The **Ponderosa**

The Pine Ridge Association Newsletter
Henry W. Coe State Park

Spring 2000

From under My Brim

by Barry Breckling

Spring

I look forward to spring each year, and each year I promise myself that I'll spend more time outside during that glorious season. When the last mariposa lily has shriveled and the pink has faded from the last farewell-to-spring, I think back and realize that I ended up spending far too much time pushing papers, too much time reading, too much time behind a computer, and too much time looking longingly out windows.

Spring is already coming again, and I'm getting out more than usual, but will I be able to keep it up? I certainly hope so . . . . Oh, I'm connected finally, and I've got mail. Fourteen messages! Well, I guess I'll just look out the window till they're all downloaded.

Spring officially begins toward the end of March, but long before March arrives, you'll see signs of spring in the Diablo Range. In January, and maybe even as early as December, the delicate, white, bell-shaped flowers of the manzanita shrubs bloom, braving the short days and cold winds. White flowered milkmaids begin to bloom in February, and long before most people begin thinking of spring, plump bumblebees are out feeding on the nectar of the blue forget-me-not hound's tongue flowers. It's about this time when the deciduous oak trees, which for months have stood naked, lifeless, and almost two dimensional in appearance, develop red-tinted twigs with swollen buds at their tips. The trees take on a glow and a more three-dimensional appearance. In weeks or even days, they leaf out, and before long the forest is shiny, bright, and green again.

The birds that flew south to escape the short, cold days of winter begin to return to nest and raise their young, relying on the bounty of spring in Northern California. The turkey vultures, like the manzanita blossoms, arrive early. They soar over the landscape and seem totally in their element as they're buffeted about by the cold, gusty winds of late winter.

If you spend time outdoors in spring, you're bound to hear the lovely song of a sort of drab little bird. If you spot the singer, you might be surprised to discover that it's what has for years been called a plain titmouse, a bird that's spent the months since last spring just being plain. These perky crested little forest dwellers have finally been aptly renamed oak titmice, and although they remain somewhat plain-looking, they continue to show off their joyful (and definitely not plain) personalities as they flit from oak tree to oak tree in search of new spring bugs.

Inside this issue . . .

Description of a 50-mile day-hike in the park!

Plans for land purchases and other park developments

New edition of *Trails of Henry W. Coe* to be released

Training on birds available for PRA members

. . . and more!

As the days get longer, they also become noticeably warmer. There are still periods of unsettled weather, but rainbows forecast the marvelous days ahead. You catch a whiff of fragrant ceanothus blossoms, and suddenly your spirits soar. Before you know it, spring is here in all its glory, and what started as a hint, building into a steady stream, has all of a sudden become a flash flood of colors and sounds and smells that brighten the whole world.

Wildflowers are one of the most precious gifts of spring, and the Diablo Range is one of the best places in the world to seek them out and enjoy them. Let me tell you a little about some of my favorites.

The lowland shooting stars with their chubby downward facing rocket flowers are one of the earliest blooming flowers, but their blooming time depends mostly on how early the rains come. Some years they've begun blooming as early as December (a friend recounted waking up surrounded by a meadow full of magenta shooting stars on Christmas morning), but in years of late rains, they may not begin blooming until late February.

The green stemmed lowland shooting stars of open meadows fade early, but the woodland shooting stars, growing in shady locations, last well into spring. The more graceful woodland species has slender downward facing rocket flowers (so slender that the rockets are often thought to look like mosquitoes with long slender bills and thus the other common name of mosquito bills). The woodland shooting stars also have magenta flowers but grow atop a reddish, longer stem. If shooting stars remind you of the garden cyclamens, you have a good eye for flowers. Both are in the primrose family.

My favorite wild violets are the Johnny-jump-ups. You'll find them covering large areas in many a grassy meadow, their glowing little yellow faces brightening the open grasslands. If you keep your eye on Johnny-jump-ups, you'll notice that their flowers always face the sun. You can walk out a trail towards the sun and not notice any, but when you turn around to return, there they all are, facing you and the sun.

There are two less common species of yellow violets in the park that you might mistake for Johnny-jump-ups, until you take a closer look. One species, the oak violet, grows in the shade of trees. Its petals are smaller and paler than Johnny-jump-up petals, and its leaves are longer and more gray-green in color. If you're walking through one of the drier areas of the park and you see a violet with deeper yellow flowers and finely divided leaves, you've discovered a Douglas violet.

The only other violet we have in the park is a white-flowered violet that grows along some of the creeks. It's called the two-eyed violet because the two outer white petals each have a dark purple spot in the middle. The two-eyed violet is not common, and it's always a pleasure to find it growing along a shady creek bank.

You'll find several species of larkspurs throughout the park, most of them in shades of blue and purple. Larkspurs are also called delphiniums because of their genus name Delphinium, which was derived from the Greek word for dolphins. The name was chosen because the nectar "spur" of the flower resembles a dolphin. My favorite larkspur is the red larkspur. It's not very common in the park, but if you're lucky, you might come across some along the East Fork of the Coyote Creek (in the narrows area) or in the canyon of the Little Fork.

Another rather uncommon flower in the park is the beautiful crimson (or red) columbine. The word columbine comes from a Latin word for dove-like. The plant grows only in moist canyons in the park, and there's a nice patch that you can't miss along the Flat Frog Trail, if the flowers are in bloom. When you find a columbine, take a close look at one of its blossoms. If you squint your eyes and use your imagination, the five petals and their upward pointing nectar spurs look like a circle of five doves facing each other.

Iris is the Greek word for a rainbow, and irises do come in a rainbow of colors. We have only one species in the park, the ground iris, and its blossoms are a dreamy shade of blue. Irises belong to the Iris family (sometimes things are simple), and we have one other member of the family in the park, California blue-eyed grass. Common names are often misleading, even downright deceptive. Blue-eyed grass, for example, is not a grass at all, its "eye" is not blue (it's yellow), and the color of the flower is much closer to purple than it is to blue. And, if that's not confusing enough, a few unusual blue-eyed grass plants in the park have white flowers. I found one "white-eyed grass" plant near the Frog Lake dam and some others along the upper section of Middle Ridge Trail.

One of the most charming flowers in the park is also one of the smallest. The blossoms of purple mouse ears look like tiny, deep purple mouse faces with brilliant magenta ears. If you look inside the dark purple flower tube, you'll see bright golden stripes and striking yellow anthers. The plants grow only two or three inches tall, so it's easy to walk right past them without seeing them. Look for them in rocky areas with sparse vegetation along Corral Trail and Monument Trail. You might have to get down on your belly to really appreciate the beauty of the tiny flowers, but the rewards are well worth the effort. Some years, you won't find purple mouse ears anywhere, but during the El Niño spring of 1998, we found

them growing by the hundreds, maybe even thousands, and in areas where we had never seen them before.

Bird's eye gilias often blanket large areas of hillsides with a pale blue glow. The petals are a whitewashed shade of blue, and the flower tube has alternating stripes of deep blue-violet and bright yellow, which gives the flower its other common name, tricolor gilia. You can delight in the color the flowers give to the hillsides, but this is another one of those belly flowers; to really appreciate them, you need to get down to their level. When you do, you can see one of their most striking features, five fluffy azure blue anthers. The flowers have a strong fragrance that some people think is wonderful and other people find a little overwhelming. Look for bird's eye gilias along the road to the park growing in the hilly meadows a mile or two below the entrance. If you want to get up close to these wonderful little flowers, look for the small patch that grows on the east side of Hobbs Road just after it leaves Manzanita Point Road and starts up steeply towards the monument.

A taller, forest dwelling relative of bird's eye gilia is the California (or blue) gilia. It's an easy plant to find. All you need to do is walk along the corral trail and look for fluorescent little blue globes straining to reach above the level of the grass.

When you're hiking through some of the drier areas of the park, you might find one of the rarest and loveliest flowers in the park. Bitterroot is a low-growing plant with a large, many-petaled flower in the middle of a ring of succulent, tubular-shaped leaves. The petals of the flower vary in color from white to pink. A few small colonies that grow in the Miller Field and East Fork area have beautiful translucent, iridescent pink petals. Because the plant was first described by Captain Lewis of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, botanists named it Lewisia.

I think my favorite spring wildflower is the white mariposa lily. Mariposa is the Spanish word for butterfly, and these tulip-like flowers do resemble butterflies. Although the petals are usually white with bright red markings on the inner surface, you'll sometimes find flowers with brighter colors, ranging from light red to brilliant crimson. A patch of red-flowered "white" mariposa lilies grows along the road to Poverty Flat, less than a mile from the Coyote Creek. Each year, I look forward to seeing mariposa lilies, but they also make me a bit wistful, since their presence is a sign that spring will soon be over.

There are two more common flowers that are well known by most Californians and that bloom for a long time. One is our official state flower, the California poppy. Its peak blooming period is in middle to late spring, but you might find a poppy in bloom in July or February or almost any other month of the year. The beauty of a poppy is in its simplicity. Its petals are not tri-colored, not bi-colored; they are simply the most beautiful shade of golden orange. A field of them can brighten your day, but to get the full effect, get down on your knees and peer into just one flower backlit by the sun. It can give you a new appreciation for all flowers. The other long-lasting flower is the California buttercup. Buttercups are one of the earliest of the wildflowers, yet they can still have blossoms when the last of the spring flowers are beginning to fade.

Several days ago I sat down next to a buttercup and spent some time with it. As I looked into its bright shiny yellow face, I found details that I hadn't imagined such a "plain" little flower could have. It was no longer simply a buttercup; it was a living creature that had as much individuality as any person. As I spent more time with the buttercup, I realized that its existence was just as important as the existence of an ant, a sequoia, or any other living thing. I gained more respect for all life and more insight into my connection with the buttercup and all the other inhabitants of this earth.

hound's tongue

A Walk around Coe—Almost

by Randy White
assisted by Lyndal Hubbard

After our 45-mile day hike out to Robinson and Orestimba Creeks last year, to see El Niño's extraordinary production of wildflowers, we decided to do something similar to honor La Niña. I am sure that many people have hiked from Coe Headquarters to Hunting Hollow, probably by way of Mahoney Meadows. We have also taken that route many times, but this time decided to take the long way—the really long way.

Lyndal loves Robinson Creek, and I do, too. But I have often wondered what treasures Jackrabbit Lake, Long Ridge, and Mustang Peak might hold. So, what the heck, let's do it all. Could we do a hike 61 miles long with 12,000 feet of climbing in 24 hours? I figured that with a comfortable walking pace of 3 miles per hour, we'd have four hours to spare for rest stops. I constructed a plan to follow the old Northern Heights route, along Robinson Creek, then hug the entire eastern edge of the park from north to south, down Hunting Hollow Creek, rest for a hot dinner at the parking lot with our support crew, Tom, then north to Headquarters. On Thursday, April 8th, we prepared our food and gear and forced ourselves to try and get some sleep before our midnight rendezvous. We were unsuccessful in the attempt. Meeting at midnight, we drove the 75 minutes to Coe Headquarters.

Coe Perimeter Hike: Take 1. Reports had said that the rainy, cold conditions would improve, but we were prepared for initial bad weather. However, when we arrived at Headquarters at 1:15 a.m., La Niña was waiting. Snow frosted the fences in front of the parking lot. Wet wind was blowing, and the clouds were moving fast. It was cold and very unfriendly outside. I couldn't imagine having to ford the chilly Middle and East Forks of Coyote Creek when temperatures were cold enough to make snow. We sat slumped in the car, postponing our departure in hopes something would change or one of us would suggest ending this craziness. That didn't happen, so we prepared to lace up our shoes and slip on our packs. But first, I had to clean one of my contact lenses that had been bothering me. In the process, my lens tore and I had no spares. This would compromise my vision somewhat and as excuses go, it was pretty wimpy. However, using that excuse, we decided to demonstrate some flexibility and leave for home immediately! The decision turned out to be a good one. It allowed us, the next day, to recognized the need for adequate sleep and to remember that it is often coldest at Headquarters. It also gave anyone the opportunity to tell us not to do this!!

Coe Perimeter Hike: Take 2. Four days later, on Tuesday April 13, we were back. This time we each had gotten three hours of sleep. And this time the skies were clear, starlit, and still. Our spirits were up, and we were ready to go. This attitude is extremely necessary for success on long day hikes. We began at 1:30 a.m. Before starting, we peeked in the office window to say hello to Barry Breckling, but guess what? He doesn't actually work all day and night!

We were on our way. I think it was Kit Carson who said "It's all up and downhill from here!" Or maybe it was Johnny Carson. Emerging from the Corral Trail, we were treated to a sky paved with a thick Milky Way against black macadam. Below us on each side lay sleeping white lakes. Wait a minute! There are no lakes down there! It was whipped cream fog, and it lay right where we were headed. It greeted us well before we arrived at the Middle Fork of Coyote Creek. Last year the creek was almost waist deep at this time. Tonight, it was up from recent rains though not nearly as treacherous. But, boy was it "La Niña" cold! We put sandals on to cross and left them on 'til we finished with the east fork of Coyote Creek. Along the way, we surprised a raccoon doing her laundry at Coyote Creek in the soupy fog. She was not pleased at being disturbed and scurried off. It was fortunate that we were well acquainted with the east fork of Coyote Creek, because cows had trashed the muddy trail making it uneven from their deep hoof-prints. Lyndal led this stretch, with flashlight pointed just in front of her footsteps. I wore a headlamp, which I don't recommend in foggy conditions . . . . The light reflects off the fog when one looks around. I took it off and held it at waist level—much better.

Walking in such conditions has the benefit of focusing you on the task at hand, and before you know it, you reach your destination. In this case, it was the climb out of the east fork of Coyote Creek and up Bear Mountain. Surprisingly, the fog wasn't that cold. Windpants over nylon shorts and a windbreaker over a nylon shirt were enough to keep us warm. We were able to remove our hats and gloves as we climbed the 1,500 feet, emerging from the fog about half way up. At the high point, we sat and rested briefly, enjoying the amazing solitude and freshness of the waning night. After the cloaked and muffled conditions of the blanketed canyon below, the expanse of stars carried our spirits away. But, "Earth to Hikers!": time to get rolling again.

At 5:30 a.m. the first hint of morning light emanated from the eastern sky. With it came the smallest sliver of a silver moon on the horizon. Here we were standing on a mountaintop feeling like we were barely 90 feet from the bottom with the fog creeping along below us and filling all available canyons to the east. We were ready to continue. The only thing barring our way was the fog draining eastward over a saddle along the ridge, spilling in waves towards Red Creek canyon. Heavily scented ceanothus and coryopsis in full bloom lined

the trail, and a variety of birds began voicing their approval of the morning. It was going to be a good day.

Descending into Red Creek, a great horned owl blessed the morning, and some tom turkeys were arguing over who should have the last dance. A few lingering bats pierced the air, and a poorwill flushed. The grass held the night's moisture but happily gave it up, soaking our shoes. It felt great to have 15 miles under our belts by sunrise. Climbing through lovely oak savannah to the ridge top, we connected with Robinson Creek trail. The oaks were beginning to put out new lime green finery, which was highlighted by the lifting mist. We followed the fog as it retreated down Robinson Creek a mile or so ahead of us. The rising sun seemed to have little influence on the awakening wilderness, because we occasionally entered little pockets of near freezing temperatures. A pair of acorn woodpeckers distracted us as they played on a dead pine tree. The canyon began to narrow, and as we walked through the tall grass, we missed our trail, remaining instead along the creek. This mistake netted us the much desired discovery of several redbud trees in full bloom, just a few yards above Robinson Falls. Lyndal had read a book about the Native Americans of the area and had learned that the expected locations of redbud trees in the Robinson Creek area were far from the location of this particular tree. After snapping off a few pictures for proof, we scrambled up the steep bank among healthy poison oak and crumbling shale and rejoined the trail. With the end of the canyon in sight, we attempted a shortcut that drove us to our knees as we crawled under buckbrush to save some time. That was a laugh! We thought that we might finish this hike on our knees, but here we were on our knees after only 19 miles. We had reached Orestimba Creek at 9:30 a.m. after eight hours of hiking, and we were ready for a break. Lyndal likes to stretch out and put her feet up, whereas, to avoid stiffening up, I usually prefer to rest standing. But, with a long way to go, I took a seat and ate. I then refilled our water bags, while Lyndal dozed in the sun.

We try to snack constantly along the way as we hike, changing our M.O. from a year ago when we had sandwiches to eat. Refining the process, we made our own high carbohydrate bars filled with oats, whole wheat, pumpkin, and spices. In addition we prepared sesame bars containing almond butter, tahini, shredded coconut, and sesame seeds in a malt syrup base. Adding fruit, Gu packets, and electrolytes for the water, we received adequate calories.

Back on the trail after the rest hour, I spied a small horned lizard and gently picked him up. They are so well camouflaged that any unsuspecting insect has little chance if they happen by this mini-dinosaur. And, we have to admit to trying another "short cut" off the Rooster Comb Trail. Don't! It took us up and over a peak. Does that count for bonus points?? Upon reaching the Orestimba drainage, we turned south to hike about a mile upstream before we connected to Long Ridge Road. But what a mile! Lush, almost pure patches of owl's clover, next to patches of butter and eggs, goldfields, poppies, fiddlenecks, and bird's eye gilia, were caressed by the gentlest of 70° honey-scented breezes and clear blue skies. Madly, we clicked away with our pocket cameras.

An unmarked (at that time) trail on our left climbed a grass-covered hill, and we followed it amongst the blue oaks. Jackrabbit Lake should be a mile ahead off of our Long Ridge Road trail. Undoubtedly, this is a popular area for campers, but this was "new" territory for Lyndal and me. Up, down, and around we went until Jackrabbit Lake lay exposed in a lovely amphitheater to our left. Temptation was strong to scout this area and maybe even go for a swim—it really was warm enough for that. Well, a few more pictures would have to suffice with so many miles still to climb. Taking a deep breath, we turned towards Mustang Peak and began our ascent along the ridge, finishing the last of my film on bush lupin and cream cups that lined the trail. The views afforded from this ridge top were truly wonderful. Eastward, more of the beautiful Coe-style terrain stretched out as far as the eye could see. West, tiny blue lakes and ponds dotted the landscape, and Paradise Flat lay stretched out in rare unbroken greenery to the north. About four miles later, we neared the base of the peak, trudging up an impossibly steep and canted dirt road that offered little in the way of joy. We tried mini-switchbacks to ease the strain, but the hours, miles, and climbs were taking their toll. At 2 p.m. we crested the peak and gratefully switched gears for the descent. A baby rattlesnake, with but one rattle, sunbathed in the middle of the road, providing a nice distraction while Lyndal caught him on film.

Our next assignment was the North Fork of Pacheco Creek via Purple Pond and Tie-Down Peak. We could refill our water at the creek and take a brief rest. Inexorably, our brain cells were shutting down one by one. Weighted eyelids and dried-up conversation didn't help matters. It was beginning to feel like a chore. However, we had a prearranged meeting with our support crew of one, Lyndal's husband Tom, so we had little choice but to carry on. We had little choice, **period,** if we were to get home that night.

Purple Pond could not be seen from our trail, but we assumed we were headed in the right direction. Our trail junction had been unmarked and somewhat overgrown, so we were left to trust our faithful Henry Coe map and our compass. It led us to a small creek before our climb to Tie-Down Peak, so we filled our water containers and patted ourselves on the back for being on the right track. Another hour break would have been welcomed, but we were running behind schedule.

Expectations had been running high in hopes of seeing the usual families of pigs, deer, and lonesome coyotes. Our first and only encounter with pig sightings happened on the climb towards Tie-Down Peak. We startled a sow who gave an angry snort and ducked into the brush with her single tiny piglet. It is too bad she didn't hang around; we needed someone to tell us exactly which peak was Tie-Down. Goldfields completely covered a road off to our left, and I hypnotically turned, wanting to follow its beguiling golden glory. Lyndal questioned the decision and convinced me to stay right and follow a southwesterly direction. It was the right choice, and we descended to Pacheco Creek, 35 miles under our belts and quite a ways to go.

Needing to cross Kaiser-Aetna Road and climb Burra Burra Peak was less than inspirational. Memories of driving a dusty road choked with campers and horse trailers on a previous Coe Backcountry Weekend leadened our steps. I don't know why we were so worried. The firm road lined with freshly washed trees and flowers welcomed our company, and we made decent time to the peak. Barry and I had discussed an old unmarked route connecting Burra Burra southwest to Cañada de la Dormida and our rendevous with Tom. I had a good idea of the direction to take but was getting opposite ideas from Lyndal. We wandered south a bit on the wrong road then returned. This time I was the more convincing, and off we went down the nose of a beautiful ridge filled with knee-high grasses and oaks.

We were on course, but no Tom at the creek. It was 6:45 p.m. and unlikely that he would be in this spot at this time of the evening, being uninspired with night hiking. We could only wonder if he had been here or anywhere in the park. Realization set in that our lofty goal of 60 miles wasn't going to happen in any amount of time, let alone 24 hours. The anticipation of a fresh spirit to carry us through to Hunting Hollow had burned dwindling energy, and we were left running on fumes.

At this point we were on a trail we had hiked in the past, so we knew what still lay ahead. We had gotten over being cranky about climbing Rock Springs Peak after several previous trips, realizing that to get to this spot in the park requires effort, and we had better have some energy stored in reserve. Putting our feet to the grindstone, we began our ascent. As we approached one of the false summits, two doe emerged from the forest and paused along the trail ahead. They focused their attention on us as we labored up the hill. That attention was enough for a trailing coyote to decide this was his opportunity to bag some venison. Neither we nor the deer expected to see a coyote come bounding out of the forest with his sights set on deerburger. The two doe decided we weren't so interesting after all and made a beeline for the canyon below. The wily coyote stopped right where the deer had been, looking after them in frustration. Then, realizing there were two wild-eyed (dazed?) human forms coming at him, did an about-face and disappeared in the trees.

Neither of us could quite believe what we had just witnessed, but we had fun theorizing about Coyote's intentions. And with that, we reached Rock Springs Peak—always a good feeling, knowing there will be some downhill relief. However, this being our 5th peak of the day, our knees were beginning to complain a bit. Water is a valuable lubricant, and we tried to drink regularly, but we now needed to drown ourselves to offset the last 16 hours. Vasquez Peak wasn't too difficult, being only a few hundred yards from Rock Springs Peak. Beyond, a ridge lay out in front of us in the fading daylight. Always a pretty time of the day, dusk descended, and in spite of our weary state, the beauty and peaceful solitude was greatly appreciated. We had pretty much given up on meeting Tom, but as we found out later, he was only a mile ahead of us, within earshot of a good whistle. Boy, we sure could have used his guiding light for a couple of reasons. First, we had expected to be back at Hunting Hollow parking lot well before nightfall, so had sent our fresh batteries there for the hike on to HQ. Secondly, Tom, having just hiked "an out and back," had a clear idea of the route home. Lyndal and I had traveled only from east to west in this section around Phegley Ridge down Hunting Hollow and had gone cross-country from Long Dam Trail to Wagon Road. Tonight, rationing our flashlights and expecting to recognize our previous route in the twilight, didn't pan out. We scrambled and climbed and thrashed and descended and got barbed wired. Whatever adrenaline was left in our bodies was activated at this time. We were lost! The thought of having to retrace our steps to get on a legitimate trail was unthinkable. In fact, just give us our space blankets, and we'd happily have curled up amongst the poison oak and slept.

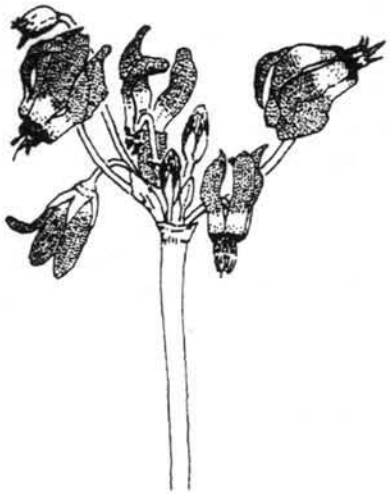
In the pioneer spirit, we were reminded of the old credo, "Go West Young Man, Go West!" So, we did, and luckily stumbled upon a cow-path that connected to Wagon Road. After kissing the trail, we got off our knees, brushed off the dirt, and mindlessly pushed onward. But getting lost at this point in the hike, and possibly having to spend the night out in the elements with Tom worrying about us, took a heavy psychological toll. I had screwed up. We had made navigational errors earlier in the hike, but by talking things out had correctly deduced the proper route. This time, I guess we were just too tired to think straight. Our observational skills were dwindling, and our legs were grumbling as we followed the road downstream to the parking lot. Several hours earlier, I had sickened of the orange Gatorade and orange-flavored GU packets and was running on empty. A few tangerines were all I could stomach. Lyndal's appetite was gone, too. Perhaps if

we'd had more fresh fruit things would have been different. Each creek crossing was irritating—definitely a sign of low blood sugar. But, we were nearing the Hunting Hollow parking lot where Tom flashed his headlights at us as he waited in the car. What a relief!

If we hadn't gotten lost, it would have been something like 49 miles to that point, but the wandering around on Burra Burra Peak and Phegley Ridge had added a bit. We had intended to walk to headquarters along Palassou and Cardoza Ridges but had been advised that this area has not been transferred to the park yet. So we decided that we could adjust and just end the hike right where we were. Just kidding! We ended it because we were toast!! Having recently turned 50, I quickly redubbed the hike "50 for my 50th." Lyndal agreed, and we were done. No one could accuse us of being inflexible!

As de Anza, to his disappointment, had found out a couple of centuries earlier, Coe is very rugged. We don't think that it was the distance that defeated us as much as the 9,000 feet of climbing, especially the unusually steep trails such as those up Bear Mountain, Mustang Peak, and Rock Springs Peak. But, our back-up plan, to meet Tom at the Hunting Hollow parking lot, had worked, and we had a ride home.

Readers of the account of this hike may question why we committed to such an arduous task. We didn't achieve our goal of a perimeter hike. But Coe is an absolutely awesome place to fail in the attempt. There is a unique and vital quality that develops when roaming from darkness to daylight and back to dark. It encompasses a microcosm of life, supported by the ability to carry all our requirements in light-weight vests. This makes the journey over varied terrain balanced and comfortable. There is a sense of freedom and gracefulness that enhances awareness, and in that element we come to appreciate better all the colors and songs of Coe.



lowland shooting star

Park News

by Kay Robinson
Park Superintendent

There is cause for celebration! Thanks to the voters of California, the historical, open space, cultural, recreational, and biological values of the state have a new lease on life. With the passage of Proposition 12 on March 7th, $2.1 billion will be expended over the next decade to purchase land, renew old structures, and build new facilities in city, county, regional, and state parks. Some examples of local line items from the proposition are $400,000 for a community center in Gilroy and $500,000 for a trail connection between Coyote Lake County Park and Henry W. Coe State Park.

For Coe State Park, our hopes are high. There are three projects that immediately float to mind as meriting consideration. First: The purchase of the remainder of the Lakeview Meadows property, which was purchased last year by The Nature Conservancy as part of their Mt. Hamilton Project. In 1999 the Public Works Board approved the purchase of almost 6,000 acres, the northerly portion of the Palassou Ridge property. Funds exist now to buy half of the 6,000 acres. It is hoped that an additional $1 million will be allocated from Prop. 12 funds to buy the remaining 3,000 acres.

Second: The Visitor Center Expansion. The Pine Ridge Association has been working ardently for about six years to raise funds to renovate and expand the Pine Ridge Visitor Center. Their efforts have so far raised about $175,000. It has recently become apparent that more significant modifications are needed, primarily in order to comply with ADA regulations. This has necessarily increased the price tag for the changes. Last year, California State Parks began the development of a Park Infrastructure Database, which details all of the maintenance and infrastructure needs of all of the parks. Included in that program is a request for $400,000 for the Visitor Center expansion. And it is tagged fairly high in the priority list. In the next few months, I will be working with Department staff to make funding of the renovation of the Visitor Center by DPR a reality.

Third: Dowdy Ranch Development. This project is considered a Major Capital Outlay project with a price tag of nearly $2 million. Some advance work has already been done for this project: it is in the preliminary 2000–2001 Governor's budget for funding of Year One (of three years) for environmental and planning documents. Year Two would be for the development of plans and specifications. Year Three would be construction. The build-out would involve minor road improvements, con-

struction of day-use parking and picnic areas, equestrian and trailhead (overnight backpack) parking area, two restrooms, and the rehabilitation of the two modular buildings into a visitor reception/office building and staff housing (for a camp host or park aid). It is anticipated that this visitor facility would be open about six months of the year, depending upon weather and road conditions.

There are many more deferred maintenance projects for Coe on the Park Infrastructure Database—these three appear to be the most urgent and beneficial to the public. As funds become available, we will be considering other activities and continue on the seemingly unending list of projects. Thank you for supporting your city, county, regional, and state parks in the last election. You and the generations who follow will be richer for it.

The Tarantula

by Millicent Kellogg

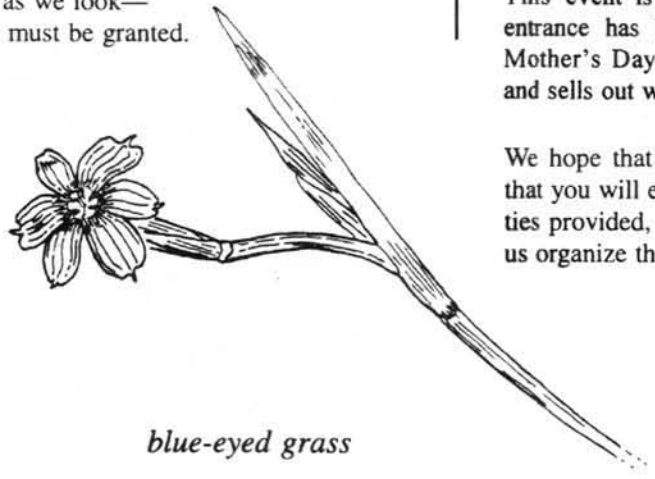
I am a whisper on your skin as I cross over
Exploring the bends and precipices of your form
The breeze makes more sounds than I do.

You catch your breath and your heart flutters
And you can feel the rhythm of living
When I tap your tapping fingers with mine.

I am the color of ground and rocks
I try to focus on you with my eight eyes
But you are so huge you block the sky.

I am older than you are by an eon or two
and have seen a wilder earth with different cronies
who were colossal and vulnerable; still I survived.

You and I are equally fragile, and can easily be destroyed
Not by my kind—fierce as we look—
But by yours. Attention must be granted.



blue-eyed grass

Coe ♫

by Barbara Bessey, PRA Chair

Welcome to the 2000 spring season at Coe Park! By the time you get this issue of the newsletter, the spring programs will have just gotten underway. After the recent rains, the wild flowers are putting on a fantastic display of colors. This is our busiest time of the year, since everyone enjoys taking a hike or a stroll to see the tiny purple mouse ears or the shooting stars. Join a volunteer on a walk to look at wildflowers, or go on a hike or backpack trip to explore a part of the park you may not know, or attend an interpretive program on Saturday evenings.

We were excited to see that Proposition 12, known as the Parks Bond Act, was passed by over 60 percent of the voters in the March 7th election. This was the first parks bond act to be passed in twelve years, and Governor Davis has stated that it is the single largest parks bond act in the history of the nation. In Kay Robinson's article on page 7 of this issue, she mentions a number of projects at Coe Park, including the expansion of the Visitor Center, that might be candidates for the use of these funds.

We are pleased to announce that the long-awaited third edition of the *Trails of Henry W. Coe State Park*, written by Winslow Briggs, will soon be available for sale in the Visitor Center. It has been ten years since the last edition was produced. This volume has information about all trails that are within a day's hike of the Visitor Center plus drawings of animal tracks that might be seen on the trails. Winslow will autograph copies of this book on Memorial Day Monday (May 29) at the Visitor Center.

There are a number of popular activities coming up that you won't want to miss, but you will need to sign up for them early. I hope you submitted your application for the Coe Backcountry Weekend that will take place on April 15–16. This event is very popular, and, for the past several years, entrance has been by random draw only. And celebrate Mother's Day at Coe Park; this event is also very popular and sells out well in advance.

We hope that there will be some activity at Coe this spring that you will enjoy! If you would like to see additional activities provided, let us know what they are (and, better yet, help us organize them!). See you at the park!

PRA Annual Meeting a Success!

by Barbara Bessey

The annual meeting of the Pine Ridge Association was held this year in Morgan Hill on February 5. Barbara Bessey opened the Pine Ridge Association portion of the meeting. She introduced the members of the Board of Directors. The officers of the Board of Directors for 2000 are Barbara Bessey, Chair; Kate Hager, Vice Chair; Winslow Briggs, Secretary; and Dennis Pinion, Treasurer (appointed and a nonvoting member). The other board members are Ann Briggs, Kevin Gilmartin, David Perrin, Derek Smith (Uniformed Volunteer Committee Chair), and Libby Vincent. Barbara Bessey then briefly summarized the mission of the PRA, which includes the promotion of interpretive services at Coe Park. Ann Briggs gave examples of some of the interpretive programs supported by the PRA over the past year. Barbara indicated that some of the most popular events, such as the Mother's Day Breakfast or the Garage Sale, were the brainchild of a member who conceived of the idea and implemented it. Dennis Pinion summarized the financial status of the organization; approximately $175,000 has been raised to support the expansion of the Visitor Center.

The meeting of the PRA uniformed volunteers was held next. Derek Smith, Chair of the Uniformed Volunteer Committee, stated that the number of active volunteers is over 130. These volunteers donated 20,000 hours in 1999. The uniformed volunteers were extremely active during the year, as evidenced by the large number of award presentations that followed.

Eighteen new volunteers graduated from the training program and became trainees: Jeri Allen, Norm Berube, Stephanie Charles, Mark Deger, Emil Frates, Rob Glover, Jodie Keahey, Linda Keahey, Lesley McDermott, Thomas McDermott, Iris Schmandle, Kit Schmandle, Owen Shimokawa, Derek Smith, Ian Stevenson, Corrie Vincent, Roger Winters, and Patty Woods.

Fifteen trainees, who had completed the requirements of the training program and had served 50 or more hours, were promoted to full volunteer status: Connie Blanchard, Elna Cunningham, Michael Donohue, Dave Flack, Patty Flack, Greg Linden, Marcia Linden, Dave Raiman, John Rapp, Pat Scharfe, Patti Shimokawa, Heike Stabenow, Rainer Stabenow, Michael Stone, and Joyce Taylor.

A multipurpose tool set that could be worn on a belt was 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 Coe Backcountry Weekend event, presenting programs to visitors, leading interpretive walks). This year, an unprecedented number of fifty-nine volunteers were eligible to receive this award: Everett Allen, Azz Azzarello, Chere Bargar, Joseph Belli, Barbara Bessey, Connie Blanchard, Lee Blanchard, Judy Breckling, Ann Briggs, Winslow Briggs, Susan Cheu, Elna Cunningham, Sean Davani, Michael Donohue, Phyllis Drake, Sharry Dunn, Stew Eastman, Tim Fast, Carolyn Fatooh, Fitz Fitzharris, Dave Flack, Sheila Flodberg, Bill Frazer, Kevin Gilmartin, Teddy Goodrich, Kate Hager, Larry Haimowitz, Don Holmes, David Hornby, Millicent Kellogg, Bonnie Lemons, Don Mason, Jim Mason, Judy Mason, Margaret Mary McBride, Mike Meyer, David Perrin, Lois Phillips, Dennis Pinion, John Prior, Barbara Radd, Don Savant, Pat Scharfe, Sandy Sill, Lee Sims, Martie Sinclaire, Toni Sousa, Heike Stabenow, Rainer Stabenow, Richard Stone, Kitty Swindle, Marlene Testaguzza, Lisa Thornquist, Jim Tuomey, Nancy Valencia, Bev VanderWeide, Chris Weske, Bill Workman, and Libby Vincent.

Six 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: Susan Cheu, Aileene Edsinger, Larry Edsinger, Kate Hager, Sandi Stevenson, and Bonnie Stromberg.

Thirteen volunteers received special recognition for the tremendous numbers of hours they have spent on Coe Park volunteer activities. Between them, they have donated over 39,000 hours to the park! Barbara Gregory volunteered 1,000 hours of service. Winslow Briggs, Phyllis Drake, Dennis Pinion, John Prior, and Chris Weske each volunteered 2,000 hours of service. Judy Breckling, Lee Sims, and Jim Tuomey each volunteered 3,000 hours of service. Don Holmes and Roberta Wright each volunteered 4,000 hours of service. Ruby Domino volunteered 5,000 hours of service. And Everett Allen has volunteered 6,000 hours.

Kay Robinson, Park Superintendent for the Coe Sector, made a special presentation to those individuals who had donated 200 hours or more within the past year. Each received a free annual pass to state parks in California. Receiving the award were Everett Allen, Azz Azzarello, Chere Bargar, Barbara Bessey, Connie Blanchard, Judy Breckling, Ann Briggs, Winslow Briggs, Julie Chase, Ruby Domino, Phyllis Drake, Stew Eastman, Carolyn Fatooh, Sheila Flodberg,, Bill Frazer, Teddy Goodrich, Larry Haimowitz, Don Holmes, Millicent Kellogg, Irwin Koff, Janet Koff, Don Mason, Jim Mason, Judy Mason, Mike Meyer, Matt Pauly, David Perrin, Dennis Pinion, John Prior, Barbara Radd, Don Savant, Lee Sims, Martie Sinclaire, Toni Sousa, Kitty Swindle, Marlene Testaguzza, Joan Throgmorton, Jim Tuomey, Libby Vincent, Chris Weske, and Roberta Wright.

The Uniformed Volunteer Committee's Golden Bear Award for exceptional service was presented to three deserving individuals this year: Marlene Testaguzza, Joan Throgmorton, and Libby Vincent. **Marlene Testaguzza** became a volunteer in 1981. She has volunteered 2,000 hours of service; she donated over 200 hours in 1999. She has given slide programs on the four seasons in the park, her pictures are on display in the Visitor Center, and she keeps the freeze-dried animals on display free of pests. She built the interpretive displays in the interpretive room, which is below the museum area. She also was a driving force behind the popular Coe Connections School Program, which will involve over 26 bookings this year. **Joan Throgmorton** became a volunteer in 1985. She has volunteered 3,000 hours; she donated 240 hours in 1999. She has participated on the Trails Advisory Committee, and she has been very active in the Mounted Assistance Unit. She has developed the check-out ride procedures, she has participated in the Volunteer Training on the annual ride-alongs to the back country, and she participated in the Hunting Hollow resource inventory. She has also been on numerous search-and-rescue rides for lost riders and horses in the park. **Libby Vincent** became a volunteer in 1992. She donated over 300 hours in 1999, bringing her total hours of service to 1,945. She has been on the PRA Board of Directors, serving as Vice Chair for two years. She leads hikes for the public, she does foot patrols, she has staffed the Hunting Hollow entrance, worked on trails, assisted with the Mother's Day breakfast and TarantulaFests, and has participated in the annual training ride-alongs for new volunteers. Last year, she received the special Volunteer Award given by the State Department of Parks and Recreation.

This year, a new award was given to three individuals who have participated in the volunteer program for twenty years. They were part of the first class of volunteers in 1980: Teddy Goodrich, Lee Sims, and Gary Keller. All three have been extremely active in the association over these years and involved in so many activities that it is difficult to single out a few highlights of their careers. **Teddy Goodrich**, the association's historian, has written many articles for *The Ponderosa* on the early years of the park history. She has interviewed many of the individuals whose lives intersected with the park in those early years. **Lee Sims** may be best known for having the idea of a Mother's Day Breakfast and implementing it, but he has also participated in training new volunteers, and he has been active in many of the association's activities. **Gary Keller** has been involved with the training of the new volunteers; he even brought some of his own pet snakes to a training class so that the volunteers could get an "up close and personal look" at a king snake that they might see in the park. He has also spent many hours keeping the association's computer together, upgrading software when needed, and backing up the files. They will receive a specially created gold pin that has the pine tree logo on it with "20 years of service" under it.

Kay Robinson announced that **Barbara Bessey** and **Kevin Gilmartin** were this year's recipients of the state's award honoring volunteers who have contributed much to state parks. They have been part of the uniformed volunteer program since 1989. They are both on the Board of Directors; Kevin was secretary for four years and chair for two years, and Barbara is currently the chair. They both have been active in the training of new volunteers by putting on training about bird identification, they were part of a team that developed a training manual for new volunteers, and they also put on evening slide programs for the public. They are co-editors of *The Ponderosa*, the Association's newsletter, and they each have written numerous articles for the newsletter.

Kay Robinson also presented a special award to **Judy Breckling**. Judy has spent many hours working on the Coe Park web site. She has included pictures of wildflowers that visitors are likely to see at the park (taken by PRA member Dave Hildebrand), pictures and sounds of birds that are likely to be in Coe, and she is continually looking for additional interpretive information to add, so that visitors to the site will learn new things. Check it out: www.coepark.parks.ca.gov.

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 Barbara Bessey and Kevin Gilmartin, went to **Dennis Pinion** and **Barbara Radd.** Dennis and Barbara became uniformed volunteers in 1983. They each have donated approximately 2,000 hours of service. They often worked in the Visitor Center on holidays when no one else wanted to work there. They restocked the Visitor Center with juices and sodas over the years. They have helped with the Mother's Day Breakfast, the TarantulaFests, raffles, and art shows. Dennis wrote a chapter on conifers for the uniformed volunteer handbook; Barbara led wildflower walks for visitors. Barbara was treasurer for four years; Dennis is currently the association's treasurer. And Dennis was on the PRA Board of Directors for nine years, including serving as chair for two years and vice chair for two years.

Congratulations to all!

After the official awards were presented, the annual tradition of having some "fun" awards commenced. This year's Masters of Ceremony were Barry Breckling, Lee Sims, and Dave Flack. They delighted the attendees by honoring some of the volunteers, especially some of the new ones, with various amusing awards (something that they will remember for at least the next year!). The Tarantulas, consisting of Robert

George, Doug Meyers, Caree Gellinck, Dave Perrin, and Don Mason, played instruments and sang songs written about Coe Park by Carolyn Fatooh. The audience joined in, reading the words superimposed on beautiful images of Coe that were projected on a screen. Professional photographer Robert Buchner used some of his own photographs for this production, which he controlled using a laptop computer.

This year, there were two keynote speakers: Henry Coletto, a County Game Officer for 32 years, and Kelly Sorenson, a wildlife biologist associated with the Condor Project in California. **Henry Coletto** talked about the management of a number of animals that have been found in or near the park. Among them are the wild pigs. In 1912, wild pigs were brought into the eastern part of the United States from Germany for purposes of hunting. In 1925, they were introduced to the Carmel Valley. Today, wild pigs are in 41 of California's 58 counties. The fact that humans moved them around the state has created a big management problem today. Henry's department has tagged some animals and even put radio collars on them so that they could better understand their range and behaviors. Through these studies, they learned that pigs tend to have a fairly small home range, perhaps two to three miles in diameter. Some pigs grow to be 300 pounds, which is considered large. Sows can have as many as three litters a year, although one litter is more normal. Pigs are prone to tooth decay, which causes them to die of starvation. They tend to root under oak trees, looking for acorns. Little is known about how they impact the land, but it is believed that their rooting may displace the native species of grasses, allowing introduced annual grasses to take hold. Henry indicated that they have discovered that, if an acorn crop is poor, the pig populations tend to decrease.

Kelly Sorenson described some of the efforts to reintroduce the condor back into the wild. Ten thousand years ago, the condors ranged over California. Starting in 1972, condors declined rapidly, in part due to collections made by museums, shooting, and poisoning. The last wild condor was brought into captivity in 1987. Kelly described a condor as a huge turkey with wings. Condors can weigh up to twenty-three pounds as an adult and have a wing spread of nine and one-half feet. They have been observed to fly 150 miles in a single day. The population of condors is now up to 160 birds. Eggs are removed from nests and raised by a condor-looking puppet, so that the birds will not associate humans with food. After three months, they weigh around seventeen pounds. Six juvenile birds will be released in the Big Sur area this year, which will bring this population of wild birds up to fifteen. Supplemental food is provided for these young birds for several years after their release. Condors can live up to 50 years and maybe even longer. Kelly indicated that there will be a number of birds released in the near future in Santa Clara County, so that, one day, we might be able to see a condor flying over Coe Park!

After the meeting was adjourned, all members enjoyed a delicious luncheon catered by some of the uniformed volunteers including Phyllis Drake, Roberta Wright, Joan Throgmorton, Kitty Swindle, and Chere Bargar.

www.coepark.parks.ca.gov

For the past several years, Judy Breckling has served as the Webmaster for the Coe Park web site. If you haven't checked it out recently, do so now. In addition to providing application forms for the special events, such as the Coe Backcountry Weekend or the Mother's Day Breakfast, there is a lot of very interesting information on the site. For example, if you are interested in birds or bird songs and calls, check out the section entitled "Birds of Coe." There you will find a list of the birds commonly found in the park, plus links to pictures of the birds and links to the sounds that they make.

Or, if you prefer looking at wildflowers, check out the photographs taken by long-time supporter of the park, David Hildebrand. Just select what color of flower you are looking for or scroll through the common or scientific names of the flowers you are interested in to see pictures of them.

Recently, there has been interest in what butterflies are in Coe Park. Check out the latest site additions that include a list of butterflies and pictures of those most likely found in the park.

And, finally, for those of you who are photo afficionados, check out the section entitled "Coe Park Nature Photography Album." If you have a photograph that would look nice in our album, send it to Judy at *webmastr@coeparks.parks.ca.gov* so that she can make arrangements to add it to our collection.

New Edition of *Trails of Henry W. Coe*!

The long-awaited third edition of the *Trails of Henry W. Coe State Park* is now at the printers and should be available for purchase at the visitor center before the end of April. The second edition was published in 1990. The book, written by Winslow Briggs, covers all of the hiking trails that are accessible on foot within a day of the Coe Park Visitor Center. According to Winslow, "some of the trails are a little far out, such as the one to Hat Rock and back, which covers approximately 18 miles, so visitors should plan accordingly."

Some of the trail descriptions included in the book appeared initially as articles in *The Ponderosa* over the years. Discussing trails, while sounding glamorous, is also a lot of hard work. Winslow spent a lot of time hiking the trails, looking for new and interesting pieces of information to share. Similarly, to get the profiles for each trail, Robert Patrie painstakingly needed to hike them . . . again . . . and . . . again. A tough job, but we are glad that someone decided to do it!

This edition, which has almost twice the number of pages as the second edition, includes art work by Judy Mason, Barry Breckling, Saelon Renke, and Steven Fend. Photographs are by David Hildebrand and Winslow Briggs. Profiles of the trails are provided by Robert Patrie using the new technique of mapping using the global positioning system (GPS). Lee Sims, working with Winslow, submitted the printing project to a number of printers, looking for the best quality printing at the best price. We think you will be pleased with the results!

The Pine Ridge Association is pleased to present a book signing by Winslow Briggs at the visitor center on Memorial Day, Monday, May 29, from noon to 4 p.m. If you will have already purchased a copy of the book before then, bring it on May 29, and Winslow will autograph it for you. Copies of the book will also be available for purchase on May 29.

Congratulations, Winslow, for all of your perseverance over the last decade in researching the trails and preparing the updates for inclusion in this third edition!

> "Henry W. Coe State Park ... is your park. Explore it, enjoy it, and protect it. For future generations you can do nothing less."
>
> Winslow Briggs

Over the Hill and Still Walking

by Bonnie Lemons

Eighteen people walked the Blue Ridge loop on Sunday, March 19, in honor of those turning 50 this year. Two of the walkers (Anne Rosenzweig and Bonnie Lemons) are in that category. Three are younger (Carrie Gellink and Mark Deger and Stefan's friend Michael), and the rest are older, many of them over 60.

A toast to Dick Stone, Stefan Ignaczak, John Prior, Irwin Koff, Janet Koff, Tony Ferrari, Robb Most, Steve Jung, Don Savant, Judy Mason, Judy Breckling, Stefan's friend Gregorio, and Lee Sims. They showed it can be done with style, and they didn't seem that tired. One of them said the party after was harder on him than the hike.

It was a hike of 15.5, 16.5 or 17 miles, depending on the particular trails taken. Some went by the Flat Frog Trail, and some added the Cougar Trail.

Highlights of the hike included a huge, showy fuschia-flowering gooseberry on the Jackass Trail and the vast expanse of Indian warriors where Jackass Trail takes off from Blue Ridge. In fact, we all loved Jackass Trail.

Special thanks to Don Mason, who drove the support vehicle; Don Savant, who now has a muddier vehicle; John Prior, who heated up the soup, opened the potato chips, put the seafood chowder together, and popped the champagne corks; and Gary Keller, who hiked to Poverty Flat to meet the rest of us and provided the delicious French bread.

Worth a snapshot: Judy Breckling drinking her champagne with her feet in a tub of warm water, provided by our accommodating ranger.

Training on Bird Identification & Interpretation

If you would like to attend three morning training sessions on birds in Coe Park, please sign up. The training will be presented by Barbara Bessey and Kevin Gilmartin on three Sundays, **May 21, June 4, and June 11,** at the Coe Park visitor center. We will begin each session by taking a walk to identify birds by sight and sound. Then we will view slides, listen to bird calls, and discuss handouts. If you can't come to all the sessions, we will mail you the handouts for the sessions you missed. To sign up, send Kevin or Barbara your name, and if they don't already have it, your mailing address, telephone number, and e-mail address: 650/851-7813, KGilmartin @AIR.org, or BBessey@AIR.org.

Membership & Contributions through March 20

by Deborah Vajretti

We are pleased to welcome the **new members** listed below. Thank you for your support, and welcome to the Pine Ridge Association!

Vicky Mendenhall, Santa Cruz
John Fioretta, San Jose
Peter Drees, San Jose
John Benedict, Stockton
Jean Pinard, Morgan Hill
Everett E. Games, Vallejo

Leticia A. Burke, Gilroy
Jerel Steckling, Gustine
David and Susan Garretson, Jr.
Lee and Wini Jebian

We welcome the following new **life members:**

Mr. and Mrs. Albert I. Heckbert

Contributors to the Visitor Center Expansion Fund

Winslow and Ann Briggs
Chris MacIntosh
Jean Rusmore
Robert and Sharon Melton
Mike and Kathy Paivinen
Patricia M. Woods
Robert and Sara Rogallo
Luke and Tina Castell

Special Contributions

Lee and Wini Jebian

PRA Calendar

Saturday, April 8: The annual **Trails Day** at Coe Park. Help build and maintain trails in the park. For more information, call Doug Meyers at the Coe Sector office (408/848-4006). If you are interested in working on trails but are not sure what is involved, check out a brief description of trail work on the Coe Park website: *www.coepark.parks.ca.gov/trailwork.html.*

Saturday & Sunday, April 15–16. The **Coe Backcountry Weekend**. Entry to this very popular special event will again be by random draw. An application was sent to all PRA members with a deadline for submission of March 23.

Saturday, April 22: **Beginning Backpacking Class.** Learn how to backpack and then join Coe Park volunteers Irwin and Janet Koff on five backpacking weekends over the year. The beginning class will be held at Coe Park Headquarters from 9 a.m. to noon. Call them (408/293-8194) to sign up or to receive additional information.

Friday, April 28, to Sunday, April 30: **April Wildflower Weekend Backpack Trip.** You will set up camp at Poverty Flat. On Saturday, Irwin and Janet Koff will lead you on a moderately strenuous 9-mile loop up China Hole Trail, past the Lost Spring campsite, down Mahoney Meadows Road, and through the Narrows back to your campsite. Call them (408/293-8194) to sign up or to receive additional information about the trip.

Sunday, May 14: **The 16th Annual Coe Park Mother's Day Breakfast.** This is one of our most popular events, and it sells out early. Pamper yourself and your family in a lovely outdoor setting and be entertained by old-time violin and banjo music. Tickets will be available at the Visitor Center starting April 15. Applications are also available on the Coe Park web site. See the enclosed flyer for more details.

Friday, May 26, to Monday, May 29: **Memorial Day Weekend Backpack Trip.** You will set up camp at Pacheco Camp. For the next two days, Irwin and Janet Koff will lead you on day hikes to Mississippi, Coit, and Kelly Lakes and back to camp. Part of the hikes will be off the trail and somewhat rough. Call them (408/293-8194) to sign up or to receive additional information.

Monday, May 29: **Book signing of the new edition of the Trails of Henry W. Coe State Park.** Winslow Briggs will autograph his latest version of this long-awaited book from noon to 4 p.m. at the visitor center. See announcement on page 11 of this newsletter.

Saturday, June 17: **The Second Annual Hunting Hollow 10K Run and 5K Walk.** The Hunting Hollow setting provides a semi-shady, fairly flat run out to Wagon Road and back. A T-shirt is included with registration. For more information, call 408/353-5644.

Friday, June 30, to Tuesday, July 4: **July 4th Weekend Backpack Trip.** You will set up camp at Paradise Lake. On this strenuous five-day, four-night trip, Irwin and Janet Koff will take you to beautiful and remote areas of the Orestimba Wilderness. Call them (408/293-8194) to sign up or to receive additional information.

Sunday, September 24: **Coe Homecoming 2000.** Put this date on your calendar and help us celebrate the 25th anniversary of our association. Please call Lee Sims if you would like to help plan this event (650/726-7547).

purple mouse-ear

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Ann Briggs
Kevin Gilmartin
Dave Perrin
Libby Vincent

Dennis Pinion, Treasurer
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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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