Hello EMPA faithful,

I'm very sorry to inform you of the passing of one of EMPA's finest. Immediate Past President Larry Skinner lost his courageous battle with cancer a few weeks ago. (Editor's Note: See tribute to Larry Skinner on page 3 of this newsletter.) For myself as incoming President, Larry was a GREAT mentor and wealth of knowledge. He will truly be missed by us all, and we all pass our love and support to Bev and Larry's entire family.

As you may recall, in last month's issue of The Empire Star, I mentioned that a first-of-its kind fundraiser “Dinner with the Bourns and the Starrs” was being planned for Friday, September 23, 2016, by the newly formed EMPA Special Events Committee. We are looking at ways to “spread the word” about this event, as well as opportunities to acquaint more members of the business community in Grass Valley and Nevada City with the Park and all its special features (and needs)!! Toward this end, we are considering the possibility of hosting a Chamber of Commerce mixer, an idea that is still in the discussion stage — stay tuned!! (AND, if there are any other ideas out there, don’t hesitate to let us know about them — the more the merrier — and the more productive we can become!!)

As you will read further in this newsletter, there are other special events scheduled to take place at the Park — the annual Mother’s Day Springtime Event on Sunday, May 8 from 11:00 to 4:00 p.m., and the bus trip to Filoli scheduled for Thursday, May 19. Also, our Cottage Living History program will begin its season on Saturday, May 7. Planning for and executing all of these special events and activities takes the efforts of many dedicated volunteers — and we are grateful for all of you!!

Finally, thanks to the good work of Courtney Ferguson, our Outreach Coordinator, we have begun to exchange information with our nearby “sister” parks — the South Yuba River State Park and Malakoff Diggins' State Historic Park. On page 8 of this newsletter, you will see a flyer provided by Malakoff about their annual “Humbug Living History Day” scheduled for June 11, 2016. If you haven't made the trip out to Malakoff for this special event, I highly recommend it! What a great way to spend the day with the family!

See you in the Park!

Mark S. Allen
THE “MAGIC” OF EMPIRE (BOURN) COTTAGE

By Lynne Buenz

My first visit to the Empire Mine State Historic Park occurred quite some time before I actually moved to the Grass Valley/Nevada City area, and long before I knew anything about the history of the Park and what lies within it. I well remember, though, how impressed I was with everything I saw that day. I was particularly intrigued by the beautiful house that stood so majestically and prominently on the grounds (I was to later learn it was called a “Cottage”). I wondered what “magic” might be found inside. As I recall, that first visit occurred in the fall, after the close of the Cottage Living History season, so there was no ready opportunity to actually go inside.

I stood on the lawn in front of the Cottage, and marveled at the beautiful architectural design, and the stone and brick used to construct it. But, even more, I wondered, “Who lived there, and what were their lives and the surrounding area like?”

This year, I will observe several milestones. In July, I will have been retired from full-time work for 10 years. In August, I will have lived 10 years in Nevada City, and, finally, in September, I will have completed 10 seasons as a docent at the Park. Much of my volunteer time has been spent in Cottage Living History (CLH). My CLH “career” began with portraying a maid, a member of the Bourn family’s staff. I then became a CLH interpreter, with the opportunity to provide a brief introduction to the history of the Bourn family and the Cottage itself, before visitors went inside. I have learned so much and have had the opportunity to share my acquired knowledge with many Park visitors who chose to become “guests” at the Cottage.

As an interpreter, I sometimes encounter visitors who give the impression that they would prefer to “skip” the introduction and simply walk in and through the structure. I always try to impress on all visitors, though, that as impressive as the Cottage is, it is basically, after all, a very “old” house. It is the history behind it that creates the “magic,” and makes it come alive. Once one has learned that, imagination can take over, and the possibilities are endless!

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And speaking of Cottage Living History, the 2016 season is about to begin! (A word from CLH Co-Coordinator Nancy Koring):

Empire Cottage is READY for the coming season, which will begin on Saturday, May 7! The roof is finished – no small accomplishment. The inside has been cleaned and is shining, thanks to the work of Park staff. Oh yes, the camera, which had been “among the missing,” has been found. Thanks to the talent of costumer Patti Gizzi, several women’s gowns and skirts have been altered to accommodate several sizes. CLH Co-Coordinator, Cheryl Balmain, has purchased new shirts for the men, and new gloves and dress shields for the ladies. All of the men’s costumes have been cleaned, as have the costumes for the maids and housekeeper Katie Moriarty, as well as dresses and blouses for the women. There is even a new full-length mirror – wow!

A “kick-off” meeting for the new season was held on Wednesday, April 20, in the Docent Building. CLH “housekeeping” details were covered, including a review of the basic “nuts and bolts” and distribution of a new roster. Those present also had an opportunity to sign up for dates on the schedules from May until September. I look forward to seeing and working with all of you.

THREE CHEERS FOR COTTAGE LIVING HISTORY, and all those who make it happen!
NEWS OF OUR FRIENDS

Volunteer Base at Empire Suffers Great Loss

By Lynne Buenz

How do you describe someone who has had a profound influence on your life? Awesome? Inspirational? Influential? A person of integrity and high standards? What about all of the above! These are all words that have been used to describe the feelings many have expressed about Larry Skinner, volunteer extraordinaire, who departed this life on Sunday, April 3, after a battle with cancer.

Larry was a member of the docent class of 2007, and contributed his time and talents in several volunteer areas at the Park, including the blacksmith shop and Cottage Living History. He also served four terms as President of the Empire Mine Park Association, at a time of great challenge and change. During this time, he worked diligently and faithfully with others toward the goal of opening the now defunct underground tour (aka the adit).

The family has planned a celebration of Larry's life to be held on Saturday, May 21, at 11:00 a.m. at Peace Lutheran Church located at 828 W. Main Street in Grass Valley, CA.

The service will be followed immediately by a luncheon in the "New Fellowship Hall" for all those attending the service. All are welcome to enjoy a light meal while visiting with others. The family has expressed the hope that all can stay for this casual time when there will be an opportunity for anyone to share a story about Larry -- and it will also provide the family a better opportunity to greet and visit with you.

Larry’s leadership, enthusiasm, dedication, infectious sense of humor and ready smile will be sorely missed by all. Our hearts go out to his wife, Bev, and his entire family.
Mother’s Day Springtime Event
Sunday, May 8th from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Empire Mine State Historic Park
10791 E. Empire Street
Grass Valley, CA 95945

A family day mom will cherish!

Enjoy:
- A complimentary cup of tea in the special tea garden
- Lots of live, local entertainment for all ages
- The potting bench - where children can create little, living gifts for mom
- Living history, with beautiful, Edwardian costumes
- A picnic near Empire Mine’s famous gardens
- FREE parking

$7 for adults 17 & over, $3 ages 6-16, FREE admission for children under 6

(530) 273-8522
www.empiremine.org

Dates to Remember

Sunday, May 8
Mother’s Day Springtime Event
11:00 am—4:00 p.m.

Thursday, May 19
Bus Trip to Filoli
7:00 a.m.—6:00 p.m.

Tuesday, May 17
EMPA Board of Directors Meeting
9:30 a.m. in the Docent Building

Thursday, May 26
Coordinators Meeting
10:00 a.m. in the Docent Building
ALL ABOARD! (Last Call for Bus Trip to Filoli)

By R. W. (Bob) Jennings

The bus will leave the main parking lot at 7:00 a.m. on Thursday, May 19. (Please park to the rear of the lot.) Expected arrival time at Filoli is 10:30 a.m. Upon arrival, the group will gather in the Visitor’s Center, where we will have an early lunch paid for by EMPA and the Filoli Foundation (be sure to thank the people at Filoli).

The tour will begin at approximately 11:30 a.m., and last for 2 to 2-1/2 hours. You will then be free to roam the grounds until the bus departs at 3:00 p.m.

I hope everyone has a good time. Thanks for joining us on this journey into the past!

IMPORTANT! Advance payment of $57.00 due prior to trip — contact Bob Jennings — rw3jennings2@yahoo.com or 274-2834.

Regarding a different subject, kudos go to Terry Armstrong and Ehren Pelonio for setting up a tour on April 9 for volunteers from Filoli. Those of us who worked the tour met some wonderful people. They are looking forward to giving us a good tour. The Filoli volunteers were not aware of all the activities at Empire, or about the Bourns, as a lot of their information is about the Roth family who owned the Filoli Estate after the Bourns. Mrs. Roth was responsible for donating Filoli to the National Trust for Historic Preservation.
FUN FACTS FROM THE PAST
By Barbara Jarvis, Research Coordinator

THE EMPIRE STAR MINES

Gold started one of the world’s most romantic movements when Marshall found a nugget on the surface. For several years thereafter, the surface was combed by many thousands and soon men found it necessary to start digging for gold. At first they “coyote” into old river channels. The term “coyoting” arose because the holes into which the miners slid reminded them of coyote holes. These tunnels were scraped out by hand—the only tools being a pick, shovel and bucket. When they reached the gold bearing gravel, pillars of that material were left standing to support the roof. Incidentally, half a century and more later many properties were again worked to obtain the values that had been left standing in these pillars by the original workers.

Recollections of Jack Wolff, 1932-1933 pg 10

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SPECIAL NOTE: The following information was found in the “History of Placer and Nevada Counties” by W. B. Lardner, published by Historic Record Company in 1924. It was published in the Empire Star, Volume IX, Issue II, February 1991. Special thanks to Lise Hinman of the Research Group for verifying the information below and for providing additional information.

JOSEPH BIRKETT

Mr. Birkett’s first trip to Grass Valley was made in 1896, at which time he built the residence of W.B. Bourn (Jr.), the owner of the Empire Mine and president of the Spring Valley Water Company. (This paragraph goes on to say that he erected the stone wall and the office at the Empire Mine.)

Recognized as a man of public spirit, both aggressive and progressive, Mr. Birkett was selected a member of the Grass Valley City Council in the fall of 1922. After the contract for improving the streets of the city was let in August 1923, however, Mr. Birkett was appointed city manager and superintendent of public works. So, resigning his position as Councilman, he accepted the position to which he was appointed and now devoted his attention to overseeing everything in the improvement of the city, and particularly to the four and a half miles of concrete paved streets under construction. Mr. Birkett and Mayor M. J. Brock started the movement for the successful bond issue, which gave Grass Valley its place in line with other cities, which have recognized that the one greatest factor in a city’s development is the building and maintaining of adequate modern streets and highways.

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 Phil Keast, Master Mechanic and Mechanical Engineer Empire Mine 1920-1957.

Early on we filled the backpack tanks that the mine rescue team carried with oxygen from the tanks in the welding shop. It was not medical oxygen. As the welding tanks got emptier we had to use a pump so that the backpack tanks still had 2000 lbs. pressure in them when full. This gave the men about 2 hours of air. We had a tough time with the seals on the pump handling the 2000 lbs. pressure.

About every 6 to 8 weeks they would call in the rescue teams from all of the mines for a drill. They would go down the Pennsylvania Mine to the 1700 drift. They would put up a canvas barrier that would seal the drift off. They would then build a fire in there to make it like an actual emergency condition.

They would put down machinists, pump men and others that would work underground and train them also. They would also train men from the Idaho Maryland and other mines. Newmont was the one who expanded this training.

From an interview of Harry Odgers, Miner/Utility man. Interview date 1977.

At the 3000 level they had a big white mule there that they called Babe. Everybody petted her. She had the run of the station. They never tied her up or put her in the corral.

If a man left his lunch bucket on the bench she would work it until she got it open then she would eat his lunch. When we got a new man we would tell him to put his lunch in a locker. Don’t’ leave it on the bench. They told me that at that time Babe was six years old.

The preceding recollections are believed to be true; however, we are relying on the memory of the individual who had such a recollection.
HUMBUG LIVING HISTORY DAY
JUNE 11, 2016

Commemorate Malakoff Diggins’ Golden Olden Days as park staff and volunteers in period costume interpret our historic heritage at North Bloomfield, formerly Humbug, California; with music, games, crafts, food and fun including a wild west gun-fight. Tour the furnished General Store, King’s Saloon, Drug Store, Skidmore residence or poke around amid transportation relics of by-gone horse & buggy days in the fascinating Ostrom Stable....followed by a tour of the town in a horse-drawn wagon. Don’t miss the opportunity to became a kid again as a little spray comes your way from an authentic water cannon of Malakoff’s hydraulic mining era. Follow Hwy. 49 north, 11 miles from Nevada City and turn right on Tyler-Foote Rd. Then follow the double-yellow lines for 15 miles to the Park.

530-265-2740
$8 / CAR

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Empire Mine State Park
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Clubhouse Living History
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Mine Yard Living History
Mine Yard Stations
Mine Yard Stations
Luncheons
Luncheons

Empire Mine State Park
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Mine Yard Stations
Luncheons
Luncheons

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Note: Changes in directory listings on this and the following page should be sent to Lynne Buenz,
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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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