



Visitor Center News

The VC has added three new docents from the class of 2012 to its roster: Cicely Brookover, Ann Wright and Margaret Vodicka. We are thrilled to have them. The Operations Committee has added a new member, Carol Berry. We are very pleased to have her help, and she will be ordering some of the merchandise for the store and will be assisting with scheduling.

In our Park store, we have several new items. In the children's book section, we have added several new mini activity books, along with larger activity books. We now feel we have something to offer children of all ages. In our jewelry cabinet we have restocked our leaf earrings and have added some new, smaller earrings made by a local artist. Bev is working on some new totes, bandanas and dish towels to go with her wonderful aprons. We are always looking to add new items, in keeping with the spirit of the Park and nature and welcome your comments and suggestions. As most of you know, Sept. 4th marks the return to our regular hours which are 11-4, Thursday through Sunday.

VC Operations Committee: Bev Morgan, Sharon Anderson, Carol Berry, Ardie Obert, Patricia Stein

Bridgeport News

South Yuba River State Park

South Yuba River Park Association

SYRPA Newsletter

October 2012

President's Report

Fall has arrived and as usual it is a busy time for the Park. Our Volunteer Appreciation Dinner in September was a big success with about 100 attendees. Many thanks to all who supported the event and special recognition to Bev and Glenn, who did the planning, purchased the food and beverages and did the cooking. What a team!

Coming up on 17 October is a planned new event to acknowledge and inform our Association members of the state of the park, recent Association accomplishments and future plans. I hope to make this "Association Member Picnic" an annual event akin to an annual meeting so that our members can be more connected to the Park and aware of how their Association supports the Park. Next on our agenda is, of course, the Fall Festival on the 28th of October. This ever popular event is being planned by our very talented Janine Martin, assisted by Mickey Springer. Put it on your calendar and tell your friends. You do not want to miss this wonderful event.

In other news, it appears that the Federal Grant for the repair of our beloved



Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

bridge has been approved. Our Supervising Ranger has more information in his report contained in this newsletter. The Board is also pursuing other grants under the leadership of Dick Buckner who is doing a wonderful job of researching and applying for those grants. Two of the latest applications are in support of our native plant garden and restoration of the gas station.

I want to assure you that your Board is working diligently to obtain funding, protect our investments and to use those hard earned resources to the best benefit of our Park and its visitors.

See you in the Park.

Dave Anderson

Fall Festival at Bridgeport

Fall is here and our annual Fall Festival at Bridgeport will be here very soon! Please mark your calendar for Sunday, October 28th from 11-4. This year our festival will highlight all the wonderful regular events such as: wagon rides, blacksmith, restored Shell gas station, historic barn tours, great food, Lazy Dog ice cream, vendors, raffle items, children’s activities, Carol Malnor’s books, Audubon Society, music, gold panning, pumpkin painting, fall crafts, and so much more. Special attractions will be the reenactment of Yankee Jim’s hanging (see story on page 7) in the barn and a local talented magician performing some scary and fun tricks for Harvest time. So bring the family (all the children and grandchildren) and enjoy a beautiful fall day by the river at wonderful historic Bridgeport.

Our raffle this year will include a large pumpkin (Giant George), coffee basket, wine basket, and many other fabulous items. Try and guess the weight of Giant George and win this very large pumpkin! Also our Visitor Center is full of wonderful gifts for the upcoming holidays: books, jewelry, art, aprons, T-shirts and so much more. Hope to see you there for pumpkin pie and apple cider! Please call if you can volunteer that day. We still need lots of help for the parking, gold panning, pumpkin painting, help with the raffle, children’s games, setup and cleanup. Call me at 265-8383 to volunteer. *Janine Martin*



BRIDGEPORT FALL FESTIVAL

South Yuba River State Park

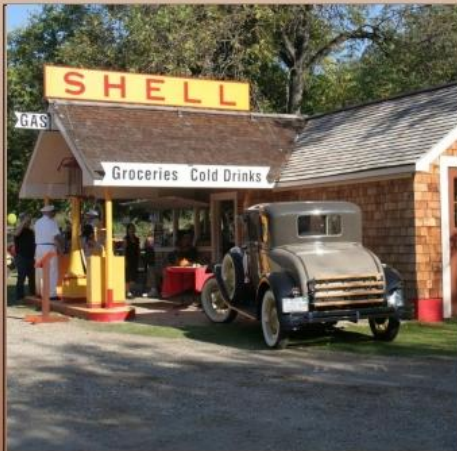


Join us for

The Ghosts Return to Bridgeport

Sun Oct 28, 2012 11 am – 4 pm

Music by *Ragged but Right*



Living History Characters

Gold Panning

Wagon Rides & Barn Tours

Pumpkin Painting

Food and Drinks

Blacksmith Demonstrations

Children’s Games

Children’s Art Projects

and more...

Free admission – Parking \$5



Sponsored by South Yuba River Park Association
 Bridgeport is located on Pleasant Valley Rd, 8 miles North of Hwy 20 in Penn Valley
 17660 Pleasant Valley Rd, Penn Valley CA 95946 530-432-2546

Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

The Rangers at South Yuba River State Park hosted their annual Appreciation Dinner on Thursday, Sept 13th. It was a time to be social, have dinner and hear a few short speeches. Good weather, great food, and the recognition of our volunteers/docents made it an enjoyable evening for all. The barbecued steak and chicken, salad, and dessert were special treats on a nice September evening in front of the Visitor Center.

Supervising Ranger Don Schmidt expressed how the Park would have no programs, no Visitor Center, no interpretation and minimal visitor contact without the Volunteers and Docents. Dave Anderson expressed the importance of volunteers in a very nice way "it's not about us; it's about you and how much you do for the Park."

Glenn Fuller

Independence Trail Update

Sequoia Challenge, originator of the Independence Trail, has turned its assets over to the Bear-Yuba Land Trust. BYLT will hold and maintain these assets until California State Parks is able to add them and achieve complete ownership of the Trail. SYRPA is working to maintain the Trail during this holding period. More repair of the wheelchair ramp deck is being planned for October. As always help is needed for this project. Work parties are from 9AM to 1PM and a 2-mile round trip hike is part of the day's work. To volunteer call Warren at (916) 965-0273 or email cwwittich@gmail.com. Plans for placing signage on the Trail are also under consideration for this fall.

Warren Wittich

Supervising Ranger Report

As I sit here waiting for Fall to arrive and contemplate the fact that this report is nearly a week late, I realize that California State Parks has reached critical mass. This is especially true for the parks in our area, including South Yuba River. We no longer have enough people to do the job of providing the traditional services that the public has come to expect. Maintaining any level of public safety, as well as keeping the facilities repaired and functioning, has become a nearly insurmountable daily challenge.

Hopefully, there may be a little relief on the way. After the discovery of nearly \$20 million in unbudgeted operating funds, the Governor recently signed AB 1478 and AB 1589 into law. In the very near future, we should see some of the previously unreported money trickle down to us, helping to keep both

South Yuba River SP and Malakoff Diggins SHP open and operating. It is my personal hope that this will translate into getting needed ranger and maintenance positions filled. I'm choosing to remain positive about the future, and hope you will too.

If you visited Bridgeport this summer, you no doubt noticed the new parking situation. With the assistance of Nevada County, *No Parking* signs were placed on Pleasant Valley Road, and both the South and North Parking Lots were designated as fee-only parking areas. Overall, I believe the new program was a success, as most people were supportive and willing to pay the fee to keep the park open. My superiors were also happy with the results, as we (so far) are on track to meet our budget projections for this fiscal year.

No doubt the greatest issue looming on the horizon is the reconstruction of the Covered Bridge. We finally got word in late summer that we had received federal grant funding for the work, but there are many, many strings attached. Our engineers and district staff are working out the details to make sure there is enough money to do the work required to keep that structure upright for many years to come. As things progress, I will keep you posted.

Lastly, I hope that you will be able to get out and enjoy what will no doubt be a beautiful fall in Nevada County. Whether you take a hike along the Independence Trail or spend a day just enjoying the river, visiting your state parks will help keep you happy and healthy.

Don Schmidt



Greeters Station

The second annual Summer-time Greeters Program has just been completed successfully, and thanks are due the dozen who served at the Greeters Table from Memorial Day through Labor Day. Some Greeters even volunteered on holidays! Additionally, some Greeters also acted as Barn Tour Guides for the docent-led half-hour tour in the early afternoon. Between 3 and 15 visitors took advantage of this extra tour. It is my hope that with additional training more of our Park docents will become Summertime Barn Tour Guides and Greeters. The Greeters who worked one or more weekends are: Dick Alexander, Ginny Brown, Barbara Brueckner, Dick Buckner, Pete Fraczek, Toni Halloran, Joan Huff, Paul Keasberry, Jeannine McGowan, Ken Norton, Hal Tieg, George Tilley and myself. And if your name is not listed above, it is VERY easy to become one of this elite group!

Don Denton, Coordinator

Help Wanted

SYRPA Needs You!

Bulletin Board Updater. Update the three Park bulletin boards three times a year (Spring, Summer, Fall). Contact: Mickey Springer (432-4926)

IT Committee Members. Help manage our use of online donations and social networking. Contact: Steve Pauly (432-1261)

Festival Coordinator. Organize the events, vendors, locations and schedule for the Spring and Fall Festivals. Contact: Janine Martin (265-8683)

Fall Festival Volunteers Needed

The Fall Festival is right around the corner. On October 28, the ghosts return to Bridgeport. The Festival committee still needs several volunteers to make the day a success. If you can help out for either a half day or possibly the whole day, there are many opportunities available. Janine Martin and Mickey Springer are co-chairing the Festival this year and are hoping you can sign up for any of the following activities; parking, gold panning, pumpkin painting, help with the raffle, children's games, set up and clean up. Please call either Janine at 265-8383 or Mickey at 432-2946 if you can help out. *Glenn Fuller*

Where Do Donations to Local State Parks Go?

According to the Presidents of South Yuba River, Empire Mine and Malakoff Diggins non-profit Associations, "Donations to, and profits made by, the Associations stay right here in Western Nevada County at each of the three local State Parks." (Note: Park entry fees, camping fees and parking fees go to Sacramento.) This joint statement is being released in the wake of the recent Department of Parks and Recreation's financial revelations. The three Association Presidents, Dave Anderson, Larry Skinner and Tom Stark, want to emphasize the fact that all Association monies are spent locally to assist in giving each visitor the best possible experience. They don't go to Sacramento.

During the recent State Park budget crises, Association members were stunned by the closure list, then shocked by the discovery of hidden money. Each Park is dealing with this loss of respect in its own way. Each Association has its own specific mission statement defining how it supports their Park to provide a quality visitor experience. Activities that the Associations support include: gold mining education in many forms, docent-led programs, brochures, trail maps, bird lists, wild flower walks, gold panning, hard rock mining displays and tours of many types. Each Park supports a uniquely different Visitor Center, offering gifts, books, maps and many educational items for families and visitors. Each Association sponsors its own unique event, i.e. Humbug Days, Miners Picnic and the Spring and Fall Festivals.

All three Associations depend on membership dues, sales in their Gift Shop, donations from visitors and several special events and fund raisers. The Presidents want everyone who has ever made a donation or bought any item from their Visitor Center to know that "all" of that money stays in the Park where the Visitor made that donation or bought that special memento. These funds are totally separate from any State budget. Please continue visiting each Park, buy a Christmas gift in the Visitor Center and especially -- join or renew your membership in these non-profit Associations. To get more information on each Park, call: Empire Mine 530-273-8522, South Yuba River 530-432-2546 and Malakoff Diggins 530-478-0720. *Glenn Fuller*

Letter from Janelle Beland, Acting Director California State Parks



Dear Volunteer,

You and your organization have been vital to the functioning and longevity of California State Parks. Your hard work and dedication has sustained this system through good times and bad. With that in mind, we owe you an explanation of what we know thus far about the information in news reports regarding the unreported funds at State Parks.

First, I want to make it very clear that the recent events surrounding the department is not a reflection on the great work done by you and our State Parks professionals every day. Our department is made up of some of the most dedicated and hard-working employees and volunteers found anywhere in state government. I am proud and honored to have the opportunity to work with such talented people.

I share your feelings of anger, concern and bewilderment surrounding this issue. You likely have the same questions I have about how and why this happened, and about the impact this may have on the future of our parks - particularly how this money may affect park closures. While we share the same questions and concerns, we do not yet have all the answers. State Parks is working with the Department of Finance to examine the accounts that have been under-reported and we will provide all the details and findings resulting from those efforts as they become available and are clearly understood.

We do not know how or why the money was categorized incorrectly. We will rely on the investigations to reveal the nature of the problem and will share that information with you. Transparency and truthfulness are two values I live by and I will make sure you receive a full explanation of what happened.

While the investigations are underway, please do not become discouraged by these events. Our park system continues to be one of the best in the world because of the more than 30,000 volunteers who selflessly give their time day after day. Our park system would not be the same today without you and the volunteer hours you willingly give every year. As we set out to fix this, and fix it we will, we ask that you remain faithful to what this system has meant to our visitors for nearly 150 years. The system itself is strong and healthy, but in need of mid-course corrections, and this can only be accomplished if we move forward together.

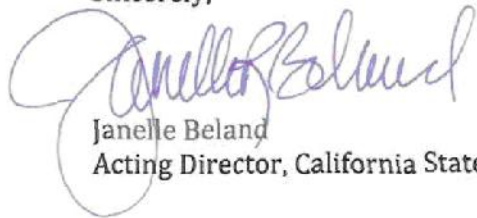
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In the meantime, if you are aware of any irregularities in the way business is conducted at State Parks, please call (916) 324-7561 or email ParksInvestigation@doj.ca.gov. We must restore trust in the department, and we plan to do just that. We are responsible to the people of California to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protect its most valued natural and cultural resources, and create opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation. We must, above all else, ensure that we can be trusted to carry out this mission.

With your help and continuing support we will regain the trust of the public. We will right this ship. However, we cannot do this alone. You are the backbone of this organization and we need your support. Please continue to remain involved.

Sincerely,


Janelle Beland
Acting Director, California State Parks



Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, September 13

South Yuba River Park Association—www.southyubariverstatepark.org

Newsletter Editors: Steve Pauly, Dick Buckner, Ardie Obert

Photographs: Herb Lindberg, Steve Pauly



The Legend of Yankee Jim

Adapted from Ben T. Traywick's article in The Tombstone Arizona News, 21 Sep, 2012

Many of the rough sailors on trading ships lying in the San Francisco port jumped ship and joined in the California gold rush. One such sailor was a tall, skinny individual from Maine. His name has long been forgotten, but he will live forever in Mother Lode history as Yankee Jim. Sailors have a well-known reputation for being short of ready cash. So, most of them searched for gold until the winter snows began in the Sierras and then made their way back to familiar haunts on the waterfront. Yankee Jim was considerably more determined—so much more so that he wintered in the desolate ravine of the North Fork of the American River. Much speculation was made as to how he had managed to survive when he showed up at Barnes' Bar in the early spring of 1849. He came out of the mountains ragged and unkempt, his feet wrapped in strips of an old blanket. He carried an old Yeager rifle and a knife. His speech was in the nasal twang of a New Englander as he asked for bullet lead, powder, beans and liquor, in that order. When his requests had been filled, he paid for the supplies with long chunks of solid gold. All of the miners around the store sat up and took notice at this. Why, they had spent months panning gold dust and grains the size of rice, and this Yankee had, from all appearances, cut his gold out with a chisel or hatchet! They questioned him endlessly, but gleaned no information at all. Several times afterward, Yankee Jim, as he came to be called, visited Barnes' Bar, but he showed up at the break of dawn and disappeared some time in the night. Men who had seen his oblong chunks of gold tried many times to follow him. It became common belief that he had located the source of the Mother Lode.

In November of 1849, a man named Ben Currier came closest to finding Yankee Jim's gold. He and five partners worked a claim not far from Barnes' Bar. After much debate, the men deduced that in all probability, Yankee Jim's mine lay somewhere near the ridge between the Middle and North forks of the American River. All of them agreed to search for this rich claim. The trail led up, and still up, high into the Sierras as they followed it almost all of the next day. From a spot high on the mountain crest, they saw tracks descending into a rugged ravine in which a small stream glistened. Slowly they made their way down-ward, realizing that this was the wildest country that any of them had ever seen. The trail was so narrow and the ravine so steep that they involuntarily held their breaths as they negotiated its twists and turns. In the bed of the creek they found two men working the gravel. Neither of them was Yankee Jim, but they knew of him. In fact, they had come too near him once, and he had shot at them. Not only that, but on the slope near where Yankee Jim's claim was supposed to be, they had found a skeleton with a bullet hole through the skull. When Currier's partners heard, this they decided to stake claims on the creek. They were duly impressed because one of the men already working there was dressed only in a long flannel shirt and nothing else. The spot soon became known as Shirt-Tail Canyon.

Ben Currier continued to search for Yankee Jim's claim alone. A great distance up the creek, he found his live quarry in a rude lean-to, fast asleep. When the man awoke, he was staring down the barrel of Ben's rifle. Closely watching the bearded Yankee Jim, Currier told him he wanted to know where he got his gold. Since he was covered, Yankee Jim thought a moment, then told Currier that if he could get the miners in Shirt-Tail Canyon to leave, and if he would come back and bring plenty of bullet lead and powder, he would show him the richest mine ever seen and make him his partner. After Currier made his way out of the maze of ravines and mountains, bad weather set in and it was spring again before he could return to the high mountains. Yankee Jim's lean-to still stood, but there was no sign of the shaggy sailor. A mining camp came into being on the spot—and of course it was named Yankee Jim's. The sands of the creek were rich in gold, all right, but chunks of gold, like those the New England sailor had spent at Barnes' Bar, have never again been found anywhere in the Mother Lode country.

The whereabouts of Yankee Jim has been a mystery from the time Ben Currier last saw him. However, in the fall of 1852, a man rode through Bridgeport driving several fine horses before him. Hours after he had passed through town, word was received that the horses were stolen. A posse set out in pursuit and the man was captured. He was a tall, skinny man with long hair and beard who spoke with the nasal twang of a New Englander. Although he protested his innocence, they hanged him anyway. When the body was cut down, a money belt was taken from around the waist. It was filled with rough, oblong chunks of gold. . . .