



# GREEN SCENE

February 2014

## FOREVER AT THE POST



*Memorial at Vasquez Rocks honors L.A. County trails advocate Darrell Readmond, who left a legacy of awareness and stewardship.*



On a beautiful fall day last November, more than 200 members of the local community gathered at Vasquez Rocks Natural Area to dedicate a memorial to Darrell Readmond – a committed advocate for promoting and expanding Los Angeles County’s trail system.

Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, Department of Parks and Recreation Director Russ Guiney, members of the Readmond family and friends were among those on hand to witness the unveiling and celebrate Darrell’s devotion to trails and the equestrian lifestyle.

Readmond, who passed away in 2005, is remembered as a leader “who would always come up with solutions,” said Antonovich. “And as a result, we have expanded our trails in the County of Los Angeles.” The supervisor added: “The equestrian lifestyle is very important not just to the past generation or the current generation, but to the future generation. So we appreciate his leadership there.”

The memorial consists of a custom-designed hitching post imprinted with Readmond’s initials, accompanied by a set of bronzed boot prints fashioned from his boots and hoof prints taken from horseshoes worn by his favorite horse, Denny. It also includes interpretive and directional signs for nearby trails.

“The Darrell Readmond Memorial is a fitting tribute to a man who worked tirelessly as an advocate for the equestrian community and the improvement of the trail system in the North County,” said Regional Facilities Deputy Director Hayden Sohm. “The event brought the community together to celebrate his achievements and remember his contributions.”

The memorial was beautifully conceptualized, designed and constructed by the Department of Parks and Recreation Planning and Development Agency and the Regional Facilities Construction Division. Special thanks go to Frank Moreno, Francis Yee, Blake Warner, Perla Arqueta, Guillermo Najar, Dwight LaCroix, Chester Kano, Ralph Beltran,

Vinnie Tapangco and his team and Brian Reeve. For their help to make the dedication event a success, special recognition goes to Sandra Dininger, Debbie Goodwin, Debbie Pepe, Tom Loria and the Tree Farm crew.

“He would have been appreciative (for the memorial),” Readmond’s grandson, Ryan, told a local newspaper. “He worked hard at what he did.”

Trails Supervisor Ralph Beltran called the dedication ceremony “a special day not only for family and friends, but also for me. I knew and worked with Darrell on numerous Antonovich Trail Duster Rides, and respected his vast knowledge of trail issues – locally, statewide and nationally.”

– Joyce Fitzpatrick



# DIRECTOR'S DESK RUSS GUINEY

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

**W**e go forth in a spirit of service all year-round in the Department of Parks and Recreation, and the holiday season has always been a time that provides even more opportunities to make our presence felt in the communities we serve.

All across Los Angeles County, the people of this Department came together to make the

holidays special at a number of parks and facilities. We welcomed thousands of people to activities that ranged from ice skating on specially-installed rinks and "Here Comes Santa" events, to toy giveaways and mini-fairs with attractions for the entire family. On page 5 of this edition of Green Scene, you can find wonderful images from some of the fantastic events that, thanks to your dedication, brought joy to so many of our patrons.

Our tradition of giving is

also a hallmark of the season: Due to your efforts and the generosity of community partners, the Department served more than 9,500 meals during the holidays and distributed more than 18,200 toys to children.

These are tremendous accomplishments in which we should all take pride. As we settle into 2014, I know we will move forward with the same sense of purpose and service that makes this Department such a rewarding place to work.

## **YOUTH, NATURALLY** *The number is in: 174,929*

**T**hat's how many hours more than 48,000 Los Angeles County children spent in nature between Oct. 2012-Oct. 2013, while participating in Department of Parks and Recreation programs that help young people establish a deeper connection to the natural world.

That's why we are thrilled to partner with the National Recreation and Park Association, in support of the National Wildlife Federation's three-year 10 Million Kids Outdoors initiative. Together, we can do it!

Learn more about the 10 Million Kids Outdoors Initiative:

<http://bit.ly/1jTv1PY> <http://bit.ly/1cqDkvW>



## **WHERE IN THE DEPARTMENT**



# IS THIS ???????

**ANSWER ON PAGE 6**

# 'WE COME TOGETHER TO REMEMBER'

Hundreds descend on Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area for remembrance of historic event that shaped a community.

As she looked out from the lot next to her family's Baldwin Hills home on Dec. 14, 1963, Laurie Kelson saw images that she says are "emblazoned in my memory. There was an unbelievable amount of water in a short period of time. Homes filled with water, and they just burst apart."

What she witnessed that day was the destruction wrought by the undoing of the Baldwin Hills Dam. Without warning, close to 290 million gallons of water began flowing from the collapsing reservoir, resulting in a tragic flood that spread water, mud and debris over a total of one square mile – claiming five lives, washing away a number of structures and impacting more than 9,000 residences. It also represented a milestone in broadcasting, as a helicopter from local television station KTLA pioneered aerial disaster coverage with dramatic images of the event as it unfolded.

Exactly a half-century later, survivors, witnesses, community organizations and representatives of first-responder agencies came together in the very spot where the dam once stood, to remember victims of the collapse and celebrate the beautiful parklands that exist at the site today. On Dec. 14, hundreds attended a 50<sup>th</sup> year commemoration event at Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area – in a section of the park known as Janice's Green Valley, a

beautiful open space that was once the bowl of the reservoir. There, they enjoyed and took part in a variety of activities, including live musical performances; storytelling sessions at a booth dedicated to the history of the dam collapse; presentations by the Department of Parks and Recreation and a number of community groups; and a visit from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Mounted Unit. "The failure of the Baldwin Hills Dam was a monumental event in Los Angeles history that changed the way we think about public safety and disaster preparedness," said Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas. "Fifty years later, we come together to remember those who perished and recognize the significant park and community improvements that have been realized in its aftermath."

Along with Supervisor Ridley-Thomas, the speakers included Lorraine Bradley, daughter of the late Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley, whose rapid response and coordination with heroic first-responders is credited with saving lives; Department of Parks and Recreation Chief Deputy Director John Wicker; and Baldwin Hills Conservancy executive David McNeill. Famed actor/director/producer Bill Duke and radio talk show host Starlett Quarles served as co-emcees.

To remember those who lost their lives, a moment of silence was observed at

3:38 p.m. – the precise time of the reservoir collapse in 1963. The Department also unveiled a memorial plaque to be installed on the walking path surrounding Janice's Green Valley.

"In spite of the devastating losses, the community has forged ahead on a new journey, making gains that will benefit generations to come," said McNeill. "The public's ongoing stewardship will keep the splendor of the Baldwin Hills parklands alive, and the Conservancy is proud to be a part of that."

Following the tragedy, then-Supervisor Kenneth Hahn began to set aside funding for a park that would include the former site of the reservoir. The state-owned, county-operated park opened as Baldwin Hills State Recreation Area on Nov. 14, 1983, and was officially renamed for Supervisor Hahn in 1988. Since its opening, the park has stood as an urban oasis and a lasting symbol of community pride and cohesion that welcomes hundreds of thousands of visitors each year from throughout the region.

"Since ... the park has been here," said Joyce Johnson, who shared her memories during the commemoration, it has been "a nice place to come and bring your family."

– Andre Herndon

Photo by S. Savanapri

# NEW DODGERS DREAMFIELD DEDICATED AT ROY CAMPANELLA PARK

Solar-powered scoreboard one of many new upgrades and renovations at park named for baseball legend.

In partnership with Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, the Los Angeles Dodgers Foundation and the LA84 Foundation, the Department dedicated its newest Dodgers Dreamfield on Dec. 14 at Roy Campanella Park.

Along with dozens of local children and their families on hand for a youth baseball clinic, Supervisor Ridley-Thomas, Department of Parks and Recreation Chief Deputy Director John Wicker, Los Angeles Dodgers Senior Vice President External Affairs Renata Simril, Los Angeles Dodgers Foundation Executive Director Nichol Whiteman and LA84 Vice President, Grants and Programs Patrick Escobar were among those who took part in the ceremony.

"I applaud the Los Angeles Dodgers Foundation for investing in this community and for ensuring that our children have a high quality field where many dreams will be made and many positive values will be instilled," said Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas.

Added Whiteman: "Our commitment to building 50 Dodger Dreamfields ensures a consistent focus on inclusion, preservation and promotion of sports in underserved communities. Dreamfields not only provide a space to play baseball and softball and keep our kids active, they contribute to community development, build character and instill important life lessons in our youth."

The Dreamfield, the Department's fourth, includes a newly restored backstop and fencing, newly painted posts and rails, new dugout roofs and outfield fence, a renovated infield surface with laser grading and new infield mix, new bases, amended infield and outfield radius to establish a uniform perimeter edge, laser grade and prep outfield for new sod, a renovated irrigation system and new solar-powered scoreboard and signage.

"Providing healthy recreational opportunities is at the heart of our mission, and we are so grateful to the Los Angeles Dodgers Foundation and the LA84 Foundation for this partnership and their commitment to young people in our communities," said Department of Parks and Recreation Director Russ Guiney. "Participating in sports helps build character in



individuals and camaraderie in neighborhoods, and the solar-powered scoreboard for the new Dreamfield at Roy Campanella Park will be a welcome reminder of important principles of environmental stewardship that are essential to everyone's future."

The park is named for Dodgers legend Roy Campanella – whose daughter, Joni Campanella Roan, also took part in the Saturday morning dedication. "Our family is honored that our father's legacy will continue to live on through the park by providing inner city youth a place to play baseball," she said. "He would be thrilled to know the Los Angeles Dodgers Foundation has revitalized this park to become a Dodgers Dreamfield where kids can come to play, have fun, learn sportsmanship and teamwork and develop [a] love for baseball."

Mr. Wicker thanked Department employees who gave so much effort to make the newest Dreamfield a reality and keep it in great shape: Joe Mendoza, Mika Yamamoto, Melinda Mayoral, Earmer Carden, Melvin Pinkney, Craig Newman and the entire team at Roy Campanella Park, Miguel Vazquez, Kenya Williams, Olivia Mosley, Bo Bo James and Gary Stevenson. See the next edition of Green Scene for images from the opening of the Department's fifth and sixth Dreamfields – dedicated Jan. 31 at Jesse Owens Park. – *Catarah Hampshire*

# *It was* THE SEASON



L.A. County Teens of Cerritos



Ladera Park



Col. Leon H. Washington Park



Val Verde Park



Sorensen Park

The Department was pleased to host a number of holiday celebrations across L.A. County. Here, a small sample of the joy you helped bring during the most wonderful time of the year.



Rowland Heights Park



Valleydale Park



East L.A. Civic Center  
Photo by  
Jonathan Makcharoenwoodhi



Jackie Robinson Park



El Cariso Community Regional Park

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## WHERE IN THE DEPARTMENT

**ANSWER**—This shiny brass cash register resides inside the adobe ranch house at Tesoro Adobe Historic Park in the Santa Clarita Valley.

The register originally belonged to the Clougherty family, which owns the Farmer John meat company. In 1953, the Cloughertys purchased the ranch property from its original owner, actor Harry Carey. The Cloughertys had hoped to use the ranch to raise hogs -- but that plan proved unsuccessful, so it became their vacation retreat for the next 40 years. — *Ansley B. Davies*



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## HIGH FIVE



RECOGNIZING YOUR SERVICE  
TO THE COMMUNITY

### RE: Junior Golf

**A** little note of appreciation for providing our kids the opportunity to discover and enjoy the fantastic sport that is GOLF! My 5 year old is in love and already used his savings on a brand new golf bag and clubs. Thank you for serving our children.

In Gratitude,  
Piñon Family

