

FRIENDS OF BODIE NEWSLETTER

Volume 13 Issue 1

Winter 2003-2004

SOME CALL IT HOME

“You live here?”

The voices are incredulous. A day does not go by when staff is not asked this question. “Do you have plumbing?” “Aren't you afraid?” “Do you have TV?” “What do you do at night?” “Do they airlift your groceries?” “Are the houses fixed up inside?” “Do you have electricity?” “No one lives here in winter, do they?” “How do you get out in winter?” “Don't you get lonely?” “What do you eat?” “Have you seen any ghosts?” “Is your house insulated?” A staff favorite is, “What did you do to get assigned here?” as if Bodie is the State Park system's dumping ground for problem employees.

Yes, most of us live here. No, we were not assigned as punishment. We sought these positions.

NOT SOON TO BE FEATURED

Ranger Mark Langner, seven year resident, describes Bodie housing as, “Not soon to be featured in *Better Homes and Gardens*, but comfortable.” When visitors wonder about loneliness and isolation, he responds that he knows his neighbors well, probably better than many of our visitors do. It's an ideal location for access to spectacular hiking, backpacking and rock climbing areas. Mark and his wife, Lynn Inouye, love to cross country ski and snow shoe during Bodie's winter months.

For Lynn, winter is a special time. “I love opening the back door, putting on my skis, seeing all the animal tracks and knowing they are there even if we don't see them. Then coming back home to a nice fire.”

As for ghosts, Lynn who is a part-time accensionist for the parks artifacts, “I don't disbelieve, but I've never seen one here.” Most of the long term residents agree.

Supervising Ranger Brad Sturdivant has a special story to tell his oldest daughter. Brad and wife, Suzanne, were living full-time in Bodie when Jordan was born. They drove to Highway 395 through four feet of snow in the parks' Snowcat to a vehicle waiting to take them to the hospital in Bishop. A well-bundled newborn, Jordan, arrived in Bodie in the same conveyances. How many of us have such a great story about our arrival on the planet? Younger sister Jesslyn arrived in milder weather but the Jeep had a flat tire half way out Cottonwood Canyon Road. By the time the youngest Sturdivant made her entrance, the family had a house in Bridgeport. With school age children, a house closer to schools and Suzanne's job, is an important consideration, although Brad stays in the D. V. Cain House in Bodie on his work rotations.

Bodie used to be considered a “hardship assignment” and rangers were rotated out after two years. Brad broke the tradition; he has been here twenty years. “I love Bodie and the Eastern Sierras.” He recalls the days when Bodie had no phones and often longs for those days again. With less fondness he remembers the days before there was an automatic turn-on feature for the emergency generator. The generator usually failed on nights with deep snow and high winds. The ranger trudged out to the generator building to manually start it.

Last November, with 13 inches of day-old, crusty snow on the ground, the power failed in the Gregory House. After checking breakers, seasonal employees Rebecca Scott and Betty Prange were stymied. Dressed in their warmest clothes, they shared the long night walk to get help. The walk from the Gregory House to Park Street is short in summer. Hiking through snow, it is a long ways!

SEASONAL RESIDENTS

Rebecca, Office Assistant, started working in Bodie as an intern through the Student Conservation Association (SCA) in 1999. “I feel like I was born 100 years too late. I belong out here.” She loves the quiet nights, “You can see the stars, it's so beautiful here.” So what does she like least? “It's too far to a pool hall.” (She is not allowed to use the marvelous billiard table in the Wheaton-Hollis Hotel). And it's hard to find a date.” But she would not trade the experience.

Seasonal housing is shared, with two to six people per residence. Those houses have no telephone, no television reception and limited radio reception. For SCA intern Molly McKinley, this was no hardship. “Compared to my previous experience in the small ghost town of Ashcroft, Colorado, where I lived alone in a rough log cabin with no electricity, no telephone, no running water, Bodie seemed like a booming metropolis complete with such amenities as a refrigerator and flush toilets, not to mention the presence of up to 17 park employees during the height of the summer season.”

Instead of TV, backbone of American family entertainment, residents share potluck dinners, moonlit hikes, explore areas off-limits to the public, sing, converse, read, have talent and slide shows, and videos in the theater. Our newest Ranger, Mike O'Connell, an accomplished western singer, guitarist and song writer, often entertains or invites us to sing along.

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We park our personal vehicles far from our houses. Residents quickly learn that closed but unlocked house doors are an open invitation for visitors to walk right on in. We travel to Gardnerville or Mammoth Lakes for groceries. And, while the post office and UPS will not deliver, the Schwan's truck comes every two weeks in the summer bringing ice cream and frozen entrees.



Photo from the Library of Congress

Is it a hardship? Based on the number of people who return for multiple seasons, the experience of living in the country's greatest ghost town must offset any possible "inconveniences". Says third year Seasonal Park Aide, Jaymi Gordon, "How many people can say they have lived in a ghost town. It's a unique experience."

Bodie is on the World Wide Web.

You are in for a treat when you checkout the new Bodie website at www.bodie.com. This informative site is as beautiful to look at as it is fun to explore. Volunteer Dave Tavres is pouring hundreds of hours, and lots of heart and soul, into this project. Bodie.com is packed full of almost everything you could want to know about our favorite ghost town. You can view photos, ask questions, leave comments, plan your visit and order items from our bookstore. It is an excellent site and we hope you will visit it soon.

You can also visit the official State of California Bodie website at www.ceres.ca.gov/sierradsp/bodie/index.html

FOB, 2004 Wish List

The Bodie Staff greatly appreciates all the people out there who have donated items. The Park operates on a limited budget. There are times that certain things would not only make our job easier but also more effective with interpreting Bodie to the public. The following is our wish list:

1. Period Clothing: We need dresses and men's clothing in different sizes for our living history tours and talks. We sincerely thank those folks that have donated in the past.
2. A laptop computer with power point software, so that we may present programs at local schools and community happenings.
3. Our old 2-cycle Snow Mobile is a cranky, noisy, polluting, smelly monster. A newer 4-cycle machine that could handle our winters would be welcome addition.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW!

Friends of Bodie night 2004 will be Saturday, August 14th. We will have our usual lively entertainment and a few surprises for your enjoyment.

Last year's 'Friends of Bodie' membership gathering was a huge success. Over 200 friends attended the daylong affair. Events included stagecoach robbery re-enactments, a fine catered BBQ dinner, several musical entertainers, a couple of book signings, mill tours and history talks, and an art and photography exhibition. Each year's activities are different; if you have any ideas for activities you would like to see at one of these events, please drop us a line.



Have you ever wondered about...

Working at Bodie

Bodie State Historic Park hires a seasonal staff for the spring, summer and fall. We are looking for dedicated, hard-working, self-motivated, intelligent, friendly people to join our crew. Bodie is a unique, fun and exciting place to live and work. It is a great location to learn about California's history, meet interesting people, and be surrounded by the majesty of the Eastern Sierra.

Seasonal Park Aides (9.32+/hour) have many challenging and diverse duties. Work includes a mixture of entrance station operation, foot patrol, interpretation (stamp mill tours, history talks, and video presentations), museum operation, park maintenance and natural resource management. You need to be able to work with the public in a friendly, courteous and competent manner. Basic math and public speaking skills are required.

Shared housing is often available within the Park for a nominal charge. There is an employee campground for trailers and RVs.

The job is great seasonal employment for students, retired folks, and those looking for an interesting change. Most of our employees enjoy the work so much that they return for several seasons.

If you, or someone you know, are interested please get in touch. Applications received by mid-April receive priority for the 2004 season. Standard California State Application (STD 678) forms are available at most State Offices and on-line. Send your application to Bodie State Historic Park, POB 515, Bridgeport, California, 93517. Contact Ranger Marko at 760-647-6445 for more information.



State Parks... Opportunities Galore

by Jaimie Hall

The following is an excerpt from the July/August 2003 issue of Workamper News.

California

Betty Prange and her husband, Lin Strout, volunteered at Patrick's Point in northern California. Both photographers, their job was to update the park's slide collection and present an evening campfire program on taking vacation photos. After Lin passed away, Betty came back to work in the entry kiosk and visitor center. Betty enjoyed setting up her solar oven and cooking a batch of chocolate chip cookies to share with visitors. Migrating whales swam by the coast and co-workers shared fresh fish. Twenty hours of work was required for a site, which can be done by one person or split between a couple. To get their positions, Betty and Lin applied to the regional office and then were referred to the park.

Last summer Betty worked as a seasonal park aide at Bodie State Historic Park and returned again this season. In the 1880s, during its heyday, Bodie boasted 10,000 people and was a rip-roaring gold rush town. Only about five percent of the buildings remain. At 8375 feet, it gets warm in the summer and snow comes early. With virtually no trees, winds whistle through the town, rattling boards, sending tumbleweeds scooting down once-bustling streets.

California Park Aides can do a mixture of maintenance and visitor contact work. Betty primarily works with visitors. Her favorite job is giving an hour long tour of the stamp mill, where ore was crushed to extract gold and silver. On a typical day, she might open the kiosk, greet visitors, do a history talk in town, give her tour, patrol for an hour answering visitor questions and keeping an eye on artifacts, then work again in the kiosk. She occasionally covers the museum bookstore, picks up litter or completes other assigned duties.

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HEY IT'S GOOD TO BE BACK HOME AGAIN

The Bodie staff is happier than a pig in a mud wallow with the return of Chuck Fell. He left Bodie five years ago to work at Empire Mines and live at Malakoff Diggings. Chuck brings with him a great team spirit and a wealth of skills. Chuck did say that "it's good to be back home again", and hey, Bodie is a unique place and experience. Chuck, better break out those thermals, Parkas, X-Country Skis, and Snowshoes.

New Lifetime Members and Contributors

We would like to welcome the following new lifetime members to the Friends of Bodie.

Steve Adams, Jr.
Ed and Joanne Allen
Frank Hays
Virginia Harwood Chapman Schultz

We would also like to say a special Thank you to the following people, who have generously donated this year to the Friends of Bodie.

Fran Cullen
Betty Boyd
Eric Brugger
Fern Adele Martin
Don and Anne Davis, Jr.
Harold Marx
Barbara Wilson
Chris Gutmacher and Andrew Stevenson
Wayne Long
Estelle H. Adams
Stephen and Janice Billeb
A donation in memory of Mike Horlick

And to the following who have donated items off our wish list:

Lance Otto
Nancy Frye
Jane Hasel

May We Brag

Bodie boasts some very awesome volunteers. These fine people come to the park and work diligently. The hours of volunteer time and efforts are greatly appreciated. Arriving at different times throughout the season, they are always ready for action. They deal with crying children, dogs in the theatre, lost people, altitude sickness, weather reports, road conditions, map directions and history questions all on a daily basis. That's not all, the heat of summer days, the cool Bodie nights, the dirt, the dust and more blowing dirt. The hardy Bodie Volunteers keep coming back for more! To all the fantastic Bodie volunteers from the grateful Bodie staff:

The following people have donated a total of nearly 1000 hours to Bodie this past year.

Frank Hays
Ed and Joanne Allen (Welcome Back)
Dennis Hugee
Dydia Delyser
Dave James
Dan McIntyre
Dave Tavres
Chris Durham
Ron & Denise Matty
Marilyn Murphy
Steve and Vicki Adams, Jr.
Lynn Inouye
Jill and Mike Lachman
Boy Scouts Troop #497, Gardnerville NV
And our two interns this year:
Molly McKinley and Sasha Trana

Help Us Save

We received several complaints and concerns that people did not receive an invitation to Friends of Bodie night and/or the newsletter. In an effort to save money on postage this year, if we showed a membership had expired by more than three months the name was removed from our mailing list. Check the mailing label on the front of the newsletter, the date after your name is your expiration date.

We do send out a reminder in the mail the month that your membership is due to expire. We receive a fair amount of notices back as undeliverable or with an expired forwarding order. If you move, please make sure we have your current address.

SCAin" it at Bodie

Perhaps you made your way to Bodie this summer and just maybe you chatted with or took a tour from one of two young ladies sporting purple and yellow patches on their left shoulder. These patches denote enrollment in the SCA (Student Conservation Association) internship program. This year Sasha Trana and I (Molly McKinley) found ourselves far away from home, sharing a room in the Gregory house, and performing the duties of State Park Aides.

With the assistance of the SCA program, individuals like Sasha and I are able to locate positions with State and National Parks around the country. As in Bodie, most SCA's work alongside the regular park employees doing anything from guiding tours to building trails. Unlike employees, interns receive a living stipend that comes from the SCA headquarters in New Hampshire and our length of service tends to be short, ranging from 3-12 months.

Having recently graduated from Louisiana State University, Sasha was looking for a job in an historical setting. Based on a friend's recommendation, she ended up not in a Louisiana plantation house per se, but rather she headed west to spend 12 weeks in the Bodie Hills where weather beaten outhouses far outnumber stately white columns.



My trail to Bodie began a much longer time ago. Beginning as a young child I was always amazed and intrigued by the ghost towns of the west. I hungered to imagine and understand what life was like for the folks who lived on the mining frontier. Against this backdrop of curiosity I, as a little girl, saw pictures of Bodie that my parents had taken during a visit in 1971. Immediately I resolved to visit the place someday as the photos revealed a much larger ghost town than I had ever seen.

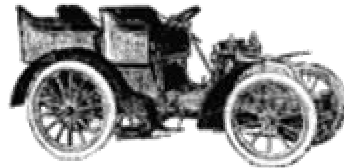
Fast forward to family vacation in Colorado where I as a teenager saw a woman working in a ghost town, answering questions, and spending her days in a beautiful setting. It struck me as the perfect job. Then, just a few months ago, I found myself with no plans for the summer months. I visited the SCA website (www.thesca.org) and found, to my excitement, that Bodie needed summer help.

Quite rapidly, I loaded my life into my car and departed my home in Indiana. I was bound for Bodie, a place I had wanted to visit for many years. Forget the simple visiting though! I moved to the place sight unseen and spent a spectacular three months living and working in the state park.

Repeatedly during the summer, visitors would make comments like, "You have an awesome job!" "Yep," I'd say, "I think so too."

On a Bodie Summer

Back in May I sat,
In Indiana, Oh Drat!
Where to go, what to do
To wish those old cornfields adieu?
With SCA's help I found
A place of positively treeless ground.
To Bodie I went,
And a stellar summer I spent
With the folks on Bodie's staff
And tourists woes that made me laugh.
Most of my memories make me grin
Hmm...except the broken window and deadly trash bin.
Good-bye, farewell I must now say
Hope to see you all again one fine day.



Bodie was named after W. S. Bodey—called William, Waterman and Wakeman by conflicting sources, and spelled variously Body, Bodey and Bodie by same—who discovered gold here in 1859. The change in spelling has often been attributed to an illiterate sign painter (or perhaps a drunken one?!) but may have been a deliberate change by the citizenry to insure the proper pronunciation.

WAGONS,HO !

One of the fond memories of my childhood was the sound of these very words. Once a week I would wait anxiously for Ward Bond to yell these two simple words out to begin an evening of high adventure on the wagon train. Danger and adventure lurked around every bend that the wagons approached. Hunger, thirst, dangerous animals, hostile Indians, and severe weather conditions were just a few of the adversities those pioneers had to face. The animals and the wagons gave them the means to cross the new frontier of the American West back in that bygone era.

We live today in a very different world. We've harnessed different horses to transport us from place to place. Occasionally there are a few names for vehicles that hearken back to earlier times. Names like Mustang, Pinto, and Bronco. There is the reliable station wagon to haul things enclosed as the wagons of old. Large diesels with semi trailers for the really big loads. Adventure today with horsepower seems to pale in comparison to those of yesteryear, at least for most of us. If the pioneers could only see us now as we drive our Ford Mustang to the drive through of a local fast food establishment. We receive our food almost instantaneously and then proceed to eat and drink while we drive to our destination. Can you imagine what it would be like holding the reins of a twenty-mule team while trying to eat a buffalo burger?

When you come to the town of Bodie today you will see several wagons and even some buggies and sleighs. If you are coming back to Bodie for another look around you will be one of the many that are asking where the wagons are. The area beside the museum seems strangely empty; giving the impression that something is definitely missing. An inquiry at the Museum will lead you to the County Barn where they are now proudly displayed.



These wagons are from Bodie's hey day. The largest is a high-sided freight wagon. It once hauled supplies; from hardware to blankets, butter and fine wine. These huge wagons were drawn by teams of a dozen horses or mules across the rugged Sierras. The teamster rode the "near wheeler" horse, with a single line to the lead animal. They were called "jerk line" teams because the driver cued the animals with a series of jerks on the line.

There's a smaller wagon that is a heavy Mountain Wagon. This wagon once hauled ore tailings from the mill to the cyanide plant. The stout wheels and extra thick axles could bear tremendous weight. A team of two horses drew this wagon. The strength of the horses for this task was much more important than their speed.

The other two wagons across the walkway in this same barn are flatbed freight wagons. Historic photos show these wagons hitched together behind a team of a dozen horses and mules in combination. They hauled lumber, heavy equipment, and huge pipe.

Historically wagons spent the harsh winters stored in livery stables and barns. In keeping with Bodie State Historic Parks' mission of arrested decay these wagons are sheltered in this barn to preserve them for future generations. Here young and old alike can imagine, reflect, and even dream of "Wagons, Ho !"

Bodie Resident Research Project "The Past Comes Alive"

The Bodie Resident Research Project is going well. I have had the pleasure of interviewing some fascinating people who once called Bodie their home. These Bodieites are now in their 70's, 80's and 90's. Their recollections are of when they were children playing in the dusty, nearly deserted streets of a town that was well on its way to becoming a ghost town. Imagine being six or seven years old and living in Bodie in the 1920s, 30's & 40's. Most certainly your father was working for the mining company that still had faith in the Bodie mines. Or maybe it was your mother who ran the only boarding house left open to take care of the hand full of miners; giving them a warm place to sleep and a belly full of home cooked food. Or possibly, you were there because your family was operating the last open store, cafe or saloon. It was a time where all the children, related or not, called Mr. J.S. Cain, Grandpa. It is the stories of these children that gives us a window to look back through and see how it was to live in Bodie in the early 1900s.

Everyone who has a connection to Bodie is valuable for the research project. So many people say, "I don't think I can tell you much ." But what they don't appreciate is that their memories are a piece of a historic puzzle. I had a woman come into the museum this summer who lived in Bodie for a summer when she was 10 years old. She was mildly shy about discussing her memories, saying she was so young and that she probably didn't really have much to offer to the research. I continued asking a few questions when she suddenly smiled with a memory. Her father was working for the Roseklip Mining Company for the summer. They were planning on leaving Bodie before the dreaded winter set in. School had not yet started and there were only 8 children enrolled. Not enough for Mono County to pay a teacher; they needed one more to enroll. Ella Cain was the teacher and she loved teaching the Bodie children. She asked this family to stay a little longer and enroll the youngster into the school. It was done and the Bodie school continued for another year! Now, that is a great piece to the puzzle!

There is a common thread meandering through the memories of these Bodie kids. It was a time in their lives that having fun was easy, staying out of trouble, not so easy! Memories of warm days and cool nights, good friends and a lot of things and buildings to get into! And if they were ones that stayed in town over winter, they all remember Bobby Bell teaching everyone how to ski down the hill behind the cemetery or down Green Street.

These kids have lived a lifetime. They are elderly now. As I gather more knowledge of those days it becomes easier to talk to them about their memories. I might bring up a name or an event that they hadn't thought about in years. Looking over pictures of Bodie, some before the 32 fire, will spark memories of fun and mischief. Most of these kids grew up and went their way never knowing where their Bodie friends ended up. This research has put some back in contact after 60 years or more! It gives me great pleasure to reconnect these old friends. They have a bond that you and I will never really understand. Growing up in a town that once held so much life. A skeleton of weathered buildings, miners shacks and rusty equipment, became their playground. Every one of them remembers their days in Bodie with a special smile and a little sparkle in their eye.

These interviews are being recorded and transcribed. It is with great hope that Friends of Bodie will publish these interviews so that they could be enjoyed by everyone who wants to look through that rear view window of time in Bodie.

If you are a Bodieite or know of one, Please contact Terri Geissinger at Bodie State Park (760) 647-6445.



My first trip to Bodie

Exciting. Surprising. Interesting. Short. Every time I (Dave Tavres, Sierra State Parks Board Member) come back to Bodie, I easily recall my first visit. I was a junior in high school, about 16 years old, on a long camping trip with a science teacher and several other students. We had spent most of our time in Death Valley and were on our way back to the Bay Area, driving up highway 395. Mr. Runyan had the map out and was studying it, when he called back to the group in the van and asked if we wanted to make yet another stop at a State Historic Park that was listed on the map. Before long we were driving down highway 270 into what looked like the middle of nowhere.

Within a few minutes of hitting the dirt road, we were all questioning our decision to visit this dot on the map. On and on the unpaved, uneven road rattled the van to pieces. It seemed to go on forever, topping hill after hill. I had quit paying attention to the horizons we were reaching, having no expectation of getting there, or even being all that interested. Then, the image that I still attempt to relive each time, suddenly something began slowly rising out of the ground. Even at a distance it was easy to tell that the grey structure on the side of the mountain was BIG! Then building after building popped up all over the place – and unexpectedly an entire town was just there.

My heart jumped into double-time as I hurriedly looked over the whole place! I was in shock that there was anything out here in the middle of nowhere, and especially a town. The most amazing thing was that I felt like I had instantly been transported back in time! This place was like nothing I had ever seen before. There were no cars driving through town, no shops with people going in and out, and no movement at all that I could see. I felt out of place as we left the rest of the world behind us.

I don't remember what my exact words were, but I do remember clamoring to get parked and out of the van. I had to see if this place was for real, or if it was just another Knott's Berry Farm. Everything looked so old and original – how could this be?! I was the most excited one by now, and had my camera in hand and wanted to jump out and let them park without me. I wanted to absorb everything I could see – I wanted to disappear into the history that was standing before me. This place was more intriguing and exciting than anything I had ever experienced. It was truly an amazing feeling.

As with all trips to Bodie, it was too short. We hadn't planned on stopping there, nor had we planned on driving 5 miles per hour on a washboard road for three miles. Our group walked through town, taking pictures and noticing how deserted it was. I remember seeing only three or four people, most likely because it was still quite cold and winter was just ending. We didn't get to go into the museum, as it was closed, we didn't see or talk to any rangers, and we didn't have any information about this amazing place. Driving out of town sincerely left a hole in me. I felt something very strong about this mystical place. There just wasn't enough time – there was so much to be learned.

When we got back to school, real life settled back in, but Bodie was still rattling around in my head. I read what I could about the town, and talked about it a lot. But as a kid, I just didn't have the experience or the money to get back right away. It took a few years, but in 1992 I went back for volunteer training and to experience Bodie the way I needed to – with time. Shortly after that training, I moved to Seattle for work, which made it that much more difficult to do, learn, and experience everything about Bodie.

In 1994, I was lucky enough to work at a small company that sold the first commercially available software for accessing the internet. As I did technical support, I began to learn more about HTML and creating "web pages", which were still extremely new for consumers. By 1996 I had the skills to build a website, and began what is now known as Bodie.com. I collected information, posted pictures, and wrote about all the things that I thought were interesting about Bodie. Again, it took several years to get back, but when I did, I was armed with ability, excitement, and drive to make the best (and probably first) website about Bodie.

Today, I'm more involved with the park and all of the wonderful staff and other lovers of Bodie. Literally, there isn't a day that goes by that I am not eating, sleeping, sharing, thinking, or talking about Bodie. It is one of my passions in life. I love to give mini-history lessons, respond to emails from the website, and especially love to talk to people about Bodie who haven't been there since they were children.

Bodie captured my heart many years ago. It is still a mystical place for me. It holds countless stories, emotions, and experiences yet to come that will fill my life with pleasure and interest. I only hope that the enthusiasm and love that I have for Bodie will be passed on to others for many years.

Little Known Folks of the Past

Bodie's population was a diverse mix of men and women from around the world. Some of its leading citizens are well known. Some of the women from the red light district have had their stories romanticized and told to later generations. We know there was a large Chinese population. What about some of the other people from Bodie? Here is a brief sketch of three Bodie residents, a look at both ethnic diversity and an unusual woman.

CONCHETTA FLORES THOMASSON

Conchetta Sarras Flores arrived in the United States from her native Nicaragua as a teenager. She was accompanied by her mother, Ferminia Sarras (several other spellings appear including Sararis) and three younger sisters. It is not known if her father, Senior Flores accompanied them or why her mother, daughter of Spanish-Nicaraguan nobility, headed to San Francisco in 1876 and then the mining camps of Nevada.

Ferminia became a prospector, journeying among several of the Nevada mining camps. She eventually earned the nickname "Copper Queen of Nevada", and sold many of her claims for substantial sums, including a \$90,000 sale of 40 claims to one syndicate.

Initially Conchetta accompanied her mother to the mining camps of Candelaria and Belleview, now part of Nevada's Mineral County. In about 1881, which would have been during Bodie's peak of population, Conchetta married Julius Thomasson. He was a miner who became a Bodie school teacher. Together they raised four children and probably helped raise Conchetta's youngest brother, little Joseph Marshall, while her mother was out prospecting,

This young woman died around 1893. Her Spanish ancestry and Nicaraguan birth are part of Bodie's diverse population.

WILLIAM O'HARA

William O'Hara was a free-born black man from Ohio. He is described as very rotund, a cook, a restaurant owner, a boarding house manager, a mine owner, caretaker for the Empire Mining Company's holdings, a money lender, and as Bodie's "foster father" for the assistance he gave out of luck miners.

He had already made a name for himself before arriving in Bodie. He was a steward for the well know William C. Ralston, entrepreneur and banker in Califor-

nia's early days. After leaving Ralston's employ, O'Hara (some spellings show O'Harra) and his wife, Charlotte, owned and ran the Jenny Lind restaurant and a ranch in Columbia, CA. There are several accounts of a large party held there in 1859. It was a celebration of the 25th Emancipation Day, the anniversary of the end of slavery in the British West Indies. Reporters were present, so were both black and white attendees, and an impressive list of speakers. While slavery was still in effect in the United States, this party demonstrated the successes of freed slaves (and perhaps a number of escaped slaves) who had emigrated to California for the Gold Rush.

After the death of Charlotte, O' Hara moved to Aurora, Nevada in 1863. Two year later he arrived in Bodie. He managed the Empire Mining Company's boarding house until the mine company closed its operations. He then became caretaker of the Empire's holding in Bodie until they were sold for back taxes. In the meantime he loaned some funds to the Bunker Hill Mine. When the company defaulted, he found himself the owner of the mine. Initially it was not a great settlement as he had difficulty finding a buyer. Eventually two men, Peter Eshington and Louis Lockberg bought it. They agreed to pay him \$8,000 as they recovered it from their labors. O'Hara got his money. Eshington and Lockberg sold the mine after taking out about \$37,000. It was renamed the Bullion Mine and eventually became the Standard, Bodie's best known and most productive mine.

O'Hara died in 1881. According to Frank Wedertz's account in BODIE 1859 – 1900, O'Hara left an estate of \$40,000 at his death. He also left behind a legacy of being a popular and well respected early Bodie resident.

JOSIE PEARL

The popular image of prospectors is that of a bewhiskered, roughly dressed man leading a burro through the rocky hills. But not all prospectors were men.

One of those prospectors was a Bodie resident for a period in the 1920's. When Josie Pearl came to Bodie she did so, not as a miner or prospector but in one of her breaks from her beloved avocation. In Bodie she earned a living as the owner and operator of Pearl's Inn. But that didn't prevent her from keeping her hand in the action. Between fixing meals in her inn, she did some panning in old tailings.

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Except for being a woman, the picture of Josie does fit the stereotypical miner. When she prospected, she was accompanied by her burro packed with basic food stuffs and a gun. Josie was a good marksman and provided her own meat. She wore overalls, a wide-brimmed hat and sturdy boots. A photo of her shows a weathered face but jaunty tilt to her hat. Even during her 15 year marriage to Lane Pearl, a mining engineer, she usually did her prospecting alone, returning to whatever community where they lived.

The Pearl Inn era in Bodie occurred after Lane died in the influenza epidemic in 1918. She drifted for a few years and then settled in Bodie. She left in 1929.

Despite the solitary periods of her life, the prospector was remembered for her kindness, caring for miners and prospectors and for sociability when folks stopped by to visit. She died in 1962 in her late 80's.

Information on these Bodie residents came from several sources. These include **BLACKS IN GOLD RUSH CALIFORNIA** by *Rudolph M. Lapp*, Yale University Press; **BODIE: "THE MINES ARE LOOKING WELL"**, by *Michael Piatt*, North Bay Books; **BODIE'S GOLD; TALL TALES AND TRUE HISTORY FROM A CALIFORNIA MINING TOWN**, by *Marguerite Sprague*, University of Nevada Press; **A MINE OF HER OWN; WOMEN PROSPECTORS IN THE AMERICAN WEST, 1850-1950**, University of Nebraska Press, **BODIE 1859-1900** by *Frank S. Wedertz*,

Photographers' Day

The Friends of Bodie will be hosting a Photographers' Day on the third Saturday of each month starting in May and ending in October.

During this day photographers are allowed to enter the park 1/2 hour before sunrise and stay until 1/2 hour after sunset. This is limited to 50 people per day. The cost is \$30.00 for non-members and \$20.00 for Friends of Bodie members.

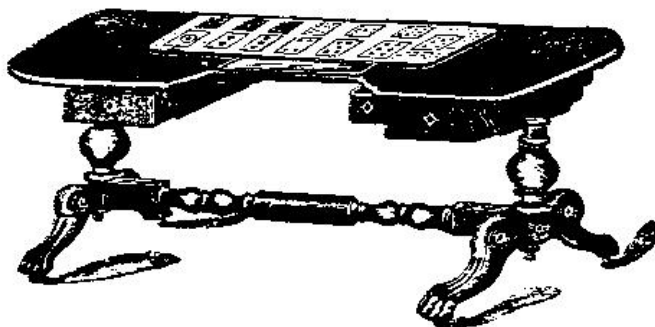


Reservations are required and there are no refunds. Please call (760) 647-6445 for further information and to reserve your space.

Articles for this newsletter have been contributed by :

Betty Prange
Mark Langner
Brad Sturdivant
Molly McKinley
Dave Tavres
Mike O'Connell
Denise Parodi
Donna Jones
Terri Geisinger

Edited by:
Rebecca Scott



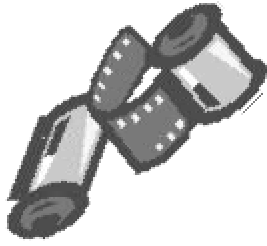
Questions? Answers? Comments?
Contact us at the Park.

Our e-mail is bodie@qnet.com and the telephone number is 760-647-6445.

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PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS 2004



The Bodie photography workshops, offered through The Friends of Bodie, provide unique photographic opportunities and instruction. During these workshops the participant will have the opportunity to photograph Bodie at sunrise, sunset, and selected building interiors. A large portion of the proceeds from the workshops goes to The Friends of Bodie to help fund management, protection, and interpretation at Bodie.

The leaders of these workshops are professional photographers and experienced workshop leader. The workshop leaders, tentative dates, and fees are listed below. **For further information and registration please contact the workshop leaders.**

Bob Cumming, 14090 Flower Street #4, Garden Grove, CA, 92843, (714) 638-9744

Dates: Sept. 13-15 and September 16-18

Cost: \$200

Thomas Morse, P.O. Box 30866, Santa Barbara, CA, 93130, (805) 682-3398

Dates: July 27-31 and September 24-28

Cost: \$495 plus \$100 donation to the Friends of Bodie and lab fees.

Noella Ballanger & Associates, P.O. Box 457, La Canada, CA, 91012, (818) 954-0933 or email: noella1b@aol.com or her website at www.noellaballanger.com

Dates: Oct. 6-10 (Workshops include Eastern Sierra as well) with Oct. 7 & 8 in Bodie

Cost: \$380

Jill A. Lachman Photography, 6850 North Shiloh Road, Suite K, PMB#261, Garland, TX 75044

(972)768-8478 or email: jalphoto@swbell.net

Dates: Oct. 10-12, Oct. 13-15 or combined Oct. 10-15 Limited to 8 people per session.

Cost: \$275 each session plus \$100 donation to the Friends of Bodie

Save money sign up for the combined, only \$450 plus \$100 donation to the Friends of Bodie.

Jan Ray, 10411 11th Ave. Hesperia, CA 92345, (760) 947-6734

Dates: July 24-26

Cost: \$325

Daniel McIntyre, P. O. Box 382, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92693-0382

Dates: July 11-14 and July 16-19

Cost: Call Mr. McIntyre for workshop costs at (949) 493-5943

Phil Raymond, Photo Insight, P.O. Box 1572, Boulder Creek, CA 95006

Heidi Vetter, Assistant

Dates: Feb. 6-9, June 3-8

Cost: Contact for availability and cost at (831) 338-7262

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VIEW FROM THE PARK

CUT ... CUT ... CUT ...

That's the sound we heard a lot of in 2003. The worst thing I had to do this year was tell the Mono County Collaborative Planning Team and the Mono County Tourism Commission the state of State Parks and Bodie this last September. Early on there was talk of closing parks ... including Bodie and Mono Lake.

Since then things have changed ... the parks will remain open but... we may not have funds to hire seasonal aides to run the entrance station, patrol, assist with interpretation and the museum, and keep the Rangers running. Years like this help us to appreciate the Friends of Bodie and the Sierra State Parks Foundation. Your donations and memberships help hire people to keep the museum open and tours in the mill going. In fact, the "Friends" supported the Park beginning about mid - August when we were told to release state paid seasonal employees due to lack of funds.

All things aside we did get through a busy summer and fall. Following are some things of note:

The Bodie Resident Research Project continued to move along. We have made some great contacts with former residents of Bodie. They have provided some great information to add to our interpretive programs.

New/old employees. Ranger Mike O'Connell transferred from Lake Tahoe to Bodie this last spring. Chuck Fell, former Maintenance Mechanic at Bodie, returned this last September as a Maintenance Supervisor. It is nice to be among the youngest of the Bodie permanent staff for a change.

1927 Dodge Graham has been looking and feeling its age of late. We sent it out this month to have some mechanical work done and hopefully a new paint job this spring.

The Friends of Bodie set up a booth at the 4th of July festivities in Bridgeport, the Sierra Heritage Festival in Mammoth Lakes, and provided a great living history program at the Founders Day program in Bridgeport. Terri Geisinger portrayed Lottie Johl. Some of you may remember her performance from the 2002 Friends of Bodie Night.

We have formed the **Bodie Advisory Committee (BAC)**. This committee has been established to look into the possibility of the Friends of Bodie becoming its own non-profit 501(3)c. Two of the committee members are now on the Board of Directors of the Sierra State Parks Foundation.



Look to the future ...

At this point it is safe to say Bodie could look different beginning this next spring. The state budget is being trimmed. There is talk of fee increases. Exactly how this will look in Bodie is not certain. We will be looking at ways to run and protect Bodie and Mono Lake. We do know that all operational aspects have been cut and we could face more in the future. We are looking for volunteers to provide interpretive talks, work in the museum, and skilled help in the maintenance function. If you would like to help ... a Volunteer Services Agreement can be obtained from Bodie. If you cannot help with time ... we are looking at fundraisers or donations to assist. We are also looking for folks who may have experience with fund raising. Are you out there?

We are sad to announce the passing of some old "Friends."

Bob Bell born in Bodie in 1914 and his sister Olive Bell. Phyllis Haskens, the last baby born in Bodie Ermil "Slim" Osborne, long time volunteer Mike Horlick, known as the "Bodie Kid."

From the Book Shelf

With our museum bookshop selling over a dozen different titles relating to our favorite ghost town, you'd think there wasn't much more a person could read or write about Bodie. Well, surprise! Three brand-new books were published this year that are sure to be a welcome addition to any Bodie fan's library. Each is a well-researched, beautifully illustrated, and thoroughly enjoyable examination of a different aspect of Bodie history. Since former Bodie employees or volunteers penned them all, each is an insightful labor of love.

Bodie's Gold, written by Marguerite Sprague, offers a lively historic overview. Interviews with former Bodie residents give a personal touch to the narrative and bring the past to life. Historic photographs and well as quotations from the newspapers of the period help paint a complete picture of the town. Published by the University of Nevada Press, this 248-page volume is currently available in hardcover at a cost of \$34.95.

Bodie: The Mines are Looking Well, by Michael Piatt, presents a detailed look at the Bodie Mining District. Starting with the first discovery of gold in 1859, this book examines the nuts and bolts of the backbone industry of Bodie. It give an analysis of the hard and bitter reality of the day-to day struggles of the mines and miners who worked them. Wonderful photographs and maps accompany the not-too-technical and very readable, text. This is an exciting addition to our knowledge of Bodie mining history. Published by the North Bay Books, this 288-page book is available in soft cover at a cost of \$29.95.

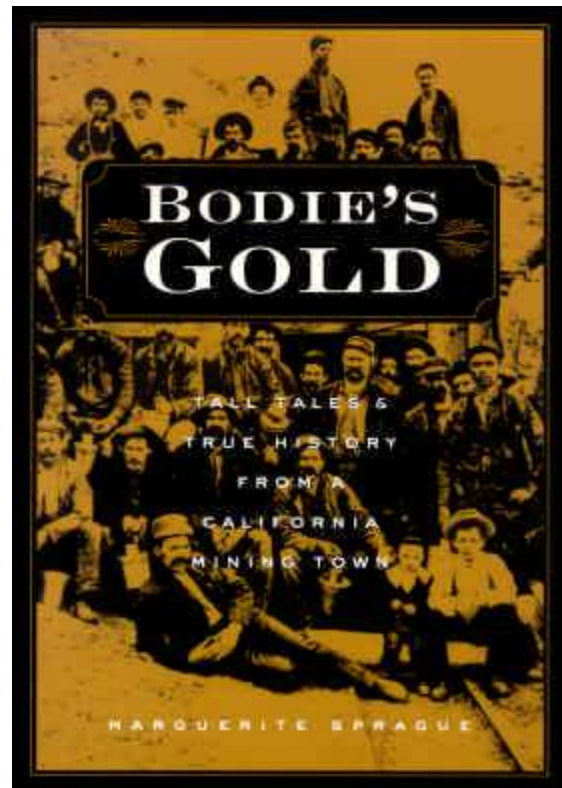
Bodie's Boss Lawman, the Frontier Odyssey of Constable John F. Kirgan, is co-written by Bill Merrell and Dave Carle. This enjoyable book follows the interesting life of the man who served as Bodie constable during the high time of the town. It reveals his early days at a military officer and takes you on a "walk" through Bodie's roughest parts of town. Striking color photographs grace a brief overview of Bodie history. Published Nevada Publications, this 176-page book is available in both hard and soft cover at \$34.95 and \$27.95 respectfully.

Any of these books would make a great gift or an enjoyable companion on a cold rainy day. You can order them anytime on-line at bodie.com. Friends of Bodie members receive a 20% discount!

Two of the books were introduced with book signings and receptions in the Red Barn. Both Marguerite and Dave portrayed their respective books with a wonderful presentation.

The museum continues to offer a new array of Bodie items each year. And as always the Friends of Bodie offered a new t-shirt design. This years design featured the slogan "It takes all kinds to run a mine", which just happened to be the theme of our July 4th's parade entry. It just seemed to capture the essence this year. As with every year's shirt this is available in very limited quantities and is almost sold out! Also new this year were several new designs for the Bodie mug. We will have a new batch of mugs available in the spring. Any and all items that we sell in the museum are available on the website at www.bodie.com.

This year our 2004 Bodie State Park calendar was a big hit! This colorful calendar features a yearful of wonderful and wondrous images of Bodie through the seasons. Order your today, there are still many months to enjoy.



Fourth of July

I've been a Park Ranger for much of my adult life. It's a career of the outdoors. It's also a career that has veered off course due to shifts in the direction of our society. The Smokey Bear image is now too often Pine Policeman. Holidays for Peace Officers mean work and oftentimes extra work. This Fourth of July for me was favorable and very positive change. I actually got to ride on a float in the Bridgeport Fourth of July parade.

Those of us who were involved in this great event were indeed fortunate. We were able to dress up "old timey" (period costume). I was a cowboy. We represented miners, shopkeepers, dance hall girls, the care-reers of old Bodie. We waved to people and they waved back. There was none of the one fingered salutes that a Peace Officer can get on occasion.

The theme for our float was "It takes all kinds to run a mine". Indeed it did, and it still does. The people on the float consisted of volunteers as well as seasonal and permanent employees. We won two awards. (Best Overall Float / Best Adult Costume) As far as I could tell a great time was had by all.

The Bodie of today operates because of all the special people that are involved in the different aspects of its operation. Today, as in the days of old, it is the people that bring out the best in a place.



Members of our award winning float crew in their Sunday best.

The Bodie Curse

Legend has it that folks who steal items from Bodie are cursed with bad luck. While stealing someone's stuff is sure to create bad karma, many people seem to truly believe in the 'Bodie Curse'. A couple of times each month, the Park receives 'curse letters' attached to an item that had been taken from the Park. The letters detail the sender's bad luck and request that the items be returned to their rightful place in the Park. These letters are most often anonymous, since the senders are worried about their bad luck continuing with a citation being sent to them by Park Rangers who frown on items being taken from the Park. Here is one of the letters we received this year.

August 11, 2003

Dear Bodie,

I'm sorry that I took this piece of metal from the town. I thought it was all a joke, but it wasn't at all. Things are happening that are very hard to explain, there is no explanation for this stuff (the car clock said the time of when we left Bodie on the 11th which was 2:15 and it was really 8:30, my pants got an enormous rip in the side for no reason, I got stabbed with a hook, the T. V. overheard our conversation about it and decided to join in, I heard footsteps and clicking sounds all night, I didn't catch a single fish after they had just dumped about fifty of them off, a deer almost ran our car off a cliff at 8:30 at night, and didn't even move when we served out of the way!). I hope that Mr. Bodie will forgive what I have done. People should know...don't take anything - from a chunk of metal to a nail or small rock. I promise you that you will be cursed, and odd things will keep happening to you. And I'm serious.

From Matt (13 years old)

Lots of Little Tidbits of News

The Bodie cats, pets of the year-round Bodie staff, are always popular with visitors. Besides being sweet and lovable, they have a very important job at the Park; they help control the mice in the park housing. In some years, an entire *fleet* of cats would be needed to put even a small dent in the mice population. You might have seen some of the cats (usually sleeping) on recent TV and DVD releases, or in the Bodie calendars. Willy is a large black and white tuxedo tom that was rescued from the pound. Squeaker is a longhaired raccoonish fellow. Ziggy Marley is a friendly calico-tabby. Toby, the latest edition, is fresh out of kitten-hood and doing splendidly. Next visit, see if you can spot them all – they are friendly (as far as cats go) and enjoy lounging in the sun. Unfortunately, the town often 'isn't big enough' for these 'fixed' tom cats to peacefully coexist on the same block at the same time, so finding them is more sporting than it sounds.

During winter, two other cats join the group. These beasts are of quite a different nature; Tucker and Thiokol are our sno-cats (ala 'The Shining') and serve as an important mode of transportation when the snow is deep and drifts. Basically sno-cats are a truck's body mounted on tank treads. These workhorses were not built for comfort or speed. The bumpy ride tops out at a noisy 9 mph.

Looking for a thoughtful and generous gift idea? Consider a gift membership to the 'Friends of Bodie'. All donations remain at work within the Park. They help protect our valuable natural and cultural resources and provide for the operation of our museum and interpretative programs. 'Life' membership are a great deal and really help keep our organization afloat.



Some of this years Bodie staff

Male Sage Grouse strutting his stuff.



Ranger Mark would like to thank the Friends of Bodie for their generous help in sponsoring his attendance at the 2003 National Association of Interpretation Workshop held this fall in Sparks, Nevada. Over 1,500 participants from across the country and around the world attended this workshop. Many aspects of natural and cultural history interpretation were covered during training sessions. The presenters were of the highest quality, and presented many inspirational programs. It was a great opportunity to network with fellow park professionals and get the word out about visiting and working at Bodie. California State Parks and the Sierra State Parks Foundation were both event sponsors.

A huge bunch of thanks and appreciation is sent out to long-term volunteer extraordinaire Jill Lachman. Jill's dedication, and true love for Bodie, has made the Bodie Calendar a reality for the past several years. Hours of work, many meetings, and lots of attention to detail has resulted in a beautiful collection of Bodie photographs that are always popular with Park visitors and enthusiasts. You have done a wonderful job Jill, and it is really appreciated!

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I believe Bodie has a future and I want to be a part of it! Enroll me as a Friend of Bodie in the category checked.

Name _____

Membership Category

Address _____

- \$30.00 Pay Dirt (Individual)
- \$50.00 Silver Vein (Ind/Couple)
- \$75.00 Gold Mine
- \$100.00+ W. S. Bodey
- \$500.00+ Life
- Renewal

City _____ State _____

Phone (optional) _____ Zip _____

Email (optional) _____

- Donation, without membership.
- Donation to the restoration of the 1927 Dodge Graham
- Donation to the Visitor Center Restricted Fund
- Please send information on how I can volunteer my time at Bodie.

Friends of Bodie
P. O. Box 515
Bridgeport, CA 93517