Happy New Year!

A sincere “thanks” goes to all of you supporters of the Park! Whether it’s through your volunteer hours, your membership dues, your visits, your words of encouragement, or – all of the above, we thank you for a very good year, and look forward to more of the same in 2015!

EMPA always ends the year with an Open House where we pause to honor a few of the people who helped to make it such a good year: the ones who have gone over and above the call of duty – the “self-starters” -- and the ones who are always there with a helping hand, and a smile on their face! This year the following seven people were singled out for special recognition -- thanks again:

- Jim Ward
- Jack Laird
- Jay Hansell
- Steve Wolf
- Bob Jennings
- Jennifer Greenfield
- Lynne Buenz

There’s going to be a change in 2015 – and it involves the Presidency of EMPA! After four years, it’s time for me to step down! In December, the Board elected Mark Allen as the new leader of the Association.

Mark, a true Grass Valley “native,” was a member of the Volunteer Class of 2008 and has been active in Cottage Living History here at Empire -- and is also a volunteer at South Yuba River State Park as well as spending time at Malakoff Diggins! His previous volunteer experiences and his very active interest in mining history will serve him, and EMPA, well as he takes over the reins.

I look forward to finishing my last year on the Board, helping Mark when I can – and spending more time as a Smithy!

See you around the Park – especially if you peek in the Blacksmith shop!

Larry
There is much information in the Cottage Living History Manual about the entrepreneur skills of Wm. B. Bourn II, but not all Park docents have easy access to this Manual. So, using this Manual and Ferol Egan’s book, Last Bonanza Kings, I’ve tried to summarize and briefly outline Bourn’s major entrepreneurial endeavors. During Cottage Living History visits, docents talk about Mr. Bourn’s success as owner of the Empire Mine which was his primary business, and of course, our focus. As the owner, he developed the largest and highest-producing gold mine in California history. He bought out family shares and started his own operation of the mine in 1879 and he bought a controlling interest in the North Star Mine in 1887 to add to his empire. Over 5.6 million ounces of gold – with the value of over eight billion dollars by today’s standards – were taken from the mine during its 106 years of operation.

Mr. Bourn’s interest and foresight into the water demands of San Francisco led him to buy up the watershed from Hollister to Napa for the benefit of San Francisco. In 1908, he purchased the Spring Valley Water Company and created a complex reservoir system in the San Francisco and south Bay Area. By 1920, Spring Valley Water Company was the largest, privately owned water company in the U.S. After years of unsuccessful negotiating, finally, in 1929, with Will in very poor health and suffering from the recent death of his only daughter, the City & County of San Francisco bought Spring Valley Water Co. and the pipelines throughout the Bay Area for $41 million. This sale eventually enabled the water from the Hetch Hetchy system to flow into Crystal Springs Reservoir. For years, water was a big business for Will -- second only to the Empire Mine.

We also often discuss Mr. Bourn’s involvement in the formation of P.G. & E. during Cottage visits. In San Francisco, the Bourn home on Webster Street, built in 1896, was not electrified, yet the Cottage enjoyed electricity when it was completed just the following year. This was because, in 1890, San Francisco was a patchwork of gas and electric companies. Mr. Bourn became President of the San Francisco Gas Company, which merged in 1896 with another small company to become the San Francisco Gas and Electric Company. He became President of that company in 1902. This company later merged with the California Gas and Electric Company in 1905 and eventually became the Pacific Gas and Electric Company (P.G.& E.) under his leadership. That is a name we all recognize!!!

In 1888, during visits to his mother’s at Madrono, William became interested in the wine business in Napa Valley and devised a business to assist other vineyard owners with making, storing, and aging their young wines. This business led to the construction of Greystone Cellar. The business was very successful until he was forced to sell Greystone in 1894 because the phylloxera plague had decimated the vineyards in the Napa Valley. The building was later bought by Christian Brothers and it is now the Culinary Institute of America. We all know this as a beautiful Napa Valley landmark.

In keeping with his high profile in San Francisco, Will became a member of the top clubs in San Francisco and was a trustee of Stanford University from 1917 to 1923. “Civicism” (Bourn’s term for civic responsibility), was important to him. He was President of the Pacific Union Club and instrumental in rebuilding the Flood Mansion as its clubhouse. He was an entrepreneur ahead of his time and played an active role in shaping the business environment and history of San Francisco.

Sources: Cottage Living History Manual (2014) and “Last Bonanza Kings” by Ferol Egan.
In Memory of Jeff Herman

Jeff Herman was a bit of an enigma -- a creative genius, a deeply spiritual thinker, an impulsive imp, and a caring, supportive boss and friend, all rolled into a strong man with a quick smile.

One of my first days working at Empire Mine was at a Miners Picnic -- with Jeff as the Supervising Ranger and me as the newly transferred Unit Ranger. I was somewhat nervous as I knew this was a big event and I was expecting a serious tactical planning meeting when I came on duty. Instead, I came upon Jeff busily skinning a dead snake he had found. He slipped a bit of rubber tubing he found into it. It turned out to be quite the conversation piece. As we went around greeting visitors and checking on interpretive stations, he would ask people if they wanted to pet the snake and then wiggled the tubing a bit so the snake still looked animated and very much alive. I was surprised how few people shrieked and jumped back and how many would actually touch it. After a while, however, the snake started to fall apart in the day's heat. So then it was on to the next mischievous activity! He opened the iron grate door to the viewing air shaft behind the Visitor Center, and placed a remote speaker box in it out of view. He held a little microphone that was connected to it, and we stood around until a child would walk by, and look inside. He would turn his back to it, and say into the mic, "Hey kid, help me, let me out!" When the child would run to his parents and point to the shaft and tell them there was a man trapped in there, of course there would be silence, except perhaps for my muffled laughter.

So many other good memories come to mind. He was like a little boy at Christmas when we toured Mike Nevius' personal collection of mining artifacts while checking on the status of the reproduction ore cars he was having built with EMPA funding for the School Tour program. Educating children about gold rush history at their local park was so important to him.

Or, when he arranged for a park staff team building river rafting trip at the Auburn State Recreation Area where he used to work. I recall him standing triumphantly in a kayak with the oar held over his head -- before he tipped into the chilly-water! The day also included a brown bag lunch meeting after the rafting activity to discuss how we could improve park operations -- it wasn't all just fun.

Or, how supportive he was of the Medicine Show I created for a campfire program at Malakoff Diggins. He stole the show with his performance as the drunken has-been sharpshooter, "Yuba Jim," who falls for the Annie Oakley-like Park Aide Mary Bottenberg's character. She outshoots him until he takes a swig of Dr. Susannah Chase's miracle patent medicine. Maintenance Chief Julie Clark pitched in as a character as well as my daughters. My favorite memory is after the show was over and we were driving back on North Bloomfield Road. A full moon was coming up over the Yuba River as we started to cross it on the Edward's Crossing bridge. Jeff stopped the car and we got out and danced by the light of the moon in our 1890's outfits. It was a magical moment for all.

Jeff also listened patiently and gave insightful advice when staff members were struggling with problems. He had weathered and overcome rough situations and times in his past, so his wisdom and thoughtful suggestions had meaning and a resonance to them. In addition to leaving his mark on Empire Mine, he left his mark in our hearts.

By Susan Chase, Retired Supervising Ranger, EMSHP
**A Glimpse from the Past**
Submitted by the Research Group, Barbara Jarvis, Coordinator

**Phil Keast — Countdown to Shutdown**

Although active mining ceased in 1956, there is more to closing of a mine than the layoff of miners. Deep hard-rock mines do not spring into existence full-fledged; they grow laboriously and slowly over many years. Closing a large mine is an equally slow and painful task.

Under the leadership of J.R.C. Mann and the planning and guidance of expert mine mechanics, such as Phil Keast, much valuable equipment was salvaged from all of the operational mines of the Empire-Star mining complex. To the final small group of men whose lifetime careers were such an integral part of these workings, it was a somber activity, but there was no room for sentiment. The following concise words, excerpted from Phil Keast’s journal, tell their own story:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>November, 1956</td>
<td>Removed Nordberg Hoist from 46 Winze-Empire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December, 1956</td>
<td>Stopped pumps at Central Shaft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 30, 1957</td>
<td>Stopped pumps at Penn Shaft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 9, 1957</td>
<td>Stopped pumps at old North Star</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 10, 1957</td>
<td>Started to pull pumps at Penn Shaft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 16, 1957</td>
<td>Completed pump removal at Penn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 17, 1957</td>
<td>Pulled balance of pumps at 4600; started dismantling 3800 Winze hoist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 15, 1957</td>
<td>All pumps out of 3400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 27, 1957</td>
<td>Water was 60 feet above 4600 station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 10, 1957</td>
<td>Water was 200 feet above 4200 station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 13, 1957</td>
<td>Water was up to 3000 station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 14, 1957</td>
<td>Finished Zeibright for Winter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 20, 1957</td>
<td>Finished pump removal at 2200 station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 30, 1957</td>
<td>Removed Byron Jackson pump at 1100 station (the last pump)</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 14, 1958</td>
<td>Pulled last electric cable for Empire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 4, 1958</td>
<td>All equipment removed from Empire Shaft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 28, 1958</td>
<td>Water was apparently on 1100 station as air was not going down Rowe Shaft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 14, 1958</td>
<td>Shipped Empire Marcy 66 Ball Mill to Philippine Islands</td>
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*Phil Keast*
May 19, 1958     Penn and North Star Shafts were filled with water as 2000 GPM was coming out of New York Hill drain tunnel
July 26, 1958     Water was 107 feet below drain tunnel of Empire
November 24, 1958 Finished tearing down Central Mill
February 21, 1959 Shipped Brown Valley-Penn Hoist to Grants N.M.
June 6, 1959      Removed Counter Weight and Covered Central Shaft
August 18, 1959   Water was just at 500 station Empire
December 4, 1959  Started to remove Ingersoll-Rand Compressor – Empire
February 27, 1960 Took down flagpole on Mill
March 18, 1960    Started to remove North Star compressor
November 1, 1960  Shipped Brown Valley surface hoist to Forest, CA
January 28, 1961  Finished at Brown Valley
April 11, 1961    Shipped Marcy 77 Mill to South Africa
December 15, 1961 Burned Empire Mill
December 23, 1961 Finished work at Empire

And so, two days before Christmas 1961, the remnants of what had once been a proud and powerful work force filed silently off the Empire premises for the final time. Looking back over two decades later, we wondered about their state of mind. Were they depressed to see the last chapter close on 106 years of illustrious gold production? From Phil Keast, master mechanic with forty years of service, the answer came quickly. “No! No depression, just relief. The tension involved in removing heavy equipment with a skeleton force has been great at times.” He recalled the emotional strain associated with removal of a 60-ton hoist and a 40-ton crusher from the Zeibright, and jockeying them down the sheer face of the mountain. “No, it was just relief” – the kind of relief, perhaps, that comes to those who have nursed a loved one through a long terminal illness.

The miners of Grass Valley were truly men to match California’s mountains. For well over three generations they had torn the precious metal from the grasp of the Sierra. Their job was done and they faced a new and strange future, but without regret for a way of life that would never come again.
Open Position on EMPA Board…
Secretary Needed!

The EMPA Board is in need of a volunteer to take minutes at the monthly Board meeting on the third Tuesday of each month. The meeting starts at 9:30 a.m. and is usually over by noon. Some filing, for record-retention purposes, would also be involved.

This volunteer need not be a V.I.P. at the Park nor a member of the EMPA Board—just someone who has an interest in serving our community, our Park Association, and our local State Park. Think about friends or neighbors who might consider this volunteer position—and share this announcement with them.

Please call EMPA's Vice President, Jim Coe, at 530-274-2375 to learn the details involved in this opportunity.

DATES TO REMEMBER

January 15
Coordinator Meeting
10:00 a.m.
In the Docent Building

February 19
Coordinator Meetings
10 a.m.
In the Docent Building

January 15
NV Co. Historical Society Speaker Night
7:00 p.m. at the Madelyn Helling Library

February 19
NV Co. Historical Society Speaker Night
7:00 p.m. at the Madelyn Helling Library

January 20
EMPA Board of Directors Meeting
9:30 a.m.
In the Docent Building

February 17
EMPA Board of Directors Meeting
9:30 a.m.
In the Docent Building

March 6, 13, and 14
Training for new docents
(ask Ranger Greg for details)

March 17
Media Workshop led by Courtney Ferguson
(time and details pending)
From an interview of Rudy Kutchar, Empire Mule Skinner, 1939-1941  Interview date 3/8/95.

One day I thought I would be smart. I put my carbide lamp on the first car going in so the mule could see better. Then I got in the third car. Well, the hitch came loose between the first and second cars and Babe just kept on walking pulling the first car with my light.

I sat there in the dark wondering what to do. I didn’t want to just stumble down the track. It was no telling what I might run in to because the drift was curvy and pitch black.

I got behind the last car which gave me something to hold onto and pushed the car to the end of the drift where I met up with the mule and my light.

From an interview of Ray Berk, Empire Welder. Interview date 3/12/84.

During most of WWII I ran the welding shop at Miners Foundry. After the war when Empire opened back up I ran the welding shop there until the mine closed in 1956. We made just about everything that was made out of steel.

They were losing a lot of gold in the smoke that was leaving the refinery. Phil Keast gave me a blueprint for a big circular drum about 10-15 feet high in which they put porcelain filters to catch the gold. I never did see anything that looked like gold. When they took it out, it looked like soot to me.

I worked as low as the 7000 foot level welding air lines to get air down there. In the main shaft we could use arc welding because we had electrical power, but in the drifts the air lines had to be welded with an acetylene torch.

The preceding recollections are believed to be true; however, we are relying on the memory of the individual who had such a recollection.
Empire Mine Two-Stamp Mill

By Don Schmidt

This is a story about good things coming to those who wait. And wait... This past fall, Jim Ward, Bob Jennings, Larry Skinner, and I met in front of the small 2-stamp mill located in the mine yard to lay out the plan to create a working piece of historic mining equipment.

Many thousands of visitors have walked past this small mill over the years without realizing its purpose or significance within the local mining community. It was always the goal of the Park to work out a way to make this a working stamp mill, but as things go, there were other priorities that took up the time.

The mill, believed to have been built in the late 1850’s or early 1860’s, worked at the Emily Mine in Nevada City until the 1930’s. John and Beverly Bennett, the owners of the Emily Mine, donated the mill to the Park in 1976. Their original idea of the donation was to preserve it for future generations. As time passed, it was thought that it could become a working demonstration piece and some restoration work was done toward that end. An effort was made toward covering it after placing it in its current location, but the structure was deemed unsafe and removed.

Fast forward to 2012 ... Larry and I discussed the idea of making the mill operational as an interpretive exhibit and took it to the EMPA Board for funding. The project moved forward a little more last year with the help of a large donation and approval of the CEQA submitted by the Park staff. With research completed by Bob Jennings and Jim Ward, and Jim’s detailed plans, we were able to go forward with the project.

During a mine yard tour, the guide will be able to give the public a first hand account of how an actual stamp mill worked. The mill, powered by electricity brought over from the Machine Shop, will operate by an electric motor, multiple gear reductions, and a large belt, engineered by Jim with OTHG input. The last phase of the project will include an interpretive panel describing the history and operation.

We hope to have a “ribbon crushing” event early this spring – stay tuned for the date and time. Thank you for your continued support of the Park and we hope to see you soon!
**Empire Mine State Park**

**Volunteer Coordinators**

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**Interpretative Coordinators**

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<tr>
<td>Trails</td>
<td>Lianne Werner</td>
<td>273-0704</td>
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[www.empiremine.org](http://www.empiremine.org)
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