



JACK LONDON PARK PARTNERS

MOON LETTER

Spring 2024

UPCOMING EVENTS

A Spring Redwood Experience

Saturday April 13 9:30 AM - 12 PM

Wildflower Hike

Saturday April 20 9:30 AM - 12 PM

Tilden Daken: The Art of Adventure

April 20 - June 23

Charmian's 2nd Annual Spring Fling

Sunday April 21 12 PM - 2 PM

Call of the Wild

Sunday May 19 10 AM - 4 PM

Free Park Admission all day!

Event Info

News From the Park

For the first time since the House of Happy Walls Museum renovation in 2018, Jack London Park Partners will host a special art exhibition featuring artist Tilden Daken. Daken, known as the "Painter of the Valley of the Moon" was a friend and fellow adventurer of Jack London. The exhibition, originated by the Museum of Sonoma County (MSC), will travel to Jack London State Historic Park (JLSHP) from Santa Rosa, where it is currently on display through March 31st. The JLSHP exhibit is scheduled to open on April 20th.

The show is supported and inspired by Tilden Daken's granddaughter, Bonnie Portnoy, and the Jack London State Historic Park version will be curated by Jennifer Bethke, collections specialist at the Museum of Sonoma County. We are beyond excited to be partnering with MSC and our good friend and Park supporter, Bonnie Portnoy.

We hope you can join us for this exciting and very special exhibition which is generously sponsored by Lasseter Family Winery.



In Coleman Canyon, to John L. Reed c. 1925



Tilden Daken in Mill Valley, California, c. 1928.



Bonnie Portnoy
Photo by Katie Cleese

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Our tireless efforts and advocacy for the return of Transcendence Theatre Company (TTC) to Jack London State Historic Park for the summer of 2024 have not yielded the outcome we all were hoping for. Sadly, we are facing the same circumstances as we did last season and TTC will not present their iconic summertime shows at the Park.

We remain in transition as we continue to work with State Parks to comply with the 2022 court order resulting from a lawsuit brought by the California State Park Rangers Association (CSPRA). Our new goal is to secure a permit from State Parks for the summer of 2025.

Thankfully, the resilient and irrepressible TTC leadership has found an alternative venue in Sonoma at the Field of Dreams. We're beyond grateful that Transcendence Theatre Company can continue to provide their world class performances in Sonoma Valley. Phew!

In the meantime, this leaves JLPP with a sizeable gap, once again, in our operating budget. Unlike last year, we have had more time to prepare for the loss in income and have a strategy to make it up to avoid any disruption to staffing and Park programming.

There is no denying that this is a significant setback, however, we remain optimistic and will forge ahead with our mission, "To rigorously protect the historic and natural character of the Park while creating inclusive opportunities for education, recreation, discovery, and joy, leaving future generations a Park that would make Jack London proud".

Thank you to all of our Park supporters for hanging in there with us.



Matt Leffert, JLPP Executive Director



Photo by James Hinchman

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT - STEVE FRACOLLI



I love meeting and interacting with staff, my fellow volunteers, and our visitors from all over the world. I appreciate that Jack London Park has a wide variety of volunteer opportunities to choose from so that you can serve the Park and the public in a variety of ways.

I most enjoy driving the golf cart because it allows for freedom of movement around the Park and involves interactions with many visitors. Each shift is unique in terms of the requests and challenges that come up.

Hiking at Jack London Park is always a wonderful experience with a wide variety of terrain and views. You never know what you're going to find around the next corner of the trail. The first time I hiked up to the historic orchard, I tried the plums...delicious!

I am a native Californian having grown up in both the East Bay and in the Northern Sacramento Valley. After moving back to the Bay Area I worked in public safety including in many public parklands. My wife Laurie and I have travelled all over the country and have visited many local, state, and national parks. Jack London remains one that stands out as offering a unique combination of history, hiking and nature.

Something you might not know about me, I am a "Trekkie", having been a huge *Star Trek* fan since I first saw the original series.

Steve has been a volunteer for 1 year and 10 months and has provided 322 hours of service to the Park. In addition to driving the cart, Steve works in the kiosk, on the Green Team, conducts trail patrol, and keeps the Park signs clean and spiffy.

COTTAGE GARDEN VOLUNTEERS

Many of you have enjoyed the spectacular sights while strolling through the garden at the Historic Cottage. The reason this wonderful cottage garden is so stunning is due largely to the dedication of our gardener, Jenny Randall. Jenny has been managing the garden here at Jack London since long before Jack London Park Partners began managing the Park, and her expertise in historic gardens shows. Using her knowledge of historic plantings and referencing photographs from Jack and Charmian London's time, Jenny has created a garden that paints a picture of what it would have been like during the London's time at Beauty Ranch.

That being said, Jenny can't do it alone. She has a dedicated group of Park volunteers (some of whom are pictured to the right) to help her trim, weed, prune, mulch and do all of the many things required to keep a garden like this looking its best. So, from the JLPP staff, a big **thank you** to Jenny and her diligent volunteer team!



Top Row: Conci Mack, Randy Mack, Mary Rychly

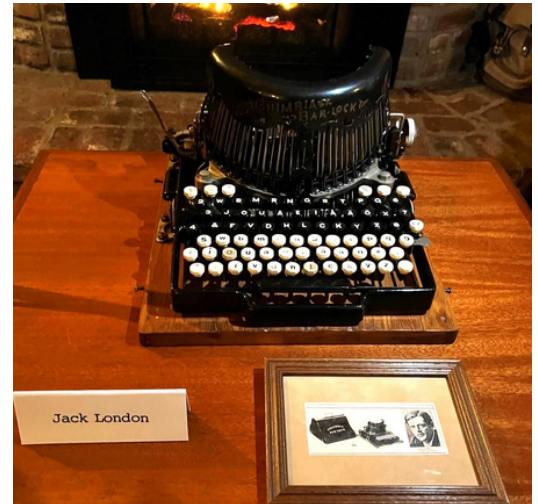
Bottom Row: Robert Feldman, Sharon Jackson, Jenny Simpson Randall

LEGACY OF LONDON

In honor of Jack London's 148th birthday on January 12, 2024, Park volunteers, staff and fans gathered at the Jack London Saloon in Glen Ellen to toast the famous author and for a special viewing of London's 1902 Bar Lock #10 typewriter.

Many experienced a moment of awe realizing it was on this typewriter that London produced so many of his greatest works. The typewriter was on display courtesy of Darius Anderson who recently purchased it, and will be housed in his private collection. Anderson, a lifelong collector of London ephemera is a local developer, lobbyist, political strategist, investor and Managing Partner of Sonoma Media Investments.

The typewriter had been away from Glen Ellen for decades and had a long journey home. It was first acquired by Waring Jones, a writer and collector of American Authors. It was then sold to Steve Soboroff, a Los Angeles philanthropist who assembled a world class collection of typewriters owned by great authors and famous people. Anderson, who had been searching for this typewriter for over 30 years, recently acquired it when the Soboroff collection went up for auction. "It is great to have it back home in Glen Ellen" he said.



"If typewriters hadn't been invented by the time I began to write, I doubt if the world would ever have heard of Jack London. No one would have had the patience to read more than a page of my longhand!" -Jack London

FROM JACK'S BOOKSHOP



The call is sounding for our younger readers and we finally have a book made just for them!

"The Call of the Wild: A Retelling" is the perfect way to introduce the love of Jack London from an early age (we even have a wolf puppet to help you read along!).

Visit the Bookshop at the House of Happy Walls Museum for these and other unique items.

JLPP 2023 GRATITUDE REPORT

Read the Jack London Park Partners 2023 Gratitude Report. We are thankful for our supporters who enable us to manage the Park for all to enjoy.

[Read Here](#)



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT - DONNA HALOW & PAUL LUCA

Donna Halow retired to Sonoma after a long career in finance at Ford, Levi's and Trinity Capital. She is fortunate, after moving to Sonoma, that many of her San Francisco friends did the same. She is more fortunate to have made many good friends, especially among hikers, here in Sonoma. She has two sons and seven grandchildren in the Bay Area.

Paul Luca left his career as a Real Estate Attorney in New York to pursue his passion for amateur race car driving. He started with a one-year mechanics training course at Sonoma Raceway, and never went back. In spite of often having four wheels under him, he and Donna also hike and bike frequently, often at Jack London Park. One of Donna and Paul's first dates almost 10 years ago was on a guided hike at Jack London Park!



Paul Luca and Donna Halow at Jack's Oak

We asked them, *What continues to draw you to the Park?*

Let us count the ways! Of course, we are often on the trails. In addition to the hikes we do with friends, we often join the New Year's Day hikes and the special hikes that Park volunteers organize and guide. We also have a group of hiking buddies that often hike at the Park with us.

We love the House of Happy Walls Museum. The remodeling and reimagining in 2018 have made it an intriguing and inspiring place. There are so many stories and treasures that are well-presented. We had guests from Italy last month and a group of local friends joined us to visit the museum with Joyce Miller, a volunteer museum docent. I learned so many aspects of the Londons that I had never heard before. The lives of Jack and Charmian are models for us all. The work that JLPP is doing to open their thoughtful and adventurous avenues of thinking and living to their school age visitors is also impressive.

In the past decade, since Jack London Partners has taken over Park management, we also enjoy the nightlife at the Park. The Galas (most recently chaired by Liz Fisher and staged by Velocity Entertainment) located in the Winery Ruins are like no other events in the Valley. These fun events provide the funding to keep JLSHP open. Showing the Park in a new way, the fabulous "In a Landscape" was a professional pianist playing classical music in the meadow as we all meandered about with ear phones appreciating the natural scenery. Of course, I enjoy the fun and successful special events held by Charmian's Circle, which have included a visit by Charmian herself, aka Lynne Lancaster.

Why do you love being a Park member?

A membership at Jack London provides natural, cultural and historical benefits that far exceed its small cost. We believe these benefits are of value for anyone from childhood to whatever age some of us have reached. The visitor service and excellent management of Jack London Park Partners, led by Matt Leffert and his committed and tenured staff, make every visit a positive one.

[Explore Memberships](#)

INTERVIEW WITH STEWART HUME WITH ELISA STANCIL LEVINE

Stewart Hume shares memories of the Guest Ranch from his childhood, as told to Elisa Stancil Levine in February, 2024. Stewart is now 90 years old and his first work as a docent was as a teen at the cottage in the late 1940's! Stewart recently retired as a cottage docent. In this two part series he recalls experiences that bring the Guest Ranch to life.

I was a young child in 1938, during the early Guest Ranch days, only 3 or 4 years old. You see, my aunt was a nurse in the Army during WW1 and a founding member of the American Legion Auxiliary. An early instigator of this important group was Eliza London Shepard, who was very dynamic, very involved, and a bonus lawyer for veterans of the war. In fact, my mother and aunt joined Eliza in France when she traveled there as National President of the Auxiliary. Eliza died when I was six years old, so my memories of her are not as vivid as those of Irving (her son) and Mildred (Irving's wife) who were like extra parents to me.



Stewart paddling a canoe on London Lake

My father was in poor health ever since serving in WW1, so though he came to the ranch two or three times, he died at the age of 54, when I was only 12. This was a horrible blow.

Monrovia is where I went to school all year, and in the late thirties, before and during the war, there was gas rationing. My mother had a C sticker, allowing her to get more gas, because she was a teacher and three other teachers car pooled to school with her. To get to the ranch you have to realize the roads were not freeways back then! It took all day to drive

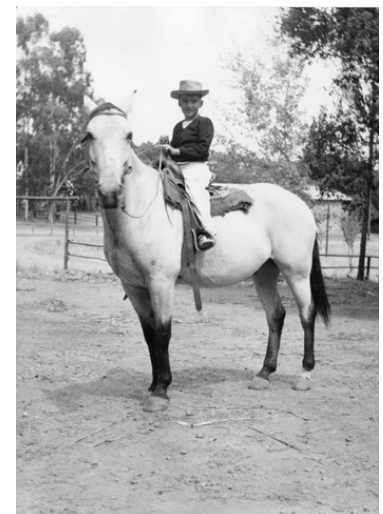
from Monrovia to San Luis Obispo, where we spent the night. The next day we drove to San Francisco, caught the ferry to Sausalito, then on to Glen Ellen.

There was a long, winding, dirt road with blind curves, starting from a lower portion of London Ranch Road, about 1/3 mile up. You had to honk your horn on every corner because no one could see you coming. All through the guest ranch days it was like that, people loved it, it was an adventure.

By the 30's and 40's there was serious smog all through the Los Angeles area, caused by steel and other heavy manufacturing. So the fresh air every summer in Glen Ellen was glorious. We used to take deep breaths when we got out of the car, breathing in the clear air...and the sky was so blue! Whenever we came to the ranch we were welcomed with open arms.

Beauty Ranch was where I learned to ride "Western" and went swimming, rowing, and canoeing on the lake. Various family gatherings took place at the lake and Olympic swimmer Ernie Smith helped me perfect Australian crawl. There were horses at the ranch and some guests brought their own horses for a month or more. Back then there was a trail called the "Up and Down Trail" from the Wolf House up to the lake, and I recall a very steep drop off along part of it, and of course now it is all overgrown after all these years. Just remember, there was a HUGE view from the Wolf House back then.

We usually stayed in the Carriage House rooms, there were a lot of guest rooms in there. Once or twice as a teen I got to stay in a room in the Cottage, the one with the fireplace. I thought that was so cool!



Stewart on Smokey, his favorite horse

Continued on page 7

INTERVIEW WITH STEWART HUME CONTINUED

Continued from page 6

No one had a fireplace in a bedroom in Southern California, of course, it was warmer there.

When I was coming here back then I read *Call of the Wild*. And then later I read *White Fang*, and thought it was a much better book, and I told Irving right away, "This is a much better book than *Call of the Wild*." And he said "Yes, that's what Jack thought too." Years later, in an auction house in SF, I saw where Jack had inscribed this same thought, in a first edition of *White Fang*. I was an English major, so I knew a little about style and how to write, and it was nice to see my impression confirmed.



On the dock at London Lake

I never read *Little Lady of the Big House*, and *The Valley of the Moon* I never finished. But *Burning Daylight* had scenes that could be set right here, a very interesting book. And of course I loved *Sea Wolf* and *Martin Eden*.

It took many years to build the House of Happy Walls, maybe 12? There were a lot of costs and delays. Charmian was working so hard to have this mansion and the first time I saw it I said "I want a house just like this." And totally fireproof, as much as anyone could imagine. Steel window frames and doors, tile roof, stone walls. The ceilings were so interesting, fascinating stuff. I actually had lunch alone there with Charmian one day, when I was about fourteen!

In the next Moonletter, Stewart will share more memories and impressions from the 1940's up until today.

Here is a favorite recipe from Guest Ranch days, Mildred made scores of casseroles and froze them so there would be plenty for unexpected guests. Stewart Hume gave me this recipe!

"MORE" casserole - a London Ranch special from Mildred Shepard's kitchen

Sauce: Brown a good sized onion and bell pepper (chopped) with a clove of garlic if desired.

Saute one pound ground sirloin, combine with onions and peppers.

Add 4 cans of tomato sauce, mix well, then add:

chopped parsley, Worcestershire sauce, thyme, rosemary, salt and pepper

Stir, allow to cool, set aside

Base:

Arrange in baking dish:

1 can corn, 1 can string beans, 1 can peas and 1 medium can of black olives

1 small can of each: pimentos, mushrooms

1 cup grated Tillamook cheese

1 cup cooked and drained spaghetti, cooked until tender

Pour sauce over base and bake at 500 degrees for half hour, reduce to 350 degrees and sprinkle more grated cheese on the top, bake for half hour until cheese is browned.

THE STORY OF THE MUSEUM LONGBOARD BY BOBBY BRINTON



My name is Bobby Brinton. This is my story on building the redwood longboard for the Jack London Park's House of Happy Walls museum.

A few years ago when my mother, Gerry Brinton, was still serving on the Jack London Park Partners Board she mentioned that there were plans for reviving the House of Happy Walls by adding displays that would highlight some of Jack and Charmian's travels. It has been documented that Jack had spent time in the Hawaiian islands in the South Pacific learning to surf on traditional redwood plank surfboards like the locals would have used during that era. The museum had the idea of displaying a wood surfboard similar to the board style that Jack London would've used while visiting Hawaii. My mom asked if I had interest in pursuing a project like this and I immediately said yes! I've spent a good portion of my childhood in Jack London State Park. It is a very special place for me and my family, and anything I can do to help contribute to the beauty and education of the park is something I want to be a part of.

I have a close friend, Xavier Lanier, who is a wood board builder and collector. He was given a traditional redwood plank surfboard that was found in a crawl space in a house he was helping a client with. There was no written history on the board, only a hand painted Hawaiian royal family crest on the top. Judging by the age of the wood, the outline of the shape and the profile of the rails, Xavier and a few experienced friends in the surf world estimated that this board was an original redwood plank from the early 1930-40's surfing era. Xavier happened to bring this board to my workshop one day for me to check out. The timing could not have been any better!

I began to get very excited about the project of creating this replica board that Jack London would have rode during his time in the Pacific Islands. In my personal lumber collection I found a second or third growth redwood piece that had the length and width to accommodate a traditional redwood plank style surfboard. The tree the slab came from was originally an old growth redwood that had fallen on Xavier's family property in the Russian River area.

He and I put together a template based off his historic Hawaiian redwood plank board from his collection. We stretch the template out to be a little bit longer to make a 10 foot board. We prepped the slab and then cut out the outline on the slab. Once we had an outline of the board on the slab, I began the shaping process.

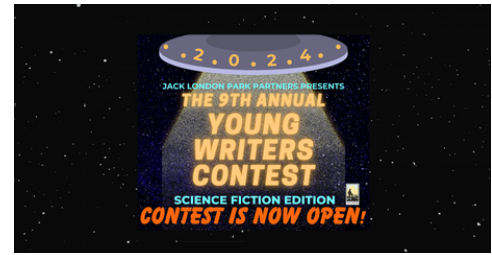
As I slowly began planing away and shaving off wood, the board began to take life. I made sure to take my time with this piece. For me, working in short increments spread out over time helps me to really see and find the perfect shape for a board. It took several months, working and then walking away in order to come back to it with fresh eyes until I finally came to a point when I felt the board was at its best shape. From there, I applied multiple coats of marine varnish to seal the redwood timber and it was ready.

Before delivering the board, I was aching to have a shot to try and surf it before handing it over. I took it to Ocean Beach in San Francisco and went for a paddle. One wave was surfed and let me tell you it was a very humbling experience! Surfing a solid redwood plank weighing more than 70 pounds is no small endeavor. Many people on the beach thought I was nuts and asked about the story of this board.

I feel this is the best board I have ever built and it was an experience I will never forget. I am honored to have it in the House of Happy Walls and hope it will be there for a long time to help share the story of Jack's adventures and surf history.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS UPDATE

The education team has kicked off a full spring schedule with 48 field trips and school programs sessions booked for January through May. The programs serving our visiting schools include Adventures in Writing for 4th and 5th grade, Nature's Design Ecology for 7th grade, and our traditional school tours and self-guided school groups for all grade levels. We are looking forward to an exciting school season at the Park!



Our annual writing contest for middle school students (6th, 7th, 8th grade only) was launched on January 12th to celebrate Jack London's birthday.

This year's prompt is **write a short story involving a mysterious portal into a parallel universe.**

The deadline for students to submit their original short stories is 11:59pm on **March 31st**. Spread the word!

[More Information](#)

CHARMIAN'S SPRING FLING

Charmian's Circle, which raises funds to support educational programs at Jack London State Historic Park, will present the second annual "**Charmian's Spring Fling**" on Sunday, April 21, from noon to 2 p.m. at B.R. Cohn Winery in Glen Ellen.

The highlight of the seasonal celebration will be a fashion show with local models and designs from *Bossa Nova*, *Half-Pint*, *The Loop*, and *Perle*. Live music will be performed by *Shameless*, a locally-based, all-female band. Attendees will enjoy lunch by *Park Avenue Catering*, paired with wines from *B.R. Cohn*.

Tickets are \$175 and can be purchased using the link below.

[Buy Tickets](#)

2nd Annual
Charmian's Spring Fling
Sunday, April 21, 2024 12 - 2 PM
at BR Cohn Winery
LUNCHEON-FASHION SHOW-POP UP MUSEUM
LIVE MUSIC- RAFFLE

CALL OF THE WILD - MAY 19



Sponsored by:



LASSETTER
FAMILY WINERY

Join us at Call of the Wild on Sunday, May 19.

Park Admission is FREE all day!

- Family-friendly events
 - Spinning Demonstrations and Early Engine Displays
 - Family Nature activities and art project with **ArtEscape**
 - Beauty Ranch Bingo
- Burgers by **Rotary of Sonoma Valley**
- **Wicked Slush** ice cream
- Live music provided by **Music In Place** – The Cork Pullers with Curley & Curlier AND The Ron Sfarzo North Beach Trio



UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE PARK



Blooming Now February - August

Our colorful online guide to the variety of wildflowers and other blooms visitors may find throughout our 1,570-acre Park containing photos, names, and recently spotted locations.



A Spring Redwood Experience Saturday, April 13 9:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Discover the energy of the forest as you travel to the park's only ancient redwood, the 2,000-year-old giant of Sonoma Mountain.



A Wildflower Hike for a Fresh View Saturday, April 20 9:30 AM - 2:30 PM

Expect a medium-paced 12-mile round trip hike through beautiful swathes of spring wildflowers with spectacular views of Sonoma Valley.



Tilden Daken: The Art of Adventure April 20 - June 23 House of Happy Walls

Exhibit open daily
10:00 AM until 5:00 PM

Event Info

TAKE A TOUR OF JACK LONDON PARK



2024 is already shaping up to be an exciting year, so why not treat yourself and a handful of special guests to a premium touring experience at the magical Jack London State Historic Park?

We're delighted to offer two *premium golf cart tours* that will leave you feeling immersed in the rich history and natural beauty that surrounds Sonoma Mountain. Whether you're visiting Glen Ellen for the first time or live locally, this is an outing you won't want to miss. Our **Original Premium Tour** will have you exploring all the historic sites within the park. Let one of our friendly and knowledgeable docents guide you through the life of Jack London and the adventures that inspired his writing. Want to take your tour to the next level? Reserve our **Premium Expedition Tour** and your golf cart excursion will continue onwards up the backcountry trails. You'll travel along fern-lined paths surrounded by towering redwoods to a scenic viewpoint known as May's Clearing. This tour will have you gaining elevation as well as an appreciation for the wild beauty of this land.

Come see why people from all over the world love this Park!

Explore Tours

Thank you to our generous supporters!

December 2023 - February 2024

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Kathryn Aanestad and Veda Lewis	Suzanne Brock	Janette Dahn
Janet Adams	Amy Brokering	Deborah Danielewicz
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December 2023 - February 2024

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