

UCSC's 'hidden treasure'

Campus has a lot open for public recreation

By DENISE FRANKLIN
Sentinel staff writer

IT'S A 30-YEAR secret that deserves to be let out.

Just a mile or so from the congestion and exhaust of Mission Street lie 2,000 acres offering deeply shaded redwood groves, sun-filled golden meadows, mouth-dropping views of Monterey Bay, tennis and racquet ball courts, jogging and biking paths and an Olympic-size swimming pool.

It's revealing that all these recreational amenities at UC Santa Cruz are open to the public. Most are without cost, crowds are minimal and, best of all, parking is free on weekends and evenings in all but reserved spaces.

"It is sort of like a hidden treasure," said Andre Dunkell of Santa Cruz, who has been running through the campus for 20 years.

For those who have been drooling from afar over the Olympic-size pool, racquet ball courts, weight room and plentiful tennis courts, it may come as a surprise that all these amenities are open to the public — for a price.

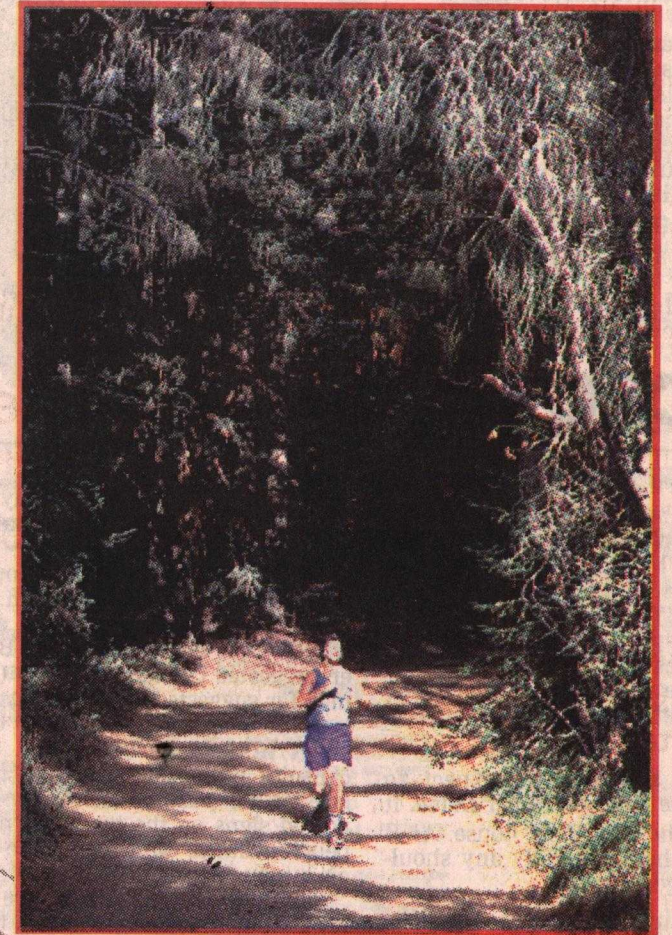
Anyone can purchase a community member card at the East Field House for \$80 a quarter, \$5 a day, or \$290 a year; children 8 and un-

Check in first

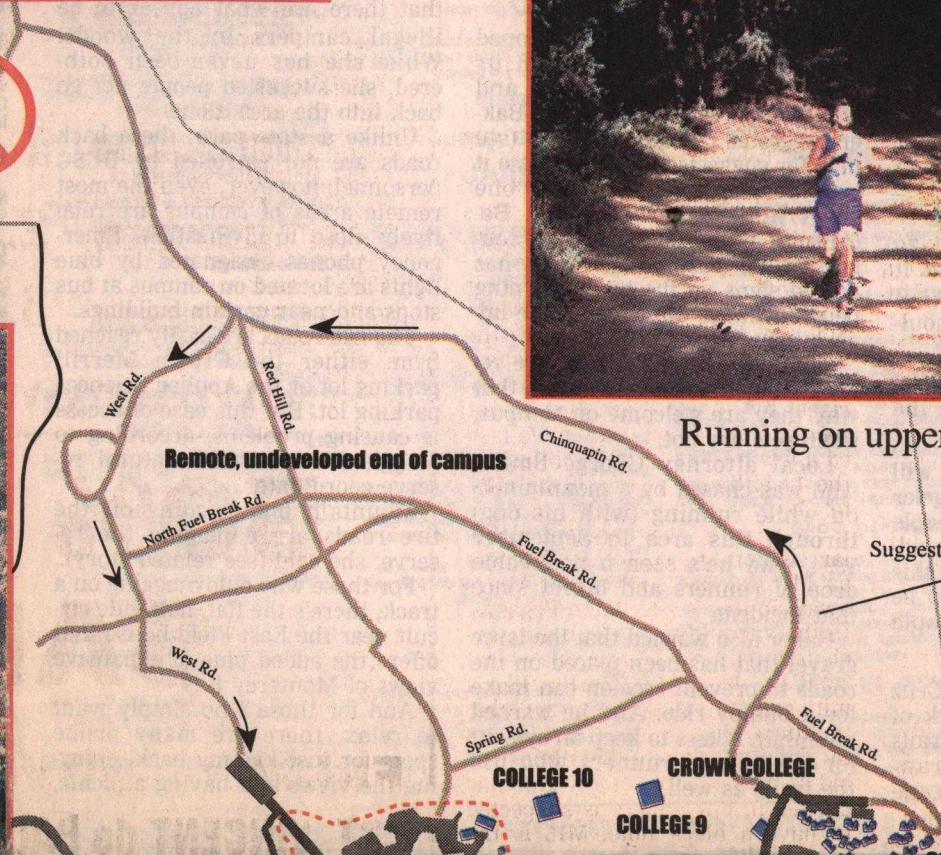
Before heading to UCSC, it's good to know what is open:



Tennis at the East Field House



Running on upper campus trails



Remote, undeveloped end of campus

Suggested mountain bike ride

good to know that is open:

- Swimming pool, tennis courts, field house, etc
- Community membership cards may be purchased
- Detailed maps for hiking and jogging are available
- Rules include no pets, and no biking on some trails

UCSC infoline:

Weekdays.....459-2531
Weekends.....459-2323

der are free, and anyone age 15 and under is charged a lower rate. Cost for UCSC alumni is \$50 a quarter.

During the summer, the shallow part of the pool is roped off for recreational swim for those with rec cards.

And there are plenty of free ways to enjoy UCSC. The tennis courts on the west side of campus, two with new night lighting, are free and opened to the public when classes aren't using them. And the sand volleyball courts on the east and west fields are free as well. (Teams or large groups, however, must reserve these facilities in advance.)

The best time to break away and use the university is weekends, when traffic and people seem to evaporate from site. They are replaced by deer, golden eagles, red tail hawks, coyotes, bobcats and — beware — the occasional cougar.

Just the other day, after a run through the heart of the campus with his wife, Nancy Ogle, and friend Tom Shanle, Dunkell said:

"We saw about a dozen deer on that run in five different places. It was quite engaging. We stopped and looked at the deer. We stopped and looked at the view...."

Most outings on the campus start where Dunkell's run took off: the Great Meadow at the south end (see map accompanying this story).

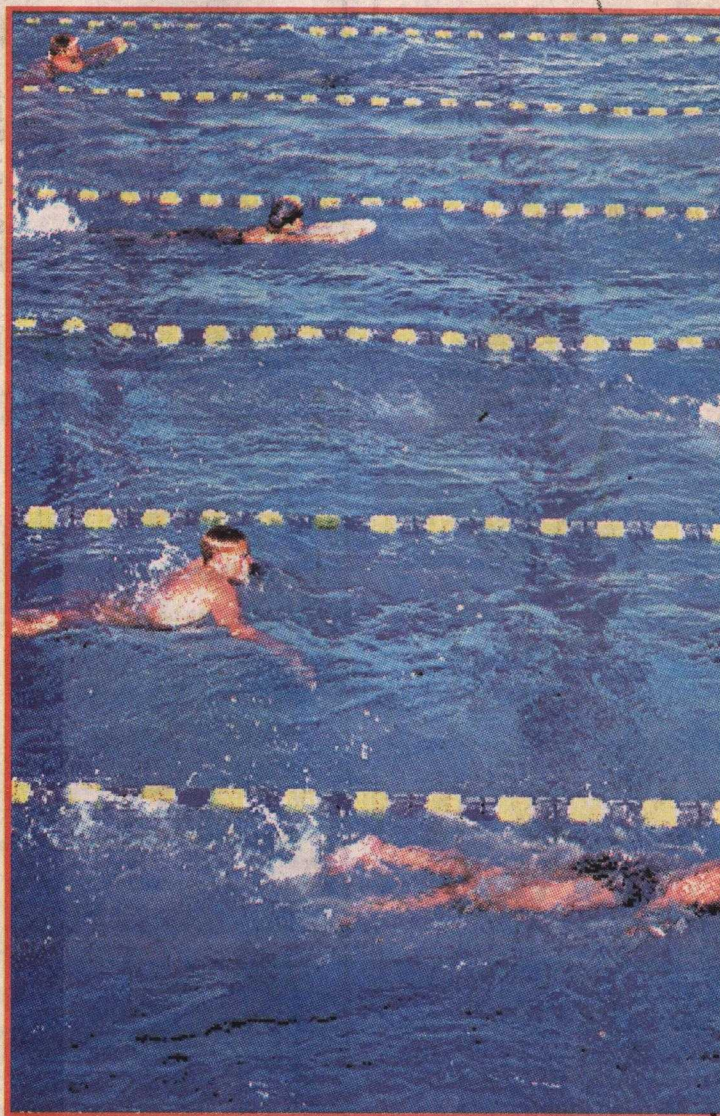
Bicyclists can start the slow, easy climb on the paved path that starts between the historic cook house and blacksmith shop — both reminders of the late 1800s, when the university was the Cowell Ranch.

Hikers and runners should avoid this bike-only route and instead take the foot path that begins at the blacksmith shop, passes the farm and garden project (which is a fabulous place to walk through and take in the last vestiges of the fall harvest), and then parallels Hagar Drive.

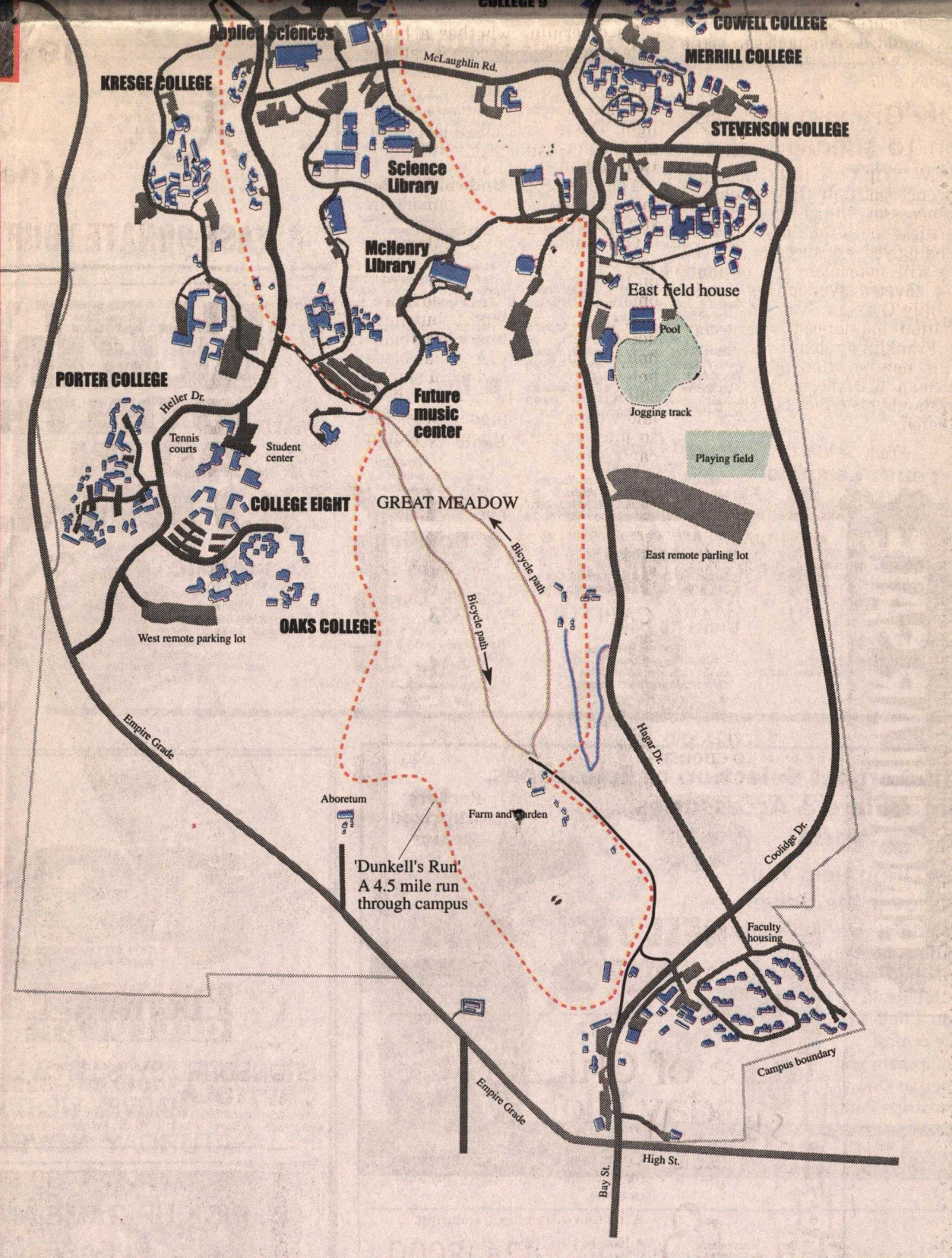
From there, the three runners turned left onto Steinhart Way and passed the Bay Tree Bookstore, where refreshments can be had at the Whole Earth Restaurant. Halfway to McHenry Library, they veered off to a path to the right.

They then skirted the upper quarry. This quarry-turned-college-amphitheater offers a sunny,

Bicycling up the Great Meadow



Swimming at the East Field House



■ Mountain bikers blamed for damage to land — Page C2

quiet resting spot. It and the lower quarry at the cook house are reminders of the Cowell days, when limestone was mined from these hills.

From the quarry, the running trio took East Road to a foot path that runs behind Colleges 9 and 10. This brought them to a trail that goes across the north end of the populated part of the campus down to what Dunkell called "the Kresge

ravine."

A word of caution here: Take care running or walking on the ravine trail; the narrow path is frequently used by bicyclists, as well.

The runners took the ravine trail and crossed back over to Meyer Drive to make the return, downhill run through the Great Meadow.

"We call this the bridge run because you go under almost every

bridge on campus," Dunkell said, "and then end up at the chancellor's house and the entrance to the bike path.

"You then go down the separate trail that runs through the meadow, down to the arboretum (another recommended stopping place), down behind the farm and out where you started. It is an easy 40 minutes or about 4.5 miles," the long-time runner said.

"The nice thing about running this way (in the late afternoon) is that you end up in the open as it starts to get dark," Dunkell said.

For those who enjoy biking, the Great Meadow offers a pedestrian-free, vehicle-free ride. And the ride down from the site of the future music center rivals the Giant Dipper for that free-fall feeling.

As your hair blows back from the wind, and your feet leave the pedals, you can catch a panoramic view of Santa Cruz and the bay beyond. Timing is important, however, because the bike path through the Great Meadow closes at sunset.

And if you encounter any bike problems, friendly students at the

Bike Co-op that recently opened at the student center can provide a fix. Hours are weekdays 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturdays noon to 5 p.m.

Ironically, the campus itself wasn't designed with bikes in mind, according to Larry Pageler, director of transportation and parking services. Back in the 1960s when the campus was designed, the popularity of biking hadn't really hit.

Therefore, UCSC was designed

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for walking, not biking. Most of the roads don't even have bike lanes, forcing bicyclists onto narrow shoulders, Pageler noted.

But in the mid-1980s the advent of multi-speed mountain bikes with wide tires that can go on almost any type of terrain, college students and others began riding in earnest.

"Next summer, we expect to build bike lanes on Hager Drive. It goes to the East Field house. As it is now, there is hardly any shoulder," Pageler said.

This situation causes bicyclists and pedestrians to often share the same foot paths.

"The official word is people will ride where they will ride," Pageler said. "We would hope that people would ride their bikes on roadways, but the most important this is where anyone rides that they be considerate about the people around them."

Harry Baker of the Santa Cruz County Cycling Club said lack of bike lanes and sharing paved trails with pedestrians are two drawbacks to biking in the core of cam-

pus.

"But on the weekend, it may be an entirely different thing," Baker added.

Baker prefers the undeveloped northern end of campus with its fire roads, woods, meadows and wildlife. For a first-time ride, Baker suggested Chinquapin Road (see map for suggested route) because it is wide and flat, with only one short hill at the beginning. Because of numerous sightings of cougars on campus, the university has posted signs on the trails warning people what to do if they come upon a mountain lion.

And runners and hikers are reminded by university officials that why they are welcome on campus, their pets are not.

Local attorney George Smith, who was chased by a mountain lion while running (with his dog) through this area in September 1994, said he's seen a noticeable drop of runners and bikers since that incident.

Baker also warned that the large gravel that has been placed on the roads to prevent erosion can make for a bumpy ride. And he warned mountain bikers to keep an eye out for hikers and runners who use the trails as well.

Maureen Ryerson, a mountain biker who occasionally rides in this undeveloped area, also noted that there are what appear to be illegal campers in the woods. While she has never been bothered, she suggested people not go back into the area alone.

Unlike a state park, these back roads are not patrolled by UCSC personnel; however, even the most remote areas of campus are relatively close to civilization. Emergency phones designated by blue lights are located on campus at bus stops and near certain buildings.

The fire roads are easily reached from either the Crown Merrill parking lot or the Applied Sciences parking lot. But this ease of access is causing problems, according to Maggie Fusari, UCSC natural reserve coordinator.

Mountain bikers going off the fire roads are damaging the reserve, she said (see related story).

For those who enjoy jogging on a track, there's the flat, half-mile circuit near the East Field house that offers the added plus of expansive views of Monterey Bay.

And for those who simply want to relax, there are many prime spots for just kicking back, enjoying the views and having a picnic.