

The Ponderosa

The Pine Ridge Association Newsletter
Henry W. Coe State Park



That's Why We Are Here

By Ranger Cameron Bowers

build on their moral fiber, strengthen their self image, and provide the confidence to do more than they thought possible.

A while ago Coe Park had some visitors. These were not our typical visitors in that they were not local Bay Area mountain bikers who frequent the park's hills and canyons on weekends and holidays looking for the burn of the climb and the thrill of the descent. They were not the devoted fishermen focused and steadfast in their attempts to reach a sure-catch lake or fishing hole. They were not the passionate hikers and backpackers trekking the almost limitless terrain of the Coe landscape in search of the solace and serenity found only in nature.

On arrival, I don't even think these visitors wanted to be at Coe, but they were in search of something, something that Coe does not even offer. I don't want to say that Coe represents Oz in this analogy, or even the Emerald City, although if you visit Coe in spring emerald is the color of the season. Much like the characters in the Wizard of Oz, what these students were looking for they actually brought with them. The park's role was simply to bring out the individual uniqueness that each student needed to

These visitors were from ARISE High School from in Oakland and many of them had never been camping or even hiking before. ARISE is a charter school and the A.R.I.S.E. stands for authenticity, rigor, inspiration, success, and empowerment. The mission at ARISE High School is to empower its students with the skills and knowledge to pursue higher education and become leaders in the world. Facilitating the trip to Coe Park was Outward Bound Bay Area (OBBA). OBBA's mission is to inspire character development and self-discovery in people of all ages and walks of life through challenge and adventure, and inspire them to achieve more than they ever thought possible, to show compassion for others, and to actively engage in creating a better world.

As you can tell by from the mission statements of the two organizations, these kids were searching for and discovering themselves long before they reached Coe Park. The role of Coe was simply to exist. Without wild places like Coe and the thousands of other parks bordering our urban areas, these kids may would be much more limited in their life experiences.

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Summer 2010

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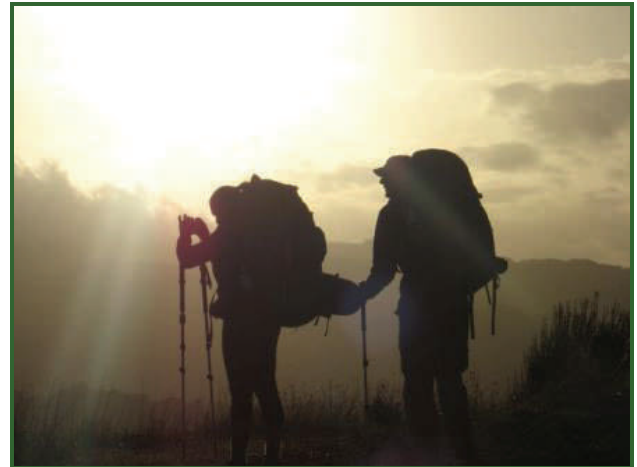
I had the opportunity to drive one of the OBBA area supervisors into the park for a food drop, which gave me the privilege of talking to and listening to the kids on day 7 of their 13-day exploration of Coe. Talking to the kids, I found that they were city kids but they were up for a challenge and though they were tired they did have a restrained determination to discover the wisdom of life. Listening to the 16 kids I found that they cared about their principal, Romeo Garcia, who came out with them.

The boys all had a sense of humor about themselves but some of them still seemed to be working on their street attitude and machismo. Some of the boys had figured out by day 7 that they didn't need ego or machismo out there. Others were still working on it and defending themselves against what they deemed to be threats but that seemed to me to be more like locker-room joking. I think by the end of the trip this joking will only strengthen the bonds between the kids.

The kids encountered turkeys, deer, coyotes, and numerous songbirds and birds of prey in the park. The kids seemed to be comfortable in the park but still had some of the fears of wildlife that growing up in the city instills in youth. In the short time I spent with the kids I felt I needed to leave some sort of impression on them. I discussed with them the frailty of nature and how important it is to have places like Coe Park where city kids can explore and understand nature. I told them what I tell

most of the kids I encounter during the school year at my outreach programs at San Jose and Gilroy schools: not to fear nature but to understand it because when we fear something we want to destroy it and when we understand something we tend to respect it. I encouraged them to take a sense of ownership of this park with them and as adults make decisions that protect places like Coe Park for future generations.

At the same time that the ARISE kids were backpacking in Coe Park, we had a group of kids from Stevenson Boarding School in Monterey County, plus another 50 students and two other groups of college students, for a total of more than 70 school kids and another 15 college students backpacking in the park. That's why we are here.



An early start to the day

New Members

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

Mike Buncic, Los Gatos
 Rebecca Faith, Oakland
 Judy & Robert Fenerty, San Jose

We need your help to keep our membership list current and accurate. If you are a paid annual member, your *Ponderosa* mailing label includes an expiration date. (No expiration date for life members, electronic mailing or organizations.) If you have any questions regarding your membership or need to let us know of any change of address, please contact us:

Email: membership@coepark.org
 US mail: 9100 East Dunne Avenue, Morgan Hill, CA 95037
 Phone: (408) 779 2728

News from Friends of Gilroy Hot Springs

By Laura Dominguez-Yon

How do you turn a liability into an asset and find a way for this property to pay for its own protection, preservation, restoration, and maintenance? Over the last three years, I've been listening to a lot of people sharing questions, memories, experiences, concerns, fears, and dreams about Gilroy Yamato Hot Springs (GYHS). Unintentionally, I've become the most informed expert with the most pictures, documentation, stories, and resources about the site. I have access to all the related images and articles at the Gilroy Historic Museum, and share new information with museum staff. We're working collaboratively on projects and thereby are fulfilling dreams of collecting and disseminating information about GYHS.

Sharing a dream helps it become reality. My dream was to gain access for Henry Kato, my uncle, who managed GYHS from 1950-1967 and has continued to consult for subsequent owners, and for us today. He's spent many days sharing his stories and advice while enjoying watching yet another generation reap pleasure from this historic resort. In July, sitting in the temporary soak tank of warm mineral water, I realized I hadn't done that since 1971! By helping Henry see his dream become reality, I have revived a long forgotten memory.

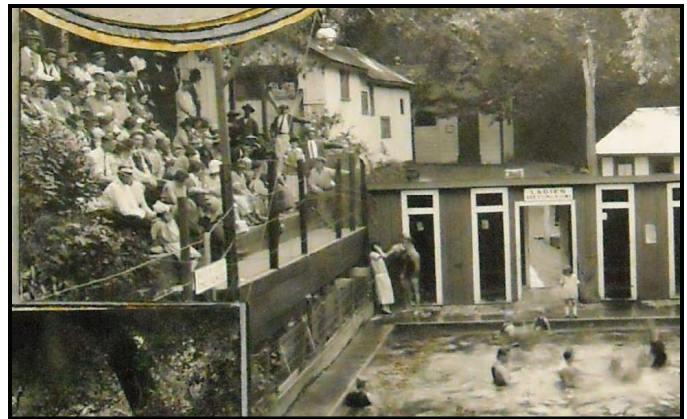
PRA board member and mountain biker Paul Nam and his volunteers took advantage of the full moon campout in July, enjoying a rewarding challenge ride enhanced by a relaxed start and refreshing end to the day. Paul shares the dream of more people experiencing this piece of Coe Park by telling everyone he meets about it and encouraging Friends of Gilroy Hot Springs (FoGHS) membership. Thank you, Paul!

The full moon campouts are the result of Margarita Jiménez sharing her dream of combining volunteer work with camping out and soaking in the mineral water. Margarita was instrumental in repairing and restoring what historian Sandy Lydon believes to be the oldest Shinto shrine in California at GYHS. She's now organizing volunteers who will document GYHS artifacts—doors, windows, benches, etc.—so we can reuse them when repairing

and rebuilding structures at the resort. Margarita and her volunteers will photograph, label, catalog, and safely store loose items, protecting them from further decay, erosion, and vandalism. We are also getting contractors' estimates for repair work to some of the structures, so we have a strategy for an active future for GYHS.

And our dream of having a camp host in residence is nearing reality! Thanks to the diligent efforts of State Parks associate engineer Joan Carpenter, who previously completed all the necessary paperwork, funding is now available to put in a cement pad for a trailer or mobile home, plus water and septic systems. We'll soon have toilets that will make it possible for hikers to use the lower barn area while the camp host is present. Designated camp host and volunteer Tom Goold, Jr. acquired the donation of two rolldown doors from Jack's Overhead Doors in Gilroy. Thank you, Jack Spence and family!

What are your dreams? Share them with FoGHS. Please join us! For more information, see www.FriendsOfGilroyHotSprings.org, email info@friendsofgilroyhotsprings.org, or call 408-314-7185.



Original mineral water soak tank, bleacher seats, dressing rooms along boardwalk (*photo courtesy of the Gilroy Historic Museum*)



Hunting Hollow to Coit Lake and Pacheco Falls

By Herbert Steierman

On an April hike to Coit Lake, what I'll remember most of all is the brilliant, bright green carpet on the hills. Winter rains had been kind and a recent storm caused the creeks to overflow with water. I was planning to enjoy three days of Nature's finest, following a route from Hunting Hollow to Lyman-Willson Trail to Willson Ranch, along Wagon Road to Crest Trail, and finally along Coit Road to Coit Lake, a distance of 9-1/2 miles.

The impressive rains of the previous days resulted in six creek crossings in 0.7 mile between the Hunting Hollow parking area and Lyman-Willson Trail, crossings that are normally easy. I exchanged leather boots for neoprene booties and hiked the distance along a trail that was now moist and spongy. The creek crossings, besides being cold, ranged from ankle deep to near knee deep.

Lyman-Willson Trail, although steep, took care of most of the day's elevation gain in a hurry. The trail gains 1200 feet in two miles, then on the Bowl Trail it's an easy mile to Willson Ranch. From Willson Ranch, Wagon Road undulates upward from 2000 feet to 2500 feet at the Crest Trail over a distance of four miles. It was a pleasant and easy hike with panoramic views of large areas of the park and the Coast Range to the south. The hills were incredibly green, not what I usually see, and once on the Crest Trail I was treated to a stupendous display of wildflowers.

At Coit Lake, I was fortunate to find my favorite campsite available, a place with level ground to pitch a tent, a picnic table, a ramada, and an outhouse. The site also had nice views of the lake when I relaxed in my camp chair reading.



Pacheco Falls, a spectacular sight following a wet spring.

Photo by Herbert Steierman

On previous trips, I had hiked along the west side of Coit Lake to the dam at the north end and then on Coit Ridge Trail to White Tank Spring Trail, where I have often found dramatic wildflower displays. However, after all the recent rain I didn't dare tackle the sometimes flooded and very muddy trail along the western shore of the lake. Instead, my day focussed on hiking to Pacheco Falls.

I hiked east on Coit Road, south on Wagon Road, north on Live Oak Spring Trail, then east on the spur trail down to Pacheco Falls.

Pacheco Falls was thrilling and impressive, gushing with water, the recent rains having provided a sensational display. The pool at the bottom of the falls rippled with excitement, drowning much of the nearby vegetation and making access difficult.

On the third day, I retraced my route back to Hunting Hollow under skies of radiant blue, a perfect day for a fairly leisurely hike. With all the sunshine the wildflowers seemed to stretch their necks to bask in the warmth. California poppies opened their petals while other wildflowers glowed; they were all enjoying the day. It was a most excellent outing.

For those interested in a more detailed report that includes distances, elevations, photos, and GPS waypoints, visit my website at www.wildtramper.com.

Park Aid Mason Hyland Wins a Major Competitive Scholarship to U.C. Santa Cruz

By Winslow Briggs

It was a sunny Friday afternoon in May at Gavilan College and people were gathering in a large lecture hall. The occasion was the annual scholarship ceremony, organized by the Gavilan College Educational Foundation. The audience consisted of award recipients, their families, their friends, and a number of faculty members.

At the very start of the ceremony, Mason Hyland, a former park aid very well known and highly respected for his work in Coe Park, was awarded the Karl S. Pister Leadership Opportunity Program Award from the University of California, Santa Cruz. The program will provide Mason with a \$20,000 scholarship, to be spread over two years, enabling him to complete his college studies. It is by far most prestigious scholarship offered this year through the Gavilan College Educational Foundation. Mason had just completed two years at Gavilan College and was hoping to transfer to the University of California, Santa Cruz where he has already been accepted. This scholarship will make that transfer possible. It is for “a junior-level University of California transfer-eligible student who has shown exceptional achievement through academic and extracurricular accomplishments despite adverse socioeconomic conditions. The student has also demonstrated involvement in activities that assist and improve the lives of others and has exhibited outstanding leadership qualities that reflect the ideals of the Pister Leadership Opportunity Program.” In addition to achieving a strong academic record, Mason founded and led a very active Science Club at Gavilan College and on top of those efforts dedicated many a weekend as a park aid to serve Coe Park visitors.



Mason doing fieldwork

Somehow, despite his heavy academic and other commitments at Gavilan College, Mason accumulated a great storehouse of knowledge about the park: its near and remote creeks, canyons, peaks, and water sources. He contributed vital help not only to the public but to park staff stretched to their limit by budget constraints and to volunteers on duty. Many of you will have worked with Mason at the visitor center and know what a valuable colleague he was. Recently he started working full time for Timothy Reilly, an environmental scientist for California State Parks, on resource management projects in the Coe backcountry. He was actually put in charge of the work crew when the environmental scientist wasn't present. Among other things Mason worked on invasive weed control, bullfrog control, pond surveys, pig baiting and trapping, and other projects. He plans to major in ecology at the University of California, Santa Cruz. His academic achievements and his considerable experience interacting both with Coe Park visitors and Coe Park ecology position him especially well to follow this academic path.

Congratulations, Mason!

A mountain kingsnake on the Corral Trail near the Coe Park visitor center.
Photo by park aid and reptile specialist, Mason Hyland.



The PRA Calendar

Mark your calendars—important dates

Mounted Assistance Unit Event

Saturday, September 25, moonlight ride and pot-luck, Hunting Hollow. For more information, contact Bonnie Stromberg at bonniestromberg@yahoo.com.

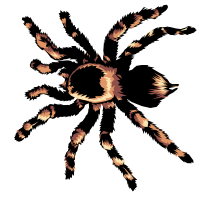
Gilroy Hot Springs Full-Moon Campouts

September 24-26 (Friday-Sunday). For information and to register, email info@friendsofgilroyhotsprings.org or call 408-314-7185.



Tarantula Festival

Saturday October 2, the annual *Tarantulafest*. Mark your calendars for the fun-filled day. More information is available at www.coepark.org, including ticket sales from www.tarantulafestival.eventbrite.com or call 1-888-541-9753.



News from the Board of the Pine Ridge Association

The Board of Directors of the Pine Ridge Association met on July 21, 2010 at the home of Barbara Bessey and Kevin Gilmartin.

- Volunteer committee chair Bonnie Stromberg reported that applications for this year's new volunteer class are strong and that arrangements for the volunteer training are in place.
The committee plans to post guidelines for foot, horse, and mountain bike patrol online soon.
- Treasurer Dan McCranie reported that income from the Mother's Day Breakfast and 10K run/walk set records. Donations are down, but overall income from all sources is \$9,442, which is on track to equal last year. A pending sale of stock that was gifted to the PRA will yield the treasury approximately \$26,000. Dan will create a budget for 2011 so various expenses that currently need to be approved individually may be provided for in advance in the budget.
- Diana Maloney reported on her group's efforts to give the PRA a meaningful presence on the web and in various social media. A survey of PRA members and friends will be conducted to determine the preferences and needs of our audience.
- The board approved the purchase new radio batteries to replace those that have begun to deteriorate.
- A new projector was purchased after approval to do so at the last meeting.
- Possible vendors to help update the PRA website and move content from the Coe Park site to the PRA site are being interviewed and evaluated.

The next board meeting of the Pine Ridge Association will be held at 7:00 pm on Wednesday, September 22 in the EOC Room of the Morgan Hill Police Department, 16200 Vineyard Boulevard, Morgan Hill. All PRA members are welcome to attend.

Ron Erskine
President, Board of the Pine Ridge Association

Larry Haimowitz, 63, a Longtime Coe Volunteer and Even Longer Time Bachelor, Got Married May 16th in Laramie, Wyoming

By Bonnie Lemons

The wedding can be vouched for by best man Thom Parks, also a former Coe volunteer, and his wife Diane—and by former volunteers Lee Sims and Bonnie Lemons. Larry looked great in a tux (and tuxedo shirt made by Robin), and he danced. The bride is Robin Kay Hill, 57, a warm and charming woman from an old Laramie family. She's a computer scientist for the faculty development center at the University of Wyoming and also teaches logic for the Philosophy Department. She wore a glowing, flowing dress she made herself, and she danced really well.



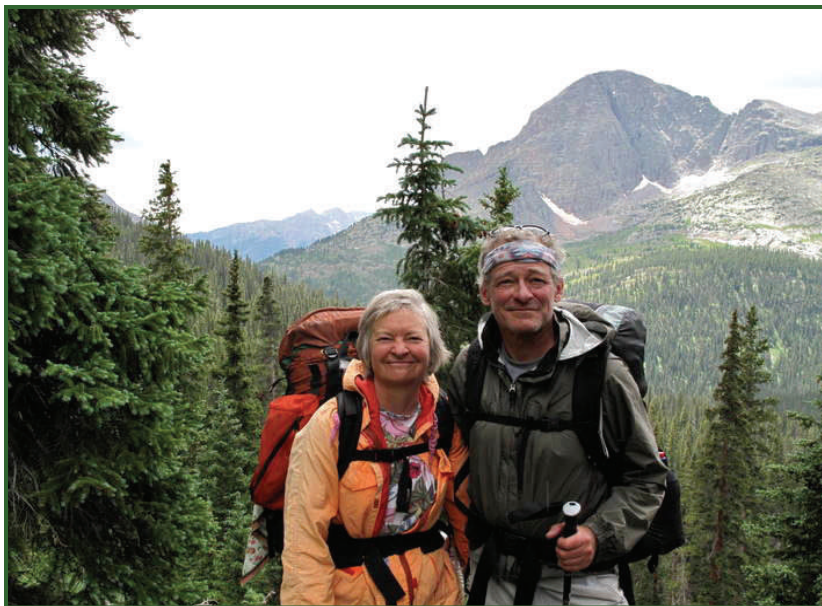
The wedding featured a chuppah, and a glass was smashed. About 200 people attended the reception, which featured bison and salmon, poetry, an original musical composition, and a bluegrass band. Afterward, Robin and Larry went camping.

Larry and Robin were introduced by Larry's cousin, who is an old friend of Robin's. For a couple of years, it's been back and forth between Robin's Laramie house and Larry's San Jose townhouse.

Robin starts a sabbatical in September, which will take the couple to Stanford for three months and Oxford for six. They will settle in Laramie. Larry plans to continue working as an occupational safety consultant.

Robin's friends say she loves backpacking, and they don't seem at all concerned that Larry might lose her on a hike.

Said a beaming Larry: "She's the person I've been looking for all my life."

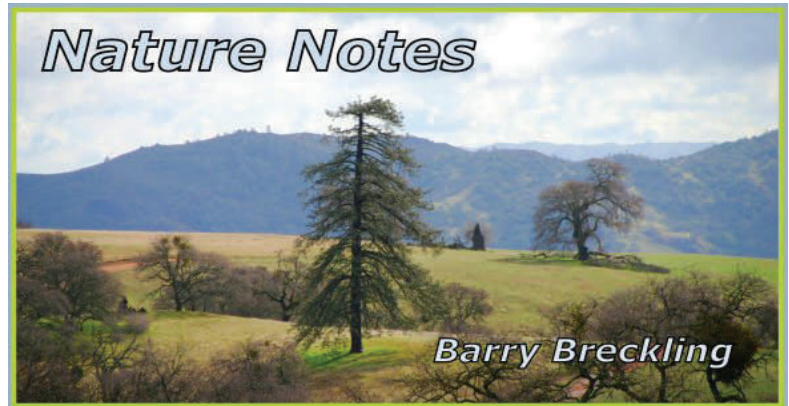


Larry and Robin,
San Juan Mountains, Wyoming 2009.
Photo by Karl Branting

Conifers of Coe

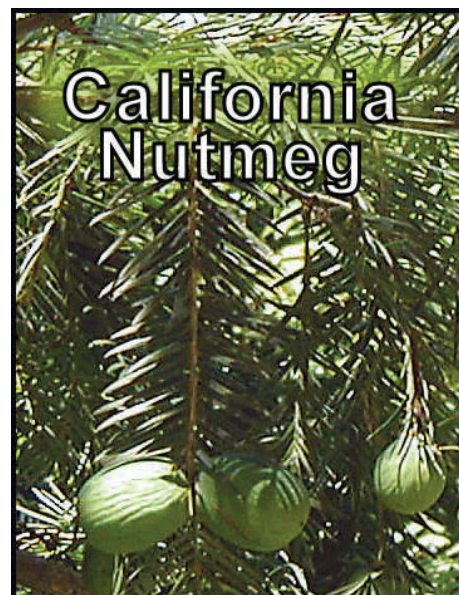
Coe Park has four species of conifers. The most noticeable is the Ponderosa Pine. It is found in much of the West including the Rockies and parts of Canada and Mexico. It's the most common pine in California forming dense forests—the Great Green Wall—in the mid elevations of the Sierra Nevada Mountains and North Coast Ranges, but it has a spotty distribution in the South Coast Ranges. In the Diablo Range, the only places Ponderosa Pines are found are around Coe Park and small populations at Mount Hamilton. The common pine on Hamilton, and further south in the Diablo Range as well as on Fremont Peak, is the similar looking Coulter Pine. If fires are excluded from Ponderosa Pine forests, numerous small trees make crowded thickets that can have devastating effects when a fire finally goes through. Occasional fires thin out undergrowth and provide a seed bed for new trees.

The other pine at Coe Park has many names. The Jepson manual gives it two very descriptive ones: Foothill Pine and Gray Pine. I like the name Gray Pine. They have also been called Ghost Pine, Blue Pine, Bull Pine, Nut Pine, and for a while Digger Pine. The word “digger” was a derogatory name used for California Indians, so it is clearly not appropriate. Gray Pines grow in dry areas often in association with Blue Oaks. They can survive in areas with as little as 10 inches of annual rain. They are a California endemic—native only to California—where they ring the foothills surrounding the Great Central Valley. The trunk is often forked into two or more main branches and their foliage is rather sparse making them poor company when you're looking for shade on a summer day. Their nearly pineapple sized cones contain large nuts that were used for food by Indians.



Another Coe conifer is the California Juniper. It also likes dry foothill habitats and more or less rings the Great Central Valley, but it is also found in Southern California as well as Nevada and Arizona. In Coe Park they are mostly found at scattered locations, but in some areas, such as on the Thomas addition, they grow in good numbers in open woodlands. Although they can reach tree size (there's a rather tall one on the west side of China Hole), their multiple trunks belie their true form as a shrub.

The final conifer is the very uncommon California Nutmeg. It grows mostly as individual trees or in small groups and is found from Fremont Peak north through the coast ranges and in the middle elevations of the Sierra Nevada. At Coe Park, they have only been found on the north-facing slope above the East Fork Narrows and in a few canyons on the east side of Blue Ridge. Most of the plants on Blue Ridge probably burned in the 2007 Lick Fire. The good news is that they stump sprout. The trees, up to about 50 feet tall, have bright green needles with needle-sharp tips. The green oblong fruit apparently reminded early botanists of the fruit of the unrelated tropical nutmeg plants.



Phyllis Drake, October 28, 1929-May 25, 2010

By Chere Bargar

Phyllis Drake, “A woman of compassion, open-mindedness, a love for nature.” Obituary in the *San Jose Mercury News*, Friday May 29, 2010.

Phyllis was an active Coe Park volunteer for many years. She did everything from helping at events, organizing lunch for the Pine Ridge Association annual meeting, cleaning out water troughs, working on trails, staffing the visitor center, and helping with new volunteer training. On one ride-along, Phyllis became famous when her SUV had not one, not two, but *three* flat tires. She knitted a beautiful afghan that featured scenes of Coe Park and donated it as a prize in the fall raffle one year. Barry Breckling remembers Phyllis as “a well rounded and dependable volunteer, and a friendly and nice lady too.”

Phyllis rode her horse many miles on patrol, pruning, and exploring possible new trails (including the Alquist Trail) with Joan Throgmorton, Ruby Domino, Kitty Swindle, and Chere Bargar. She worked many hours on the Juan Bautista de Anza National Heritage Trail. She was afraid to ride downhill but that didn't stop her; she just got off and led her horse, or slid down on her behind—she just didn't get left behind! She was a founding member and first coordinator of the Coe Park mounted assistance unit and the originator of “The Awards of Dubious Merit.” These awards are still a highlight of the mounted assistance unit's February meeting.

Phyllis and her husband, Don, were both long-time members of the San Martin Horsemen's Association. They and their family were very active in the club, helping and participating in everything from gymkhanas to North American Trail Ride Conference rides. A number of years ago, at a San Martin Horsemen's Christmas program, Phyllis played the part of a waitress in a skit with her slip hanging below her dress, chewing gum loudly and making rude and funny comments to the patrons. I laughed until the tears poured down my face. I was very impressed with her acting skills, and to this day I smile when I think of her performance.

Phyllis was bright, articulate, witty, and a good sport. If she wasn't smiling it was because she was laughing. Phyllis was devoted to her family, loved parks and open space. When she set out to do a job or project, she did it well. We will miss her smile, her laugh, her enthusiasm, and her many contributions to Coe Park.



Phyllis staffing the visitor center



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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 bonniestromberg@yahoo.com.

Please send submissions and ideas to the editor at: PRAnewsletter@wildblue.net.

Deadline for next issue: October 24, 2010





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Henry W. Coe State Park Tarantula Festival and Barbeque



Saturday, October 2nd, 2010
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Food Served from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Meal Selections:

<p>Marinated Chicken Dinner</p>  <p>\$15</p> <p>(\$4) Tax deductible</p>	<p>Santa Maria Style Steak Dinner</p>  <p>\$15</p> <p>(\$4) Tax deductible</p>	<p>Vegetarian Dinner</p>  <p>\$8</p> <p>(\$4) Tax deductible</p>	<p>Grilled Hot Dog Dinner</p>  <p>\$5</p> <p>(\$4) Tax deductible</p>
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All meals are served with barbeque beans, tossed salad, and grilled French bread. Soft drinks, juice, beer provided by local Brewery, and wine will be available for nominal prices.

To order meal tickets please go to www.tarantulafestival.eventbrite.com or call them to phone order at 1-888-541-9753 and ask to buy tickets for the Tarantula Festival. You will receive your tickets by mail, there will be no tickets held at will call.

Event tickets are for food only. Parking is limited please carpool

A limited number of meal tickets will be sold day off, ..

Deadline to Order tickets
September, 24 2010

Parking (payable when you arrive) is \$8.00 (\$7.00 senior rate 62 or older) and is limited; buying a meal ticket ensures you a parking space. Please carpool if at all possible.

Directions: Take the East Dunne Avenue exit off Highway 101 in Morgan Hill. Coe Ranch Entrance is at the end of East Dunne Avenue, 13 miles east of 101. for more information, see our website at www.coepark.org or call (408) 779-2728. Proceeds benefit operations and interpretive programs.

Event Sponsored and supported by:

