



TAMALPAIS GUARDIAN

Guardian of the Mountain since 1912

President's Message: Winter 2023

The Tale of Bald Hill

This is a story which began once upon a time, long, long ago, 20 million years ago, when the Farallon plate subducted under the continental North American plate. Ocean floor sediments, including some rocks of deep volcanic origin, were uplifted. Much of that sediment was compressed to the mudstone and shale that are found on much of Mt. Tamalpais; interestingly, Pilot Knob and Bald Hill incorporated metamorphic igneous greenstone. (You can read about this in the TCC book written by Barry Spitz, *To Save a Mountain*.)

The bald top of the 1100 foot hill crowns the landmark of the Ross Valley.

For many decades, most hikers assumed the top was part of the MMWD lands, or public. In fact, it was long privately owned. The modern part of this story begins 36 years ago, and like all good stories, it is a tale of work by good people over the decades, and long, slogging, unappreciated work by one: the hero of our tale. By the time you read this, the happy ending should almost be written.

In 1987, San Anselmo Open Space Committee began, with the San Anselmo town council, a collaboration with the town of Ross to create Measure D, in 1990. It would have, via a small parcel tax on residents of both towns, created public funding with the hope of purchasing the 60 acre summit of Bald Hill. A 2/3 majority was required. It passed with an overwhelming majority in Ross, but a few precincts in San Anselmo were less enthusiastic, and it failed by a mere 180 votes. Some of us worked on that campaign and are thrilled today to see this beautiful hilltop become public land in perpetuity.

Between 1993 and 2015, the county, San Anselmo and other partners made a series of purchases on the

northern face of Bald Hill, including Sky Ranch, to which the TCC made a small donation. These four land purchases totaled 46 acres, but are not contiguous with the summit property. Now, 106 acres total have been added to land on the hill for anyone to enjoy.

Every fairy tale has its own favorite character. This true tale does, too: an entomologist who used to be part of MOST discovered a unique, tiny spider there! It is the Ross Blind Harvestman. You can look for it...

The hero of the story is Jonathan Braun. He has been working on this project since 1987, quietly, with dedication worthy of any fairy tale prince. Thousands of hours of voluntary research, discussions, offers declined, discouragement and worry: not many are aware that saving the beauty of that magnificent place will be in greatest part thanks to him.

The property was put on the open market for a year in 2021. Open space advocates jumped at the chance to secure, finally, the 60 acre mountain top. After the year ended, MOST (Marin Open Space Trust) raised the funds to purchase it:

- The TCC donated \$250,000.
- The Town of Ross approved a \$200,000 contribution, and San Anselmo also donated \$200,000 from the San Anselmo Open Space Committee Fund.
- The Marin County Board of Supervisors approved \$850,000.
- Private donors made up the rest.

The Supervisors voted to take over the property, and it will become part of the county's Bald Hill Open Space Preserve. For the past year, Jonathan has spent

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Tamalpais Conservation Club

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Perry Cole Obituary



Perry Walker Cole, born in San Francisco in 1939 to Jane and Bill Cole, died on November 23rd at his home in San Rafael, with his loving family at his side. Because of his

Dad's job with the telephone company, Perry's parents moved several times when Perry was a boy. His early years were spent in San Jose, Salinas, and Santa Cruz. The family moved to Marin County in 1949 where Perry attended Ross Grammar school. It was here that he met life long friends that led to many adventures. Perry loved to tell stories of their early backpack trips in the Sierras, bonfires on the beach, canoeing down the Russian River, hunting at Pt. Reyes with bows and arrows, making beer and distilling it in his mother's kitchen, and many other mischievous undertakings which earned him and his friends a reputation with the local Ross authorities. In his early years, Perry learned to sail the Bay from his Uncle Perry, taking the helm as his uncle took a nap. He went on to become an avid sailor, with one most memorable trip to the British Virgin Islands. Perry went on to graduate from Drake High School in 1957 where he swam competitively on the high school swim team. Perry first attended Menlo College and then moved to Montreal where he graduated from McGill university with a degree in Zoology. One of his fondest memories of McGill was the summer he spent in Barbados at the Bellaire Research Institute tagging flying fish. After graduation, Perry moved to Bethesda, MD where he worked in research at NIH. During this period, he served in the Navy Reserves. He then attended Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN where he obtained his Master's degree in Biochemistry and Organic Chemistry. From Nashville,

Perry went on to obtain his Ph.D. in Biochemistry and Immunology from Louisiana State University in Shreveport, LA. Perry then relocated to the University of Arizona in Tucson to do postgraduate work in immunology, studying multiple myeloma. It was here, while Perry was working at the VA Hospital, that he met his wife and partner of 38 years, Rosel Mulkey. They married in 1994 and had a lifetime of love and adventures together. Following his post-doc work in Arizona, Perry moved back to California, where he worked at San Francisco General Hospital in the Nuclear Medicine Department until he retired in 2001. In later years, Perry came out of retirement to help his wife with her business. He took great pleasure in this and he was not only an amazing support for his wife, but all of her patients as well. Perry was a devoted volunteer with the Sierra Club and the Tamalpais Conservation Club, the latter of which he served as President and the group's treasurer for over 20 years. He was instrumental in preserving Mt. Baldy in Ross for future generations to enjoy. Perry had many interests and hobbies and had a great zest for life. He was a creative, quick witted, fun loving and risk-taking kind of guy. He spoke his mind, lived with no regrets and had extreme gratitude for a blessed life. He never experienced boredom and always found something positive and exciting in every new adventure. Perry was

an amazing father and husband and supported his family in every way possible. He was a kind, gentle and selfless person. He loved spending time in nature as his many hobbies reflected that. From duck hunting with his brother Bill in Oregon, to numerous fly fishing trips with his son Stephan, (including Alaska multiple times), he cherished each of these experiences. With his daughters Jessica and Jamie and his wife Rosel, he loved spending vacations and weekends backpacking, camping, hiking, walking the beaches, snorkeling in Hawaii and skiing. He and his wife travelled the country in search of backpacking adventures, some of which included backpacking the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and numerous national parks. Perry is survived by his beloved wife, Rosel, his dear children, Stephan of St. Paul, MN, Jessica and Jamie of San Rafael, his sister Cathy Kirk of Orcas, WA, his nieces and nephews, Kelly Cole Brown, Amy Cole, Elisabeth Kirk Lancaster, Christopher Kirk, Jeremy Kirk, Ian Kirk, and his former wife and mother of Stephan Cole, Sallie Weaver. He was preceded in death by his parents, Bill (1968), Jane (1993) and his brother Bill (2019). A memorial in honor of Perry will occur at a later date. *Memorial contributions can be made in Perry's name to Trout Unlimited, PO Box 7400, Woolly Bugger, WV 25438, SF/Marin Food Bank, Planned Parenthood and Spirit Rock, PO Box 169, Woodacre, CA 94973.*



Jonathan Braun (MOST) receiving the \$250,000 donation from TCC President Janice Barry

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further countless hours to assure that the complex legal requirements of every party are met. Even now, the county will have work ahead to repair some of its eternal landslides to make it safe for hikers.

When you hike there, perhaps in spring to see the magnificent view across to Mt Tamalpais over the grass, iris, and checkerbloom at the top, remember a bit of gratitude to the town council members and mayors from then until now, and the uncountable hours spent by Jonathan.

The Tamalpais Conservation Club is thrilled to have been able to make a substantial contribution to this, probably the last large parcel to be included in the purchases begun in 1912, with the goal of transferring the mountain from private to public hands.

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Another hero in this tale is Derek Anderson, a former board member, along with his wife, Pat. His brilliant guidance of the TCC's investments meant we had the funds to make the significant gift this year for Bald Hill.

Perhaps every tale has a tragic part. For this one, it is the death of our long time board member and treasurer, Perry Cole. Perry grew up near Bald Hill, hiking there in his youth and later years. He joined in our joy to contribute to making the hill public, and hoped to be with us to present the check to Jonathan for MOST. He was a kind, knowledgeable guide to the TCC, and we miss him.

Janice Barry, MD, President



Artwork by Janice Barry, MD for the 1990 campaign to save Bald Hill. Prints were displayed in local store windows to help advertise it to the public.

Time Value

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