Inside this issue:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cottage Living History (CLH)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message from Ranger Greg Sherr</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News of Our Friends</td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking Ahead</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dates to Remember</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoke from the Forge</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun Facts from the Past/EMSHP Gets International Exposure!</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tales from the Tapes</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold Panning at Bridgeport, 2016</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMSHP Volunteer Coordinators</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMSHP Administrative Coordinators</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empire Mine Park Association</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**In The Vein . . .**

Hello EMPA faithful,

I hope you all had a chance to see the "World's Tallest Wisteria" (until proven otherwise) in bloom. In previous years I have seen the bloom happen in a wave; however, this year the blooms happened all at the same time. It was spectacular!! If you have not seen the base of the vine from which this grows, please venture up the walkway to the left side of the Starr house foundation and take a look at it. I call this view "The Cambodian Jungle" on my tours. People are really impressed with its SIZE.

The formal grounds are looking sooo BEAUTIFUL thanks to our hard working garden maintenance crew of Jennifer, Joy and a host of volunteers. Being a "gear head" with "greasy thumbs," I BOW to those with the "green thumbs." Thank You, Thank You, Thank You!!

As mentioned in previous issues, EMPA is hosting a Grass Valley Chamber of Commerce Mixer. It will be held Thursday, June 9, from 5:30 - 8:00 pm at the Clubhouse. Come enjoy the evening with eats and drinks and to meet some of the business owners of this GREAT community.

If you have never been to the Filoli Estate in Woodside on the San Francisco peninsula, in my opinion, you are truly missing one of the "Seven Wonders of California." A BIG thank you to Bob Jennings for arranging our tour on May 19. The house is unbelievable(!), the grounds spectacular(!), and the tour guides awesome!! Once you have seen Filoli, you will come away with a much greater understanding of the Bourns and their tastes. You will also understand why, at approximately 4,600 square feet, the Empire Cottage was considered their "little get away Cottage house." I recommend adding Filoli to your "mid-week get away" this summer. You won't be disappointed, and I would love to hear your comments afterward.

Cottage/Clubhouse Living History programs are “Rockin’ and Rolling.” I’m really looking forward to playing George Starr again this season, and meeting all our “newbie” volunteers.

See you in the Park!

Mark S. Allen
Besides being wonderfully beautiful in every way, Filoli gave me more insight into the Bourns as people. I learned about some of their little quirks which made them more real. Mr. Bourn wanted to be a gentleman farmer and had all manner of game as well as fruit trees and vegetables planted on the estate. He liked the idea of blending the beauty of the outside with the inside, and had many floor to ceiling windows that could be opened to let afternoon breezes flow through the home.

As a CLH Interpreter, I always point out the irony of the Bourns escaping earthquake torn San Francisco to build Filoli next to Crystal Springs Reservoir where the San Andreas Fault runs through the middle of the water. As it turns out, Mr. Bourn knew about the fault line. He had geological studies and surveying done and had Willis Polk construct the house with steel in the foundation to withstand earthquakes. He just wanted to be next to Crystal Springs and enjoy the view. It must have reminded him of Muckross and the Lakes of Killarney. After he suffered strokes that limited his mobility, he had servants carry him daily to the amphitheater in the far end of the garden so he could look down a long corridor of trees and see Crystal Springs in the distance.

I also learned that Filoli had an elevator. One day Mr. Bourn got stuck in the elevator and would never ride it again. He had his servants carry him upstairs and down as his bedroom and office were on the second floor.

I also very much enjoyed seeing a picture of Maud and Arthur Vincent’s daughter, Rose. I learned her name was Elizabeth Rose. The Filoli docent thought she had been married twice and there was a picture of her daughter, (or niece?) next to hers on the table. This could lead to further research, as will more knowledge about Mrs. Agnes Bourn. CLH Interpreters are generally very quiet about Agnes and know much more about her mother-in-law, Sarah Bourn.

The murals of Muckross in the ballroom are not really murals. They were painted on canvas and then attached to the wall. The chandeliers are copies of the chandeliers in the Hall of Mirrors in Versailles. Originally, the room was a beige color, then painted in soft greens to go with the “murals.” Finally, Mrs. Bourn added a “touch of gold” to the walls! For large events, all the doors were opened and the front courtyard was tented. Food and drinks were served outside, keeping with Mr. Bourn’s desire to blend the outside with the inside of the home.

In all, the trip to Filoli was memorable and certainly a day well spent!
SPRING INTO SUMMER
By Ranger Greg Sherr

Even though it has been cool this week, we soon expect the temperature to make its annual climb upward as the summer season starts. Our Mother’s Day Event had over 800 persons in attendance! Those attending enjoyed a day of tours, living history, blacksmiths, ice cream, hot dogs, pasties, games, flower potting, Suffragettes, live music, picnics and family fun. A big thank you to all those who helped make this a great day at Empire Mine! On the weekend, Cottage Living History is continuing to have great popularity, and I have received many compliments regarding the Cottage Living History volunteers!

Docents from our most recent class are working in the blacksmith shop, leading tours, working in the gift shop, leading school groups, helping with research and making a positive impact on the Park. Please introduce yourself if you see a new face.

Our new Park Aide, Lauren Wilson (see page 4) is doing great at the front desk and has attended numerous tours at Empire Mine. She would like to lead tours in June and I have encouraged her to ask current tour guides and docents for helpful hints and suggestions. Please welcome her to Empire Mine when you have a chance. Ehren Pelonio and Jenna Nustad have both taken permanent State Park Interpreter positions with the Off-Highway Vehicle group in Sacramento. It will be impossible to replace them at Empire Mine (If you seeing me crying, this is why)! I wish them the best of luck with their new careers and hope to see them at Empire Mine for our Volunteer Appreciation Dinner in September.

Guided school groups are also going well with Marilyn, Priscilla, Tad, Nancy and John and Betty Lucas leading many of the groups. I have received numerous positive comments from those attending our guided school programs and would like to thank the volunteers who have led the tours.

I have also received rave reviews of our gardens and garden tours and have told visitors to thank Jennifer and Joy when they see them as well as Marsha, Terry, Jeanne and any docents who they see in the garden area. It is a tremendous amount of work to keep the grounds looking great with all of the activities going on in this incredible park!

If you haven’t been to Empire Mine in the past month or so, please join us to celebrate all that is positive and uplifting! Both the Park and those involved are in full bloom.

NEWS OF OUR FRIENDS
A Farewell Message from Ehren Pelonio

Anytime I think of why Empire Mine is such as special place to me, the immediate answer is the people I get to work with each day. Over the last 15 years I have been fortunate to work with and get to know a great bunch of people. All of you bring to the Park your knowledge, life experiences, laughter and dedication. I will miss all the serious, fun and crazy times I have shared working with all of you. I value your friendship and the time you give to the Park. I am sad to leave, but opportunity has knocked with a permanent full-time Interpreter I job with State Parks/OHMVR Division in Sacramento. My husband and I have become empty nesters and it is time for me to try something new and be able to better support a college student!

By the time you read this I will have officially left Empire, but I know that the Park will be just fine without me because of all of you. I am saying so long, but not goodbye. I hope you will let me know how things are going both with you and your work at the Mine. I will miss seeing you at the front desk.

So when you are next at the Park — go smell the roses on the garden side and the coal smoke in the mine yard; lead a school tour (can’t blame me for trying!); listen for the frogs in the Visitor Center walls; say hi to the pair of ravens who patrol the Picnic Area in the evenings and enjoy all of the usual and unusual things there are at Empire — for me. The real gold at Empire Mine SHP is the people who keep the Park going day in and day out.
NEWS OF OUR FRIENDS, continued
Introducing a New Park Aide

Hello, my name is Lauren Wilson and I am the new Park Aide at Empire Mine State Historic Park. I am originally from northwestern New Jersey and moved out to California in January of this year. Before moving, I graduated from East Stroudsburg University in Pennsylvania with a degree in Recreation Management concentrating in Outdoor and Park Management. After graduating I worked for a season with children in Environmental Education at a YMCA camp in New Jersey. I would love to continue in the State Park System or the National Park System in Interpretation because I love to learn and share my knowledge with others. I also love being outside and hiking a lot. I am so excited to be a new member of Empire Mine State Park’s team and I look forward to meeting all of the new and exciting people that make this park so wonderful!

THINKING AHEAD . . .
By Steve Sanchez, Coordinator, Miners Picnic

Mark your calendars now for Saturday, August 27, 2016 – the date of this year’s Miners Picnic – an annual summer celebration of our colorful gold mining history.

The first Miners Picnic was held in 1895 to raise money for the widows and orphans of miners, as well as injured and out-of-work miners. Today, it’s an action-packed day of fun, food, gold history, and lasting memories.

Volunteers are needed – not only the day of the picnic – but also for the preparations ahead of time. Especially needed are donations for the silent auction – preferably new or “gently used” items that others will find attractive and desirable and be willing to bid on. Also needed are cakes of all types for the children’s cake walk.

Look for further information in forthcoming issues of The Empire Star, and SAVE THE DATE!!

Dates to Remember

Tuesday, June 21
EMPA Board of Directors Meeting
9:30 a.m. in the Docent Building

Thursday, June 23
Coordinators Meeting
10:00 a.m. in the Docent Building
SMOKE FROM THE FORGE

By Bill Blount

Our hardy blacksmiths have forged their way through the early year and, we think, have survived.

Docent training class work has finished with nine survivors and now we move to the forge time to polish the skills and get over the fear of guests. We do try to teach the new smiths that guests are just people like they are but, you know, they may ask a question and I won’t know the answer. We all got over that phase. Our graduation lunch was held Friday, May 20th with pizza for all and about 18 total guests.

The school tour season is winding down with kudos to the school tour guides for keeping the tours on track and on time. We will have had 14 tour days when May finishes and only three scheduled for June so I would say the season is done. We are working with four effective tour smiths so we do hope that some of the new folks will step up and fill some slots.

Five of our members attended the California Blacksmith Association Spring Conference in Ferndale, CA. Yes, I know it’s a “cute” place to go, but the time was spent learning, talking and participating in projects. Dan Perkins, Tom Davison, Andy Berg, Doug Wade and Tom Files all came back with tales to tell and they were all about new stuff, new techniques, which will be the grist for training sessions throughout the year.

Speaking of training, we have enjoyed several local “pro” blacksmiths from the area making presentations on their work. Now you will not see some of the really wild dragons and make believe animals in the gift shop, but they do teach the smiths skills in tool use, heating and imagination.

And speaking of people, the traffic in the smithy is picking up quite nicely. The Spring Fling, Mother’s Day, was not as busy as we would have liked, but our little shop got pretty crammed on several occasions. The weekend traffic is building and it is always fun to talk with folks from all over the world. Like I’ve said before, when you are not wearing your pretty Cottage dresses or your butler garb, come on out and see us, we’re real people under the soot.

In closing, we want to wish Lianne Werner God speed and quick recovery from her illness. Go girl!
FUN FACTS FROM THE PAST
By Barbara Jarvis, Research Coordinator

Mine Temperatures — Empire vs Comstock Area

Temperatures in the Empire and other Grass Valley mines ranged from the 50’s—70’s, whereas in the Comstock area there were hot spots like those in Yellowstone. The temperature in those mines could be over 100 degrees, even in winter.

To work underground at the Empire, the typical Cornish miner wore woolen underwear having long legs but short sleeves. On top he might wear a cotton or woolen shirt and a “jumper,” which was similar to today’s blue jean jacket. He wore baggy canvas pants made of heavy cotton duck material. The trousers were generally “staged,” or roughly cut off a little above the ankle to reduce the length that could accumulate mud.

On his feet he wore either heavy “brogans” — course high top shoes — or boots, either of leather or rubber. Judging from old photographs, only rarely did the miners wear gloves. His “hard hat” was really not very hard. It was a wool felt hat having a rounded crown and narrow brim. It was stiffened by repeated applications of linseed oil or pine resin until it was firm enough to deflect light blows. Some miners wore a cotton or linen skullcap beneath the hard hat for improved comfort.


EMSHP GETS INTERNATIONAL EXPOSURE!
By Courtney Ferguson

Below is a link to the British-based American Affair publication. Amy-Grace Whalley's original request was forwarded to me by Ehren Pelonio, and I have been providing her with information and photos. I am quoted in the article, which was not expected or intended, but the way it came out!

http://www.americanaffair.com/blog/2016/05/26/panning-for-gold-in-californias-gold-rush-sites/

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 John Martin, a Cousin Jack who ran a grocery store/boarding house in Grass Valley. Interview date 9/16/87.

My wife and I were building our house in 1937 before we were married. Ed Madison was quite renowned as a stone mason in this area. He was building our chimney using used bricks that were fashionable at that time. They were also cheaper than new bricks.

The Starr home had seven chimneys still standing after it burned down. Mr. Madison was taking the chimneys down. All of the flue lining and some of the bricks in our fireplace came from the Starr Mansion. (They called the home the Starr Mansion.)

There was no depression here. You didn’t see anyone selling apples on our streets. There was work for the men, even though gold was only $20.67 an ounce.

We sold bread in our store for 12 cents. We had a garden and sold vegetables for 5 cents a pound. We grew parsnips, turnips and rutabaga. Rutabaga pasties were their idea of heaven.

From an interview of Robert Cannon, Empire Engineer and Geologist. Interview date 2/3/81.

Being chief engineer didn’t mean anything in those days. You started at 7:00 in the morning and didn’t stop until you went home at night. I never had a job in my life where I had Saturday off. Those were depression days. I started off at $150 a month. It got up to $300 a month. I felt like a rich man.

Fred Nobs worked everybody hard, but he was really a pussycat. He was one of the most compassionate men that God put on this earth. If you didn’t get your work done, he would let you know.

People were flocking here for work. Between the North Star and Empire in 1934 and 1935 we had about 700 men not counting the leasers.

They took the pasties down in the mine. They were a convenience food. They didn’t consider them any good if they couldn’t drop them down the shaft without breaking the crust.

The preceding recollections are believed to be true; however, we are relying on the memory of the individual who had such a recollection.
Gold Panning at Bridgeport 2016
Begins May 28

Imagine squatting on the bank of an icy river in 1850... working twelve hours a day in all sorts of weather, swirling pans of gravel in search of a fortune. Some struck it rich, while others struggled in vain to find the prize – gold!

When you visit Bridgeport in South Yuba River State Park this summer, be sure to stop by the troughs near the Visitors Center to try your hand at gold panning. Learn from docents how the old 49ers used simple pans to find hidden treasure in the shallows of the Yuba River. After a panning demonstration, practice your technique in the troughs before heading down to the river to do your own prospecting.

Docents at Bridgeport provide step-by-step panning lessons, share stories about the history of our area, and describe other ways the precious metal was extracted during the California Gold Rush, such as hard rock mining and hydraulic mining. Gold panning is fun and educational for the entire family and kids get to keep the treasures they find in the troughs.

Docents offer gold panning demonstrations at Bridgeport from noon to 2:00 p.m. every weekend and holiday, Memorial Day through Labor Day. Gold panning sessions for private groups and school talks can be arranged at other times by prior reservation. Call South Yuba River State Park for more information at (530) 432-2546.

Written by Cheryl Pirtle
Photos by John Field
Empire Mine State Park
Volunteer Coordinators

Interpretative Coordinators

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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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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