mission treasures
historical collection revealed

also:
swallows day celebration
preserving the olive mill
mission thanks volunteers
mission history for chocolate lovers
Volunteers
Executive Director's Message

"5,200" is the answer.

And the question is, "How many hours do volunteers give to Mission San Juan Capistrano annually by way of their support in events, office work, tours, education programs, museum development, historic interpretations, and gardening?"

The number is staggering. If you were to compensate these hours, the Mission would have to close. If you were to eliminate the valuable work being done by our volunteers, the Mission would be a different place.

Each volunteer brings a different set of eyes, and a different life’s story when they come here volunteering to help or looking for a way to become engaged.

Many volunteers are teachers, many are retired, but not all. Some of them are still raising children, or working in busy careers and jobs. Some are looking for work too. Each of them has a unique perspective of how they can help and what the Mission means. And still, somehow the intangible meaning of the Old Mission brings these varied individuals together collectively to create a vibrancy that is unmatched at any other California landmark.

Since 2005, it has been our tradition to take a timeout, to say thank you to our volunteers and employees. The celebration is held at the World Famous El Adobe Restaurant right here in downtown San Juan Capistrano where the chips are fresh and the salsa “just right.” We gather with members of the Mission Preservation Foundation, our City Council leaders, and employees. We enjoy a meal together, take time to make new connections and revive ourselves and purpose. Every year we select several volunteers and employees that best capture the spirit of inspiration, education, and preservation and give out certificates of appreciation in front of one another, applauding the award winners enthusiastically.

While each volunteer here is deserving of recognition, it is also important to say thank you to some for whom the Mission is like a second home. So we do. And the effect is moving. To see the excitement in the eyes of selfless givers makes me want to give more and to be a better example of leadership, purpose, and determination. Those volunteers, each and every one of them, mean something special to the Mission.

I always say, “It takes many hands to make light work.” At the Mission it takes many hands to do good work, to inspire, make a difference, preserve a landmark, and make a memory. This edition of the Jewel is dedicated to all our volunteers, from rich to poor, retired and active, young and experienced, they are the best anywhere.

See you on the path,

Mechelle Lawrence-Adams
Executive Director
Chief Preservation Officer
The Olive Mill was originally built around 1880 at the request of the Mission Pastor, Father Mut and has been a long standing feature in the front gardens of the Mission, also serving as an educational tool for many visitors.

The Mill represents how important olive production was to the Mission. The central circular well area show where olives were crushed to extract olive juice.

Evidence emerged in late spring 2010 that the pillars to the Olive Mill were beginning to lean and by fall it was getting worse and in danger of falling over.

Inspection of the Mill site revealed the tilting was caused by uneven settling of the ground as a result of water draining directly below the pillars and the collapse of decaying roots from a pepper tree removed several years earlier.

To prevent this important tour feature from collapsing, action was taken by the Preservation and Facilities departments with the installation of a wooden bracing system to arrest further tilting. Afterwards, staff added topsoil to promote water drainage away from the site. All work was carried out according to the National Trust for Historic Preservation standards, which are always a governing principal for all preservation work conducted at the Mission.

At this time, the Mission lacks the funds required to further landscape and conserve the Olive Mill. To learn more on how you can support this and other preservation projects, please contact Mission San Juan Capistrano at (949) 234-1323 or visit www.missionsjc.com.
■ St. Joseph’s Day & Return of the Swallows ■

Once again we celebrate the return of the famous swallows to San Juan Capistrano and the coming of spring — a time of renewal — on Saturday, March 19 with our annual St. Joseph’s Day and the Return of the Swallows Celebration.

The annual celebration begins with the ringing of the historic bells followed by performances from Renee Bondi, Mission Parish School, Ballet Folklorico and Mariachi Capistrano. Join us by the bell wall to hear Acjachemen Prayer songs from Tushmal Singers along with the official bell ringing ceremony. The day continues with Native American Stories by award-winning teacher Jacque Nunez; “Are You Smarter Than a California 4th Grader” presented by the Docent Society and ends with dance performances by a Native American Dance duo and La Sole Flamenco.

The Living History Volunteers will show off in a historic fashion show and the Mission is proud to welcome back Dr. Charles R. Brown, renowned cliff swallows expert for a special lecture. The day concludes with the final ringing of the historic bells. Food and dessert options will also be available from our vendors: Las Golondrinas Mexican Food; Z Pizza; Hawaiian Delight’s Sno Cones, Cotton Candy and Churros; A&M Catering’s Hot Dogs and Apple Revolution’s Chocolate-Dipped Fruit and Cupcakes.

Don’t miss out on the Swallows Day Parade which takes place the following weekend, Saturday, March 26 in Downtown San Juan Capistrano. Be sure to take a look at the Mission San Juan Capistrano Parade float featuring Mariachi Capistrano. After the parade, join us in the Mission courtyard for a performance from Mariachi Capistrano.

■ Upcoming Exhibit ■

Mission San Juan Capistrano is excited to debut its next exhibit, “Mission Treasures: Historical Collection Revealed” coming this spring. The exhibit’s official opening will be Friday, May 27 and will continue on display through the summer. The exhibit will feature historic artifacts from the Mission’s past that have not been seen in decades, if ever. Mission Treasures includes precious and rare paintings, religious artifacts, and documents related to the Mission’s history. These artifacts date back as early as the 1800’s. Don’t miss out on this limited exhibit and the chance to view this one-of-a-kind collection.
El Viaje de Portolá will celebrate its 48th Spring Trek on the weekend of April 1-3, and Mission San Juan Capistrano will again benefit.

El Viaje de Portolá, South Orange County’s annual trail ride, is hosted by Rancho Mission Viejo. Activities are planned for Thursday, March 31, at the Ranch’s Cow Camp and Cecil Martinez Arena as well as that evening at San Juan’s El Adobe. Prior to beginning the actual trail ride on Friday, April 1, at noon, riders and friends will gather at the Mission’s Serra Chapel for Mass at 8 a.m. and after Mass, at Portolá Plaza for the annual Empty Saddles Ceremony where all the men who have “ridden the Portolá Trail” — and have passed on — are remembered. The Mass honors “Gibby” Aguirre (1958-1995), the son of Mission’s 2010 “Gala” honoree, Gil Aguirre. It is called “Gibby’s Mass.”

The membership roster of persons affiliated with El Viaje de Portolá lists more than 300 men. Most are from Southern California; others hail from Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Utah, Texas, Arizona, Nevada, Virginia, Washington D.C., Alaska and Hawaii. Each year approximately 250 men saddle up for the Spring Trek.

El Viaje de Portolá was established in 1964. Eight men, known affectionately as “Los Fundadores” or “The Big 8” — Irvine family member Charley Wheeler, Knott’s Berry Farm’s Ken Oliphant, Orange County lawyer Dudley Wright, San Juan’s own Fulton Shaw, and Orange County businessmen Bud Curtis, Bill Riffle, Bill Shattuck and Bill Votaw — are the founders. Only Bill Shattuck is still riding; the others have joined the “Empty Saddles Trek.” This year’s Trek is dedicated to Bill.

The first Spring Trek in 1964 began at El Adobe. Two days later, after camps in Trabuco Canyon and on the Irvine Ranch at the MCAS El Toro, the riders arrived at the newly constructed Saddleback Inn on First Street in Santa Ana! Until 1977, Spring Treks were hosted alternately by the owners of the Irvine Ranch and Rancho Mission Viejo. Since ’77, Rancho Mission Viejo has welcomed all Portolá activities.

Memories of early Treks on the Irvine Ranch include riding on the beaches between Corona del Mar and Laguna Beach and camping at the present-day location of the Shady Canyon development and at the now public Bommer Canyon cattle headquarters.

Other memories about times at Rancho Mission Viejo include beginning the Trek on the Mission Viejo Country Club driving range and camping at the “Trabuco Hilton,” the same site where Portolá spent a night in July of 1769. The “Hilton” may be observed from the 11th Tee at Tijeras Creek Golf Club in Rancho Santa Margarita.

For many years, the Ride began with a brunch at El Adobe. At about noon, the riders would ride up Camino Capistrano to the Mission’s Front Gate where Monsignor Paul Martin would bless the group before they rode east across the freeway on the Ortega Highway and wandered to the San Juan Creek trails which lead to Rancho Mission Viejo.

El Viaje de Portolá is essentially a group of friends who share a common love for California history and Mission San Juan Capistrano, the outdoors, the American West, cowboys, horses, campfires, and “Good Times.” In many ways, it might be characterized as a fraternity of pals. The yearly Trek provides the opportunity for these friends to leave the realities of every day life behind for a few days.

Down through all the years, El Viaje de Portolá’s commitment to Mission San Juan Capistrano has been generous and consistent. Annual gifts, made at the Spring Trek and also at the traditional October One Day Ride, now total more than $400,000. Moreover, giving records vividly reveal a history of individual Portolá riders leading the way with personal contributions in support of restoration programs, the Mission School, and the Mission Basilica.

The modern day “El Viaje de Portolá” — commemorating the 1769 trek of Gaspar de Portolá and Father Junipero Serra — has faithfully supported Mission activities for almost 50 years. The staff and volunteers at the historic Mission welcome, salute, and thank the “Riders of the Portolá Trail”.
For 30 years now, they have “walked the path.” Mission San Juan Capistrano’s Docent Society this year is celebrating the 30-year anniversary of its founding, and all along the way, it has been those individual Docents — defined as those who “walk the path” — that have made the Society an invaluable asset to the Mission and the community at large.

Since its founding in 1981, the Docent Society has provided tens of thousands of tours, led the effort to save the original mission bells, annually donated to the Mission School scholarship fund and donated funds for museum acquisitions, helped restore and conserve priceless artifacts and, all in all, served as an ambassador to visitors from all around the world.

In the past fiscal year alone, the Docents have provided tours for nearly 27,000 students while continuing to help raise funds for Mission maintenance and preservation.

Originally in 1981, there were 14 Docents and today there are a total of 91. The demand for these Touring Docents is 60 per week, so the Docent Society is always looking to add more of these special people who bring to life the stories of Native Americans, Spanish Founders and early settlers while connecting present-day concerns and relating how the mission system was fundamental to California’s socio-economic infrastructure.

Mary Susa, the Docent Society’s current president, said its members are perpetually attending continuing education programs to expand their knowledge and pass it on through the Docent Tours.

“I hear it all the time, especially on Saturdays at the information table,” Susa said. “I hear people trying to decide what to do, whether to come in and take a tour. And then when they do, their mouths drop open. The comment I hear all the time is, ‘I had no idea …’ They ask questions, they marvel at it. They want to know more and they come back.”

In 2000, Susa and past president Helen Gavin led the effort to save the four original mission bells that were slated to be melted down. Now, the two larger bells hang in the Great Stone Church, and the smaller two bells are in the bell wall.

It is efforts like that from people like Susa, Gavin and all the Docents that allow the Mission to continue as a vital link to California’s rich history.

“When you come in, there’s an aura of peace,” Susa said. “People are busy, busy, busy, but when you come here, you relax. People tell me they come here on their lunch break, just to have a moment and get themselves back together. It’s a wonderful place.”

There are many rewarding opportunities to become involved and support Mission San Juan Capistrano

For volunteer information please contact Pat March (949) 234-1322 or visit www.missionsjc.com
Join the Landmarks Club, Call (949) 234-1323 for membership details
Did You Know?
The History Channel recently filmed a documentary about Jesus at the Mission. Scheduled to air on Easter Sunday, April 24th. See History Channel for listings.

New Mission San Juan Capistrano Employees
L-R: Brandon Heffern, Guest Services; Joseph White, Security; Michael Redondo, Security; Sarah Riggs, Guest Services; Ashley Sayegh, Guest Services; Jim Burke, Guest Services

Upcoming Events
St. Joseph’s Day and Return of the Swallows Celebration
March 19, 2011 • Saturday • 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Mariachis at the Mission - Swallows Parade Day
March 26, 2011 • Saturday • Parade: 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Mariachis Performance: 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Thomas J. and Erma Jean Tracy Family Foundation presents The Seventh Annual Battle of the Mariachis Festival
Live musical entertainment, Mexican food and festivities!
May 21, 2011 • Saturday • 11:00 a.m.

Music Under the Stars Concert Series
Season Table Packages - March 28
Member Tickets & Tables - April 11
General Public Tickets & Tables - April 25

HOW TO ORDER
BY PHONE: (949) 234-1300, Mon.- Fri.
ONLINE: www.missionsjc.com
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Mr. and Mrs. Don Tryon

We regret any misspelling or errors. Names are published as records indicate.

PLEASE CONSIDER THE MISSION IN YOUR ESTATE PLANNING
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SPRING 2011 | THE JEWEL 6
Can you imagine living without chocolate? California’s Native people lived without chocolate for thousands of years, until the Spanish introduced it in the mid 1700s.

Yet, the Spanish cannot be credited for inventing chocolate. It was the Mayans and Aztec people over 2,000 years ago who harvested the native cocoa bean, ground them and added various seasonings to make a spicy and frothy chocolate drink.

As Spanish explorers and conquistadors entered the Americas, they soon discovered the Aztec and Mayans special chocolate drink. By the early 1500s, the Spanish imported chocolate back home, where it quickly became a royal court favorite. In just 100 years, chocolate became a favorite drink throughout Europe.

The Spanish people of Europe and New Spain became addicts of the chocolate drink. The Franciscan padres and soldiers who entered Alta California were no exception.

Almost every supply order from the California Missions and Presidios included large quantities of chocolate, chocolate cups or mugs, and special chocolate pots called jarro chocolatero, which were generally made of copper, and included molinillos, or a whipping stick.

The requisition records of February 1809 show Mission San Juan Capistrano ordering 10 large boxes of chocolate. The Presidio of Santa Barbara in 1795 requested 120 pounds of chocolate.

Franciscan padres were serious chocolate drinkers, so much so that visitors from all around the world mention the “super excellence” of their favored drink. Included is a Spanish recipe for hot chocolate. It may take more time than the powder packet variety, but it is worth a try. How often can you say that you have tasted history?

**RECIPE:**
1/2 cup (55 g) unsweetened powdered cocoa
1 cup (200 g) sugar
7 tsp (25 g) cornstarch (cornflour)
1/2 cup (120 ml) water
4 cups (1 l) milk

1. Mix the cocoa and sugar together.
2. Dissolve the cornstarch (cornflour) in the water and combine with the cocoa-sugar mixture in a medium-sized saucepan. Stir this until it is a smooth paste.
3. Begin heating this mixture, continuously stirring it with a whisk. Gradually pour in the milk. Continue stirring as you bring it to a simmer.
4. Simmer, stirring often, for about 10 minutes. The cocoa is ready when it thickens and is glossy and smooth.

*The consistency of the finished product should resemble chocolate pudding that didn’t quite set. If you halve this recipe, you’ll get just the right amount for two large mug-falls.*