MINE, WINE & DINE” 2018 – 
Memorable, Successful, and Just Plain Fun
By Courtney Ferguson

How do you take that which was already good (i.e. “Mine, Wine & Dine” 2017) and make it even better? Now that’s quite a challenge. However, our second annual fundraiser held on Friday, August 3rd went from outstanding to just about perfect.

With more wines, craft beers and raffle prizes – plus more dancing – I think everyone would agree that, yes, this year’s event was more fun (as well as considerably more profitable) than last year’s. While the final figures are being tallied, it looks as if we are much closer to repairing the Firehouse roof – as well as other worthwhile projects on our never-ending list.

Tickets sold out early. Event Chair Steve Sanchez, whose tenacity encouraged heartfelt support from many local businesses, deserves big-time kudos and gratitude. He and his team worked tirelessly to make the event a success. (See the sponsors list in the Gold ’n’ Gratitude section of this newsletter.) Steve and Event Coordinator Shanin Ybarrondo of Imersion Marketing worked closely with the “Mine, Wine & Dine” Committee to make sure the entire evening was magical. Each and every volunteer, from our Living History docents to our registration people, raffle ticket people, pourers, servers, set-up and take-down team all did a masterful job.

Sherry Sanchez shared her time and talent to create dazzling designs for our promotional materials. Special thanks also to our musical docents, Celtic Joy,

(continued on page 3)
COTTAGE LIVING HISTORY

AT HOME IN SAN FRANCISCO

By Bev Skinner

Since it’s been a while since you’ve heard anything about the Bourn’s Webster Street home in San Francisco, I’m taking this opportunity to bring you up-to-date on its present status as well as to share some interesting historical tidbits of information. This past spring, I was in contact with the present owners – Greg and Gloria McCandless – who were responsible for the wonderful restoration of this historic home starting back in 2010 with the purchase of this badly neglected property. For those of you who didn’t visit the home in September 2014 when many of us did – and for those who weren’t even docents at that time – the Webster Street home in Pacific Heights was the primary residence of the Bourn family when the home was built in 1896 – just the year before “our” Empire Cottage was built.

Greg and Gloria had many different ideas of just how they might use this home when the restoration was completed, including using it as a second home. They pursued several different options, but in weighing the pros and cons, chose to use it only as a second home for themselves and their family, and permitting occasional selected events which would have minimal impact on the house. One of their four sons enjoys living there and oversees the care of the home in addition to his regular job.

The tour that they graciously provided for our group of EMPA members was the first they had hosted, but since that time they’ve hosted several other groups and events, including a reception, two years ago, when they were privileged to host the California Preservation Foundation Conference that was being held in San Francisco. Their Webster Street home restoration won a prestigious preservation design award in 2015 from the CPF.

They were very pleased to host a group from Filoli, which included the Curator, Julie deVere, as well as docents. In appreciation for the tour, the McCandless’ were given a set of very early photos of the home which, according to the docents, identified the top floor bedroom suite, with its adjoining redwood sitting room and balcony, as Maud’s personal suite of rooms. Some of the pictures showed items that are known to have belonged to Maud – including a framed photo of Marie Antoinette. Greg was told by a former Filoli docent that Maud is said to have identified more with the French Revolution era than the Victorian generation of her parents. We, at EMSHP, had always been under the impression that those rooms were William Bourn’s “study” or office although a few of us thought it curious that they were located on the top floor of the house.

The single photo at the top of the page is of a rear entry to the home – be sure to notice the stained glass window which is located on a stairway landing. The two photos to the left show Maud’s bedroom at the top and her sitting room below – both part of the “Redwood Suite” on the top floor of the house. The two French doors flanking the fireplace lead out to a small balcony from which you can view San Francisco Bay.

(continued on page 3)
“MINE, WINE & DINE” (continued from page 1)

for the delightful dinner music, as well as to our volunteer photographers Richard Bannister and Jerry Martini. Park Ranger Michele Green and Volunteer Coordinator Lauren Wilson proved to be invaluable resources too.

Guests enjoyed an interesting and extensive beer and wine list, thanks to Dan and Kathy McCarthy’s creative coordination. Delicious farm-to-table cuisine was provided by Antonio Ayestaran Custom Catering and the after-dinner dance band was award-winning Dream and the Dreamer. Board Member Sean Gilleran of Gold Miners Inn provided the dance floor. It was well used!

Our tempting raffle prizes were donated by Damon Scholl, Graham’s Restaurant in Squaw Valley, Rhetta Vander Ploeg, Gold Miners Inn, Forrest Cureton, Sierra Theaters and Nevada County Farm Supply. Raffle ticket sales alone raised over $2,200.

A post-event meeting was held on August 14 to review new ways to raise the bar higher still for our next “Mine, Wine & Dine,” scheduled for August 2, 2019.

For me, as I watched the beautifully arranged tables and our guests’ delight, the evening’s most memorable highlight remains the tremendous pride we have in our Park – and how determined we are to maintain and improve it. Our shared passion seems to shine its brightest at “Mine, Wine & Dine.”

AT HOME IN SAN FRANCISCO (continued from page 2)

When Greg and Gloria were given a tour of Filoli they learned that, at Filoli, Mr. and Mrs. Bourn had separate bedrooms connected by a bathroom. At Webster, the third floor living quarters has a similar arrangement, where the master bedroom is connected to another bedroom by a common bathroom. Their thinking now is that those rooms likely served as the bedrooms of William and Agnes.

I’m a bit of a detective myself, in very modest terms, so I find little tidbits of historical “discoveries” like these to be fascinating – they’re like adding very small pieces to a very large puzzle. Another example is that during construction, Greg found a small torn corner from a San Francisco newspaper in the top floor wall framing that was left by a workman – presumably as a record – that had a 1897 date. So, the home was probably started in 1896, but it’s probably a fact that it was not completed until the following year – at best.

As I hope to keep in contact with Greg and Gloria, there could be other things I can share with you about this magnificent home in Pacific Heights. Keep on reading! (More photos will be printed in a future issue!)
A DIFFICULT FAREWELL

By Lauren Wilson

It is with a heavy heart that I have made the decision to end my employment at Empire Mine State Historic Park. I started in May of 2016 as a Park Aide, and after a year became a Park Interpretive Specialist and the Volunteer Coordinator. Over my approximately 2-1/2 years total at the Park, I have learned so much about the local history, volunteer coordination, interpretation and State Parks in general, but most importantly, I have been exposed to one of the best groups I have had the pleasure of working with.

When I started at Empire Mine, I knew no one and had no roots. My family and entire life was in New Jersey. Now, I can't go anywhere without recognizing someone, having someone recognize me or running into a volunteer! Because of Empire Mine, I feel like I am a part of a family out here. I've loved every moment of this journey and want to thank everyone who has touched my life along the way. It was not an easy decision, but I have accepted a full-time position elsewhere. However, I intend to continue my journey with Empire Mine as a volunteer. Thank you everyone for your relentless support and constant smiles. I am so fortunate to have had this opportunity. My last day will be September 15, 2018, so be sure to stop by and visit if I am at the Park!

NEWS OF OUR FRIENDS

By Lynne Buenz

Angie Slicker, long-time docent at the Park, called me about the recent death of Phyllis Slack, another docent whom Angie had worked with in the rose garden. “Phyllis loved the rose garden,” Angie said, “We worked side-by-side for some time; those were definitely “the good ‘ol days”!

There didn’t appear to be any information published in the local newspaper about Phyllis’ death, and I could not find anything on the Internet other than a picture of her on the cover of her Facebook page. Angie also told me that sadly, Phyllis’ husband, Robert, had also passed away just a couple of weeks later. She added that family members were planning a celebration of life on Saturday, September 1 at the Slack home in Penn Valley. Angie thought that others who had worked with Phyllis in the garden would want to know about her passing. She added that she thought a fitting tribute to Phyllis might be for those who knew and worked with her to make a donation in her memory to the Park and perhaps designate it for use in the rose garden.
The Empire Star

Volume 43, Number 8

Stevens Court Pays Tribute to a Small Town Boy

By Gage McKinney

U. S. Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens (called “Chris”) knew the stories of his Cornish ancestry. His great grandfather, John Stevens, was manager of the Rose Hill Mine when the miners encountered a barren zone. When there was no money to pay the men’s wages, John paid them from his own savings.

A mine manager no longer, John Stevens made his living as a pumpman at the Ophir Mine and later at the Idaho Maryland. But it was at the Rose Hill, later absorbed into the Empire Mine, where he made his sterling reputation. When he walked into town from his home on Wood Street, he was met on the streets of Grass Valley with neighborliness and respect.

Chris’ grandfather, Elmer Stevens, excelled in local schools. While still a boy, Elmer was called on to speak at Constitution Day and July 4th parades, and as the old-timers said of a passionate speaker, “he made the eagle scream!” He went on to earn a diploma and Phi Beta Kappa key at the University of the Pacific in Stockton and a master’s degree at the University of California, Berkeley. He taught history, civics and speech at the local high school, touching countless lives over a 40-year career. His students called him “Chief Stevens.”

Elmer Stevens was enthusiastic about Grass Valley and its people. He was founding president of the Nevada County Historical Society, a leader of Emmanuel Episcopal Church and the Masonic Lodge, and a founder of Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital. When Chris would walk into town with Elmer, he would watch his gregarious grandfather greeting person-after-person on the streets, calling them by name, shaking hands and exuding the warmth of a teacher, neighbor and friend.

Chris followed in the footsteps of his father, Jan Stevens, when he attended the University at Berkeley. After graduation he served with the Peace Corps in Morocco, where he learned to love North Africa and its people. Then he followed his father again by studying law. He graduated from Hastings College of Law and practiced international law at Pillsbury, Madison and Sutro, California’s oldest “powerhouse” firm with offices across the country. But working in a law office, Chris realized his heart was far away. He joined the U. S. Foreign Service, returned to the Middle East and rose through a succession of diplomatic posts.

“Wherever the Foreign Service sent him,” Jan Stevens told me, “Chris brought with him the gentle good humor and interest in people that his grandfather instilled in him in Grass Valley.” Whether on the streets of Cairo, Amman, Damascus, Casablanca, Tunis or Tripoli, Chris brought the friendly greeting and the neighborly cheer he had known on the streets of a foothill town.

At age 52 Chris died during an attack on the U. S. Consulate in Benghazi, Libya in 2012, the sixth U. S. ambassador killed while on duty. After his death 30,000 Libyans took to the streets to mourn the loss of the lanky blond American who cared about them.

This month Grass Valley will dedicate Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens Court near Mill and Bank Streets. It’s the town’s tribute to a native son who gave his life trying to bring peace to a region which has had too little peace. He was at heart a small-town boy who courageously took his small-town values into a bigger world.
ATTENTION: FILM ENTHUSIASTS!!

A film entitled “Phantoms of the Holbrooke” will be screened as part of the Nevada City Film Festival on Saturday, September 8, 2018, at 1:00 p.m. at the Nevada Theatre. Three Empire docents have a “cameo” appearance in this film: Vince Seck, Bob Jennings and John Lucas. Tickets for individual screenings are $10, and tickets should be available on the Film Festival website at nevadacityfilmfestival.com.

SPECIAL TOUR REMINDER!

WHAT: Day tour(s) to the Hellman-Ehrman Mansion and Vikingsholm, both located off Highway 89 at North Lake Tahoe. Transportation is on your own and please bring a brown bag lunch.

WHEN: September 26, 2018—meet at 9:30 a.m. at Ed Z’Berg Sugar Pine Point State Park

WHO: For reservations call Lianne Werner at 273-0704 or Bob Jennings at 263-0523.
From an interview of Doris (Hooper) Sheridan (born at Empire in 1909). Interview date 3/8/96.

Every day going to school, I walked through the Empire Mine Yard. I would go into the machine shop and say hello to my dad. I knew the men. The carpenter shop was right there. You didn't play in the Mine Yard. You didn't touch anything. You learned that early.

We always went to the State Fair. We had friends in Sacramento. Sometimes we would drive and sometimes we would take the train.

As I got older, many times I went to Lake Olympia. It was loads of fun. Many times, we went dancing there all through high school and even afterwards. It was a fun place.

My husband grew up in Auburn. He worked at the Maryland Mine. We got married in 1934. That was during the depression. He was lucky to get the job. He worked at the Maryland 'til it closed during WWII. He worked in the mill and in the flotation building.

When he came back after the war he could have gone back to the mine but he didn’t want to do shift work. So, he went to work for the newspaper. He was a pressman at The Union for 28 years. He passed away two weeks after we celebrated our 60th anniversary.

Georgie Sing’s mom couldn’t speak a word of English. I would talk to his dad. Coming and going to school I would say hello as I passed by their house. Mrs. Sing had bound feet. Her feet were like four inches long. She had to hold onto tables and chairs.

After we left there I would see Georgie around and in the grocery store. His family is called Oyong. I don’t know where that came in. He was always Georgie Sing to us. His dad was called Sing. That’s all we ever called him. All of Georgie Sing’s kids were all Oyong.

From an interview of Phil Keast, master mechanic and mechanical engineer, Empire Mine 1920-1957.

When testing the air in the mine they used special glass flasks that had negative pressure inside. They would take them down and when they were in a stope or a drift where they wanted to check for silicosis they would break the neck of the flask. The flask would suck in the air there, then they would plug the neck.

About twice a year a man from San Francisco would come up and test the samples that had been taken from the different areas of the mine. Then if someone brought a lawsuit against the company they would have it recorded from an inspection source on file.

The preceding recollections are believed to be true; however, we are relying on the memory of the individual who had such a recollection.
**GOLDEN GRATITUDE**

To All Our “Mine, Wine & Dine” Sponsors

Your generosity will help to safeguard our treasured Park.

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**ALSO: SPECIAL THANKS TO THE “MINE, WINE & DINE” COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

- Steve Sanchez, Chair & Sponsorship
- Cheryl Balmain
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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 Park Association

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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Special Note: The Board presently has four open Director positions.

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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