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

The Ponderosa

The Pine Ridge Association Newsletter
Henry W. Coe State Park

Late Spring 1999

From under My Brim

by Barry Breckling

Old Ways

I've been interested in nature all my life and became especially interested in tracking when I was a young boy. Earlier this year, I had the good fortune of attending Tom Brown's week-long Tracking, Nature, and Wilderness Survival School.

Who is Tom Brown? At age 7, Tom met Rick, who would be his best friend for years. Both boys loved nature, and though they lived in one of the most densely populated states in the country, they had the good fortune of living near the wild Pine Barrens of New Jersey.

Even greater fortune came to Tom when he met Rick's grandfather, Stalking Wolf, an 83-year-old Apache who had been raised in the Old Ways by his grandfather and great-grandfather. For the next nine years, Stalking Wolf (called Grandfather by the boys) trained Tom and Rick in the Old Ways, using the Apache method called Coyote Teaching—he was their mentor, but they had to learn through their own experiences.

One day Stalking Wolf and the boys were walking in the woods. As they walked under a tree, Grandfather said to the boys, "Let it sleep." He kept on walking as the boys begged him to tell them what was sleeping. He pointed out a Great Horned Owl sleeping on a branch up in the tree. The boys were certain that Stalking Wolf had not looked up as they walked under the tree, and they begged him to tell them how he knew the owl was there. The only clue he would give them was, "Go and ask the mice."

Toward the end of our last day of class, Tom Brown told us that he'd tricked us. He said that we probably thought we were there to learn tracking and wilderness survival but that we were actually there to fulfill Grandfather's vision. His vision began with saving and passing on the knowledge of the Old Ways, but the vision went much further. People who learned the Old Ways would become Stalking Wolf's grandchildren and would learn the value of protecting the earth.

Running Fox, a little reluctant to go, waved goodbye to his grandfather. It was his grandfather who insisted that he go out on his own for three days. After all, he had learned the

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10 kilometer run/walk in Hunting Hollow

. . . and more!

sacred order of shelter, water, fire, and food, and he had practiced over and over again every skill he would need. He had learned to track everything, and he had learned that tracking and awareness were one. He could track an ant across a rock, track a raindrop from the sky to a brook, and he could see that tree-covered ridges and creek-cut rocky canyons, though much larger, were also tracks upon the earth. He tracked every disturbance with his keen awareness; every disturbance was a track to learn more from. He headed east, barefooted, carrying only his obsidian knife.

Running Fox walked until early afternoon and entered a valley far from his home. He'd never been in the valley before, but he didn't feel lost. He knew that, if need be, he could turn around and follow his own tracks back to familiar territory.

He searched for a place to make his camp. He was aware of how the sun and wind danced with the trees of the forest and the grasses of the field. He found a good place away from the creek at the edge of a meadow and began to build his debris hut near a sprawling oak tree. The trees to the south and west would shelter him from the wind, and the first rays of the early morning sun would warm his camp.

He searched until he found a dead pine limb that was larger around than his arm and almost twice as long as he was tall. He carried it back to camp and rested one end of the limb on a large waist-high branch that had fallen off the oak and set the other end on the ground. This would be his ridge pole. He propped sticks like ribs off an animal's backbone on both sides of the ridge pole, creating the skeleton of a triangular-roofed shelter. He arranged more sticks sideways along the "ribs" and then piled sticks, leaves, and bark on top of the structure until he had a pile of debris that was almost as tall as he was. He collected dry grass and leaves and filled the floor of his shelter until it was about three fists deep. This comfortable bedding would keep him warm during the night. Finally he collected more debris and piled it in front of the opening near the fallen oak branch. After he crawled into his hut for the night, he would pull this debris in to seal off the door. He used only what he needed and gave thanks for everything he used. He had been taught by his grandfather that everything they had was a gift from the creator and that they must use what they were given wisely and thankfully.

Later that evening, Running Fox walked to the creek and took a long drink of the cool water. As he stood up, a jay told him that a bobcat was nearby. On the way back to his hut he gathered a bunch of dry, dead nettle plants he found near the creek. A little farther on he found an elderberry shrub and broke off a long, straight piece of dead wood about as long as his arm and as big around as his middle finger. Close by he stopped at the remains of an old fallen pine tree and pulled off a scrap of pine that was as wide as his hand, about as long as his lower arm, and as thick as his little finger. He knew that everything he would need to make fire could be found in the woods. He knew that fire was stored in the wood he had carefully selected.

When he got back to his camp, he stacked wood for a fire into a teepee shape. Tracks in the pine needles nearby told him that a coyote had passed through while he was away.

He separated the fibers of the nettle into fine strings and gathered the strings together in a loose ball. He used his knife to prepare his elderberry spindle and his pine fire board. He laid the pine piece flat on the ground and put his dry nettle tinder under it and began to spin the elderberry spindle back and forth between the palms of his hands. As his hands went back and forth, he pushed down and his hands slowly moved towards the bottom of the stick. He stopped momentarily to move his hands back to the top of the stick and then continued spinning. Smoke started to come from the pine, and hot dark dust pored out and onto the tinder. When the tinder started to smoke, he picked it up and blew long full breaths into it until it burst into flame. He stuck the burning tinder into his stacked firewood and soon had a small fire going.

The sun was setting as he sat down close to his small fire. He ate some grass seeds and plant leaves he'd collected earlier. He knew which plants would sustain him, which plants would heal him, and which plants would keep him warm.

His stomach was full, and he had the warmth of a fire, fresh water to drink, and a shelter that would keep him comfortable and dry during the night. He thought of the animals who shared their valley with him. Without seeing or hearing some of them, he'd known of their presence by the disturbances that they had left. He'd also seen and heard many other animals, including several rabbits who lived in a thicket close to his camp. In the morning he would set a snare and catch his next meal.

He would have two more days to explore, practice his skills, and learn more about the bountiful valley. Before he left, he would dismantle his hut, and carefully return his campsite to the way it was when he first saw it.

On his journey home, Running Fox stopped on the ridgetop overlooking the valley that had been his home for three days. He climbed to the top of a rock outcrop and looked out over the valley. Billowing clouds spoke of rain showers to come that afternoon. Distant blue hills were places of mystery that held no fear for him. The shiny green tree-covered ridges across the valley seemed like part of a giant living being, and

there in the valley below flowed the blood of that being. He felt blessed to live in such a beautiful world.

As he climbed down the rock, he noticed a footprint and recognized it as his grandfather's. He knew that the track was left there for him to see. It told Running Fox that his grandfather had been keeping a watchful eye on him the whole time, and it told him that he had done well.

The Willson Ranch
by Teddy Goodrich

Horace Willson was born in New Hampshire on February 18, 1822. In 1853, accompanied by his wife, Eunice, and three children, Charles, 6, Daniel, 4, and Frank, 2, he came to California by way of Nicaragua. After their boat docked in San Francisco, they immediately set off for Gilroy, there to join Horace's older brothers, Dan, Albert, and Dorsen, who had come to California during the gold rush.

The Willsons were bricklayers by trade, and Horace bought property in Old Gilroy (then known as San Ysidro) and built a brick house for his growing family. He and Eunice eventually had ten children, seven of them born in Old Gilroy. These seven were Edwin, born in 1855, Lyman, 1858, Amanda, 1860, Ida Eliza, 1863, twins Lucy Ann and Luly Ambra, 1865, and Mary Jane, 1866.

In the 1880s, Horace's sons, Frank, Edwin, and Lyman, began filing homestead claims on land east of Gilroy Hot Springs. Between 1882 and 1890, they filed claims on almost 780 acres, all by cash entry. Meanwhile, Horace negotiated with the railroad to buy the alternating odd sections that lay between the homestead claims to create a solid parcel of land. (Even numbered sections were open to homesteading; odd numbered sections belonged to the railroad.)

Horace waited a long time for the deeds from the railroad. The Gilroy *Advocate* of January 16, 1892, contained the following notice: "The railroad company is issuing deeds to the purchasers of land in townships nine and ten. Deeds have been delivered to Horace Willson." On January 30, 1892, the following real estate notice appeared in the *Advocate:* "Southern Pacific Railroad Company to Horace Willson - the southwest quarter of section 7, T10sR5e - 168.21 acres - $588.73. Same to same: 8, 489.85 acres - $11,638.30."

Meanwhile, his career as an orchardist and stockman can also be traced through the newspaper.

February 10, 1877: "Among the principal growers (in Gilroy) may be named Horace Willson, a resident of 23 years standing. Horace Willson makes 6,000 gallons of cider and 2,000 of vinegar. This gentleman resides in a handsome mansion, the bricks and lime for which he made himself on the spot."

June 4, 1887: "Horse Sales: Buyers from San Francisco have bought liberally of horse flesh in this vicinity the past month. It is estimated that $5,000 was exchanged for horses. Horace Willson sold about 36 head."

October 22, 1887: "Gilroy's Fine Stock: Six black horses belonging to Horace Willson were exhibited last Wednesday morning in front of Pat Fitzgerald's stable, to the admiration of all beholders."

His productive orchards and fine horses and cattle tell us of his prosperity and his pride in work well done, but nothing reveals as much about the kind of man he was as the gifts he gave to each of his daughters as they married. Again we turn to an article in the Gilroy *Advocate:*

"Married: Onyon/Willson - January 1, 1891 at the home of the bride's parents by Reverend D.A. Dryden. Miss Luly Willson of San Ysidro and Mr. John Onyon of San Ardo." Among the gifts given to the bride "a hammer, saw and hatchet from her father, Horace. A practical man, he gives similar wedding gifts to all his daughters so they can, if need be, 'saw their own kindling, saw off a board, or nail up a box'."

As in all lives, sorrow came to Horace Willson as well. Daniel, his second son, died in 1857. In 1867, his oldest son, Charles, died of an accidental gunshot wound.

Gilroy *Advocate,* November 27, 1886: "Mr. Lyman Willson and his bride, who arrived a few days since from the East, were on Tuesday night honored with a serenade by the Golden State Band at Horace Willson's home, Old Gilroy."

January 1, 1887: "died on December 29, 1886, Mrs. Vesta B. Willson, wife of Lyman Willson, aged 23 years." They had been married seven weeks.

In 1893, Frank died suddenly at the age of 41. "The death of Frank Willson brings sadness to all his friends. He was in the prime of life, an active, energetic, progressive citizen, absorbed with the duties of farm life to which he has given attention in this locality for over twenty years. He leaves a widow and four children."

Then in 1896, "Another Pioneer Gone." "Horace Willson died at his home in Old Gilroy, June 1, 1896 at the age of 74 years, 3 months, and 13 days. . . . Mr. Willson was one of the pioneer settlers of Gilroy. He arrived here in 1853,

bought a homesite at San Ysidro, erected the first brick family mansion there, invested in land in the east range, gave attention to stock raising and interested himself as a good citizen in the educational, religious, and secular affairs of the district."

His will left all his property to his wife Eunice, with the stipulation that it pass on to his children and grandchildren after her death. Among the real property described in the will, "a tract of land containing between ten and eleven thousand acres situated in the Coast Range of Mountains about 14 miles east of the town of Gilroy, and known as Horace Willson's Stock Ranch, and being parts of Townships 9 and 10 South of Range 5 East, MDM of the value of about $25,000."

For a time, Eunice carried on the ranching activities by herself. She built a shed specifically for sulfuring apricots on the ranch in Old Gilroy and sold her pear crop to the local cannery. On December 11, 1897, the following notice appeared in the *Advocate:* "The Horace Willson estate has been offered for sale, and is now on the San Francisco market." A map of Santa Clara County from 1902 shows that the Willson Ranch became the property of Frederick Hyde, an unscrupulous land speculator from San Francisco.

Edwin and Lyman continued to ranch on property of their own near Gilroy Hot Springs.

In August 1915, Lyman Willson met with an accident "while out hunting on the old Willson Ranch[1] near Gilroy Hot Springs. In company with Mr. Kellogg, Willson was on horseback bringing in a deer they had killed. Each horse packed half a deer. Willson's horse was what was known as an 'outlaw' having been ridden only a few times. Coming down a steep hill, the horse commenced bucking, and threw Willson violently to the ground, kicking him and stomping on him. Kellogg came to the rescue, but Willson was unconscious. He rode hurriedly to the Willson camp where Mrs. Willson and daughter Leola were waiting in an auto. On hearing the news they rushed to the nearest phone and summoned Dr. John Clark and two nurses from town. In the meantime, two men carried Willson out of the hills on a stretcher , and he was brought to the Gilroy Hospital where his injuries were dressed. He has a fractured skull and other serious injuries. Dr. Terry, a noted specialist from San Francisco, was summoned and says there is a chance for Willson to recover. He had not recovered consciousness up to Friday at 4:00pm."

He never recovered consciousness. On August 14, 1915, the newspaper reported his death from the injuries he had received. "Lyman engaged in farming and stockraising. . . . He was a man of steady habits, quiet and unassuming, what one would term 'the salt of the earth' . . . . He was married twice, his first wife dying shortly after their marriage. His second wife was Miss Nettie Cavanaugh, a daughter of Mrs. Jack White, and their union has been a most happy one. He was fond of outdoor sports, hunting and driving, and was an expert horseman."

In December 1937 Horace Willson's last remaining son, Edwin, passed away at the age of 82. "One of Gilroy's oldest pioneers, member of the first pioneer family to settle in Old Gilroy, passed away Wednesday . . . . Willson (retired) from active farming and cattle business—same as his pioneer father was engaged in—about eight years ago. Only one of his sisters, Mrs. John Onyon of Oakland, survives."

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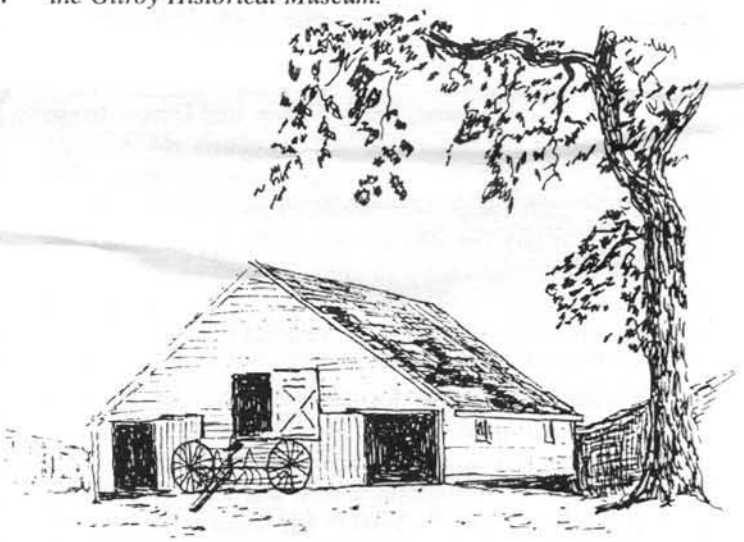
[1] It is typical of this area—if not of other areas as well—to refer to a ranch by the name of its original or longtime owner. Thus the Willson Ranch was called the "old Willson Ranch" long after ownership had passed out of the family. The Willson hunting camp was in Hunting Hollow, and Lyman was thrown from his horse as he came down the middle ridge into Hunting Hollow.

The author is indebted for the information in this article to the patience and generosity of George Willson White and to the Gilroy Historical Museum.



Mountain Lion Adventure Footnote

Winnifred Coe Verbica wishes to credit Fay Angus of Sierra Madre for helping to edit "Mountain Lion Adventure," which was published in the last issue of *The Ponderosa.* In addition, Winnifred wishes to clarify that Sada Coe Robinson, her father's sister, donated the original property as a park in memory of Winnifred's grandfather, Henry Willard Coe.

Eric's Bench

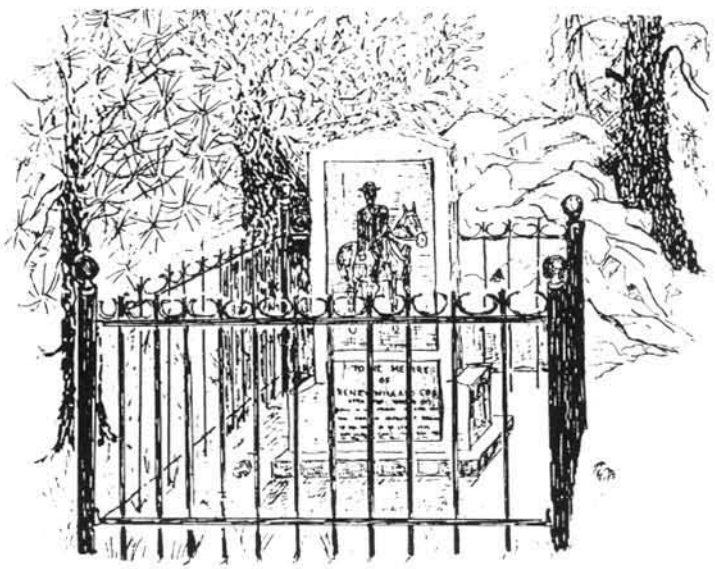
by Libby Vincent

Parts of me sleep now
while others play
in the woods.
Soon the weary will rest
and the dreamers
will awaken.
When will they both
sing together?

Eric, Nov. 10, 1985

Eric's Bench sits beside a meadow on top of Pine Ridge in Henry Coe State Park. The bench was placed there by family and friends as a memorial for Eric David May, who was killed in a fall on Mt. Shasta in 1988 when he was 26 years old.

Pine Ridge is a special place for many people who know Coe Park well. It's the first piece of the park you see from the valley below—the far, high ridge to the east marked by a spine of ponderosa pines—and lies just inside the western boundary of the park. On the eastern flank of Pine Ridge, there's a monument to Henry Coe that was put there by his daughter Sada Coe Robinson when she donated her ranch to California in memory of her father. The monument is inscribed with the words "May these quiet hills bring peace to the souls of those who are seeking." On the western flank of Pine Ridge, Eric's Bench sits in dappled sunlight beside the meadow that overlooks Santa Clara Valley. Barry and Judy Breckling were married on Pine Ridge in 1996 near Eric's Bench. Barry has lived at the park for more than twenty years and probably knows it better than anyone else. Pine Ridge is still at the top of his list of favorite places in the park.



To get to Eric's Bench, you have to walk from the visitor center half a mile or so up the road and the Monument Trail and turn left at the top of the hill. The elevation here is just over 3,000 feet above sea level, so there's often snow on the ground in winter and early spring, especially in the shaded places and on the north-facing slopes. The trail leads to a broad, grassy meadow with a sprinkling of ponderosa pines, oaks, and, on the north-facing side, some madrones. In the spring, the meadow is a carpet of wildflowers—blue-eyed grass, buttercups, oak violets, lomatium, ground irises, and later in the year evening-blooming soap plant.

When the trail curves to the right, you walk between two tall ponderosas and see Eric's Bench ahead sitting beneath the gnarled remains of a live oak, an enormous ponderosa that has been topped by powerful winds, and a younger ponderosa with three trunks that looks almost like a gray pine. The bench is in immaculate condition, faces south, and is inscribed with the words "In memory of Eric David May from his family and friends." If you kneel and scrape away the grass from around the two concrete foundations of the bench, you'll see scratched into the left foundation "Dad," "Jon," and the date 4-8-89. Dad is Dan May, Eric's father, Jon is Eric's older brother Jonathan, and the date marks the date the bench was installed, ten years ago. On the right foundation are simply the initials "FK," for Fred King who was with Eric when he died.

When you sit on Eric's Bench and look southeast, you can see far off, framed by those two tall ponderosas, Mariposa and Pacheco peaks south of Highway 152. Other peaks to the south are hidden by trees on Pine Ridge, but if you walk forward you can see them, including Santa Ana above the town of Hollister. You can almost see Monterey Bay and, in certain weather, you can watch the coastal fog stream inland and seep up Santa Clara Valley. In the valley below, you can almost hear the hum of activity in the towns of Gilroy and Morgan Hill; you can glimpse traffic on Highway 101 but are far removed from its turbulence. Above Santa Clara Valley and to the west rises the blue density of the tangle of hills between the valley and the ocean. There's an enormous, ancient, spreading valley oak a hundred yards west of Eric's Bench. Through it, you can see some spectacular sunsets.

One afternoon a while ago, I took a break from staffing the visitor center and walked up Pine Ridge for a bit of exercise and fresh air. I walked first to the monument to see if I could see the Sierras then crossed the ridge top to the Monument Trail that leads back down to the visitor center. There was someone walking down the Monument Trail just below where the trail to Eric's Bench branches off. I didn't know who it was but noticed that he was carrying something in each hand. As I caught up with this person, I remembered that I had my

volunteer uniform on; the uniform sometimes creates distance from visitors so, to break down the barriers, I began chatting to the hiker about what a wonderful place Eric's Bench was. The hiker stopped, put down what he was carrying and turned to listen to me as I talked on about Eric being a young man who was killed while mountain climbing with a friend who was a volunteer at the park. I said that all of us at the park thought Eric's Bench was a very special place, and I added that when I was staffing the visitor center I sent special people here, people I thought would really appreciate the quiet and peace and beauty of the place. The hiker smiled a small smile, tipped his head a little to one side, and said "I'm Dan May, Eric's father." Only then did I notice that he was carrying a can of some kind of paint and a brush and some other implements, and I realized that he must have been doing some maintenance work on the bench. We walked on quietly down the hill together, and I wiped away some tears. I felt silly for chattering on about the bench to the person who had been instrumental in putting it there and who loved Eric, and I felt enormously moved that Eric's father took such good care of his son's memory. Later, I wanted to learn more about Eric David May, how he had died, and why his family and friends had chosen to place a bench in his memory on Pine Ridge in Coe Park.

Fred King had backpacked and climbed with Eric for a number of years. They had climbed Mt. Whitney in 1987, the summer before Eric was killed, and on July 4th, 1988, had hiked to the top of Mt. Shasta. At 14,162 feet, Shasta is among the monarchs of California mountains, although the three W's are higher—Whitney, Williamson, and White mountains. Shasta is a symmetrical peak, snow-covered year round, and is a distinctive landmark that's visible from the Trinity Alps to the west, from the Sierra Nevada just below Donner Pass, and from many other places in northern California. Shasta is a spiritual center for Native Americans. In a conversation, Dan May, Lynne Birch, Eric's girlfriend, and I agreed that perhaps, somehow, Eric chose to die there, in that special place.

On that July day in 1988, Fred and Eric were walking back down the trail after summiting Mt. Shasta when Eric slipped on the packed ice on the trail and fell over the edge so suddenly that there was nothing Fred could do. They were on the north face of Shasta; Eric fell 500 feet to a crevasse near the west headwall of Hotlum Glacier and died, the pathology report later revealed, within minutes if not seconds. It took Fred nearly an hour to get down to Eric's body, but there was nothing he could do to help his friend. He went back to the tent where he and Eric were camped to stay overnight, and hiked out the next day to report the accident and get help. Fred was quite calm talking about Eric's death, but it's now 1999 and he's had almost eleven years to come to terms with the shock and horror of that day.

Dan and Jonathan May and Lynne Birch and Donna Taniguchi, Fred's girlfriend (now his wife) drove to Shasta Township to retrieve Eric's body when the helicopter brought him out from Mt. Shasta. They brought Eric back to Morgan Hill where family and friends gathered for the funeral service. Eric had lived in Morgan Hill since 1972 and had attended Live Oak High School. He was an active and creative young man who was a naturalist and a skilled observer of plant and animal life. He also wrote poetry and played the violin, and was an acolyte at St. John's Episcopal Church. Eric loved meadows and flowers and the wild hills around the Santa Clara Valley. He once hiked from home to Coe Park through Otis Canyon, Clark Canyon, and Finley Ridge. He also hiked and backpacked in the Sierras. He majored in biology at Humbolt University, graduating in June 1987, the year before he died. Fred King said of Eric, "When he died, the world really lost a friend of the earth."

Dan said that as soon as the family thought of Coe Park, it was the obvious place to put a memorial for Eric. Dan contacted the park and got in touch with the Pine Ridge Association. Don Holmes was chair of the board of the Pine Ridge Association at the time. Don and others worked with Eric's family and friends and the State of California to develop criteria for a memorial and a list of 14 different sites in the park, representing a variety of settings and distances from park headquarters, where a memorial could be placed. Possible sites included the headquarters parking lot, the entrance parking lot, the Little Fork of Coyote Creek, and several springs—Arnold, Deerhorn, Grapevine, Brem, and Willow Ridge.

In October 1988, Dan May, Eric's mother Jane, Jonathan May, Lynne Birch, and Fred King joined Don Holmes and volunteers Leif and Bonnie Larsen on a tour of the park. It was a long, dusty day, but they took their time to explore each of the fourteen sites on the list of possibilities and also enjoyed lunch by Coit Lake. Of those fourteen sites, two ended up on the short list. One site was just below the high point of Middle Ridge on the road that heads down to Deer Horn Spring and the Middle Fork of Coyote Creek, with a view northeast across the canyon to Blue Ridge. The other was the meadow and sprinkling of ponderosa pines on top of Pine Ridge with spectacular views east, south, and west. Every season has a personality in that meadow, it was a place Eric would like, and it would be easy for family and friends to be there quietly with thoughts of Eric. They chose this place to put Eric's memorial.

Now that they had chosen the perfect place for the memorial, family and friends decided that the best form a memorial for Eric could take would be a bench inscribed in his memory. They worked with the Pine Ridge Association to establish the Eric David May Memorial Fund, to which people could make contributions toward the cost of the bench. There were so many contributions that the board of the Pine Ridge Association established a perpetual fund, with the extra money to be spent on interpretive projects recognizing the Eric David May Memorial Fund. Dan selected the bench and the carpenter in Santa Cruz who did a beautiful job of carving the inscription on the bench. Dan, Jonathan, Fred King, and Leif Larsen installed the bench in April 1989. The bench sits overlooking that meadow today and is as beautiful as it was in 1989.

Dan May has retired and lives in Santa Cruz with his wife, Carrie, and two cats, Tio and Tilly. Years later, Dan has been able to let go of the pain and anger of Eric's death. "You live with it," he says. He still has Eric's violin, his writing, his poetry. When you talk to Dan, you begin to understand how gentle, thoughtful, and sensitive Eric must have been.

Eric's mother, Jane Voigts, is a teacher; she's now living in Frankfurt, Germany, for a couple of years with her husband. She wrote an eloquent obituary of Eric that was published in the October 1988 issue of *The Ponderosa.* She described, with parental pride, the many achievements of his short life and included the following note Eric had written: "Hot stuff—Beethoven piano concerto #4, opus 58 (first movement)." Jane is touched that the bench keeps Eric's memory "alive in the hearts and minds of many people . . . even those who never knew him." She was delighted when the signpost to the bench was installed on the Monument Trail and the bench was added to the park map.

Eric's brother, Jonathan, visits the bench and Eric's grave site regularly. Jon still feels the loss of the brother he had just begun to develop an adult relationship with, and feels the sadness of Eric's unfulfilled potential. Jon is a social worker and lives now in Portland, Oregon, with his wife Jeanne. Jon said "It has been a great comfort to our family knowing the bench is enjoyed by visitors and animals of the park."

Fred King joined the volunteer program at Coe Park after Eric died and was active for some years. He and another volunteer, Dave Sellers, installed peak registers on several of the highest points in the park. Fred and Donna live in San Jose and stay in touch with Lynne and, through her, the May family.

Lynne and Eric had been dating for four and a half years and had moved in together just a month before Eric died. Lynne's loss was profound, and she still feels it. She is an architect and now lives in Santa Cruz, running her own business. She's in her late thirties, still looks like a young and beautiful graduate student. The tenth anniversary of Eric's death in July 1998 was very difficult for Lynne. She and Donna went to Eric's grave, and she broke down the next day.

Eric is buried in the cemetery on Spring Street in Morgan Hill, his grave marked by a simple, elegant piece of marble inscribed by his family. The cemetery is surrounded by trees—pines, acacia, and some mimosa in full bloom, El Toro rising behind them in the waning afternoon light. A dog barks; some children play across the street; a cool evening breeze stirs the air. From Eric's grave, you can look across the valley to the hills Eric loved. You can see some of Pine Ridge, but the grassy meadow area is obscured now by an acacia tree in the cemetery that has grown many feet in the last eleven years. You can't see Eric's Bench from his grave site, but you know it's there, resting quietly in the late afternoon sun on Pine Ridge, bringing peace and consolation to all of us who know that special place.

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

Park News

by Kay Robinson
Park Superintendent

If any of you were able to join us, either as worker/volunteers or as visitor/participants, for Coe Backcountry Weekend 1999, you know that it was a very successful event. We had 1,091 visitors (421 vehicles over a two-day period) attended to by 104 volunteers. Those 104 volunteers donated 748 hours of time from Friday through Sunday and offered 35 programs that were attended by 863 people (includes attendance at the Mounted Assistance Unit and Bike/ROMP [Responsible Organized Mountain Pedalers] tables and Encampment). Of the nearly 1,100 attending, 880 were hikers, 184 brought their bicycles, and 27 were equestrians; 45 groups totaling 174 people backpacked to remote areas; 61 parties were fisherpersons.

Our very special event this year was the appearance of the Mountain Men lead by Trapper Jake (Jerry Krinn). Their encampment was set up north of the corral, and over 125 visitors stopped by to view the shelters, food preparation, and

hunting techniques of the 1840–1850s era. A campfire audience of 250 volunteers and visitors alike enjoyed the tales, exploits and history of overland wagons, early California banditos, and Mountain Men. The accounting hasn't been concluded; however, the preliminary report is that we did very well this year with the entry, T-shirt, and merchandise sales—another chunk of income to help the Visitor Center Expansion fund.

An additional $38,000 was secured this year by California State Parks to assist the Pine Ridge Association in reaching their goal of an enhanced visitor center. This $38,000 will be focused on the purchase of goods for achieving Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standard restrooms and for repair of dry rot and other problems identified in the termite inspection from last year (structural components). With the plans and specifications provided by Paul Johnson of Ferris, Johnson and Perkins Architects of San Diego, construction management expertise provided by Larry Kent of Pacific Oak Properties of Morgan Hill, and the combined energies and commitment of the Fundraising Committee (Winslow and Ann Briggs, Barbara Bessey, Dave Perrin, Page Frechette, Sheila Flodberg, and myself), we really are moving forward.

Another project coming to fruition is the upgrade of the Ranch House. It will be tented for termite treatment during May; a contract for roof, porch, and window repair will be let in late April for completion this summer; and we are going forward with compiling a refurbishing plan for the Ranch House zone (includes the bunkhouse, cooler, and yard). With the refurbishing plan in place, we will be able to proceed with other repairs (such as electrical wiring—what is appropriate? What era are we focusing on?), exterior landscaping, and interior treatment and furnishing.

Lastly, the Bell Station Day Use Area contract has been let, and construction is expected to begin in late May or June. By next year's Coe Backcountry Weekend, you will see a small day use area complete with single and trailered-vehicle parking space, a vault toilet, interpretive display panels, a short hiking path, some repaired roadway, and plantings of oak saplings along the entrance road. These are just a few of the many projects on the plate of the Coe State Park staff.

Hunting Hollow 10k Run/Walk

by Julie Chase

The Henry Coe State Park 10k Run/Walk will be held at the **Hunting Hollow** entrance, on **Saturday, June 19, 1999.**

Registration will start at 7 a.m., with the event starting at 8 a.m. The event will be limited to 220 registered runners and walkers. The Hunting Hollow setting provides a shady, flat, fast run out to Wagon Road and back. The route has steep ridges surrounding the jeep trail and lots of oak trees along the route. You will also cross many streambeds (dry, we hope). The jeep trail is not appropriate for strollers, and pets are not allowed. A T-shirt is included with registration to commemorate the event. The entry fee is $22 including the park entrance fee. Please car pool if possible; parking is limited.

Activities will follow the event. There will be Awards and Prizes for winners in each age category. The awards ceremony after the race will have park-specific awards presented by park officials. There will be awards in every age group. Bring the kids and run/walk as a family. We will have music, food, massage, chiropractic services, and more.

What an awesome place to run!!!! Bring the family, and make it a great day for the benefit of your State Park.

For more information, please call 408-353-5644 or check out our web site at www.coepark.parks.ca.gov. Entry forms are available on the web or by fax.

Membership & Contributions

by Lee Dittmann

We are pleased to welcome the new members listed below, who joined before April 11th. Thank you for your support! Welcome to the Pine Ridge Association. The membership total now stands at 386.

David A. Appling, Morgan Hill
Phil Atwood, Morgan Hill
Belser-White family, Berkeley
Edith Black, Orinda
Jeff Farnsworth & Michele Taylor, Los Gatos
Harro Hohenner, Cupertino
Ken Howell, San Jose
Mike & Sandee McCaffrey, Los Altos
Michael Moores, Los Gatos
Jeff Otto, Santa Clara
Chris Peyer, San Francisco
Lynn Rodrigues, San Jose
Mary Sue & Charlé Rupp, Morgan Hill
Maya Suryaraman, Los Gatos

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490 Jarvis Drive
Morgan Hill, CA 95037-2809

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CARMEL
MONTEREY

637-6002
GILROY
HOLLISTER

RAM Commercial Insurance Services
195 San Pedro Avenue, Building A
Morgan Hill, CA 95037

(408) 776-2800

Thanks for your renewal!

New Contributors to the Visitor Center Expansion Fund

Ascot Roofing
Mary Sue & Charlé Rupp

Special Contributions

Thanks to **3Com Corporation** for matching employee **David Baumgartner's** generous donation to the Visitor Center Expansion Fund.

Thanks to **Boole & Babbage** for matching employée **Dennis Pinion's** generous donation.

Thanks to **KPMG** for a generous donation in support of the PRA's upcoming June 19 fundraiser, a 10 K walk/run at Hunting Hollow.

Thanks to **Cisco Systems** for once again providing a generous donation matching former employee **Libby Vincent's** Coe Park volunteer hours.

PRA Calendar

Friday to Monday, May 28–31: **Memorial Day Weekend Backpack.** Join Irwin and Janet Koff for a backpack trip to visit the three biggest lakes in the park. Camp at Pacheco Camp under the full moon! Call Irwin or Janet for more information (408/293-8194).

Saturday, June 12: **Poker in the Park.** This event, initiated last year, was a great success. Join others on foot, on bicycles, or on horseback and pick up poker hands in the park, starting at the Hunting Hollow entrance. See enclosed flyer for more information.

Saturday, June 19: **Hunting Hollow 10K Run.** Both walkers and runners will be accommodated in this event. All entrants will start from the Hunting Hollow entrance. See article on page 8 for more information.

Friday to Sunday, June 25–27: **June Weekend Backpack.** Join Irwin and Janet Koff for a backpack trip out of the Hunting Hollow entrance. Backpack to Willson Camp and hike around the Redfern. Enjoy the nearly full moon! Call Irwin or Janet for further information (408/293-8194).

Saturday & Sunday, July 31–August 1: **Fourth Annual Coe Garage Sale.** Proceeds benefit the Visitor Center Expansion Project. See enclosed flyer for more information.

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http://www.coepark.parks.ca.gov

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The Ponderosa is a publication of the Pine Ridge Association with approximately five issues per year. 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 650/851-7813.

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