

Wednesday, October 9 in the Barn at Quarry Farm

7 p.m.

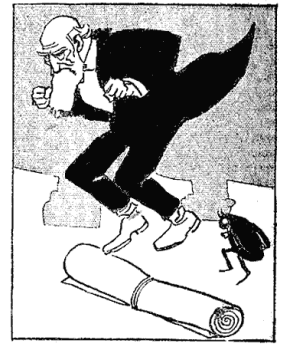
“Mark Twain Invades Washington”

Alan Pell Crawford, *Independent Scholar*

“I believe the Prince of Darkness could start a branch of hell in the District of Columbia (if he has not already done it)”

Mark Twain, Letter to Virginia City *Territorial Enterprise*, March 7, 1868

Before he was a famous novelist, Mark Twain lived and worked in the Nation’s Capital, first as an aide to Senator William Stewart of Nevada—he was quickly fired—then as a lobbyist and Washington correspondent. These early experiences gave Twain a unique perspective on American politics, and in later years he became a fierce critic of war and imperialism. Having had his profits as an author reduced by pirated editions of his works, he returned to Washington late in life to testify before Congress for copyright protection for authors. People still read his trenchant writings on politics, with good reason. They still speak to us. “Fleas can be taught nearly anything that a Congressman can,” Twain wrote in *What is Man? and Other Essays*. In *Mark Twain, A Biography* he is quoted as saying “Suppose you were an idiot. And suppose you were a member of Congress. But I repeat myself.” What would he say today?



“Fleas can be taught almost anything that a Congressman knows.”

*Illustration from
American Examiner, 1910*

Alan Pell Crawford is the author, most recently, of *How Not to Get Rich: The Financial Misadventures of Mark Twain*, published in 2018. His previous books include *Unwise Passions: The True Story of a Remarkable Woman and the First Great Scandal of Eighteenth-Century America* and *Twilight at Monticello: The Final Years of Thomas Jefferson*. A former Senate and House staffer, Alan has been a residential scholar at the international Center for Jefferson Studies at Monticello and George Washington’s Mount Vernon. He has written for the *Wall Street Journal* for 25 years and been published in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *National Review*, the *Weekly Standard* and *Vogue*. He lives in Richmond, Virginia.

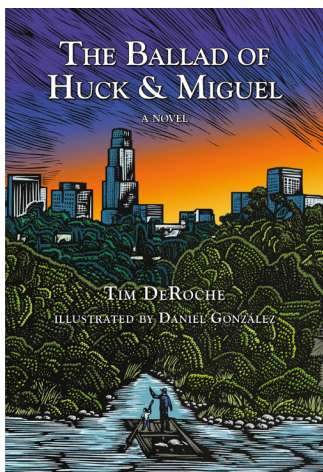
Wednesday, October 16 in Cowles Hall on the Elmira College Campus

7 p.m.

“He ain’t a-comin’ back no mo’: Huck Finn as an American Myth”

Tim DeRoche, *Redtail Press*

The *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is a rousing adventure, a realistic depiction of American boyhood, a satirical critique of American society, and a foundational text for all of modern American literature. But part of what makes the story so transcendent and enduring is that Huck Finn is also a myth. In this story of two fugitives fleeing down a river, Mark Twain taps into universal themes and tropes that recur in fairy tales, folklore, and religious narratives. That’s one reason that American writers and filmmakers have been retelling this story – both overtly and covertly – for the last 100 years. Seeing Huck Finn through the lens of Joseph Campbell’s universal “hero’s journey” helps reveal why the book has been so important in the formation of the American psyche but also why the ending can feel so unsatisfying. As the prototype for a particular American myth, Huck Finn will be retold over and over as long as our society persists – perhaps even longer.



Tim DeRoche is the author of *The Ballad of Huck & Miguel*, a modern-day retelling of Huck Finn set on the Los Angeles River. Featured on CBS Sunday Morning in May of 2019, the book has been called “satirical, funny, thrilling, hopeful, and human” by the Mark Twain Forum. Born and raised in Milwaukee, Tim DeRoche emigrated to California to attend Pomona College, where he studied English literature. A graduate of the PBS Producers Academy at WGBH in Boston, he also holds a certificate in feature-film screenwriting from UCLA. He served as executive producer and writer of the children’s science series *Grandpa’s Garage*, produced by Turner Learning for Georgia Public Television. Tim has written for the *Washington Post*, *Education Week*, *School Administrator*, and the

Los Angeles Business Journal. His new nonfiction book *Separated By Law* will be published in 2020 and takes a close look at the policies and laws that assign American children to schools based on where they live.

Wednesday, October 23 in the Barn at Quarry Farm

7 p.m.

“We found we had a little cash left over.”: Sam and Livy’s Hartford Dream House and Its Architectural Roots”

Pieter Roos, *Mark Twain House and Museum, Hartford, CT.*

Just as would be the case today, Sam and Livy Clemens embarked on an adventure in building a new house. Like any young couple, having the dream, selecting an architect, and seeing a project through to the finish is always a challenge. Sam and Livy spent a substantial portion of her inheritance on the house, and their love for it was life-long, even after they left it. At the time of its completion, the *Hartford Courant* remarked that the house was the newest marvel of Hartford, a city replete with large and expensive works of domestic architecture. Their architect, Edward Tuckerman Potter, designed a house that was undoubtedly stylish and thoroughly contemporary, but while it fell within the general early precepts of the Stick Style, it was not in the mainstream, and still stands out today in its individuality. A few year’s after the initial completion, the Clemens’ engaged Louis Comfort Tiffany and Associated artists to take the interior up to a whole new level. We will look both at the Clemens’ personal journey in construction and the architectural roots of a remarkable and iconic building and what made it the singular example of the Stick Style that it became and remains today.



The Mark Twain House and Museum

Pieter Nicholson Roos has served in the museum field since 1984, working all over the Northeast. In 1999 he became the Founding Executive Director of the Newport Restoration Foundation, a preservation and museum organization that administers some 82 historic properties. In 2016 he created the groundbreaking “Keeping History Above Water” conference, the first national discussion of the impact of climate change on historic preservation. Since 2017, Pieter has served as the Executive Director of the Mark Twain House and Museum. During the last two years, programming has doubled, and \$2.8 million has been raised to enhance programming and operations and to preserve the campus and the house. Pieter has written and lectured extensively, teaching at both Harvard University and Brown University. In 2017 he was the recipient of the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission’s Fred Williamson Award for Professional Excellence and the Doris Duke Preservation Award.

Wednesday, October 30 in the Barn at Quarry Farm

7 p.m.

“Sociable Sam: Mark Twain Among Friends”

Judith Yaross Lee, *Ohio University*

Samuel Clemens joked in one of his lectures that he had met “uncommonplace characters Bunyan, Martin Luther, Milton, and . . . others,” but it’s not stretching much to say that he knew just about everyone famous between the Civil War and World War I. By 1892, his social network had grown so large that eleven-year-old Jean Clemens, impressed that her parents had received a dinner invitation from Germany’s Emperor Wilhelm II, remarked, “Why papa, if it keeps going on like this, pretty soon there won’t be anybody left for you to get acquainted with but God.” Yet sociable Sam Clemens was more than a famous guy who knew other famous folks: from the start of his career as Mark Twain, his writings grew from and through interactions with others. This illustrated lecture traces the impact of that sociability on some of his most important works.

Judith Yaross Lee, Distinguished Professor Emerita at Ohio University (Athens, OH), studies American humor and other popular discourses in interdisciplinary historical contexts. Among the 5 books and 60 articles that she has published are *Twain’s Brand: Humor in Contemporary American Culture* (2012), showing how Mark Twain pioneered contemporary practices in stand-up comedy and comic brand management, and *Garrison Keillor: A Voice of America* (1991), the first analysis of this major comic performer and writer. Current projects include *Seeing MAD: Essays on Mad Magazine’s History and Legacy from Cover to Fold-In* (co-edited with John Bird) and a revised history of American comic rhetoric, *American Humor and Matters of Empire*, also the theme of a 2020 Quarry Farm Symposium.



“Mark Twain’s 70th Birthday: Souvenir of Its Celebration,” Supplement to Harper’s Weekly December 23, 1905

Visit the “Trouble Begins Archives” at MarkTwainStudies.org for a downloadable recording of all these talks and other past lectures.

You can also see past “Trouble Begins” programs and CMTS quadrennial conference and symposia programs.

Elmira College Center for Mark Twain Studies

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