

# Orange County Historical Commission Newsletter

[www.ocparks.com/historicalcommission](http://www.ocparks.com/historicalcommission)



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## Anaheim Historical Society Home Tour

*Helen Myers, Orange County Historical Commissioner*

The Anaheim Historical Society is hosting a Historic Home Tour on May 14 & 15, both Saturday and Sunday, from 10am to 4 pm. The tour is scheduled to include five private homes, as well as two commercial buildings. The newly opened Ruby's Diner, located in the historic flat-iron building at 5 Points, will highlight adaptive reuse of a historic building that was nearly lost to demolition due to a road widening. The community rose up in protest at the loss of the historic resource, and the City's Redevelopment Agency, working with private developer Bill Taormina, rehabilitated the structure for its current use. Ruby's Diner has become an active gathering place for the Anaheim community. Another story of successful rescue is the Anaheim Brewery, which is also scheduled as a featured property on the tour. Located in the historic Packard dealership building, the site is being rehabbed for adaptive reuse as a microbrewery, owned and operated by master brewers Greg and Barbara Gero-vac. The Anaheim Brewery is scheduled for completion and Grand Opening just prior to the tour. The privately owned homes represent a range of architecture and time periods, including Italian Renaissance Revival, Craftsman, Spanish

see "Home Tour" on page 5

## ORANGE COUNTY'S WORLD-CLASS FOSSIL COLLECTION

*By Doris Walker-Smith, Orange County Historical Commissioner*

No dinosaurs walked across what is now Orange County, because the land here was under the ocean when those prehistoric terrestrial creatures inhabited the earth. Yet, Orange County is one of the richest vertebrate fossil preserves in the world, with untold remnants yet to be discovered.

As the local shoreline was uplifted some 10,000 years ago, an abundant population of land animals moved onto the new coastal plain. Later their remains in the soil became mixed with those of the marine animal species that had been local residents during the undersea age. What has been excavated here during modern development has become the most diverse collection of fossils imaginable.

Orange County has entered the scientific record books for such notable resources as:

1. the densest fossil bone collection,
2. the most diverse mix of co-deposited land and sea animal remains,
3. some of the most complete whale fossil skeletons,
4. California's largest intact prehistoric "reef" of pecten shells,
5. the presence of hundreds of previously unknown fossil species

In Coyote Canyon, when sand and gravel were extracted for construction of the I-5 and I-91 freeways from 1956 to 1973, remains from more than 70 different species were unearthed. These ranged from pond turtles

*Members and staff of the Orange County Historical Commission held their recent monthly meeting in Laguna Hills. They are pictured here at its Civic Center entrance.*

*This city, built on record-setting ancient fossil beds, has decorated the interiors of its civic buildings with specimens of the ages-old fossils that have been lifted from the local soil.*



see "Fossils" on page 2

(residents when the area was a swamp) to camels and giant bison (when it was an oak woodland). Even whales had swum in that inland canyon, when it was an ocean bottom before geologic forces uplifted the hills.

Upper Newport Bay has yielded one of the nation's most unusual mixes of land and sea fossils. They have included native horses, bison, wild dogs and birds. Forces of nature intermingled these animal remains with former ocean residents. Those sea creatures included shellfish, sharks, dolphins and whales. Also found with them are the bones of later mastodons, pronghorn antelope and bears. A similar mix of vertebrate and invertebrate land and sea fossils was unearthed during excavations for the extension of the I-55 freeway.



*A diverse display of off-shore fossils that were buried within the land that became Laguna Hills features the dramatic skull and tusks of a two-million-year-old mammoth, displayed in the city's Community Center.*

In 1967, a 30-foot petrified whale skull was uncovered in San Juan Capistrano, and the next year the skull and jaw of a 40-foot one was raised there. In 1980, two of only four complete whale skeletons ever found to that date were uncovered: a 70-footer in Laguna Hills and a 50-footer in San Clemente. In 1986 a 30-foot fossilized whale, exposed during grading in Monarch Beach, was lying alongside a 10-foot one, perhaps its calf.

Other spectacular finds in the uplifted ocean bottom have included a unique four-tusked walrus and a rare fur seal within the area of San Clemente appropriately named Marblehead. The pecten reef in Also Viejo, made of fused fossilized limestone and scallop shells, extends for miles and is as thick at 500 feet in places.

Birds whose locally discovered bones prove they were once residents of the county include the flightless great auk, puffin, albatross, booby and gannet. Four-inch-long teeth of the great white shark's predecessor – still sharp after 20 million years, have been found through the county. These preserved teeth of that prehistoric 30-foot-long fish had often surfaced and punctured the tires of trail bikes.

Before massive developmental excavations became common here in the 1970s, random fossil finds were graciously given to the well-known natural history museums in Los Angeles and San Diego, as there was no place designated in Orange County to store or display them. Then the Natural History Foundation of Orange County was formed by concerned citizens, who gained quick expertise when they saw these precious record-setting bones exiting this county.

In 1977, the Orange County Board of Supervisors enacted an ordinance requiring the presence at all grading operations of a certified paleontologist, invested with the authority to halt the operation when a significant fossil or artifact was uncovered. Costs of that monitoring and relic extraction and encasement in a protective plaster cast were, and still are, to be borne by the developer.

*see "Fossils" on page 3*

*"Fossils" from page 2*

Then, in a 1986 precedent-setting move, the Board of Supervisors established by law that all such historic remnants found in Orange County shall be retained here, unless special permission is granted for their transfer elsewhere. However, provisions for displaying these valuable specimens have yet to be realized.

Excavations for the toll roads in recent years have uncovered many thousands of additional fossils, including new genera and species of marine mammals and fish. Newsworthy oddities have included a penguin-like bird (manacala) and a beaked whale.



*Another Community Center exhibit features the bones and teeth of extinct Ice Age animals that died and were fossilized under the ground of Laguna Hills. Many were uncovered during excavations to build the city's Community Center and Sports Complex.*

The bulk of the not yet articulated fossils are stored unceremoniously in a county complex in Santa Ana. The precious pieces have been tenderly organized there, and some cleaned and made ready for display by a group of committed volunteers. Cal State Fullerton entered into a curation program with the County of Orange in 2009, which should further their readiness to be exhibited. The collection facility has been named the Dr. John D. Cooper Archaeological and Paleontological Center.

For many years this operation was coordinated by volunteer retired geology professor, Dr. John D. Cooper. He had noted that Orange County's wealth of fossil material includes a collection of marine mammal specimens that ranks third in the world – outranked only by those owned by the Los Angeles County Natural History Museum and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC.

The goal of believers in local historical preservation should be the acquisition of a county site to share these wondrous trophies of the local past with their owners – the citizens of Orange County.



*Three original commissioned paintings add historical drama to the walls of the Laguna Hills Civic Center. They depict the changing scenes of local agriculture in the Saddleback Valley – cattle ranching, then field crops, then citrus growing, all prevalent on the terrain that became the City of Laguna Hills.*

*Photos by Steven Sarkis*



# COME CELEBRATE 50 YEARS OF CITYHOOD FOR SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO!

## CENTURIES OF HISTORY - 50 YEARS OF CITYHOOD

### SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO ANNIVERSARY CALENDAR

<b>January 14-15</b>	Powerpoint Presentation of Yorba Photographic Collection by David Belardes
<b>February 5</b>	Car Show by CARE & Rotary <a href="http://www.capoanimalrescue.com">www.capoanimalrescue.com</a>
<b>February</b>	Photographic Exhibit of Old San Juan Capistrano at Historical Society - all month <a href="http://www.sjchistoricalsociety.com">www.sjchistoricalsociety.com</a>
<b>March 26</b>	Swallows Day Parade and Mercado
<b>April 8</b>	Battle of the Bands - Historic Town Center Park
<b>April 9</b>	Celebration Festival HTC Park 10:00 -4:00; Music, Games, Food
<b>April 16</b>	San Juan Capistrano Library Professional Storytellers
<b>May</b>	Battle of the Mariachis - Mission
<b>May</b>	Juaneno Cultural Days - Blas Aguilar Adobe Month long hands on events
<b>June</b>	Seminar on the History of San Juan Capistrano by author Pam Gibson
<b>July</b>	Capistrano Play by Camino Real Playhouse At Zoomars in Historic Los Rios District
<b>August</b>	11 Annual Rancho Mission Viejo Rodeo
<b>August</b>	Julie Johnson Horse demonstration

San Juan Capistrano started with the Mission in 1776. Before that we were a village of Native Americans. But we did not become a City until 1961.

There had been talk about becoming a City before, but after a year-long fight to get a new high school was lost to San Clemente the residents of San Juan Capistrano decided that they wanted more control over their future. They feared that San Clemente might annex our community. After the signing of a petition, the vote by the County Board of Supervisors was set for April 11, 1961. The vote was 358 in favor of cityhood and 88 against. San Juan Capistrano officially became a city on April 19, 1961, the day the election was certified.

For additional information and location of events go to the City's web page at [www.sanjuancapistrano.org](http://www.sanjuancapistrano.org)

<b>September 10</b>	Capistrano Native Plants by Tree of Life Nursery Los Rios Park
<b>October</b>	Vintage Farewell to the Swallows by Chamber of Commerce <a href="http://www.sanjuanchamber.org">www.sanjuanchamber.org</a>
<b>October</b>	Rotary's Annual Ridge Walk <a href="http://www.sanjuancapistranorotary.org">www.sanjuancapistranorotary.org</a>
<b>November</b>	Photographic Exhibit on People of San Juan Capistrano Historical Society - <a href="http://www.sjchistoricalsociety.com">www.sjchistoricalsociety.com</a>
<b>December</b>	Holiday Photographic Exhibit and Time Capsule Historical Society - <a href="http://www.sjchistoricalsociety.com">www.sjchistoricalsociety.com</a>

### Anniversary Celebration Sponsors

Advanced Real Estate Services  
Blas Aguilar Adobe Museum and  
Acjachemen Cultural Center  
Capistrano Veterinary Clinic  
Capistrano Valley Christian School  
Excel Electric  
Friess Electric  
Independence Bank  
Ricardo's Place  
Ross Medical Associates  
Family Practice & Urgent Care  
San Juan Capistrano Historical Society  
South OC Auto Group at San Juan Capistrano  
Southern Counties Construction  
Stroscher Capistrano, LLC  
Sukut Real Properties  
Tuttle-Click Capistrano Ford  
Wells Fargo  
Zoomars Petting Zoo

### Celebration Committee

**Honorary Chair**  
Pam Hallan Gibson

**Chair**  
Jan Siegel

Ilse Byrnes  
Ann Forster  
Councilwoman Laura Frees  
Ken Friess  
Erin Kutnick  
Jerry Nieblas  
Randi Pushkin  
Mozelle Sukut  
Don Tryon  
Jonathan Volzke

**Banner Artists:** Local youth, 17 and under, designed the banners that are on Camino Capistrano and Del Obispo. They are: Jordan Anderson, Xiaoyang Chen, Robert Hoffman, Caitlyn Kelly, Andrew Kim, Kate Lee, Tiffany Meza, Tamara Meyerhoff, David Orgill, Jessica Scheevel, Lauren Schneider, Bronwyn Seward, Matthew Shaffner, Liam Short, Andrew Stevens, Kevan Zameni, Sonia Zhang.

The Celebration Committee is selling brick pavers to be placed at the entrance to Historic Town Center Park. The pavers have three lines, 17 characters per line. They can be purchased by anyone in the community for \$250.00 each. Forms are available on line at [www.sanjuancapistrano.org](http://www.sanjuancapistrano.org). All the money for the pavers is 100% tax deductible.

The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary logo design is by local artisan, Toni Reiner.



*"Home Tour" from page 1*

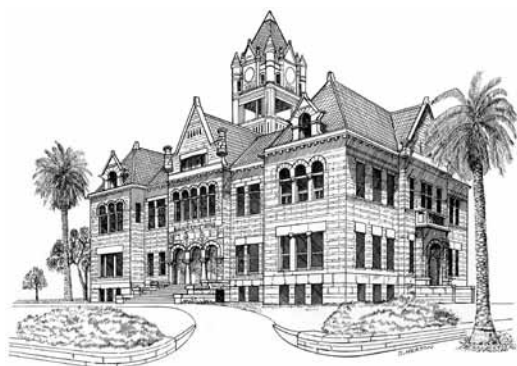
Colonial Revival, and an American Foursquare home that was featured is a previous tour as a "hard hat house".

To make this Home Tour even more exciting, the Muzeo is donating tickets to AHS, which will be included with each advance purchase ticket. Tickets bought prior to May 1 are \$20, and include the free Muzeo ticket. Tickets purchased the day of the tour are \$25 for the General Public and \$20 for Anaheim Historical Society members. To purchase your tickets, send a check along with a note for the number of tickets you wish to purchase, and where to send confirmation, to:

Anaheim Historical Society  
PO Box 927

Anaheim, CA 92815

Volunteer docents receive a free ticket to the event and a free Muzeo ticket. If you would like to volunteer as a docent, please contact Andrea Manes at 714-815-3885.



## OC HISTORIC PARKS DIRECTORY

### OLD COURTHOUSE

Griselda Castillo, Historic Parks Manager/ Executive  
Officer, Historical Commission/Archaeology  
and Paleontology ..... 714-973-6609  
Donna Breitfeller, Staff to the  
Historical Commission..... 714-973-6610  
Old Courthouse Museum..... 714-973-6605  
Marshall Duell, Old Courthouse Museum ..... 714-973-6607

### KEY RANCH/YORBA CEMETERY/ PERALTA ADOBE

Office..... 714-973-3190  
Bradley Flynt..... 714-973-3191

### HERITAGE HILL/IRVINE RANCH HEADQUARTERS/MODJESKA

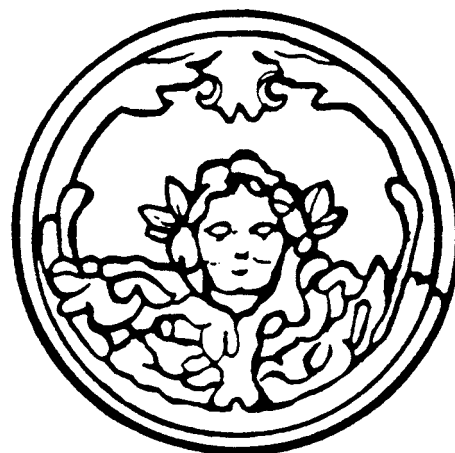
South County Office (Heritage Hill) ..... 949-823-2230  
Sue McIntire..... 949-923-2231

## 2011 OPEN HOUSE SCHEDULE

**The Old Orange County Courthouse will be open  
on the following Saturdays in 2011:**

April 30th  
September 24th  
December 3rd

**Come and join us!**



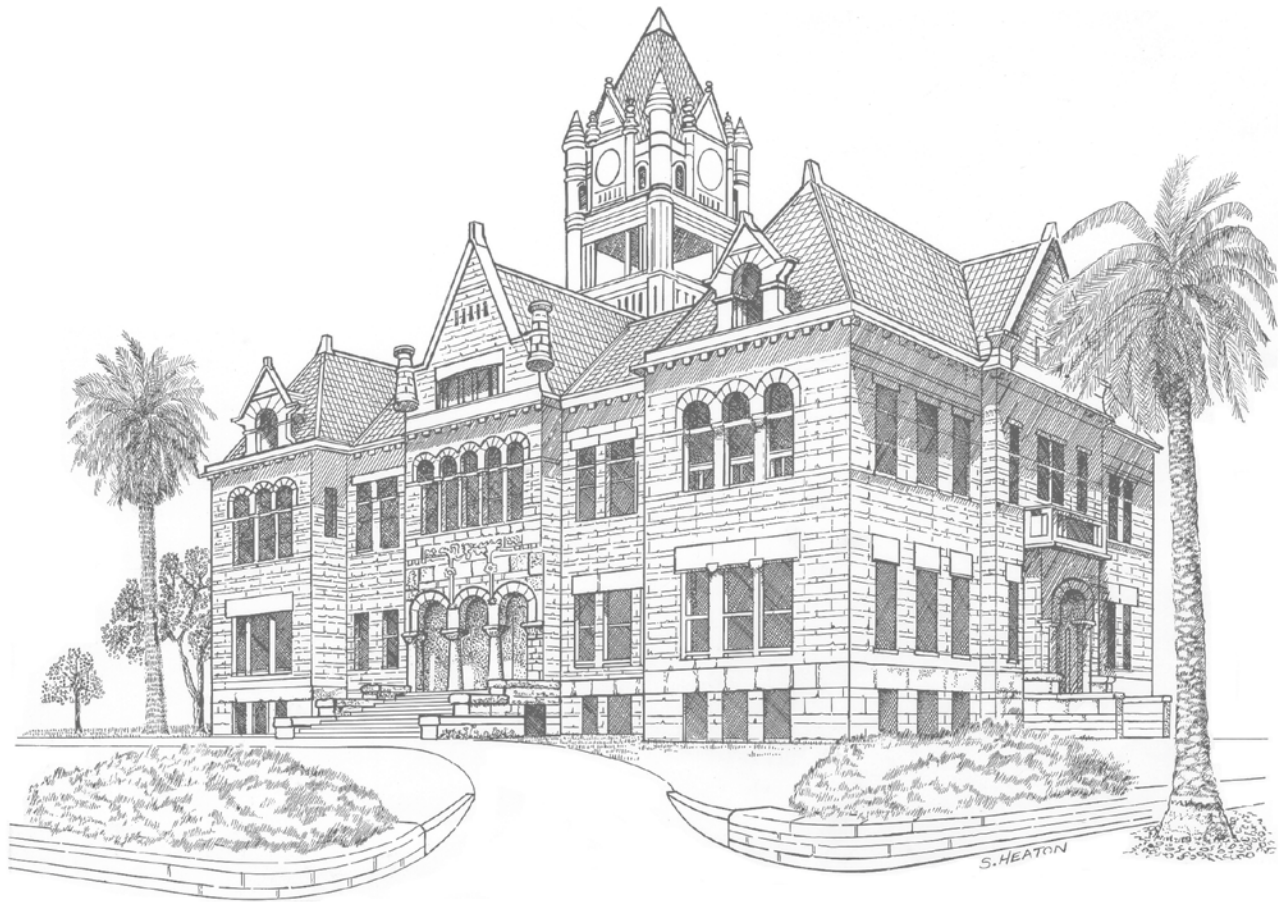
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The following are the deadlines for submission of items for  
the Newsletter:

<u>Newsletter Date</u> .....	<u>Deadline</u>
May 2011 – August 2011 .....	May 2, 2011
September 2011 - December 2011 .....	September 5, 2011

For more information, contact Donna Breitfeller  
at 714-973-6610 or [donna.breitfeller@ocparks.com](mailto:donna.breitfeller@ocparks.com).

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