



## Robert Louis Stevenson Club of Monterey



Celebrating the life and works of RLS since 1994

### In this issue

**President's Message.....p.1**  
**Event Highlights to Date**  
**-February Salon.....p. 2**  
**-RLS at Library event.....p. 2**  
**-Trotter Gallery Meeting...p. 3-4**  
**-Anniversary Celebration.....p.5**  
**Saranac Lake RLS Club info..p. 6**

### President's Message by Monica Hudson

Our club's focus has always been on RLS, his work and his life story. His incredible adventures were greatly aided by Fanny, the woman he chose as his life partner. Today, there is real energy and interest in recording the contributions and talents of the women "behind the men." When Fanny was married to RLS she was his helpmate, lover, nurse, sounding board, collaborator, muse, organizer, and field marshal all rolled into one. During that time she was overshadowed by her husband's towering intellect, unbound creativity, and charismatic personality.

### Calendar of Coming Events

**Dates and Time subject to change-  
updates will be emailed**

**June 14, 2 pm Zoom Salon** Topic:  
*The Silvarado Squatters*

**August 30, 2 pm Celebrating RLS'  
Arrival in Monterey.** Topic and  
location TBD.

**October 11 2 pm Annual Meeting**  
at Black Bear Diner.

**November 15- 2 pm - Annual  
Unbirthday Event,** sponsored by  
Monterey Public Library, in the  
Community Room. Topic to be  
announced.

Fanny was almost 11 years older than RLS and outlived him by 20 years. She had a life both before she knew him and after he died. So, in the spirit of "discovering" Fanny we started out 2025 by reading and discussing the new biography by Camille Peri, *A Wilder Shore*. With the emphasis squarely on Fanny, we see a young woman ready to escape from Indiana, looking for adventure, growing up to hard realities and relying on her wits and talents to support herself and her child. She matures to follow her artistic nature both in painting and writing – daring to act, against the odds, to make a life in art happen for her daughter and herself. She overcomes disappointments and tragedy to finally embrace her relationship with RLS. Throughout their life together she found time to create articles and short stories under her own name. Despite bad press from jealous critics, and with the strong support of RLS, she persevered.

In the end Fanny moved to California where she spent her last two decades. Here she became an inspiration, a draw, and muse for young artists and writers in San Francisco. She had the wherewithal to buy several properties, built a family compound in Santa Barbara, and was interested in the latest technological inventions, such as automobiles. The fact that she learned to drive one "like a pro" does not come as a surprise. This unique woman serves as an inspiration to us today. This year we hope to delve more into her contributions to give credit where credit is due.

### How to communicate with the RLS Club?

<https://rlsclubmonterey.org/>

Please send an email message to  
[rlsclubmonterey@outlook.com](mailto:rlsclubmonterey@outlook.com)

## Event Highlights to date- February 2025-May 2025

### Literary Salon at Bianchini's- February 2025

As the deer grazed in Maureen Bianchini's forested backyard, the RLS Club met in her home for a meaningful February "Salon". Past Club President Keith Decker led an interactive discussion of "A Wilder Shore. The Romantic Odyssey of Fanny and Robert Louis Stevenson" authored by Camille Peri in 2024. The writing was a biography of our beloved Bohemians, Louis and Fanny Stevenson. Being well-researched, it generated audience comments noting the couple's courage, eccentricity, resilience, inspiration, and love, etc., endured during RLS chronic lung challenges. Louis felt the best during his last 4 years of life while living in Samoa at "Vailima". Hopefully you'll be able to visit if you haven't! Delicious refreshments and a time of camaraderie concluded a delightful evening!

This RLS/Fanny book and others are available to members through our lending library. Feel free to contact our Librarian: Ruth Anne Krotzer at [rkrotzercolts@gmail.com](mailto:rkrotzercolts@gmail.com) or Phone (831) 601-1894.



### RLS at the Chocolate & Wine Event

The Monterey Public Library Friends & Foundation held its 20th Annual Chocolate & Wine Benefit on February 22, 2025. The RLS Club supports the Benefit because of the Library's sponsorship of our annual 'Unbirthday' event, commemorating Stevenson's bestowal, in a letter to the President of the United States, of his birthdate (November 13, 1850) to a young lady whose birthday unfortunately fell on Christmas Day and thus was never properly celebrated. MPL's California History Collection highlights Stevenson's 1879 visit to Monterey.

The Benefit was a thrilling success, with an incredible turnout. It was wonderful to see so many familiar faces and meet new friends. Both floors were filled with offerings of delicious chocolates and exquisite wines from several local wineries, locally crafted beers, and many tasty sliders and savories. The atmosphere was much enhanced by the amazing live music of Dave Holodiloff on mandolin and Juneau Rowe on keyboards, creating an unforgettable ambiance.

It was fantastic rubbing elbows at the Silent Auction area where folks were commenting on all the great donated treasures and services. As is becoming tradition, our RLS Club treasurer Harish Joshi was the host of the flowing chocolate fountain. And one of the highlights of the evening was the popular Bookmobile parked in front.



Continued from p. 2

**Evening at the Trotter Gallery- Did artist Jo Mora and Fanny Stevenson ever meet?**

At the end of March, our group of RLS Club members and friends were treated to an afternoon full of surprises. The meeting at Terry Trotter's gallery museum was magic and almost overwhelming with all the priceless treasures around us. A large gathering of members were comfortably ensconced, listening to the soft strains from the harp played by our very own Amy Krupsky.

Our guest speaker, Dr. Scott Gale, conducted a fascinating talk and visual presentation on the maps, or "cartes," of artist Jo Mora\*. Over a number of years from the late 1920s to his death in 1947, Jo had created these intricate pictorial maps, some commissioned by the railroad and the Hotel Del Monte as well as other commercial entities. His maps abound with beautiful, often whimsical, detailed illustrations of significant locations, people, and animals, and are chock-full of historical facts. They are a treasure trove for the mind and heart and are highly collectible. Scott walked us through the creation of many of them, highlighting the three Monterey Peninsula maps where your Jo includes RLS' visit to Monterey. Scott is also a board member to the Monterey History and Art Association (MHAA), which owns and exhibits a large Mora collection. He has great knowledge and passion for Mora's work and has been instrumental in clearing the path to have some of the cartes reprinted. Mora's treasured maps are now available again through MHAA. Thank you for all the research and energy it took to make that happen.



Next came the surprise presentation by Scott Gale of a draft manuscript for an RLS biography written by the late Laura Bride Powers. Scott and Terry found it in the archives of MHAA. Scott presented a copy to Monica Hudson, President of the RLS Club of Monterey to be read and discussed by interested members and, if viable, published under the auspices of MHAA. Powers was a writer, historian, preservationist, and prime mover in the creation of the MHAA in 1931.

Continued on p. 4

Then club member John Sanders added to the fun by highlighting Fanny as the resourceful and gutsy woman she was. John, who was the historian for the Naval Postgraduate School, located at the old Hotel Del Monte property, found newspaper clippings: "The widow of Robert Louis Stevenson and her son, Lloyd Osbourne, are among the most enthusiastic of local automobilists, says the San Francisco Wasp, and are frequently seen on the park roads and ocean boulevard. They consider a run to San Jose in their White steamer as nothing out of the ordinary, while trips to Del Monte are of frequent occurrence during good weather. Mrs. Stevenson herself is an expert autoist and manipulates the levers with all the confidence of a veteran chauffeur" (San Jose Mercury News - 1904 - Enthusiastic Automobilists.) And the Santa Barbara Press Democrat of 1908 covers the auto accident Fanny, Lloyd, and Isobel had on their way to Fanny's ranch at El Sauzal, Ensenada, Mexico, driving her Stoddard Dayton touring car. The original handout is on our website <https://rlsclubmonterey.org>.



As if our program needed another surprise, we were treated by Greg Berkin, a friend of our host, to a discourse on historic automobiles such as the White steamer and the Bay Area car races of the era. Greg's love for his hobby and the research into who drove these cars and placed in these races may possibly turn up another Fanny connection in the future.

So the question remains: Could it be that Fanny actually met Jo Mora before she died in 1914, maybe at the Hotel Del Monte? If not, it is highly likely that Fanny's daughter, Isobel, who lived until 1953, heard about Jo Mora and his amazing artwork.

---

\*Joseph Jacinto Mora (1876-1947) was a Uruguayan-born American cowboy, photographer, artist, cartoonist, illustrator, painter, muralist, sculptor, and historian who wrote about his experiences in California. He has been called the "Renaissance Man of the West" [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jo\\_Mora](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jo_Mora)

A great Thank You goes to our presenters Scott Gale, John Sanders, and Greg Berkin, and especially to Terry Trotter for his generous hospitality. Also to Amy Krupsky for yet again providing beautiful music on her harp, and to Ruth Krotzer who managed the RSVPs and kept the board members in the loop on what wonderful treats to bring for our informal gathering after the program.



## Anniversary Celebration

It was an idyllic garden setting for our annual RLS and Fanny's wedding anniversary event! Twenty-five RLS literary enthusiasts met on May 18, 2025 at Monica Hudson's tranquil nature hide-away. We were surrounded by sunshine, birds singing, a profusion of flowers blooming, and water lilies from a nearby pond.

The program was a delightful presentation by our own Club President Monica Hudson. Inspired by our friends from the Edinburgh RLS Club Spring 2025 News, Monica gleaned fascinating parallels between Mrs. Fanny Stevenson and another Fanny-the first love of Louis. Both women had the same first name, were RLS's senior, had an abusive marriage, etc.

Guests enjoyed an assortment of "tea sandwiches" including cucumber, of course. So Scottish! Our two amazing, decadent, cakes were from Pacific Grove's Patisserie Bechler. They were inscribed "Scotland and Indiana's Finest" and "Love to Louis and Fanny".

Everyone received a practical laminated RLS bookmark as their memento of our happy gathering. Many thanks to all the gracious volunteers who made this another memorable time!





## A Sister Museum and a New View of Stevenson

The RLS Club's Zoom Salon on April 26 featured a fascinating discussion about the Stevenson Cottage Museum in Saranac Lake and its importance to Stevenson's work and life. Our guest was Dr. Trenton Olsen, assistant professor of English at Brigham Young University-Idaho. He is president of the Stevenson Society of America, based at the Baker Cottage in Saranac Lake. The society was founded in 1915 and opened the museum the following year, to preserve it and to spread Stevenson's philosophy of living.

Stevenson went to Saranac Lake because Dr. Edward Trudeau had recently opened a sanatorium featuring "fresh air therapy" for lung disease. He lived in Baker Cottage for 6 months in 1887-88, helping to put the new institution on the map. The author loved Saranac Lake and Baker Cottage, calling it "a first-rate place." He wrote the Master of Ballantrae and many essays while there.

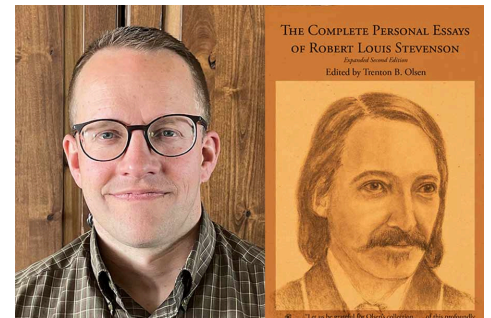
Olsen related the numerous challenges (familiar to many of us!) of maintaining an historic building and museum while depending on

volunteers, grants and donations. They have a new board and are working towards repairs and staffing. The society is planning a Stevenson Festival to celebrate the 175th anniversary of his birth and the 100th anniversary of the society's purchase of Baker Cottage.

Olsen, a scholar of 19th century British literature, also edited the second edition of the Complete Personal Essays of Robert Louis Stevenson. The project proved to be more complex than expected because of the considerable amount of research required to identify to get the most authentic version of each essay.

Olsen specifically focused on Stevenson's guiding philosophy—living life to the fullest even though he faced chronic illness and knew that he would die prematurely. He constantly pursued his writing and traveled throughout the world. While at Saranac Lake, he made preparations for his largest trip of all—sailing to the South Pacific. He finally settled in Samoa and, active to his last days, died there in 1894.

His attitude of "brazen boldness in the face of death" continues to inspire people today.



## In Memoriam

It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of a longtime club member, Joyce Burnside. Born and raised in Edinburgh Scotland, she married an American Army officer and subsequently attained dual citizenship in the United States. Joyce frequently borrowed books from our RLS Library, to enhance her knowledge acquired in Scotland. She was an interactive participant in Club discussions and would provide facts unknown to us which resonated from her hometown of Edinburgh. Although she didn't play the bagpipes, Joyce compensated through her culinary artistry, especially shortbread cookies and egg salad "tea sandwiches". Her life epitomized "hope and tranquility" as is depicted in RLS "Requiem". If Joyce was here today, she might say, "Lang may yer lum reek." Scottish translation, "May you live a long and happy life."

## Tours available through Monterey State Historic Parks

Join a State Parks Guide for a 45 minute tour. Stevenson House (550 Houston St) at 10:00 and 3:30. Larkin House (464 Calle Principal) at 11:30 and 2:00.

Meet at the respective building. Tours are limited to 10 guests. First come, first served. Private Tours can be booked for times outside of regularly scheduled tour times. Two weeks advance notice. Contact Aaron Gilmartin at (831) 649-2907. [https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=30491](https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=30491)