SAVING THIS HISTORIC LANDMARK
FOR GENERATIONS TO COME

MISSION TREASURES EXHIBIT CONTINUES

FIRST FRUITS OF THE HARVEST
HISTORY OF THE “MISSION GRAPE”

AWARDED THE MOST IMPORTANT HERITAGE SITE

MEMBERS APPRECIATION DAY ON NOVEMBER 5TH
When I was 8 years old, I lived in Santa Ana. From that perspective San Juan Capistrano seemed a long way away. But my folks made the trek to South Orange County (which wasn’t even called that then) past Lion Country Safari through the new City of Irvine, past the unincorporated territory of what would become the City of Mission Viejo to visit the Mission. We weren’t Catholic. However, my parents looked for budget-friendly trips and as a result made a routine of coming south to enjoy the Dana Point Harbor, Mission, and Aliso Creek Pier.

Our visits to the Mission meant my little brother kicking up the gravel along the rock-bordered walkways, climbing upon old chairs (which later I would discover were confessional) and walking into the Serra Chapel, which smelled of candles. We were worried about covering our heads and shoulders as we quietly entered the space.

On what would be one of the few times my working mother could volunteer for my school, I got to come to the Mission on my fourth grade field trip. It was a special day for me. I bought a swallow pin to commemorate the day (a pin that is still sold from the Gift Shop and looks more like a blue bird).

I recall my visits vividly as they continued even after my parents relocated to Anaheim, Hacienda Heights, and Seal Beach. Later, as a college student at Cal State Fullerton I brought a prospective boyfriend to the Mission to capture the memories of my youth and look at the old buildings. Many years later, and just prior to working here, I led my son’s fourth grade class on a history hunt on the Mission’s grounds.

In my mid 30s, the opportunity to serve as Executive Director came about, a privilege I am still grateful for every day. I believe I had been prepared somehow for this job as I had the chance to see the Mission from “an Orange County resident” perspective.

Even though I was on my own personal journey of faith, my experience in visiting the Mission and seeing it through the eyes of a student, child and parent, gave me a chance to see how others saw the Mission.

And now, I have been working here for nearly eight years. The time has flown, and the team has grown. The Mission is my home away from home. In this role I get to meet many people from all over the world who have enthusiastically planned their visit to California and specifically included the Mission as one of their vacation stops.

In contrast to this worldwide appreciation of the Mission, there are few Orange County residents coming to the Mission. It seems that some people might take the Mission for granted, thinking it will always be here. I think about that frequently and recall that when I was a child there were no annual passes to anywhere, which meant a paid visit to anywhere was a big deal, and something you saved for and remembered. Maybe some OC residents specifically don’t think to come here because they are too busy getting their set number of visits out of their theme park passes.

Speaking as a daughter of Orange County my message is meant to go through you, our committed supporter of the Mission, to those around you that might fit the description of having a benign awareness. You are among a distinct group of individuals who appreciate the value of this oasis of the past. Because of that appreciation, I invite you to share the good news about all that is going on here, from education, to arts, museum and cultural events, the Mission offers so much value on so many levels.

Who knows, perhaps your reminder or advocacy will generate a memorable visit for a son or daughter of Orange County who then one day might grow up to be a steward of history. It’s worth taking a chance on.

I hope to see you on the path,

 Mechelle Lawrence- Adams
 Executive Director
 Chief Preservation Officer

Mission San Juan Capistrano Staff, Romance Gala, 2011
One of the critical elements of the forthcoming Gate House Preservation Project includes the much-needed rehabilitation of the 1916 gate house building located in the front of the Mission.

This tiny, yet historically-significant building that once served as a ticket booth when Father O’Sullivan was the pastor of the Mission (1910-1933), will now be saved for future generations to enjoy. The building is in dire need of care.

As a result of private funding, the Mission’s Preservation Team will carry out the following work over the next several months:

* Fumigation of the building
* Removal of trees and root systems surrounding the building
* New roof to prevent water coming into the space
* Repair and patch failing plasters inside and out
* Stabilize the building’s foundation
* Conserve interior finishes
* Stabilize failing wood
* Removal of outdated electrical system including safety upgrades to ensure compliance with City building codes

In addition to rehabilitation of the historic gate house, the project includes removing the wall in front of the building, creating a safer entry plaza outside of the Mission with new seating and landscapes, ultimately constructing the new gift shop and ticket area.

Upon its completion and conservation, the building will be gently used for back house operations as it was used historically. For information on how you can get involved in this important project, contact Mission staff at 234-1311 or 234-1323.
Mission Treasures Exhibit  

Did you see the Lincoln Document? How about Father Serra’s Vestment? Anybody tell you about actress Mary Pickford’s secret wedding at the Mission, captured in vivid color on canvas by a remarkable artist?

If you missed some of these incredible pieces of history on display at Mission San Juan Capistrano as part of the “Mission Treasures: Historical Collection Revealed” exhibit, not to worry. Because of popular demand, the exhibit’s scheduled end date has been cancelled and it will now be a permanent exhibit. For those who haven’t seen the breathtaking exhibit, as well as those who already have and would like to see it again, the exhibit’s doors are open daily.

Lincoln Document artifact on display.

The exhibit features rare paintings, precious religious and historic artifacts, and documents related to the Mission’s history dating back to the 1700s.

Awarded Orange County’s  

On the heels of the Mission’s benefit gala, Mission San Juan Capistrano was recognized as Orange County’s Most Important Heritage Site when it was honored with a Helena Modjeska Cultural Legacy Award for lifetime achievement at Arts Orange County’s 12th Annual Orange County Arts Awards. Also honored for lifetime achievement was Rod Gilfry, who performed at the Mission’s benefit gala this year.

The award was presented on September 20th at the Samueli Theater, Segerstrom Center for the Arts in Costa Mesa. Mission San Juan Capistrano Executive Director Mechelle Lawrence-Adams accepted the award presented by the California Arts Council as appointed by the governor and state legislature.

“I couldn’t be more proud of the Mission,” said Aitken, a Mission Preservation Foundation Board member and a founding partner of Orange County law firm Aitken, Aitken and Cohn. “As a legacy, Arts Orange County recognition is significant not only as it relates to individual artists, but also as it relates to institutions, institutions that promote historical culture. This jewel of the missions has never sparkled so bright as it has in recent years. “The Mission is a spiritual place, but it’s not exclusive in a religious sense. It’s relevant to the histories of Spain, of Mexico, and of the U.S. It brings us back to where we come from, where we are and where we can go.”

Arts Orange County is the county’s official arts council and local partner for the California Arts Council.
Hosted by the Mission Preservation Foundation, the 2011 Romance of the Mission held on Friday, September 16th, was a magical evening for over 400 guests who gathered on the grounds of Historic Mission San Juan Capistrano, and raised over $210,000 in support of the Gate House Preservation Project. Mission Preservation Foundation President, George O’Connell, welcomed guests and introduced the evening’s honorary chair Reverend Monsignor Arthur A. Holquin prior to a concert in the Ruins of the Great Stone Church that featured two-time Grammy-nominated baritone Rod Gilfry.

After the concert, guests were treated to a four-course plated candlelight dinner thanks to the Mission’s longtime community partner, The Ritz-Carlton, Laguna Niguel. During the evening, The Ritz-Carlton was recognized for the resort’s steadfast support over the years and gala committee members Diana Arrigoni, Barb Beier, Georgianna Hales, Mozelle Sukut, and Madeline Swinden were introduced and thanked by Board member Bill Cvengros. Visit the slideshow on www.missionsjc.com.

Save the Date for the 2012 Romance of the Mission benefit gala scheduled for Friday, September 14th.
First Fruits of the Harvest

Most Americans do not realize Spain “Primicias” (Spanish for first fruits) is a long held tradition of the Native Americans of the missions. “Acu” or Jose de Gracia Cruz, the last full-blooded Native Acejachemen, (Ah-hawsh-eh-men), is seen in this photograph continuing the tradition of his forefathers presenting the first fruits to Father John O’Sullivan in the fall of 1916.

The practice of presenting “Primicias” most likely occurred for the first time at Mission San Juan Capistrano in the early 1780s. We know a shipment of vines arrived in 1779, and were planted right away, making the first harvest most likely in 1781. After the founding in 1776, Mission San Juan Capistrano, like all other California missions imported their wine. However, because the quantities of wine coming into California were insufficient Father Serra personally requested each mission plant grape vines to produce wine for the Roman Catholic celebration of Mass, but also for table use for the Franciscan padres.

The “Mission Grape” origin(s), or genetics are unclear. Many scholars debate whether it is a descendent of the European grape Vitis Vinfera, or the sub variety of the Chilean grape Pais. Yet, other scholars believe the “Mission Grape” to be hybrid of Native California grapes with European varieties. Despite not having a clear understanding of the grape’s origin(s), we do know it is a hardy grape.

Visit the west garden at the Mission to see the “Mission Grape”.

Serving Education

Congratulations to Mission Preservation Foundation Board Member, Connie Spenuzza, also known as author Cecilia Velástegui on the release of her first novel. Gathering the Indigo Maidens takes the reader on an exhilarating journey through time, languages and cultures as Paloma searches for the indigo maidens of her personal and historical past. Proceeds from her book signing on October 4th will be donated to the Mission’s Adopt-A-Class scholarship program.

For parents, students and teachers, two perfect guides! All 21 California Missions Report Workbook is recommended for studying any of the 21 California missions for a school mission report. Also available is Mission San Juan Capistrano Report Workbook, which is recommended for studying Mission San Juan Capistrano for a school mission report. Both workbooks are available for purchase online at our gift shop at www.missionsjc.com. Also visit our on-site California Mission Resources Studio, open daily from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Thank You

(Gifts given from May 18, 2011 - September 6, 2011)

to Our Generous Supporters!

Anonymous-In Memory of
Aurora “ChaCha” Belardes
Anonymous-In Honor of the Tassinaris, the Millers, the Woods, and the Crittendens
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William Beier and Waldo L. Boehner
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Sheila and Gordon Mann
Sara Maye
Julie and Tom McDorman
Memories of Me
Microsemi Corporation
Suzi and Paul Mikos
Mission Baslica School
Melinda and Anthony Moiso
Mollie’s Famous Cafe
Arilyn Moran-Lawrence
Hamideh Movahedi
MP Urban Marketing
MSJC Women’s Guild
Sue Ann Ness
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Zen Dojos- Martial Arts Studios
Zoomars Petting Zoo

Ralphs is giving up to $3,000,000 to non-profit organizations this year, and with your help, Historic Mission San Juan Capistrano can earn a share of it for preservation.

Every time you shop for groceries and swipe your card, the Mission will automatically start earning.

An important note: Due to a changeover in the Ralphs online system, beginning 9/1/2011, participants who registered before 8/1/2011 must re-register for the new term at www.ralphs.com or in-store for the community contribution program to remain active.

For any other questions visit www.missionsjc.com/donations/ralphs.php
Members Appreciation Day
Complimentary Hotdogs & Lemonade
November 5 • 12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Celebrating Communities
2 for 1 Admission
November 4, 2011: 92688
December 2, 2011: 92637

Teacher Appreciation Day
Free Admission 2nd Saturday of the Month

Christmas at the Mission
Saturday • December 3, 2011
5:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Award Winning Audio Tour
Available in English, Spanish, German, French, Italian and Vietnamese

Audio Tour for Children
Available in English and Spanish

Panning for Gold
Saturdays • 12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Guided Tours
Monday - Friday • 1:00 p.m.
Saturdays & Sundays
11:15 a.m., 1:00, 2:15, & 3:45 p.m.

California Missions Resource Studio
Open Daily • 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Koi Fishing Feeding
Daily • 12:45 p.m.

Curiosity Carts (Hands On Learning)
Tuesdays & Thursdays • 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Garden Tours
Wednesdays • 10:15 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.

Native American Basket Weaving
Wednesdays • 1st & 3rd of each month
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Mariachis at the Mission
Saturdays • 10:00 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.