

# MOONLETTER



VALLEY OF THE MOON NATURAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

FALL 2010

Hello Volunteers and members of the VMNHA...The Moonletter is undergoing a transformation so please bear with us as we change the format and graphics over the next few issues. This quarter we had many exciting events so the Moonletter has more photos than text. I hope you enjoy it! Elisa Stancil, editor

## PHOTO CONTEST A SUCCESS!!

The first annual CELEBRATE THE PARK photo contest is over, but the exhibit will travel to venues throughout the community through the end of the year. VMNHA will share the unique views of Jack London State Historic Park and have a chance to inform exhibit viewers of our organization. Come to Sonoma Community Center on September 3 for the opening reception from 5-7 pm, or visit the show there through September 23rd!



GRAND PRIZE Christine Hansen



2ND Place Close up Cathy Fisher

**CELEBRATE THE PARK:  
THE CONCEPT**

*Valley of the Moon Natural History Association and the Docent Council came up with a great idea this year---celebrate the anniversary of Jack London State Historic Park. This one idea gave rise to a new concept: a repeatable, community based park appreciation series of events, rotating from park to park each year!*

*This year at Jack London we successfully collaborated with Plowing Play Day, put on by the North Coast Draft Horse and Mule Association in May, followed by VMNHA'S first annual Photo Contest and CELEBRATE THE PARK event in June, and the MOONLIGHT ADVENTURE AT JACK'S in July. September 11 at the ruins, and Sept 20 at Sebastiani Theater we are presenting film screenings (see details on the website: [www.jacklondon50th.com](http://www.jacklondon50th.com)) of movies based on London's writings.*

*This leap into event planning has been challenging, but volunteers came forward and brought great spirit and determination to the task at hand. So positive was the experience, despite the daunting 104 degree heat at Celebrate, VMNHA plans to reprise the Celebrate the Park and photo contest to commemorate Annadel's 40th anniversary in 2011!*

*Plans are underway to highlight the many attributes of Annadel through a daytime, community based event and an afternoon/evening more formal fundraiser. Funds raised at the "Annadel Celebrates" events will be used for the visitor center currently under construction. Are you a volunteer with special ties to Annadel? Join the committees to be announced soon and take part in shaping the anniversary events to be held in 2011.*

*Event photos of Moonlight and Celebrate by Cathy Stancil, [www.cathystancilbelleimage.com](http://www.cathystancilbelleimage.com)*

**Food, music and photos in the Ruins**



1) Photo exhibit, including some prints of London's images of the ranch, were displayed within the Old Winery Ruins. 2) Fifteen wineries and twelve chefs provided tasting for the crowd, and 4) Mobius Jazz Quartet played cool sounds. The 104 degree heat diminished the number of visitors, but the event was beautiful.



**Winners brave the heat**

top to bottom:

Monica Schwalbenburg-Pena First Place (sold!)

Owen Leung Youth First Place

Christine Hansen GRAND PRIZE

Carol Zychowski Second Place (sold!)



See the show Sept 3-24 at Sonoma Community Center. Reception 5-7 pm on Friday Sept 3!



## Moonlight Adventure at Jack's is magical!

The evening began with appetizers and a special ginger fizz served by Landmark Landscaping owner June King. Carol Dodge of CSP and docent LaVerne Crumley displayed rarely seen artifacts and Lou Leal and Greg Hayes interpreted the stone dining room. Jenny Randall guided guests through the garden and many other volunteers hosted guests:

*Linda Felt, Judy Howell, Chris Ward, Denise and Tom Sobel, John Felton, Paul Martin, Patti Kozlovsky, David O'Donnell, Bob Reuther, Sheila and Rich Ward, Deborah Large, Elisa Stancil, Chuck Levine, James Stancil, with photos provided by Cathy Stancil.*

The community really came forward and helped us put together an amazing auction. Wines from Kenwood were donated for the entire dinner, and all auction wines, from 14 wineries, were

donated as well. Art, adventure, romance and history were the themes of the auction. Benziger Winery loaned us their electric tram, and their auction item, along with Greg Hayes' Treasure Hike were the two big ticket items. The event brought in more than \$20,000 and the guests all remarked they would love to return next year! Sue Hodson, of the Huntington Library, gave an insiders look at ranch life during Jack's time, and the music before and during dinner added to the heartfelt, magical atmosphere.

## THE GARDEN AT JACK LONDON COTTAGE

This year has been especially beautiful in Jack and Charmian’s garden. The rain has had a lot to do with it, but most of all the volunteer gardeners have been a tremendous support in working hard to see that it always looks as though someone loves it. Some people have come and gone according to demands in their lives, but I would like to thank the following people for their effort and continued support: Jane Merryman, Barbara Allen, Helga Barron, Bob Carlsen, Lauren Johannessen, Don McGillis, Jean Hasser, Gary Schlichter and Bob Reuther.

If you spend anytime in the garden perhaps you will have noticed that some of the bigger trees are beginning to look a little more loved! This is thanks to the wonderful skills of both Bob Carlsen and Don McGillis, the olive tree doesn’t know what has hit it! I am also grateful that Chris Ward has offered to join us on our workdays. He and Bob tackled the cleaning up of another olive down by Milo Shephard’s gate.

We create mounds of garden waste in maintaining the area, some I compost, but very woody material is taken away by the Park’s hard-working maintenance crew. This was something that Don McGillis also helped with this past year, which we all very much appreciated.

I am always happy to add to the list of volunteers. You may call myself on 707-996-9697 or Susan St.Marie, volunteer co-ordinator, at the Museum.

~JENNY RANDALL



Bob Carlsen and Don McGillis photo by Jean Hasser



Chris Ward and Bob Carlsen at the olive tree photo by Chris Ward

## Dear readers!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR and FEATURE ARTICLES requested, please submit to Elisa Stancil at [estancil@earthlink.net](mailto:estancil@earthlink.net) or mail to VMNHA SPECIAL EVENTS, PO Box 2168, Glen Ellen, CA 95442



Since joining the ranks of the VMNHA several years ago Elisa has taken on a variety of challenging tasks for the organization and for the good of Jack London SHP. She and husband Chuck Levine (VMNHA Board member) live next-door to the park and are great neighbors. As well as having served on the Board of Directors, for the last six years Elisa has edited the *Moonletter* and founded the Lake Alliance to restore London's lake.

This year, as if her plate wasn't already overflowing, she is volunteering massive amounts of time, labor, and material to help the VMNHA stage a series of special

events for the park's 50th anniversary celebration. Those of you who attended "Celebrate the Park!" or the "Moonlight Adventure at Jack's" know just how beautifully designed and orchestrated those efforts turned out, with a small army of volunteers, vendors, and organizations participating enthusiastically. Many deserve thanks for their roles in helping to make the events inspirational successes, but Elisa, who has the ability to be everywhere at once, has earned the lioness's share of the credit for planning, attention to detail, and follow-through on these model community-building and fundraising events that we on

the Board of the VMNHA would like to see repeated yearly at all three of our parks.

Obviously we would also like to clone Elisa so that the original could get some of her free time back, but since we don't have that technology we can only hope that our most energetic volunteer will continue to favor our Valley of the Moon parks with her dynamism and imagination. Thank you, Elisa!

--Greg Hayes, VMNHA President

*Note from Elisa:*  
None of this work would be possible without the support of the board and the stalwart efforts of our great volunteers. It is an honor to work with all of you!

**VALLEY OF THE MOON NATURAL  
HISTORY ASSOCIATION  
VMNHA**

**California State Parks, Valley Sector**

**Jack London State Historic Park**

**2400 London Ranch Road**

**Glen Ellen, CA 95442**

**Board of Directors:**

**Greg Hayes, President**

**Lou Leal, Vice President**

**Dave Chalk, Secretary**

**Sheila Ward, Treasurer**

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**Chuck Levine, MAU rep**

**Matt Atkinson**

**Chris Ward, Docent Council rep**

**William Murray**

**Larry Houghton**

**John Felton**

**Special Projects: Elisa Stancil**

**SUPPORT OUR STATE PARKS, VOLUNTEER!**



**SONOMA HOMETOWN BAND at Celebrate the Park**

**LEGISLATIVE HEARING ON PROPOSITION 21** (*\$18 Vehicle registration add on to fund state parks*)

On August 10 I attended the legislative hearing on Prop 21, along with about twenty other folks gathered together by CALIF STATE PARKS FOUNDATION. We met two and a half hours prior to the hearing and were given packets to distribute to legislators and a briefing on talking points. This was well organized and included the chance to have a box lunch with others... I traveled up there with Isabel Wade, a lake donor and founder and former exec director of the Neighborhood Parks Council of SF.

She and I visited Mark Leno's office (a fragment of our park is in his district) and twelve other senators and assembly-people, dropping off signed petitions for each district. Then we attended the hearing, where Jared Huffman was present. Ruth Coleman and her director of operations gave an informational presentation, hitting quite soundly on the deferred maintenance issue... and then Nature Conservancy, CSPF, and tourism interests made a passionate appeal for funding. Elizabeth Goldstein was in top form. Then the auto industry and a rep from Jacob Javitz organization rebutted, but the sentiment in the room was totally with Prop 21.

Be aware that the democrats have introduced their own bill calling for a small increase in registration fees, and this may do one of two things--dilute the passion for Prop 21 or incentivize the republicans to support prop 21. In any case, Prop 21 is showing, according to the latest poll, a 55% support ratio.

Jared Huffman asked Coleman about morale at the parks and she seemed to want to paint a positive picture, saying the parks were suffering no more than all other agencies...and her deputy then said the positive experience of seeing people enjoy the parks offset the morale issues.

I had 90 seconds to address the hearing, I explained the 4000+ hours of volunteer patrol from our three parks alone, assisting with short staffing...also emphasizing the tragedy of deferred maintenance, and ended by saying the cuts were beyond the sinew, and now into bone.

I want to request that we consistently support CSPF on an ongoing basis, and emphasize our partnership with them when discussing our work at the parks...I believe they are doing exemplary work and are essential to the success of protecting and enhancing our state parks.

**Soon I will receive signs and posters, I can use help posting them, please contact Susan St. Marie to help 707-938-4827 Elisa S.**