

December 2010

La Lavandería



Rancho Guajome Adobe County Park

Large Volunteer Turnout for Rancho Christmas 2010

We were pleasantly surprised and impressed by the many volunteers and docents that turned up to help out before and during our biggest special event of the year. We had somewhere in the neighborhood of 50 volunteers and docents that participated in the annual event. Local college students were volunteering in groups, while docents were bringing along their grandchildren to help out as well. We also

were lucky enough to have the Boy Scouts and the Miss Vista Pageant help out during the event.

Nothing makes our job more stress-free and satisfying than knowing we have so many wonderful, eager volunteers that we can rely on during our busiest times of the year.

Thanks to all of our volunteers and docents! Happy Holidays!



First day of Rancho Christmas Preparations : (L to R) Jason, Tina, Jerry, Jacob, Danny, Patricia, Dominic, Joshua, Barbara, Sue and Phil

Park Staff Attends Fallback Festival in Gaslamp

Annual Event Attracts Thousands to Historic Gaslamp District

In November we attended the Fallback Festival in lovely downtown San Diego. The event was free to the pub-



little incredulous that their parents are going to let them play in the mud. I like to use the time to explain to kids what adobe mud actually consists of, and its applications. I like to tell them how it's one of the oldest building methods in the world. They always seem to be thoroughly impressed by how hard adobe bricks are when they dry (since we have a finished sample for them to inspect).

Another bonus to attending the event is visiting the Sultan Shawarma eatery. Some of the best food I've ever eaten, es-

pecially after a long day of making adobe bricks.

lic this year, so there was definitely a large crowd. Without the help of An-nemarie at the San Diego Archaeological Center, and her great volunteers, I probably would have succumbed to adobe brick-making fatigue. We spent the day helping kids and even a few adults, make miniature adobe bricks. I find that it's a very popular activity with children and parents alike. Kids are usually excited and a



Ranger's Report: Soil Science

It's all about the soil! Everything is connected to the soil, more or less. Soil is the determining factor in everything from growing crops to deciding where to build a structure. Soil also is an important factor in determining water and air quality.

Soil is made up of air, water, mineral matter and organic matter. Air and water make up about 50% of soil. There are many defining characteristics used to classify the many types of soils. Just as plants and animals are organized in a taxonomic system, so are soils. There are thousands of different types of soil on the planet (over 23,000 in the U.S. alone). For the sake of simplicity, we can describe soils as sand, silt or clay. Different ratios of sand, silt and clay make up various types of soil, such as, sandy loam, silt clay, loamy sand and so on. Here at Ranch Guajome Adobe, we find soils that range from sandy loam to clay loam. In fact, according to the soil surveys conducted by the Dept. of Agriculture we have about 14 different types of soil in or near the park.

As a Park Ranger, it's important to know what type of soil you may be dealing with if you are planting or irrigating. Since soil is the medium for plant growth it's important to do your research and make sure you are adding plants that will thrive in the native soil available at your park. Typically, it is too labor intensive and expensive to try and change the soil structure of an area just to add some plantings. Also, it's important to know the type of soil you are irrigating because the soil will determine how often and how much you should

water certain areas. For example, a sandy area will require frequent watering of shorter duration (referred to as "cycle and soak"), while clay or loam areas require less frequent watering, since they can hold more water.

Finally, it is important to educate park visitors about the importance of soil in the environment. A good place to start is to inform the public that soil is one of the largest carbon sinks on the planet. In other words, soil holds more carbon dioxide (CO₂) than other mediums, such as vegetation and the atmosphere (the ocean is an exception). In essence, agriculture (i.e. plowing) can release more CO₂ into the atmosphere than driving your car. Furthermore, since CO₂ is a greenhouse gas that could speed global climate change, then understanding the effects of disturbing (plowing, grading and tilling) soils is just as important as understanding the effects of driving your car to work everyday.

So, now we can add another advantage of preserving parks and open spaces to our list. Parks and open spaces can be considered carbon sinks, where greenhouse gases are stored and kept from escaping into the atmosphere. At the very least it's an interesting concept that parks can help prevent global warming, even if on a small scale.

For more info check out <http://soils.usda.gov>, this website is administered by the US Dept. of Agriculture's National Resource Conservation Service— it has a wealth of information about soil, you can even find out what type of soil you have in your own yard!

December 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7 Docent Meeting	8 Furniture Committee	9	10	11
12	13	14	15 <u>Awards Ceremony</u>	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30 Wedding	31	

Potluck @ the Next Docent Meeting

Please bring a dish to share at our next docent meeting on December 7th, 10am @ the Graham House Ranger Office.

Docents are asked to bring an unwrapped gift. Gifts will be donated to a local charitable organization, TBD at December's Docent Meeting.



- ◆ Docent Meeting @ the Graham House @ 10am on the 1st Tuesday of every month
- ◆ Furniture Committee @ the Graham House @ 9:30am on the 2nd Wednesday of every month

Park Projects & Updates

New Wedding Photo Album Completed

Park visitors interested in renting the park for a reception and/or wedding will now have an updated wedding album to peruse. The album contains photographs from recent weddings and allows customers to visualize the use of the different spaces available (i.e. West Veranda, Victorian Garden and the Chapel).

Parlor Clock Repaired

The parlor clock— an antebellum model that was available in the Montgomery Ward catalogue in the 1860s— has been oiled and adjusted. It is said that the clock smith spent nearly one week unwinding the timing adjustment device! Docent **Toni Bongiovani** had the clock repaired at the Tick Tock Doc in Carlsbad. She will ensure that the clock is now keeping correct time and that it continues to be wound.

Also...

Thanks to **Toni** we now have new Rancho Guajome postcards for sale in the gift store. Toni did everything from snapping the photos, to printing them and delivering them to the park.

FYI: Heritage Trees

Parks Departments Around the Country Help Protect Historically Important Trees

I came across a link on the Los Angeles City Parks webpage concerning heritage trees. I was fairly certain I knew what heritage trees were. I figured they were really old, gnarled trees that had been around since George Washington was president. Turns out the classification of a tree as a heritage tree, is a bit more complicated than simply being an old tree. According to City of Los Angeles Parks and Recreation Department, "heritage trees are individual trees of any size or species that are specifically designated as heritage because of their historical, commemorative or horticultural significance" ([www.laparks.org/heritage trees](http://www.laparks.org/heritage%20trees)).

I'm familiar with several heritage trees at Rancho Guajome, including the giant California Pepper-

tree in the Carriage Courtyard and several Osage Orange trees. However, what would we call the historic Bougainvillea and Cherokee Rose in the courtyard? Heritage shrubs?



Firewheel Tree, a heritage tree in an LA City Park



General County Info



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A legacy preserved

If you have something you would like to contribute to the newsletter (e.g. announcements, articles or photos) email Park Ranger