

NEWSLETTER



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Calendar of Upcoming Events

March 31 (Saturday)

Stevenson House re-opens for the summer season.

May 19 (Saturday), 1pm

Dramatic reading presented by Keith Decker at the Stevenson House..

August 25 (Saturday) 5-7pm

Annual RLS concert, RLS' Hawaiian connection at the Stevenson House.

September 13-16 (Thursday through Sunday)

Art in the Adobes, Stevenson House participation.

October 6 (Saturday)

History Fest with city wide family treasure hunt, Stevenson House participation.

November 13 (Tuesday) 6:30 pm

Unbirthday celebration at the Monterey Library, Howard Burnham presents "RLS in Carmel Valley."

December 7 & 8 (Friday and Saturday)

Christmas in the Adobes, Stevenson House participation.

RLS Club President Monica Hudson's Message

Redefining our Mission for 2012

In an ongoing effort to keep the memory of Robert Louis Stevenson in Monterey alive the Board of the RLS Club of Monterey has decided to re-focus its efforts, and we have defined three areas where we can be most effective.

First: We are dedicating our efforts to helping the Monterey State Historic Park keep the Stevenson House open to the public as much as possible. Over the last few years a handful of RLS club volunteers have taken a lead in providing staffing for the house on Saturdays, thus making it possible for the casual visitor to have a look inside. Our focus shall be on recruiting more people to help expand the days the house is open. For this year we have added the last Sunday of every month during the summer to the calendar.

Second: We continue to participate in sponsoring special events at the Stevenson House. This will help keep the Stevenson House in the public consciousness as the events are open to the community at large. As in the past, these events are supported with the cooperation of the staff at Monterey State Historic Park, the members of MSHPA and the City of Monterey. These events open access to the house to the general public, and bring the memory of RLS and the many artists who called it home alive.

Third: We have addressed the treasure of materials in our club archives and the need to find a permanent home for them where public access would be guaranteed. Board member, Lindy Perez, undertook this daunting task singlehandedly. She carefully sorted and identified the materials by topic, and organized them for easy access into binders. She also secured the cooperation to the Monterey Public Library to house these treasures in the California Room where they will be available for research. We all owe Lindy a great big "THANK YOU" for her initiative and dedication.

Membership Dues Reminder

Your dues make possible the Newsletter and the events that the Club sponsors. If you have not already paid your 2012 dues, please send a check for \$10.00 made out to the RLS Club of Monterey to :

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

If you have any questions about the status of your dues, please email the Club Treasurer at bobj83@comcast.net.

Did Stevenson Sleep Here?

by Lindy Perez, Club Historian

The other day as I dug deep into the archives at the Mayo Hayes O'Donnell Library in Monterey, I found several typed pages copied from the diary of Charles Warren Stoddard, a writer, traveler, and friend of Robert Louis Stevenson. The two men met in San Francisco in 1880. Stoddard stayed in Monterey with artist friends Jules Tavernier and Joseph Strong and took his meals at the restaurant of Jules Simoneau a year or so before Stevenson arrived.

Twenty-five years later, Stoddard returned to Monterey and kept a diary which was later transcribed by Amelie Elkinton, curator with California State Parks for 12 years. Stoddard detailed several visits with Jules Simoneau at his home on 456 Van Buren Street, which still stands and is part of the Monterey Institute for International Studies. Then in his eighties, the retired restaurateur eagerly welcomed visitors who wished to hear about his friendship with RLS. Stoddard was working on a piece about Stevenson and wanted to clear up some confusion about RLS and his brief stay in Monterey. One question, which persists to this day, is whether or not Stevenson actually slept at the old adobe turned boarding house, operated by the Giradins. In 1905, when Stoddard kept his diary, the building had already been renamed the Stevenson House.

Sunday, August 6, 1905..... Came back to the Hotel past the Stevenson House. Jules Simoneau tells me that RLS occupied one small room in that house and Dr. Heintz another; that the house was then as it is now, a cheap lodging house. Yet I got the impression that Louis had five rooms with verandah; that the whole house was occupied by Heinz, and that there was more or less style there. Alas!

Wednesday, August 9, 1905.....I got into the Stevenson House today. O! What a dismal place. RLS, in one of his letters from Monterey says: "Then home to my great airy rooms, with five windows opening on a balcony." Was this a pleasantry, or was it an after-thought of his editors?His was the smallest room in the house, with one window, single bed – a very small room indeed. There is no balcony to the house. I would really like to pass one night in his room, but the room is taken by a musician who plays all night and sleeps in the daytime so I could not get a peep into it.

Thursday, August 10, 1905It was a dusty walk to Simoneau's. The garden gate stood open....I started to enter the garden and Mrs. Simoneau said, "Yes, do go in to see Mr. Simoneau; you will find him there. Just call him." There he was, with his same old welcome – a warm one, from a man who totters on his feet but whose eyes are full of life and merriment....I told him of my walk to the Stevenson House and my interview with the landlady. "She pointed out the wrong room as his room was the last one, at the edge of the passage, on the right hand side. After that is the open shed-like room and from it the stairs descend to the garden to the outside of the house." I wish I had looked into it. She was letting rooms by the night to anyone: 50 cents for one, a dollar for two! No questions asked. A dreary place it is, yet not without interest.

This precise, unambiguous testimony from Jules Simoneau to Charles Warren Stoddard ends any doubt I may have had that RLS lodged at the Stevenson House. There was no one more familiar with Stevenson's coming and going in Monterey than Simoneau. When RLS was too ill to come to meals at the restaurant, Simoneau went to him where he lay in bed and helped nurse him back to health. What seems to have fueled this long debate is the fact that RLS stayed at several places in Monterey, including the Leese Boarding Home and the home of Dr. Heintz on Alvarado Street. Dr. Heintz himself moved from place to place. When the doctor was new in town, he first resided at the Leese home; then after his marriage to the daughter of Manuela Giradin, he stayed with his in-laws at their boarding house. The artists who came to Monterey in the 1870's, in keeping with their bohemian spirit, stayed wherever there was low rent and high jinks. Stevenson's mobility was not out of the ordinary, although his sickly appearance and fragile health were Anne Roller Issler, who was curator at the Stevenson House from 1957 to 1962, spent years researching Stevenson's stay in California. In addition to Jules Simoneau, she identified seven others who knew from first or second hand knowledge that Stevenson lodged part of his time in Monterey at the building we now call Stevenson House. Historical records are seldom consistent or complete. Stoddard's diary has made me a believer.

Presenting: Club Archives

Thanks to the hard work of Lindy Perez, Club Historian, the RLS Club of Monterey is proud to announce the creation of official club archives. Beginning with the 1994 centennial celebration, the archives cover 18 years of club history and Stevenson research, assembled by topic in 12 durable binders. We are grateful to the Monterey Public Library for its willingness to house the RLS archives in the California Room. The complete content of the Archives is listed at the end of this Newsletter.

The club is indebted to Stephanie Culbert who for many years meticulously collected and organized information about Louis and Fanny Stevenson, the works of RLS, and the club's many activities. Stephanie documented the history of the club by taking hundreds of photographs during speaker presentations, group trips, and social events. The volumes contain unique documents, correspondence, and old photographs from relatives and friends of the Stevensons. We encourage admirers of RLS to visit the library at 625 Pacific Street in Monterey.

RLS and the Internet

by Kris Quist, Museum Curator, The Stevenson House

As there are many days that the Stevenson House is closed, those of us who are fans of RLS are always looking for other ways to appreciate Louis and his works. I also realize that the membership of the RLS Club of Monterey has a number of Stevenson "Trivia Masters" who will dazzle any unsuspecting tourist with the depth of their knowledge. With that in mind, I have searched the internet seeking other sources of information about RLS that can be enjoyed when not visiting or volunteering at Stevenson House.

While surfing I came across several web sites dedicated to trivia of Robert Louis Stevenson. These include a RLS trivia quiz at: <http://www.funtrivia.com/trivia-quiz/Literature/Robert-Louis-Stevenson-22933.html> And a related RLS trivia questions and answer site: <http://www.funtrivia.com/en/Literature/Stevenson-Robert-Louis-8964.html>. Both of these web sites come from funtrivia.com.

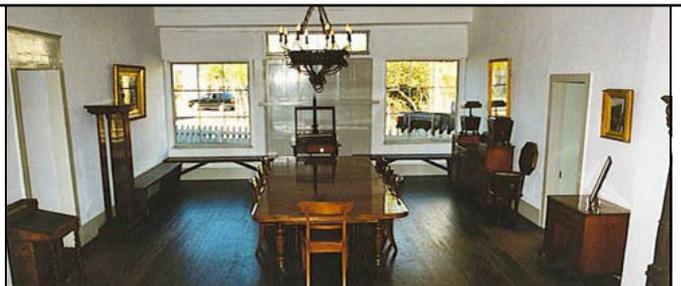
Regular Opening Hours for the Stevenson House

From March 31 through the end of September, the Stevenson House is open from 1-4 pm each Saturday, and every last Sunday, from April through September. The Stevenson House will be staffed by RLS club docents and MSHPA volunteers. More volunteers are needed, so if you would like to volunteer please contact Michael Green at mgree@parks.ca.gov or (831) 647-7172 .

The other State Historic Park buildings with also be open-see article on the last page of this Newsletter..

Dramatic Reading Presented by Keith Decker

A play written by Alanna Knight will be given a staged reading at the Stevenson House, with Keith Decker and Laura Akart, performing the roles of RLS and Fanny. The setting is the last day of Stevenson's life and reflects on their time together. *The Private Life of Robert Louis Stevenson* is one of many works by this recognized author and is presented on May 19th as a tribute to the wedding anniversary of our beloved author and a "romance of destiny ."



Robert Louis Stevenson Club of Monterey

Contents of Archives

Volume I: Family

1. RLS Portraits and Residences
2. Fanny's passing and Belle
3. Sanchez line: Adulfo, Nellie, Louis, Ysabel Matney - old photos, letters, family history
4. Real Estate property of Fanny and Belle: pictures and documents
5. Ords and Strongs

Volume II: Friends

1. Jules Simoneau and Josephine Fussell
Gifts, Simoneau Plaza, Simoneau House
2. Edward Berwick
3. Henry and Annie Ide
Birthday Gift, Unbirthday Celebrations
4. Dora Williams

Volume III: Places They Went

1. Goat Ranch
2. San Francisco to Silverado
3. Saranac Lake
4. Vanumanutagi Ranch

Volume IV: Articles and Books

1. Articles about RLS – arranged chronologically (more or less)
2. Books about RLS – arranged alphabetically by author

Volume V: Writings and Discussions

1. Works of RLS
2. Collections and Library Lists

Volume VI: Centennial Celebration (1994)

In chronological order

Volume VII: Special Events in Monterey

In chronological order

Volume VIII: Stevenson House

1. History and Restoration
2. Christmas Celebrations
3. RLS Club of Monterey – organization and newsletters

Volume IX: Scotland

1. Visits
2. Edinburgh News and RLS Club newsletters
3. Japanese newsletters

Volume X: Samoa

1. Tour to Apia (1994)
Photos, Centennial Events, Articles
2. RLS Museum/Preservation Foundation
Souvenirs, Legends of Old Samoa

Volume XI: France

Visits: *Travels with a Donkey* and Grez

Volume XII: Robert Louis Stevenson (1911) by Isobel Strong

Photographs

Jules Simoneau and his Restaurant

(Continued on next page)

Robert Louis Stevenson Club of Monterey Contents of Archives (Continued)

Books

1. Tusitala, Story-Teller: A Musical/Whimsical, by Carolyn and Jack Fleming, and Allen Pote
2. Imagination: A Musical/Whimsical (full length version and concert version) by Carolyn and Jack Fleming, and Allen Pote
3. Teller of Tales: A Musical Adventure from the life of Robert Louis Stevenson, by Neil Wilkie, David Stoll
4. San Carlos Day (written for Monterey newspaper by RLS 1879), design and artwork by NJ Taylor
5. In Japanese – *Life of Robert Louis Stevenson* by Midori Yoshida
6. In Japanese – *Pikake – The Story of Princess Kaiulani*

Videotapes

1. ABC- Tusitala, Australia, parts 1-5 (2 tapes)
2. BBC – Travels of Robert Louis Stevenson
3. BBC – Scotland: programs about RLS (2)

CDs

1. I Have a Little Shadow: A Child's Garden of Songs
2. Songs of the Silverado: Music and Narrations
3. Souvenirs of Modestine: A Musical Journey in Stevenson's Footsteps
4. RLS Ranch – photos by Roger Swearingen
5. Robert Louis Stevenson Meets Mark Twain – presentation by Roger Swearingen
6. Great Debate about Fanny – Edinburgh RLS Club (2011)

Also in Library: The Goat Ranchers who Saved RLS – new research by Lindy Perez

Roster of Board Members and Email Addresses

Monica Hudson, President - monicahudson@gmail.com

Bende Kelly, Secretary - bendekelly@sbcglobal.net

Lindy Perez, Historian lindycap@yahoo.com

Bob Jaques, Treasurer and Newsletter Editor - boj83@comcast.net

Maureen Bianchini - bianchini@mbay.net

Keith Decker - actordecker@yahoo.com

Kris Quist - kquist@parks.ca.gov

Rosemary Smith - HESmith21@comcast.net

News Release Regarding Opening of Historic Buildings

Monterey State Historic Park (MSHP) is pleased to announce the opening of Custom House and Pacific House Adobes on Friday, Saturday & Sunday for the spring, summer and fall seasons, beginning Friday March 30, 2012.

Custom House and Pacific House Museums will be open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. all three days. A modest single entry fee of \$3 allows visitors access to both buildings. Forty-five minute walking tours of the Custom House Plaza and waterfront area will also recommence for an entry fee of only 5\$, which includes entrance to Custom House and Pacific House. Youth age 12 and under are free accompanied by paying adult.

Thanks to a substantial gift from its non-profit partner, the Monterey State Historic Park Association, MSHP will offer free entrance to Monterey County residents on the last Sunday of each month for all adobe tours and walking tours. Residents need only show identification with proof of county residence.

Stevenson House, located at 530 Houston Street in historic downtown Monterey will be open Saturdays and the 4th Sunday of each month from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., staffed by volunteers. Entrance is free to this museum.

House tours of Cooper-Molera Adobe and Larkin House will commence on Saturday April 28 and will be available Friday, Saturday and Sundays thereafter.

For private group tours, contact Michael Green at (831) 649-7172. Private tours range between \$75 and \$150, depending on the number of buildings visited and group size.

