HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL!

We have concluded another year and started a new one. How fast time goes!

Looking back on 2016, I am grateful for all the volunteers who made our annual events so successful. The Miners Picnic in August was overwhelmed with visitors and was great fun for all. We also had over a thousand adults, many with accompanying children, visit Holidays at Empire during the two days following Thanksgiving. All of us who were there had a heartwarming experience! Santa was overwhelmed in a good way. In the future, we may need to develop a “fast track system” similar to the one at Disneyland to get all the children in to see Santa in a timely fashion. Are there any ideas out there?

The EMPA holiday party in early December was a great success thanks to EMPA Vice President Troy Hammer and friends. This year EMPA provided all the food as well as beverages, including wine, and entertainment. All that EMPA members had to do was show up and have a good time -- and many did!

In addition to the special events named above, I would be remiss not to acknowledge volunteers who work behind the scenes throughout the year as tour guides, blacksmiths, living history actors, lunch workers, history researchers, security, traffic controllers, van drivers, and the very talented members of the “over-the-hill gang.”

Looking ahead to 2017, EMPA will continue to explore ways of raising funds while taking advantage of the Park’s beautiful grounds for special events. We have some volunteers who have expressed a willingness to make this happen, but ideas and help are always welcome.

The EMPA Board is excited about supporting future plans for making our local parks become even more alive. I am personally encouraged by the efforts of Supervising Ranger Matt Green and other Sierra District leaders to bring representatives of all cooperating associations in the District together. The second Annual Sierra District Cooperating Association Workshop was held on October 8, 2016 at the Empire Mine Clubhouse. Speakers included Sierra District Superintendent Marilyn Linkem, Chief Ranger Matt Green, Supervising Ranger Dan Youngren, and Sierra District Maintenance Chief Ron Hansen. Subjects discussed included improving communications with the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) in Sacramento, and project planning including legal requirements, reviews and required paperwork.

(Continued on page 3)
LOOKING AHEAD . . .

Submitted by Nancy Koring, CLH Co-Coordinator

Happy New Year, Cottage Living History Docents! Cheryl, Jane and I wish you and your families a healthy and happy year full of adventures and playful fun at the Cottage. Speaking of the Cottage, the Empire Mine will be hosting a Volunteer Open House on February 18 from 10 a.m. until noon. This is a time for prospective volunteers to visit various sites of interest around the Park and get ideas for areas of involvement. In the Cottage we usually have two volunteers dress and welcome people. We have a sign-up sheet to capture names and we hand out information about CLH. My husband, Carl and I did this last year and are willing to participate again, but someone else might like the opportunity, so please call me at 273-5510 if you’d like to be part of the Open House.

Volunteer training for the Empire Mine State Historic Park is either on the 4th or 11th of March. This is the required training by the State Department of Parks and Recreation. Cheryl, Jane or I will be present during the lunch hour on these days to “sell” the pleasures of volunteering in the Cottage. If you know of friends or family whom you think would be interested in volunteering at the Park, please encourage them to attend these events. A few more people on that roster would be lovely for everyone.

Those of you who have 50 volunteer hours are awarded a District Pass for free entry into Parks in our District and those of you with 200 hours are awarded a State Wide Parks pass. Those passes are available by going to the Visitor’s Center and asking for them. Make sure you take advantage of this great “thank you.”

Enjoy your winter and we’ll all get together some time in April for the “Kick-Off” of another wonderful season.
IN THE VEIN (Continued from page 1)

Other EMPA goals for 2017 include connecting with State and local politicians as well as business leaders and proposing new projects to make the Park even more attractive to visitors. Join us to brainstorm ideas and bring your talents to help spread the word about your park.

In addition to being involved yourself, talk to your friends and anyone you come in contact with about joining our team. If you are already involved, you know how rewarding it is to be connected. For more information, visit our website at www.empiremine.org, or go to the Visitor Center for a membership application. Finally, if you know anyone who is interested in becoming a park volunteer, ask them to call or visit the Visitor Center at Empire to sign up for open house events, which will be held for prospective docents in February.

A GOOD TIME WAS HAD BY ALL!

“Holidays at Empire,” which was held the Friday and Saturday after Thanksgiving, was a resounding success! Below are a couple of pictures representing some of the highlights. Photos were taken and submitted by Courtney Ferguson.

Katie by her little tree: Taking a break from the Holidays’ crowd, Katie enjoys a quiet cup of tea.

Spontaneous song in the Visitor Center by members of Forever Young Chorus and Park Aide Lucy Montgomery
(Editor’s Note: The following is reprinted from the January 2017 issue of the South Yuba River Park Association (SYRPA).)

**SUPERVISING RANGER REPORT**

The New Year is upon us and I keep asking myself, “where did 2016 go?” I guess that time flies when you are having fun or... I’m just too busy to stop and smell the roses as they say. 2016 was yet another challenging year for the Sierra District and the South Yuba River State Park. California State Parks is still trying to recover from past budgetary problems which are reflected in neglected park facilities, projects not getting off the ground or completed and areas of our parks not getting patrolled. If you ask any Parks person, “Why are these things not getting done?” or “Why don’t we ever see a Ranger when we need one?” the simple answer is that State Parks need staff in order to fulfill our obligations to our visitors and tax payers. Some of you may know that the Sierra District has been hit hard, twice, since 2010 when full time positions were taken away since the Sierra District budget did not allow us to fill these much needed positions. Did you know that at one time (2010), just the South Yuba River SP alone had one full-time Maintenance worker, a Supervising Ranger and five rank and file Rangers? Our current staffing consists of zero full-time Maintenance workers, a Sector Supervising Ranger to cover the three Sector parks and two rank and file Rangers. Times are tough but... relief may be on the horizon.

Our Department is on the verge of announcing a major reorganization. The term that has been used by the *Transformation Team is “streamlining.”* Finding ways to cut costs and eliminate redundancies from the headquarters level down in order to better serve the field staff. I am hoping that 2017 brings this change and that it will allow our Department to get back on the right track in order to better serve our visitors and to protect our most valuable resources, our Parks.

Cheers, and a Happy New Year to all!

*The Transformation Team is a group of park professionals and outside individuals tasked with implementing the “Parks Forward” report that can be viewed on the California Department of Parks and Recreation website. https://www.parks.ca.gov/

Dan Youngren
“Don’t Stop Until You Get to the Empire Mine”

By Gage McKinney

With its reputation for wealth and continuous production, the Empire Mine was famous throughout the mining world. Across the sea in Cornwall, England, one of the ancient mining districts of Europe, even a housewife knew the Empire. When her four sons left one-after-another for America, she told them: “Don’t stop until you get to the Empire Mine.”

As fate would have it her first son, Richard Heather, did stop. In 1920, when he was about 20, Heather crossed the Atlantic in 1920 aboard the *Olympia*, sister-ship to the *Titanic*, without incident or harm from icebergs. He landed a job in Milford, Massachusetts, and worked there for over a year, without losing sight of his ultimate destination. He found his way to Grass Valley at last, landing a job at the Empire Mine alongside men he had known back home and eventually beside his three brothers. Heather spent 20 years underground in the Empire, first as a miner and later as shift boss, proving his capabilities.

“Some of the shift bosses were sons-of-bitches,” one old miner remembered, but Heather wasn’t one of those. He was fair, the miner said. “He criticized when it was just and praised good work.”

Dick Heather (as the miners knew him) was also a man of song, who sang Cornish carols with the Grass Valley Carol Choir, and with a more elite group, the Grass Valley Gold Miners Chorus, which performed at mining conventions and in churches and theaters throughout Northern California. Unlike most of the singers, Heather learned to read music and play the organ.

When the federal government closed the gold mines in 1942, Heather went to work at the Bethlehem shipyards in San Francisco. After the war his wife persuaded him to swap a miner’s lamp for a grocer’s apron, and for 19 years he operated the Parkview Market near Grass Valley’s Memorial Park.

Despite a limited education, Heather distinguished himself as a miner, vocalist and merchant, and gained even more renown as a man of service. This Ellis Island émigré became master of the Masonic Lodge, commander of the Knights of Pythias, president of the Lions Club and senior warden of Emmanuel Episcopal Church. He served on the City Charter Commission, as chairman of the Planning Commission, 11 years on City Council and two years as Mayor.

Short and stocky, with a shock of white amidst his back hair, wearing black-rimmed glasses, a starched shirt and khaki trousers, Heather was recognized around town as a hard-working mayor, a man of good judgment and few words. After completing his term he remained active in civic affairs and eventually left his market to become parks superintendent in Grass Valley. When he died of a heart attack in San Francisco in 1971, he was representing the city at the League of California Cities.  

(Continued on page 6)
DON'T STOP UNTIL YOU GET TO THE EMPIRE MINE (Continued from page 5)

Dick Heather was among the best-regarded of the Cousin Jacks, the Cornishmen who came to America, and represented the kind of talent the Empire Mine could attract from far away.

On Saturday morning, March 11, 2017, 9:30 a.m. at the City Hall parking lot in Grass Valley, civic leaders, children, families and dogs will gather for the annual St. Piran’s Day pasty toss, perhaps the quirkiest contest since the days of the jumping frogs. In the midst of the fun there will be a solemn moment when the master of ceremonies calls on me to tell the story of Mayor Dick Heather. As an old-timer once told me: “No finer man has walked the streets of Grass Valley.”

CHINESE DELEGATION VISITS THE EMPIRE
Submitted by Frank Herwatt (All photos by Frank Herwatt)

A delegation representing the Chinese Travel Bureau paid a recent visit to the Park. They were evaluating potential areas for Chinese travel tours in the future, and spent several days in the Nevada City and Grass Valley area. They were very interested in our area because of the past history of Chinese individuals involved with gold mining activities. They spent the morning and early afternoon at the mine and enjoyed a Cornish pasty luncheon. Several members of the delegation found the pasty significantly different than the food that they are familiar with. They had a wonderful experience with the mine presentation and I feel confident that our area will be a place to be recommended by this group.
From an interview of Clarence “Lightening” Thomas, Machine Shop, Blacksmith, 1935-late 1940’s. Interview date 1/9/83.

The first day I went to work at Empire the foreman decided to have some fun with me. He sent me off to find a “timber stretcher.” Each place I went they would send me to another place. Finally after about 3 or 4 places, I realized they were pulling my leg.

I ended up in the hoist building. The hoistman told me to just stay there for a while. I enjoyed watching him operate the big hoist. After about an hour or so, I thought I had better get back to the machine shop or I wouldn’t have a job. I went back to the foreman and told him I couldn’t find the timber stretcher. He told me to get back to what he had previously showed me to do. I guess I was taken down the garden path that first day.

I was kind of an errand boy with the pickup. I would take the surveyors over to the Pennsylvania Mine or to the North Star. You didn’t really go to the office area. That was kind of forbidden territory.

I would see Johnnie Mann walk across from the mill to the office to the refinery. He would have these silver balls about the size of an indoor baseball. They were gold but still had the mercury in them. They would take them to the retort.

From an interview of Phil Keast, Master Mechanic and Mechanical Engineer, Empire Mine 1928-1957. Interview date 11/10/80.

All of the mines had whistles to start work and finishing up at the end of the day. Also at lunch time. At the North Star and Empire Mines they had whistles that were known all around Grass Valley for years and years.

Both the Empire and North Star blew 3 blasts at 5:30 in the morning to wake up the men so they could get their breakfast. At 6:00 they blew 2 blasts and at 7:00 they blew one blast. The people in Grass Valley always told the time by the whistle.

They could also know if we were going to have a storm by the sound of the whistle. If you could hear the whistle awful plain, they knew there was a storm coming because it was cloudy weather.

The whistles blew one blast at 12:00 to let the surface men know that it was lunch time. At 12:30 they blew blasts to let them know it was time to get back to work. Also, it blew one blast at the end of the work day at 3:30. There was no whistle for the night shift. Just for the day shift. We worked 6 days a week and it blew all 6 days.

The preceding recollections are believed to be true; however, we are relying on the memory of the individual who had such a recollection.
HELP NEEDED FOR MINERS PICNIC 2017

Submitted by Steve Sanchez

Although Miners Picnic 2017 is several months away, I felt it was not too soon to let everyone know that I am looking for a volunteer to be the “Silent Auction Coordinator.” Carol Bordeau, who has handled this responsibility for the past several years, has “retired” from the position. We thank Carol for the excellent job she has done!

If you are interested please contact me either via email at snakeandflower@gmail.com, or by telephone at 530-273-8235, (home) or 510-673-3741 (cell phone — text or call).
Empire Mine State Park
Volunteer Coordinators

Interpretative Coordinators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tour Guides</th>
<th>George Sanford</th>
<th>274-1646</th>
<th><a href="mailto:tang62000@comcast.net">tang62000@comcast.net</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Tour Guides</td>
<td>Park Staff</td>
<td>273-8522</td>
<td><a href="mailto:empiremine@parks.ca.gov">empiremine@parks.ca.gov</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Tour Guides</td>
<td>Marilyn Sakowicz</td>
<td>272-5507</td>
<td><a href="mailto:emsako@sbcglobal.net">emsako@sbcglobal.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacksmith Shop</td>
<td>Marilyn Sakowicz</td>
<td>272-5507</td>
<td><a href="mailto:emsako@sbcglobal.net">emsako@sbcglobal.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacksmith Shop</td>
<td>Bill Blount</td>
<td>477-0317</td>
<td><a href="mailto:willie5311@gmail.com">willie5311@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cottage Living History</td>
<td>Cheryl Balmain</td>
<td>273-6087</td>
<td><a href="mailto:balmainiacs@gmail.com">balmainiacs@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cottage Living History</td>
<td>Nancy Koring</td>
<td>273-5510</td>
<td><a href="mailto:seekoring1@suddenlink.net">seekoring1@suddenlink.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clubhouse Living History</td>
<td>Betty and John Lucas</td>
<td>679-0310</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lucasjabl@digitalpath.net">lucasjabl@digitalpath.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clubhouse Living History</td>
<td>Bob Jennings</td>
<td>274-2834</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rw3jennings@yahoo.com">rw3jennings@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mineyard Living History</td>
<td>Vince Seck</td>
<td>273-4574</td>
<td><a href="mailto:vinceseck@yahoo.com">vinceseck@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mineyard Living History</td>
<td>Frank Hamlin (Intern)</td>
<td>268-5672</td>
<td><a href="mailto:frank@hamlin.net">frank@hamlin.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mineyard Stations</td>
<td>Vince Seck</td>
<td>273-4574</td>
<td><a href="mailto:vinceseck@yahoo.com">vinceseck@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mineyard Stations</td>
<td>Frank Hamlin (Intern)</td>
<td>268-5672</td>
<td><a href="mailto:frank@hamlin.net">frank@hamlin.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luncheons</td>
<td>Jane Bland</td>
<td>274-2440</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Janebland16@gmail.com">Janebland16@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luncheons</td>
<td>Troy Hammer</td>
<td>575-9155</td>
<td><a href="mailto:troypheus@yahoo.com">troypheus@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Administrative Coordinators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Barbara Jarvis</th>
<th>477-1557</th>
<th><a href="mailto:barbaraj@nccn.net">barbaraj@nccn.net</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral History</td>
<td>Lise Hinman</td>
<td>273-8266</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lhinman0@gmail.com">lhinman0@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gift Shop</td>
<td>Jennifer Greenfield</td>
<td>205-7469</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jgardens2@att.net">jgardens2@att.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursery</td>
<td>Troy Hammer</td>
<td>265-3848</td>
<td><a href="mailto:troypheus@yahoo.com">troypheus@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHG</td>
<td>Tom Newmark</td>
<td>575-9155</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rajotom@fsaccess.net">rajotom@fsaccess.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Bob Jennings</td>
<td>274-2834</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rw3jennings@yahoo.com">rw3jennings@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Terry Armstrong</td>
<td>271-0126</td>
<td><a href="mailto:terryrarmstrong@gmail.com">terryrarmstrong@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose Garden</td>
<td>Carol Terrell</td>
<td>878-0050</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bluesycarol@gmail.com">bluesycarol@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose Propagation</td>
<td>Bob Jennings</td>
<td>274-2834</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rw3jennings@yahoo.com">rw3jennings@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose Propagation</td>
<td>Troy Hammer</td>
<td>575-9155</td>
<td><a href="mailto:troypheus@yahoo.com">troypheus@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garden Tours</td>
<td>Marsha Lewis</td>
<td>274-2834</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rw3jennings@yahoo.com">rw3jennings@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trails</td>
<td>Lianne Werner</td>
<td>273-0704</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Changes in directory listings on this and the following page should be sent to Lynne Buenz, Editor/Publisher, at la_buenz@hotmail.com
Empire Mine State Historic Park
10791 East Empire Street
Grass Valley, CA  95945
Return Service Requested

THE EMPIRE STAR

This Newsletter is a Cooperative venture between the California Department of Parks and Recreation and the Empire Mine Park Association.

On the web at www.empiremine.org