Hello EMPA Faithful!

Well, I don't know about you, but I'm ready for fall and a nice cool, wet winter!!

With all the bad wild fires throughout the state, we have been very lucky here at Empire Mine – although there have been a couple of close calls.

Please, let's all extend a HUGE high-five “thank you” to Jack and Peggy Laird for putting together a FABULOUS 120th celebration of Miners Picnic. A well-deserved “thanks” should also go to all the VIPs for making it one of the most successful events ever held at Empire Mine. We had an estimated 1300+ visitors.

For those VIPs and EMPA members who participated in the September 2nd tour of the NEW Donner Memorial State Park Visitors Center and Museum, again, “thank you!” It's a real GEM in my opinion. And special thanks also to Interpreter 1 Steven Ellmore for all the great stories and hidden facts beyond the historical accounts. For those of us who also went on the tour to the Donner summit petroglyphs and railroad snow sheds with him, WOW! The view of Donner Lake was incredible!! Add this to your bucket list for sure! Very special thanks to Bob Jennings for putting together this GREAT tour!!

VIP Jerry "otad" (on time and dependable) Haralson and I participated September 12 and 13 in the Colfax Railroad Museum Days by setting up the State Parks' booth along with two gold panning troughs. What a greatly successful outing – with hundreds of Argonauts, young and older, seeking gemstones and the elusive faux golden nuggets of brass which the finder could barter for a faux gold-on-quartz specimen or genuine mine core piece to take home. It was all “tons of FUN !!”

HEY! News Flash!! The scaffolding is going up around the Cottage. YEAH! The new roof and repairs are underway. So PLEASE, no rain dancing! LOL!

Come see it with me.

MARK S. ALLEN

Check out EMPA’s brand new website – it’s cool! – www.empiremine.org.
As I’ve done before occasionally, my Cottage Living History article has more than one topic this month – the first two will be of general interest to all our readers – but you’re welcome to read through to the end!

If you’re reading this article, I know that you’re most certainly familiar with the Empire Cottage. And probably a good percentage of you also know that there’s been scaffolding on various parts of the Cottage for years now – which has made it easier for “roofers” to make frequent emergency repairs to patch the very old roof on this historic building. Well, I have very, very good news for you! Even though more scaffolding was added during the second half of September, the end result will be much more of a permanent fix! As I write this, the evaluation is still in progress that will help determine just how extensive the cracked mortar is that is found in the brick cap on top of the rock walls of the building. The damaged mortar in this cap will be re-pointed as needed and the plan is then to re-evaluate what the appropriate action should be on the roof itself – and the impending major El Nino event is being taken into consideration! What roof work is actually undertaken will probably be done in sections because of the likelihood of rain. Watch for updates in the future.

It’s a known fact that DPR is way behind on deferred maintenance projects state-wide so there was little chance of the State being solely responsible for this desperately-needed replacement. So – Empire Mine Park Association (EMPA) is stepping up to help financially with this project. If you are a member of this non-profit group, your dues have helped to pay for this. Thank you! If not, you can still join – and/or you can always make a donation. Just go to their website, www.empiremine.org – you can join or donate right there!

Ranger Greg Sherr would like to know if any of our VIPs don’t have the State Parks official name badge/pin. If you’ve never had one – or if you’ve lost your original one – please let him know at your earliest convenience.

For CLH and Clubhouse docents, you’re all invited – and encouraged – to attend the annual “Wrap-Up Party” which is scheduled for October 27 from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the Clubhouse. You’ll find that there will be a good balance of socializing, eating, and “taking care of business.” People with a last name that begins with A through L, please bring a hot dish; if your last name starts with M through Z, please bring a salad. Jane, Nancy and Cheryl are providing dessert for all. Please remember to also bring your personal calendar so that sign-ups can begin for several activities at the Cottage this fall!
ANGIE SLICKER: VOLUNTEER EXTRAORDINAIRE!

By Lynne Buenz

What can you say about 35 years of volunteer service? I can only think of one word, WOW! At the volunteer dinner held on September 11, Angie was recognized for 35 years of dedicated service to the Park, an accomplishment so extraordinary that a special die had to be cast for the pin that was given to her! She also received the "Golden Poppy Award," for her “significant contributions to the betterment of California State Parks through volunteer service.” Angie’s daughter, Linda, and Russell, one of her sons, were on hand to witness this special honor. In addition, Angie recently celebrated her 93rd birthday, and was serenaded by all in attendance at the dinner.

Angie began her service to the Park as a garden volunteer, and worked closely with the first Gardener hired by the State, Richard Figuerdo. She was there at the beginning for the establishment of the heritage rose garden. Over the course of many years, Angie guided other garden volunteers on the proper way to “dead head” and prune the “old” roses, the varieties of which were propagated prior to the year 1929. Over time, Angie’s knowledge of and love for the garden — especially the roses — grew, and she was instrumental in helping to produce a brochure that is still sold in the Park’s gift shop.

Shortly after becoming a docent myself, I was one of those fortunate enough to work with Angie, and because of it, I grew to appreciate not only the garden, but all of her knowledge, and to love her for the special person that she is! Although Angie is no longer able to work in the garden as she would like, she said during her brief remarks at the awards ceremony, that her “first love” at the Park will always be the garden! Far from retiring from service, however, Angie can still be found from time-to-time at the Park “manning” a special table in the Visitor's Center. THANK YOU, Angie!

ROSES AVAILABLE FROM THE GIFT SHOP

By Jennifer Greenfield, Coordinator

American Beauty
Hybrid Perpetual Shrub

Cécile Brunner
Polyantha Climber

Paul Scarlet
Polyantha Climber

Also available: Belle Poitevine Rosa Rugosa Shrub; and Marie Pavié Polyantha Climber.

Heritage roses from the garden at Empire Mine State Historic Park would make a wonderful gift for the gardeners in your life! Begin your holiday shopping in the Gift Shop where one can find many unique and interesting selections.
JIM WARD’S “FOLLY,” a.k.a. THE STAMP MILL UPDATE

By Don Schmidt, Volunteer

Those of us who have been to Alaska know that the purchase of this beautiful part of the world by then Secretary of State, William Seward, is anything but “Seward’s Folly.” Such, too, is the work that Jim Ward and the Over-the-Hill-Gang (OTHG) have put toward the completion of an operating stamp mill on the Empire Mine grounds.

I have come to jokingly call this project “Jim’s Folly” because the idea of getting a small stamp mill operational again after nearly 50+ years was a bit farcical. However, Jim, with the help of the whole OTHG crew, have implemented a vision of a working stamp mill to be used as an interpretation tool for the guides giving Park tours. They are nearing completion, and it is anything but a “folly”!

Any project that is undertaken in the Park requires approval from Park management to be sure we are protecting our artifacts. That requires a significant packet of paperwork and, in the case of the stamp mill, precise CAD-based drawings showing all the work we thought would be needed to get the machine running again. In order to complete those drawings, it required an engineer, or at least an engineer’s mind, to see through the problems. Without Jim Ward on this project, we would never have tightened the first nut and bolt!

When we first started this project, it seemed simple enough, as it’s a small 2-stamp mill. All the parts seemed to be there, the camshaft turned, the bull wheel seemed to be solid, the stamp shafts went up and down, and it was already on solid concrete. However, as we got into it, we found that the mill required extensive restoration, along with the engineering of motors, drive gear ratios, precise belt alignments, electrical runs, precision woodworking, and a whole lot more.

Because of the extensive work that Jim has done with this project, as well as with his design of a computerized volunteer management system, he was awarded the California State Parks “Golden Poppy Award,” the highest award given to Park volunteers. He has been a great asset to Empire Mine over the years, and is truly an all-around nice guy. Thank you, Jim, for all of your dedicated work.

Be sure to say a big “thank you” to any of the OTHG guys you see around the Park. They have done so much over the years and have put in long hours to give the public the best experience they could possibly have. Thanks guys for everything you do!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates to Remember</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, October 19</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMPA Board of Directors Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:30 a.m. in the Docent Building</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, October 22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coordinator Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 a.m. in the Docent Building</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, October 22</td>
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<tr>
<td>VIP Educational Tour of the Mineyard</td>
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<td>3:00—5:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>(see article in this Empire Star)</td>
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<td>November 27-28</td>
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<td>Holidays at Empire</td>
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Jim in his “OTHG” work clothes
(photo by Darlene Ward)
An Incredible Day for a Picnic
By Jack Laird, Event Chairman

Not just any picnic. On Saturday, August 29, over 1300 people enjoyed history, entertainment, food, fun and games at the 120th Miners Picnic on the beautiful grounds of Empire Mine State Historic Park.

This event is not a fundraiser, but rather a tradition. It is a day when the Empire volunteers get to share their passion for the Park with all visitors from toddlers to seniors. And a wonderful job they did.

Steve Grevstad headed up the gold panners which made sure that everyone went home with gold. Other event leaders were Cheryl Balmain, Cottage Living History; Vince Seck and Marilyn Sakowicz, Mine Yard; Carol Bordeau, Silent Auction; Lisa Hinman, Cake Walk; Lyn Muth and Mike Tracey, Children’s Games; Bob Jennings and Terry Armstrong, Security; Bill Blount and Dan Perkins, Mine Rescue; Kathy and John Field, Tin Stamping; Peggy Laird, Technical Support; Troy Hammer and Jane Bland, Pastie Lunches; and Courtney Ferguson, Entertainment and Publicity.

We would like to thank The Union, KNCO, State Farm agents Mike Bratton, Brian Hollister, Jeremy Sanders, and Chuck Hemmert; Gold Miners Inn — Holiday Inn Express; Jerry and Goldie Levitt, and all others who generously gave their support to the success of this event. Plan on joining us next August for the 121st Annual Miners Picnic.

TAKE NOTICE!

EMPA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

1:00 p.m.

November 5, 2015

Docent Building at EMSHP

Please join us at EMPA’s Annual Meeting. You are invited to share your ideas and concerns with your EMPA Board of Directors as we move forward into 2016.

Since there are only two applicants for the four openings on the 2016 EMPA Board (as I write this on September 23), there is no need to hold an election by ballot this year.

The two people who have submitted their applications are:

**Pat Maule** has been a volunteer tour guide and former president of the EMPA Board. Pat wants to get involved again and “participate in EMPA’s ongoing commitment to improve the Park’s facilities and enhance the experience of our visitors.” We welcome Pat to the Board who wants to bring “enthusiasm, patience, and perseverance in accomplishing EMPA’s goals.”

**Virginia Brunini**, a current Board member whose term is ending this year, intends to serve for another term.

Jim Coe, EMPA Vice President
Docent Visit to Donner Memorial State Park
By Bob Jennings

On September 2, a group of 32 volunteers from Empire Mine State Historic Park took a short drive up to the new Visitor’s Center and museum at Donner Memorial State Park in Truckee. We were greeted by State Parks Interpreter Steven Ellmore; Steven transferred from Santa Cruz to Donner a short time ago. He has really done his homework on the Donner party and the history of the area – evident as he talked with us.

We met Steven at the entry to the museum for a short introduction. This was followed by a tour of the immediate surrounding area, highlighting the history and cabin locations. We returned to the museum and viewed a 20-minute film followed by a self-guided tour of the new exhibits. A highlight was the short video of Ranger Don Schmidt’s tour of the area in his Model A car. Don was involved in the beginning efforts to create the new museum.

Some of our group took a picnic lunch to the nearby Donner Lake while others hiked to the snow sheds with Steven. We all had a wonderful time, and wish to give a huge thank you to Steven and all the staff at this amazing new museum.

For those interested, there was an article on the new Donner Museum in the travel section of the Sacramento Bee on September 20, 2015.
**From an interview of Eric Rood, Mucker. Interview date: 5/12/83.**

I almost got killed. I was a mucker. We had stope'd up and almost had broken through to the next level. I could talk to the miner in the next level because it was so weak. I saw movement and stepped aside. Two big rocks came down together and knocked me down the chute. It put my light out.

A guy named Jolly was the shift boss. He came by about 10 or 15 minutes later and saw what happened. He told me to take the rest of the day off.

I went into the Air Force in February, 1943. I am currently a Nevada County Supervisor.

When I was a kid, some friends and I would walk to Empire from Grass Valley and play tennis. There was a chicken wire fence all around the tennis court. We would also swim in the pond below the cottage and a couple of times swam in the swimming pool. I don't recall ever getting kicked out.

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**From an interview of Leonard Bednorz, Miner 1950-1955. Interview date: 9/3/85.**

A contract miner was paid so much a foot. In drifts, we got $3 a foot and $5 a foot for raises. The company supplied the powder and the machinery. You only provided the labor. They would measure the footage every two weeks.

With leasing, everything was split 50/50 with the company. When I was leasing, our ore would be processed one day every two weeks. Only your better men would do leasing as they were the ones who knew the short cuts and tricks to work more efficiently while still working safely.

If the company had a chunk of ground that they could not move at a profit, they would lease it to you and both of you made a profit. It was beneficial to both of you.

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

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**REMEMBER: VIP Educational Tour of the Mineyard ...**

The next VIP Educational Tour (the final one for the year) will be held from 3:00 to 5:00 pm on Thursday, October 22. The subject of this tour is the Mineyard. As with previous tours, subject matter experts will serve as guides, and will shed light on several areas, which together comprised the “heart” of the working mine in its “hey day.”

As a reminder, the VIP Educational Tour Program is a partnership between the Empire Mine Park Association (EMPA) and Park Staff, and is intended as a “continuing education” program for active docents, so that they might broaden their working knowledge of the Park.

Group size for this tour will be limited to 40 persons. Advance reservations are required, and may be made by calling the Visitor’s Center at 273-8522 no later than Monday, October 19. If there are specific areas of the Mineyard that you would like to know more about, please let me know, either by e-mail (la_buenz@hotmail.com) or by telephone (470-0895). See you on October 22!

Lynne Buenz, Coordinator, VIP Educational Tour Program
FUN FACTS FROM THE PAST
From Barbara Jarvis, Research Coordinator

THE EMPIRE MINE: the oldest one now in the district which is being worked, still goes on full-banded and with good results. We are not able today to give full figures from the Empire because we could not catch either the Superintendent Mr. David Watt, nor the Foreman, Mr. James Bennalleck.

There are a great many ledges here, which are rebellious in their character. These are awaiting the results of Mr. Fryer’s experiments with his new works (method on separating precious metals from their matrix). In not many days, it will be known to all, whether the new process can do what is expected of it. We believe that it will be a complete success and that the process of the reduction of gold bearing quartz will completely revolutionized by it. We, however, are not speaking by authority, but say what we do say because appearances suggest the opinion.

Speaking of the Fryer process reminds us to mention that ore has been brought here from San Salvador, in Central America, to be worked by that process.

Grass Valley Union, Sat. 23 Oct 1875  Pg. 2  Col. 2

NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

This issue of the Empire Star marks a change in Publisher. We are grateful to Jan Blake for faithfully producing this newsletter in a high quality and professional manner for the last 3 years. At the same time, Bev Skinner has been working hand-in-hand with Jan to receive, edit and even write copy to appear in the newsletter. I am happy to say that at least for the time being, Bev will continue in this role.

I have used Microsoft Publisher in the past, but it’s been awhile, and it will take some time for me to get “up to speed.” With trial and error, and the help of “Microsoft Publisher for Dummies,” I will do my best to produce the high quality publication that everyone has grown used to. Comments and suggestions are welcome, but please be patient with me and remember, like everything else that VIPs do, this is a volunteer effort!

Lynne Buenz

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.
Empire Mine State Park
Volunteer Coordinators

**Interpretative Coordinators**

<table>
<thead>
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<td>Rose Garden</td>
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<tr>
<td>Garden Tours</td>
<td>Jeanne Powell</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trails</td>
<td>Lianne Werner</td>
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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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Return Service Requested

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