The **Ponderosa**

The Pine Ridge Association Newsletter
Henry W. Coe State Park

Early Spring 2001

From under My Brim

by Barry Breckling

Jousting with Windmills

Some people visiting the park last summer asked, "Where's Barry?" Volunteers and staff would answer, "Who?" The person would try again with something like, "You know, that tall ranger." The reply would be, "Oh, him, haven't seen him all summer, he must be on vacation." Some people were getting a little suspicious, figuring that not even a public servant gets that much vacation.

Well, I am now free to let you know where I was last summer. I was working undercover from early June until the end of August for the Bay Area Researchers for Energy (BARE). In early June, while working on BARE projects, I uncovered a conspiracy that had gone unnoticed for well over 25 years. The BARE people decided that I would be the best person to infiltrate this conspiracy centered in the Central Valley of California. I spent the next three months in the dark alleys, pool halls, and smoky-the-beer joints of Modesto, Merced, Lodi, and Bakersfield. After only two weeks I became an accepted member of the Rip Off of Bay Area's Bountiful Energy Reserves Society (ROBBERS).

Their secret and insidious plan had been in operation for all those many years, with not a single person in the whole Bay Area becoming wise to what they were up to. Although my report is still not completed, I feel that the magnitude of the conspiracy is such that I must immediately and irrevocably expose this horrific plot.

Let me digress for a moment. You have probably driven over Altamont Pass or Pacheco Pass and seen those large "energy producing" windmills. "What a wonderful thing," I've thought everytime I passed their spinning arms. Such a creative and environmentally friendly idea, using the wind's energy to make electricity. You've probably thought the same thing. Well, just like you, I'd been duped all those years. Even though they keep building more and more windmills, we've been going deeper and deeper into an energy crisis. Doesn't that seem a little strange to you?

And then there are the statistics. Well, we don't even have to look at the statistics. I'm sure you've noticed that, as years have gone by, the Bay Area has had less and less summer fog. And, did you happen to drive through the Central Valley last summer? I'm sure you noticed that it was not really that hot, certainly not as hot as a few years ago, and the statistics say it was 10° cooler last summer than ten years ago. And if all this is not making the conspiracy clear enough to you, the next time you cross one of those passes, look at what direction those windmills are pointing!

Inside this issue . . .

Who ranched Pine Ridge before the Coes?

How do California newts keep from getting gobbled?

Introduction of Ranger Cameron Bowers

Invitation to join a hike around Mustang Peak

. . . and more!

Yes! These windmills are not producing electricity, they are *using* our Bay Area electricity to power giant fans that are pushing cool coastal air over the passes into what used to be the blistering hot Central Valley! And this is the real cause of our present energy crisis.

Wind powered generators in California are actually producing about one percent of the state's electrical needs, but like all forms of power production, even this "clean energy" has drawbacks. I find the windmills lining the ridges a little like billboards along a rural freeway, not a very attractive addition to the countryside. Also, the windmills are hazardous to birds. It is so much of a concern that a planned release of California Condors in our area has a proposal for including fake windmills in the bird's initial enclosures that would be equipped with shocking devises to teach the condors to avoid the structures.

We build dams to produce electrical energy and think what a wonderful thing we have done, but then we start seeing the effects downstream not only to fish but to the whole river and riparian ecosystem (not to mention the loss of beautiful canyons like the Hetch Hetchy). And eventually the dams become silted in and become useless.

A large portion of our energy is produced by generators using fossil fuels. Besides the obvious fact that fossil fuels are not a source of renewable energy, they pollute the air.

And so it seems that Pogo was correct, "We have met the enemy, and he is us." Maybe it will be that *Science* and modern technology will come up with new and better sources of electrical energy generation, but if we don't consider the environment—our very home the Earth—as we seek new methods of energy generation, we will be, to paraphrase a Native American view of modern society, putting our grandchildren in darkness to provide our children with light.

And then there is the other side of the coin. Sometimes *more* is not better. I certainly like lots of light at night, and then there are all those wonderful things that technology has given us: refrigerators, microwaves, televisions, computers, hair dryers, clocks on our coffee makers, you name it.

Tonight I think I might sit and read a book by the light of a new low-energy light bulb instead of watching TV, and I might go to bed early and get up and use (and enjoy) the environmentally friendly early morning sunlight that's usually shining an hour or two before I am. Maybe I'll unplug a couple of those electric clocks that I seem to see in every room and wait until I have a full load of dirty clothes before I do the wash. There's that bottle and even that sheet of paper that I threw in the garbage. I'll pull them out. Everything recycled saves energy. And I certainly have enough of my own energy to get off of my aesthetically pleasing easy chair and turn off the light I see burning in the bedroom, and why did I leave it on in the first place when I walked out of the room a half hour ago? The next time I leave a room, I'll remember to turn off the light on the way out.

I've been given my next assignment, and if you don't see too much of me this next summer, be assured that I'm not just on vacation. I'll be working hard to protect the people and the environment of the San Francisco Bay Area. BARE has received the naked truth, some startling inside information about another conspiracy. The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE, not to be confused with the local environmental group USATCOE) plans to move ahead with their plan to remove the Golden Gate Bridge and replace it with a dam. This will flood the Central Valley with water to a depth of over 800 feet, and with over 1,500 miles of shoreline, it will make a body of water larger than Lake Superior. Initial information is that urban planners, developers, and farmers from Southern California have joined with the Corps of Engineers to draw up these secret plans. The project will provide 800 million megawatts of electrical power for cities south of the Tehachapis, which will be about half of their needs for the year 2020, and 3 trillion acre-feet of water per year, which will be about a third of their need for 2020. If I'm not working undercover in Southern California this next summer, you can find me at my newly purchased house in the foothills (at about 850 feet elevation). I've always wanted lake-front property.

All I can say is keep the faith, do your best to conserve, and please toss this newsletter into your recycling bin as quickly as is possible as it will self-destruct in ten seconds.

The following website is a good source of answers to energy concerns and ways to conserve: *www.energy.ca.gov/flexyourpower.html.*

Boden and Company
by Teddy Goodrich

"Some surprise always lurks in the familiar, some bit of history we can appreciate only with the passing of time."
Paul Gruchow, *Boundary Waters*

It may come as a surprise to learn that Henry Coe was not the first rancher to settle at Pine Ridge. That distinction belongs to Wesley Boden and other members of his family, Boden and Company, who homesteaded much of what is now known as the "original Coe" land in the late 1800s.

Wesley Boden was born in Nodaway County, Missouri, in 1855 to Wilkinson and Harriet Jones Boden. Wilkinson died in 1862 while serving in the Union Army during the Civil War.

When Wesley was eighteen, he moved to Kansas, then to Nebraska, working as a cowboy and bronc buster. While he was living in Nebraska, he met Annie Post. They were married in North Loupe, Nebraska, in October 1880, and soon after their marriage, the young couple moved to California and settled on a ranch near Alum Rock Park.

In 1886, Wesley, Annie, and their young daughter, Mabel, arrived at Pine Ridge. Wesley filed a homestead claim on 143 acres that included the area now occupied by park headquarters.

Soon after, Wesley's mother, Harriet Hunt, once more a widow, his brother-in-law, Oscar Kaese, and Wesley's brother, Henry, filed adjoining claims. Together the family purchased adjoining land from other homesteaders until their combined land holdings grew to almost 1,500 acres and included a number of springs essential to a ranching operation.

Wesley built a three-room house, described by one of the witnesses who verified his claim as a "first class house." He built the white barn and some chicken houses, cleared the

Left to right: Millie Kaese, Annie Boden, Harriet Hunt, Mabel Boden, Oscar Kaese, Wesley Boden. Sometime in the late 1890s. Photo courtesy of Eleanor Dunton.

spring, improved the road, and put in fencing and a corral. His livestock consisted of five horses, a dozen head of cattle, and two hundred chickens. He had cleared a hundred acres on which he raised hay, a vegetable garden, and fruit trees.

Harriet Boden Hunt moved to Pine Ridge in August 1887. Within a year, she had replaced the small house homestead law required her to build in order to "prove up" on her claim with a larger, six-room, two-story house. Her home was located across the road from the Frog Lake backpacker's campsite. Harriet also had a barn, chicken house, and a small vineyard. She kept a dozen cattle, six horses, and seventy five chickens. The outstanding feature of her property was her orchard of 1,600 fruit trees. Of these today, only the trunk of a long-dead cherry tree remains.

Frog Lake was probably constructed during the Beach ownership of Pine Ridge in the late 1940s, so in Harriet's time, there was only a fine spring in the place now occupied by the lake. Below the face of the dam at Frog Lake are the remains of a rock enclosure that was a hog pen. It, too, may date from the Boden era.

Henry, Wesley's bachelor brother, settled on his claim in March 1887 in a small twelve-foot by fourteen-foot cabin.

The exact location of his cabin is unknown, though clues may be found in the description of his improvements; he "cleared the spring . . . and road" and provided a "water trough and pipes." Sada's spring, formerly known as Boden's spring, lies within Henry's claim. A road [now known as the Shortcut] passes close by; it was known in those days as the government trail because it provided access to remote public lands. Henry's cabin, shed, and corral probably stood on the flat area near the springs. His livestock consisted of six horses and one hundred head of cattle.

Oscar Kaese, Wesley's brother-in-law, kept a livery stable in Oakland before moving to Pine Ridge. The site of his cabin is more difficult to pinpoint. When he lived at Pine Ridge, the road that accessed his homestead [the road to Frog Lake that leaves Manzanita Point Road approx. ½ mile from headquarters] began approximately at the western edge of his claim, so his home was probably nearby. He moved onto his claim in August 1887 with his wife, Millie. His redwood cabin was small, only eleven by sixteen feet with two windows and a door, but the interior walls were lined with cloth and paper, a domestic touch probably provided by his wife. His claim also boasted several hundred fruit trees and five hundred grape vines. He raised chickens and claimed one-quarter interest in twenty-one horses and one hundred fifty head of cattle.

It is difficult to understand the sequence of events that began in January 1890, when Wesley deeded his mother his claim in return for $1,000 in gold coins. A year later, in March 1891, the remaining family members sold all their holdings to Andrew Johnson for $10, a large financial loss to each of them. A search for reasons brings a number of possibilities immediately to mind: drought, illness, or financial difficulties, but there may be a more ominous reason.

An interview was required of a homestead applicant when "proving up." When Oscar Kaese was questioned about absences from his claim, he twice replied that the absences were due to violence and threats of violence to his person by two men with neighboring claims. In a 1971 interview, Sada Coe Robinson alludes to this conflict and goes on to state, "They had a terrible war there. The hills were always full of wars."

The Pine Ridge Ranch would be sold again before it was purchased by the Coe brothers. A year after he acquired the property, Johnson sold the ranch to John and Priscilla Thomas—the price: $10. The Thomases, after another year had passed, sold Pine Ridge to Charles and Henry Coe—for $10.

After he left Pine Ridge, Wesley Boden made his way to San Joaquin County. He farmed and invested in real estate that would eventually become part of the city of Lodi. He died there in 1927, a well-known and respected member of the community.

I am indebted to Eleanor Dunton, widow of Wesley Dunton, Wesley Boden's grandson, for some of the information included in this article.

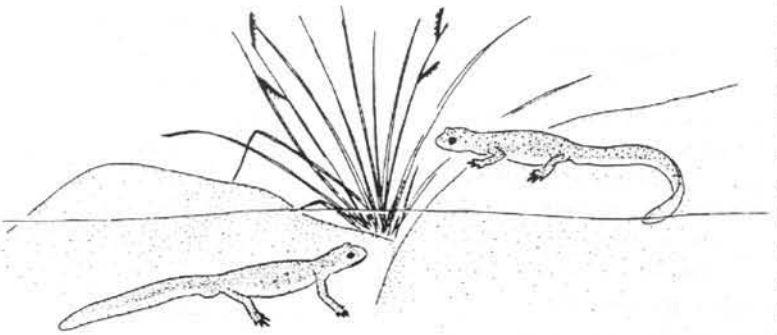
Salamander Meanderings, or the Return of the Newts

by Winslow Briggs

As you make your way along a wooded trail sometime after the first winter rains, keep your eyes open for the California newt, *Taricha torosa*. The animals are easy to recognize by their mostly brown backs and their bright orange legs and bellies. These little salamanders emerge from burrows and crevices in rocks to begin an odyssey that may last a couple of months. Although they are amphibians spending the first part of their lives as swimming larvae and must return to the water to reproduce, you may find them a mile or more from the nearest water. After the first rains, they ramble over the moist forest floor for a month or more dining happily on insects, earthworms, and other invertebrates that suit their taste. They appear completely oblivious to the streams where they eventually must go to reproduce.

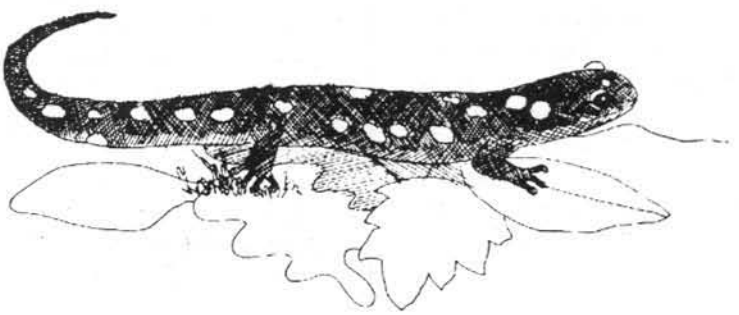
Finally, however, those that are reproductively mature head for their own home stretch of water. There they will mate,

and the female will lay eggs. These she most often attaches firmly to underwater vegetation. Both males and females then leave the water and return to the land to do a bit more rambling. However, as the rainfall declines with the advancing spring and the temperature climbs, they return to a moist burrow or a crevice. There they will be protected from dehydration by the summer sun and enter a dormant state that allows them to survive the hot dry season ahead.



It is well known that salmon have an unerring capacity to return from the open ocean and make their way, in some cases many hundreds of miles, upstream to their spawning grounds. They are capable of detecting subtle chemical differences in the water flowing out of different streams and somehow identify the stream and spawning grounds in which they originated. It is not as well known, however, that salamanders also return unerringly to within a few yards of where they originally swam as larvae before metamorphosing into the familiar four-legged amphibians we know. How good are they in finding their way? How exact is their homing instinct?

Some years ago Victor Twitty, a Stanford biologist, set out to find the answer. He set up a field laboratory near Pepperwood Creek in Sonoma County and began watching these fascinating animals. He marked them and followed them from one season to the next, and he quickly learned that they always returned to the same short stretch of stream. He then captured animals from the stream bank or from the stream itself at sites several hundred yards apart. These salamanders he placed in a raised box with a spiral ramp leading to an opening on the top. He had previously located the box midway between the two collecting sites. Around the box he had installed a large star-shaped fenced-in area, with a trap at the end of each point of the star. After releasing the animals into the box, he went back to the field station, had a good dinner (perhaps a bottle of wine as well) and a good night's sleep and let the animals wander where they wanted to. The next morning he inspected the various traps. To his astonishment, only animals collected upstream from the box were found crawling around in the trap at the point of the star directed upstream. Likewise, only animals collected downstream from the box were found in the trap at the point of the start directed downstream. Few if any salamanders were found in the traps at the other points of the star. If the collection sites were too far from the box sites, then the animals wandered in a more random fashion, in many cases failing to migrate in the direction from whence they had been transported. Clearly these salamanders could detect the proper site along the creek if they weren't moved too far away from it. In some cases this turned out to be as much as an astonishing 400 yards.



Were the different members of the same population communicating vocally with each other? ("Hey, Doris, I think we need to go north a few yards.") Hardly likely. Salamanders do not have voices. (Does that make one of them a mute newt? The vagaries of English spelling again: Couldn't that just as well be mewt newt? Or for that matter, mute nute?) There has to be some other kind of information they can use. Twitty determined that it was most likely their acute sense of smell that allowed them to recognize the complex odors wafting in from a specific segment of stream.

However, the problem was hardly completely solved. Twitty already had evidence that these animals could migrate enormous distances and still unerringly find their way to their own particular stretch of stream even though the above experiments suggested a limit near 400 yards beyond which their movements were random. He decided to test their long-distance homing abilities and transported several hundred animals to a stream far on the other side of a ridge rising 1,000 feet above Pepperwood Creek. None returned the same season, but the next season a few reappeared. The following season even more reappeared. What was astonishing was that virtually all of those that reappeared were found within a few yards of their home stretch of stream. The following year even more returned to their own home base and, again, there were only rare exceptions. Twitty estimated that most of these animals had to have traveled at least a mile to get to their final destination—perhaps a great deal more. It was likely that these critters were able to search patiently by wandering all over the wooded hillsides until they detected that partic-

ular combination of odors that they recognized. Only then did they return to the water.

During the course of their apparently nonchalant meanderings (should that be salameanderings), you would expect these newts to be easy prey for predators. They are hardly speedsters (compare their languid wanderings with those of a startled lizard, for example), they can't hide inside a shell (the way tortoises do), and they aren't known for their viciously defensive nature. Likewise the egg clusters appear to be extremely vulnerable to predators. Somehow, however, the species survives. It turns out that the California newt (as opposed to other salamanders) has evolved two astonishing chemical defenses. The adult secretes a toxin from its skin that is a cardiac poison, capable of stopping a predator's heart. The larvae on the other hand secrete an extremely potent nerve toxin, one that brings on paralysis to the unsuspecting predator. Curiously, other salamanders appear not to use these chemical defenses. It is only the California newts belonging to a single family (*Salamandrinaae*) that are endowed with both of these potent weapons. Needless to say, they are immune to their own toxins.

When chemists began determining the chemical nature of the nerve toxin, they found that it was identical to the toxin produced by a notorious fish family. The puffer fish, or "fugu," from Japan manufactures exactly the same toxin! Other puffer fish from all over the world make the same toxin, but the fish from Japan is probably the best known. Although people eat the flesh of the puffer fish, the chefs must be licensed to prepare it for human consumption and must follow extremely rigorous procedures. Even so there are occasional deaths from puffer fish toxin. Whereas Twitty and his chemist colleagues were fully prepared to name the toxin "tarichatoxin" after the friendly California newt, they found that it was already named tetrodotoxin after the deadly puffer fish family *Tetrodontoidae*.

Despite this chemical arsenal, there are apparently fish, snakes, and other predators that are either immune or at least highly resistant to these toxins. Garter snakes do occasionally eat salamanders, and other predators do as well, both without dire effect. Other predators have simply learned to avoid these little creeping poison packages. For example, many western snakes, when offered a juicy salamander, will simply turn up their noses and slither away. Related eastern snakes, lacking the same sophisticated knowledge, happily make a meal out of the newt, usually with fatal consequences. As is so often the case, animals anxious for an easily captured protein source have evolved ways around the defenses set up against them. California newts may survive more than ten years as adults, so it is a safe bet that at least the adult's toxin is a significant deterrent. Less is known about the effectiveness of the larval toxin.

Since other salamanders don't make these toxins (or make only extremely minor amounts) and somehow manage to survive, it remains a curious evolutionary puzzle: How did two such distantly related animals as the California newt and the Japanese puffer fish both acquire the complicated biochemical machinery to manufacture tetrodotoxin. Beyond that enigma, why are they the *only* two animals known to have done so?

Park News

by Kay Robinson
Park Superintendent

As I promised last time, I am proud to introduce Cameron Bowers, our new State Park Ranger. Cameron comes to us most recently from Fremont Peak State Park. However, he is not a newcomer to the area. He was raised in the south bay area, went to school at Gavilan College, and his wife is from Morgan Hill. He even worked as a Park Aid for Coe State Park in the early 1990s before moving on to County Parks. See Cameron's own article below.

Plans are progressing well for the Major Capital Outlay project for development at the Dowdy Ranch. C + D Engineering, Inc., of Monterey has been selected as the contractor for the preparation of conceptual drawings for the development. They have been on board since early December and have already presented to us several alternatives for our consideration. The plans will show traffic flow (road placement), parking areas for 10 truck-and-trailer rigs and 75 single vehicles, three group picnic areas with ramadas (which can be used by either groups or individuals), a combination visitor reception/office building that will also house a studio-type residential unit for seasonal help or camp host, three small restroom buildings, one of which will have showers, and interpretive panels/displays.

It has been decided that the two existing modular buildings will be removed and the one combination reception/office/residence building will be built at a lower elevation, closer to the parking areas. We also have the blessing and cooperation of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) to do a prescribed burn of the buildings as a training exercise. This will necessitate some trimming of the two live oaks behind the modulars, which will be done by contract. Removal of the resulting residue from the burn will occur next year when funds are available for any needed demolition and construction.

The parking and driving areas will be in three areas: the meadow currently used for parking, the upper road behind the modulars, and the knoll to the north of the concrete pad

(northwest of the old barn)—well away from and north of the cultural site of the barn and old housesite and away from the environmentally sensitive wetlands sloping downhill from the lower road. The siting of the facilities, of course, is contingent upon the findings of the Project Evaluation Form (PEF) —the review of cultural and natural resources in the area. The results of the PEF could be a declaration of Exemption (no significant impact), Negative Declaration (significant mitigatable impact), or Environmental Impact Report (EIR, potentially significant non-mitigatable impact).

Our plan is for this facility to be open to the public more or less six months of the year—the dry season, roughly May through October. There will be minor upgrades to the road such as bank stabilization, addition of aggregate base, and control of water run-off. The parking and driving areas at the Dowdy ranch will be an asphalt-concrete (macadam) surface. This will be healthier for the environment by reducing dust, providing a firm surface in times of minor precipitation during use periods, and reducing the noise of traffic. If, in the future, we are able to provide more year-round access, the surfacing done now will come in good stead. As the months progress, I will keep you informed of the progress of the plans.

Hello All!

by Cameron Bowers

Hey to the Coe volunteers, PRA members, and state parks people I have yet to meet.

I am one of the new Backcountry Rangers at Henry W. Coe State Park. My name is Cameron Bowers (legal name is Newton Cameron Bowers IV). I have been a State Park Ranger for almost six years. I started my state parks career here at Henry W. Coe State Park back in 1992 or '93 as a seasonal Park Aid for all of 1½ months. I told Barry Breckling that I would be back to work with him someday as a park ranger.

Some of the many jobs and experiences I had prior to working at Coe as a Park Aid were: Crew Leader in the California Conservation Corps, Intern with Department of Fish and Game at a hatchery in Mammoth Lakes, and Helitack Firefighter with California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) in Los Gatos, which was how I met my wife, Jeana. Her sister was our engineer. When I left CDF to work at Coe as a Park Aid, most of my Captains and fellow firefighters were a bit confused about my career choice. Looking back, that month at Coe solidified my desire to be a State Park Ranger. After my short stay at Coe, I spent one summer as a seasonal ranger for the City of San Jose (really a glorified security guard) and two years as a seasonal ranger for Santa Clara County Parks at Coyote Lake. Meeting Jeana settled me down a bit, and I stayed at one school long enough to miss playing football. It was at Gavilan where I met Kay's husband, Coach Ted Robinson. He must have mentioned an article highlighting my adventures and many jobs to his wife, who remembered my short stay at Coe, because Kay sent Ted a flier for the Ranger Cadet Program. I did not think I would get in without my degree (though I did have close to 200 college units), but I applied anyway. And while starting my first semester at Humboldt State, I got accepted into the Academy. *Thanks, Kay!* Since then I have worked at Will Rogers State Historic Park, Leo Carrillo, Pt. Mugu, Turlock Lake State Recreational Area, and Fremont Peak in the Gavilan District, which is a prerequisite for working at Henry W. Coe State Park. ☺

The park has grown significantly, but the volunteers and staff are still as I remembered them: friendly, helpful, and most of all caring, both for the park and for the public. *Wow! I can't believe I made it back, Barry!*

Coe ♫

by Barbara Bessey, President, PRA

Spring is always a busy and wonderful time of year at Coe Park; there are activities for everyone. On March 10, we launch our spring interpretive programs. These provide opportunities to get to know more about the plants and animals and cultural history of Coe. Generally, longer hikes are offered on Saturdays, and two wildflower strolls are offered on Sundays. The Sunday strolls are not strenuous, nor fast-paced (let's face it, plants do not move very fast!). And there are interpretive programs on Saturday evenings at the headquarters.

For those of you who would like to get to know more about the backcountry areas of Coe, check out the hike to Mustang Peak or the Coe Backcountry weekend. Both of these events allow you to enter the park from Route 152, which puts you much closer to your destination than if you started hiking from the Visitor Center.

If you are interested in building trails, join us for our Trails Day work in the spring and fall. Even if you know nothing about trail building, get involved; experienced trail crew leaders will show you what you need to do, and, by the end of the day, you will be discussing the fine points of McLeods with the best of them!

We are pleased to have two Earth Day projects this year. Funded by the California State Parks Foundation, one project will consist of removing barbed wire from the area near Kaiser-Etna Road, and the other will involve placement of recycling containers and removal of exotic plants around the headquarters. We need many pairs of hands for each project, so join in and make a difference!

Please call the Park Headquarters at 408/779-2728 to receive additional information about any of these activities.

Don't forget that the vehicle parking fee at the Coe Headquarters has been decreased to $2; the day use vehicle parking fee at Hunting Hollow is only $1. Joe Hardcastle, the District Superintendent, told us at our Annual Meeting in February that this is a good time for state parks. With the reduction in fees, more people are visiting state parks than before. And, with greater fiscal resources, the state is in a better position to maintain and support the environments in parks. But, he cautioned, times can change, and he challenged all of us to "remain as vibrant as you are and be ready to serve as advocates for state parks."

See you at the park!

Mustang Peak Hike: A Chance to Satisfy Your Curiosity about the East Side of the Park

by Larry Haimowitz

The annual PRA "get-to-know your park" hike gives volunteers and PRA members the chance to experience distant Coe backcountry destinations without having to backpack. This year's hike will take us up Long Ridge, over Mustang Peak, and into the Coon Creek drainage. The hike is open to all volunteers and PRA members.

Hike Preview: Early morning December 31, I stopped for lunch goodies at Safeway Morgan Hill on my way to meet Thom Parks at Bell Station (for a preview hike) and who should I find? Lost puppy (and volunteer) Ian Stevenson, who eagerly followed us to the trailhead. We left one pickup at the Pacheco Creek culvert and took the other to Long Ridge Road (near Red Creek on the Orestimba). This starts out with a pretty easy climb and includes a view of Jackrabbit Lake. The trail leveled out (relatively speaking) at the top of the ridge, rolling up and down until we reached the final ascent of Mustang Peak. I do not use the word "ascent" lightly; if you were to take this grade in a vehicle, you would be looking up at the sky. Fortunately, it's pretty short, just a few hundred yards, to the top. The views into and out of the park are . . . well, you come along and experience them for yourself. Coming off of Mustang Peak on County Line Road, we hang a left at Dutch's Trail toward Purple Pond and walk along an easy, grass-covered ridge until we leave the trail for the pond. Back to Dutch's Trail, which delivers us to Tie Down Trail, Tie Down on to Pacheco Creek, and out to our vehicle at the culvert.

Total distance for this hike is 10 to 11 miles. Although a little shorter than the Robinson Creek hike, it is more strenuous. If there are takers, we will also have an alternate, less demanding hike.

When and Where: The hike will take place Saturday, March 24. We will car pool from the Dowdy at 8 a.m. to the trailhead. It's important to leave early, because this is a long hike, and it is a long drive to the trailhead. We need to leave vehicles at the culvert to take drivers back to their vehicles after the hike. Vehicles do not have to be 4wd but do need high clearance to drive beyond the culvert.

There will be a campout at the Dowdy Friday and Saturday nights. If you do not plan to camp out on Friday night, you need to be at the Dowdy by 8 a.m. Saturday morning. Call me, Larry Haimowitz (408/778-6088) or e-mail *Misnomer9@aol.com* for details and to sign up. We need to know how many are going so we can plan for vehicles and entry at Bell Station. Hope to see you there!

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 3. 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 2001 are Barbara Bessey; Chair; Kate Hager, Vice Chair; Winslow Briggs, Secretary; and Dennis Pinion, Treasurer. The other board members are Ann Briggs, Kevin Gilmartin, David Perrin, and Derek Smith (Uniformed Volunteer Committee Chair). Barbara Bessey briefly summarized the mission of the PRA, which includes the promotion of interpretive services at Coe Park. Examples were provided of some of the interpretive programs supported by the PRA over the years. Dennis Pinion summarized the financial status of the organization; it is financially very strong, and almost $200,000 has been raised to support the expansion of the Visitor Center. Barbara also mentioned that the PRA had been honored by the California League of Park Associations (CaLPA) as being the Association of the Year for 2000. The PRA was subsequently invited to co-host CaLPA's 2001 annual convention, which will be held in Morgan Hill in October. In talking with the other association members of CaLPA, and in preparing forms to submit to the State, our designations of "Chair" and "Vice Chair" were always in need of an explanation. At the January meeting of the Board of Directors, the Board voted to change these designations to "President" and "Vice President," pending approval of the membership. This item was brought before the membership at the annual meeting for a vote, and it was passed unanimously.

The meeting of the uniformed volunteers was held next. Derek Smith, Chair of the Uniformed Volunteer Committee, stated that the number of active volunteers is over 140. These volunteers donated 18,741 hours in 2000. The uniformed volunteers were extremely active during 2000, as evidenced by the large number of award presentations that followed.

Twenty-four new volunteers graduated from the training program and became trainees: Heather Ambler, Einar Anderson, Jim Bailey, Priscilla Campbell, Jim Citta, Pat Dallam, Neal Grover, Brian Guina, Holly Harper, Mike Harper, Pete Henshaw, Nancy Hildebrandt, Sharon Holland, Susan Hund, Dan McCranie, Mike McGlashan, Sean Messina, Greg Scott, Lykke Smith, Erika Sutkin, Howard Sutkin, Nancy Thomas, Andrea Van Cuylenburg, and Paul Yellow Horse.

Fifteen trainees, who had completed the requirements of the training program and had served 50 or more hours, advanced to Volunteer status: Jeri Allen, Norm Berube, Stephanie Charles, Mark Deger, Rob Glover, Jodie Keahey, Linda Keahey, Iris Schimandle, Kit Schimandle, Patti Shimokawa, Ian Stevenson, Michael Stone, Corrie Vincent, Roger Winters, and Patty Woods.

An insulated coffee latte mug with the logo of the association 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 interpretive programs to visitors, leading interpretive walks). This year, fifty-one volunteers were eligible to receive this award: Everett Allen, Chere Bargar, Norm Berube, Barbara Bessey, Judy Breckling, John Briese, Ann Briggs, Winslow Briggs, Michael Brookman, Stephanie Charles, Susan Cheu, Sean Davani, Phyllis Drake, Stew Eastman, Bill Frazer, Kevin Gilmartin, Rob Glover, Teddy Goodrich, Kate Hager, Larry Haimowitz, Don Holmes, Gary Keller, Janet Koff, Irwin Koff, Don Mason, Jim Mason, Judy Mason, Margaret Mary McBride, Mike Meyer, David Perrin, Lois Phillips, John Prior, John Rapp, Don Savant, Sandy Sill, Lee Sims, Martie Sinclaire, Rob Sinclaire, Derek Smith, Toni Sousa, Richard Stone, Kitty Swindle, Joyce Taylor, Marlene Testaguzza, Lisa Thornquist, Nancy Valencia,

Bev VanderWeide, Corrie Vincent, Libby Vincent, Patty Woods, and Bill Workman.

Nine 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: Lee Blanchard, Sean Davani, Bonnie Lemons, Mike Meyer, Henry Rocha, Don Savant, Sandy Sill, Joanie Smith, and Lisa Thornquist.

Seventeen volunteers received special recognition for the tremendous numbers of hours they have spent on Coe Park volunteer activities. Between them, they have donated over 38,000 hours to the park! Julie Chase, Carolyn Fatooh, Mike Meyer, Matt Pauly, Lois Philips, and Toni Sousa each volunteered 1,000 hours of service. Ann Briggs, Stew Eastman, Larry Haimowitz, Janet Koff, Irwin Koff, and Libby Vincent each volunteered 2,000 hours of service. Barbara Bessey, John Prior, and Kitty Swindle each volunteered 3,000 hours of service. Jim Mason volunteered 4,000 hours of service. And Everett Allen has volunteered more than 7,000 hours!

A special silver pin with the association's logo was presented to those individuals who have participated in the volunteer program for ten or more years. These thirty-two individuals are Everett Allen, Chere Bargar, Barbara Bessey, Judy Breckling, Robert Buchner, Ruby Domino, Ron Erskine, Bill Frazer, Robert George, Kevin Gilmartin, Larry Haimowitz, Don Holmes, Janet Koff, Bonnie Larsen, Jim Mason, Don Mason, Judy Mason, Celia McCormack, Dave Perrin, Dennis Pinion, Barbara Radd, Martie Sinclaire, Rob Sinclaire, Richard Stone, Marlene Testaguzza, Joan Throgmorton, Carolyn Tucker, Nancy Valencia, George Van Gordon, Sandy Voechting, Chris Weske, and Roberta Wright. Since this was a new award this year, pins were also presented to those individuals who received recognition for their twenty years of participation in the volunteer program: Phyllis Drake, Teddy Goodrich, Barbara Gregory, Gary Keller, Jim Mansel, Karen Mansel, and Lee Sims.

Last year, for the first time, a special gold pin was presented to those individuals who have participated in the volunteer program for twenty or more years. This year, pins were presented to Phyllis Drake, Barbara Gregory, Jim Mansel, and Karen Mansel.

Kay Robinson, Park Superintendent for the Coe Sector, announced that a coffee mug was being given to every volunteer as thanks for their effort. She 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. Thirty-four individuals received the award this year: Everett Allen, Richard Auser, Chere Bargar, Norm Berube, Barbara Bessey, Judy Breckling, Ann Briggs, Winslow Briggs, Ruby Domino, Phyllis Drake, Stew Eastman, Bill Frazer, Caree Gellinck, Teddy Goodrich, Larry Haimowitz, Don Holmes, Irwin Koff, Janet Koff, Bill Levey, Jim Mason, Celia McCormack, Mike Meyer, Bob Patrie, Matt Pauly, David Perrin, John Prior, Don Savant, Lee Sims, Martie Sinclaire, Derek Smith, Toni Sousa, Kitty Swindle, Marlene Testaguzza, and Roberta Wright. Kay indicated that these thirty-four individuals contributed a total of 12,513 hours of service.

The Uniformed Volunteer Committee's Golden Bear Award for exceptional service was presented to two deserving individuals this year: **Winslow and Ann Briggs**. They have both served on the PRA Board of Directors; Winslow has been secretary of the Board for the past several years. They are also very active on the Trails Advisory Committee, the Visitor Center Expansion Committee, the Coe Park Map Committee, and the Coe Backcountry Weekend Steering Committee. They have installed signs throughout the park, participated in the ride-along training for Uniformed Volunteers, and have helped train new volunteers in Visitor Center procedures. Last year, Winslow published a new edition of his popular book on the trails of Coe Park. Between the two of them, they have donated more than 4,000 hours of service to the park. In addition, they were awarded the prestigious Dewitt Award by the State DPR for all of their contributions to the park.

Kay Robinson announced that **Jim Mason** was this year's recipient of the state's award honoring volunteers who have contributed much to state parks. Jim has been a member of the uniformed volunteer program for over fifteen years. He served as treasurer of the Pine Ridge Association for over ten years, he has conducted training in first aid for volunteers for more than a decade, he has served as the PRA Bookstore Manager and Bookstore Buyer, he has assisted Ranger Barry Breckling with the training of volunteers on how to track lost people, and he has most recently become a State Park Aid.

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 **Kay Robinson.** She received a standing ovation when the award was announced. Kay has supported the volunteer program and the PRA board in all of the activities that they put on. In addition to her support of the park as part of her "day" job as the Park Superintendent, she has also volunteered many hours of personal time. She has been actively involved in the Coe Backcountry steering committee, the Trails Advisory Committee, the committee to plan and expand the Visitor Center, the Coe Park Map Committee, an organizer of the Redfern resource inventory, and an active participant in the training of the uniformed volunteers. *Kay embodies the spirit of state park associations and state agen-*

cies working together to form meaningful and productive partnerships.

After all of the serious awards were presented, humorous awards were announced. This year's award presentations were hosted by the very creative and funny Barry Breckling and Lee Sims, with assistance from Bonnie Lemons. Traditionally, some of the awards go to the new uniformed volunteers who have entered the program as a way of introducing them to the rest of the volunteers, as well as to other more experienced volunteers who have distinguished themselves in some amusing ways over the past year. A good time was had by all!

Congratulations to all!

This year's speaker was Margareta Sequin, an organic chemist from San Francisco State University. The title of her presentation was "Molecules of Nature—a walk with a nature-loving chemist." Margareta started with the chemical representation of the photosynthesis process, the important process in plants that involves light, chlorophyll, and water to produce oxygen, the building block of life. Lest the audience get too stressed out by the chemical notations, she hastened to put up pictures of soothing flower and plant slides, many of which were images that could be found in Coe Park. By alternating chemical representations and slides of beautiful and colorful plants, she introduced us to the anthocyanins (the reddish-purple pigments, such as found in Indian warriors), caratonoids (the yellow, orange, and reddish pigments most commonly found in stamens), and flavonoids (the white, ivory, and yellowish pigments found in buttercups and milkmaids that may also show up in ultraviolet light). She then showed us how the chemical composition of the pleasant odors differs from that of unpleasant ones (such as the smell of the wild currant) or those that are both repulsive in terms of smell and taste (such as the organic compounds containing sulphur or hydrogen-cyanides). In addition to the odors of some plants being strong or unpleasant, the scents may serve to protect the plants from attacks from insects or animals (consider the acorns that are full of tannin, which is strongly acidic or bitter tasting, or the milkmaids that have sulphuric compounds that provide them with a natural insect repellent). Margareta did an excellent job of explaining the world of chemistry in a way that all of us could enjoy.

After the meeting was adjourned, all attendees enjoyed a delicious luncheon catered by the Uniformed Volunteer Committee consisting of Phyllis Drake, Roberta Wright, Kitty Swindle, Chere Bargar, and others.

PRA Calendar

Saturday & Sunday, March 10 & 11: The start of the **Spring Programs at Coe Park**. See the enclosed program schedule for more details.

Saturday & Sunday, March 24 & 25: **Mustang Peak Hike weekend.** See the article on page 8 for more details about this hike.

Saturday, April 14: The 2001 **Beginning backpacking class** given by Coe Park Volunteers Irwin and Janet Koff. Join Irwin and Janet from 9 a.m. to noon at Coe Headquarters to get an introduction to backpacking at Coe. Call them at 408/293-8194 to receive more information and to reserve a place in the class.

Saturday, April 21: **Earth Day projects.** We have two projects this year—recycling and exotic plant removal around the headquarters and barbed wire removal in the Orestimba. Please call the park headquarters at 408/779-2728 for more information and to sign up.

Saturday & Sunday, April 28 & 29: **The Backcountry Weekend at Coe Park.** Tickets are limited to this special event. A reservation request form is included in this issue of the newsletter, and it is also available now on the Coe Park website. Applications must be mailed on or before March 31.

Friday, May 4, to Sunday, May 6: **First Spring Backpack trip.** Join Irwin and Janet Koff on this two-night trip to Madrone Soda Springs with full moon. Call them at 408/293-8194 to receive more information and to reserve a place on the trip.

Saturday, May 5: **The Spring Trails Day.** Help build or maintain trails in Coe Park. To see what a typical day is like, check out the description on our website: *www.coepark.parks.ca.gov/trainwork.html*. For more information or to sign up, please call Ranger Nedra Martinez at 408/848-4006.

Sunday, May 13: **Mother's Day Breakfast.** Tickets for this very popular event will go on sale starting April 15.

Saturday, June 16: **Hunting Hollow Run/Walk.** Save this date for the 10K run and 5K walk out of Hunting Hollow. More information will be included in the next issue of the newsletter and on the Coe Park website.

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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, poetry, 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 94062-3512; or call 650/851-7813.

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