

JACK LONDON PARK PARTNERS

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Generations later, Charmian London continues to fascinate and inspire *Jack London State Historic Park gala celebrates her spirit with "Charmian's Wild Call"*

Sixty-six years after her passing, the life of Charmian Kittredge London continues to influence and inspire others. Her enduring impact can be seen in the remodeling of a museum, a new biography and an upcoming celebration.

Charmian first entered the public spotlight when she married popular author Jack London in 1905. By that time, she was already an accomplished traveler, writer, stenographer, equestrian, and pianist.

During their 11-year marriage, she was much more than Jack's wife and muse. She was his traveling companion and co-adventurer, trusted editor, and an author in her own right.

After Jack's death in 1916, Charmian lived the rest of her life – another 39 years - at the home they shared, known to them as Beauty Ranch.

During these years she acted as steward of Jack's legacy and manager of his literary assets while developing her own writing career. She continued to travel and lead a vibrant social life, just as she had during her life with Jack.

In 1960, the ranch opened to the public as Jack London State Historic Park, where visitors can tour the cottage where they lived, visit the ruins of their never-completed Wolf House, and learn the story of Jack and Charmian London in a museum housed in what Charmian named "The House of Happy Walls."

Half history and half nature, the 1,400 acres of the park-includes 29 miles of hiking and equestrian trails through breathtaking, soul satisfying scenery. Charmian enjoyed exploring the land on horseback, even in her advanced years.

Charmian's Circle

In 2017, a group of 100 women, motivated by this remarkable life, gathered and became "Charmian's Circle." They re-imagined the upper level of the museum as a showcase for Charmian's story, which would encourage young women to embrace her spirit of adventure and individuality.

The remodeled museum debuted in 2018. After surviving the threat of wildfire and an extended closure during the pandemic it reopened in March 2021.

“Our female visitors regularly share their heartfelt surprise at learning of Charmian London and her journey to live her life out loud and according to her own sensibilities and standards, particularly during that period of history,” said Tours and Education Manager Kristina Ellis. “The emotional impact of the exhibits is evident as they share how inspired and motivated they feel after reading about her courage and independent spirit. They also often remark on how she was just as big a personality as Jack London himself.”

A New Biography

In 2020, award-winning literary biographer, essayist, and poet Iris Jamahl Dunkle published a new and deeply researched biography, [*Charmian Kittredge London: Trailblazer, Author Adventurer*](#). In the book, Charmian’s story comes alive, and the reader meets a unique and decidedly ahead-of-her-time woman.

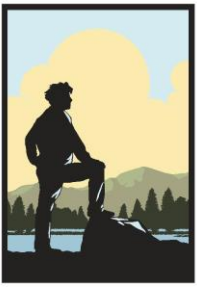
“She was an ambitious and adventurous woman who did not fit into the gender norms that regulated the time when she lived,” Dunkle writes. “She was a modern woman. She didn’t abide by the conventions that governed feminine behavior in the early 1900s. She was an intelligent woman who lived a creative life.”

Dunkle writes what many women have said about Charmian London: “Charmian was the kind of woman you would love to have known. She was brave. She was free-spirited and she didn’t give up.”

Answering the Wild Call

Jack London State Historic Park, in the heart of the Sonoma Valley, is operated and funded by Jack London Park Partners, one of the first non-profit organizations to be entrusted with management of a state park on behalf of the people of California. Funding to keep the park going strong is generated from visitors, annual passholders and generous donors.

Since 2016, an annual fundraiser and celebration of the Londons’ life at the ranch has been a critical revenue generator for the park. The much-needed benefit could not be held in 2020, due to the pandemic.



JACK LONDON
STATE HISTORIC PARK

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On September 25, 2021, the event will return with an entirely new and creative theme, developed by Gregangelo's Velocity Entertainment with hands-on direction of former Sonoma Alcalde Marcelo Defreitas. Charmian's Circle volunteers are providing their support in making it a success.

["Charmian's Wild Call"](#) (a play on the title of Jack London's book, "The Call of the Wild") takes guests to the year 1926, ten years after Jack's passing and during the height of the roaring 20's. Charmian has invited all her friends – the attendees – to celebrate the best of life with her characteristic sense of fun.

"To me, Charmian is an inspiration - a woman who loved her life, her 'man mate' (as she and Jack called each other) and, most especially, the land they called home. It was an easy 'yes' to help the park with this extraordinary gala in these extraordinary times. I can assure everyone who answers the call, this event will offer a rich and exciting experience, relishing in both Charmian's world and the beauty of Jack London State Historical Park," said Liz Fisher, gala chair.

It will be a chance for people to "meet" this most unforgettable of women.

Learn more about the park at <https://jacklondonpark.com/> and on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).

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Photos of Charmian London, courtesy of the Huntington Library, are available at

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/r1m3el4wxoho3zb/AAADMf_XexuOJN4Y7Wyo72PWa?dl=0