

NORTH STAR HISTORIC CONSERVANCY

# THE STAR NEWSLETTER

Winter 2018/2019

## A CHRISTMAS AT THE NORTH STAR HOUSE

An engaging primary source documenting life at the North Star House exists in the reminiscences of Ruby Trivelpiece, who penned her impressions of the time she spent as cook for five months in the late 1940s. Ruby served under retired mine superintendent, Arthur B. Foote and his wife, Jeanette Hooper Foote. Her tenure at the House included the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays: “hectic, but fun.”

Christmas dinner included the Foote’s daughters—Janet and Marian, at least, for Evelyn no longer lived locally—and their families along with “a minister or judge or whoever else they could get to fill up the big dining table.” The gardener, Charlie Hatch, who’d operated an inn in Cornwall, was tasked with cooking the turkey, “easing in a little thyme” despite Mrs. Foote’s admonitions against that fine herb.



Jeanette Foote hailed from San Francisco, and if you know San Franciscans of a certain generation, they spoke with kind of an East Coast “posh” accent. Ruby found Mrs. Foote’s “English” accent a source of great amusement, and suggested plum pudding—an English holiday tradition—for Christmas dessert. Ruby summarizes Mrs. Foote’s

reaction: “‘How delightful,’ she said. She nevah had it before.” Ruby found a recipe, steamed the pudding in its mold, and collaborated with Charlie who ignited it after a good brandy-dousing. “He lowered the overhead lights in the dining room and I bore it in to ohs and ahs.”

**Christmas, cont. on pg. 7**

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Larry Dulmage

Looking back on 2018, I feel immense satisfaction in terms of project goals accomplished and, just as significantly, the several new volunteers we've welcomed into the North Star Historic Conservancy family. It is something to savor and appreciate. And celebrate.

The Construction Crew has transformed the look and feel of the living room by installing French doors, which were part of the original footprint of the house. The dining, living, and Julia Morgan rooms have all been completed. There are new shingles in the courtyard, a new stairwell to the servants' quarters, a new irrigation system and holding tanks, and a new fire hydrant.

Thanks to our generous supporters, community partners, and de-

termined, energetic volunteers, these improvements were made possible.

Here at year's end, we acknowledge the service of Cheryl Belcher, whose roots go deep into the institutional history of the conservancy. A longstanding member of our Board of Directors, serving as treasurer, and a constant presence at the House, Cheryl will be retiring from the Board. We are grateful for the untold hours she's spent managing finances, providing tours to visitors, and handling many of the details involved with keeping a volunteer-driven organization moving forward.

Looking ahead, we welcome two new Board members: longtime construction crew volunteer Rich McRay, and Paula Campbell, a volunteer on the Heritage Garden Committee.



Project priorities for 2019 include completing the shingling project, regrouting exterior stonework, beginning construction of the second-floor M.W. Swan Levine Art Gallery, completing the Heritage Garden, installing new irrigation, replanting the East lawn, and improving the driveway and parking areas. A very ambitious list!

With your help, we can accomplish these goals. If we can purchase the materials, our volunteer teams can make it happen.

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# THANKING CHERYL

We bid a grateful farewell to Cheryl Belcher, who leaves The North Star Historic Conservancy Board of Directors after five years of service.

Her dedicated work on behalf of the House spans further than that, however. North Star House was her project during her tenure directing the Nevada County Land Trust, now renamed Bear Yuba Land Trust. One of the original North Star pioneers, she helped guide the House's designation as a historical landmark and the establishment of the Conservancy. With her expertise in nonprofit management, Cheryl was instrumental in creating infrastructure to support the House's cultural events: establishing committees, fundraising strategies, and creating a part-time staff position to facilitate the volume of work associated with House events and reservations.



*Cheryl Belcher*

Cheryl herself has spent countless hours managing the House's finances, the depth of her stewardship

**Cheryl, cont. on pg. 7**



## NORTH STAR HISTORIC CONSERVANCY

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We need your help with the Ongoing Restoration and Revitalization  
of the **Historic North Star House.**

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*Nice digs for a table saw and roller.*



*Chuck Field and Lorie Nilsen demo-ing future art gallery walls*

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## MOVIN' ON UP

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The second story of the North Star House has lived beneath a secretive shroud over these many years of loving rehabilitation—the main stairwell curtained in kind of a Wizard of Oz sense of mystery. But thanks to our dedicated, volunteer crew, the veil is lifting.

We knew things were getting serious when a temporary workshop was installed in one of the second floor guest bedrooms. Relieved of decrepit flooring and drywall, it's possible to reimagine the beautiful bones of the House's second story spaces.

The workshop allows our crew to store building materials and carry on working without having constantly to tromp up and down stairs.

Another exciting development on the House's second floor involves the project dedicated to honor Peggy Levine, one of the North Star House's founding mothers. Volunteers are removing plaster from the House's original construction in order to install new electrical wiring. It's extremely difficult to remove! The new walls will provide a worthy canvas for the M. W. Swan Levine Art Gallery, located in the bedroom with attached verandah where the Foote children used to sleep.

To keep the upstairs construction and its eventual use up-to-code, we have also installed a new stairway leading from the old laundry room space next to the kitchen, to what used to be the upstairs servants quarters. Like all carpentry projects at the North Star House, it has been beautifully crafted and constructed.

We could not be more grateful for our talented



*Roger Bloom, Harold Butler and Larry Dulmage*

and dedicated volunteers who've made 2018 such a productive year at the North Star House.



*Staircase will serve as second floor emergency exit.*

## A MOVABLE SHED

On a beautiful November morning, volunteers convened to transport the shed protecting the old water well infrastructure to its perch above the new pumping system. Ken Bales adapted his tractor with a forklift extension capable of supporting the shed's width, having fortified its interior with bracing to insure a safe delivery. Doug Brannon and Joe Heckel helped stabilize the moving shed with guy lines, while David Wright directed travel. Slowly but surely, Ken inched the shed closer and closer to its destination, cleared the pump machinery, and finally eased it into place.



*Voe Heckel and David Wright facilitating Operation Shed.*

Next step: shingling its exterior to match the aesthetic of the North Star House and other outbuildings on the property.

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## GALS GETTING IT DONE

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*Marilee and Sherian*

Marilee Shannon met the North Star House not long after she moved to Nevada County, not really absorbing the nature of the project. Fast-forward fifteen years when she and Sherian Kutzera attended a local wedding fair. “Wow! Where’s that?” exclaimed Sherian, when she saw pictures of the House. Hailing from El Dorado Coun-

ty, and relatively new to Grass Valley, she felt a real affinity for the House, almost as if she’d known it all her life. The women wasted no time in offering their services, initially training to be docents. But when they noticed fellow volunteer Kika Kane working on the House’s renovation, they realized they’d like to work hands-on—and

have done so, two full days a week since last May.

Marilee and Sherian love the work. They prep; they paint; they varnish. They learned to install shingles: “It’s harder than you think.” Marilee, an artist, envisioned a new look for the entry gate, and offered to paint it. Women with a vision, they ponder the House’s role in local history and culture, wondering about collaboration with other local historical organizations. And their magnetism has drawn an additional ten volunteers who contribute to the House’s renovation. They have also instituted all-crew lunches, taking turns making sandwiches for all to enjoy, and building community among the volunteers.

The women feel they receive as much as they give by volunteering at the North Star House. They appreciate and enjoy learning new things, and they feel the work they’ve contributed will still be there when they are gone. They bring plenty of good energy for these walls to absorb.

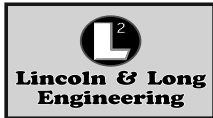
**Christmas, cont. from pg. 1**

In her wry humor, Ruby noted that she then took the bus into Nevada City where she cooked a holiday meal for her sister's family: "Don't ever do that." Ultimately, Ruby left the Foote's employ that summer in order to help with her sister's daughter. Mrs. Foote let her go, "with tears in her eyes."

**Cheryl, cont. from pg. 3**

tantamount to her love for The North Star House.

Early next year, Cheryl will return to her "first love," lending her talent to a land conservation organization. She treasures her work on behalf of the North Star House, and it is with immense gratitude we say good-bye and wish all the best in her future endeavors.



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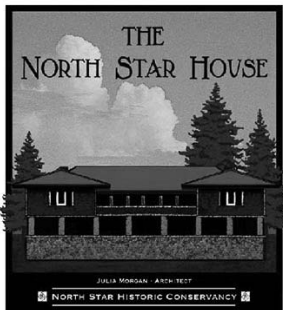
CHARLIE & MARY BROCK

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REALTY





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**See what so many of us are doing for fun! Get involved! It's contagious!!**

details inside

