

# The Ponderosa

The Pine Ridge Association Newsletter  
Henry W. Coe State Park



## Tarantula Festival 2017

By Allene Liebenberg



Photos by Michael Ingrassia (top two);  
Shae Collinge (bottom left) and Michael Patrick Ellard (bottom right)

The warm fall day and the dedicated efforts of park volunteers and staff made the annual Tarantula Fest another enjoyable and educational experience at the park. This year's T-Fest continued with many traditional activities.

The tarantula walks were very popular. Volunteers Kathryn Levine, Michael Ingrassia, and Debbie Frederick led hikes on the Corral Trail. Visitors were treated with tarantulas making an appearance out on the trail for all to see.

Tom Conrad and John Thatcher again staffed the ever-popular geocaching table.

Pokémon was also a popular activity.

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Fall 2017

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## Tarantula Festival 2017, continued...

The talented Sada Springs Jug Band were in fine form and kept us all entertained.

Jesus Valdez, Lynne Starr, Paul Liebenberg, Ted Tawshunsky, and Sue Dekalb did a marvelous job setting up and taking down the bandstand, eating tables, and sunshades.

Many children enjoyed making crafts in the interpretive room. Kelly Lind, Carolyn Straub, Shae Collinge, and Renee Hentges contributed their creative skills.

The Visitor Center was very busy with people watching intently as exhibitors RJ Adams and Monika Davis expertly handled tarantulas and answered related questions.

The Keller family also presented their wonderful snakes this year. Their main goal was to teach people about snakes and dispel the myths surrounding these incredible animals.

Kitty Swindle sewed beanbag tarantulas that were a big hit at the “Tarantula Toss”. Added this year was a tarantula piñata full of tarantula-themed prizes.

A big thanks to Cal Fire for taking the time to drive up with their rig; giving kids the opportunity to climb on the truck and select hats, stickers, and coloring books; and assisting with a minor medical incident.

Laura and Dean Yon from Gilroy Yamato Hot Springs were with us with displays of information and history about the hot springs.

Susan Blake brought her large collection of animal pelts. Elena Armstrong and Carolyn Tucker assisted with this wonderful educational display.

Wildlife Education and Rehabilitation Center of Morgan Hill once again presented their popular exhibit. WERC brought their “ambassador” birds that the public rarely get a chance to see up close.

Visitors could not get enough of the famous tarantula cookies prepared by Denice, John, and J.J. Verhoeven; Bonnie Doran; Liz Brinkman; and Cynthia Leeder.

Much work goes into the pre-event work—such as food shopping, food preparation, and cooking. Thank you to Linda Keahey, Kathy McBride, Steve Knepper, Dick and Lourdes Stone, Pat Scharfe, Steve McHenry, Martin Eppel, David Cartwright, Bill Frazer, Art Pon, Bev Vanderweide, Joanne Rife, Janet Koff, Martin Cheek, Pauline Wood, Susan Harwager, Margaret Mary McBride, Don Wong, Jim Wong, Chere Bargar, Gary Keller, John Jenkins, Bonnie Doran, and Winslow and Ann Briggs. Many of these volunteers did double duties.

Adam Escoto and Kelly Kersten arranged for the raffle gifts. Patrick Goodrich assisted with raffle sales in the Visitor Center prior to the event.

Cynthia Leeder and Manny Pitta provided great support in general.

Rick Casey, Dave Raiman, Victor Bubbett, Ed Fox, and Harry Cline somehow got all the cars parked in the Entrance Parking Lot.

None of this would have been possible if not for the Coe Park volunteers and staff who always give their time, dedication, and energy to ensure a successful event. Thank you all!

# How The TFest Got Its Legs!

By Lee Sims

Long before there was TFest, there was a barbecue, a simple “spend your money, stuff your face” fundraiser for the PRA held at Manzanita Point. One of our early volunteers, Judy Rood, arranged for a barbecue group from Santa Maria led by Ben Marasco to come to Coe and present their renowned cooking. This all began in 1983. A fundraiser: good food, good location and good camaraderie, nothing more.

Actually, because of the weather, that initial barbecue was served in the metal barn at Coe headquarters. Mounds of garbage and piles of raccoon poop were replaced by tables loaned by the San Martin's Horsemen's Association, borrowed chairs, a string band and some cloggers, including volunteer Kathy Paivanen .

The following year, 1984, the Morgan Hill Earthquake closed the park and forced the BBQ to be held in San Juan Bautista. There were no signs of tarantulas there.

By 1988, the BBQ was established at Manzanita Point in September with hay rides to ferry the curious and hungry. Ticket sales were at 400 and above for the previous years . That year \$9.50 bought a "steak, cowboy beans, grilled bread, salad and a soft drink." Beer and wine were also available. Roberta Wright wrote for The Ponderosa:

"Friday night ... was a beautiful full moonlit evening. However, there are those who will remain unnamed who would have preferred doing something other than moving 20 HEAVY picnic tables [like in the campground today] until all hours of the night" to Manzanita Point from headquarters. No one knows how the tables got back to headquarters; maybe they didn't because next year the BBQ was held at headquarters where it has been ever since with knock-down tables.

In 1990, Ben Marasco was still cooking up a fine meal for 350 people. But the Ponderosa also noted that "the tarantulas, which were out and about, enjoyed the nature hikes that were led by Coe Park volunteers." But the spiders were not yet allowed to join the party.

1991 was a crucial year for the future of the BBQ. The PRA event lost \$92 despite the efforts of many volunteers. But comparing it with the profitable Mother's Day Breakfast, the PRA board noted that the BBQ was a catered affair.

So in 1992, volunteers stepped in to do the cooking: Hersch Wright, Jim Tuomey, Dave Perrin and Steve Knepper served to 223 people. To this day Perrin still tends the coals (though absent this year in Ireland) and Knepper cooks his fabulous beans. But also, several weeks later Larry Haimowitz lead possibly the first nature hike devoted to tarantulas. He had a crowd.

1993 introduced the first raffle to benefit the Visitor Center Expansion Fund, an expansion that hasn't occurred.

In 1995 the menu offered steak (\$10), chicken (\$8), veggie (\$6) and hotdog (\$4). The PRA board was told "while the PRA did not make much off the fall Barbecue, the raffle ... brought in \$1,817."

In 1996, Larry Haimowitz was still leading tarantula hikes, but the BBQ was struggling and heading down a spider hole. With that in mind, my wife, Bonnie Lemons, and I somehow latched on to Larry's enthusiasm for spiders and proposed featuring the fall tarantula courting migration as a theme for the fall event. The idea took hold.

So for 1997 there were tarantula tee shirts aplenty, and Ranger Barry Breckling found more tarantulas to

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## How The TFest Got Its Legs! continued...

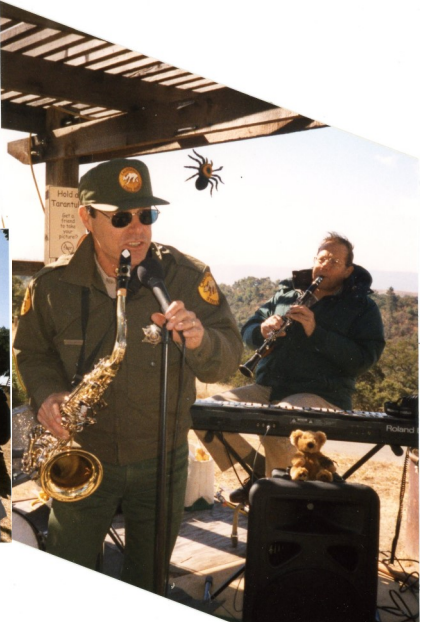
show off from a spider collector. Local tarantulas crawled on arms and challenged visitors' arachnophobia. There were games and music and tall tales and native American stories about spiders. The eight-legged races were short-lived as the self-insured state of California was unwilling to pay for any skinned knees or dislocated shoulders. And there was music – by a group called the Tarantulas. The TFest was born. And the Fall Barbecue and PRA raffle lived on.

After several years and one spider bite, the handling of the tarantulas was limited. But the chance to observe them and snakes and raptors, and the PRA chefs, has lived on into the next century. This fall, 34 years after Judy Rood brought Ben Marasco from Santa Maria, we had a fine time at Coe headquarters: still good food, good location and good camaraderie, and now a lot more.

And my story from the September 1984 Ponderosa, probably written by Ranger Barry Breckling.

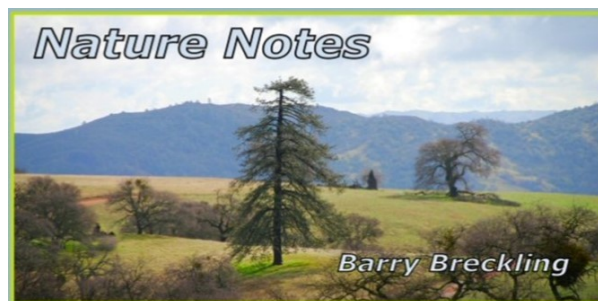
### ANOTHER BELIEVE-IT-OR-NOT STORY

Park Aide Lee Sims often spends the night out under the stars at Coe. The other morning Lee awoke, and, in order to grab a quick cup of coffee, he dumped the keys, change, etc. from his shoes that had spent the night next to his sleeping bag and put them on without socks. He felt something on the toe of his left shoe, but figured it was a sock or some other thing that he didn't dump out — he would remove it later. When he was ready to go to work, he put on socks and after putting his shoes on again, realized he still didn't had'n't removed the object in the toe — he would get to it. After working in the office for more than an hour, he decided it was time to see what that uncomfortable lump was. He took his shoe off, reached in, and pulled out a tarantula! I am happy to report that Lee is still alive and well, actually taking the event in stride. The tarantula, though still alive, didn't fare as well. With one broken leg and who knows how much mental anguish, it was last seen walking in circles.



## Coe Has A Lot of Gall

Have you ever seen leaves on an oak tree with fuzzy red growths or maybe the growths were tiny red cones? These are galls. A gall is a growth of plant material caused by such things as viruses, bacteria, fungi, and insects. What we most commonly see on oak trees are galls caused by insects in the family Cynipidae, often called Cynipids. Well, OK, let's just call them gall wasps. These wasps are not the kind that would be after your hamburger at a picnic. They look more like tiny flies, with bodies no larger than a grain of rice. They're not very showy, but what they leave behind sure is.



Blue oaks have the greatest variety of galls. A single tree can have over 20 different kinds. There are galls that look like fuzzy red caterpillars, spiny sea urchins, cups or saucers, dunce caps, royal crowns, elegant vases, and a myriad of other shapes. Not to be left behind, valley oaks have the oak apple gall that can be as large as an apple and the tiny sesame-seed-sized jumping gall that hops around on the ground.

The life histories of gall wasps can be quite varied, but many follow a common pattern. In the spring, a female gall wasp lays eggs on the leaf, stem, bud, or another part of a tree. The eggs or larva release chemicals that disturb the plant's hormonal balance or alters the cell's DNA. The larvae, which live inside the gall, eventually pupate into adult females who emerge from the gall in the summer and fly off to lay their eggs on another oak. There are no males produced in this generation. The females lay unfertilized, but viable eggs. The result will be a different looking gall.

Many other insects can inhabit a gall wasp's home, and lots of them consider wasp eggs and larvae to be tasty treats. Although the gall provides some protection to the eggs and larvae, some predators and parasites are able to move in. Some visitors simply use the gall for shelter. Others take advantage of the gall for food, that is if they can abide the tannins found in most galls. Galls often develop with very high concentrations of these tannins, acidic compounds used by oaks to repel insects. The gall wasp larvae can eat the gall material because they are able to neutralize the tannins, but most other insects find the material inedible. Some visitors are after cynipid meat. Some mites, midges, and wasps eat the eggs or larvae straight away. Taking a more delayed approach, chalcid wasps lay their eggs on the gall wasp larvae, and the chalcid wasp larvae, when they hatch, munch on the gall wasp larvae. Even acorn woodpeckers will peck into oak apples and eat the larvae. Life's rough out there for a wasp without a sting.

If you are up at the park this fall, check out the great variety and beauty of galls to be found on the oaks. Check out some of the scrub oaks and you might see my favorite gall, the deep crimson, yellow dotted, reversed teardrop shaped "spotted beaked gall." If you get interested in galls and want to learn more, check out "Plant Galls of the California Region" by Ronald Russo.

Crystalline Gall Wasp



Spotted Beaked Gall



Urchin Gall



# Western Whiptail

By Joseph Belli

Whiptails are exasperating. They're hard to see, hard to photograph, hard to catch, hard, even, to comprehend. Me, I don't trust 'em. But I'm getting ahead of myself. First things first.



**Hard to see:** this applies to Coe Park, large portions of which don't provide ideal whiptail habitat. Whiptails are most abundant in dry, open areas with scattered shrubs. Much of Coe is forested though, and even the grassy ridges don't offer much, because the grasses grow too thick and tall. In the park, whiptails are more likely to be found in openings in the chaparral, on the edges of woodlands, and the sunny, sandy sections along creeks.

**Hard to photograph:** whiptails are always moving. You won't find them basking long in the sun, or perched on a rock. They're on the go, searching for food, mainly insects they detect by smell and capture on the ground or just below the surface. Finding a whiptail that stays still long enough is a challenge to a photographer.

**Hard to catch:** Not only are whiptails in a state of perpetual motion, they're highly wary and hard to approach. When they run, they're fast, the speediest lizard in the park. Capturing one by hand, I've come to conclude, is only theoretically possible. You're more likely to pluck a hummingbird out of the air. Field biologists don't waste time trying to catch fast, wary lizards by hand; they use a noose. Nooses can be fashioned from fishing line, thread, dental floss, or other pliable material. The noosing stick can be sophisticated and state of the art, such as a fiberglass pole that can be extended a dozen feet or more, or Stone Age simple: a (green) stalk of wild oats, stripped of seeds and branches, with the tip fashioned into a slip knot. But while nooses are highly effective in capturing most lizards, they're much less so with whiptails. Besides the difficulty in noosing a moving target, whiptails have such slender necks that nooses don't catch and slip past. (To quell any concerns about the practice, noosing, dramatic though it may seem, is not injurious. Noosed lizards scamper away with no ill effects upon release. In the park, of course, noosing is a no-no.)

There are 22 species of whiptails in the Western U.S., with the richest diversity in the desert Southwest. New Mexico is the hotspot, with 14 species residing within its borders. California, in contrast, has just two, the Orange-throated Whiptail (*Aspidoscelis hyperythera*), found in San Diego County and south to Baja, and the widespread Western Whiptail (*Aspidoscelis tigris*), found throughout the deserts and semi-arid lowlands of the state, from the Sierra foothills and Central Valley west. In favorable habitats, they can be abundant. In Coe, they're the second largest lizard, behind Southern Alligator Lizards. With a slender tail twice the length of the body, whiptails can exceed a foot in length.

Whiptails are heat-loving lizards, out and about in temperatures that send other lizards to seek shade or burrows. They may not even be active if it's under 80 degrees. Whiptails are strictly ground-dwellers-- they never scale trees, boulders, or fence posts, opting to remain earthbound and scamper beneath shrubs or in burrows for cover. Western Whiptails have a wide distribution, found in eight states and Mexico. There are five subspecies, and the one in the park, the California Whiptail (*A. t. munda*), has eight dorsal stripes and is sometimes referred to as Tiger Whiptail.

**Hard to comprehend:** Of the 22 whiptail species inhabiting the West, nine are parthenogenetic. I'm fairly confident that Alex Jones has never heard of whiptails. He can't possibly be aware of parthenogenesis. For if he were, he might stop worrying about a clandestine plot to turn frogs gay by adding chemicals to the water, and concentrate on what might literally be the Mother of all conspiracies: parthenogenesis.

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## Western Whiptail, continued....

As a frog aficionado, I appreciate Alex's concern, but there are bigger fish to fry. (Alex is apparently referring to Atrazine, a widespread pesticide which has been linked to hormonal disruption in male frogs, causing some to become females.)

Parthenogenesis is the ability to produce offspring by means of an unfertilized egg. When I first read that definition I had to sit with it awhile before it sank in. It enables females to produce young without any genetic contribution from males. Without a partner and the blending of genes, the offspring are genetic replicas of the mother. Clones. This may sound like severe science fiction, but it's not. Though not widespread, parthenogenesis is seen occasionally in invertebrates, and while it is unknown among mammals and birds, there are a handful of reptiles exhibiting it, particularly whiptails.

But how does parthenogenesis work? In sexual reproduction, each partner contributes a sex cell with one set of chromosomes. When fertilization occurs, they merge, resulting in an embryo with two sets of chromosomes. Parthenogenetic whiptails have somehow managed to double the number of chromosomes in their eggs, bypassing the need for a partner and resulting in offspring genetically identical to the mother. It's believed that parthenogenetic whiptails arose as a result of hybridization between two sexually reproducing species, with the resulting female offspring possessing twice the number of chromosomes and becoming parthenogenetic. Don't ask me how; I'm still trying to uncross my eyes after reading a few research papers on the subject.



But wouldn't a parthenogenetic population-- an all-female species comprised of clones-- contradict the benefits of genetic diversity within a population? Wouldn't a population of genetically identical individuals be especially prone to being wiped out by disease or other external conditions? In light of such shortcomings, what advantages does parthenogenesis confer?

Parthenogenesis allows a population to increase quicker, since all the adults, not just half, are capable of giving birth. That also allows the species to colonize new areas more effectively. In sexually reproducing species, individuals, usually male, move into new territories, but fail to establish populations unless they stumble across a female. In a parthenogenetic population, you don't need to deal with the hassle of finding a partner. All the time, effort, and energy that goes into courtship and mating, all the turmoil and drama, no more. No need to swipe right on Tinder, or post a profile on Match.com. It doesn't take two to tango.

Those sneaky whiptails, out there in the New Mexico desert, suspiciously close to Area 51, might be onto something. Be afraid, Alex, be very afraid. If that unholy sisterhood spreads its secret to the human race, it'll be curtains for us men. We'll be rendered useless. To add salt to the wound, researchers have observed captive female whiptails engaging in courtship behavior, including (gasp!) pseudocopulation. I didn't google "pseudocopulation" only because I'm pretty sure we both know what *that* is; besides, you stand a good chance of seeing for yourself most nights around midnight on *Showtime*.

If it's any consolation, our whiptails in Coe still do it the old-fashioned way. Rest assured, the next one you see scampering down the trail won't be a clone, and the little guy might really be a guy after all.

Of greater comfort might be the knowledge that some evolutionary biologists view parthenogenesis, at least in whiptails, as an evolutionary dead end. A gimmick. A short-term strategy that might work for a couple of dozen millennia but not over the long haul. Those all-female whiptail species might be living high on the hog right now, but the good times for Thelma and Louise won't go on indefinitely. As the saying goes, he (not she) who laughs last, laughs best.

## Bill Leikam Biography, Guest Speaker at PRA Annual Meeting (February 3, 2018)

By Carolyn Straub

Bill Leikam, widely known as The Fox Guy, will present an engaging multi-media presentation about the gray fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*), a carnivorous mammal native to North America and found in Henry W. Coe State Park, at the Pine Ridge Association's annual meeting on Saturday, Feb. 3, 2018, at the Morgan Hill Community and Cultural Center, 17000 Monterey Rd., Morgan Hill.

Leikam is an associate director of the Guadalupe-Coyote Resource Conservation District. He will begin his presentation with an overview of the gray fox's general ecology as an orientation to its life. He will then weave together the science through personal stories about foxes he has studied in the Palo Alto Baylands Nature Reserve, as he follows them over the course of a year. You will witness juvenile gray foxes begin new relationships, and experience the secret lives of gray fox pups as they learn how to survive in their ever changing world.

Eight years ago, Leikam began documenting, photographing and researching the behavior of the gray fox. This study resulted in the development of the Urban Wildlife Research Project. He introduced his work to videographer and naturalist Greg Kerekes. Dedicated to developing viable habitat and connectivity corridors for the gray fox, Leikam has given highly acclaimed presentations to corporate, private, and an array of wildlife organizations.



The photos are courtesy of the Urban Wildlife Research Project (UWRP).

<https://urbanwildliferesearchproject.com/>

## She's Done It Again!

By Chere Bargar

Several years ago, Sue Dekalb received an award earned by only a handful of people for riding her horse, Doc, 10,000 hours. Most of those hours were earned in Coe Park. Now she has completed the same number of miles on her other horse, Doc's Not Fooling—affectionately known as "Duddy." With all the volunteer hours she does for Coe, I don't know how she managed all that time in the saddle. Congratulations, Sue and Duddy!

Photo by Ted Tawshunsky



Photo by Sue Dekalb



Photo by Ted Tawshunsky





## Some of Coe Park's Unsung Heroes

By Chere Bargar

I have been a uniformed volunteer for 30 years and have always appreciated how many dedicated volunteers donate hundreds of hours to this wonderful park. It is the only organization I have ever belonged to that has more than a handful of people who seem to do all the work. That being said, I would like to recognize a group of people who come together at least once a week, and many times two or three times a week to work on a variety of projects.

We all know what a huge park Coe is and how few staff there are. There are not enough hours in the day for them to maintain everything that needs to be done. Enter the members of SPLAT (Springs, Ponds, Lakes, and Trails). This informal group does whatever park staff asks of them and comes up with innovative ideas for projects on their own. They built the Jim Donnelly East Connector Trail and have maintained many trails by pruning, hand sawing fallen trees and limbs, installing and/or repairing signs and signposts, and fixing drainage issues and trail tread. A BIG boulder on Coit Road? No problem! Soon it was in smaller, more manageable pieces and moved off the road. Much of the debris was crushed into smaller pieces and used for fill where needed on trails. Yellow star thistle invasion? Many hours were spent pulling it out by the roots. Plumbing not working? SPLAT members to the rescue! Spring boxes and hundreds of feet of pipe replaced or repaired to ensure water for man and beast. Windmill not turning? The windmill in Hunting Hollow that had not worked in many years is up and running. Need poison oak pruned or weed whacking done? SPLAT answers the call and that's not all: Pacheco Camp cleaned up and repairs made, pine needles raked out from underneath trees in preparation for a prescribed burn, memorial benches installed, and outhouses repaired! They also maintain a website on downed trees and slides.

These are just some of the things this group has done and continues to do. A big THANK YOU to one and all!!

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## MAU Happenings

By Allene Liebenberg

The Mounted Assistance Unit (MAU) of Henry W. Coe State Park is certainly a unique and busy group. During this year's Ride-Along, the MAU welcomed the new uniformed volunteer trainees with a discussion of duties and activities provided by the MAU. Chere Bargar, Pauline Wood, Susan Stillman, Allene Liebenberg, Pat Scharfe, and Kitty Swindle (and their horses of course!) met

the Ride-Along convoy by the Hunting Hollow windmill. MAU riders explained their duties—such as search and rescue and horse patrol. They explained the importance of carrying extra water for hikers, first aid supplies, and other equipment in their saddlebags. In addition, the MAU representatives talked about other events coordinated by the MAU—such as Ranch Days and Raincoats and Rubber Boots. It was a fun and informative morning.

The MAU also had their Search and Rescue training October 22nd at Coit Horse Camp. What an exciting and educational day! After an informative morning lecture and reviewing radio and GPS procedures, we formed two teams and proceeded to the area of a fictional reported lost hiker. Then a big scary surprise! A creepy clown armed with a handsaw darted in front of the horses and ran into the forest. After communicating the incident to the command base, we went on to find a severely injured park visitor. Lynne Starr and Kitty Swindle demonstrated giving first aid to the injured park visitor. Then we finally found our lost hiker!

The MAU wishes to thank volunteers Dan Healy and Paul Liebenberg for their wonderful acting abilities. And thanks to Colleen Combes, Carole Bridgeman, and Rob Krensky for their time organizing a very unique and informative Search and Rescue training for Coe Park's Mounted Assistance Unit.



Photo by Allene Liebenberg



Photo by Lynne Starr

# News from the Board of the Pine Ridge Association

By Daniel Benefiel, President, PRA Board

The PRA Board held meetings on July 11 and September 12. The agendas covered typical items such as the financial report from Cynthia, the Volunteer Committee update from Manny, a GYHS update from Laura Dominguez-Yon, and a Monterey District Update from Ranger David Hermitte. The board also discussed and took action on many other items.

The board approved funding of the volunteer appreciation event held on November 4 and are grateful to Rangers Jen and John for setting it up. It will be nice for volunteers and staff to connect outside of the usual work routine!

The PRA acted as the 501(c)(3) grant recipient to help acquire the Kitaji Bibles. If you're not familiar with these amazing and historical artifacts or the incredible effort that went into obtaining them, see <http://www.mercurynews.com/2017/10/21/how-bay-area-family-reclaimed-its-85000-bibles/>.

To make the Backcountry Weekend registration process simpler and faster, the board approved development of an online registration process. This will give park visitors instant confirmation and simplify the work of volunteers.

Park staff and the Volunteer Committee requested vests and patches similar to those used by the Open Space Authority which can be worn over jackets or other clothing. For example, these will make volunteers more recognizable when everyone's wearing coats at the Mother's Day Breakfast.

When Ranger Jen had San Juan Bautista volunteers on a mission to buy pelts, she requested that the PRA approve funding in case they could also find any needed by Coe. The volunteers purchased deer, raccoon, kit fox and coyote pelts for use at Coe.

The board approved purchase of six sets of Vortex 8x42 binoculars to be used by visitors during guided hikes.

Earlier in the year, the board approved funding a much-needed upgrade to coepark.net. With the old infrastructure, security and compatibility are becoming increasingly difficult. The upgrade is mostly complete, and Manny will flip the switch soon.

The board is still looking for volunteers to help with a service such as Mail Chimp or Constant Contact. Although we have The Ponderosa to keep members informed, there are many non-members that we would like to hold close via regular emails so that we can call on them for future support and membership. Please contact Dan or Manny if you are interested in helping!

The DPR has approved a plan for an interpretive "Peaks Panel" to be installed near the HQ Visitor's Center. The original intent was to show the peaks of the Quien Sabe Volcanic Field to the south, but final content and design is TBD.

The full park relief model or diorama has been moving slowly after grappling with ADA requirements and use of space in the Visitor's Center, but we are still committed to seeing this complete and will keep it moving.

In her financial report, Cynthia noted that the PRA has received very significant donations from volunteers' employers, based on their volunteer hours. Please check if your employer matches dollars for your hours!

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# Time To Run For The PRA

## By Steve McHenry, Secretary, PRA Board

The Pine Ridge Association will hold its annual election for the board of directors in December. The terms of two directors—Peter Verbica and Adam Escoto—expire at the end of this year. Both Peter and Adam have indicated that they wish to run for reelection, but if you wish to run for one of the seats, now is the time to prepare your candidacy statement and send it to Steve McHenry, 439 Chateau La Salle Drive, San Jose, CA 95111 or email, [stephen.l.mchenry@gmail.com](mailto:stephen.l.mchenry@gmail.com).

Any association member may run for the board. A member may also nominate another PRA member to serve on the board. To do this, send Steve a short statement explaining why you believe the person would be a good board member, and he will contact your nominee to ask the person to consider running.

The most important qualification for a board member is a willingness to attend board meetings and participate in carrying out tasks for the association. Meetings typically take place every other month on weeknights. The term of office is three years. If a board member is also a uniformed Coe Park volunteer, meetings and board-related activities count toward volunteer hours.

We use the special nonprofit bulk-rate mailing permit to send out PRA-related materials. However, this means that some members might not receive their newsletters or other materials for a couple of weeks after they are mailed. So that the ballots can be distributed (and received by all members) in a timely fashion, it is important that all candidacy statements be postmarked on or before Friday, November 24.

Please send your statements to Steve at the address above. (If you plan to nominate someone else, please do so at least two weeks earlier.) Your statement might be a few paragraphs long and might contain information such as how long you have been a PRA member, why you became interested in Coe Park, ways you have served the park or other volunteer activities that have benefited the public, any special qualifications or experience you have, and specific plans you have for improving the park as a board member.

If you have any questions about what it would be like to be a board member or if you would like additional guidance on putting together a candidacy statement, please call Steve at 408-286-8858.

Publisher's Note: Since we have a number of new members as well as new volunteers, we thought it would be a good idea to review the objectives of the Pine Ridge Association as to what we are all about and how we should be supporting our favorite park. The entire set of PRA Bylaws can also be reviewed at the PRA website: <http://coepark.net/pineridgeassociation/support-coe/pr>.

## ARTICLE II. OBJECTIVES

Section 1. Objectives. The objectives of this corporation are: (1) to provide and promote the public education and interpretive activities of the State Park System, principally at Henry W. Coe State Park; (2) to produce and make available to park visitors, by sale or free distribution, suitable interpretive and educational literature and materials, including but not limited to books, maps, pamphlets, visuals, and recordings; (3) to acquire materials or objects pertaining to the cultural history or natural history of the area for the purpose of adding them to the interpretive collections of the State Park System; (4) to develop and maintain a suitable library for Henry W. Coe State Park; (5) to assist in development and improvement of interpretive facilities; (6) to assist financially and otherwise in the establishment and operation of similar cooperating associations in other areas of the State Park System; (7) to give aid to the State of California in conserving, developing, and interpreting the areas of the State Park System for the benefit of the public; and (8) to work in close partnership with the uniformed volunteer organization, as appropriate, to further the above objectives

## News From The Volunteer Committee

By Manny Pita, Chair, Volunteer Committee

The 2018 PRA Annual Meeting will be on Saturday, February 3! It will feature “A Year With the Urban Gray Fox” presented by Bill Leikam, the Fox Guy. The morning will start with a meeting of the PRA Board of Directors followed by volunteer awards and presentation of the new volunteer class by the Volunteer Committee. After Bill Leikam’s talk, lunch will be served by the MAU.

Planning for the Annual Meeting includes reviewing volunteer hours for 2017 to identify volunteers for awards and advancements and recognition of 1000-hour and decade-of-service milestones.

Membership in the Henry Coe State Park Outdoors Meetup group (<http://www.meetup.com/Henry-Coe-State-Park-Outdoors-Meetup/>) now tops 820 and is still very active and growing. Thanks to Mike Hundt and his team of Meetup event organizers for making this group a great success.

Other Volunteer Committee Activities include managing the volunteer training program. The first two days of this year’s new volunteer training were on September 9 and 16. They included an overview of the volunteer program, a tour of Coe Headquarters, emergency procedures, Coe Park history, the physical environment, cultural resources, and a geology hike. On September 30, the training continued with a full day of hiking on the Corral, Springs, and Forest Trails with frequent stops discussing the plants and animals of Coe Park.

Thanks to Allene Liebenberg, Bill Frazer, Bonnie Daley, Dan Benefiel, John Thatcher, Kathy McBride, Ken Hulick, Liz Brinkman, Mike Hundt, Mike Meyer, Patrick Goodrich, Sue Dekalb, Teddy Goodrich, Victor Bubbett, and rangers John Verhoeven and Jen Naber for leading hikes, presenting sessions, and providing refreshments.

The trainees had a wonderful experience during this year’s Ride Along weekend on October 14-15. Trainees from last year’s class also joined the event, since their Ride Along was cancelled last year due to wet weather. John Thatcher assembled and led the drivers along a modified route this year. Last winter’s storms had washed away parts of Bear Mountain Road through the East Fork of Coyote Creek, so a detour was in order. All went well, though we did take longer to get to our Bear Mountain destination.

David Cartwright led a discussion on foot patrols along the Madrone Soda Springs trail, and we visited Madrone Soda Springs and Keeney/Simas Cabin along Soda Springs Canyon. We met with Irwin and Janet Koff at China hole for a talk on backpacking and hiked through the Narrows to Los Cruzeros. Before getting there, we encountered evidence of suspicious activity, including empty beer bottles, trash, a spool of irrigation tubing, and a primitive campsite with a fire ring and spent gun shells. The trainees took notes so that they could report what they observed to a ranger. Of course, they did suspect that it was all planted as part of the training.

At Los Cruzeros, we “happened” to run into the Coe Mountain Bike Patrol led by Paul Liebenberg who delivered a talk on their activities during lunch. After our drive to Bear Mountain and taking in the sights along the way, we arrived at Pacheco Camp. The group split up to enjoy a hike to Pacheco Falls led by Ligaya Yrastorza and Philip Strenfel, a hike to Coit Lake led by Dan Healy, or a drive to Mustang Peak led by John Thatcher.

After a wonderful dinner prepared by the Pacheco Camp team led by Ken Howell, we enjoyed a chat by the fire (gas fireplace) to top off the evening.

After breakfast, the second day of the Ride Along continued with the group driving to Willson Camp for a tour of the cabin and a talk on springs led by Paul Liebenberg. We then continued through Hunting Hollow for a rendezvous with the MAU at Windmill Meadow, where Chere Bargar led a talk on their activities. Also at Windmill Meadow was a Visitor Support Station set up by Dave Waldrop who informed the trainees how they could participate in assisting visitors out in the park.

Continued on page 13....

## News From The Volunteer Committee, continued...

We then proceeded to Coit Lake for Bill Frazer's fishing demo and finished the day with a hike down Willow Ridge Trail before the drive out to Coe Headquarters.

CoeEd Day took place on October 28 and included sessions on Coe Family History, Introduction to GPS and using the Park Map, Birds of Coe, Emergency Procedures and Communications, Animal Tracking, Mountain Lions, Coe Park Geology, Tree Sketching/Nature Journaling, Basic Skills, and details of an upcoming Prescribed Burn in the park. Special thanks to volunteers Kathy McBride, Bill Frazer, Bonnie Daley, Carolyn Straub, Chris Weske, Dave Waldrop, Mike Hundt, Mike Meyer, Steve McHenry, and rangers John Verhoeven and Jen Naber for their part in conducting this event.

MAU training took place on Oct 21/22 at Coit Camp. It will be followed in the next few weeks by Mountain Bike Patrol, Visitor Center, Trails and Springs, Foot Patrol, and Gilroy Yamato Hot Springs training. Training activities for 2018 are already scheduled for February, including hike leader training and backpacking site tours for volunteers. Information on these and other training opportunities will be rolled out to the volunteer community.

Volunteer Committee meetings are held bi-monthly on the first Wednesday of the month. The next meeting will be on January 3.



Volunteer Class 2017 Photo (L – R): Joe Machado, Cliff Anderson, Molly Shaw, Matt Morley, Bobby Barnett, Jeff McMillan, Michael Paglianti, Dave Fent

Photo by Patrick Goodrich.

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## News From The Board Of The Pine Ridge Association, continued....

At the July meeting, Peter noted that one of Sada Coe's daughters, Bonnie Robinson Nazarenko, had passed away. The board sent a letter of condolence to her sister, Irene Robinson Lim. Sadly at the next meeting, the board closed in memory of Irene. Once again, we thank Sada and her family for what they've given the people of California.

The board meets bimonthly. All PRA members are welcome. We have recently changed the venue from the Gilroy Public Library to the homes of board members in Morgan Hill. Please contact [pr-board@coepark.net](mailto:pr-board@coepark.net) if you would like to attend. The next meetings will be November 14 and January 9 at 6:30pm.

## Nominations Sought for the Volunteer of the Year Annual Award

Each year at the PRA annual meeting held in February an award is presented to an individual (or individuals) whose efforts have preserved and enriched Henry W. Coe State Park. It is not necessary that the recipient be a member of the Pine Ridge Association or be a uniformed volunteer in the park. The recipient receives an engraved plaque, and their name is added to the large plaque that is displayed at the Visitor Center.

Two unofficial sets of criteria have been used to guide the selection process:

- Leadership: scope, motivation, and initiative
  - Involvement: scope, altruism, and time contribution
  - Asset growth: recruiting, fundraising, and contributions
  - Ideas/projects: creative, innovative, follow-through with personal implementation
  - Performance: past, sustained, future expectations
  - Measurable accomplishments: visible results
- Has had a beneficial effect on the park's resources and activities
  - Has sought responsibility and has acted as a leader
  - Has leveraged efforts into multiplicative effects by organizing the activities of others

We are asking PRA members to supply nominations for this award by the end of November. If there is someone you would like to nominate, please write short paragraph of reason why that person should be considered and sent it to the PRA president, Daniel Benefiel, P.O. Box 1015, Morgan Hill, CA 95038 or email [dbenefiel@gmail.com](mailto:dbenefiel@gmail.com). A committee of the PRA board of directors will collect additional information about the activities of your nominee and will make a selection.

## New PRA Members

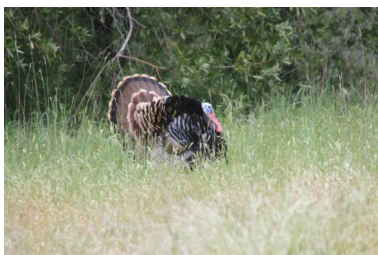
We are pleased to welcome the new members listed below. Thank you for your support.

Rich Chou, Morgan Hill CA  
Lawrence Wiener, Beverly Hills CA  
Molly Shaw, Santa Cruz CA

We need your help to keep our membership list current and accurate. If you have any questions regarding your membership or to let us know of any change of address, please contact us.

Email: [membership@coepark.net](mailto:membership@coepark.net)  
U.S. mail: 9100 East Dunne Avenue, Morgan Hill, CA 95037  
<http://coepark.net/pineridgeassociation/join>

## HAPPY THANKSGIVING from our Henry W Coe SP Turkeys!



Photos by Sue Dekalb

# News from Gilroy Yamato Hot Springs

By Laura Dominguez-Yon

## The Kitaji Bibles

For those of you who saw the Saturday, October 21, 2017 headlines in the Mercury News, yes, that was me! Since then, my daughter has been proudly and gleefully trying to embarrass me via Facebook and Twitter, fully knowing I prefer to remain in the background instead of having my face on the front page of the newspaper. As I said to the PRA board, "It has been an emotional roller coaster," to which Dan Benefiel replied, "Thank you for holding on."

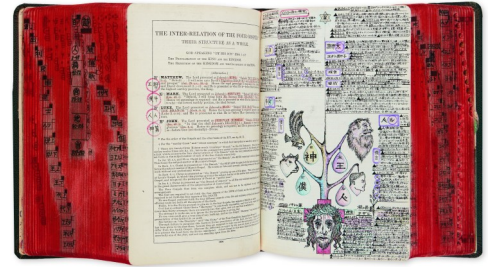


Photo credit, Swann Galleries, NY

For those who did not see the article, here is the link:

<http://www.mercurynews.com/2017/10/21/how-bay-area-family-reclaimed-its-85000-bibles/>

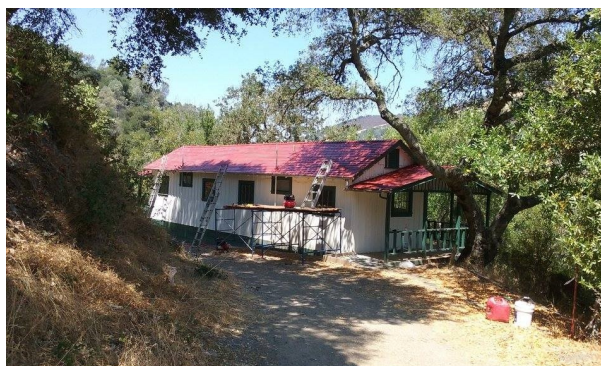
And for those who read Chinese, here is the link to an article in the Chinese American Journal, The World Journal, as found by a professor at Stanford:

[http:// tinyurl.com/yamuxavw](http://tinyurl.com/yamuxavw) at WorldJournal.com

Thank you to the PRA Board for facilitating the acquisition of the Kitaji Bibles. Contributions by the Kitaji family and friends covered all acquisition expenses, and no PRA funds were used for this project. The Hoover Archives at Stanford have accepted the Bibles, and anyone with proper identification can view them there. The archives have an international reach for scholarly research, from which we anticipate interesting developments regarding the contents of the Kitaji Bibles. Now we are raising funds for an interpretive panel at GYHS about the Kitaji cabin, the man who lived there, and his legacy. We would also like to honor other figures that have contributed to GYHS and its development as a resort for public use: Quintin Ortega, Francisco Cantua, and the Roop, McDonald, Sakata, and Siedo families. Donations are welcome for development and production of interpretive materials as well as for restoration projects to protect, preserve, and restore public access. There is a PayPal link on the GYHS website for such contributions.

Join us on a GYHS tour and see the new red roof on the Texas cabin. It complies with the color of the roof during the McDonald period. More importantly, it is fire retardant paint, giving the cabin a layer of protection.

December 4<sup>th</sup> there will be a GYHS volunteer training. Uniformed volunteers and readers of the Ponderosa are welcome to attend. Please RSVP so we can prepare the correct number of training manuals: ([info@GilroyYamatoHotSprings.org](mailto:info@GilroyYamatoHotSprings.org)) or text/call 408-314-7185. There will be separate training for Docents and Restoration Team Volunteers. Please indicate your interest area.



TX Cabin. Photo by Matt Bischoff

Pine Ridge Association  
Henry W. Coe State Park  
9100 East Dunne Avenue  
Morgan Hill, CA 95037

408-779-2728



### **PRA Board of Directors**

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Jen Naber, Volunteer Coordinator (shared)  
Manny Pitta, Chair  
Ken Howell  
Michael Hundt  
Kathryn Levine  
Allene Liebenberg  
John Thatcher  
Dave Waldrop

### **Contributors for this issue**

Sue Harwager, publisher, e-distribution  
Patrick Goodrich, co-editor, photographer  
Teddy Goodrich, co-editor  
Heather Ambler, photographer  
Chere Bargar, author  
Daniel Benefiel, author  
Joseph Belli, author, photographer  
Matt Bischoff, photographer  
Barry Breckling, author, photographer  
Liz Brinkman, mailing list  
Shae Collinge, photographer  
Sue Dekalb, photographer  
Michael Patrick Ellard, photographer  
Michael Ingrassia, photographer  
Allene Liebenberg, author, photographer  
Steve McHenry, author  
Manny Pita, author  
Lee Sims, author, photographer  
Lynne Starr, photographer  
Carolyn Straub, author  
Ted Tawshunsky, photographer

*The Ponderosa* is a quarterly publication of the Pine Ridge Association. The PRA's mission is to enhance and enrich the public's experience at Henry W. Coe State Park through education and interpretation. Articles and artwork relating to the natural history, history, and management of the park are welcome. Also, interested in volunteering? Email Manny Pitta, [mannypitta@gmail.com](mailto:mannypitta@gmail.com).

Please send submissions and ideas to the editor at: [PRAnewsletter3@gmail.com](mailto:PRAnewsletter3@gmail.com)

**Deadline for the next issue: January 31, 2017**

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