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Timber Cove Foundation is a 501c3 nonprofit public benefit corporation founded in 2017. We support civic improvement including forest management, fire abatement, and water resources development. We promote the improvement, maintenance, and safety of Timber Cove easements, including private hiking trails through the forests and coastal areas of our community for the benefit of all residents, and promote social interaction, dialogue, and cohesion by supporting community events and publications. The Foundation can facilitate other board approved community improvements by accepting targeted donations for specific projects to address emerging needs in the community.

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OUR NEW PROJECTS

New Trail Restoration

Our 2026 Trail Work Days are set for **April 18 and 19, 2026**, with a rain fall back for April 25 and 26. Volunteers and paid help will be restoring two segments connecting Timber Cove Road to Gordon Court and Koftinow. This is one of the trails that will also provide an emergency pedestrian escape route to residents of those two cul de sacs.

We named the new trail Stillwater Creek Trail because it crosses a lovely creek that empties into the *real* Stillwater Cove, just north of Ninive Drive. [What we usually call Stillwater Cove is technically and historically Stockhoff Creek.] Thanks to Richard Murphy for the map.

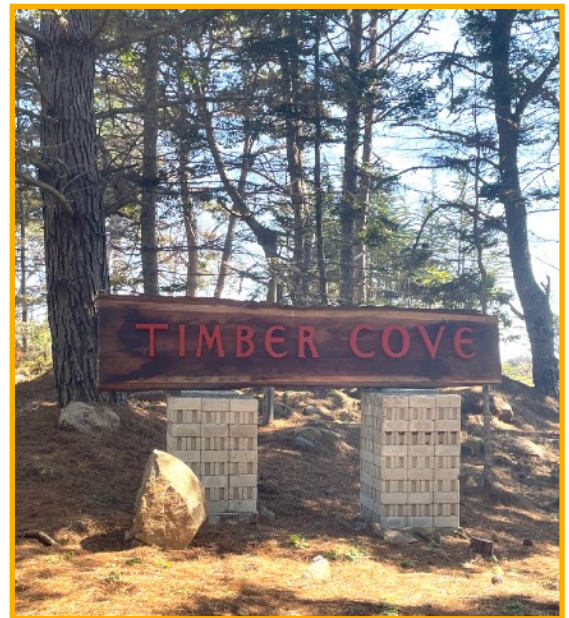
[Map of Stillwater Creek Trail](#)

If you use or appreciate any of our trails please make a donation for upkeep and maintenance by clicking the "Donate" button or mailing a check to the address above. You can also volunteer your time or expertise to a variety of projects, from events to fundraising. Contact us at the email address above.

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We like to see things get done! Congratulations to Mark and Krissy Van Divner for rebuilding the Timber Cove highway sign near Pacific View Drive.

Todd Chisum, a retired master carpenter from Martinez, volunteered his time to meticulously



**Rebuilt Timber Cove Highway Sign**  
**A big thank you from all!**

replicate the original letters. They are truly a work of art.

First, tanoak is not a true oak! But how can that be? It makes acorns. The tanoak (*Notholithocarpus densiflorus*) is an evergreen tree in the beech family which includes beeches, oaks, and chestnuts. Tanoaks are thought to be a connecting link between true oaks and chestnuts.

It is called tanoak because of the rich amounts of tannin in the bark, which was almost its undoing, unfortunately. Tannin was used for centuries to convert hide into durable leather and during the settlement era tanoaks in California nearly disappeared due to over harvesting. What saved them was that the leather industry switched to more modern and less expensive tanning agents like sodium sulfate, calcium hydroxide, and other acids and liming agents.



Tanoak in Six Rivers National Forest, near Somes Bar, California; Photo: USDA Forest Service.

Now this lovely tree's problem is a high susceptibility to the dreaded Sudden Oak Death Syndrome. (*Phytophthora ramorum*).

Tanoaks can reach up to 130 feet-tall and produce an acorn favored by many coastal tribes. According to Sierra Club author David Casterson:

*The Kashaya Pomo of the present day Fort Ross called, and continue to call, the tanoak "Chishkale" which means beautiful tree. (Ortiz, per.comm. 2014).*

Although prized for their beauty, the Kashaya did not use tanoaks to tan animal hides. They used animal



brains! It was a common saying among trappers in the 1800s that every animal had enough brains to tan its own hide.



The most important aspect of the tree for Kashaya was the acorn that formed a staple of their diet. To share a quote from *Useful Plants of California* by Charlotte Clarke:

*People who use acorns today agree that they resemble other nuts in oiliness and flavor. They contain significant quantities of calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, sulfur, fat and protein. They are especially good in cookies, bread and pies.*

For anyone interested in gathering and processing your own acorns, there is a little gem of a book called [Acorns and Eat 'em by Suellen Ocean](#), which is now available free on line.

But if you don't want to go to that much trouble and just want to get straight to baking, acorn flour is available at any good Korean market, usually labeled as acorn starch, and is also available online. It is a powder with an appearance like fine ground dried mushrooms.

My personal favorite is to make peanut butter crisscross cookies. Choose your favorite cookie recipe and just swap out 1/4 cup of the regular flour for 1/4 cup of the acorn flour. It will turn regular cookies into a satisfying energy bar type experience that will keep you feeling full for a long time.

Hope you liked this brief profile of an often under appreciated member of our local forest.

Sources and more information:

Casterson, David. In the Company of Redwoods: An Interactive Guide to Learning 50 Redwood Community Plants through Hand Tinting. Aptos: Natural Sight Press, 2004. Pages 104-105.

Clarke, Charlotte, Edible and Useful Plants of California, University of California Press; 1978.

Lightfoot, Kent G. and Parrish, Otis, California Indians and Their Environment: an Introduction; Berkeley : University of California Press; 2009.

Ortiz, Beverly R. "Cultural Handout: Contemporary California Indians, Oaks and Sudden Oak Death (*Phytophthora ramorum*)." General Technical Reports 217, pp. 39-56. U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region. 2008.

**Ruth Marshall**

Artist Beniamino Benevento Bufano began work on the 93-foot tall sculpture at Timber Cove at the same time that Richard Clements began construction of the Timber Cove Inn in 1962. The two knew each other since at least 1946 when Clements became a patron of the Bufano Society for the Arts.

Clements had purchased the Gualala Hotel the year before and the two were staying there with Bufano's long-time friend, photographer Ansel Adams. Clements commissioned a statue to draw attention to his new development at Timber Cove and he hired Adams to photographically record the construction of both the hotel and sculpture. In 1961 the team developed a brochure to advertise Timber Cove Properties along with "Hatsy" Beardsley, who later became his sales agent. Marin County surveyor and engineer Ken Frost designed a foundation for the sculpture and got a street named after him.

We have mentioned these collaborators in previous issues but now we examine Bufano's personal vision for the work he labored on for the next seven years in a shop set up for him in the rear of the Gualala Hotel and at his studio in San Francisco. He never received money for this work, rather Clements committed to setting up a scholarship for young sculptors.

### Hand, Madonna, Child, Peace

As with so many artists, some of Bufano's life facts are obscure and interwoven with fantasy. Born in Italy the youngest of 15 children in 1890, he emigrated with his family to New York City at age 3. He was

already an aspiring artist when a traumatic accident in 1917 severed part of his right index finger, a calamity for a young sculptor. In later years Bufano encouraged the legend that he mailed his detached digit to President Woodrow Wilson to protest his declaration of war. He was passionate, audacious, pugnacious, and just five feet tall.

Bufano settled permanently in San Francisco in 1921 and during the Depression years explored his



fascination with the natural world by distilling animal forms down to curvilinear shapes that often expressed emotion. He juxtaposed opposites: a fierce grizzly bear looking over the head of a benign madonna; a mouse resting peacefully on the back of a cat. St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals, became a recurring theme.

His first "Peace" statue introduced a Madonna and the Universal Child in a work intended for the San Francisco Golden Gate Exposition in 1938-39. Many Bay Area natives remember seeing it at SFO from 1958 to 1996, just as they remember coming across his other distinctive works scattered around the Bay. This prototype "Peace" was a 38 foot-tall stainless steel projectile in the shape of a WWI artillery shell. He used black granite to create a simplified feminine head with ample breasts atop the sculpture, with a multi-eyed, multi-hued child figure below, symbolizing the Universal Child. Bufano wrote:

*I sculptured "Peace" in the form of a projectile, to express the idea that if peace is to be preserved today it must be enforced peace---enforced by the democracies against Fascist barbarism. Modern warfare, which involves the bombing of women and children, has no counterpart in a peace interpreted by the conventional motif of olive branches and doves. (from Bufano essay For the Present We Are Busy (Washington, DC: The Federal Art Project, 1939).*

Bufano mused on these themes for the next two decades and then on a visit to the Soviet Union with a delegation of artists in 1958, he brought along a 4-foot model of a proposed 400 foot-tall Peace statue that he envisioned erecting there. He actually spoke on the phone to Soviet Premier Nikolai Bulganin, who diplomatically declined his offer. Bufano countered with an offer to erect Peace on behalf of the USSR in front of the United Nations building in New York. Bulganin



**Bufano in his studio with model 1963 (note missing digit) (S.F. Library)**

suggested that he clear that with President Dwight Eisenhower. A sincere letter to the U. S. President elicited only a form letter in response. It is this frustrated vision, vetoed by both a premier and a president, that began to materialize on the northern California coast in the old logging community of Timber Cove four years later.

By this time the WWI artillery shell had morphed into the shape of the intercontinental ballistic missiles that threatened the globe in that year of the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. The large open hand, with all its precious digits intact, the Madonna, and the Universal Child were all obsessive themes in Bufano's later work.

Although it is often titled *Peace*, Bufano named this sculpture *The*

*Expanding Universe*, apparently referring to the ground breaking discovery made by Edwin Hubble in 1929. He is quoted in *Bufano: an intimate biography* by Howard Wilkening and Sonia Brown:

*...Maybe if the world gets frightened enough, we'll have peace...Man is a stupid beast. He seldom learns unless he is shocked into thinking. The greatest good to thinking has been the invention of atomic fission. It is terrible in its worst aspects, but God has seen fit for it to happen so that mankind can be saved. The great force of atomic fission has blown man out of his convenient nationalism into international thinking. If it is fear that must awaken man to brotherhood and humanity ... then let's scare the hell out of him!" (141)*

The main trunk of the sculpture, made of concrete and lead, was the only part standing when the Timber Cove Inn opened in 1963. The solid redwood hand covered in mosaic tiles and the Madonna's head lay in a nearby field for the next five years. The Vietnam War commandeered all the helicopters that might be powerful enough to lift them to the top.

Meanwhile Bufano sculpted a female torso to grace the Inn's central swimming pool (now a patio), and built other monumental sculptures expressing these themes around the Bay. Richard Clements had moved on to heading up the Peace Corps in the Dominican Republic.

We have recounted in other issues the ill-fated attempt by Bufano's friends in Timber Cove to surprise him by finishing the job with a crane while he was at his studio in Italy in 1969. Unfortunately they reversed the direction of the Madonna's gaze, intended by the artist to face the land, not the sea. Bufano spent the last year of his life accommodating that error, and likely did not finish the job before his death on August 16, 1970. During those last years he wore a button that read, *Yes, Peace*.

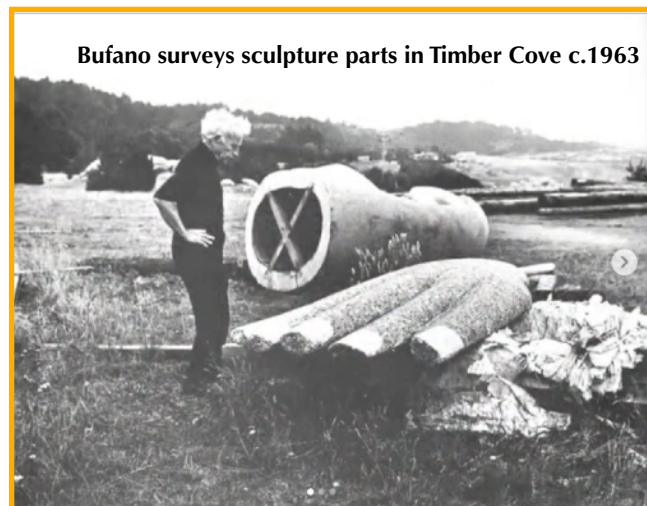
Benny Bufano's artistic ambitions yearned toward the monumental, although some of his unrealized visions have not aged well: an 800-foot arch on Alcatraz; Yosemite's El Capitan covered in gleaming tiles in the form of St. Francis, or alternately carved in the likeness of President Franklin Roosevelt. Bufano's universe was unique, personal, and, like our own, ever expanding.

Further Reading and Sources:

[Beniamino Bufano on Public Art](#)

[Missiles of Peace, Breck Parkman, 2007](#)

[Interview with Benny Bufano, 1965](#)



**Bufano surveys sculpture parts in Timber Cove c.1963**

### Seventies Dancing Craze

On our journey through primary sources for Timber Cove we have arrived at the construction decade of the 1870s. As the often relocated steam sawmills masticated the ancient redwood and fir of our canyons and hillsides, the lumber economy still boomed and the stage road through Sonoma County saw increasing traffic. Henry's Hotel, our focus last time, was but one among several hotels and public halls on the coast, all constructed in the same era. And wherever there was a roof and a large wooden floor, it seems they held a ball.

Not unlike the disco dancing craze of the 1970s, coastal settlements couldn't seem to get enough waltzing balls a century before. The first dances would have been unpublicized and may have been in barns, the only structures large enough to hold a crowd. The first recorded "ball" at Timber Cove was held on February 22, 1870. Although no structure is mentioned, it was probably Helmke's (later Miller's) Hotel and Store about where the Timber Cove Resort is today. Kimball & Carter's band provided the music to drown out the heavy rains that night.

### Chance for a Bride

A visitor arriving at Timber Cove in November 1871 recalled:

*...Sounds of revelry were heard and we were informed by several that a dance was in progress at the hotel. The long and tedious day's ride had created an appetite that dissipated all romantic ideas, but after partaking of a steaming supper, we were content that the ball should go on... We had no bed, and were not in a dancing humor. Just as we were becoming discouraged at the all night prospect ahead, W. R. Miller, the head and front of Timber Cove, offered lodging at his house, which we readily accepted.*

*On the following morning when we arose we found the fog had cleared away, and old Sol was dazzling in splendor upon the waters. Timber Cove had not yet recovered from the effect of last night's dissipation. Several of the yeomanry were hilarious, and Constable Price and Justice Armstrong had their official hands full to keep the peace...*



**well-dressed young lady in 1871  
Elizabeth Brian, Petaluma  
(Sonoma County Library)**

In a settlement made up largely of unmarried, adult males, these dances gave the few single ladies a chance to assess their marital prospects, and the young men a chance for a bride, if they could afford one. At a dance given as a surprise party for a Mrs. Conway at Henry's Hotel at Sea View in April 1872, we learn that the single eligible ladies are but three: Misses Coburn, Lowery, and Parks. While Prof. Clark kept the dancers twirling, some of the men,

*...were not unmindful of the comfort of their horses, as was evinced by the many trips made to where the*

*horses were supposed to be hitched, and it was noticeable that every trip made them more and more pleasant, as if the conscientiousness of doing what was right spoke from their hearts through their eyes.*

*It was a matter of surprise to the ladies why the gents should become so suddenly solicitous for the welfare of the equine tribe generally. I observed Mr. O'Brien had a large "horse" of the Muller stock, while O'Connor had a "pony" of the Henry production.*

He most likely referred to the alcoholic "stock" of Carl Muller [who operated a brewery in Healdsburg] and James Henry, proprietor of Henry's Hotel and Saloon. Readers of our last issue might remember that James nabbed one of those three single ladies, Anna Maria Lowery, for his bride only one month later. (Nice work, James.)

All of the hotels in the region seemed to take turns holding these balls. The Gualala House held a Mayday ball in 1872. It opened at 8 p.m. with music by O'Connor, Harden, and Prof. Clark. An onlooker counted 60 couples from Fish Rock, Point Arena, Stewart's Point, Fisk's Mill, and Timber Cove along with other coastal locations.

Pioneer Cyrus Robinson, who inaugurated the first ferry in Gualala in 1857, had just finished building the first Gualala House. According to an attendee:

*...The dancing hall was tolerable good, and floor managers very good. Everything was quiet, and all enjoyed themselves. Supper at twelve o'clock, and the way in which the many delicacies disappeared bore witness to their good quality... Mr. Robinson's new hotel is a fine building, well furnished and neatly kept. His bar is about the nicest on the coast, and adjoining the same is a small room in which the knights of the cue can while away the tedious hours by "punching the ivories."...*

**Till Broad Daylight**

It seemed everyone with a little capital was trying to get into the hotel business to capture that stage traffic. Perhaps they anticipated the inevitable depletion of the lumber fueling the local economy.

By this time Irish immigrant James Dixon had already logged off most of the Fort Ross land he purchased from William Benitz in 1867. He may have been considering a hotel of his own when he held a ball at Fort Ross on July 3, 1872.

*Festivities commenced...by the employees of Jas. Dixon of Fort Ross giving an invitation ball, which was well attended, conducted very nicely and enjoyed by all present. The dancing room was neatly decorated, the supper very good, and the whole arrangement reflects much credit to the ladies and gentlemen of Fort Ross.*

The next evening, July 4, 1872, saw not one, but two balls, one at Plantation House, which was well patronized, and one put on by the Fisk Brothers who then owned Stewart's Point. Regarding the latter the correspondent reported:

*I think it was the greatest success of anything I have seen on the Coast. About seventy couples attended, and all went merry as a marriage bell...Mr. Charles Hook played first violin, and, as a performer on that instrument, he has but few equals in the State, and still fewer superiors... Mr. Snell of Gualala, played second violin...Mr. O'Connor of Henry's Hotel, Timber Cove, performed on the concertina, and he certainly takes more music out of it than any other performer I have heard...Mrs. A. J. Fisk played accompaniments on the piano till 12 o'clock.*

*...The music, like the ball and supper, was a splendid success. Dancing was kept up till broad daylight, when all separated well satisfied.*



Sheet Music for balls, 1872

**Direct Competition**

Even the popular constable of Salt Point Township, Joseph K. Price, decided to get in on the act by opening his own hotel, in direct competition with and just a mile away from Henry's Hotel at Sea View on the stage road. Price probably built near the current junction of Sea View and the Fort Ross-Cazadero Road. He invested heavily in advertising and held an inaugural ball on January 10, 1873, in conjunction with the creation of the "Pacific Lodge, Golden Circle of True Friends".

*Mr. Price promises that the best of music will be provided and that the supper shall be all that can be desired.*



*Admission to the ball, including supper, has been fixed at \$2.50. [That would be about \$66 in 2025.]*

But perhaps the dancing craze was already waning by 1873. At Miller's hotel at Timber Cove on February 22, it was reported:

*Washington's birthday was celebrated...by a ball, which was a success socially, but not financially; and the same may be said of a ball in honor of the same event, at Fisk's Mill, given by Mr. Foster. I wish both better success next time.*

The main Independence Day Ball in 1873 was hosted at Stewart's Point by its owners, the Fisk brothers, John C. and Andrew J., who managed the landing and had a hotel, store, and public hall there. Andrew would be buried in the Fisk Mill Cemetery just one year later.

We are treated to a good list of the upper crust of coastal society at the time headed up by the Fisk brothers and their wives, and the names Baxman, Blanchard, Flllabrown, Harback, Headley, Helmke, Henry, Horton, Inman, Lowe, McClellan, Mitchell, Nolan, O'Connor, O'Neil, Parks, Pendegast, Severight, Shaw, Shone, Stingel, Stump, Targett, and Totten.

These folks danced all night and, in various stages of *hilarity*, as was the custom, finally bid a fond farewell at 5 o'clock a.m.

**Hannah Clayborn © All rights reserved**

**Dance to the Music... of 1872!**

Waltz Quadrille (fiddle)

Dolly Varden Galop (full brass band)

Dolly Varden Song (music box)

**Next time:** We now know the location of the first school and church in Timber Cove!