Fellow EMPA members, Rejoice! I survived the 2015 “THINKING BIG” CALPA conference. Barely! WOW!! This year’s conference was held in Borrego Hot Springs which is surrounded by Anza Borrego State Park – and what an AWESOME state park that is! At 634,000 acres, it is the largest, and although I only saw about 2% during the four days I was there, it was incredibly beautiful. I can hardly wait to go back.

The conference was soooo busy! Our days started at 7:30 a.m. each morning with the roundtable breakfast and networking groups along with special speakers. We then went immediately into the general sessions with more guest speakers and training.

There were tours planned during the afternoon hours – Friday I chose the Archeology Labs which were very informative. I was able to see a volunteer cleaning petrified logs and another working on the skull of a LARGE Woolly Mammoth with curved tusks 8 feet long!! In another area, we were able to see Native American pottery, baskets and tools, and in yet-another, we could observe their educational outreach programs called PORTS – a studio with live video feed and green screen backdrop. This concept could work GREAT for sending the Empire Mine and the California Gold Rush in general, across the Country and even the World! Hmm, something to ponder for the future?

Saturday’s bus tour took us to the Stonewall Mine – one of the richest in southern California where we had a great interpretive talk by Alex Bevel, State Park Historian. Then we were off to a Native American site and more learning.

On an entirely different subject, at our April EMPA Board meeting, Randy Widera, working through the California State Parks Foundation, reported on the Organization Assessment, conducted over the past six months. It was very eye-opening to see how EMPA ranked among the other Associations. EMPA is a SUPER STAR according to Randy. However, “the aging Board needs to grow, as does the membership as a whole and EMPA is seriously lacking in fund raising.” So, if you LOVE this Park as much as I do, please help! Our continued success depends on all of us working together – not just a few doing most of the work.

And a big welcome to our brand new Board Member and 2015 VIP graduate, Brianna Pacillo. Thank you for stepping up to help “shoulder the load.”

Come smell the roses with me –
Mark S. Allen, EMPA President

Check out EMPA’s brand new website – it’s cool! – www.empiremine.org.
MARY HALLOCK FOOTE

Last year, I wrote an article for *The Empire Star* that provided brief biographical information about several individuals believed to have been friends or business associates of William Jr. and Agnes Bourn. These individuals were also thought to have visited the Bourns at Empire Cottage. Among them were Arthur DeWint Foote and his wife, Mary Hallock Foote.

I recently read a biography about Mary Hallock Foote, which I received as a Christmas gift. It is entitled *Mary Hallock Foote – Author-Illustrator of the American West* by Darlis A. Miller. The book was fascinating to me in many ways, especially because I learned that at a time when women were mostly “in the background” and expected to concentrate “on family and hearth,” Mary Hallock Foote (1847-1938) was a renowned author and illustrator in the 1870’s and 80’s.

Mary was born November 8, 1847, in Milton, New York, and was raised on a farm in a family with English Quaker ancestry. As a young woman, she studied art in New York City at the new Cooper Institute School of Design for Women, and by her early twenties she was an accomplished artist-illustrator for several publishers in New York City. In 1876 she married Arthur DeWint Foote, a mining engineer, and her life changed drastically. She left her beloved east and followed Arthur first to the New Almaden Mine near San Jose, California, followed by Leadville, Colorado, Deadwood, South Dakota, Boise Idaho, Morelia, Michoacán, Mexico, and finally to Grass Valley where Arthur became manager of the North Star Mine and eventually retired. While in Grass Valley, the North Star Company hired architect Julia Morgan to design the North Star House, where they presided over many social and civic events.

During her working career, Mary published twelve novels, four short story collections, almost two dozen stories and essays and innumerable illustrations. Indeed, while her husband struggled to earn a living wage in the early years of their marriage, Mary’s work helped the family to survive economically. She was also a devoted wife and the mother of three children – a son, Arthur Burling Foote, and two daughters, Betty and Agnes. Tragically, Agnes died in 1904 at age seventeen from complications following surgery for an acute appendicitis.

Mary and Agnes Bourn became good friends having first met because of their husbands’ involvement with mining. Each was a guest in the home(s) of the other, and together they participated in various social and charitable activities. Agnes was a little younger than Mary, but their friendship lasted through the lifetime of each. Mary once wrote about Agnes to another friend, describing her as a “thoroughly unselfish and tactful guest, and I enjoyed our reading and talking hours exceedingly.”

Reading about the friendship between Mary and Agnes Bourn caused me to wonder about the role Agnes might have played in her husband’s success. Unlike Mary, there is no documented evidence that Agnes ever worked outside the home. Indeed, I have found very little written material about Agnes. I intend to keep searching!
VIP Tour of the Clubhouse a Success!

Lynne Buenz, VIP Tour Coordinator

On Thursday, April 16, a group of 18 docents were given the opportunity to explore all the “nooks and crannies” of the Empire Clubhouse. Tour guides Bob Jennings and John Lucas provided members of the group with a glimpse of history, and dispelled some of the myths about this prominent structure on the Park grounds. Constructed originally to host mining executives, it continued as a “men only” club until Libbie Starr (wife of George Starr) and Grace Clinch (wife of local mercantile owner C. R. Clinch) formed the Empire Club. This “invitation only” Club still exists today, and continues to meet at the Clubhouse.

As a “bonus,” docents participating in the April 16 tour heard a presentation given by docent Marsha Lewis about the Women’s Suffrage Movement in California and about Mary Clark Sargent, and were afforded the opportunity to view the Oyung House, the home of the original gardener at Empire.

Next up on the VIP Tour Schedule will be a tour of the gardens and grounds to be scheduled sometime in July. This tour will include identification of some of the lesser known buildings within the landscaped areas.

As a reminder, the VIP Tour Program is intended for active docents, as a way of broadening their knowledge about the Park and its special features. Special thanks to Ranger Greg Sherr and park staff for supporting this program, and to the Empire Mine Park Association for conceiving the idea.

Gift Shop

*Bourn Dynasty*, by Charles C. Steinfeld (former Park volunteer), after more than a year off the Gift Shop shelves, is now available – having been reprinted and complete with a new cover and sharper images. This book traces the Bourn family from its English beginnings in 1629 through Mr. Bourn Jr.’s death. An excellent read for those of you interested in the history of the family and is a great resource for any Empire docent.
SMOKE FROM THE SMITHY
By Bill Blount

Over the past several months the blacksmiths have enjoyed several educational opportunities during our monthly “hammer-ins.”

At the February meeting we were able to enjoy John McClellan, president of the California blacksmith association and local blacksmith company owner. He spent two hours with us working on anvil and hammer technique – to the awe of all attending.

John is well known in the local and national blacksmithing community. He has been a blacksmith for many years and his skills make the job look all too easy. As we all discovered, it takes practice, practice, practice to come even close to his examples. The photo above was taken at his shop in Loomis.

In April we were honored to have a return of an old favorite demonstrator, Mike Carson. Mike presented a demonstration of various medallions, key fobs and cap removers. Mike is often seen at the Draft Horse Classic, the County Fair and various other venues with his wide selection of Blacksmithed items for sale.

Mike is a big man with a wide range of skills that we always look forward to mining. This picture was taken in our smithy. We hope to integrate some of his ideas from this presentation into our list of items we offer in the smithy and the gift shop.

As a bit of a side note, four of our smiths completed a course leading to a class 1 certificate from the California Blacksmith Association – that is if we individually pass the final “exam” project. Dan Perkins, Tom Davison, Will Perkins and Bill Blount all went through the course which was spread over a 7-month period and was held at John McLellan’s shop in Loomis. We all hope we can use the new skills to raise the level of operation in the Empire Mine Blacksmith Shop.
Be a Star!!!!

Let’s face it – every one of us needs his or her 15 minutes of fame!!! So here’s your chance . . .

Just give Bev Skinner a call at 477-1750 – or email her at bev4411@gmail.com – and tell her that you’d like to claim your chance at fame. It’s so easy too . . . and you have several options as well.

Join the annual 4th of July Parade troupe – this year’s venue is Grass Valley – and help the members of our community recognize the importance of the Empire Mine State Historic Park right here in our midst! Most of us are pretty passionate about the place, but we all have neighbors and friends who don’t appreciate it like we do – let’s remind them!

Pick up your phone right now before it slips your mind and dial the number above to find out your options – riding, walking, in costume or not – there’s something for everyone – including you!
DATES TO REMEMBER

Saturday, May 2
Cottage Living History Season Opening Day

Sunday, May 10
Springtime at Empire Mine
Event Hours: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Tuesday, May 19
EMPA Board of Directors Meeting
9:30 a.m.
In the Docent Building

Thursday, May 21
Coordinator Meeting
10:00 a.m. in the Docent Building

Some photos by Richard Bannister, Dreamspinner Productions
From an interview of John Martin, a Cousin Jack who ran a grocery store/boarding house in Grass Valley. Interview date: 9/16/87.

People thought the Cornish were stupid because they were naïve and made jokes on themselves. They were not stupid. They were pretty sharp and they were honest. They stayed with us long after they got out of the mines. In all the years they stayed with us, which was 1922 to 1966, we had one bad debt. They were an honest lot, but there were characters.

The Cornish men were no different than anyone else when it came to drinking. We had one boarder that you would see staggering down the sidewalk. He was so drunk that he couldn’t hit the ground with his hat. The next weekend you would be downtown and see him singing up a storm with the Salvation Army Band. They drank beer a lot. They seemed to be happier drinkers.

From an interview of Fred W. Whitford, Mining Engineer. Interview date: 6/22/93.

They had to inspect the Magenta Drain at least once a month to make sure it was open to Woodpecker Ravine behind the tennis courts at Memorial Park. I walked the length of the drain one time when it was being inspected.

When you are exploring for gold bearing quartz you didn’t look for pyrites. You looked for galena. You can have tons and tons of pyrite and it means nothing. A little bit of galena and you’ve got good stuff. Zinc isn’t bad but galena is a good indicator. That’s lead sulfide.
Fun Facts From the Past
By Barbara Jarvis, Research Coordinator

Fred Searls

Fred was a very intelligent person; quick to assemble facts and reach decisions. He had a friendly attitude and had many friends, but he did not hide his lack of interest in a man or situation of which he did not approve. His basic principle was he would never accept second-hand information. He believed in a small hard working staff, less likely to make expensive mistakes.

Fred’s mode of dress was a cloth cap, yellow mining boots, red jazzbow* necktie, nondescript jacket, short trousers, and white socks showing above his shoes – so his trousers wouldn’t get wet from dragging in the water down in the mine.

He used his country bumpkin appearance to a good advantage in litigation actions. One story is: . . . “a distinguished Idaho geologist quoted all his qualifications and credentials before testifying in a trial, but when Searls took the stand, dressed as usual, and was asked of what societies he was a member, he scratched his head and said, ‘Well, I belong to the Elks.’” This brought the house down, and some say won him the case.”

(taken from *Men and Mines of Newmont*, pg. 3)

* In case you don’t know, like I didn’t, a Jazzbow tie is merely a ready-made bow tie. Your Editor.

(Pssst! Looking for a ‘really good’ deal?)

If you like history, or know someone who does, here is the “Real Deal” for you! It has a long name – Historian Passport Day Use Admission Annual Pass – but you get a good looking Historian Passport card!

And it lets you, and three of your closest friends, visit over thirty different State Historic Parks and Monuments or Museums for the one-time cost of just $50.00. And you have 12 months to do it in!

If you do your math – that comes to about 40 cents per person per visit! I’d challenge you to find a better deal than that!

For a list of the historic Parks and more information, just go to http://store.parks.ca.gov/ and click on Passes. There are a few Historic locations that this will not work on (sorry -- but that does include Hearst San Simeon!), but you’ll have saved so much money on the rest of the Parks that you won’t mind that!

You can purchase these on line – or from one of the friendly Park Aides at the Empire Mine State Historic Park Visitor Center.

Bon Voyage to you and your lucky friends!
Empire Mine State Park
Volunteer Coordinators

Interpretative Coordinators

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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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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