



JACK LONDON STATE HISTORIC PARK

Moon Letter

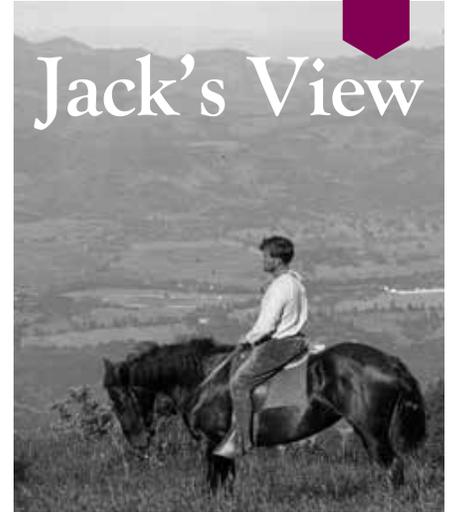
Operated by Jack London Park Partners

Fall 2018

Park Spotlight



See caption on page 7



JACK LONDON—FARMER ON THE FOREFRONT, THEN AND NOW

Let's summon the spirit of Jack London for a tour of our current US agricultural scene, but warn him that the sights will be troubling. On I-5 north from L.A., Jack will see thousands of beef cattle standing hip-to-hip and knee-deep in their own wastes in a CAFO (concentrated animal feeding operation), a system that has produced E. coli O157:H7, the microorganism that proves deadly when introduced into our food supply. If we helicopter Jack across the Midwest American "heartland," sometimes called our "breadbasket," he will see acres of corn rolling to the horizon—none

continued on page 3

News from the Park

THE HOUSE OF HAPPY WALLS REOPENED ON NOVEMBER 10TH WITH NEW EXHIBITS THAT WOULD SURELY MAKE CHARMIAN LONDON SMILE "In the case of my death, it is my wish that my home "House with Happy Walls" is not to be lived in by anyone but a caretaker. This building and its arrangements are peculiarly an expression of myself and its ultimate purpose is that of a museum to Jack London and myself" she wrote. The new multimedia installations tell the story of their adventures and accomplishments and are intended to inspire visitors to pursue their own dreams and passions and "Live Like a London".

Many of the rooms that have been off limits are now open and contain objects and artifacts that represent the London's innovative lives. Visitors can enter the dining room to see displays of London's sustainable agricultural practices or walk right up to the big, stone fireplace or sit in the window seats on either side of it. The library now functions as the museum bookshop and is stocked with printed copies of all 50 of London's books as well as Charmian's books - the only place where the entire collection can be purchased. Upstairs the two small guest rooms are now open - one describing the vision for the Wolf House and the other featuring a timeline of how Jack and Charmian's lives intersected.

The museum serves as a celebration of all that made the Valley of the Moon a place the London's loved to call home and draw inspiration.

A Note from the Executive Director



There are currently 20-25 acres of eucalyptus groves in the park that were planted by Jack London to be used and sold as lumber post the 1906 earthquake in San Francisco. The groves are culturally important as they help to tell the story of Jack's vision for Beauty Ranch. Over time however, the groves have become overgrown and crowded. This condition has weakened the health of the historic trees and has created a hazardous fire condition for the groves and surrounding areas. An ongoing restoration and management plan has been developed so that the grove's historical significance can be better interpreted, improve the overall health of the stands, and greatly reduce the risk and intensity of wildfire. This plan was developed by Eric Metz, Director of Operations, with help from experts from the Department of Parks and Recreation, scientists, archeologists, historians, foresters, and fire ecologists. Work includes clearing understory fuels, removing trees to reestablish the original planting grid, thinning multiple sprout eucalyptus trees to single trunks, re-planting gaps within the grid and ongoing mowing and fuel removal. There will be areas that will undergo a full cultural restoration so that park visitors can walk through and experience the groves as Jack London imagined them. In other areas that have already become naturalized, the work will focus on wildfire mitigation and safety.

— Tjiska Van Wyk

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Volunteer Spotlight

Greeting Visitors with a Smile!

MEL EHLERS' AIM IN LIFE IS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

His 32 years as a high school teacher is testament to the accomplishment of his goal. Mel continues to make a difference by greeting and introducing visitors to the park and its points of interest every Thursday in the kiosk, making sure that they will enjoy their visit and be thankful for having come. He also helps others as a volunteer driver for Paratransit, ensuring that his passengers get to all their various appointments. Mel has contributed 530 hours of service in his 3 ½ years as a park volunteer and looks forward to continuing service because "It is such a good feeling and I benefit more than the visitors"

and a special thanks to...Jennifer Metz



While staff and others were busy preparing the museum for its grand re-opening day, one person was keeping her eyes on the face of the Happy Walls. Wife of Operations Director Eric Metz, Jennifer Metz, volunteered her time and her naturally green thumb to bring vibrant color and life to the many quirky planters sprinkled across the building's façade. Her design included plants with shapes that honor the architecture of the home and colors that evoke the bold spirit of Charmian London, with blooms of bright gold and yellow. Feeling a special connection to the park, Jen always asks herself

the same question before planting, "What would Jack and Charmian like?" We would like to thank Jennifer for her beautiful contribution to the Happy Walls!

Jack's View continued from page 1



of it edible by humans, for this feedstock corn will fatten cattle and be broken into molecular components for a range of products from flashlight batteries to catsup and diapers. If Jack asks about rainfall or irrigation for the annual ninety-six million acres of this corn (or the annual eighty-nine million acres of soybeans), he will learn that much of the water for these commodity crops comes from the Ogallala aquifer, a vast underground reservoir running from the South Dakota to Texas, but now shrinking because the water is being pumped out faster than rainfall can replenish it. (Some estimate that with the current rate of pumping, the Ogallala will dry up within twenty years.)

Jack would tell us that he is no stranger to damaging industrial agriculture, which proved equally unsustainable in his own day. He knew that in California's Colusa County, the "Wheat King," Hugh James Glenn, operated a mechanized "bonanza" farm of tens of thousands of acres along the Sacramento River from 1867 through 1884, the year of Glenn's death. The Glenn Ranch boasted that "the wheat is in the sack" and ready for shipping within fifteen minutes of harvest. Jack also learned that Glenn, a former gold miner, saw the soil as a resource solely for extraction. His much vaunted bonanza farming proved devastating to cropland, Jack realized, for the soil was not replenished but plundered. The crop yield, in fact, was markedly diminishing at the time of Glenn's

death, but the Wheat King's plan was simply to abandon the depleted soil and move on to untapped acreage or to other entrepreneurial projects. The main character in Jack's novel, *The Little Lady of the Big House* (1916), put it bluntly in a resounding indictment of all bonanza farmers: "You've destroyed."

Jack learned, what's more, that America's small farmers had been equally heedless since colonial days. Thomas Jefferson eulogized those who "labor in the earth" as the "chosen people of God," but the settlers sought ever-new "virgin" cropland when their farm yields diminished, leaving abandoned acres eroded and gullied. The French traveler, Alexis de Toqueville, observed in 1840 that the American "brings land into tillage in order to sell it again, and not to farm it." The 1862 Homestead Act promised ownership of 160 acres of federal land, but many homesteaders proved to be as entrepreneurial as they were ignorant of tillage, their most desired crop the greenbacks from the sale of the properties. Absentee ownership of rented farmland exacerbated the problems from New England through the depleted tobacco fields of the South, into the Midwest, the plains, and California too. By 1900, the US Department of Agriculture bulletins exposed the crisis of US farms—and of the nation's perilous food supply (e.g. in the USDA's booklet, *Renovation of Worn-Out Soils*).

When Jack decided to farm Glen Ellen's diamond-shaped Hill Ranch that he bought in 1905 and determined to buy the "distant hills" as well, he found the Sonoma soil to be as depleted as in the rest of the country. Newspaper listings of Sonoma farms for sale in the late 1800s are revealing. One showed a "neglected appearance," while another was "not well kept up." A third boasted "virgin richness"

because the land had never seen a plow. Jack's new neighbor insisted that his agricultural skills were proven by the three farms he had "worked out."

Jack London committed himself to reverse decades of exploitive, disastrous agriculture by making Beauty Ranch a model of progressive agriculture. As he wrote, "I have pledged myself, my manhood, my fortune, my books and all I possess to this undertaking." This onetime farm boy, together with his stepsister-manager, Eliza Shepard, bred prize livestock and consulted Luther Burbank for the best seeds and strains of fruits and vegetables for orchards and fields. The two silos of London's "pig palace" were models of hygienic feeding and watering for swine, and Jack proved that the Sonoma hillsides, terraced into croplands, were thus utilized in the manner of centuries of East Asian farmers. Rejecting chemical fertilizers, he used the "green" manures of livestock and vegetable nourishments. Bypassing petroleum-fueled mechanized farm machinery, he relied on stout plow horses, and among his farm workers were San Quentin parolees learning skills for their post-prison lives.

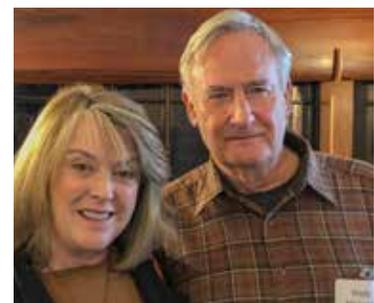
Jack was not merely dabbling in rural living but, as he wrote, "I am that sort of farmer who, after delving in all the books to satisfy the quest for economic wisdom, returns to the soil as the source and foundation of all economics." His philosophy of farming is fully presented in his bestselling novel, *The Valley of the Moon* (1913). His credo stands as a challenge and guideline for the twenty-first century: "I believe the soil is our one indestructible asset."

Cecelia Tichi, Vanderbilt University, author of *Jack London A Writers Fight for A Better America* (2015) University of North Carolina Press

Museum re-opening reception

A reception was hosted the evening before the grand reopening of the museum to thank the donors who made the project a reality. 372 people stepped up with financial donations to raise little over \$850,000 for the design, fabrication and installation of the new exhibits. Mike Benziger, Chair of Board of Directors for Jack London Park Partners led the remarks with a reminder of the museum's by-product: inspiration to live life at full measure. Tjiska Van Wyk, Executive Director, acknowledged Harvey Shein, the museum renovation's leader, and several key donors who contributed in creative ways to make this a true community effort. Nancy and John Lasseter and the Hind Foundation were thanked for being the seed funders that inspired others to contribute, Donna Halow and her team, Gerry Britton, Vicki Stollmeyer, and Diana Bugg established the Charmed Circle - a group of over 100 women who helped underwrite exhibits regarding Charmian's trailblazing life, exhibit underwriters, Ted Eliot, Jane and Gerry Baldwin, and Kenwood Winery, and all the Board members who contributed gifts over and above their annual contribution.

Guest were treated to a complimentary bottle of wine from Kenwood Winery as they left the reception to "dine like a London" at their choice of Glen Ellen Star or girl & the fig who included "London entrees" on their menus.



Row 1: Lynne Deegan-McGraw, Chuck Levine (aka Jack London) Harvey Shein, Mike Benziger.
Alice Melillo (aka Charmian London) rides astride, Harvey Shein, Jean Schulz.

Row 2: Bobby and Gerry Britton, Tjiska Van Wyk and Mike Benziger, Katherine and Tom Culligan

Row 3: Betsy Kukska and Paul Genovese, Donna Halow, Jean Schulz and Gerry Britton, Colleen McCarty and Wally McGuire

Reopening weekend activities a celebration the London's no doubt would have enjoyed

The reopening of the park's museum with new interpretive exhibits also marked the 55th anniversary of the park's National Historic status, and visitors were treated to plenty of fanfare. Docent led tours of Beauty Ranch (complete with a tasting of wines made by Kenwood from the grapes grown on the ranch) Jack's gravesite and Wolf House and the ancient redwood tree were complimented with special readings of the London's work and related lectures. Iris Jamahl Dunkle, poet Laurette, spoke about Charmian's three day visit in 1901 to the Pan American Exposition in New York, Cecelia Tichi, London scholar, discussed Jack as a visionary in sustainable agricultural practices and Doug McConnell, host of Open Road NBC Bay Area, talked about London's contemporary relevance. Younger visitors were entertained by some of Jack and Charmian's favorite pastimes including their love the sea when award winning children's book author, Jean Walker Harvey, read her latest book, *Boats on the Bay* and the London's love of fencing with En Garde Fencing providing a demonstration and instruction. Carriage rides were led by one of Eliza Shepard's descendant's Neil Shepard. All weekend long music filled the rooms of the museum while park volunteers played some of Charmian's favorite music on her baby grand piano.



Row 1: Waiting to cut ribbon; David Stollmeyer, Katherine Culligan, Vicki Stollmeyer and Lynne Deegan-McGraw; Amy Harrington, Rebecca Hermosillo and Betsy Kutska; Jack London (Chuck Levine) and Charmian London (Alice Melillo)

Row 2: Carol Dodge, Vince Anibale; visitors viewing display; Jeff Falconer; Iris Jamahl Dunkle

Row 3: Doug McConnell; Cecelia Tichi; Jean Walker Harvey with students; young visitor enjoying the saddle display

VOLUNTEERS MADE THE MAGIC HAPPEN!

A team of sixty-seven Jack London Volunteers enthusiastically participated in making the long-awaited House of Happy Walls Museum re-opening weekend a huge success. "Jack" and "Charmian" were on hand to welcome visitors to their home. Others braved the smoky air to greet visitors with a warm welcome and information in the Kiosk, Parking lots, Cottage and Museum. They cleaned the museum and grounds in preparation for the opening, served refreshments to the donors and provided a delightful ambiance, playing Charmian's piano. Museum, Cottage and Tour docents dazzled visitors with stories of the Londons. Intrepid golf cart drivers made sure everyone got to visit the various sites in the park. Hike leaders and sweeps shared their love of nature in the park. We are so thankful to all our volunteers for sharing their passion for the park with our visitors.



What's the Buzz?

Through an interactive display that allows guests to type-out and post their thoughts about the museum, we can see what inspires our visitors and how they felt about the new exhibit designs:

"Thank you so much for keeping this place alive to inspire us all."

"We are so happy to see all you have accomplished with this amazing installation. Brava and Bravo!!!!"

"Outstanding changes... Jack would be delighted."

"I'm in love with their love story! How romantic and adventurous Jack and Charmian were."

"I think this place is awesome" – T. Trenkle, 8 yrs. old

"Are you kidding me! What a super new, modern space to honor Jack. Thanks."

"Be daring and take risks. Life is short."

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|---------------------|------------------------|
| Linda Alwitt | Deborah Knapp |
| Linda Arons | Gary Kozel |
| Beverly Ashe | Lou Leal |
| Greg Berruto | Bern Lefson |
| Eugene Birger | Chuck Levine |
| Laura Blatt | John Lynch |
| Rod Boudreau | Sheila Mackintosh-Sims |
| Leanna Breese | Brad McCarty |
| Carol Brugger | Alice Melillo |
| Katy Carrel | Jane Merryman |
| Stephanie Chapralis | Jim Minton |
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| Ruth Cooper | Susan Nuernberg |
| Tim Cummings | Michael O'Brien |
| Jack Diviney | Kit O'Neill-Conover |
| Jeff Falconer | Marilyn Pahr |
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In My Opinion... Jack London's Best Book



Pat Matthews, successful entrepreneur, credits the reading of Jack London's Burning Daylight as influencing some of his life choices. He indicates, "its theme - not wasting your time, has become a central part of who I am. London was a hell of a thinker - maybe at the same level as Bill Gates. Writing eventually became a way for him to earn the kind of living he wanted to do. There are more opportunities today to be a visionary than there was at his time. His sense of adventure should inspire others to just go out and embrace the world - do everything you can to enjoy all the gifts life offers." Pat is pictured standing next to his wife, Patti Paulson, park supporter and friend



Volunteer, JoAnn Augustine recommends The Little Lady of the Big House, "particularly for those of us who are interested in Jack London's life. It felt to me that I was watching Jack imagine his life in Wolf House with Charmian. Of course, the autobiographical nature of the story does not extend to its ending."



Michelle Milne, Retail manager, recommends The Sea Wolf "what I love about this story is that it starts out right here in the bay. It grabs you immediately and doesn't let go until the story ends. It touches on human behavior and how it can change from bad to not so bad. From suspicion to trust. No matter how

dire the circumstances. Even a little love pops up. This novel is an exciting adventure and has it all."

Editors Note: We bid a fond farewell to Michelle Milne who will retire this month. She began as a Park Aide for California State Parks, 11 years ago and became the Retail Manager in 2012. Along with her buying ability, incredible creativity, loyalty and determination she has increase sales significantly and recently, used her skills to set up the new Jack's Bookshop. We will miss you Michelle and wish you the best!



All new Jack's Bookshop

So many of us are attracted to and enjoy pawing around a book store. We are proud to announce that the new Jack's Bookshop was also redesigned and is now open in the House of Happy Walls museum! So many nooks and crannies to explore but not to be missed is the Jack London Park special museum editions of the complete 50 books written by Jack London, each book in the collection containing the text, illustrations, and cover from the first edition. Affordable paperback editions. Absolutely marvelous for Jack London fans. Plus 4 books written by Charmian London. All published by Sea Wolf Press. Great for gifts!

The House of Happy Walls Museum and Jack's Bookshop are open daily 10:00am-5:00pm. Closed Christmas day.



Caption from page 1

Lynne Deegan McGraw (center, with scissors), president of the Board of Directors for Jack London Park Partners, gets assistance from Riley Weiswasser in cutting the ribbon during the pre-opening ceremony for the House of Happy Walls Museum in Jack London SHP on November 10th. Riley's sisters, Noa (left) and Haley (behind) look on, along with (L to R in back) California State Parks staff, Ronnie Cline, Michael Patrick, and Carol Dodge, board member Karen Collins, (center back) and Rebecca Hermosillo, aide to Congressman Mike Thompson. Amy Harrington, Sonoma city Council member stands far right back.

With Gratitude

Contributors June 2018 — November 2018

Thanks to all of our generous donors

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<http://jacklondonpark.com/jack-london-be-a-partner.html>

From the Land

If you have made it up to the historic orchard recently you may have noticed big things happening, or rather very little things of big importance. These little things are trees of course! Planting has begun again in the orchard, continuing on from the single quince tree planted last fall. This year we are planting apples and cherries, and are off to a great start. These trees are grown from cuttings taken from the historic trees early this year, and grafted onto historically appropriate rootstock ensuring the precious genetic stock from the original trees, some of which were planted over 100 years ago, continues to tell its wonderful Sonoma Mountain story. A total of seventeen trees will be planted this year including fifteen apple trees and two cherry trees. A very special thanks goes out to our grafting expert, Dr. Dick Kirk, who took the cuttings and grafted them this spring, and to Quarryhill Botanical Gardens who fostered our little saplings until they were ready to plant. And of course a special thanks to all of our wonderful orchard volunteers who come out week after week to help restore this amazing cultural gem.



NEW Family Membership

Come and see why Jack London Park is great for the whole family!

Annual \$80 Benefits include:

- Annual Jack London Park pass
- Quarterly Newsletter
- 20% discount at Jack's Bookshop
- Jack London Ranch kids Activity Book
- Free entry to a family event at the park

Joining is easy. Go to (Link to member page <http://jacklondonpark.com/become-a-member.html>)

HERE'S A GREAT GIFT IDEA THAT BENEFITS THE PARK!

A Jack London Park annual **Day Use Parking Pass** makes a great gift for the Jack London enthusiast, outdoor lover or history buff on your Holiday list.

[Order today](#)

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Upcoming Events and Activities

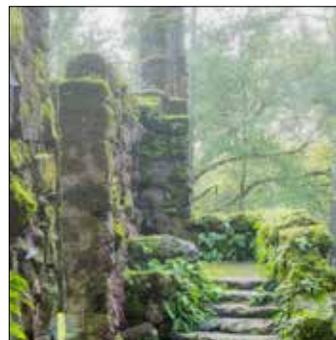
see more at www.jacklondonpark.com



First Day Hike
January 1, 2019



Jack London Birthday
January 12, 2019



Winter Photography
January 26, 2019



Piano Concert
February 17, 2019