

Hello Nature Friends.

The new year is about to start, and we want to send you our very best wishes for a year filled with good health and happiness and many walks outdoors enjoying our beautiful Nature Center. We had an outstanding craft fair, thank you to Heidi Webber and RuthAnne Murthy who co-chaired the event. We are very grateful to all the docents who worked hard with a joyful spirit to make it such a fantastic and successful event. (See Heidi Webber's article).

January will start with the Docent training, check the flyer and Ron's article. Spread the news. It keeps our organization very lively, open to new ideas and projects and so interesting. Mark this date on your calendar January 14. We thank you for your interest and your support.



Chronic Wasting Disease in Deer

Recently, dead deer have been reported along the waterfall trail and the other trails nearby. Those deaths are due to Chronic Wasting Disease.

Be aware that dead deer on the trail attract predators. A bear has been seen on a few occasions on the waterfall trail. An easy prey cannot be ignored, and deer are food. It is the circle of life, and hikers should not interfere.



The Rattler

Sponsored by the Placerita Canyon Nature Center Associates
19152 Placerita Canyon Road, Newhall, CA 91321
www.placerita.org (661) 259-7721

Placerita Canyon Nature Center
Over 50 Years of Nature Education

January-February 2025

Editor: Evelyn Vandersande Publisher: Heidi Webber



Docent Training 2025 Begins on January 14th

By Ron Kraus

This will be my 21st year of leading the Docent Training Program and I'm excited to welcome the next generation of nature enthusiasts to our orientation on January 14th, 2025. There's been many changes over the years, particularly in the number of students (there were six in my 2002 class) and the breadth and depth of the classes. But the goal of the program is the same—to train enthusiastic volunteers who bring the natural world to life for visitors of all ages.

Following are some of the basics you can share with those who may be interested in enrolling in the class.

Why Become a Docent?

- **Deepen Your Knowledge.** Explore the wonders of Placerita Canyon's natural world and history through in-depth training led by experts in fields like botany, ecology, and local history.
- **Inspire the Next Generation.** Ignite a passion for nature in children by leading engaging hikes and activities, helping them discover the wonders of the local flora, fauna, and other natural features.
- **Make a Difference:** Be a part of something bigger and contribute to the ongoing mission of environmental education and community outreach at Placerita Canyon.

Who Can Become a Docent?

No prior experience is necessary! All you need is a love for nature, a willingness to learn, and a commitment to volunteer your time (minimum twice a month). The program welcomes individuals 18 years and older.

What's Involved?

Our comprehensive 12-week training program starts on Tuesday, January 14th, 2025, and classes run Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 AM to Noon. The program fee of \$75 (discounted to \$60 for seniors) covers all training materials, including an instruction manual, field guide, T-shirt, and other resources.

Ready to Join the Fun?

Space is limited, so secure your spot and express your interest by emailing ron@placerita.org. You can also sign up at the Placerita Canyon Nature Center.

We're looking forward to a great new class! As in prior years, we welcome senior docents to attend the training to brush up on skills and to mentor and encourage the new students.



Behind the Scenes at the Annual Placerita Canyon Nature Center's Craft Fair

By Heidi Webber (Co-Chairperson with RuthAnne Murthy for 2024)

Every first weekend in December for decades, the Placerita Docents gather to put on the best Craft Fair in the Santa Clara Valley. People come from near and far. For years a group of women traveled from Arizona annually for this event. This year we had people drive from Las Vegas. The word is out. Bill and I personally have been involved for around 25 years!

Have you ever wondered how we get to this place, being able to put on this fantastic event, which is also our only focused fund-raiser of the year? Well, read on... This is what Bill and I do every year.

Beginning in October, I start ordering the wreaths. I keep a detailed inventory for each year so I know how much I should buy for the next year—still always a guess. I also keep notes and suggestions for the next year. If I don't start ordering in October, I have found out the hard way that wreaths can become scarce and we don't want that. In spite of this, there have been a couple years that we run out of something. This is also when Jill Goddard updates the flyer and I send off the order to have 500 made to give out to everyone. We also start posting it on FaceBook.

I put out notice that we need small logs for the Yule Logs. We like wood like sycamore, oak, birch and pine because of the beautiful bark and hopefully with odd twists and branches. They need to be aged a bit because fresh makes for a difficult and sappy drill for the candle holes. Bill gets started on them—what a mess! Sawdust and bits and pieces everywhere. But the end results are amazing.

After ordering most of what I need, there is at least one planning meeting. Now I can relax a little bit other than thinking about what's next. Evenings Bill and I, and Glenda Perl and often Sandra Cattell, sit in our homes and bag the #15 of floral pins we use for the wreaths. A #5 box of pins is about 3500 and we do little bags of 20 pins. For 2025, I anticipate needing #20 of pins. Packaging actually goes kind of fast once you get going.

The day after Thanksgiving, is when we really gear up. Word goes out to bring greens on Friday before the event. Bill is hitting the tree lots for trimmings and it's often close as they are just beginning to get their trees. Around Thursday, Bill and I and anyone else starts going out to the roadsides and people's property (with permission—thanks Liz Bastiani!) to gather greens.

This year Bill was trimming the coyote brush (that is quite healthy from its annual trim) and slid down a small hillside as he was headed for a nice bush. He landed in the bush, so while he was laying there, just started pruning away.

The afternoon before, a couple dozen of us descend on Placerita, roll out heavy plastic for the floor, plastic the walls for protection, cover the snake tanks to protect from glue splatters and so it doesn't freak out some of the patrons who are nervous around snakes. We paper the tables, lay out the glue guns and glue sticks, scatter pruners on the tables and the persons in charge of the greens are outside arranging.

In the Kid's Crafts room, RuthAnne Murthy is in her element. She and her wonderful helpers are setting up various crafts and getting the sample boards together. Signs are set up that Jill Goddard also made (she's such a talent and deserves so many thanks), wax pots are set up on papered counter.

In the museum we have brought out all the wreaths: this year we had 410 of various sizes—and ran out!!! The Yule Logs are on tables and organized as are the taper candles of various colors that go with them.

SHOWTIME!

On Saturday morning, the crowds start lining up about 9am. This year, they were lined up from the museum door and out and down the parking lot! We couldn't even breathe until around 11:30.

The doors open at 10 and it's non-stop organized chaos from then until Sunday when we are done. We've sold out of wreaths. We sent Liz Bastiani out to hunt down more pins, she found some, barely enough to give out with the few wreaths left. (Notes taken...). Of 108 Yule Logs, we have 20 left. Santa (Fred Seeley) is in the doorway handing out candy canes, taking photos and helping to direct traffic. About 3pm on Sunday, docents descend on the center: inventory and cleanup take only about an hour. We are all happy and very tired. Another Craft Fair is in the books.

Bill and I aren't done yet though. We come on Tuesday to sort some of the totes and return them to the shed where they'll stay until the chaos of 2025 begins.

And that, people, is how it's done!

Just Look at the Joy! Placerita's Craft Fair 2024



Children Crafts

by RuthAnne Murthy

When I was a teacher, one of the things that I enjoyed the most was celebrating holidays with my class. The Craft Fair is a chance to do the same with children of all ages that come year after year. I love the creativity and sense of community. I see all the smiles and excitement. We have some regular crafts that are the classics like bird-houses, bird feeders and candle dipping. We have found a few new ideas and always have a couple of \$1.00 crafts because we know families have budgets. The bonus is that all of our docents get to know each other better. By the end of the weekend, we are all tired but have enjoyed the joy of the season.





Partners for Potential

by Pat Coskran

My work group from Partners for Potential was hard at work in November. We planted yucca, sage, Yerba Santa and other natives, to replace the invasive plants that were removed over several prior weeks. The team was under the supervision of Master Botanist Robert Grzesiak.

These folks are making a contribution to our Natural Area, and at the same time gaining important soft skills, like keeping a positive attitude, teamwork, and persistence. These are important skills that bosses are looking for in employees. It's a win—win.



Bloom of the Season with RuthAnne Murthy

The sun is not so hot in the morning, so RuthAnne was ready for a change of trails. We went on the Canyon Trail, starting from the Walker Ranch. There is still water in the stream, which is highly unusual at this time of the year. But it was not deep, and we enjoyed the sound of running water. We were taken by surprise how many plants were in bloom all along the trail, that late in the season.

RuthAnne warned many hikers about the poison oak which was turning bright red. Fall is the best time to make an easy identification of poison oak. Many visitors were not aware, and many had dogs which can carry the oil on their fur. It was a beautiful, clear fall day and the park is so lovely at this time of the year.



Creepy-Crawly Lunch

by Glenda Perl.

The Placerita Docents brought Nature to Sierra Vista Jr. High for its annual Creepy-Crawly Lunch Bunch in the library. Five kids from each class won a "golden ticket" to the presentation, for a total of 75 kids!

Judie Kerr Davis walked around the room with the Mexican Red-knee tarantula, while Will Webber, aka Bill Webber, valiantly attempted to relay pertinent information about the spider. (the teens were excited to be there, and eating their sub sandwich lunches, provided by the school). So, it was a little chaotic and LOUD! A few strident whistles from Bill calmed them down, temporarily.

We showed 3 snakes (gopher, king, and rosy boa), and Richard Brammer closed the show with Wheelie, a Harris hawk.

A big thank-you to Monica Chocooj for loaning us her animal poo and pelt collection! In appreciation of our efforts, the head teacher insisted we take the leftover sandwiches! This program has been brought to the library for 26 years, and they still love us. It's a really nice collaboration between the docents and the teachers.



Dudleya lanceolata

Lance-leaved dudleya or Live-for-ever

Trail Treasures

By RuthAnne Murthy

Lance-leaved dudleyas are a perennial succulent that grow from sea level up to 9000 ft in elevation. They grow on dry rocky slopes and in crevices on rock faces. They do not thrive in wet places because they are susceptible to root rot. They are often seen in the chaparral and coastal sage scrub habitats. They hybridize readily with the other 25 dudleya species in California often making identification difficult. In the heat of the summer dudleyas go dormant and recede into the soil or rock.

The thick leaves are a pale green that grow in basil rosettes. The leaves are fleshy and hold water as succulents do. The pointed leaves are 2-8 inches long.

The plant produces a long, naked, reddish stem that grows up to 20 inches tall. The flowers bloom in a cluster at the top of the stem. The clusters are called cymes because they grow on a central stem. The flowers are an orange-red that bloom from May to July.

Recently dudleyas have been the victims of poachers who sell the plants around the world. This has caused the population of the plants to decline. Each winter to spring keep your eyes open for lance-leaved dudleyas, one more of our Trail Treasures.

Our Trip to the Antelope Valley Indian Museum

by Glenda Perl

What a fantastic day we had at the Antelope Valley Indian Museum (and California State Park)! A small group of PCNC Docents caravanned waaaay out into the desert for a Ranger-guided tour through the almost century-old buildings.

In 1929, Howard Arden Edwards homesteaded 160 acres of open desert land. He, his wife and teenage son started construction of their home. Edwards was a self-taught artist and theatrical set painter by profession. He also was a collector of ancient geological and Native American artifacts and needed plenty of space to house his extensive, always growing collection.

The most fascinating aspect of the architecture is how natural rock formations were included INSIDE the buildings! The museum passed through different owners over the years, until the California State Park system purchased it in 1979.

After the museum tour, we took a 30-minute, 1/2-mile self-guided nature walk, using the handy paper Trail Guide, just like we have at Placerita. If you've never been to this historic treasure, you really should check it out for yourself!

Thank you, RuthAnne Murthy, for arranging this outing.



A Tour with Dan Kott

by Glenda Perl

In October, a contingent of 20 hardy PCNC docents was treated to an up close and personal tour of the St. Francis Dam Power Plant No. 1 (and dam disaster site) by our own long-time docent Dan Kott (class of 2010). So fascinating!

In his career days, Dan worked at the Castaic Power Plant as Aqueduct Power Plants Trainer and lived in one of the employee houses on the property. For our tour, Dan enlisted the help of current and former workers at Power Plant No. 1, including Michael, Ken, and James. All of them are filled with knowledge of the past, present, and future of how L.A. gets its water and power. Thank you, Dan Kott and RuthAnne Murthy for planning this trip.

It was interesting to learn that San Francisco Canyon was part of the stagecoach route. We enjoyed checking out the outdoor museum with the heavy-duty wagons used in the early 1900s, pulled across the desert by mule teams. They were used during construction of the first LA Aqueduct. The power plant is still in operation, and provides about 5% of LA's water and power needs.

Then we started the walk to the ruins of the dam site. We could clearly see the scar on the hillside where the dam collapsed, but some concrete "steps" are all that remains of the huge concrete dam. Many remnants of the dam flowed down the canyon, on the fateful day of the collapse. 450 people were swept away, and 12 billion gallons of water and a wall of debris rushed down the Santa Clara River to the Pacific Ocean. It occurred on March 12, 1928, just before midnight.



LOOK UP LOOK DOWN LOOK ALL AROUND WHAT DO YOU SEE? TREES! By Linda Jensen

At our Nature Tots program in December our objectives will be to show our tots how to recognize different trees in Placerita Canyon as well as the differences in size, leaf shape, evergreen vs. deciduous, bark thickness, seed types, and more. As always, we'll have music, videos, a story, science activities, movement time, crafts, hiking and games.

On November 9 we had 20 kids attend our program on the topic of lizards and snakes.

On October 12 we had 25 kids attend our program with the theme of Spooky and Fun Night Creatures.

We continue to welcome new families, and they always express how impressed they are.

Nature Tots take place at Placerita on the 2nd Saturday of the month at 9. 30AM. For 3-to-6-year-olds. Program lasts 45 minutes to one hour and will involve learning about the environment. To register go to Nature-tots@placerita.org

Olivia Miseroy

Olivia is a naturalist, science communicator and Regional Park Superintendent of Los Angeles County's 16 Wildlife and Wildflower Sanctuaries. For us at Placerita, she will always remain that wonderful young volunteer that came to Placerita when she was a barely a teenager and who grew up into a young woman, full of knowledge, enthusiasm and incredible artistic talent. Here are some of her words "I am a science communicator through two different avenues, as a freelance exhibits model-maker for museums and as a naturalist with the Natural Areas division of LA County Parks.

For my museum work, I specialize in reptile replicas, tactile sculptures and molding and casting nature. I am one of the top reptile replica artists in the country and have won awards for my work in the master's category at The World Taxidermy Championships and the European Taxidermy Championships. My work can also be seen in many museums and nature centers.

I have been with LA County Parks Natural Areas since 2009 when I began volunteering. Since then, I have been involved in planning and executing nature-based programming, caring for animal ambassadors, maintaining thousands of acres of open space and compiling data of local flora and fauna."

I should mention that Olivia was a World champion for Taxidermy in 2024. We were extremely lucky to have her give a lecture at Placerita in October, providing detailed information about all the different steps in taxidermy, what was done in the past and what the future will bring. She is also a very brilliant, enthusiastic and fun young woman. Thank you so much Olivia for the education you gave us, it was very interesting.

Nature Education programs are given every 3rd Sunday of the month at 2PM. PCNCA provides this free educational program open to the public. Helen Sweany is in charge, thank you Helen.





Photo by Gary Park

Common Raven by Ken Yasukawa

A regular visitor to Placerita Canyon, the Common Raven (*Corvus corax*) is one of the world's most widespread birds. It is found in major portions of North America, Europe, Asia, and North Africa, and in all habitats except tropical rain forests. Historically in North America, it lived on the Great Plains in association with American bison (*Bison bison*) and it still lives in wilderness areas throughout much of the continent. It is even moving into urban areas in parts of its range, but in other parts of its range, it has declined so drastically that reintroduction programs have been implemented.

This raven is known for scavenging animal carcasses and human garbage. It also actively hunts rodents, pulls nestlings out of nests, and takes food from other birds, including other ravens. It is also suspected as causing declines of several threatened and endangered species including the desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) and the California Condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*). In fact, in some parts of its range, ravens are considered pests, and programs have been implemented to reduce its numbers.

Common Ravens make a wide array of sounds. They may also have local dialects and individually distinct calls so that the total vocal repertoire may be virtually limitless. They are usually either solitary or in pairs, and pairs stay together year-round. Nonbreeders are generally solitary, but they can gather at carcasses and other concentrated food sources, and they sleep in communal roosts where they recruit each other to food bonanzas.

Ravens typically nest in or on cliffs and trees, but also power-line towers, telephone poles, billboards, bridges, railroad trestles, oil derricks, windmills, communication towers, and abandoned buildings. Some unusual nest sites have been found in the Mojave Desert, including abandoned automobiles, a satellite dish used for deep space communications, a barbecue in an abandoned railroad car, and an occupied commercial building in downtown Palm Springs.

The Common Raven has a long history in the folklore of many cultures. Native Americans of the Northwest revere ravens as the creator of earth, moon, sun, and stars, but also regard it a trickster and cheater. Poets and authors of Western cultures have often used the raven to symbolize death, danger, and wisdom. It is a bird of myth, mystery, and misinformation.

Placerita Goes to Vasquez Rocks by Glenda Perl

In November, the PCNC Outreach Team participated in the Interpretive Signage Dedication and Celebration at Vasquez Rocks Natural Area and Nature Center. Numerous county park officials were in attendance, including Kim Bossell, Sarah Brewer, and Placerita's favorite taxidermy artist, Olivia Miseroy.

Members of the Fernandeno Tataviam Band of Mission Indians started the ceremony with a traditional blessing and songs, which was followed by a ribbon cutting in front of the Interpretive Center. There was even a Singing Cowboy strolling around! An estimated 100 people attended the event.

San Dimas Nature Center's booth was next to ours. They borrowed our barn owl, Ghost! That cute, tiny owl is a "saw-whet" owl. With The Outreach Team: Will Webber, who we all know as Bill Webber, Sandra Rosenthal Cattell, and Jayme Thomas. Heidi Gray Webber was there in spirit. Heidi handles all of the organizational duties. Thank you, Heidi!



Children Are Back

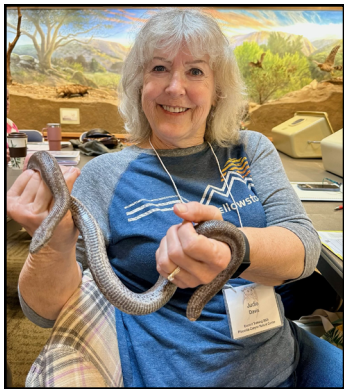
This fall season has been really wonderful at Placerita, because we've been able to provide so many school tours. In the last issue, I thanked Lori Wolf for the difficult job she handles so well, scheduling those tours. I would like to thank all the docents who have jumped on the bandwagon to make all this possible, including many of our new docents.

It can be intimidating to run with the tour role, in front of more "seasoned" docents. But they have done it, and they have enjoyed it tremendously. That is really the message: if you are enthusiastic, interested and are having fun, the children, teachers and parents will feel the same way! Thank you all.

I did my best to gather the list of most of you who have been involved on a regular basis.

Denise Allen, Judie Davis, Brieanne Kelly, Jennie Marsh, Glenda Perl, Jack Levenberg, Richard Brammer, Denny Truger, Pat Coskran, Maria Elena Christensen, Dave Taylor, Jim Crowley, Cindy Gold, Herb Broutt, Sue Murachanian, Dennis Cain. Ken Yasukawa, Dan Duncan, Henry Cuaz and Marc Alva in the Walker Cabin.

If the schools cannot come to us, we will go visit them. This is part of our outreach program. Placerita also takes part in many events all over the Santa Clarita valley and our booth is very popular with visitors who ask lots of questions about our display and animals. Heidi Webber is in charge of the planning and many docents are always willing to jump in to help. Glenda Perl takes many photos to document the events, writes articles about the outreach days and is willing to participate. Bill Webber is always there and other docents help according to their availability: Denise Allen, Denny Truger, Jack Levenberg, Richard Brammer, Sandra Cattell, Jayme Thomas. Please forgive me, this list might be incomplete at the time it will be published.



Greetings Y'all!

My name is Judie Davis and I am a member of the 2024 Docent Class at Placerita Canyon Nature Center.

My parents moved to Canyon Country in the mid 1960's, and I continue to reside in the area with my partner of over 30 years, Kim. We share a love of family, travel and adventure. Both my children and their families, which include 4 grandkids, all live in the area as well. Their ages currently range from 5 to 16!

As a life-long lover of the outdoors I enjoy hiking in the mountains, taking long walks on the beach, camping and traveling. I am an avid reader, and love music, crafting and gardening.

I am also a long-time volunteer, two days a week at SCV Grocery, a local food distribution center that helps make families' lives easier during difficult times.

In 2019, I decided to become a full-time grandma and took early retirement after working 41 years for a major auto insurance company as a Casualty Claims Team Manager. After my youngest grandchild began school, my good friend Sue Murachanian recommended I join the Docent program. Thank you,

Sue, what a great idea!

My mother was an elementary school teacher in the SCV for over 20 years, so I spent many a year helping her and have deep ties in the community. I grew up in our local mountains as well as here in Placerita. I did my fair share of catching snakes, horned toads, lizards and tadpoles. A natural fit, right?

My history also includes teaching young children as a 2nd degree Taekwondo instructor. I have a passion for sharing my love for nature, the outdoors, and the little joys in life that can be found all around us. It is so humbling and amazing to listen and learn about the world around us through a child's eyes, and hear their ideas and enjoy their vivid imagination.

Since I am leading school tour hikes and participating in nature talks here at Placerita, I have found a renewed joy in sharing my love and appreciation of nature. In addition, by joining the Outreach Team, I am learning the importance of sharing my new knowledge and enthusiasm for our nature program with members of the community! We literally "take the show on the road" to promote and invite the public to visit PNC.

I am very grateful and blessed to be welcomed into such a warm and friendly nature "family" and look forward to many more adventures with you all!



Books & Hikes

by Barb Heinzl

Fall of 2024 was fantastic! Books & Hikes celebrated their first anniversary with a discussion of *The Big Burn*, *Teddy Roosevelt & the Fire That Save America* by Timothy Egan. Guest Docent Ron Kraus led our exploration of the burned area in Walker Ranch, sharing the history of fires in the area. The morning concluded with attendees enjoying anniversary cupcakes and breakfast cookies. The remainder of the year members discussed *Feral* by Emily Pennington, *Fuzz* by Mary Roach and *Super Communicators* by Charles Duhigg. Book Picks for 2025 include
January 26 - *Travels with Charley* by John Steinbeck
February 23 - *Encounters with the Archdruid* by John McPhee
March 23 - *Greenwood* by Michael Christie

BIG SHOUT OUT TO THE HAMBURGERS

by Jennie Marsh

The Placerita Nature Tots and the Walker Cabin Committee would like to recognize Catherine Hamburger (Docent Class of 2024) and her husband Tom of Scenic Express for contributing five wonderful signs to Placerita. One sign is a large table length vinyl sign for Nature Tots and the others are four 18 x 24 vinyl signs that will be used to advertise when the Walker Cabin is open for tours.



HEARTFELT THANKS TO BOB WALKER

The Walker Cabin committee would also like to recognize Bob Walker, one of the grandsons of Frank E. Walker, for a very generous monetary donation to be used for various Walker cabin projects. It will be used for the much-needed painting of the cabin as well as other cabin upgrades. Thank you, Bob, for all you do to support our work on this legacy project! Thank you so much to Ray Orloff from the class of 2011 who started to repaint the cabin. It was time!

WALKER CABIN- Ways to Help Support the Legacy- FOR DOCENTS ONLY.

Some of you have perhaps wondered how to support the committee in their Walker cabin work. Two thoughts come to mind immediately. We would love to train 1-2 other docents on the new Walker Cabin Docent Menu. Once trained, their occasional assistance conducting weekend or weekday tours would be very helpful. We would also like help in identifying and dating the many artifacts we have on display in the cabin. This will help us ensure that each item is referred to by its proper name and also that all items displayed are appropriate for the period in which the cabin was in use (1920-1930).

Docent Training Placerita Canyon Natural Area



Become a Docent!

- *Learn about the natural environment*
- *Teach children about nature*
- *Make a difference in your community*

No special background needed,
just a willingness to attend training and to volunteer at least twice a month.

Training Starts Tuesday, January 14th, 2025
Classes meet Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9AM to 12 Noon

Docents attend a 12 week training program. Topics include native plants, ecology, insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals, geology, history, and interpretive techniques. Instructors include noted professionals in the various fields. The cost of the training is \$75 (Seniors \$60), which includes all training materials (instruction manual, field guide, T-shirt, and related items.) Minimum age for Docents is 18. Visit our website (placerita.org/docents-volunteers/) for further information regarding the Docent program.

Other volunteer opportunities are also available at Placerita Canyon Natural Area that don't require the 9-week training program—call the Park Office at (661) 259-7721 and ask for the Volunteer Coordinator.

**For further information call Placerita Canyon Natural Area, (661) 259-7721
or Email ron@placerita.org**



10 Years Ago

If you visit the Placerita Canyon Nature Center, you will be welcomed by the noise of jackhammers and a busy team of workers handling concrete and new electrical wiring. That was the start of an article I wrote 10 years ago when our new Interpretive Center was built.

The old museum was built in the 70s. An effort was made to have exhibits at a high scientific level, but they were difficult for the public to understand, and not interesting to children.

In 2014, the museum was old and tired. It had a warm retro feel, but a lot of broken machines and threadbare taxidermy. A new vision was developed. What is wonderful about Placerita? All the nature around you. Our Interpretive Center should explain the different ecosystems in Placerita, and give some pointers so that our visitors could better understand the nature around them on the trails.

Janet Kubler from the class of 2004 remembers it well; "It was quite the project, as the county was renovating the whole building around that time and the docents raised the funds for the new Interpretive Center, then the design process, then the installation..."

Ron Kraus was very much involved and here is his comment; "That was a team effort of which I was honored to be a part of. Jim Southwell was our leader, and much credit goes to him for shepherding the project to completion."

Docents, when you take a tour of the Interpretive Center, be proud. The work of docents made this possible....10 years ago in 2014.



WINTER SCHEDULE

DOCENT TRAINING STARTS TUESDAY, JANUARY 14th, Classes meet Tuesdays and Thursday from 9AM to 12 Noon (see flyer)

Books and Hikes: 4th Sunday of the month from 9AM to 10:30AM. Please register at booksandhikes@placerita.org

Bird Walks: 1st Saturday of every month with Rosemarie Regis. 2nd Saturday of every month with Ken Yasukawa. For all levels of birders, from 9AM to 10AM. Bring binoculars, water and a field guide.

Blooms of the Season: Learn about native plants with RuthAnne Murthy, 4th Saturday of every month. Meet on the patio at 9AM for a one-hour stroll. Bring your camera and questions.

Family Nature Walk: Every Saturday from 11AM to noon with Judy McClure. An easy 1-hour walk exploring the natural and cultural history of the area.

Hike with the Downhill Sliders: 2nd Monday of the month, check Trails and Nuggets for information

Placerita Nature Tots: 2nd Saturday of the month at 9:30AM. For 3-to-6-year-olds. Program lasts 45 minutes to one hour and will involve learning about the environment. To register, go to Nature_tots@placerita.org

Nature Education: Every 3rd Sunday of the month at 2PM, PCNCA provides a free educational program open to the public. Check the webpage to learn about the topic.

Native Plant Renewal and Restoration: Every Thursday at 9AM, led by Robert Grzesiak. Bring garden gloves and water.

Upcoming Events for Docents

Saturday, January 11: Holiday party for docents and significant others. 6PM.

Fall and winter hours for Placerita Nature Center Park: Beginning on November 1st through and including February 28th, 2025, the office and park are scheduled to be open from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. The Courtyard, Office, Museum and Classroom will still be closed on Mondays, and the entire park and office will be closed completely on Christmas Day.