Hello EMPA faithful,

The spring bloom has come and gone. Summer is HERE!! OUCH — it looks like it’s going to be a scorcher — however, the Park is as beautiful as ever.

Did you notice that the tennis court at the Clubhouse is sporting a new look, (darker and smoother) as it was re-coated recently to help extend the life of the asphalt. Just in time for the wedding season and for the Grass Valley Chamber of Commerce Mixer hosted by EMPA.

We had spectacular weather and an overflow crowd for our first Mixer event. I am looking forward to hosting another, possibly around the holidays, while all the beautiful decorations are still in place!!

Also, speaking of the Grass Valley Chamber — a WONDERFUL display area has become available, and EMPA plans on utilizing it to its fullest extent. We plan on keeping the current monitor (near the entrance) and upgrading both to high definition for visitors to see crystal clear images of Empire Mine and possibly South Yuba River/Bridgeport State Park and Malakoff Diggins/North Bloomfield State Historic Park. Look for more information and pictures in next month’s Empire Star.

HELP NEEDED!!

Your EMPA Board has several members retiring at the end of this year. So NOW is the TIME to HELP!! Without volunteers stepping up to fill those positions and carry-on Board tasks, we will be forced to hire people to do such jobs as Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Webmaster, Membership Chair, etc. These expenditures would mean less money available for the Park. There has also been discussion about hiring an Executive Director and possibly a Fundraising Director (as other associations have). So, if you have a talent that could help in these areas, GREAT!! Call or email me or come to our next Board meeting. If you really, truly LOVE the Park, step forward. We could use your expertise. Otherwise, get out your checkbooks!!

See you in the Park!  

Mark S. Allen
I recently stumbled upon some interesting information about our nearby “sister” park at Bridgeport. Some of our docents also serve at Bridgeport, so this will not be new information for them. But for the rest of us, the information may be new. The recent fundraiser at Bridgeport reminded us that the old gas station has been put into service as a catering center after volunteers spiffed it up and painted the gas pumps. The Kneebone family built the original Shell Gas Station in 1927, and began to develop the Bridgeport Pleasure Resort that year. So the following are the “Cliff Notes” on the Kneebone family and their contributions to Bridgeport and Gold Mining.

Joseph and Mary Kneebone were born in England and came to Bridgeport in 1862. Their son, Andrew, followed in 1876 and became a well-known farmer in Spenceville and teamster in the Gold Country. He became an expert in leading 16-20 horse and mule teams and driving wagons through Bridgeport to serve gold mines in the area. He was well-known in the Grass Valley and Nevada City area.

Virginia Cole grew up in Bridgeport and married Andrew Kneebone in 1886. They had five children and it is believed that Virginia inherited the ranch from her parents. Only one adult son, Alfred, remained in Bridgeport to take over the ranch after marrying Lucy Moyier from French Corral. They made many changes at Bridgeport. In 1926 Lucy and Andrew built some cabins, and a “Dance Hall” near the swimming hole about one-quarter mile upstream from the bridge. They opened their resort in 1927 and the Grass Valley and Nevada City newspapers were abuzz with the news of “music under the stars.” The resort became very popular in the surrounding small towns. They never charged for swimming at the resort, but did charge 50 cents per car at a locked gate to go out to the beach.

During the Depression, a second gold rush occurred along the South Yuba River. Alfred bought the gold from miners for $18.20 per ounce and processed the ore behind the gas station and sold it for $20.70 per ounce in Grass Valley. This mini gold rush brought much business to the store from 1938 to 1943.

In approximately 1940, the resort area was threatened with flooding due to the new Upper Narrows Dam in the Smartsville area, originally built to catch hydraulic mining debris and later retrofitted for hydroelectric generation. This dam created what we know today as Englebright Reservoir. Andrew expected to become rich through a lawsuit after his resort was flooded by the dam. It never happened and he never became rich.

Al Kneebone died in 1945 and Lucy moved to Grass Valley and leased the ranch in Bridgeport until she sold it in 1955. The ranch passed through several hands before becoming State Park property.

Some of the historic features at Bridgeport according to Lucy Kneebone Brandt in 1930 were irrigation from Kentucky Creek with a “rastra” diverting water to the ranch, a granary near the house but closer to the bridge, generator house/creamery, a dairy barn, the Shell Gas Station, the barn and the swim hole.

We are so fortunate that some of the structures have been preserved as South Yuba River State Park. The SYRPA handbook also lists 14 flumes and, of course, the 1862 Bridgeport Covered Bridge, which is a State and National Historic Landmark.
MISSING!!!
by Cheryl Balmain and Nancy Koring
Co-Coordinator, Cottage Living History

... Pinafore aprons wore by maids in the Cottage — there were four (4) aprons, and now there are only two (2)!! They disappeared after “Springtime at Empire Mine.” PLEASE, everyone, search your closets, laundry baskets, backrooms and every nook and cranny you can think of for these “fashion statements.” It’s a mystery! The finder will receive undying gratitude, and maybe even a “prize”! Thanks for looking.

NEW IN THE GIFT SHOP
by Jennifer Greenfield, Coordinator

New items just added to the inventory are as follows:

** Miner’s Helmet with LED light—$17.50 each
(see photo below)
** “Flour-sack” tea towel—$7.50 each (see photo below)

Also, now back on the shelves are copies of “The Bourn Dynasty—The Empire Mine’s Golden Era—1869—1929” by Charles C. Steinfeld.

Remember, all EMSHP volunteers and EMPA members get a 10% discount on all items purchased in the Gift Shop. Come check it out!
MINERS PICNIC FAST APPROACHING!
By Steve Sanchez, Coordinator

As mentioned in last month’s newsletter, the date of this year’s Miners Picnic is Saturday, August 27, 2016. Plans are in full swing to make this special day the fun event that everyone has come to expect!

Especially needed at this time are donations for the Silent Auction — preferably new or “gently used” items. The proceeds of the auction benefit the Empire Mine Park Association (EMPA) and, ultimately, the Park itself. Contact for the Silent Auction is Carol Bordeau, Silent Auction Chair, who may be reached via telephone at 305-6913, or via email at cabordeau@gmail.com.

ALSO ...

ALERT! TEMPERATURE RISING—CAKE DONATIONS FLAT
By Lise Hinman, Cakewalk Chair

We know this heat has you avoiding your kitchen, but we are in need of more cakes, cupcakes, cookies or brownie donations for the Miners Picnic Cake Walk on August 27. You can let the professionals at your local bakery take all the heat; the item should just be appealing to children (no age limit implied) with lots of color and sprinkles.

Please call or email me with questions (273-8266 or Lhinman0@gmail.com — that is a zero behind hinman). We will have cake boxes available at the front desk of the Visitors Center the week before the picnic.

Thanks for your help with this popular activity!
FUN FACTS FROM THE PAST  
by Barbara Jarvis

CORNISH WRESTLING  
GRASS VALLEY  
July 4th, 5th, and 6th, 1883

First—The proprietors to choose three or five men as a committee.

Second—The committee and proprietors to choose three sticklers—any disputes arising in regard to the wrestling to be decided by them.

Third—What constitutes a fair back fall, viz: Which is to be thrown square on the back, or two shoulders and one pin, or two pins and one shoulder.

Fourth—Any hold below the jacket is unfair.

Fifth—Two collars of the jacket not allowed to be taken in one hand. Neither your arms to cross with one hand in each collar.

Sixth—The crowbar hitch is not allowed, which is slipping your arm under the bottom of the jacket and bringing it over the shoulder, crossing the breast and taking hold of the opposite collar.

Seventh—Any two or more parties known to agree and not wrestle in earnest, the committee have power to disqualify them for the wrestling.

Eighth—In the first round every one must throw one man before he is entitled to wrestle for the money. For instance if one man backs out the one that is standing is to wrestle with another in the same round.

Ninth—Any man thrown in the first round before all the standards are made can wrestle again by consent of the committee.

Grass Valley Union, 27 June 1883
FROM THE SOUTH YUBA RIVER STATE PARK:

NO PARKING ADVANCE WARNING SIGNAGE
—PURDON BRIDGE AND EDWARDS CROSSING

WHAT: State Parks is working with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to have signage changed

WHEN: Before Fourth of July Weekend

“In an effort to address issues such as: illegal overnight camping on State Park property, reduce the threat of illegal fires and after hours illegal activities, while still providing access to BLM camping at China Bar on the South Yuba River, State Parks will be posting a new order, Title 14 CCR 4326a. The new Posted Order will limit parking hours at the Purdon Crossing Parking Lot on State Park property from 7 a.m. to Sunset. State Parks is working with BLM to have signage changed before the Fourth of July Weekend. The new regulation will allow two parking sites identified for 72 hour parking for vehicles associated with persons accessing BLM China Bar camping. My thanks to the County and our partners for supporting State Parks in our efforts to make State Parks and the community safer for all of our visitors and residents.”

Matthew Green, Chief Ranger—Sierra District

Empire Star Editorial Policy — All articles submitted for publication become the property of the Empire Mine Park Association (EMPA) and, as such, are subject to editing and/or other modification. In addition, articles may NOT be published the same month they are submitted due to space limitations.
From an interview of Charles Concannon, nephew of Kathryn C. Moriarty, Empire Cottage housekeeper. Interview date 4/8/01.

I was born in San Francisco in 1910. When I was 15 we went to Grass Valley to spend time with Aunt Kate. I enjoyed the time with her. We would use the swimming pool and go down and use the bowling alley in the Clubhouse.

About two years later, we went up again and had the same routine. We had use of all of the accommodations as the Bourns were never there. The last time I was there was in 1929 or 1930. I spent another week there that time.

I moved out to get married shortly after that and left San Francisco. I never saw Aunt Kate after I left San Francisco.

Aunt Kate moved up to the Cottage in 1900. She lived there until 1934. When she retired she moved down to San Francisco to live with us. She stayed there with my mother and sister. Then she moved to my other sister’s house until she died in 1956.

She was my mother’s sister. They were all born in Ohio. My uncle Charles, Aunt Kate, and Aunt Mamie all came out to San Francisco. I forget what year that was. After several years my mother and two others came out.

From an interview of Emil Raetz, Miner. Interview date 9/17/93.

I was getting four dollars and a half a day in the early 1940’s when I was working for a day’s pay. When I had a contract, I was getting $12.00 a foot. I was making 18 feet a week.

As soon as they started blasting, the mules knew it was the end of the shift and they would start heading back to the corral.

The preceding recollections are believed to be true; however, we are relying on the memory of the individual who had such a recollection.
(Editor’s Note: As our Nation prepares to celebrate it’s 240th birthday, I thought it might be appropriate to reprint the following, which first appeared in the July 2015 issue of The Empire Star.)

Little Known Facts about the Fourth of July

By Bev Skinner

Justifiably, you’re undoubtedly wondering what possible connection the topic of this page has to do with “Cottage Living History.” You’re right – there’s little real connection – except that the people we portray at the Cottage would certainly have celebrated the birthday of our country’s independence – and, quite possibly, they would have enjoyed activities very similar to what we enjoy today – with parades, games, picnics, and even fireworks filling their day! However, the typical holiday menu of hamburgers or hot dogs we enjoy today might have been tweaked over the years – see below.

So, with that explanation out of the way, here are a few “little known” facts that I found interesting – and so might you!

Anyone for Turtle Soup? "According to legend, on July 4, 1776, John Adams…and his wife, Abigail, sat down for a celebratory meal of turtle soup, New England poached salmon with egg sauce, green peas and boiled new potatoes in jackets. They followed the meal with Indian pudding or Apple Pandowdy," wrote Justine Sterling for Delish.com.

American Bald … Turkey?

In a letter to his daughter in 1784, Benjamin Franklin wrote that he was displeased that the bald eagle had been chosen as the symbol for the nation. “He is a bird of bad moral character. He does not get his living honestly,” he wrote. “You may have seen him perched on some dead Tree near the River, where, too lazy to fish for himself, he watches the Labour of the Fishing Hawk.” A turkey, Franklin went on to argue, is a far “more respectable” bird. The Turkey is a true original Native of America, Franklin wrote. “He is besides, though a little vain and silly, a Bird of Courage, and would not hesitate to attack a Grenadier of the British Guards who should presume to invade his Farm Yard with a red Coat on.”

The “State of Independence”

Is Pennsylvania the country’s most patriotic state? According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the so-called “State of Independence,” where the Declaration of Independence was debated and signed, is home to 11 places with the word “liberty” in their name and 33 with the word “union” in them, leading the country for the number of places with such names.

Only one place in the nation has “patriot” in its name – Patriot, Indiana is said to have an estimated population of 209!

Hot Dogs Galore

July 4 is the biggest hot dog holiday of the year according to TIME magazine with Americans reportedly consuming about 155 million of them on Independence Day alone. But despite a nationwide love for the salty snack, no one really knows where the hot dog came from. According to the National Hot Dog and Sausage Council, it is “likely that the North American hot dog comes from a widespread common European sausage brought here by butchers of several nationalities.”
Empire Mine State Park
Volunteer Coordinators

**Interpretative Coordinators**

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Note: Changes in directory listings on this and the following page should be sent to Lynne Buenz, Publisher, at la_buenz@hotmail.com
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Thanks to these folks for taking the lead in making the Empire Mine State Historic Park such a unique and enjoyable experience!

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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