

# THE BODIE TIMES

PROTECTING BODIE'S FUTURE BY PRESERVING ITS PAST

THE NEWS OF BODIE, MONO LAKE & GROVER HOT SPRINGS

[www.BodieFoundation.org](http://www.BodieFoundation.org)

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## Millers Remembered with New Marker

By Chris Spiller  
Bodie Times Editor

**N**ext time you visit Bodie, take a stroll through the cemetery to see a new memorial stone honoring one of Bodie's most successful businesswomen: Annie Miller.

Annie and William Miller's grandson, Chuck Miller and wife Jane, arranged for the making of the stone. Annie is buried in Colma, California, while her husband, son William D. and his wife, and brother-in-law, Thomas, are buried in Bodie. William Miller's grave in the family plot at Bodie is hard to see as it is sinking. The new memorial stone has both Annie and William's names



Annie Miller

on it. Chuck and Jane said they decided upon a memorial stone as a tribute to Annie's much-loved home, Bodie.

Annie Miller's journey to the Eastern Sierra began in 1885 when she was nine years old. Her parents, Charles and Anna Currie, headed west from Minnesota with their eight children. The family would have three more children after moving to the Mono Basin. Anna's uncles, James and William Wilson, had settled near Mono Lake and urged their relatives to join them.

The train trip from Marshall, Minnesota to Hawthorne, Nevada took a week. A stagecoach the next morning delivered them to Bodie for an overnight stay. The following day, the family set out for Mono Lake, a trip that took most of the day. During their first night at the

*Please see MILLERS page 6*

## Give the Gift of Bodie this Holiday Season

The holiday season is almost upon us and what better gifts could you get friends and family than something from Bodie? The online Bodie Foundation store has apparel, collector series shot glasses of Bodie saloons, the 2017 Bodie Calendar, and much more! Do you want something special for trimming the tree? We will feature two ornaments this year. They are \$10.95 each or two for \$18.95 plus shipping.

Check the Bodie Foundation online store at [www.bodiefoundation.org/store/](http://www.bodiefoundation.org/store/) to see to see all the exciting items. A great gift for a baseball fan is the Bodie Mutts shirt that celebrates Bodie's baseball team and beer lovers will enjoy the Bodie Brewing Co. shirts.

Order soon to guarantee delivery in time for Christmas! For information and questions, contact [Terri@BodieFoundation.org](mailto:Terri@BodieFoundation.org) or call (760) 647-6564.



# Park Staff Arrivals and Departures

## Catherine Jones

Catherine was hired this year as a State Park Interpreter at Bodie. She grew up in Tennessee and earned a Bachelor's degree from the University of Arkansas in History and Anthropology. While in college, she worked in the University's museum



Catherine Jones

collections facility and was soon hired by the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. to work at the National Zoo.

A U.S. Forest Service job brought her to California in 2009. She worked for the Forest Service at Mono Lake for four seasons, then was hired as a Senior Park Aide with the Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve and Bodie State Historic Park. In her new position Catherine leads interpretive tours, manages the volunteer program and assists with daily operations of the park. "This is truly a dream job, said Catherine. "I love sharing this amazing place with visitors from all over the world."

## Jon Burgasser

"Hi, Welcome to Bodie! I've had the opportunity and privilege to say these words for two months this summer at Bodie. By the time you are reading this I will have completed my service and moved on to my next adventure."

Jon also served as Seasonal Ranger in Summer 2010. "My recollection of working at Bodie from then was that it is like no other place that I had ever worked at in my 25-plus years as a Ranger. The Summer of 2016 has been no different," he said. With the large amount of summer visitors, which include many from all over the world, Jon added, "Being a part of the Bodie experience for those more than 1,000 daily visitors is very rewarding. Being a part of the team at Bodie that does that job is the most rewarding of all."



Jon Burgasser

*Please see PARK STAFF page 7*

# News Briefs

## Bodie Fees Increase

After the Bodie Times spring newsletter went to press, entry fees increased at Bodie. The fees are now: Adults: \$8 per person; Children: \$5 per child (ages 3 to 17) and Children ages 3 and under are free.

## Grover Fall and Winter Camping

Grover Hot Springs State Park's campground is now off reservation status and is first-come, first-serve until next May 2017. Camping rates go down to \$25 per night (\$23 senior). Once freezing weather arrives, the summer campground closes and the Grover picnic area opens for camping throughout the winter. The winter campground only accommodates tents, and motorhomes and trailers up to 18-feet long. The winter camping rate is also \$25 per night (\$23 senior). Pool facility use fees went up in May and are now \$10 per adult and \$5 per child. Check [www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=508](http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=508) for pool hours, or call the park at (530) 694-2248. The Grover Hot Springs Visitors Center, operated by Friends of Grover Hot Springs, is now closed for the season.

## Bodie Calendar Contest Opens

Do you have a beautiful photo of Bodie? Then consider entering the 2018 calendar contest, sponsored by the Bodie Foundation. The contest is now open for entries and complete information and requirements are available at <http://www.bodiecalendarcontest.com/2018-calendar-contest-rules/>.

## THE BODIE TIMES

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Comments, stories and photographs are  
welcome.

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# Marina Fire Impacts State Park Site

By Catherine Jones  
Bodie SHP Interpreter

Last summer, the Marina Fire started June 24 just north of the town of Lee Vining and impacted visitation to the Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve's Old Marina interpretive site.

The fire blocked access to the Reserve's Old Marina for several days and the nearby community of Lee Vining was on evacuation notice. The fire burned 654 acres of vegetation on steep slopes along Highway 395, which was closed initially, but reopened eventually with escorts. There was some vegetation loss on state land, but no facilities were damaged in the fire.



The Marina Fire at Mono Lake burns on a hill last summer above Highway 395 near Mono Lake Tufa State Natural Reserve. Photo By Dave Marquart

Exact cause of the fire, which started under a power transmission line, is still under investigation. There was a

total of 493 personnel assigned to the incident, which included 11 hand crews, 23 engines, two dozers, six helicopters, two fixed-wing aircrafts and three water tenders.

Mudslides are a concern because of the loss of vegetation that holds the steep slope in place. In the event of prolonged rainfall, mudslides could block the highway, further impacting visitation to Old Marina. Visitors should be aware of this potential hazard when visiting the site.

## *Bodie Foundation Sees Growth in Membership, Donations This Year*

It was a busy and successful year for the Bodie Foundation with growth in our membership, donations and photo workshop program.

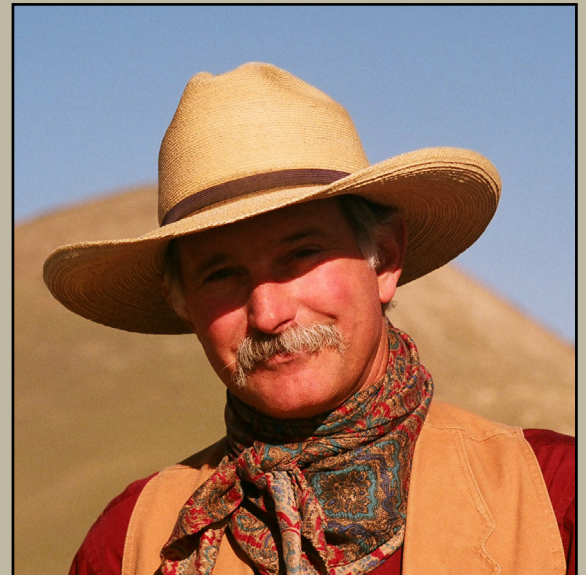
Overall donations to the foundation totaled \$41,565. Our Lifetime Members donated \$13,000 to the Bodie Stabilization fund! Thank you to our members for your generosity.

From the first of the year to the present, 197 new members joined the ranks of those who love and care for Bodie. Of that total, 10 of them joined at the 601 Lifers membership level.

The Foundation permitted 45 photo workshops with 472 participants attending. The workshops raised \$42,850 for Bodie Foundation Stabilization Fund. We consider this a great success and are already at work on the 2017 Photo Workshop Program. We hope to offer some expanded opportunities including a new "Members Only" Photo Day.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the 2016 Photo Workshop Program. If you are interested in a 2017 workshop or photo day, please contact Shayla at [Shayla@BodieFoundation.org](mailto:Shayla@BodieFoundation.org) and (760) 616-0559. For more information, please go to: [www.BodieFoundation.org/photo-workshops/](http://www.BodieFoundation.org/photo-workshops/)

## **Dave Stamey Concert Announced for 2017**



Make plans now to attend the Bodie Benefit Concert with Dave Stamey at the Bridgeport Barn and Terrace in Bridgeport, California on June 10, 2017. Watch our website and Facebook page for ticket sales! For more information about Dave and his music, see [www.davestamey.com/index.html](http://www.davestamey.com/index.html)

# Despite Lower Levels, Birds Busy at Mono Lake

By Duncan King  
Senior Park Aide

It's late summer and the lake level is dropping, but the birds don't seem to notice. They're all busy catching shrimp and flies in the calm waters while I watch from shore. Yesterday, to the amazement of the visitors, the lake worked up into a froth by the action of the wind, and suds washed up on the beach. The lake always has the capacity to surprise but it gave me a great teaching moment on how laundry soap is one of the components of artificial Mono Lake water made in the school laboratory, along with table salt, baking soda and Epsom salts.

The California Gulls have finished nesting on the islets behind Paoha and Negit and will soon be returning to

the coast for the winter. The Osprey chicks are fledging and learning all about the huge world outside of their nests, assuming that is, that the precarious first flight off of a tufa tower is accomplished successfully. The Phalaropes and Eared Grebes have been arriving to fatten up before their migrations southward for the winter, and we hope that last year's scenes of starving and dead birds on the shore are not repeated with the failure of the shrimp population.

There seems to have been a population explosion this year at Bodie and around Mono Lake of jack rabbits and cottontails, which will likely cause an increase in coyote numbers next year, and that could be a problem for the California Gulls. The islets in the lake are home to one of

the world's largest nesting rookeries of these birds.

The level of the lake has been falling for five years as a result of the drought in California, even though water exports to Los Angeles have been reduced in line with the State Water Board's 1994 decision. Next year those exports may be reduced to zero if the drought continues. More drought may mean exposure of the land bridge connecting Negit to the mainland. This would potentially allow coyotes access to the island, from where it would be an easy swim to the islets. The last time this happened the breeding colony on Negit was slaughtered and the birds abandoned the island for decades.

A possible solution is in sight though, as permits have been granted, and resources obtained, to build an electric fence to deter the predators. Some people have queried why we should interfere with nature by building this fence, but humans created the problem by diverting water away from the lake in the first place, and thus we are in a sense trying to balance the situation.

So how low is the lake? Today it is just less than 6,378 feet above sea level, only three feet higher than the 1994 height, incredibly disappointing when we recall that the previous water models predicted it would take 20 years to come up the 20 feet to the target level of 6,392 feet.

We all hoped for a great El Nino last winter. Now even a 'normal' snowfall would be a blessing. We may not understand everything that happens in, on, and around, the lake, but viscerally we just know that more water won't hurt!

## Looking Forward to the Coming of Winter



The historic Scossa Cabin at Grover Hot Springs State Park may look like this again soon. The hot springs valley was purchased from Mrs. H.A. Grover by Joseph Scossa, a local rancher, in 1908. The land was then deeded over to Charles Scossa. The cabin, built around 1935, was home to Charles, who operated the hot springs. The springs, including the cabin, and valley were purchased by the state in 1959. *Photo By Dave Williamson*



Photo by Joe Curtis



Photos by Ken Karagozian

## BODIE OR BUST!

Friends of Bodie Day 2016 was a favorite among many. The daytime festivities included a terrific demonstration of historic packing and hitching of the Dynamite Mule Team and live music from some great performers which included Laura Lind, Bodie 601, Chris Bayer, Dr. Spitmore and The Bodie Travelers. Tintype portraits by F395 Photography captured the many folks who showed up in period attire. Vintage children's games entertained kids of all ages and the watermelon-eating contest was a big hit. For the first time ever, we sold out of dinners prior to the event. Albert's Meat Market of Bridgeport dished 346 BBQ dinners to our members. Dinner was followed by a walk around town to meet characters from Bodie's history. Mark your calendars now for Saturday, August 12, 2017 – Friends of Bodie 30th Anniversary. Bodie Foundation members will enjoy an evening graveyard walk and should plan to attend the funeral of W.S Bodey!

## Autumn Arrives in Bodie After Busy Summer

By Erica Hedlund  
Senior Park Aide

It was an amazing summer season here in Bodie this year! We had a terrific staff that gave their all to serving Bodie's visitors by assisting guests in the museum, working through long lines of cars at the kiosk and providing the park's history talks and stamp mill tours throughout the day.

Our total attendance this season was 130,000 people! It's feeling like fall here in Bodie. Although the days are still warm, the temperatures are beginning to drop into the 20s (Fahrenheit) and below during the night! We

are enjoying slower days and cooler temperatures. Park hours change for the winter on November 1. The park will open at 9 a.m. and close at 4 p.m.

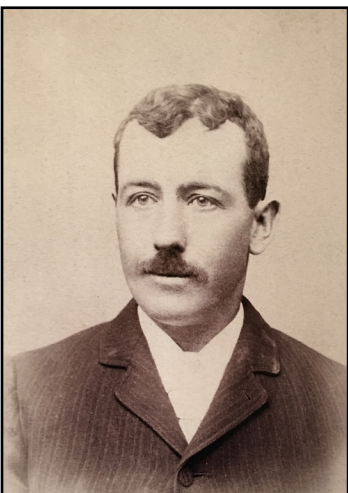
For those planning on traveling to Bodie this fall/winter season, be prepared for winter travel, carry chains, wear appropriate clothing for cold weather and check ahead for weather conditions and road closures. Call the park at 760-647-6445 for questions about conditions. Visitors call also check California highway conditions online at [quickmap.dot.ca.gov/](http://quickmap.dot.ca.gov/) or by calling 1-800-427-7623. The Bodie Foundation also updates conditions at the park on its Facebook page.

*MILLERS from page 1*

Wilson, Anna learned that there was no school in the Mono Basin. Almost immediately, she began laying the groundwork to start Mono's first school in 1888. Her husband was hired as a foreman at the Thompson Ranch, one of the largest ranches in the area. This was the first home of the Currie family.

Chuck and Jane think Annie met William through her sister, Jessie, at one of the many dances in the Mono Basin. The dances attracted young people from all over the region. William, a miner, had arrived in Bodie from Canada in 1889 to join his brother, Thomas, who ran the Mono Mills store and worked as a teamster.

Annie and William were married at the Currie Ranch on New Year's Day, 1896. A minister traveled from Bodie to preside over



William Miller



The Miller family poses in Bodie. Back row, from left is Charlie, Laretta, William D., Annie and William. Front row, from left: Lawrence, Thelma and Mabel. The youngest child, Donald ("Tuffy") is not pictured. All family photos courtesy of Chuck and Jane Miller.

the ceremony which had 200 guests in attendance. The couple soon traveled to Bodie to begin their married life. They would eventually have eight children. (One child, Neil, lived three months. Chuck and Jane are unsure if that child is buried in Bodie.) In 1897, Annie's sister, Jessie, married William's brother, Thomas and also moved to Bodie into a house owned by Thomas on the west end of Green Street.

William spent many years working at the Standard Mining Company. His positions included miner, mill worker and assayer. At home, Annie was kept busy raising their large family, but she always found time to do something more. "She was kind-hearted and

industrious," said Chuck. She began operating the Occidental Hotel on Main Street and became known for her talents as a fine cook. She also started Bodie's first library in her variety shop next to the hotel.

Eventually she left the Occidental and started a boarding house and rooming house in two buildings on Green Street. Part of the boarding house included the Miller family home.

There is a story about a "big-name gangster" coming through Bodie in the 1920s, said Chuck. Depending on whom you talk to, it was either John Dillinger or Pretty-Boy Floyd. Whoever it was, he got the word that the best place to eat in town was

Annie Miller's on Green Street. "She talked about what a nice person he was," remembered Chuck.

As mining slowed, many left, but the Millers stayed. William's love of Bodie showed in a comment that was repeated in his obituary. "I can't tell you how glad I am to be home again; there's no place like it."

William went to work for Mono County roads in the 1930s and also served a term as county supervisor. He ran for re-election and lost by one vote. While working for county roads, a truck backed over his foot as he worked as a flagman on Conway Summit. He was treated in San Francisco and died as a result of his injuries in 1936.

After William's death, Annie continued to work and live in Bodie. She was often asked to cater events including some at the Miners' Union Hall, which had always served as a social gathering place. However, the town's population was dropping dramatically. The last mining company in Bodie, Roseclip, closed as a result of the United States' entry into World War II. Gold was considered a non-essential metal. The government wanted miners to mine copper,

*Please see MILLERS page 7*

*MILLERS from page 6*

lead and zinc for the war effort.

Annie reluctantly left Bodie in 1941. "It broke her heart," said Chuck. She lived with daughter Thelma in Lee Vining at first, then moved in with son Lawrence, Chuck's father. Lawrence worked at the Natural Soda Products plant in Keeler, CA. Chuck remembered that Annie preferred sitting and sleeping on a screen porch at their house, even at night. Apparently, after those years in Bodie, the temperatures in southern Inyo County did not seem cold to her. After three years, she moved to San Francisco to live with daughter Lauretta Gray and family. Annie passed away in 1954.

Perhaps a woman ahead of her time? "I think so," said Jane Miller.

Chuck agreed. "Yes, doing all she did and raising 8 kids. Her mother was strong too, starting the school in Mono when they arrived in the area."

Annie's boarding house and rooming house both still stand on Green Street, a reminder of a kind-hearted wife and mother, and successful businesswoman.



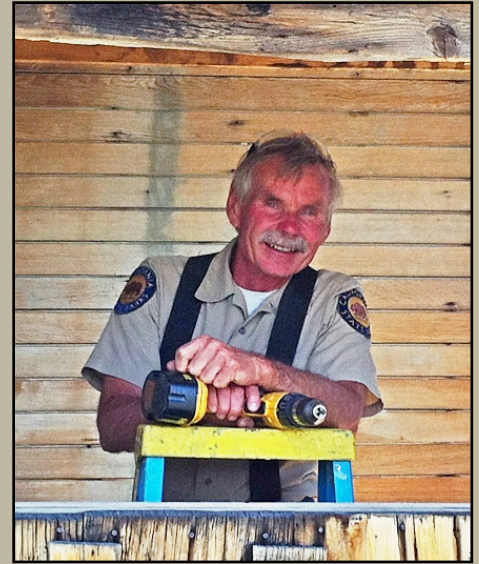
Jane and Chuck Miller, with a plate from the boarding house of Annie Miller, Chuck's grandmother. Photo by Chris Spiller

## Bodie's Chuck Fell Passes Away

By Dydia DeLyser  
Bodie Foundation Board Member

As *The Bodie Times* went to press we learned of the passing of Bodie's long-time Maintenance Mechanic, Chuck Fell.

Chuck came to Bodie in 1989 — it was his first job for State Parks, and he arrived with considerable skills, having worked for many years as a machine repairman. Bodie was something new: a place where everything was made of wood (not steel), and nothing was square, plumb, or level. Chuck embraced Bodie's aesthetic, but also came to see the urgency with which more and more sophisticated levels of repair needed to be undertaken if the buildings were to be preserved. It was under Chuck's leadership (and that of Karl Knapp at Sierra District Office) that Bodie's stabilization program emerged. What had long been a low-budget sagebrush-and-bailing-wire operation became highly professionalized with skilled crews, specialized tools (including some of the crews' own design), and custom resources (such as rough-sawn, full-dimensional lumber).



Chuck Fell

Thanks to these efforts, dozens of Bodie's buildings remain standing to this day.

Chuck eventually promoted to Park Maintenance Supervisor, overseeing Bodie, Mono Lake Tufa State Reserve, and Grover Hot Springs. In 2009, he retired with his wife Judy to Chewelah, Washington. Chuck died on October 8, 2016 after complications from surgery. He is survived by Judy, his son Tony and wife Terri, and his daughter Shannon, along with five grandchildren: Alex, Nick, and Aaron; Tucker, and Jackson.

*PARK STAFF from page 2***Robert Peek**

Ranger Robert Peek, who joined the Bodie staff in September 2014, departed at the end of August for a new ranger position at California State Parks in Northern San Diego

County. He will be based in Carlsbad, CA. We hope to see him again at future Friends of Bodie Days!



Robert Peek



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