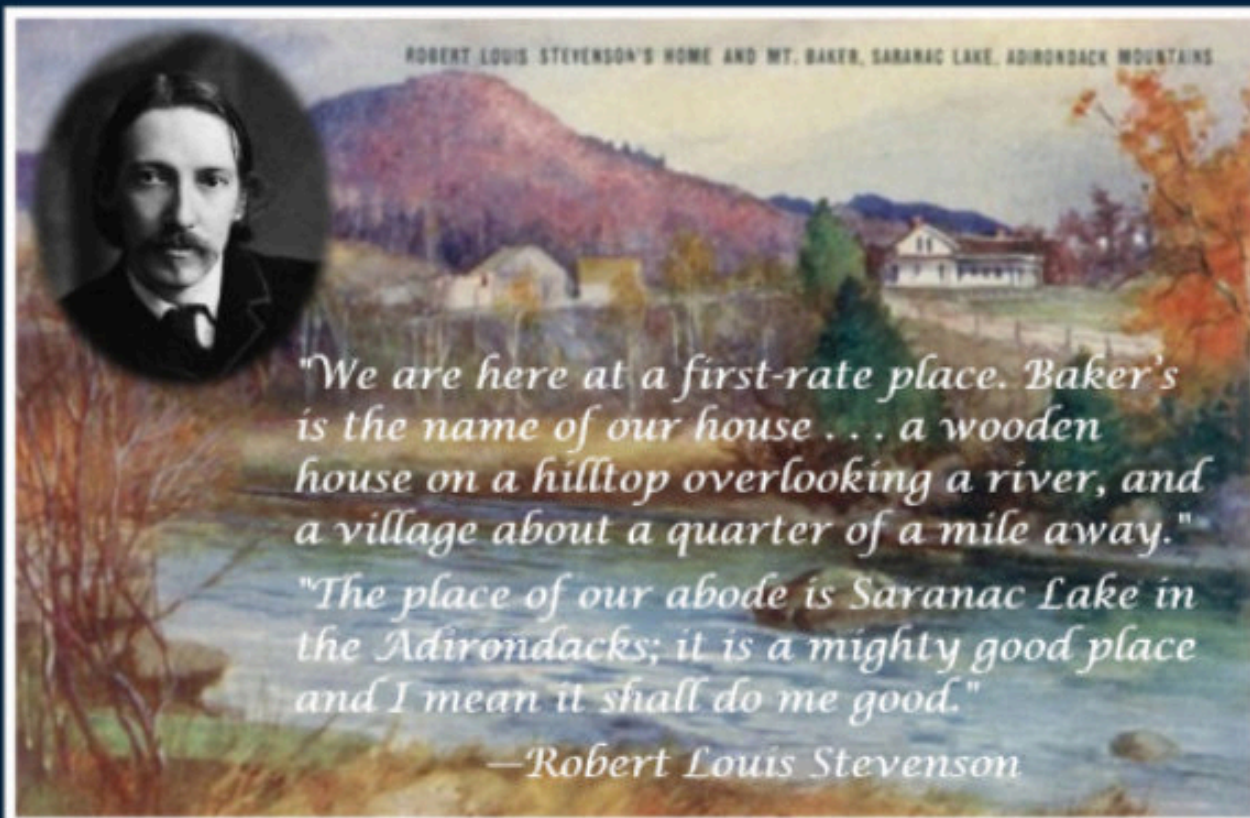


The Lantern Bearer

The Stevenson Society of America Newsletter

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Reintroducing the Robert Louis Stevenson Cottage Museum

The Robert Louis Stevenson Cottage Museum in the Adirondack mountains of upstate New York was the residence of the famous author of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and *Treasure Island* in 1887–1888. He came to Saranac Lake for his health. While here, Stevenson wrote some of his best work and planned a bold Pacific voyage that ultimately led him to Samoa.



The cottage museum holds an extensive collection of Stevenson artifacts, donated by his family and friends, from his infant cap to the last pen he ever used. Owned and operated by the Stevenson Society of America, the cottage has been open to the public since 1915, making it the world's first site dedicated to Stevenson.

A restless traveler, Stevenson chased health and adventure around the globe. He reflected, “to travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive.” With the formation of a new board, the cottage museum is entering a more active and visible chapter in its history. There’s a long road ahead of us as we work to revitalize the museum, ensure its future survival, and re-establish its international reach, but we are traveling with great hope. Follow our journey on social media and join our [email list](#).



Acclaimed Writer Phillip Lopate Visits Cottage Museum and Joins Stevenson Society Board

Phillip Lopate, a leading figure in creative nonfiction, made the trip to Saranac Lake to see the residence of one of his literary heroes.

The late Nobel Prize winner Louise Glück called Lopate “one of the most brilliant and original essayists working now.” A member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Lopate is the former Director of the Nonfiction Graduate Writing Program at Columbia University. His personal papers have been purchased by Yale University’s Beinecke Library.

Lopate joined the board of the Stevenson Society of America following a July tour of the cottage museum. “I’ve been to a lot of writers’ houses in my life,” he said, “and this is one of the better ones.” On the museum’s future, Lopate said, “It has a tremendous amount of potential, and I hope it will begin to draw donors, docents, and interns to make it everything it could be.”

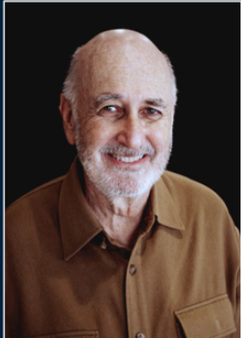
Watch a short video on Phillip Lopate's visit below or on [YouTube](#).



Meet the Board



Trenton B. Olsen



Phillip Lopate



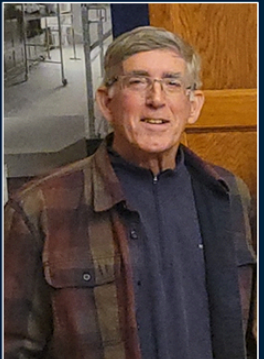
Carla Manfredi



Nicholas Rankin



Audrey Murfin



Timothy Holmes



Dan Reilly



Rebekah Greene



Andrew Kelly



Tom Delahant

- President, Dr. Trenton B. Olsen, Associate Professor of English at BYU-Idaho and editor of *The Complete Personal Essays of Robert Louis Stevenson.* Olsen began volunteering for the museum in the summer of 2023 and looks forward to spending time in Saranac Lake each summer.
- Secretary-Treasurer, Timothy Holmes, grant writer, research consultant on tourism and economic development, and a former administrator at the Wild Center Natural History Museum.
- Phillip Lopate, former Director of Nonfiction at Columbia University
- Andrew Kelly, Paul Smith's College Library Director.
- Canadian Representative, Dr. Carla Manfredi, Associate Professor of English at the University of Winnipeg and author of *Robert Louis Stevenson's Pacific Impressions: Photography and Travel Writing, 1888-1894.*
- British Representative, Nicholas Rankin, Royal Society of Literature Fellow, former Chief Producer of the BBC World Service, author of *Dead Man's Chest: Travels After Robert Louis Stevenson.*
- Dr. Audrey Murfin, Associate Professor of English, Sam Houston State University, author of *Robert Louis Stevenson and the Art of Collaboration.*
- Dan Reilly, writer, business owner, and Kiwanis volunteer.
- Tom Delahant, musician and lifelong supporter of the museum.
- Dr. Rebekah Greene, University of Rhode Island PhD on Scottish adventure literature. Assistant Professor at the University of Rochester, teaching writing in the School of Nursing.



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Left to right: Tim Holmes, Mike Delahant, Marilyn Kaplan, Lisa Goldberg, Andy Kelly

Stevenson Cottage Museum Awarded Federal Grant

The Stevenson Cottage Museum was one of only 71 institutions in the United States selected to participate in the Collections Assessment for Preservation (CAP) program. The \$10,000 federal grant is administered by the Foundation for Advancement in Conservation (FAIC), devoted to preserving cultural heritage, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS): the primary source of federal support for American libraries and museums.

CAP funded a thorough on-site assessment on October 15–16 by conservator Lisa Goldberg and preservationist architect Marilyn Kaplan. Their assessment report will help the museum prioritize its collections care and building preservation efforts in the coming years.

We are thrilled to be awarded the CAP grant and grateful to work with world-class preservation experts. The grant is a great vote of confidence in our new board and a crucial first step in securing the museum's future.

3 Generations & 70 Years of Volunteer Resident Curators



Honoring the Delahant Family

As of this year, Mike Delahant, third-generation volunteer resident curator, has cared for the cottage museum for 44 years: the entire length of Stevenson's life. To honor the Delahants' three generations of service, we presented them with a commemorative plaque.

Read below Stevenson Society of America President Trenton B. Olsen's moving tribute to the Delahants—"the family who literally and figuratively kept the lights on for more than 70 years"—originally published by the *Adirondack Daily Enterprise*.

Bearing the Lantern at the Stevenson Cottage

By Trenton B. Olsen

The Scottish author Robert Louis Stevenson arrived in Saranac Lake in October of 1887 a global celebrity. In the previous four years, he had published *Treasure Island*, *Kidnapped*, *A Child's Garden of Verses*, and, most sensationally, *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Stevenson suffered from pulmonary illness and came for the open-air treatment of an Adirondack winter. He brought significant attention to the new tuberculosis sanatorium of American Lung Association founder Dr. Edward Trudeau. Tens of thousands followed him there.

Read the rest of the article [HERE](#).



Student Internship Program

Rose Bullard (pictured above) bought a car just to commute to the Stevenson Cottage Museum from SUNY Plattsburgh! We're grateful for the on-site and remote undergraduate interns from BYU-Idaho and SUNY Plattsburgh.

We are currently seeking a graduate student intern in museum studies, preservation / archival studies, public history, library science, and related fields. The internship will be unpaid, but we may be able to arrange temporary housing for qualified candidates. **To apply, email a cover letter and CV to stevensoncottagemuseum@gmail.com.**



“A certain amount [of money] is a true necessary; but beyond that, money is . . . a luxury in which we may either indulge or stint ourselves, like any other. And there are many luxuries that we may legitimately prefer to it, such as a grateful conscience. . . Year by year it is [ours] to distribute . . . to further public works and institutions.”

— Robert Louis Stevenson

Fundraising Needs

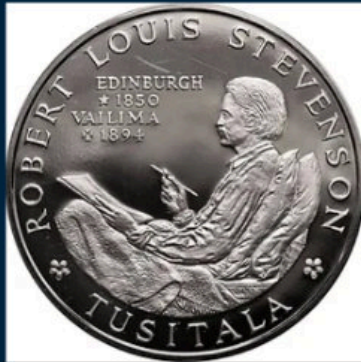
The all-volunteer Stevenson Cottage Museum has had virtually no money since the Great Depression, relying on a few donors to cover emergency costs at key points in its history. The museum has less than \$5,000 in its bank account, so donations in any amount are helpful. The Stevenson Society of America is a registered 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization.

ALL DONATIONS ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE.

Our first and most urgent fundraising need is roofing and exterior restoration, including structural and drainage repair, which we anticipate will cost about \$200,000. Building systems upgrades (electrical, heating, and cooling) are also necessary to preserve the collection.

Museum Repair Needs

Some specific ways your donation can help the Cottage Museum:



\$100 will buy acid-free storage and display material to help protect an artifact.

\$250 would pay for a new exterior sign to draw visitors.

\$500 would help us get wi-fi at the museum, which would help museum personnel, guests, and visiting researchers.

\$1,000 would pay for improved exhibit lighting.

\$2,500 would help us open a gift shop and online store to generate income for the museum.

\$5,000 will buy a new furnace.

\$10,000 would pay for a new electrical system.

\$20,000 would cover roofing over Stevenson's study and living quarters.

Stevenson lovers around the world owe Mike Delahant a great debt of gratitude. He and his wife, Karla, will have a home in the quarters of Stevenson's landlords the Bakers as long as they require it. But Mike turns 74 next month and recently broke his pelvis and cracked several ribs in a fall. The intrepid resident curator is still at his post, though now with the aid of a wheelchair or cane. While we hope that Mike, with his encyclopedic knowledge, deep commitment, and unassuming charm, will be involved in the museum for many years to come, it's time to take the burden of its daily care and maintenance off his shoulders.

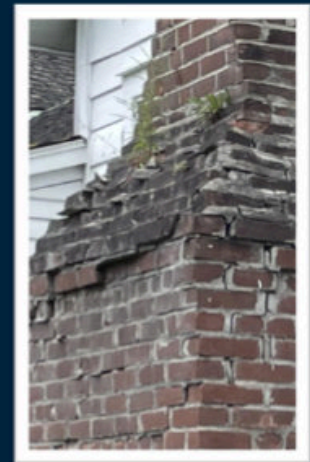
We will always welcome volunteers, but total reliance on volunteer work is not sustainable. We need to build a budget consistent with the cottage museum's significance and needs to secure its future. That includes hiring a trained, professional curator full-time. All told, between the need for essential repairs, hiring staff, and making future building improvements, we need to raise several million dollars. We're actively applying for grants, but most of the funding will need to come from donors large and small.

Please become a paying member of the Stevenson Society of America and receive a gift. Beyond membership dues, we hope you'll contribute as generously as you can. As the images below demonstrate, **the Robert Louis Stevenson Cottage Museum needs saving.**

[DONATE](#)

“I’m proud to say that my wife, Mandy, and I are both Lantern-Bearer donors (\$2,000+). You’d be hard-pressed to find a museum of this significance where your donation would go further or make a greater impact.”

— Dr. Trenton B. Olsen, President
Stevenson Society of America



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