



*The charm of Willow Oak Plantation, a Middletown inn*

*Continued from Page 7*

**Middletown Days** Old-west-style weekend celebration with rodeo, parade, horse show, barbecue, games, food, crafts, children's activities. Held on Father's Day weekend in June. Central Park, Middletown. (707) 987-0652.

**Onion Patch Visitor Center** Art and collectibles created by Lake County residents. 8000 Highway 29, Kelseyville. (707) 279-4009.

**Ployez Winery** 53 acres, sparkling wine and varietals; tasting room open all year. 11171 S. Highway 29, Lower Lake. (707) 994-2106.

**Steele Wines** Site of annual Harvest Festival held in October. Highway 29 and Thomas Drive, Kelseyville. (707) 279-9475.

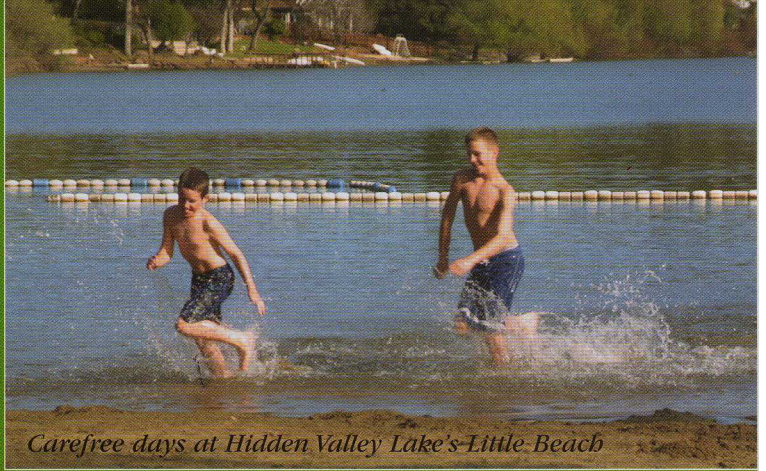
**Twin Pines Casino** Card tables, slot machines, restaurant. Open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. 22223 Highway 29, Middletown. (800) 564-4872. [www.twinpine.com](http://www.twinpine.com).

**Wildflower Tours** Narrated wagon rides through fields of flowers; chuck wagon-style barbecue. Conducted in April in historic Bear Valley. (707) 998-4471. [www.elevenrosesranch.com](http://www.elevenrosesranch.com).

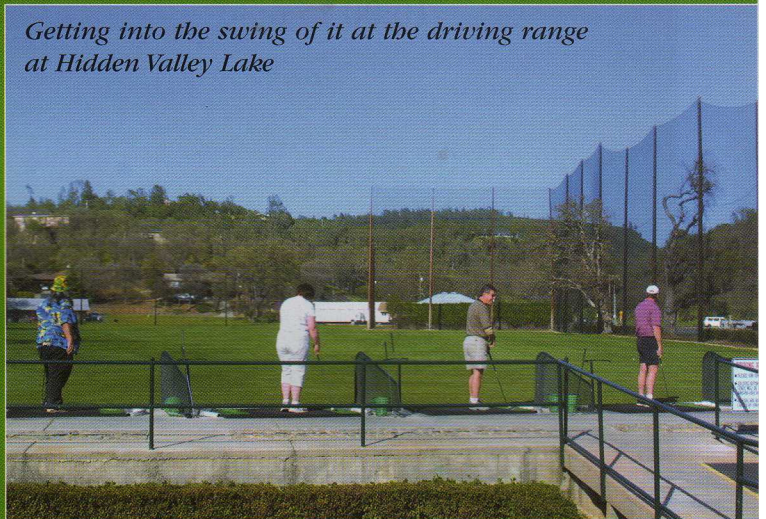
**Wildhurst Vineyards** Tasting room, gifts, local art. In historic Odd Fellows (IOOF) Hall, 3855 Main St., Kelseyville. (707) 279-4302. [www.wildhurst.com](http://www.wildhurst.com).



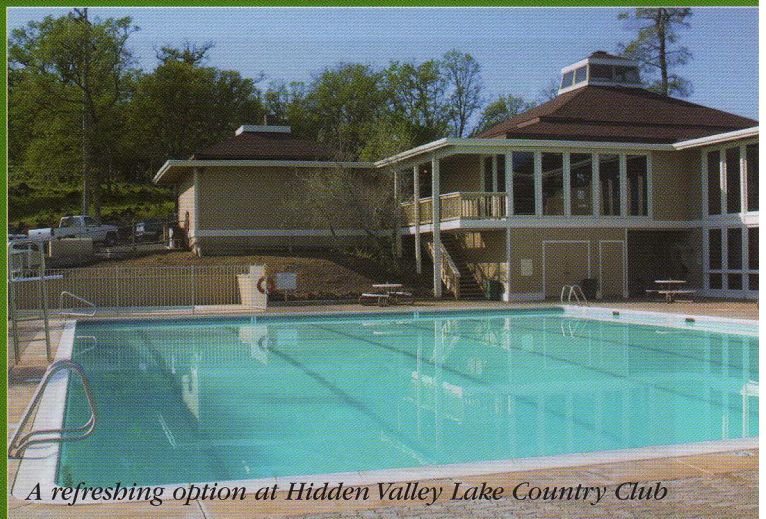
*Learning how The Geysers geothermal plant works*



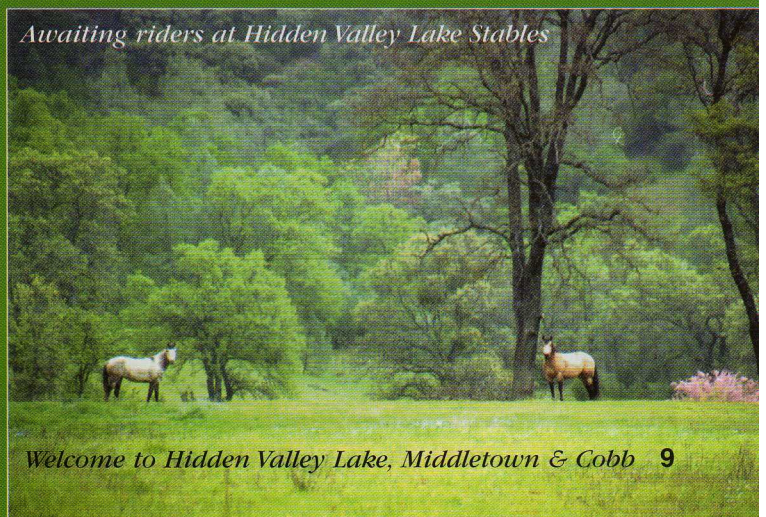
*Carefree days at Hidden Valley Lake's Little Beach*



*Getting into the swing of it at the driving range at Hidden Valley Lake*



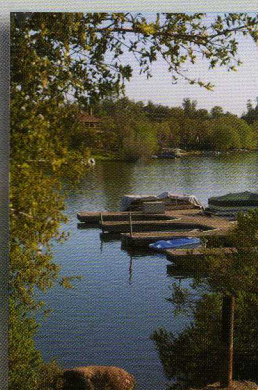
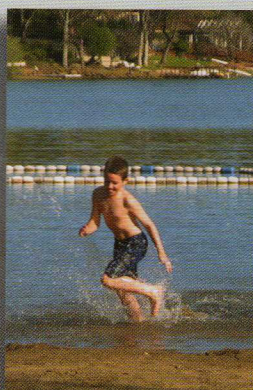
*A refreshing option at Hidden Valley Lake Country Club*



*Awaiting riders at Hidden Valley Lake Stables*



*Welcome to*  
**Hidden Valley Lake,  
Middletown & Cobb**  
*in Beautiful Southern Lake County*



PAGES FROM HISTORY • GETTING ACQUAINTED • AREA MAPS  
THINGS TO DO, PLACES TO SEE • COMMUNITY PROFILES • DIRECTORIES



*"The strength of our Nation lies in the homes of its people."*

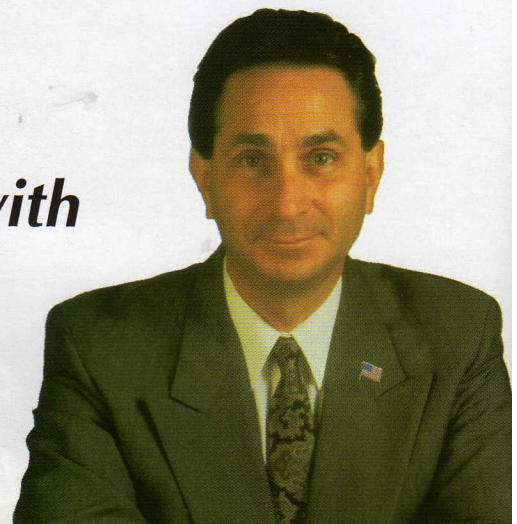
—Abraham Lincoln, 1858



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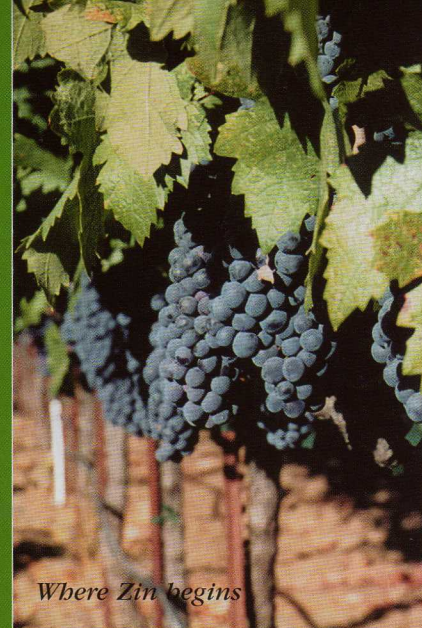
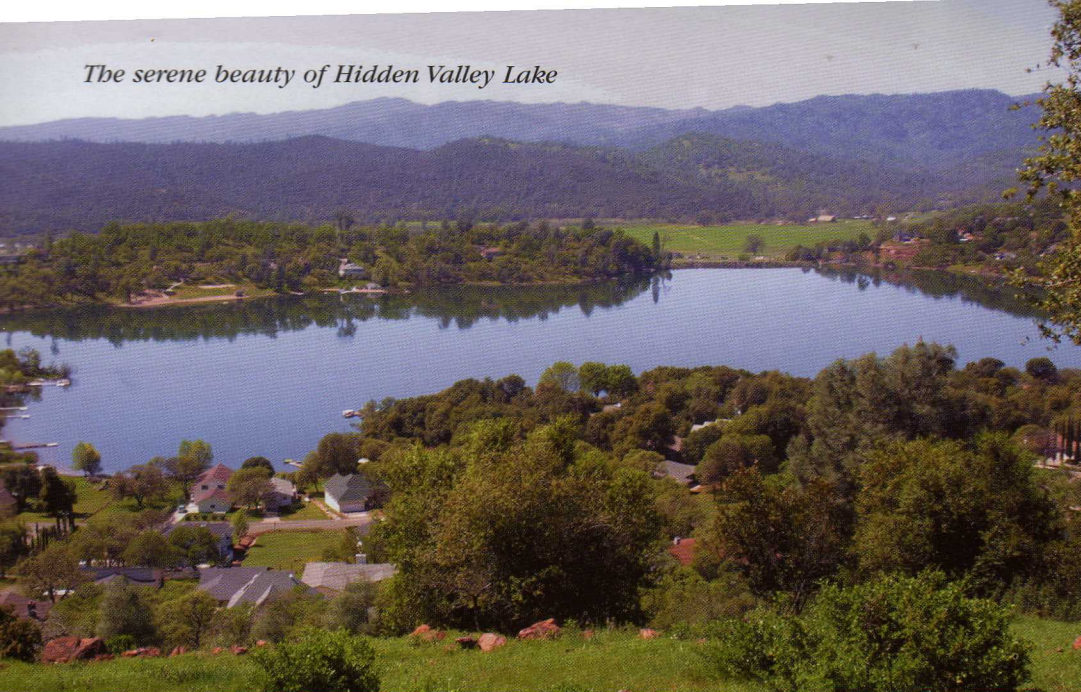
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*Where Zin begins*

## *Things to do, places to see*

**Adams Springs Golf Course** Jack Fleming-designed nine-hole course. Highway 175 and Snead Court, Cobb. (707) 928-9992.

**Anderson Marsh State Historic Park** Indian village with tule houses. Nature habitats. 8825 Highway 53, Lower Lake. (707) 994-0688.

**Blackberry Festival** Blackberry foods, living history performances, arts, fiddle contest, historic ranch house tours. Held in August. Anderson Marsh State Historic Park, 8825 Highway 53, Lower Lake. (707) 995-BERY.

**Boggs Lake Preserve** Bird watching. Harrington Flat Road, Cobb Mountain. Call Redbud Audubon Society. (707) 994-2024.

**Boggs Mountain State Forest** 3,500 acres with bike and hiking trails and camping. Highway 175, Cobb Mountain. (707) 928-4378.

**Calpine Visitor Center** Free guided tours of world's largest geothermal plant. 15500 Central Park Road, Middletown. (707) 987-4270 or (866)-GEYSERS. [www.calpine.com](http://www.calpine.com) or [www.geysers.com](http://www.geysers.com).

**Clear Lake State Park** Camp sites, boat launching, hiking and nature trails, fishing, water-skiing. Visitor center on lake. 5300 Soda Bay Road, Kelseyville. (707) 279-4293.

**Cobb Meadows Golf Course** Nine-hole course, restaurant, lounge, pro shop, PGA pro. Open year-round. Highway 175 & Golf Road, Cobb. (707) 928-5276.

**Crazy Creek Soaring** Glider rides, instruction and rentals. Open year-round. Middletown Gliderport, 18896 Grange Road, Middletown. (707) 987-9112. [www.crazycreekglders.com](http://www.crazycreekglders.com).

**Detert Reservoir** Bird watching. Butts Canyon Road, Middletown. Call Redbud Audubon Society. (707) 994-2024.

**Guenoc and Langtry Estate Winery** Wine tasting and tours. Picnic facilities. Spring St. Guenoc's Day and Langtry Day celebrations. Victorian mansion tours Mother's Day weekend in May. Fall wine auction gala. 21000 Butts Canyon Road, Middletown. (707) 987-2385. [www.guenoc.com](http://www.guenoc.com).

**Harbin Hot Springs** Year-round clothing-optional 1,160-acre resort with hot- and cold-spring pools. Harbin Springs Road, Middletown. (800) 622-2477. [www.harbin.org](http://www.harbin.org).

**Heron Days** Nature festival with nature walks, slide shows, workshops, pontoon tours to nesting sites. Held in April. Anderson Marsh State Historic Park, 8825 Highway 53, Lower Lake. Co-sponsored by Redbud Audubon Society. (707) 994-2024.

**Hidden Valley Lake Golf Course** Lake County's only 18-hole championship golf course; designed by Billy Bell. Driving range, lessons, pro shop, restaurant and lounge. Highway 29 and Hartman Road, Middletown. (707) 987-3035. [www.hiddenvalleylake.org](http://www.hiddenvalleylake.org).

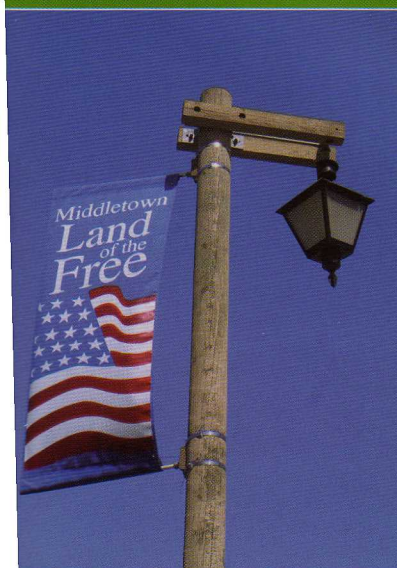


**Konocti Harbor Resort and Spa** Concerts by the lake, family activities, spa, lodging. 8727 Soda Bay Road, Kelseyville. (800) 660-LAKE. [www.konoctiharbor.com](http://www.konoctiharbor.com).

**Lake County Visitor Information Center** For additional things to do and see. (800) 525-3743.

**Lake Cruises** Around Clear Lake aboard the Clear Lake Queen paddleboat. Dining and sight-seeing cruises. 13050 Carter Lane, Clearlake Park. (707) 994-5432. [www.paddlewheel.com](http://www.paddlewheel.com).

*Continued on Page 9*



*Keeping Middletown's history alive*





# Days of Yore in Southern Lake County

John Cobb takes his place in history as the first white settler in what is now Lake County. In 1835, he and his family arrived, in what would become his namesake valley. They came from Kentucky by way of Napa Valley. An industrious farmer, trader and harbinger of modern-day entrepreneurs, he built saw and grist mills the following year to handle the potential timber harvest on nearby Cobb Mountain.

Soon after, the Cobb area's big draw was its rare and many hot springs, used by the Lake Miwok Indians for medicinal purposes for thousands of years. Harbin Hot Springs, still operational after rebuilding from fires in 1894 and 1960, was the first to be opened to the public. That was in 1871, when the only means for guests' arrival or departure was by horseback. Also-famous Hoberg's Resort was established in 1885. It, too, has enjoyed longevity, operating today as Forest Retreat. Several other hot springs-based resorts have since come and gone.

Perhaps to help cool the thirst of those who "took the waters" in the hot springs, an ice plant became one of Cobb's most successful early businesses. Ernest Swartz, who also



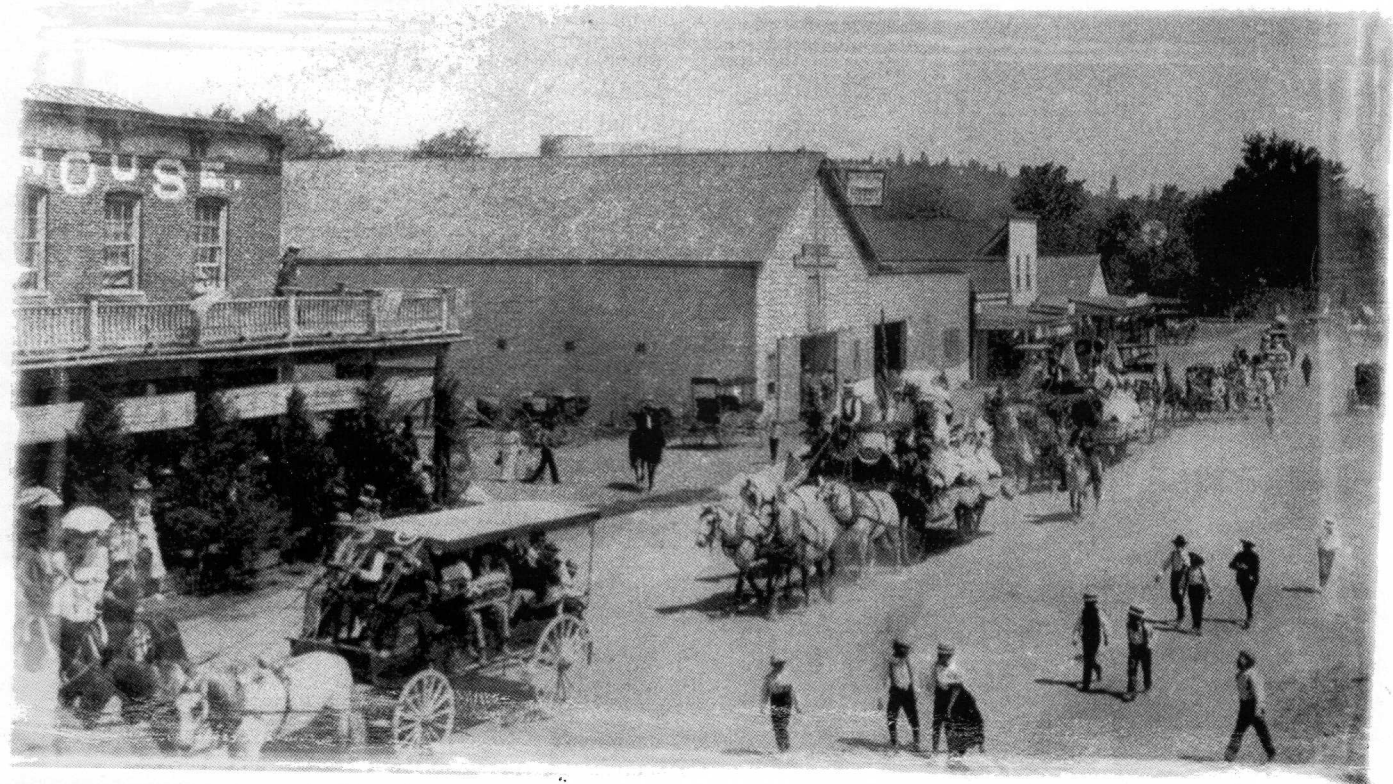
ran a brewery near Cobb from 1912 until Prohibition took hold in 1920, established it in 1902. After the first saloon arrived, in 1905, a post office soon followed, putting Cobb on the map as a true town in 1911.

This hidden-away rural respite rather meandered into the 20th century.

Eventually, and albeit begrudgingly, Cobb began to catch up with the

times, and the area's inaugural subdivision was begun in the early 1950s. Ever the resort haven, a golf course was constructed, then, too.

Middletown's central location — on St. Helena Creek, in the center of the Loconoma Valley, gave it a date with destiny. It started out, literally, as a fork in the road, to go to Cobb





Mountain or to Clear Lake, with a stage station and a large corral. The first house, built near the crossroad by John Berry in 1870, evolved into a hotel for travelers with the initial mercantile opening in 1872.

Middletown's proximity to the Great Western Quicksilver Mines and the Bradford Mine made it a highly suitable place for businesses. In fact, these 1870s-era quicksilver mines were reputed to be the most extensive on the continent.

Even in the 1800s, The Geysers, then known as one of California's greatest curiosities, was a tourist attraction, and Middletown was the most practical departure point for this sizeable adventure.

Much of the surrounding 10-mile-long Loconoma Valley, as well as Cobb Valley and neighboring Long Valley, were part of the 1845 Callayomi and Guenoc grants. With soil rich in minerals left in the wake of nearby Mount Konocti's ancient volcanic activity, these naturally irrigated lands were

used to produce grain. But the lush earth's true calling was soon found to be fruits: apples, pears, peaches, prunes and berries as well as grapes for claret wines and brandy.

Etched in Middletown's lineage is the stuff pioneers are made of: strength and spirit. That's what rebuilt Middletown after the town burned in 1918.

The townsfolk willed themselves onward until the community again pushed at its boundaries, inspiring the building of Middletown's first subdivision, Whispering Pines. That was in 1923-24, four years before the coming of electricity to the area.

Each time a new industry or large-scale business endeavor has touched down, Middletown has risen to the occasion. Gracefully, it grew to embrace waves of retirees and vacation-home owners when Boise Cascade began developing Hidden Valley Lake in earnest in the early 1970s. Within a decade, Calpine began harnessing the steam at The Geysers,

enticing a new and large work force of full-time residents to Hidden Valley Lake's hills and homes.

Recently, the "welcome mat" has spread wide again, to encompass buyers taking refuge from the storm of too-high property values in neighboring counties. Since 1979, Hidden Valley Lake has grown from some 50 homes to 1,800 and from fewer than 25 school-age children to some 600, requiring the building of Coyote Valley Elementary School.

At the turn of the 19th century, Lake County was famous for its vineyards and spas. Today, important growers such as Andy Beckstoffer, Jed Steele, and the Magoons of Guenoc Vineyards have replanted and continue to cultivate the great Lake County vineyard land.

The area offers beauty and recreation for the visitor who often decides to stay and build a life in Lake County, a place Lillie Langtry, who owned Guenoc Winery for nearly 20 years, once called "Paradise."



**One thing remains sure: The healthful environment that has been the undercurrent of this trio of communities these many decades. It still runs true and strong in Southern Lake County.**



# Location Is Everything

Mild-mannered in its climate, pace, people and property prices, Southern Lake County has been and continues to be one of northern California's hidden gems.

Lake County, incorporated in 1861, encompasses 1,259 square miles. Still primarily rural, in mid-2000, some 39,200 of the county's total population of approximately 59,300, resided in unincorporated areas such as Middletown, Cobb and Hidden Valley Lake. There are some 329 full-time farms. Lake County has an average of 46 people per square mile while the average throughout the state is 217 per square mile.

## Climate Overview

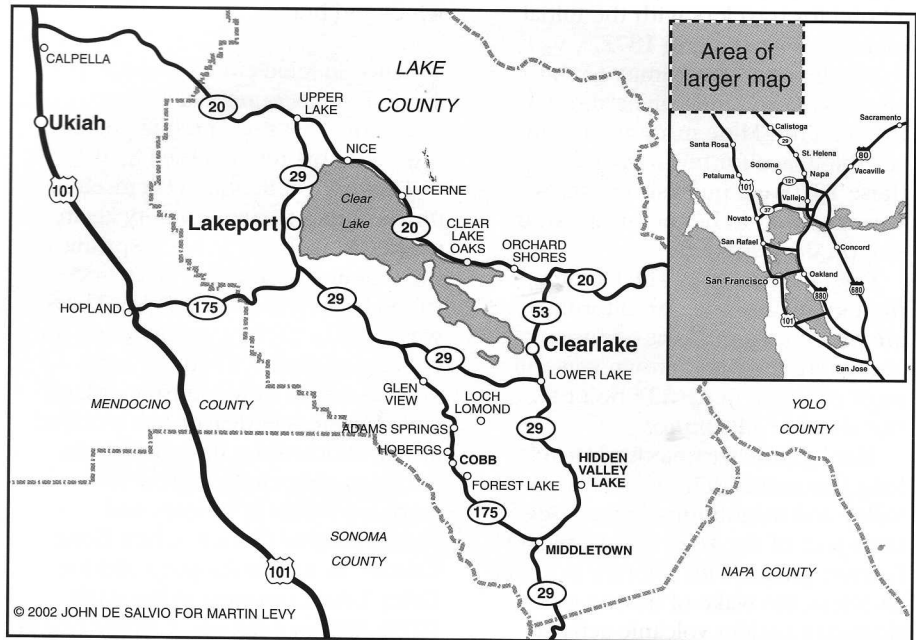
- Average summer high 95 degrees
- Average summer low 57 degrees
- Average winter high 60 degrees
- Average winter low 32 degrees
- Average annual rainfall 25 inches (up to 60 inches on Cobb Mountain)
- Average summer humidity 30 percent
- Average winter humidity 50 percent
- Occasional wintertime snow
- Best-in-the-state air quality

Middletown, Cobb, and Hidden Valley Lake are a threesome with personalities lifted from the pages of yesteryear.

Property prices here are more akin to those of old, too. Homes that more, rather than fewer, folks can afford are one of the area's most powerful draws.

This coupled with the advantages of telecommuting and untapped entrepreneurial opportunities locally have convinced many a Lake County tourist to make it more than a vacation destination. Drove of San Francisco Bay Area, Napa and Sonoma county families have pulled up tenuous stakes there to put down real roots in Middletown, Cobb and Hidden Valley Lake in recent years.

It's the new sign of the times, going back to more removed, calmer towns such as these in order to have a future that means something. Towns with time for family, for community involvement, and for saying more than a hurried "Hello" to neighbors. Time to breathe in air still pure and to swing a



fishing pole or a golf club more instead of less.

## Approximate Distances from Southern Lake County

- Clearlake 15 miles
- Lakeport 24 miles
- San Francisco 90 miles
- Santa Rosa 35 miles
- Napa Valley 35 miles
- Area airports are: Lampson Field in Lakeport, Pearce Field in Clearlake, Napa County Airport in Napa and Charles M. Schulz-Sonoma County Airport in Santa Rosa

Indeed, recreation at your very door brings many people to visit or reside in Southern Lake County. Nearer to Clear Lake — perhaps the largest attraction in the entire county — than many of their north county counterparts, these three small communities are a haven of grounds and surrounds for outdoor activities.

Fishing is a likely choice, with Clear Lake, the state's largest and possibly oldest natural freshwater lake, so close at hand. Known as the Bass Capital of the World — and thought to have more fish per acre than any lake in the country — Clear Lake is a magnet for locals as well as tourists drawn by its fish tales. Clear Lake is also a favorite with those who thrive on boating and water sports.

Cyclists will find rides of varying

characteristics and challenges, including 11 excursion routes traversing the county. Equestrians, hikers and hunters all have many haunts to enjoy their sport of choice in and around these three burgs. Outlets for rodeo activities are plentiful, too.

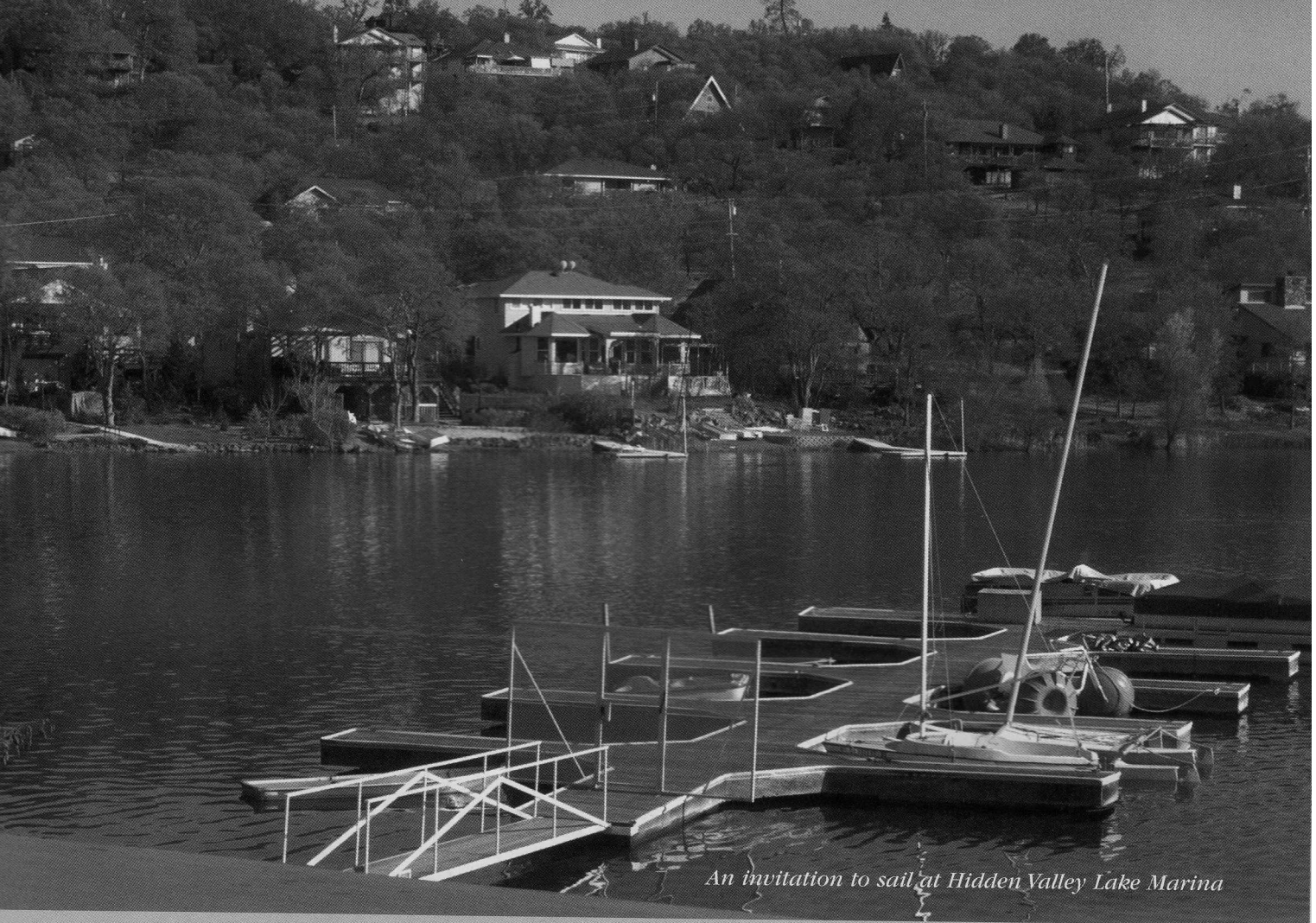
Southern Lake County has three golf courses to call its own, each enjoying the beauty and serenity of a lakeside or alpine setting.

A birder's paradise, Southern Lake County's abundant mountains, creeks, lakes, forests and meadows are home to a variety of songbirds, waterfowl and birds of prey, starring the occasional bald eagle in an updraft ballet.

Two additional jewels of nature remain unique to Lake County: variations of diamonds and deer. Diamonds called Moon Tears, semi-precious stones of volcanic origin, are found here and nowhere else in the world. Legend has it that Moon Tears were formed from tears cried by Moon when duty called her to the sky to light the night and mark the seasons, forcing her to leave her beloved, earth-bound Indian chieftain behind.

Tule elk, native to Lake County, have been curiously absent for a century. Recently, they have been reintroduced east of Clear Lake in efforts to reestablish a herd at its origin.





*An invitation to sail at Hidden Valley Lake Marina*

# About Hidden Valley Lake

## *A Recreation Retreat Community*

**T**he community of Hidden Valley Lake came to be in the late 1960s. U.S. Land Company first developed the former Hartmann Ranch and dairy lands in 1969. When acquired by Boise Cascade a few years later, the recreation-full area was soon being marketed in the Bay Area and beyond as a place to purchase real estate that would ensure vacations of and for a lifetime.

Real estate agent Charlotte Schlink recalls getting her real estate license to help sell those first Hidden Valley Lake lots. "Potential buyers were bused in, with the offer of a free restaurant dinner, on weekends," she said. Later, Schlink helped many of these buyers turn their Hidden Valley Lake purchases into vacation rentals.

In the late 1970s, when Calpine

came to town and began developing the Geysers, the largest geothermal energy complex in the world, the workers and their families needed places to live. It was then the nature of Hidden Valley Lake buyers changed from retirees and vacationers to permanent, full-time homeowners.

Now Hidden Valley Lake is enjoying a second wave of full-time resident buyers, sent over the hill from Sonoma and Napa counties by home prices that are over the top for many families.

**S**urrounded by rolling hills, primeval-like forests and engulfed in the state's purest air, Hidden Valley Lake is where the sound of children laughing and splashing at water's edge, the sight of an eagle patrolling a

ridgetop and the smell of evergreens grown fragrant in the noontime sun are, well, routine.

It is a community that is what neighborhoods were conceived to be, enclaves of caring and respectful residents willing to do the person down the block a good turn. The kind of community that pulls together for annual events, such as fishing derbies and parades, as well as to help neighbors in need.

And where many concerned with preserving history are working to restore The Stone House at the southern edge of Hidden Valley Lake. Built from oak and quarried stone in 1854, it has been designated as a California Historic Landmark.

Hidden Valley Lake is also a place where there is no compromising on the important things: nearby schools