

NEWSLETTER



Come See the Stevenson House

The historic view of the Stevenson House has been restored. After decades of being partially hidden behind several trees, the historic site can now be easily viewed from the sidewalk and street.

The Stevenson House is a State Historic Landmark and it is listed on the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places. There is only one Stevenson House in the world, and people from around the world come to Monterey to see this site. The façade of the Stevenson House is currently being interpreted turn-of-the-century, c.1900. This is in part due to the building being shown without window shutters and with a white-wash appearance to the structure. During this exterior interpretive period, no trees were planted in front of the Stevenson House. The unobstructed view of the building is consistent with the appearance of the Stevenson House during its established period of significance.

In the 1950s, State Parks planted non-native trees in front of the Stevenson House. As they grew, not only was the view of this Stevenson House blocked, the trees caused preservation issues, maintenance problems and public safety risks. The extensive root system of one of the trees was continually causing damage to the historic structure and brick sidewalk.

Now when visitors come to Monterey to especially see the Stevenson House, they are provided with a clear and photographic view of the building. The removal of the trees is both a great interpretive and preservation enhancement to this historic site.

Kris Quist, Museum Curator

Membership

It will soon be time to renew your membership in the Robert Louis Stevenson Club. If you forgot to renew in 2010, why not mail in your very reasonable dues for 2011 of \$10 now and you will feel better about coming to the last 3 meetings this year. In this newsletter you will see there are 3 interesting meetings.

Robert Louis Stevenson Club of Monterey
P.O.Box 624
Monterey, CA 93942

Fanny's Portrait in the Stevenson House

Dora Williams was only a name signed on the fine pencil drawing of Fanny which hangs in the first room at Stevenson House, until her vivid personality and details of her friendship with Fanny came alive. Dora's niece, Nancy Everett, researched and recently printed an article in the "Argonaut, Journal of the San Francisco Museum and Historical Society." She mailed a copy to Bende Kelly for our club.

Dora gave a description of the Stevenson wedding. Stevenson wrote, "She was my guardian angel, Best Man and Bridesmaid rolled into one." Descriptions of the S.F. jaunts made by the trio led by Stevenson make for good reading. "The Silverado Squatters" is dedicated to the Williams.

Aside from the Stevenson connection, Dora was a woman who would have been at home in the 21st Century. Born in Maine, she married at age 42 after a career in art and education. Her husband, Virgil Williams, was not only a fine artist but a leader of San Francisco's elite artistic community. Nancy writes "Dora had a truly outstanding talent for cultivating friendships with people destined for fame". Her friendship with Fanny was "loyal and sometimes testy".

Nancy Everett's research led her to the Beinecke Library at Yale, the Stevenson House vault and many other sources, including personal letters between Dora and Fanny.

The article is available as a loan from
Bende - 649-1750 or Rosemary - 625-7622.

RLS Club President Monica Hudson's Message

One of the highlights of our club year has been the visit from our friends of the Edinburgh RLS club. The planning and brainstorming of ideas, which led up to their visit, added fun and excitement to many of our meetings. The pleasure of looking forward to sharing "our town" was only surpassed by the actual arrival of the 19 enthusiastic members of the club from across the water.

What unites all RLS fans across the world is our interest in Louis who is forever young, boyish but wise, observant and eloquent, frail but vital, sickly yet adventurous, pampered and dependent yet risking it all. He is an inspiration of how to live life to the fullest and not complain about the challenges it inevitably brings.

The fact that RLS spent time in Monterey, and that we have a great collection at the Stevenson House, has not only inspired the formation of our club, but has had a defining influence on the role of our club. During the last two years of California budget deficits our club has provided desperately needed assistance to maintain access to this collection to the public. We have been privileged to share our knowledge of RLS with people from all over the world. Many a visitor has left the house with the intention to pick up one of RLS' books to read. Not one of our volunteer members ever left a Saturday shift without the feeling that it was worth while.

RLS saw life as a journey. We have met and shared this road with several members who passed away this year, but we remember each of them for his, or her, part in our common interest. We have shared our enthusiasm and knowledge, have developed friendships and had fun in the process. We hope you will invite a friend to join us, to help us follow in RLS's footsteps, making the journey count, and not the destination. May this knowledge lead us to many more RLS inspired adventures in the coming year.

Calendar of Events

October 21

Scary Stories, 7 P M at the Mayo Hayes O'Donnell Library, bring a small snack to be shared.

November 9

Unbirthday party for RLS at the Monterey Library, 6:30 P M

Actor Keith Decker performs his "The Velvet Coat." Birthday cake will be served after the program.

November 13

Unbirthday celebration At the Stevenson House. The Heartstrings will play celtic music. Refreshments from 6-7 and music from 7-8.30. There will be a charge for this program.

December no program

January 8

2011 Pot luck dinner at the home of Maureen and Hugo Bianchini 6 P M

February No program

March

Fanny Stevenson "Love her or hate her" Date will be announced later.

April 21

Two day trip to Napa Valley, Silverado, more information later.

Scots Conquer Monterey



With true Stevensonian adventurous spirit and incredible charm, nineteen members of the Edinburgh RLS Club descended on the Monterey Peninsula for four lively days in September.

This amazing group managed to "do it all", from Vanumanutagi Ranch to Point Lobos and the Goat Ranche in Carmel Valley, Carmel Mission, Monterey walks, a private tour of the Stevenson House by Curator Kris Quist and dinner at the Mission Ranch.

On Saturday evening they were guests at a Stevenson House reception co-sponsored by the RLS Club, Monterey

State Historic Park, and MSHPA. The highlight of the Reception was Ian Nimmo's enlightening talk, accompanied by PowerPoint photos on RLS's life when he returned to Scotland after his marriage to Fanny. Gifts were exchanged and a grand time was had by all.

The visit came to end on Sunday evening with a no host catered barbecue at Hacienda Carmel for the Scots and RLS Club Board members. Keith Decker opened the evening with an excellent performance as Long John Silver in three scenes from the recent Forest Theater production of Treasure Island.

Fine food, wine and friendship and a goodbye toast of Scots whisky brought this wonderful visit to an end for Monterey, but not for our Scottish friends. Off they went for several more hectic days in Napa and San Francisco.



The Scots in the Stevenson House