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Alta Dutch Flat Gold Run

COMMUNITY

Volume 35 – No. 1 PUBLISHED BY THE DUTCH FLAT COMMUNITY CENTER WITH MEMBER SUPPORT Spring 2024

The Dutch Flat Flood of 2024

By Ernie Bullard

On her way to work on a very cold January morning, a young woman turned onto Stockton Street and couldn't believe her eyes. The road was flooded with water with large areas of ice, making it difficult to pass through. Concerned, she quickly sent an email to the local PCWA Construction Supervisor, fearing a major break in the newly installed water pipeline project.

Within an hour, the Construction Supervisor responded and sent the project Inspector to investigate. It was suspected that the water was coming from storm run-off and a nearby spring, but they needed to be sure. The PCWA Construction Supervisor also alerted the Placer County Roads Department to the potential road hazard and asked for sand to be placed on the road to prevent further icing.

Later that day, the Roads Department had responded and assured that they had already sanded the area early in the day and would continue to monitor it.

Upon further investigation by the project Inspector, it was discovered that the flooding was caused by a combination of storm run-off and a private residence leak. The residence leak was fixed and shut off immediately. However, there was quite a bit of run-off from the surrounding properties, and the ditches and storm drainage structure were plugged so water was pooling on Stockton Street.



Photos by Ernie Bullard and Sarah Fugate

Stockton Street in Dutch Flat

A few days later, PCWA crews attempted to clear the debris that could be obstructing flow from the culvert by using a big vacator sewer cleaner, but they were unsuccessful. They removed some material, but at approximately 3 feet in there was collection of cobble and the top of the corrugated metal pipe was indented.



A few days later, the County Roads personnel met with the PCWA and wrongly accused the water pipeline project contractor of damaging the culvert during construction of the new pipeline. County Roads wanted the project contractor to replace the culvert. In addition, the County said that in many areas, the drains flow to open space, where the property owners are responsible for keeping it clear, not the County.

However, when the project Inspector reviewed the inspection reports and photos, it was obvious that the water pipeline project contractor did not damage the culvert during construction, and reports and photos showed the storm drain in the excavated area was constructed of redwood lumber and the new water main was installed under it.



Apparently, when the County installed the corrugated metal portion of the storm drain years earlier, they did not extend it across the street, since the redwood portion was still in place. It was also evident that the culvert was actually damaged by Placer County during the installation of the metal portion of the drain.

Meanwhile, a nearby resident downstream of the flooded culvert reported that the water had found an alternate drainage path and was undermining several fence posts and creating other damage to their property, and requested immediate action.



After a few days, PCWA checked in with the County Roads Department for updates on the culvert. It was concluded that the culvert would need to be dug up and replaced by the County, but unfortunately they would have to wait until May or June when the weather was drier.

Until then, the water would continue to flow over the road and into the AT&T yard and neighboring properties.

As several residents in town discussed the issue, they couldn't help but reflect on the lack of maintenance by the County Roads Department. It seemed that the County Roads Department rarely cleared the gutters and drainage ways, causing issues like this to occur. They hoped that the culvert would be replaced soon, so the drainage could be fixed and their community could go back to normal.

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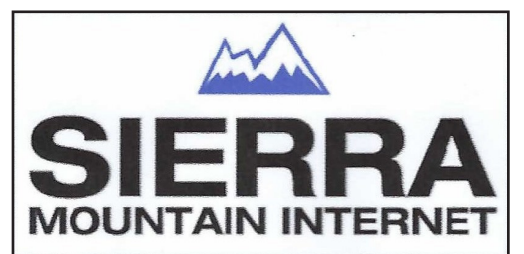
Alta Attic Gets Security

By Birdsong Sundstrum

Our local thrift store, the Alta Attic (better known to some as the Alta Mall), has had a recurring problem of illegal dumping. The staff has often arrived to find oversized, broken, soggy and other problematic items, which go directly into their dumpster. Paying dumpster fees is one of the biggest costs of running this community service, which provides very inexpensive, gently used clothing and household items.



The store is only open one day a week, leaving eyesores for both the residents driving by and those on the trains to view. The staff has not been happy to see the quaint Alta building reflect so poorly on the town when discarded items are lying around outside. They have not had adequate ways to address this problem outside of posting that it is illegal to leave unattended items, both with signs on the building and repeated exhortations on the local Facebook pages.



In February, Sierra Mountain Internet, operated by the local Stanfield family, approached the Attic staff with a generous offer to address this problem through connection to already existing internet in the community, and offered volunteer labor and free materials. The team arrived the first week in March, and quickly got an antenna and router in place, with appropriate cameras coming by the time this news is published.

This is a great example of one service in the community helping another to serve our mountain population. The Attic team is so grateful. If you need blazing fast internet service, call Sierra Mountain Internet at (530)389-5550. If you want to shop at the Alta Attic (located across the road from the Alta store), drop by any Thursday from 10 am to 1 pm.



Photo by Joy Hughes

Alta Attic Volunteers: Front Row (L-R) Debby McClatchy, Linda Mandelker, Karen January, Back Row (L-R) Donna Ladd, Deb Harris, Jeannie Nyberg, Karen Charles, Birdsong Sundstrum

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Views expressed in letters, guest opinion pieces and other contributions do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor, the Dutch Flat Community Center, or its Board.

This newspaper is published quarterly and distributed to Dutch Flat Community Center members and to residents of the Center's service area from Gold Run to Emigrant Gap in Placer County, California.

We welcome contributions from readers. Submission deadline for the next issue:

June 10, 2024.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The Attic: Thursdays, 10 am - 1 pm.

Dutch Flat Community Center Board of Directors Meeting: 2nd Mondays, 6:00 pm. Location varies. Contact Laura Glassco, 916-778-8308.

Dutch Flat Community Center Potluck: 3rd Thursdays. 6:00 pm. Bring a place setting, your own drink, and a dish to share. July and August at the Dutch Flat Pool.

Dutch Flat Seventh Day Adventist: Community Worship Service, Wednesday, 6:30 pm and Saturday, 3:30 pm. 936 Stockton Street. Contact 706-633-8789.

Dutch Flat United Methodist Church Pancake Breakfast: 2nd Saturdays, 8:00 am -10:00 am.

Dutch Flat United Methodist Church Arts & Crafts: Thursdays, 9:30 am - 4:30 pm. All are welcome. Learn something new!

Dutch Flat United Methodist Church: Sundays. Fellowship Dinner, 5:00 pm. Worship Service, 6:00 pm.

Golden Drift Historical Society Board Meeting: 1st Monday of February, April, June, August, October and December, 7 pm. Golden Drift Museum, Main Street. Contact Sarah Fugate, 530-210-5085.

Pioneer Union Church, Gold Run: Worship Service, Sundays, 10 am.

Placer County Library Mobile Service:

Sierra First Baptist Church, Alta: Worship Service, Sundays, 11 am. 33990 Alta Bonny Nook Rd., Alta. Contact 530-389-2168.

Sierra First Baptist Church Bible Study: Mondays, 8:30 am,

Sierra First Baptist Church Community Lunch: Mondays, 11:30 am - 12:30 pm. Free.

Sierra First Baptist Church Food Pantry: Thursdays, 10 am - 12 pm.

A message from the DFCC President

By Laura Glassco

Hello to All!

Spring is just around the corner! We hope you all are staying healthy and ready for warm weather! We've had a few changes to our Board of Directors so allow me to introduce your 2024 Directors:

Officers:

Laura Glassco, President
 Karen Charles, Vice President
 Ernie Bullard, Treasurer
 Deb Harris, Recording Secretary
 Vacant, Corresponding Secretary

At Large Directors:

Shana Brown
 Bill Charles
 Doug Hughs
 Bob Pfister
 Suzanne Vidal
 Shelley Willsmore

The big news is that due to the overwhelming amount of donations, we are now able to not only have the roof repaired but able to pay Colfax Professional Roofing for their labor. Ken Edwards, owner, has now made our roof a priority and will complete his repair by mid-March, weather permitting. Doug Hughs, Board Member, is heading up this project.

Another big project that is slated for mid-year is exterior painting. As you can imagine, preparation prior to painting is extremely important. Bill Charles, Board Member, is leading this effort. Bill has secured a bid and the Board had voted to have the exterior prepped and painted. And should there be sufficient funds, the Board has decided to have the interior of the building painted later in the year.

Upcoming special events at the Community Center:

Saturday, March 30 – Easter Egg Hunt

Saturday, May 4, Dutch Flat Artisan Faire

Saturday, May 25, Spring-Fling Dinner Dance



Photo by Bill Gallaher

Colfax Professional Roofing begin work on the Community Center

Look for flyers around town for specific times etc.

And as always, please mark your calendars to attend our **Monthly Potlucks** held on the 3rd Thursday of each month. Bring your own place settings, beverage and a dish to share.

The most amazing dishes from the best cooks are always a delightful culinary feast!

Our Annual Membership Drive is in full swing! We want to thank all of you that have sent in your Membership Fee. Without your support we could not publish our quarterly paper, maintain our 1898 Community Center, or support the many childrens events such as Easter and Halloween. If you have not sent in your Membership Fee, please do so at your earliest convenience.

Become a Member of the Dutch Flat Community Center!

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 A 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization (Tax ID# 68-0484699)

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Welcome Home

By Bill Gallaher

The mystery of the shoot-down of Baron 52
5 February 1973, 0200 hours, over northern Laos, elevation classified:

Navigator to Crew: "Stay alert guys. We're over Laos and approaching the area that heavy triple A has been reported. But nothing for a couple of weeks. WTF are we doing here? The war has been over for a week!!!"

Pilot to crew: "Aww SHIT guys, tracers. Here it comes. Looks like 37 MM. Buckle up. Grab your chutes. gonna get rough."

Baron 52 to Ground: "BARON 52 is taking heavy ground fire."

Co-Pilot to Crew: "Uhh guys. We just took a bad hit. We're going down. We'll try and hold her level so y'all can jump, but make it quick. Radio to ground is out. You all know what to do. Jettison the electronics if you can. Good luck my friends. God Bless us all."

This true story is especially close to me because Baron 52 was an EC-47 Aircraft from the 361st TEWS (Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadron) out of Thailand. The 361st monitored the northern part of the Ho Chi Minh trail through Laos, North Vietnam and northern south Viet Nam. I flew with the 360th TEWS flying EC-47s out of Saigon, South Vietnam. We monitored the southern part of the HCM trail through Cambodia and South Vietnam. Both missions were highly classified as the USA was involved in a secret war in all 4 countries.

On January 27, 1973, the Paris Peace Accords officially ended the United States involvement in the Vietnam War. One week later, on February 5, 1973, Baron 52, on a highly covert mission, was reported missing. Last know location was Northern Laos and last radio message was that they were taking heavy ground fire. The wreckage of Baron 52 was found 2 days later, inverted with the wings sheared off. Of the 8 crew members, 4 were found dead, and the remaining 4, plus the highly sensitive electronic devices, were all missing. "Officially" the 4 missing men and the gear have never been found. The final "official" government report concluded that all members of Baron 52 were killed in the crash.

I say "official" because there is controversial forensic evidence and physical sightings that continue the questions as to whether our boys were killed, or did they become POWs? There is much evidence to suggest the 4 missing airmen were captured. In June 1978, a report by investigative journalist Jack Anderson, stated that U.S. intelligence had intercepted *numerous communications* by North Vietnamese forces, (*confirmed by the US*), indicating that at least four people on Baron 52 survived and had been captured by the North Vietnamese. These intercepted communications as well as questionable forensic findings raise more questions. In November of 1992, a joint task force excavating the Baron 52 crash site recovered the partial remains of "seven" men. (Even though there were 8 on the crew). Ellis R. Kerley, a highly respected anthropologist and considered to be a founding father of the science of forensic anthropology, publicly stated that bone fragments found at the scene of the crash "cannot be proven conclusively



Photo courtesy of U.S. Navy NNAM

Baron 52

to be human." Kerley was replaced by a U.S. Army Lt. Colonel, professionally a dentist, but with limited forensic experience. He said the bone fragments were the remains of all four of the remaining crew members. The families requested DNA analysis be done on the bone fragments, but their requests were denied by the government.

There is an ironic and sad "rest of the story" to the Baron 52 coverup. Sgt Peter Cressman is one of the electronics experts that is missing.

An angry letter to his congressman, penned but not mailed, was found in the Sgt's belongings that were sent home after the crash. In the letter, he stated that he and others in his unit were in violation of the Paris Peace Accords, being forced to continue missions despite the official end of American involvement in the war. He also stated that he wanted to refuse orders, but feared the consequences. Within a week of that letter Sgt Cressman and 7 other US Airmen were either dead or POWs.

In addition, forensic evidence that was specifically linked to Sgt Cressman was debunked. Robert A. Cressman, the older brother of Sgt. Cressman, said the military told him that his brother was positively identified based on dental x-rays. The US Air Force provided those x-rays which showed a full set of upper and lower teeth. However, Sgt Cressman had several teeth knocked out prior to entry into the USAF which adds further doubt to the identification.

So here's the question: With all the evidence that suggests these men were captured and were/are POWs, why didn't and doesn't our government do all it can to secure their release?

I believe the answer lies in typical government/military bureaucracy and CYA. (Cover Your Ass). *Baron 52 was shot down over Laos a week after the war ended!!*

In 1973, if we admitted that our four missing men were in fact from Baron 52, not only would it blow our covert status over Laos, but we were violating the Paris Peace Treaty!!

The denial continues to this day. As the years go by and more officials deny the existence of these POWs, if it ever comes out that our government has known about these POWs, a lot of people and administrations will lose credibility!

There is much interesting information on the web about Baron 52.

My research on Baron 52 turned up questions regarding POWs. My next column will bring y'all enlightenment :) ARE THERE ANY POWs STILL ALIVE? HOW MANY ARE STILL MISSING?

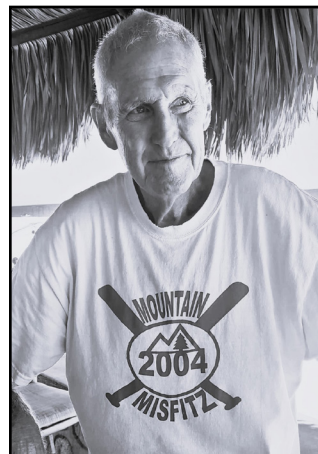
Obituaries

Scott Miles

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of a beloved father, grandfather, and cherished friend to so many. Born on November 14, 1946, in Grass Valley, to parents Robert and Wilma (Claire), Scott lived an extraordinary life, filled with adventure, experiences, service, and profound accomplishments. He passed away peacefully in Colfax, on December 5, 2023.

He was a proud father to his four children: Brianna (Deanna), Ashley (Marilyn), Jackson and Daniel (Kathy); and a cherished grandfather, lovingly known as Papa Scott, to his nine grandchildren: Camden, Audriana, Michael, Eric, Dawson, Christian, Alaura, Carly and Robbie. His grandchildren were the apple of his eye, and his love for them knew no bounds. His friends were his chosen family, and he cherished every moment spent with them.

We invite all who knew and loved Scott to join us in celebrating the incredible man who was larger than life itself. A Celebration of Life will be held on June 8, 2024, from 5:00pm – Sunset, at 22880 Hayford Road, Colfax, CA 95713. Please RSVP to Brianna (530) 392-0884 or Ashley (530) 863-8157.



Virginia Mae Lee Wolfe

It is with great sadness that the family announces the passing of Virginia Mae Lee Wolfe. Virginia (Also known as Ginger, Gigi and Mom) passed away peacefully on November 25, 2023 at her home in Alta,

CA with her daughters Sherry & Diana and her brother Gerald by her side.

Virginia is survived by her daughters Sherry & Diana (Karen predeceased her), her grandchildren Chantel, Kati, Rob, Heather and Nic and her great grandchildren Lydia, Lennon, Baylee, Vera, Alexa, Owen, Violet and Marco. Virginia was a beautiful woman with an amazing smile and a genuine loving heart. She loved God and her Church, art & painting, crafts, music, dance, nature, hiking, her friends and deeply loved her family. She will be truly missed and forever in our hearts.

A Celebration of Life will be held at the Dutch Flat United Methodist Church, 936 Stockton St, Dutch Flat, CA, Saturday, April 6th at 11:00 am. Refreshments will be served following.



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The 2024 Irruption of Songbirds in Alta

By Annette Rodgers Purther

Have you noticed either of two songbirds pictured in this story in our area this winter '24? Please let me know if you see these birds at a lower elevation. I only know my area and need your input, please.

I've noticed Pine Siskens at my feeder and the Evening Grosbeaks came through our land as a large flock, landing in several trees. They have since gravitated to our feeders. I wonder if irruptions adversely affect the birds we typically see?

An irruption, not eruption, of birds generally enters the scene rather abruptly, and many times in numbers. They may stay a few days or a few months, then abruptly disappear.

An irruption is the sudden change in the population density of an organism. When speaking of birds, irruptions refer to the movement of northern-wintering species to the south in years of low food availability or when the density of birds sends some of them seeking a less congested place to feed. If you see more than two, and especially if you see 10 or more of a different than normal bird to your area, that's indicative that there are more around and that it's an irruption year.

Here in Alta at 4700 Elevation, I've had Pine Siskens since 2/14 and Evening Grosbeaks since 2/20.

The Pine Siskin winter movements are erratic and depend partly on the state of cone crops in northern North America. About every other year, Pine Siskens irrupt, or move into central and even southern parts of the continent, but the timing and extent of these movements are extremely variable.

Evening Grosbeaks somewhat puzzle me. I have read up on them, but it depends where the writer is located as to whether their information actually pertains to our area. I believe they are a somewhat higher

Pine Siskens are little finches with yellow barred wings and yellow seen as they fly.

They are smaller than our House Finch and have a pointed beak perfect for eating thistle.



Photo by Annette Rodgers Purther

elevation bird and we get them here at 4700 about every other year in the summer. This is the first time I recall seeing them this early; but that doesn't mean I just haven't noticed them. This year, I first found them flying as a big flock and then dropping down, like leaves out of the trees to forage under the Manzanita bushes that line our property. Why? Fruit/berries from the year before or a sheltered place to pick up grit to help digest seeds hulls, or both?

Below is a list of birds that may show up unexpected following food. Keep in mind that birds listed may not actually show up in our area, ever, and that when you read info online, if it's from across the country, it may not apply.

* Signifies species I've seen in my area. I have Red-breasted Nuthatches all year round, and they are also an irruptive species, so go figure.

> Designates a Finch, which I found very interesting. It appears that most songbirds that irrupt are some type of Finch. Some 240 species of birds, called the true finches, are classified in the family Fringillidae.

- Bohemian Waxwings *
- >Common redpolls
- >Evening grosbeaks *
- >Hoary redpolls
- >Pine grosbeaks

- >Pine siskins *
- >Purple Finches *
- Red-breasted nuthatches *
- >Red crossbills
- >White-winged crossbills

In ending, the best advice I can give when it comes to knowing if you have an irruption of a particular species of bird, is to keep your eyes and ears open. And, NEVER think, "Oh it's just a bird" ...and I've sure been guilty of this. To be honest, I thought the first sighting of Evening Grosbeaks were "just birds" until I looked through the binoculars. Ugh.

I continue to be amazed by creation. Our local wildlife is a gift given by a Creator. Think about it, if a building needs a builder; creation needs a Creator. I am convinced God is good and only hope to share just a tad bit of the excitement I feel when the lightbulb goes on and I understand creation just a little bit better.

Please like and follow my "Placer County Wildlife" Facebook page. I try to post local and close-enough info on wildlife rescues and what they're doing. I will also post reels and photos that have a connection to us all and/or our area. Together we can learn to CO-EXIST with our local wildlife. We must, for we have been given the task of stewardship for creation by a Creator.



Photo by Annette Rodgers Purther

Evening Grosbeaks are large stocky finches. The male is a striking yellow & black with a yellow monobrow. The female is a less striking gray/brown with yellow & black marks. Both have an extra-large beak and are known as the Pit bull of birds in rescue. Ouch!

Bohemian Waxwing



Photo courtesy of Nature Alberta

Dawn M. Anderson, D.D.S.

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Dutch Flat Water System Update

By Ernie Bullard

Well, the best laid plans seem to get changed when Mother Nature is involved. The planned contractor work to switch over water services was put on hold when the weather changed. In January, Dutch Flat received 13 inches of rain, and February saw 15 inches of rain. Needless to say with the ground saturated, construction work was brought to a halt.

Hopefully by the end of March, the contractor will resume switching over services from the Dutch Flat pipeline to the new PCWA pipeline. Currently, 27 services have been switched over mainly on Clark Street and Park Avenue, out of a total of 108 services. Dutch Flat Mutual is currently providing the treated water to both the old pipeline and the new pipeline, until the contractor completes the tie-in to the PCWA treated water main at the storage tank site.

The order the services will be switched over is as follows:

1. Clark St. – partially done
2. Park Ave. – partially done
3. Secord Alley – partially done
4. Lower Main St.
5. Sacramento St.
6. Stockton
7. Jay St.
8. School St.
9. Lower 5th Ave.
10. Upper 5th Ave.
11. Upper Main St.

Customers will be notified when their meter switch over is to occur. Door tags will be placed in advance, with follow up in person or by phone. Water pipes will be exposed to connect the existing Dutch Flat service to the newly set PCWA meter box.

A brief water outage will occur when the connection is made to customer's existing plumbing. In most cases, outages are anticipated to be less than 1 hour; max outage of 4 hours.

When water is restored:

- Clear air from incoming water by opening an outside faucet and letting water run for one to two minutes.
- Check any pumps and your hot water heater's low flow cut off switch.

PCWA will provide email updates as the crews finish services on each street.

The exact date of each customers service swap cannot be provided, but if customers need to make arrangements to be home during this work, please inform PCWA for coordination with the contractor crew as they get closer to customer locations.

Customers will continue to be billed as usual by Dutch Flat Mutual until all the services have been swapped over and PCWA takes over operation of the system; this is now anticipated to occur by May.

Thank you for your continued patience and support of this project.

But This is How We Always Do Things

By Shana Brown

It seems like small schools are ripe for the comment, "But that's how we've always done it." Part of it is not having enough staffing to reinvent the wheel so we have to be expedient in how we spend our resources of time and money. But part of it is also the rich history of tradition that we try to honor. And we certainly have that at Alta.

Last week, the forecast was calling for major snow here, a blizzard in fact. Luckily the weather was wrong, and the amount of snow we had was manageable. Thanks to Placer County Services and Gary Dashiell, we were able to open school without calling a snow day. The next day, a pair of sisters showed up with sleds. It had been a while since we had sleds at school, but we "used to sled here in the old days." The students brainstormed a list of rules to follow and everyone was clear on how to stay safe while sledding. I'm proud to say we opened the sledding hill and spent the rest of the week at recess laughing in the snow and sledding. As principal, worried about keeping everyone safe, my first reaction may have been to say no to this activity. But we worked together to find a solution and then worked on that solution.

Back when some of you went to Alta, there used to be Ski Day. It's my understanding that this was a weekly occurrence. A couple years ago, our Alta-Dutch Flat School Parents' Club resurrected Ski Day. The entire school heads further up the hill, to Soda Springs Ski Resort, and all student can ski, snowboard or sled. This year, Parents' Club held their wonderful SpeakEasy to raise funds for our Ski Day so that all children can participate. Many in our community generously donated to this fundraiser, although we know that weather prohibited some of you from attending. Thank you for helping to create memories for our students that harken back to the memories you may have of attending here. Our students feel that tradition and feel they are part of something bigger and something with permanence. While new faces may come to teach and new curriculum brings new lessons, we also try to keep our special mountain school connected to the "ways we've always done it."



ADFS Parents' Club Annual Fundraiser

By Brandy March

Every year, the Alta Dutch Flat School takes a school-wide field trip to Soda Springs. This field trip is one that the student body and staff look forward to immensely. For many students, this is their first experience with skiing and/or snowboarding and has the potential to spark interest in sports that can last a lifetime. This beloved experience is partially funded by the Alta Dutch Flat Parents Club who raise the needed funds via an annual fundraiser. In the past there have been Surf and Turf dinners and Crab Feeds to raise these funds, however, this year the ADFS Parents' Club chose to do something different.

The event was held at the Dutch Flat Community Center and provided a myriad of 1920s-style entertainment. Attendees were dressed up in their best flapper, gangster, and bootlegger attire. The venue was decorated as the perfect combination of a rustic underground Speakeasy and glamorous Gatsby-inspired dining hall and catered by Brianna and Kevin Harback, who provided a delectable array of hors d'oeuvres ranging from flat bread pizzas, shrimp cocktails, stuffed mushrooms, fried ravioli, miniature cheesecakes, trifles, and several other options. Guests were treated to our local favorite band, Malarkey. Additionally, guests participated in blackjack and roulette with several exciting prizes to vie for which kept the night exciting for all.

The night was a success, however, it almost didn't happen, as Mother Nature decided to challenge the event mightily. The Parents' Club worked doggedly to overcome obstacles such as power outages, fallen trees, and a raging blizzard. With assistance and support of the community, the show did go on!

The ADFS Parents' Club would like to acknowledge and thank each and every community member, local business, PG&E, the staff and Administrators of Alta Dutch Flat School and our fellow members for their dedication to make this event happen. The event was legendary and we are humbled.

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Peggy Roberts, DVM



White Elephant Sale 2024

By Shelley Willmore



Donations will be accepted Wednesday and Saturday mornings throughout August

Though it is barely spring and there is so much ahead for summer, I dare to bring up the subject of Labor Day and our annual White Elephant Sale, affectionately referred to as the WES. I have agreed to step up for another year and “conduct” this very popular and very praiseworthy event. The WES is a huge fundraiser for the Center, with many thanks to the volunteers and generous donations from the community. I say “conduct” because the volunteers and community donors are the orchestra, there is no concert without these concerted efforts.

We will need volunteers for each of the areas. Help will be needed on donation days as well as the days of the sale, setting up the week before and tearing down the week after. If you are able to help in any way, if you have ideas or suggestions, please speak up. You may call the Community Center at 530-389-8310 or email dfccommcenter@gmail.com and your information will be passed on to me.

I plan to have a planning meeting the beginning of summer. If you are a member, you will get an email on the date. If you volunteered last year, you will get an email. If you don't like meetings, just let me know and I will make sure to get you the information you need to get involved.

The plan this year is to have the teams set up their areas on a day TBD, the last week of July. Donations will be accepted Wednesday

and Saturday mornings throughout August. Hours may be extended since there will be fewer donation days, it will be up to the volunteer staffing. It has also been suggested that we accept donations a few times before August. Again, it depends on the volunteers.

This year Labor Day is very early, September second. Last year, due to unprecedented rain, we opened Labor Day and the following Saturday. If the volunteers agree, we may extend the sale through the following weekend. There were many comments about working so hard for only a 10-hour window of shopping.

I hope you will consider volunteering this year. Many of our helpers said they had fun, especially the men. If you have never attended the WES, it is a fun, community event where you meet new people, reunite with people you haven't seen for awhile and if you are like me, who doesn't need another thing, you might find something you really did need. We love our historic school house and “stepping back in time” in Dutch



This year's White Elephant Sale will be held on Labor Day weekend and may be extended through the following weekend

Re-ach Out

By Mia Monroe



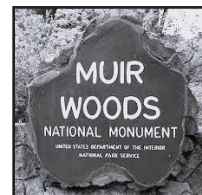
Photo by Alan Dep, Marin Independent Journal

Mia Monroe, park ranger and educator for the National Park Service, was stationed in the Muir Woods Redwood Creek watershed for over 40 years

Hi neighbor--you may know me as Ranger Mia from Muir Woods, or maybe the one up near the cemeteries, or simply the nature nut, but now I'm **retired** and having great fun with my **re-set!**

Looking in my dictionary, I love the words near **retirement**: implies leisure, enjoying a place of seclusion, but also shy and humble! So maybe writing about Dutch Flat to you is my way of **reaching** out and sharing the wonders of our special home habitat and place of **respite**.

Will be an amazing year to follow the bloom upslope as spring arrives at higher and higher elevations (did you know that as you **respire**, the negative ions and increased oxygen of being near rivers makes you healthier?) and will feel refreshed by the good air and sunsets, watch and learn from the **resiliency** of the tremendous forest, plus critters....wow! We look forward to **re-settling** often, and for longer periods, thankful always for warm DF welcome and hope you see my more **relaxed** smile!



Bob Hampshire



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More Gold Rush Stories

By Debby McClatchy

Security in the hard-rock mines made it almost impossible for workers to steal the gold. Old Jim Barnes, a muleskinner in a large Grass valley mine, was still able to do so for many years, using two techniques that thwarted the guards.



Mules were used to haul the ore cars through the mine. They lived their entire lives down below. Hay was brought in and droppings were brought out. Special workers, called gold stoppers, checked the ore before it left the depths and culled out larger nuggets for separate sales. One was a friend of Jim's and sold him some at a reduced rate. Jim mixed them with droppings and sent it aloft. No one checked it. He then collected the mess, washed it down, put it through sluices, and sent the nuggets to another friend with a small active mine in Plumas County. When this friend sold his gold, Jim and the others got a cut. Also, when a mule died, the nuggets were sewn up in the carcass and dealt with in the same manner.

At a certain point mules were replaced by machinery. Jim quit and everyone worried about him; no pension and no social security yet. However, the approximately \$10,000 a year Jim had salted away afforded him a fine retirement. As the truth leaked out he became known as "Mule Droppings Jim".

Other thieves were rampant, particularly in early days of the rush. Claims, sluices, and long toms had to be guarded 24/7. One problem was easy access and sales. The thief would scoop up the nuggets or a gold/mercury mix. The mercury was easily separated by placing the amalgam in a wet chamois bag. The liquid mercury passed through the tiny pore holes of the leather, leaving the gold "in the bag". From this, our use of "in the bag" became to denote having riches or a positive outcome. The remaining "sponge gold" could be sold to a local buyer.

One mineral thief was particularly unlucky. The silver mines in Virginia City continued operation during the 1930s Depression. An inventive worker was able to smuggle out almost half a ton of silver sulfide. How was a mystery. Having no way yet to sell it, he hid it in an old engine fire box in a long abandoned trainyard. And waited.

As World War II loomed, the value of scrap iron shot up. Every old mine and disused trainyard was stripped and sold. The Reno-based salvage company that contracted out the aforementioned trainyard got a bonus in 1941 when they started to break up everything. The thief had disappeared, ownership of the ore was untraceable, and the Reno company celebrated with a big party.

Grass Valley was full of ledges, some full of gold, some not. One of these ledges, across Wolf Creek from Gold Hill, looked promising enough that its claim was bought by an investment group from New York. They sent out an employee, Michael Brannan, to test the waters.

After a few successes, Brannan sent for his family, secure in the belief that he would soon be rich. Unfortunately, the ledge only yielded small deposits, just enough to keep the investors marginally happy, and three years later they pulled the plug.

Brannan refused to quit. He registered the claim in his own name, borrowed against all

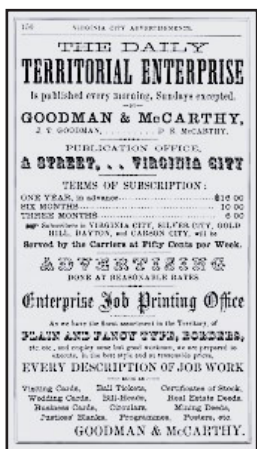
he owned, and continued. Ledges around him were making their owners rich, but his was still a failure. Broke and starving, Brannan laced his family's breakfast with poison, then went to the mine for a last look. He loaded all his blasting powder into the ledge, sat under it, and lit the fuse. He and his family all died that day.

The blast uncovered a two foot high vein of shiny gold. Oh, his timing! You can still visit the family's five graves in Greenwood Cemetery in Grass Valley.

The Homestead Act of 1862 prompted owners of homes in Grass Valley to file for rights to land under their structures. To forestall a rash of lawsuits the Empire Mine bought up the mineral rights under the whole town. Some owners were paid more than the value of their houses. The rights started one hundred feet below the surface. In years to come workers would leave home, travel to a mine, go underground up to four thousand feet, and find they were extracting gold directly below their own property. Their grandfathers had sold away any profits long ago.

Years after the Gold Rush the U.S. Forest Service opened much of the wilderness with fire roads. In the 1930s the Civilian Conservation Corps also built numerous fire and logging roads. Areas not easily reached during the rush, and possible sources of gold, were now accessible to heavy machinery. Many inventive miners created fanciful vehicles to dig out the ore. These were called "doodlebugs" and the men known as "doodlebuggers".

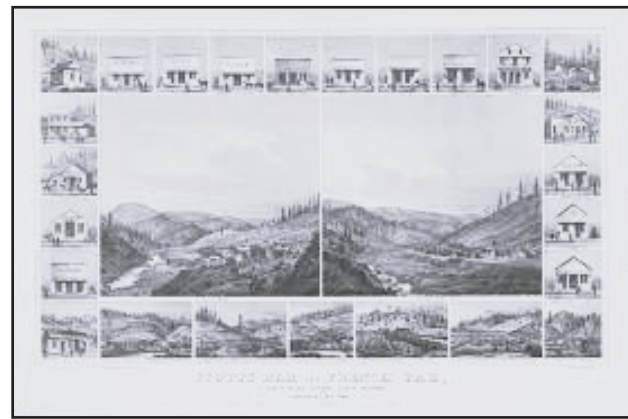
With luck, a group, with little investment, could find a field of gravel too low-grade to have been previously worked. The dug earth was washed in a large screen called a trommel, and then sluiced to recover the gold. Many companies during the 1930s Depression put food on the table in this way. The gold was usually fine dust. They used a closely woven wool blanket to capture the smallest pieces. One miner must have been a student of Greek mythology; the Golden Fleece had been used in exactly the same way.



Before Samuel Clemmens became "Mark Twain" he was a writer for the Virginia City newspaper, the "Territorial Enterprise". During this time he inadvertently helped the mining companies with the value of their stock. Every time he wrote a well-read story about a successful claim, the stock went up.

On a break from the paper, Sam and two friends tried their luck at silver prospecting. They quickly found a rich lode near Mono Lake, staked their claim, and returned to Virginia City. There was a legal wait-time before they could actually begin mining, so Sam went down to San Francisco to take care of some business.

Meanwhile, his two friends bragged about their fortunes in a local saloon. A group of men kept them playing poker, just letting them win enough to play a long time, then it was days of recuperating from bad whiskey. When Sam returned he found the claim jumped, just one minute after the allotted time. He had no recourse and the claim eventually yielded millions to others. Perhaps a richer Sam would never have become Mr. Twain and wrote all those magnificent books. Perhaps a blessing in disguise?



Scott Bar

In 1850 a rich deposit of gold was discovered at Scott Bar on the Klamath River in Siskiyou County. A sharp bend in the river had created hundreds of acres of gravel, fronted by a large white quartz ridge, showing chunks of iron sulfide laminated with plates of pure gold. A wild rush of three thousand men, followed by their families, businesses, a post office, church, and lodges created the town of Scott Bar. There was also a Chinatown. This and most of the homes were built upon worked-over land.

Government and business buildings rested on unworked ground. The boom was short and the town gradually crumbled to ruins.

The 1930s saw fly-fishing enjoy its own boom among the upper classes, including President Herbert Hoover, a steelhead enthusiast. He heard a rumor that the California legislature wanted to pass a bill to stop anyone blocking a river, especially mining companies. He wanted exclusive fishing rights to the Klamath and he wanted to mine under Scott Bar. Most likely the latter was an excuse for the former. By forming a mining company immediately he hoped to be grandfathered in if a bill passed.

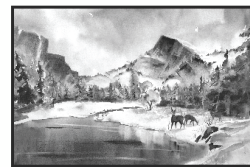
He was wrong on two counts, outsmarted by the Governor and the Chinese. In signing the bill, the Governor included provisions that forced Hoover's company to pull out. And when they dug under the businesses they found no gold. The Chinese earlier had tunneled down below their own houses and then tunneled horizontally over under the unworked ground and quietly dug out most of the gold. Hoover's \$150,000 investment was in vain and the river was open to all comers.



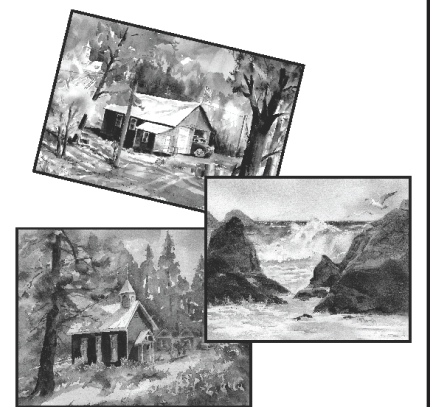
Herbert Hoover



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Saturday, June 1, 2024
8 AM—12 PM

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