In The Vein

It’s summer! And there’s no question – it’s definitely the busy season around the Park! And it’s going to stay that way for a while. As you read through this issue of the Star, and it’s a large one, you’ll see what I mean. We are indeed fortunate to work with such a great cadre of Volunteers to make things happen!

Let me put in a plug -- and ask that you go the “second mile” and, in addition to volunteering your time, to please help out in the following areas if you can:

- Bake a cake, some cookies, or cinnamon rolls for the Cake Walk! (Page 8)
- Get creative and come up with a fun item for the Silent Auction! (Page 3)
- Encourage young kids you meet to enter the Writing Challenge! (Page 5)
- Participate in the Grab the Gold Raffle! You just might win! (Page 6)

Here’s a short introduction to Frank Hamlin’s article which appears on page 4 in this issue. If you’re interested in the real facts regarding the mining history of “our” Empire Mine, and want it delivered in a “talkin’-to-you” manner, you’re going to want to go to the link and read the 18-page document that he, with the help of others, has put together for your enlightenment -- and enjoyment! People in the “know” have termed it, “An amazing compilation that will only get better with time!” and “Wow! This is some achievement!” (It sounds like it should be on the Best Seller list -- but it’s only available to those of us who read the Empire Star!)

And, after reading it, which I have done, I’m looking forward to the slower season when we’ll have time to take the two-hour tour that he’s offering. I’m sure I won’t be alone! Thank you, Frank!

In conclusion, I want to thank our “history contributors” this month: Caryl Fairfull (page 2), Barbara Jarvis (page 7), and Jack Laird (page 8)! If my teachers had made history this interesting, I might have stayed awake in class!

Looking forward to seeing you around the Park!

Larry Skinner
When we planned our recent South American Adventure cruise from Florida to Los Angeles, it did not occur to us that we would repeatedly be hearing about the California Gold Rush nor learn about the plans for a Nicaraguan canal to connect the Caribbean with the Pacific. Now, as I re-read Last Bonanza Kings, the voyages of Capt. Chase when he sailed around Cape Horn, have become more meaningful as a result of our own recent cruise around the Horn. We stopped at many of the same ports that countless California-bound miners did – as well as the Senior Bourns – while traveling from the East Coast to San Francisco. As we embarked on our cruise, we also never surmised that the California Gold Rush stimulated the growth of so many South American ports. This meant more to us because of our connection with Empire Mine and the Bourn family.

Last Bonanza Kings mentions the impact of increased traffic to Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Montevideo and even the Falkland Islands. We visited all these ports and were surprised when our tour guides told us how these ports grew in response to the demands of early Gold Rush travelers. The moxie of these people was impressive as they went “round the Horn” in the small ships of that era – like the California, Oregon, Antelope and Columbus – while the Captain of our modern and stabilized ship, the Crown Princess, determined that it was not safe for us to “round the Horn.” Instead, we traversed the Beagle Channel, a very narrow, but safer route north of the Cape, in safety. There are many stories of even today’s ships having dangerous incidents as they traverse from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean “around the Horn.” Imagine the fate of some of those small ships!

In 1850, William Bourn sailed to Chagres, Panama, and then traveled by boat and mule across the Isthmus to continue his trip north on the Pacific Ocean to San Francisco. With the discovery of gold in California, transiting North Americans sought a faster route to the gold mines through Nicaragua via the San Juan River and Lake Nicaragua. In 1854, Sarah Bourn traveled from New York to California, crossing Nicaragua on a Cornelius Vanderbilt steamer, and then taking a smaller river boat to San Juan del Sur. She arrived in San Francisco on May 28, 1854 after a journey of only 29 days. Her route was 375 miles shorter than the Panama route. Sarah Bourn traveled much of the voyage in miserable conditions, however. Of course, our trip was much more enjoyable on a modern luxury liner.

On August 26, 1849, the Nicaraguan government signed a contract with the United States businessman, Cornelius Vanderbilt. It granted him the exclusive rights to construct a waterway within 12 years and gave him the sole rights for an overland crossing through Nicaragua and Panama by train and stagecoach to complement his steamship business. These routes quickly became the main avenues of trade between New York City and San Francisco. In 1853, about 20,800 people traveled across Nicaragua. However, an earthquake in July, 1863 increased sedimentation in the San Juan River, greatly increasing the difficulties of navigating the river. In 1869, the construction of the transcontinental railway across the US diminished the demand for ship transportation.

We sailed from San Juan del Sur to Puerto Vallarta and then to Los Angeles in modern day luxury. Because we were on a 49-day cruise the ship’s company called us the “49ers,” and we were again reminded of the California 49ers. We have never sailed into San Francisco Bay, but it is easy to envision Sarah’s joy of sailing into the Bay after a tough journey and seeing William there on the pier to greet her.

Egan, Ferol, The Last Bonanza Kings (University of Nevada Press, 1998), 21
Egan, 17
Egan, 24
Needed: Jazzy Items for Annual Silent Auction!

Our Silent Auction for the Miners Picnic is on August 23, 2014 this year. I am seeking quality, new and/or gently used items for this event. You can donate items and bring them to the Gift Shop or the Smurf Room before August 18. I need time to make signage for each item.

Last year we received some wonderful items and we grossed about $2,000. The Auction will only be as good as our donations! Go through your closets and cupboards and consider donating those things that you simply are not going to use! It’s a therapeutic and cleansing process!

If you have any questions, please email me at cajbordeau@gmail.com or call me at 305-6913. Please do not bring items the day of the event!

Carol Bordeau
Silent Auction Chair

Dates to Remember

July 15
EMPA Board of Directors Meeting
9:30 a.m. in the Docent Building

July 20
Don Schmidt’s Retirement Party
5:30 p.m. at the Clubhouse

July 24
Coordinator Meeting
10:00 a.m. in the Docent Building

August 23
119th Miners Picnic
11 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Help wanted! Do you have a video cam and a few hours to spare on Saturday, August 23rd? Would you consider using your equipment and your talents to wander around the Park and capture some interesting footage of the 119th Annual Miners Picnic? There’s a whole lot of interesting activities going on that need to be preserved! If so, please get in touch with Jack Laird at 478-0999. Thank you in advance!
I have been a docent now for about five years and during that time I have learned that what we know and tell the public about the Empire Mine isn't always accurate. The information that was written down is reasonably good, but the fun stories about people and the descriptions of the processes used to get the gold out of the ore are too often passed on verbally from one docent to another. At one time that information was probably correct, but over the years details were lost, some stories were made more interesting and a general understanding of the mine operations was lost. I have been fortunate enough to hike with a mining geologist who could answer my questions, I was a mechanic back in the 60's so I'm familiar with equipment and I have a couple of mechanical engineering degrees. I also converted the oral history interview tapes into digital MP3 files so I have listened to most of them. Finally, I have read several books about the equipment and processes used in mining. I decided to write down much of the information that I often hear incorrectly presented. I then got help from Jack Laird to both review the material and to add information he hears docents incorrectly present. Jack has also read a number of books and listened to many of the tapes. It wasn't any surprise to Jack and me that when we started to write things down, we both caught minor errors in the information we used.

We now have an online document available at:

test-empiremine.org/documents/starr.pdf

(It may be necessary for you to copy and paste this address into your browser – or you may call Frank and he'll send you a copy directly. His number is at the bottom of this page.)

This is not a description of what a docent should say on a tour as all of us have individual interests and like to present different information. This document has far too much information to be included in our normal public tours; however, any of the information may be used. This should also provide enough general information to enable docents to correctly answer almost all questions that might be asked on a tour. I will be happy to try and answer questions that docents have after reading the mine yard information and I will be giving extended mine yard tours to those that are interested. Please get in touch with me if you would like to be scheduled for a tour. Typical tours, including questions, last about 2 hours.

Frank Hamlin
(530) 272 3248 (frank@hamlin.net)
First-ever contest open to all children in third to eighth grade
“What’s so special about Empire Mine?”
Submitted by Courtney Ferguson

That’s the question – and school children are encouraged to write their answers in the new Gold, Grit and Glory Writing Challenge. With a little thought and a little research, six creative children can win valuable prizes.

Miners Picnic Chairman Jack Laird is coordinating this first-ever contest to encourage youngsters to be proud of our hard-rock gold-mine heritage and to write about it. There are three different groups: 3rd & 4th graders, 5th & 6th graders, and 7th & 8th graders. The higher the grade, the more advanced the challenge becomes. First and second prizes will be awarded to the winner and runner-up in each group – and Certificates of Achievement will be presented on the stage by the old Club House at 2:30 p.m. the day of the Miners Picnic (August 23rd). Winners will also claim FREE tickets to the 119th Miners Picnic, Lazy Dog Ice Cream Vouchers, FREE Sierra Cinemas’ tickets and Empire Mine baseball caps.

Prizes, Rules and Entry Forms are available at the Visitors Center – as well as at The Union, Lazy Dog Chocolateria (111 Mill St., Grass Valley). All entries must be received at the Visitors Center by Friday, August 1st. An impartial panel will choose the winners. If you have children or know some who would welcome a challenge like this, encourage them to enter. Just make sure they understand that completed, signed Entry Forms must accompany each submission.

Special thanks to retired teacher Nancy Koring for her valuable input – and to The Union’s Features Editor, Brett Bentley for running an article on the contest in the July 9th edition.

Our Gold, Grit and Glory writing challenge encourages youngsters to explore our history - and be proud of it!

Photo courtesy of Union photographer John Hart
Stake your claim --
And you could be a winner in our
Grab the Gold Raffle!

With a little luck (and plenty of raffle tickets) you could win …

- A gold nugget worth $350.00
- Or one of three gold dust vials worth between $50.00 and $140.00

**Raffle Ticket Prices** (The more you buy, the better your chances!)

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Winning tickets will be drawn at the 119th Miners Picnic on Saturday, August 23rd, Empire Mine State Historic Park. (However, you don’t have to be there to win.) Sponsored by Empire Mine Park Association in support of Empire Mine State Historic Park

Raffle tickets available at the Visitors Center Gift Shop

PROCEEDS TO BENEFIT PARK IMPROVEMENTS
Anchor Brewing Company Partners with California State Parks Foundation

In an earlier issue of the Empire Star, Larry Skinner, EMPA President, announced the good news that the Empire Mine Park Association (EMPA) was one of three recipients of grants from the California State Parks Foundation (CSPF). Our grant was for $4,835, which is to be used to obtain equipment to digitize our extensive Oral History archive and to add to that collection.

What was not made clear in the announcement of the grant was that Anchor Brewing Company had partnered with the CSPF to make the project possible. Anchor Brewing Company was born in the Gold Rush and shares a history with the Empire Mine. A portion of its Anchor California Lager sales goes to the grant program with the CSPF. Anchor California Lager is the brewery’s re-creation of the first genuine lager brewed in the Golden State at the Boca brewery.

So support your State Parks and drink Anchor California Lager!

Empire Vs CA Employment Commission

Barbara Jarvis, Research Coordinator

Summary of litigation between Empire Star Co. (Plaintiff) and CA Employment Commission (Defendant), January, 1943.

Question: Are gold mine lessees independent contractors or are they employees of the mine owner?

A California gold miner is, by inheritance and tradition, an independent worker. Later they were put on an employee basis but never lost hope of a chance to become an independent lessee whereby they might share in the profits of the venture. This leasing system, as Federal Court states, had its origin in the tin mines of Cornwall and the Cornish miner brought it to this country. The purpose of the system was to give workers a chance of operating on their own, paying the owner only a royalty for the privilege of this development.

The company never interfered with lessees. Occasionally—once or twice a month — the safety engineer came through and made suggestions for the protection of lessees and workers. The company bought concentrate from the lessees at the Mill tables and paid them on separate assays—50% of its full gold value. The lessees were no longer allowed to run the tailings into the streams so they became the property of the mine owner with no additional compensation for these tailings.

Lessees used the same exits and entrances and methods of conveyance in the mine as mine employees. This was for their convenience. Schedules were arranged so ore was not mixed — made for the benefit of both parties. Leases were renewed for a six (6) month period.

Special melting days for the lessees were held at the middle and again at the end of each month when the gold was melted in separate crucibles and marked E.S.L. (Empire State Lessee) and sent to the Mint.
Tales from the Tapes


In the summer of 1953, I came back to work in the Pennsylvania Mine, only this time I was a miner and not a mucker.

The stope where I worked was very large and was worked for years. I think we went in on the 2500. The drift going in wasn't very tall. I am not very tall but I couldn't walk standing up straight. I must have hit my head about 50 times until I learned where the low spots were. I practically wore out my hard hat in the two summers I worked in the Penn.

The vein in the stope was very narrow but rich enough that it paid to mine it. When I had graduated from mining school and came back as an engineer in 1954, I would go into the same stope as it was still working.

I would guess that stope was 200 feet wide and up at an angle for 300 feet. The vein would pinch down to a couple of inches. If we had 8 or 10 inches, the vein was considered pretty wide.

We would blast a hole in the center of the vein and then blast out the quartz. We would then drill and blast the granite to make it big enough so you could work. We were working on our knees most of the day.

From an interview of Phil Keast, Master Mechanic and Mechanical Engineer. Interview date: 11/13/84.

I was going to leave on May 31, 1956 for a three-month trip to Europe. Nobbs came to me and said he wanted me to go down to San Jose the next morning to check out a fire engine the county was selling. If it checked out ok I was to buy it and drive it back, which I did. I left for Europe the next day.

When the mine closed down they gave it to the Ophir Hill Fire Department.

Sugary Treats Needed for the Miners Picnic Cake Walk

We need your donation of "cakes," of every description, for the Miners Picnic Cake Walk on August 23rd. The definition of "cake" includes pies, sweet breads, brownies, cinnamon rolls, cookies, cup cakes, and, of course, tall cakes dripping in icing. Homemade is great, but we also appreciate artful professional efforts. We need prizes that will delight our target market: young, sugar-crazed walkers and jumpers.

Please call Lise Hinman immediately (before you talk yourself out of it) at 273-8266 or email me at Lhinman0@gmail.com, if you can donate a sugary creation. I need to know I can count on you!
Empire Mine State Park
Volunteer Coordinators

### Interpretative Coordinators

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<td>Terry Armstrong</td>
<td>271-0126</td>
<td><a href="mailto:terryrarmstrong@gmail.com">terryrarmstrong@gmail.com</a></td>
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<td>Blacksmith Shop</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td><a href="mailto:vinceseck@yahoo.com">vinceseck@yahoo.com</a></td>
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### Other Roles

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<td>Research</td>
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<td>Tom Newmark</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:rajotom@fsaccess.net">rajotom@fsaccess.net</a></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Security</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Angie Slicker</td>
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<td>Rose Garden</td>
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<td>Garden Tours</td>
<td>Jeanne Powell</td>
<td>271-2138</td>
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<td>Trails</td>
<td>Lianne Werner</td>
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[www.empiremine.org](http://www.empiremine.org)
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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Grass Valley, CA 95945

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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