

NORTH STAR HISTORIC CONSERVANCY

THE STAR NEWSLETTER

Winter 2017

A NORTH STAR CHILDHOOD

By Maria Hetherton

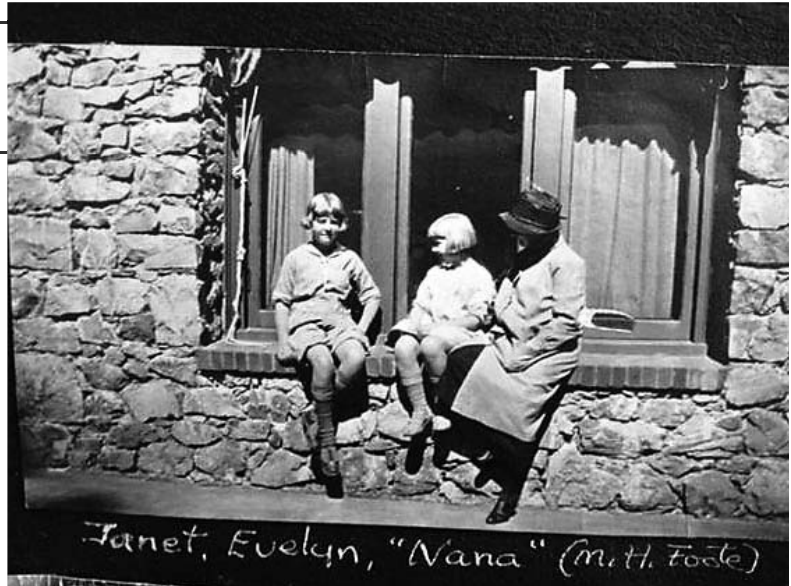
In 1996, Evelyn Gardiner sat for an interview, sharing her memories of growing up at North Star. Her father, Arthur Burling Foote, was mine manager; her grandparents were Arthur De Wint and Mary Hallock Foote. Evelyn spent her entire childhood at the house, and then only holidays once she went away for high school and college. In the interview she mused on a “wonderful childhood” with “no connection with real life as it is!”

Self-deprecation aside, what were some of the highlights of a North Star childhood?

For one, the mine environs were her playground. With a backdrop of structures like the head frame towering over the mineshaft, and the sound of the pump like an ominous heartbeat, Evelyn had her favorite places to pretend and to play: “We played around the prospect holes and behind the cyanide plant and the whistles told us when it was time to go home for lunch and dinner...”

There were also times her father provided Evelyn and her sisters, Marion and Janet, guided tours of the stamp mill and the mine’s interior shaft. Evelyn grew up fascinated by dinner conversations among mining engineer guests from all over the world.

Another major bonus to a child’s life at North Star was having a creative, doting and attentive grandmother in the person of Mary Hallock Foote. Evelyn noted the nightly ritual of bidding first her parents, and then her grandparents, good night. Evelyn recalled:



Janet & Evelyn Gardiner with Mary Hallock Foote.

My grandmother taught us to draw and do water colors and she would take us out for walks and draw pictures of the wildlife. And she would write us a little poem for a birthday present and make us beautiful paper dolls.

When Evelyn was very young, she even remembers her grandmother working on her reminiscences, “hearing her typewriter going in her study.”

Evelyn went on to recall the social isolation she experienced once her older sisters went away to school, and how she entreated her parents for the opportunity to attend local schools—grist for a future piece drawn from a very self-aware and down-to-earth voice from the historical legacy of The North Star House.

Gardiner, Evelyn. 1996, July 16. Interview by Peggy Cabrera, Willah Haberman and Jean McKeen [Tape recording]. The North Star House Archives, Grass Valley, CA.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Here we are wrapping up another year of restoration work successes, and on a personal level, saying goodbye to two cherished colleagues. Board member and tireless North Star supporter Peggy Levine's passing has left a large hole in our hearts. Peggy's unwavering faith in being able to completely restore the North Star House for community use will continue to push us forward.

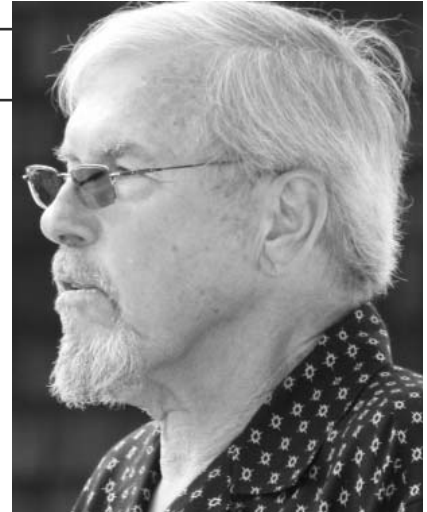
As long as we are on the hard things I'll also add Bo Kleger, our dedicated groundskeeper for the past ten years, has retired and moved to the East Coast to be with his grandkids and his daughter. We will miss his odd sense of humor—and his excellent craftsmanship. Thanks Bo, for all the windows you custom built for the library, living room, dining room, Julia Morgan room, and the courtyard.

Now for the good news. Peggy's

husband, Howard Levine, will be joining the Board of Directors in January, which will go a long way towards the continued growth of our organization, as well as mending our hearts.

The Conservancy was lucky in finding a capable and dedicated Property Manager to take over Bo's position. His name is Thomas Nelli and you will be seeing him a lot, as he becomes more acquainted with the House and grounds.

We have received our occupancy permit for the ground floor. This means we can start marketing the house, and begin to fulfill our mission to transform the North Star House into a premier event center in Nevada County. The occupancy permit allows us to grow revenue to meet a critical part of our Master Plan: restoring the house and opening it for public use. Many thanks to the Construction Committee, Board



of Directors, and all our great volunteers, sponsors, members and supporters, who believe in what we are doing.

In October, the Board passed a resolution to designate the M W Swan Levine Art Gallery on the second floor in memory of Peggy, which was a dream of hers for a long time. We are in the planning phase of this project which I'm sure you all know will not happen overnight. But with your continued support, we will get there.



The bench by the courtyard entrance was donated by the NSHC Board of Directors, in memory of Peggy Levine.

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David Wright

GROUNDS CREW UPDATE

By *Kenny Bales and David Wright*

Our crack grounds crew has grown slightly from last year, and now includes six members: Kenny Bales, Doug Brannon, Gary Emanuel, Henry Goodman, Joe Heckel and David Wright.

2017 was a great year for improvements to the North Star driving and parking experience. We made entering the property easier by repairing a couple of nasty ruts in the driveway. And, we made exiting safer by painting “one way” arrows and “wrong way” signs along the loop drive, removing the gate and post at the exit to create better clearance, and adding a “stop” sign and a “no entry sign” at the South Auburn Road exit. We also created new parallel parking spaces on the entrance loop road.

Most recently, we installed new underground piping to facilitate drainage near the ADA-accessible pathway toward North Star House.

Projects identified for 2018 will involve the following:



Gary Emanuel and Kenny Bales removing the old gate from the exit road.

tree removal that will allow a new diagonal parking section; an inventory and assessment of NSHC maintenance tools, supplies and equipment; and the replacement of concrete water tanks. Two of the three existing tanks have failed, with only one aging tank, a survivor of the 1900s-era mine operations, still functional. The new tanks will efficiently store and disperse the well water so vital to preserving the beauty of our lawns and landscaping.



NORTH STAR HISTORIC CONSERVANCY
12075 AUBURN ROAD, GRASS VALLEY, CA 95949
thenorthstarhouse.org 530.477.7126

We need your **HELP** with the Ongoing Restoration and Transformation of the **Historic North Star House**.

- Heritage Garden
- Ground floor and Courtyard windows and doors
- Library Rehabilitation
- East face shingle siding restoration
- Julia Morgan room restoration
- Mary Hallock Foote Study restoration
- Site improvements for parking, lighting, signs & access

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HERITAGE GARDEN WORK CONTINUES

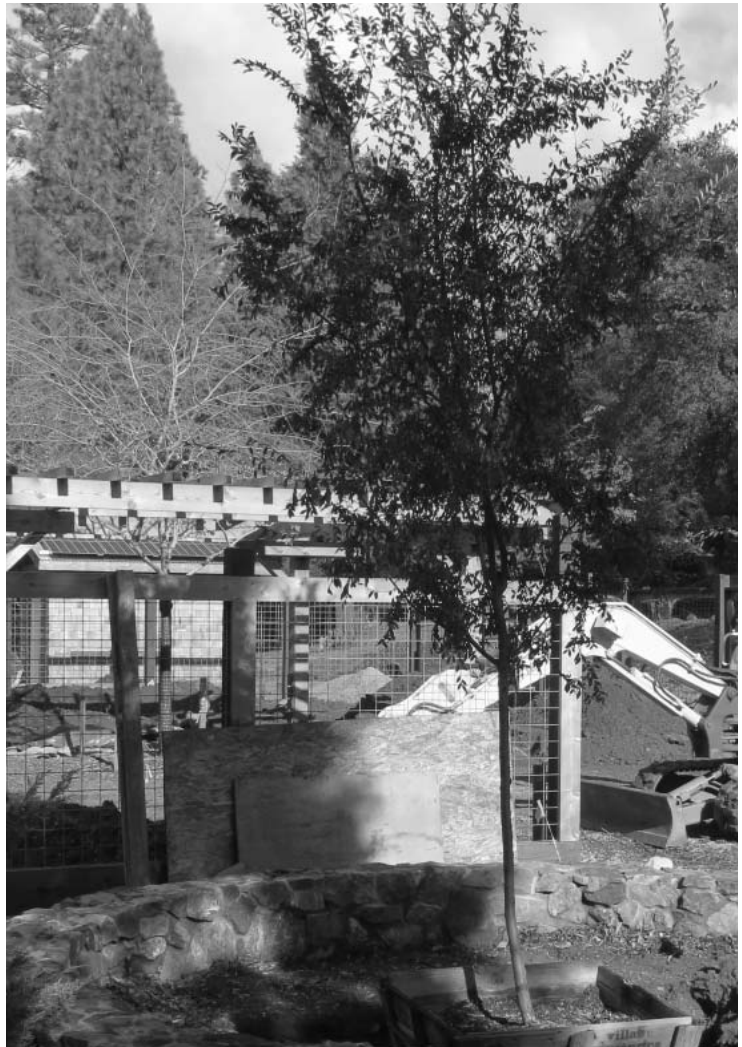
By Betzi Hart

If you have been out to The North Star House in the last week you will have seen that there is new activity at the Heritage Garden. Jim Pyle and his assistant have started building the reflecting pool and there is a large elm tree waiting to be planted at the entrance of the garden.

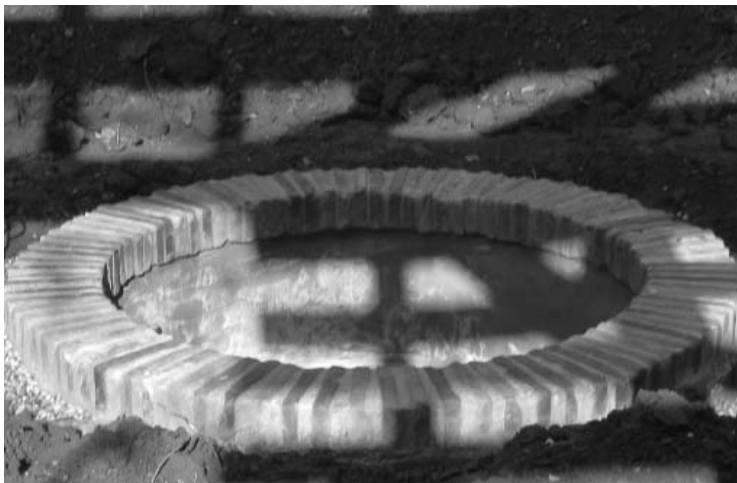
The tree is a memorial to our beloved docent, David McKeen, who, along with his wife Jean, portrayed Mr. & Mrs. Foote at The North Star events. Jean donated the tree in David's honor so everyone entering the Heritage Garden will be able to have some shade in the summer-months and a lovely place to sit.

The reflecting pool is being placed in the garden as a reminder of the pool that was originally located in the courtyard of The North Star House. The grandchildren of the Foote's remember the pool with great fondness. Our goal is to recreate the original pool as shown in the archive photographs.

In preparation for planting, the rough-in of the irrigation and electrical system will also begin in December. This is a critical part of the garden, and will be an underground installation.



Chinese Elm Tree, in honor of Dave McKeen.



Reflecting pool

Following that will be the installation of the paths and benches.

The final phase has thus begun. If you have not yet made your donation to be on the Heritage Garden Donor's Plaque, please send your check to the North Star House, Heritage Garden Project, 12075 Auburn Road, Grass Valley, CA 95949 or contact Betzi Hart at 477-7126.

TAX ADVANTAGED GIFTING STRATEGIES

By Cheryl Belcher, NSHC Treasurer

While recently chatting with a certified financial planner friend of mine and he reminded me of two great tax advantaged gifting strategies. Perhaps one or both of these would be a good way for you to realize your desire to help revitalize The North Star House.

We were discussing how the stock market had significantly gone up in value over the past year. He suggested that this offers a great opportunity. Instead of donating cash, you could give appreciated shares of securities (stocks or mutual funds). Doing so could yield a double tax benefit. First, just like gifts of cash, you may be able to deduct it on your tax return. In addition, if you give this way, you avoid paying the capital gains taxes that could be owed had you sold it. Note that North Star won't have to pay this tax either when selling the securities. So, don't sell a security that is worth more than you paid for it and give the proceeds to North Star.

What if you don't want to relinquish your shares of a well performing security? Just take the cash you would have donated and purchase new shares - these new

shares will have a higher cost basis than the old ones.

On the other hand, if you have an investment that you'd like to sell that is at a loss, definitely sell the investment yourself to take advantage of the tax loss and give the proceeds to North Star. Either way, using your investments for giving could provide you with some nice tax benefits.



At that point, he reminded me that the IRA Direct Rollover for those over 70.5 years of age had been made permanent, and is another good donation strategy. This is particularly timely if you haven't yet fulfilled your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) for 2017. You can now transfer funds - up to \$100,000 annually - directly from your IRA to North Star House and it will do two things. It will count towards fulfilling your RMD, and it also won't be reported to you as income to be taxed, like 'regular' IRA distributions are. This latter benefit is really great if you are not itemizing your taxes and haven't been able to get tax credit for donations in the past.

If you decide on donating appreciated shares, please make sure to advise North Star Historic Conservancy of your gift, so that we will be able to send you a thank you letter.

NORTH STAR HOUSE DOCENTS NEEDED

North Star House Docents tell our story to the visiting public. We are the voice of the Foote Family, Julia Morgan and the North Star Historic Conservancy.

The North Star House docents are trained volunteers who act as a knowledgeable visitors' guide to further the public understanding of the North Star Historic Conservancy, the Julia Morgan designed North Star House and the surrounding property.

Docents greet visitors and provide an informal tour of the house answering questions about the house, the Foote family and the North Star Historic Conservancy.

They serve a 3 hour Saturday morning shift once a month from April through October. Docents also have the opportunity to volunteer for NSHC events and specially arranged tours of the house. We are a friendly group who have several social events during the year.

A brief NSHC Docent Training program will be held in February 2018. Please contact us now if you would like to find out more about this volunteer opportunity.

If you love history and architecture, this is a job for you.

MEET THE NEW PROPERTY MANAGER, TOM NELLI

By Maria Hetherington

The North Star House Conservancy welcomes our new Property Manager, Tom Nelli. Hailing originally from New York State, Tom has been out west for several years, now, working in residential and industrial carpentry and enjoying road and desert motorcycling. It seems Tom's work has located him further and further from big city commotion, and North Star is a perfect culmination of his professional journey. Tom enjoys being on deck for house events, and interacting with visitors and guests. He enjoys the volunteers, as well: "They're passionate about it and because they're doing something they like, it's always pleasant. It's just a good environment, all the way around."

Part of that good environment for Tom involves working on grounds that include beautiful natural vistas. In particular, he loves the animal wildlife—bears at night—and the rich sense of history surrounding the house and the mines. He feels a real connection to the house—its history and spirit, and in his custodianship of the property he has even befriended a lone burro, bringing pears to the fenced pen adjacent to the property when he has some down time.



Tom's wife, Gwendolyn, along with Leroy, a Golden Retriever, and his sidekick Doc, a wire-haired Chihuahua, are likewise happy to be at North Star. If you see a guy buzzing across the grounds in a golf cart with a Golden riding shotgun, give a wave, because that is Tom and we are happy he is here.

MILESTONES MET AND 2018 GOALS

It has been a year of setting and surpassing new milestones at The North Star House. Custom-built Craftsman windows have been installed in the library, living room and dining room. A pergola has been built in the Heritage Garden, and solar panels have been installed to power irrigation and lighting. The west side of the house is being re-shingled and should be completed by April 2018. All thanks to your support.

Priorities for 2018 include new French doors, cabinets and ceiling paneling for the library. And for the Julia Morgan room, cabinetry, trim work and glass doors by fireplace. Once these tasks have been completed, the Ground Floor work will be nearly complete. Our hearty Construction Team volunteers will soon begin tackling the initial second floor restoration work.

In order to continue the revitalization of The North Star House, we ask for your support again this year. Your donation will be used to keep our doors open for weekly public tours, educational programs, and to complete work in the library and the Julia Morgan room. And, the benefits of your gift will be multiplied many times over, by the thousands of volunteer hours invested each year in the House and grounds projects.

We are committed to making The North Star House and grounds as beautiful as they once were. Which will also make it a perfect site for historic weddings, theatrical productions, small concerts, business meetings and retreats for our community. Please help us by supporting our project goals for 2018.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF PEGGY LEVINE

On a warm, sunny October day, more than 600 friends, family and community members gathered on the grounds of The North Star House to remember Peggy Levine. There was music, remembrances shared, and a pot luck dinner enjoyed by everyone who attended. A beautiful tribute to a life well lived.



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It all adds up!

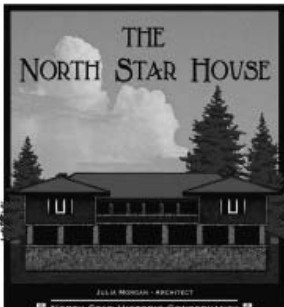
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Please consider designating the North Star Historic Conservancy as a recipient. It's a terrific way to support our efforts to refurbish The North Star House.



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www.thenorthstarhouse.org
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See what so many of us are doing for fun! Get involved! It's contagious!!

details inside