point on the ridge, the road turns left and plunges downward.

On a June afternoon, the narrow floor of Cañada de la Dormida is one of those hidden, hushed places in Coe where it seems as if the Earth is cradling you in its arms. The grass is still deep and green here; water pools in the white creek bottom and trickles over tiny ledges of rock. The sycamores stand holding their big leaves out to the sun, and there is no wind, or too little wind, to stir them. Not even a bird is singing. Perhaps time has fallen asleep here. Everything else has, it seems. It is a perfect place for sleepers, or dreamers, or lovers. It is the protected place inside the protected place—the little place that needs the larger places standing shoulder to shoulder around it if it and its magic are to go on existing—the protected moment in which time, for a moment, transcends itself.

Even though we must hurry on, for the afternoon is passing, and time presses, as it pressed us on Willson Peak, the quality of this place goes with us, for it is partly *of* us. At the edges of our map, we choose the wrong turn—or at least not the one planned for. Instead of the western side of the canyon fork to the north, we climb its eastern side, topping out a few hundred yards west of Burra Burra Peak. We have just added another four miles to our hike. But there is some satisfaction in having walked from Coyote Creek almost to the Dowdy Ranch. And the view of the gray face of Walsh Peak and up the north fork of Pacheco Creek and up Mississippi Creek and over into the Orestimba country helps us to forget the miles. The sight of Willson Field Hill far to the west is a stern reminder of reality, however.

With half our hike still ahead of us, we set off hotfoot along the ridges. The road we chose was on our map but had vanished in the grass. Luckily we didn't need a road on the grassy ridgetops that stair-stepped down to the junction where the direct route from Cañada de la Dormida comes in, near Center Flats. We stopped for a snack, then reached the junction with the road to Willson Field Hill and climbed up onto Wasno Ridge.

Along the wide bend in the ridge enclosing the head of Kelly Cabin Canyon we hurried, looking for a path down to the road in Grizzly Gulch that we had taken earlier that week. We saw bucks in the meadows below us—the first antlered deer we had seen in Coe. Finally, not wanting to climb too much higher, we left the ridgetop and hiked cross-country down steep, grassy slopes to the road we sought. By then, the sun had set. In the dying light, we found the path that turned off the road, and headed down toward the bottom of the Gulch. We passed through the fence at the same gap we had used before. And then, as darkness closed round us, we lost the way.

For nearly half an hour, we probed downhill, turned back repeatedly by thickets or by seemingly cavernous gullies yawning before us under the moonless sky. At last, we decided to retrace our steps. Halfway back to the fence, we stumbled on the crease of the trail in the grass, a shadow in the meager light our headlamps provided. Eagerly following it, we were soon at the ford. Through the profound darkness of the forest south of the stream, we threaded our way back to the trailhead.

Even without the unscheduled extension to Burra Burra Peak, this would be a long, hard hike, with a total elevation change equivalent to descending from the South Rim of the Grand Canyon and climbing out again. For variety and quality of habitat, terrain, and vistas, however, it is among the best day hikes we have taken in Coe—and we have taken a few.

Park News

by Kay S. Robinson
Park Superintendent

On Thursday, February 6, a public hearing was held regarding the potential acquisition of the Don Silacci property known as Hunting Hollow. This property is adjacent to the Redfern addition and would make an ideal location for visitor facility development and access to the southern portion of the park. The hearing went well with about 40 people in attendance. After a presentation about the current park and this acquisition project by Steve Hill (District Planner) and me, remarks from about eleven members of the audience were heard. Negotiations for purchase are proceeding with Mr. Silacci.

The winter rains have done their best to disrupt access routes through the backcountry. Many slides, slipouts, and washouts have been discovered. It will take many hours of heavy equipment operation to get all the roads operational again. Meanwhile the park is being enjoyed on foot, bike, and horseback by numerous visitors who are not impeded by mere three-ton boulders on roadways.

Coe Backcountry Weekend is again on the "menu" for the spring, scheduled for April 26–27. Applications are available on the web at <www.garlic.com/coe> (for complete information about the park as well as the application form for the Weekend) or at <www.garlic.com/coe/cbw97.html> specifically for the Information and Application Form. REI stores in the Bay Area as well as many feed and tack, sporting goods, and bicycle shops are carrying the flyers. Applications must be postmarked by March 29 for a random drawing to be held on April 1.

PRA Annual Meeting a Success!

The annual meeting of the Pine Ridge Association was held this year in Morgan Hill on February 8. Kevin Gilmartin opened the Pine Ridge Association portion of the meeting. He announced that he and Dennis Pinion had been reelected to the Board of Directors. The officers of the Board of Directors for 1997 are: Kevin Gilmartin; Chair, David Perrin, Vice Chair; Owen Melroy, Secretary; and Barbara Radd, Treasurer. Kevin announced that the modification of the bylaws was ratified by the membership: to require only one signature on checks for less than $200 and to allow the PRA to make prudent investments other than just leaving the funds in a savings account. Barbara Radd provided information about the financial status of the organization. Barbara Bessey briefly reviewed the sta-

tus of the Visitor Center Expansion efforts. Owen Melroy challenged the membership to come up with proposals to offer interpretive services to the public and to apply for funds from the Board to implement them.

The meeting of the PRA volunteers was held next. Stew Eastman, Chair of the Volunteer Committee, stated that the total number of hours volunteered during 1996 was again over 15,000. The volunteer organization had been extremely active during the past year, as evidenced by the large number of award presentations that followed.

Sixteen new volunteers graduated from the training program and became trainees: Cari Benefiel, Ron De Falco, Caree Gellinck, Wade Hall, Kristina Kutter, Bonnie Lemons, Mike Meyer, Patrick Perez, Kris Pitschka, Don Savant, Sandy Sill, Marlene Testaguzza, Lisa Thornquist, Dan Villarreal, Laura Welch, and Steve Wengert.

Nineteen trainees, who had completed the requirements of the training program and had served 50 or more hours, were promoted to full volunteer status. They were: Paul Brown, Scott Cowherd, Aileene Edsinger, Larry Edsinger, Robert Esposito, Sheila Flodberg, Victor Haskett, Alan Haviland, Barbara Hunnicutt, Chris Mahon, Margaret Mary McBride, Matt Pauly, Henry Rocha, Steve Schramm, Vicki Shelton, Travis Smith, Sandi Stevenson, Craig Tarr, and Mike Torralba.

Specially designed T-shirts, which contained a beautiful image of an iris produced by computer graphic artist Paul Brown, were offered to volunteers who spent 48 or more hours working in the visitor center or on other visitor-centered activities during the past year (e.g., staffing the booth at the Mushroom Mardi Gras, presenting evening programs to visitors, leading interpretive walks). This year, thirty-six volunteers received this award: Everett Allen, Barbara Bessey, Judy Breckling, Ann Briggs, Winslow Briggs, Phyllis Drake, Sharry Dunn, Stew Eastman, Aileene Edsinger, Larry Edsinger, Sheila Flodberg, Bill Frazer, Kevin Gilmartin, Dennis Green, Don Holmes, David Hornby, Gary Keller, Bob Kelley, Millicent Kellogg, Penny Kirk, Irwin Koff, Chris Mahon, Jim Mason, Margaret Mary McBride, Owen Melroy, Dave Perrin, Lois Phillips, John Prior, Barbara Radd, Martie Sinclaire, Rob Sinclaire, Toni Sousa, Kitty Swindle, Jim Tuomey, Libby Vincent, and Chris Weske.

Eight individuals, who had volunteered 200 or more hours of which at least 100 hours were spent in the visitor center, were promoted to senior volunteers. These were Ann Briggs, Winslow Briggs, Michael Brookman, Frank Escobar, Page Frechette, Dennis Green, Chris Mahon, and Toni Sousa.

Ten volunteers received special recognition for the tremendous numbers of hours they have spent on Coe Park volunteer activities. Between them, they have donated 19,000 hours to the park over a period of years! David Hornby, Irwin Koff, John Prior, and Kitty Swindle each volunteered 1,000 hours of service. Barbara Bessey, Bob Kelley, and Jim Tuomey volunteered 2,000 hours of service. Don Holmes, Don Mason, and Roberta Wright volunteered 3,000 hours of service.

Kay Robinson, Park Superintendent for the Coe Sector, made a special presentation to those volunteers who had donated 200 hours or more within the past year. Each received a free annual pass to most state parks. Receiving the award were Everett Allen, Chere Bargar, Barbara Bessey, Judy Breckling, Ann Briggs, Winslow Briggs, Lee Dittmann, Ruby Domino, Stew Eastman, Aileene Edsinger, Carolyn Fatooh, Bill Frazer, Don Holmes, David Hornby, Irwin Koff, Chris Mahon, Judy Mason, John Prior, Lee Sims, Martie Sinclaire, Toni Sousa, Kitty Swindle, Joan Throgmorton, Jim Tuomey, Libby Vincent, Chris Weske, and Roberta Wright.

The Volunteer Committee's Golden Bear Award for exceptional service was presented to **Bill Frazer.** Bill has been a very active volunteer for twelve years. For most of those years, he was not only a member of the Volunteer Committee but its Chair. He was also a member of the PRA Board for many years. He has been involved with new volunteers, park trails, and backcountry events, and he has always looked for ways of bringing Coe Park to the public. In 1993, he received the state's award for meritorious service, and he received the PRA Annual Award in 1995.

Kay Robinson announced that **Lee Sims** was this year's recipient of the state's award honoring volunteers who have contributed much to state parks. Lee was a member of the original class of volunteers in 1979, and he has contributed much to the park since that time. He originated the idea of the Mother's Day breakfast, which he has coordinated each year. He also has organized many explorations of the park, so that volunteers can better advise the public about trails based on their own personal experience. Most recently, he has organized the resource inventory of the newly acquired Redfern property. He was the recipient of the PRA annual award in 1988.

The PRA Annual Award is given to an individual who has contributed outstanding work in furthering the mission of the association in preserving and enriching Coe Park. This year's award, which was presented by PRA Chair Kevin Gilmartin, went to **Winslow and Ann Briggs.** They have been actively involved with the welfare of the park since the mid-1970s. They joined the trails advisory committee in 1985, and Winslow has been chair of that committee since 1987. They worked on the signs subcommittee in 1989, installing many signs in the backcountry themselves; they are now redesigning the signs for the entire park. Ann joined a state-appointed citi-

zen's committee commissioned to coordinate new park acquisitions and use, and she chaired that committee for one year. The park management plan developed by the committee was presented at a public hearing. They are both working on the Redfern resource inventory; they adopted four areas and are serving as coordinators for information on existing and potential trails in the Redfern. Ann and Winslow joined the PRA volunteer program last year. They jointly put in more than 900 hours, completing the requirements to become senior volunteers in a single year! Visitors can see their names on the large plaque in the visitor center near the cash register, along with the recipients from previous years.

Congratulations to all!

This year's speaker was Christine Scott, a member of the California Bat Conservation Fund for nine years. She had the audience spellbound as she displayed three species of live bats as well as slides of many other kinds of bats. There are approximately 1,000 species of bats in the order Chiroptera (which means "hand wing"). The smallest bats, which weigh several ounces, tend to have tiny eyes and big ears; they tend to be insect-eating bats. The largest bats, which can have up to a six-foot wing span, have large eyes and tiny ears; they tend to be fruit-eating bats. There are twenty-three species of bats in California; all of them are insect eaters. Most of them use their large ears for echolocation to help them find their meals. However, there are some California bats with extremely large ears that do not use echolocation. Their choice foods are moths that can detect echolocation; thus, these bats locate the moths just by listening for the moths' wing beats! Approximately one-half of the species of bats found in California are in trouble due to a number of factors: loss of habitat, pesticides, plus people killing them out of fear.

After the meeting was adjourned, all members enjoyed a delicious luncheon catered by the Volunteer Committee.

Membership Survey Results
Part 1: Organization Priorities
by Lee Dittmann

We received a good response to our recent membership survey. To date, 130 responses have been returned. To do justice to your views—and not overwhelm any single issue of this newsletter—the results of the survey will be published in several parts this year.

The first section of the survey asked members to rate our **Organization Priorities**. *"What priorities would you give the following PRA activities?"* Members were asked to rate each of the listed activities according to this scale:

1 = Highest priority
2 = Moderate priority
3 = Low priority
4 = Don't know
5 = PRA should not do

There are a variety of ways to analyze the results. The first presented here ranks the activities by number of respondents giving each one *highest priority*. In this, the top winner is **Maintaining a financially healthy organization**, with 82 members giving this a 1 rating. **Support for the volunteer program** and **Trail building and maintenance** tied for second, with each receiving 77 votes for highest priority. (Note that a member could give as many activities highest priority as he or she felt were deserving). Third place was **Publication of *The Ponderosa***, with 75 respondents giving this activity their highest priority.

In descending order of "votes," then, these were the full results for activities rating the *highest priority*:

82	Maintaining a financially healthy organization
77	Trail building and maintenance
77	Support for the volunteer program
75	Publication of *The Ponderosa*
71	Guided hikes and wildflower walks
67	Coe Backcountry Weekend
40	Informing members about decisions of the Board
40	Fundraising for the visitor center expansion
37	Mother's Day Breakfast
37	Evening talks and slide programs
31	Fall Barbecue
31	Publication of new books and pamphlets
14	Expanding the inventory of the bookstore

Another way to look at the results is to rank the activities by the *total* of the *highest* and *moderate* priorities. When we rate them according to which were deemed to be of highest *or* moderate priority for the PRA, then we have **Trail building and maintenance** at the top, with 114 "votes," virtually equaled by **Guided hikes and wildflower walks** with 113.

Using this method, we get this ranking of activities believed to be either highest *or* moderate priority:

114	Trail building and maintenance
113	Guided hikes and wildflower walks
111	Publication of *The Ponderosa*
110	Maintaining a financially healthy organization
107	Support for the volunteer program
100	Coe Backcountry Weekend
89	Informing members about decisions of the Board
87	Fundraising for the visitor center expansion
85	Publication of new books and pamphlets

83 Fall Barbecue
81 Mother's Day Breakfast
80 Evening talks and slide programs
63 Expanding the inventory of the bookstore

The activities that received the most ratings of 3—low priority—were **Expanding and improving the inventory of the bookstore** with 40 members giving it this rating; **Evening talks and slide programs** with 26 "votes" for low priority; and **Publication of new books, pamphlets, or other literature** receiving 25 votes. In these and all other types of activities, however, each category received more moderate priority rankings than low priority.

Now how about the last option people could choose—the number 5 rating, things the PRA should not do? It is a reflection of general membership support for the organization's activities that this ranking was rarely used. Only one activity received multiple "hits," the **Coe Backcountry Weekend** with nine members giving it thumbs down. Several other categories received one vote each for this dubious honor.

Members were also encouraged to write in additional activities they thought important. Here are these individual "write-in" responses:

- *Protecting the character of that aspect of Coe that is unique among parks in the Bay Area, i.e., a large wilderness area.* (Highest priority)
- *Expanding the park.* (Highest priority)
- *Adding signs to trailheads in areas that have none.* (Highest priority)
- *A Fall Backcountry weekend.* (Moderate priority)
- *Education about park in schools, etc.* (Highest priority)
- *Expand public contact at schools, service clubs, libraries, fairs.* (Highest priority)
- *All educational and interpretive activities.* ("1+")
- *Develop more overnight spots for backpackers, a couple of miles apart—for us old slow backpackers.* (No priority given)
- *Reintroduction of extirpated species (e.g., tule elk, pronghorn) as well as maintaining quality habitat for threatened/endangered species.* (Highest priority)
- *Opening new entrance (Bell Station).* (Highest priority)
- *Alternative park entrance (i.e., Gilroy Hot Springs) with overnight secured parking facilities. Auto fee collection for backpackers.* (Highest priority)
- *Second entrance to Coe?* (No priority given)
- *Staff Bell Station.* (Highest priority)
- *Patrolling.* (Highest priority)
- *More advertisement to solicit new volunteers and users.* (Highest priority)
- *Recruiting new volunteers.* (Highest priority)
- *Recruit membership.* (Moderate priority)

More survey results will appear in the next issue of *The Ponderosa*. Thanks again to those of you who returned your survey form. If you didn't get a chance to complete yours, it's not too late; it will be a month or two before I can compile all the results and pass them on to the PRA Board of Directors.

[Thanks to volunteers Winslow and Ann Briggs for assistance in compiling the Organization Priorities portion of the survey.]

Membership & Contributions

by Lee Dittmann

The rain keeps coming, and so do the new members. We are pleased to welcome the people listed below, who joined before February 12th. Thank you all for your support, and welcome to the Pine Ridge Association!

James Buxton, Redwood City
David Crawford, Menlo Park
Mike Donohue & family, Hilmar
Dave Graham, Simi Valley
Lee Ingram, San Jose
Gwen Schlemmer, Sunnyvale
Sandy Sill, San Jose
John Wells, San Jose

New Life Members
We have been honored by a veritable shower of new Life members! Thanks to:

Vic Hill, San Jose
David Perrin, San Martin
Kay Robinson, Gilroy
Craig Tarr, San Martin
Libby Vincent, Palo Alto

New Business/Corporate Members
We thank our second Corporate/Business member for joining:

Wiltron

WILTRON COMPANY
490 Jarvis Drive
Morgan Hill, CA 95037-2809
TEL (408) 778-2000
FAX (408) 778-3180
(408) 778-4093 CAREER HOTLINE

. . and our third:

ASCOT ROOFING WE ROOF

BILL WILSON
OWNER

757-7776 SALINAS LIC. 648794
373-8922 CARMEL MONTEREY
637-6002 GILROY HOLLISTER

Renewing Business/Corporate Member
Thanks once again to our first Corporate/Business member for renewing for a third year!

RAM COMMERCIAL INSURANCE
195 San Pedro Avenue, Bldg. A
Morgan Hill, CA 95037

(408) 776-2800

Corporate/Business members donate a minimum of $100 annually for membership dues.

New Contributors to the Visitor Center Expansion Fund

David Baumgartner
Brian S. Bean
Ben's Backhoe Service
Steve & Kim Bradley
Joe Cannon
Luke & Tina Castell
Scott Cowherd
Herbert & Barbara Grace
Alan Haviland
Robin Hayr
Tony Kramer
Chris MacIntosh
Betty McMartin
Marty Pflasterer
3Com Corporation (matching the contribution of employee David Baumgartner, above)
Wiltron Company

Special Contributions

We acknowledge with thanks exceptionally generous special contributions from **Sam & Gigi Eastman** and from **Robert D. Patrie**.

We acknowledge with thanks a special contribution from **Martie & Rob Sinclaire** in memory of Martie's father **Max M. Kenney**.

This membership chair neglected to report in the last issue that the special contribution to the Visitor Center Expansion Fund from **Ann Watters** was in honor of the wedding of **Judy & Barry Breckling**.

Robinson/Red Creek Hike

by Larry Haimowitz

On Saturday, March 15 (or March 22, if we are rained out), we will car pool from the Dowdy Ranch (off Bell Station entrance) to the Rooster Comb Trail, where we hike past the Rooster Comb Ranch (about a 400' climb) to the Orestimba, and on to Robinson Canyon. Experienced Robinson hikers please note—this is the reverse direction from previous years. We need to reverse the direction every few years to keep the earth's rotation in balance. Actually, we're reversing the direction to save the easiest part for last.

As we hike up Robinson, we come first to Robinson Falls (lots of poison oak here for you fans), then on to the housepits at the confluence of Robinson and Pinto Creeks, where we make a short detour for Barry's bathtub. Barry's bathtub is deep enough to dive, but remember, there's no diving in the state park. Then back up Robinson, with another short stop (for those interested) at the largest known patch of stream orchids (*Epipactis gigantea*) in the park. Another mile or so and we'll cross over just west of Grass Peak to the Red Creek drainage—a short climb, about like the walk from headquarters to the monument. Lunch will be at the top, where there are spectacular views of both drainages.

After lunch, we're off to Red Creek where (time permitting) there will be a short side trip to another native site. Then it's down Red Creek, up to Paradise Flat, and back to the vehicles. Total distance is about 14 miles, so plan on a full day.

RAIN: If the roads are too muddy, the hike will be postponed for a week. Alternate date is March 22. Call headquarters or the Gilroy office if it rains just before the hike.

SUNDAY: There may be a morning hike on Sunday, depending on how people feel. Some possibilities—Coon Creek, Walsh Cabin, or ?

CAMPING: Camping will be available at the Dowdy Friday and Saturday nights. Campers, bring all camping gear, food, water, etc. Bring firewood if available. We'll have a Weber grill or two; coffee and hot water will be provided. If you have a vehicle we can use for the trip to the Rooster Comb Trail, please let Ranger Barry Breckling or me know.

We leave the Dowdy at 7:00 a.m. sharp! This is absolutely necessary because of the length of the hike. If you're not there by 7:00, you'll get left behind—ask Gary Keller about that! Call me (408/778-6088) or park headquarters (408/779-2728) for the lock combination at Bell Station and additional information.

PRA Calendar

Saturday & Sunday, March 15 & 16 (or weekend of March 22 in case of rain): **Robinson/Red Creek Hike.** Don't miss an opportunity to explore this beautiful area starting from the eastern side of the park. Meet at the Dowdy Ranch at 7 a.m. on Saturday for a 14-mile adventure. Additional information appears in the previous article of this issue.

Saturday & Sunday, March 22 & 23: **The Start of the 1997 Interpretive Programs at Coe Park**. There will be hikes offered on Saturdays; evening programs at the visitor center on Saturday evenings; and wildflower walks on Sundays. A flyer listing all of these events is included in this issue.

Saturday, April 12: **Trail Days** will be held in Coe Park. Help work on various trails in the park. Bring gloves and sturdy shoes. To receive additional information or to sign up, please call Ranger Doug Meyers at the Sector Office (408/848-4006).

Saturday & Sunday, April 26 & 27: The **Fifth Annual Coe Backcountry Weekend.** See the flyer included in this issue on how to get tickets for this very popular backcountry event. Note the deadlines in the flyer.

Saturday, May 3: Join Irwin Koff for his backpacking trips. This first class will be an **introduction to backpacking.** The enclosed flyer presents the schedule for the remainder of the year.

Sunday, May 11: The annual **Mother's Day Breakfast** at Coe Park. Tickets will go on sale on April 12 for this very popular event.

Friday, May 23 to Monday, May 26: **Memorial Day Backpack weekend** with Irwin Koff. Call 415/968-3524 to make reservations.

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

Saturday & Sunday, August 2 & 3: **Garage Sale** to benefit the Visitor Center Expansion Fund. 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.

Periodic weekends: 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).

Pine Ridge Association
Henry W. Coe State Park
P. O. Box 846
Morgan Hill, CA 95038
(408) 779-2728
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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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