

Bow in the Limelight

A visit to the Santa Cruz Mountains in 1963 opened his eyes to the beauty of this area, and he purchased a vacation home here. Piwarzyk moved to Bonny Doon — or, as he said, escaped from Los Angeles — in 1975 and soon discovered the ruins of an old lime kiln near his home. Suddenly, bricks were back in his life.

"The lime kilns are lined with firebrick," Piwarzyk said. "I would find shards, or what's known as brickbats, a portion of a brick with letters [stamped] in it."

He was working then for the city of Scotts Valley as an engineer (and would later become the city's public works director), and on the way home from work would stop for a walk at Fall Creek.

At the time, Fall Creek was a unit of Henry Cowell and home to one of the largest lime kiln ruins in the county. He said the walk unwound him from the pressures of

the day.

Today, on the guided walks he leads in Fall Creek, Piwarzyk draws on his background as a mechanical engineer to explain how the lime kilns were constructed and how they operated. He also explains how the intersection of industry and nature left permanent marks on the local environment.

"In the Santa Cruz Mountains ... between the logging for lumber and the logging for fuel to burn in the kilns, you have the evidence of a forest recovering from the impact of man," Piwarzyk explained.

Yet, he added, "not only in the valley, but in other state parks like Nisene [Marks in Aptos] that were heavily exploited, a lot of these roads and trails we hike on today are remnants of these industries."

Colleagues describe Piwarzyk as honest, straight-