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Welcome

The City of San Gabriel, birthplace of the Los Angeles region, kicked-off its Centennial celebration on January 1st with the City's first Rose Parade float in 41 years. Our float captured top honors at the 124th annual Tournament of Roses Parade by being awarded the Directors' Award for Outstanding Artistic Merit in Design and Presentation.

Our year-long celebration continued with the long awaited production of The Mission Play Re-Imagined which was performed for thousands in early April at the breathtaking Mission Playhouse. The Mission Play re-imagined the pageantry and spectacle of the original even as it attempted to draw parallels between that historic period and life in present day Southern California.

On April 24th at high noon, the City will gather at the Mission Playhouse courtyard as the time capsule buried in 1963 is uncovered, opened, and all contents will be shared with everyone present. Later that evening, the items will be on display at the Centennial Dinner being held at the San Gabriel Country Club.

An exciting array of events will continue throughout the year. Learn more about our Centennial at www.sangabrielcity.com, or by visiting www.sangabriel100.com.

We are so proud of our City's rich history and diverse culture and invite all of you to come to San Gabriel and join us at one of the many events being planned this year celebrating our Centennial.

Mary Cammarano
Co-Chair
Centennial Executive Committee

Kevin B. Sawkins
Co-Chair
Centennial Executive Committee

San Gabriel: Celebrating 100 Years and beyond

By AMY H. ROBERTS

A modern, lively and thriving community, the City of San Gabriel's history is just as diverse, alive and vibrant as its present.

Nestled in the shadow of the San Gabriel Mountains and named for the Mission San Gabriel Arcángel founded there by Father Junipero Serra, the City of San Gabriel was instrumental in the founding of Los Angeles, as well as the state of California. Long a tourist destination with remarkable attractions, today's city blends its unique historical importance and charm with an exciting future.

San Gabriel holds serious historical significance, as Mission San Gabriel Arcángel served as the starting point for the original Spanish settlers' (los Pobladores) nine-mile walk to Los Angeles in 1781 that initiated founding of Los Angeles.

This year, the 100th anniversary of San Gabriel's incorporation, will bring history alive with a number of centennial celebrations. With San Gabriel's past historically important and exciting, there is much to celebrate.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

In the late 1700s, Franciscan Fathers established a series of 21 California Missions to help spread the Catholic faith throughout the area, including the Mission San Gabriel Arcángel.

Founding of Mission San Gabriel Arcángel sets stage for development of region

In the late 1700s, Franciscan Fathers established a series of 21 California Missions to help spread the Catholic faith throughout the area, including the Mission San Gabriel Arcángel. Missionaries relied on the work from members of the local Gabrieleno-Tongva tribe to build and run the mission.

For years, this Mission, the fourth of the 21 built, was the Valley's spiritual center. It gave rise to a thriving agricultural industry that would remain strong even after the mission was disbanded. The native people were instrumental in the Mission's agricultural and ranching work. In addition to cattle and crops, the Mission boasted a 170-acre vineyard that provided wines to other Missions.

The Mission was secularized in 1834. After California gained independence, the California governor Pio Pico sold the Mission in 1846. President Abraham Lincoln eventually returned the Mission to the Catholic Church when he signed a declaration returning all 21 California missions to the Catholic Church.

Today, the San Gabriel Mission runs a vibrant Catholic community, replete with ministries, schools and more. Known as the "Pride of the California Missions" and located in the heart of the city's Mission District, the San Gabriel Mission remains an integral part of the community it helped establish.

Rancho era establishes San Gabriel as an agriculture powerhouse

During the mission's most active period, the region operated under a Rancho system, establishing boundaries and grazing rights. Fertile lands, as well as the ample water within local boundaries, inspired San Gabriel's early agricultural focus.

When Mexican political interests changed, the Mission's work suffered, and the Mission dispersed its extensive land holdings. With America's westward expansion, ranchers and farmers assumed prominence, establishing

See HISTORY, page 7

CALENDAR

APRIL 2013: "HAPPY BIRTHDAY SAN GABRIEL"

April 24
Time Capsule Excavation
A time capsule planted in 1963 will be excavated in the courtyard of the San Gabriel Mission Playhouse at noon.

Centennial Gala Dinner
The celebration dinner will be held at the San Gabriel Country Club starting at 6 p.m. and will include the presentation of artifacts found in San Gabriel's time capsule.

April 27 & 28
SGFAA Art Show
San Gabriel Fine Arts Association's Annual Spring Art Show: 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Saturday and 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Sunday at the Adult Recreation Center. For details, call 626-282-1448, or visit www.sgfaa.clubexpress.com/

MAY 2013: "ENJOY THE OUTDOORS"

May 2
Prayer Breakfast
Hope Christian Fellowship, in conjunction with the National Day of Prayer, will sponsor a prayer breakfast from 7:30 – 9:00 a.m at the San Gabriel Country Club. The event is non-denominational and open to all faiths; a $20 donation is requested at the door.

May 4
Family Tea Party
Families can enjoy tea, tea sandwiches, a craft and more at 2 p.m. at the San Gabriel Library. Theme for this year's free pre-Mother's day tea is "The Hobbit," the book designated for the "One City, One Book, One Read." For details, visit www.colapublib.org/libs/sangabriel/index.php or call 626-287-0761.

May 15
Chamber of Commerce Annual Business Expo
"Set sail for success" at San Gabriel Chamber's 8th Annual Expo. This nautical-themed networking event is 5:30 p.m. at the Hilton Los Angeles/San Gabriel. Admission and parking are free, and the public is welcome. To learn more, call the chamber at 626-576-2525.

May 18
Anniversary of the Dedication of La Laguna de San Gabriel Playground
Come out at 2 p.m. to this playground, located in Vincent Lugo Park, for a variety of family-friendly activities! La Laguna, recently named by Yahoo! Shine blog as one of America's nine coolest playgrounds, is home to 14 concrete play structures crafted by artist Benjamin Dominguez.

JUNE 2013: "ARTS & CULTURE"

Watch for special plans to recognize San Gabriel's residents who turn 100 in 2013!

JULY 2013 — "CELEBRATE OUR YOUTH AND THE FUTURE OF SAN GABRIEL"

July 4
San Gabriel's Kids' Day & 4th of July Parade
This free event celebrates both kids and the nation's independence. The Parade begins at 9:30 a.m., traveling along Mission Drive and Broadway. Following the parade, attend the free Kid's Day picnic in Smith Park. Activities conclude at 1 p.m.

July 4
Honoring the Troops
The City of San Gabriel welcomes tributes about local residents who served in the armed forces for an "Honor Wall" and invites service members to participate in the July 4th parade. Learn more at www.sangabrielcity.org/honorwall.

July 29
San Gabriel Library "100 Books" Event closes
San Gabriel residents are challenged to read 100 books by July 29. For details, visit www.colapublib.org/libs/sangabriel/index.php.

AUGUST 2013: "CELEBRATE OUR COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY"

Throughout August
Library Month: "One City, One Book, One Read"
San Gabriel library encourages residents to engage in this unique communal read of "The Hobbit."

Aug. 6
National Night Out
San Gabriel joins forces with communities nationwide for a crime/drug prevention event.

Aug. 30-31 & Sept 1
San Gabriel Fiesta and Mission Tours
This Labor Day weekend event coordinated by the San Gabriel Mission features entertainment, international foods, games, bingo, rides, and historical and cultural festivities. For details, visit parish.sangabrielmissionchurch.org/.

SEPTEMBER 2013: "LIVING HISTORY"

Sept. 1
San Gabriel Fiesta and Mission Tours Continue
Final day of the 242nd annual Fiesta features festival activities, Founder's Memorial Mass and closing ceremony.

OCTOBER 2013: "HEALTH AND WELLNESS"

Oct. 5
SGV Medical Health Fair
The San Gabriel Valley Medical Center's annual health fair provides area residents opportunities to learn more about their health care options and receive free screenings and treatment. Special activities for kids are included. For details, call 626-570-6533.

Oct. 13
San Gabriel Chamber Bridal Expo
This expo is suited for anyone planning special events from weddings to balls to Quinceaneras and more. Details: 626-576-2525.

NOVEMBER 2013: "LET'S BE THANKFUL"

Nov. 16
Turkey Trot
San Gabriel's healthiest event offers 10K and 5K runs, a 5K walk and a youth 1K run, all beginning at Vincent Lugo Park. Visit the city's website for details in the future.

Nov. 13
San Gabriel Rotary, Trees of Giving
The San Gabriel Rotary invites the community to attend the 4th Annual Trees of Giving luncheon. Themed trees decorated by designers will be raffled to benefit PolioPlus.

Nov. 20
San Gabriel Chamber Harvest Celebration Dinner
The dinner will take place from 6-9 p.m.

TBA
SGFAA Art Show
The San Gabriel Fine Arts Association has moved its annual open juried Fall Show to November.

DECEMBER 2013: "HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS"

Dec. 3
Holiday Tree Lighting
The 37th Annual City of San Gabriel Tree Lighting ceremony occurs at 6 p.m. in Plaza Park.

Dec. 8
Holiday Home Tours
The home tour will include Adobes

Dec 18
SG Chamber Holiday Networking Mixer
The mixer will take place from 5:30-8:00 p.m.

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'Mission Play' captivated early visitors

By AMY H. ROBERTS

The legendary "Mission Play", chronicling the establishment of the Missions in California and the beginning of the Golden State's modern history, took on a re-imagined and revitalized form during a recent production for the City of San Gabriel's Centennial from April 5-7.

The modern adaptation shared with current residents the rich and diverse history of the Missions, the cultures that lived in the area and the establishment of the modern San Gabriel Valley. It also offered a glimpse of a wildly successful piece of theater history.

Although modernized and updated, the 2013 show was grounded in the original groundbreaking play. A California classic, the "Mission Play" was written in 1911 by Los Angeles Times columnist, congressman and California poet laureate John Steven McGroarty. Originally a pageant play including long periods of song and dance, the "Mission Play" presented the dramatic story of the founding of the California Missions. The show followed the struggles of the Francisan Fathers, led by Father Junipero Serra, as they built 21 missions throughout the state. These efforts were the birth of today's State of California, the City of San Gabriel and the entire Los Angeles region.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Mission Playhouse, which played host to April's performance of "Mission Play," was originally built to accommodate performances of the play in the 1920s.

"The incredible thing about doing the "Mission Play" is all the history that's involved," said Jonathan Salisbury, marketing coordinator at the Mission Playhouse and director of the 2013 production.

The long-running success of the original play was unprecedented. The "Mission Play" ran for 20 years and spanned nearly 4,000 performances.

"For 20 years, the play was a destination. It put San Gabriel on the map in many people's minds back in those days," Salisbury said.

The original show was so successful that the San Gabriel Mission Playhouse was built to accommodate it. Dedicated in 1927, the Mission Playhouse took seven years to build, seats 1,400 and houses tapestries donated by the King of Spain, a fully operational Wurlitzer Theatre Organ, a beautifully carved ceiling and more. This magnificent historical theater again played host to the "Mission Play," in early April, this time transformed into a modern version well suited to the city's centennial celebration.

"The Mission Play is just over 100 years old now, making it a perfect part of the city's centennial celebrations," Anna Cross,

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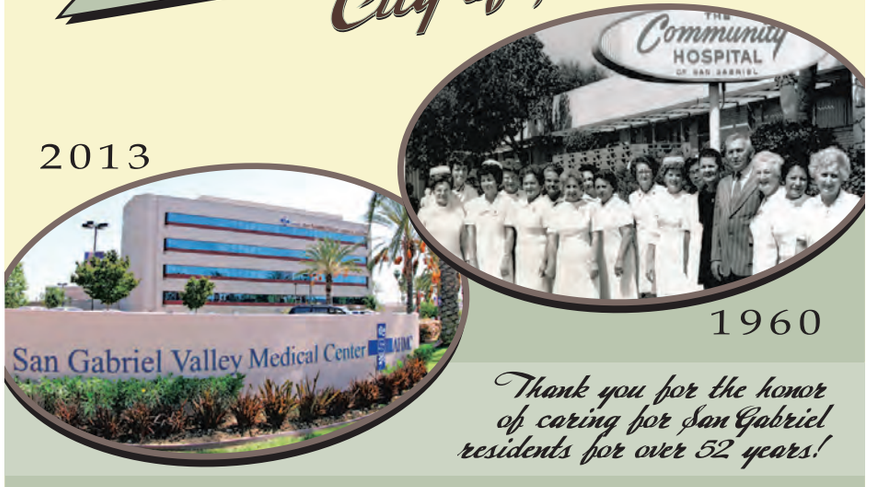

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HISTORY

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successful farms and ranches.

Ultimately, population growth and industrial expansion hastened the end of San Gabriel's agricultural focus. However, the area will always be remembered as the "Mother of Agriculture in California."

Expanding tourism and culture

The late 1800s and early 1900s brought expansion and population growth to San Gabriel.

Noted historical structures such as the historical adobes were built, as were the San Gabriel Cemetery and the Church of Our Saviour.

Among the first tourist destinations was Grapevine Arbor, which covered more than 10,000 square feet. Within Grapevine Arbor was Ramona's Home Inn, an inn with fine dining and relaxation options. It was also during the late 19th century that Chinese, Japanese, Filipino and South Asian pioneers first settled in the area. Their arrival added ethnic diversity and culture that remain vibrant parts of San Gabriel today.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

San Gabriel, shown here in an aerial view from an historic photograph, is celebrating its centennial this year.

In 1911 California poet laureate John Steven McGroarty wrote the legendary "Mission Play," chronicling the founding of the missions and touting the area's rich history. The play was so successful that 2.5 million people saw it over a 20-year run. Given the play's early success, the Mission Playhouse was built, and it remains a cultural center yet today.

Incorporation leads to growth

Today's modern city of San Gabriel was incorporated on April 24, 1913, with a population of 1,500, up from 586 citizens in the community in 1860. Businesses were established, and many flourished and continue to do so. For example, the San Gabriel Nursery and Florist has served residents for more than 80 years, bouncing back even after its Japanese founders were relocated to an internment camp during World War II.

By the year 2000, San Gabriel's population was 40,000. Over the years, the city has been home to artists, innovators, business people and more. Some of the most loved toys ever were created by the WHAM-O Corporation right in San Gabriel, while artists such as Benjamin Dominguez contributed work cementing the city's reputation.

Today, the historic mission district pays tribute to the city's rich heritage, as do gems like the Church of Our Saviour, with its beautiful stained glass windows. The city's history, architecture, tourism, businesses and kaleidoscope of cultures make San Gabriel a fascinating modern community living up to its motto: "City with a Mission."

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LOS ANGELES TIMES | www.latimes.com • • WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, 2013 T9

Grapevine Arbor Park gateway to new world

By AMY H. ROBERTS

Step through the historic Spanish-inspired gate of Grapevine Arbor Park, and you just might find yourself in a whole new world, one steeped in a colorful and diverse past, offering charm and elegance for today's modern world.

Grapevine Park, one of San Gabriel's oldest parks, is home to the Grapevine Arbor and the Home of Ramona, formerly a popular inn.

The park harkens back to a period when wine production was a vital part of the San Gabriel Mission's way of life. With portions of the original vine still intact, Grapevine Arbor remains a lovely and important destination, just as it was in its glory days.

The historical grapevine that gave the picturesque park its name was transplanted to the site in 1861. Historical accounts vary as to the grapevine's origin. Some credit a cutting from the Mission's "mother vine," while official Parks and Recreation Department history follows a story in which a wild grapevine was dug up and then planted on a local property before finally being moved by the Hall family to its current location in 1861.

Regardless of where it came from, the grapevine thrived and set the stage for the beautiful yet varied story of Grapevine Arbor and today's Grapevine Park. The grapevine grew until its trellised branches covered 10,000 square feet. The setting became a popular gathering place and a noted tourist destination.

When chronicling the history of the grapevine and the park it inspired, former San Gabriel city clerk Robert D. Jones once wrote: "The vine grew luxuriantly, serving as a summer kitchen for the Halls (the family credited planting the grapevine in the location it would later make famous). It was considered the largest grapevine in the world, covering the entire area and held up by wood scantlings."

This historic grapevine was reported to have provided the grapes for the wine at the city's first inn, Ramona's Home, an important part of the site both in the past and today. The inn took its name from the heroine in Helen Hunt Jackson's famous novel of the same name. It's reported that Jackson began writing her epic work while staying at the inn and borrowing the title character's name from a local resident.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Above: Ramona's Home, located in Grapevine Arbor, was San Gabriel's first inn. Below, right: Grapevine Park, San Gabriel's oldest park, is home to the Grapevine Arbor and the Home of Ramona, formerly a popular inn.

The Grapevine Arbor was one of the first tourist destinations in San Gabriel.

Ramona's Home itself helped solidify the reputation of San Gabriel and Grapevine Arbor as a tourist destination. The majestic grapevine provided shade for the inn's popular beer garden before a storm flattened parts of it. Later, after the City of San Gabriel acquired the property, it was discovered that the vine had been attacked by serious disease, which resulted in its being cut back to its modern, smaller size.

Although the vineyard is gone and the once majestic grapevine is a shadow of its former self, Grapevine Arbor continues to serve as a centerpiece for San Gabriel. The iconic arbor gate was included as focal point

See GRAPEVINE, page 14

La Laguna Playground delights children, adults

By AMY H. ROBERTS

Fantastical creatures de San Gabriel, creative play, unique artistry and undeniable history combine to make La Laguna Playground one of San Gabriel's most uniquely endearing landmarks. Affectionately known by generations of park goers as "Monster Park" or "Dinosaur Park," La Laguna was recently named one of America's nine coolest playgrounds by a Yahoo! Shine blog.

Things haven't always been quite so rosy for La Laguna and its 14 amazing concrete play structures.

Inspired by artistry and in service for decades, there was a point when the park was nearly slated for demolition. Now, thanks to community advocacy and efforts by Friends of La Laguna (FoLL), a nonprofit spearheading the playground's preservation, La Laguna has a new lease on life.

La Laguna Playground was originally designed and constructed by noted Mexican concrete artist Benjamin Dominguez in 1965. Dominguez's unique designs not only provided many climbing adventures and inspired imaginative play, but they are astounding for their artistry, as well.

"This playground was about the only untouched example of this artist's work remaining," said Senya Lubisich, president of FoLL. "It was also the first time Dominguez introduced color to his concrete sculptures."

Dominguez's work fit San Gabriel's Parks and Recreation Department's desire to offer something unique to draw visitors and stir their imaginations.

The fantastical sea creatures in the lagoon-themed playground within Vincent Lugo Park have delighted children and adults alike for decades. The sand-filled lagoon is home to concrete structures, including Minnie the Whale, Stella the Starfish, Ozzie the Octopus and more.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MARTHA BENEDICT

Lookout Mountain's restoration work was completed by Friends of La Laguna in cooperation with the City of San Gabriel

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Despite its uniqueness, La Laguna's structures simply deteriorated over time. They failed to meet many modern, strictly-written playground codes, and any attempts to repair structures would have triggered automatic need to comply. With the playground in disrepair and seeing no other options, the City of San Gabriel proposed demolishing the landmark in 2006.

The community outcry was immediate, galvanizing efforts to "Save Monster Park." FoLL was formed, and the effort to preserve and restore the historical playground began.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

La Laguna Playground is one of San Gabriel's most uniquely endearing landmarks.

"The initial outcry and efforts were so fascinating," Lubisich said. "Nearly everyone brought up how much a part of the community this playground is."

The work to save La Laguna would not be easy — despite its being an integral part of the community — as modern playground regulations had caused the demise of many playgrounds across the country. Therefore, the effort to save La Laguna Playground would need to be creative and innovative.

FoLL chose to focus on the playground's historic nature, a concept never before attempted. The group undertook a groundbreaking study for the preservation of playgrounds.

"The idea that a playground could be considered historic was totally off the radar," Lubisich said.

The innovative approach worked.

In 2009, La Laguna Playground was successfully nominated to the California Register of Historic Places and was later designated a local landmark for the City of San Gabriel, clearing the way to save the historic play park.

The first phase of preservation restored the playground's central piece — Lookout Mountain, with its iconic dragon slide — and the playground's entrance. The work was completed thanks to grants from the National Trust for Historic Preservation LA Fund, the Pasadena City College Foundation and the California Cultural and Historic Endowment, as well as private donations.

"We still have a tremendous amount of work to do," said Lubisich, who noted that 12 structures need various levels of restoration and repair, from structural to more cosmetic, with Ozzie the Octopus in the most danger.

"We need everyone to get behind the project," Lubisich said. "We also hope to partner with the city on some of the work going forward."

FoLL may plan volunteer work days in the future. Additionally, the group must raise money for the work. Lubisich estimates it will require a $500,000 to complete La Laguna's restoration.

FoLL accepts tax-deductible monetary donations online through PayPal. To donate or learn more, visit www.friendsoflalaguna.org.

"When I first got involved in this project, I knew my family loved the park. We just needed to determine if that love reverberated throughout the community," Lubisich said.

With the success of the project to date, clearly residents throughout the San Gabriel Valley have embraced the effort.

"The most fun thing has been when people come up and say 'thank you,'" Lubisich said. "The community really does love La Laguna."

ARTS

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Producer, said.

The recent production is the first time the "Mission Play" has been performed in more than six decades. After 20 successful years, the original play closed in 1932 due to pressures stemming from the Great Depression. In its heyday, this legendary play was seen by more than 2.5 million people and was even considered for Broadway. The "Mission Play," however, had not been performed since 1947.

After sitting dormant for more than 60 years, the play's centennial version shared history with new generations. The updated version kept true to the story of Father Serra's struggles to bring Catholicism to the state while incorporating more of the experience of the Native Americans who provided much of the work in building the missions. The recent production also noted many of the historical changes that San Gabriel has experienced since the play was first introduced. Both the original pageant play and the 2013 version were replete with rousing songs, vibrant dance, stunning costumes, history, diversity and more.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

"Mission Play," written in 1911, was performed in early April to honor San Gabriel's centennial.

Framed in the modern day, the reinvigorated "Mission Play" followed a group of teenagers as they traveled back in time to look at the Mission's history. It highlighted other modern twists such as popular culture and the area's growing Asian-American population.

The 2013 show included dancers from Spanish, Native American and Chinese cultures. It also featured artifacts from the original "Mission Play," such as a shawl used in the very first production, as well as other historical artifacts. The recent play also included members of the local Gabrieleno-Tongva tribe.

This Native American tribe was an integral part of building those first missions and establishing the area as the birthplace of the entire Los Angeles region.

"Some of the dancers and singers in the show are Native American people who are direct descendents of the people who lived in the San Gabriel Mission not long after it was built in 1771," Salisbury said.

The key to the success of the "Mission Play," from its most recent production to its historic run in the early 20th century, is simply the story that it shares with audiences.

With so much history involved, the "Mission Play" resonates with San Gabriel residents and others throughout the valley. From the history it shares, to its early unprecedented success to the opulent auditorium it gave rise to, the "Mission Play" is an important part of San Gabriel's past.

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San Gabriel: Home to hula hoops and Frisbees

By AMY H. ROBERTS

WHAM-O Manufacturing Company, an innovator of toys, created and manufactured many of the world's best-loved toys right in San Gabriel.

Initially founded in a family garage in South Pasadena, WHAM-O grew too large for such small digs. In the 1950s, the company moved its manufacturing plant to San Gabriel. Soon, this unique southern California community would be home to some of the most-loved toys ever created.

In 1957, WHAM-O first embraced the idea of Australian bamboo "exercise hoops," and the hula hoop was born. Company reps showed off this new toy at playgrounds throughout Southern California, including right in its home community. Within four months, San Gabriel's WHAM-O sold 25 million hula hoops, launching one of the greatest toys fads ever. The San Gabriel factory ultimately made and shipped millions of this toy.

WHAM-O followed this success with the Frisbee. Although WHAM-O executives first encountered the flying disc in 1955, they weren't able to buy the "Pluto Platter" from its originator until 1957. The company redesigned the concept, creating the Frisbee, which literally took off in 1959. Again the company showcased its newest product at local playgrounds, sparking sales and allowing kids throughout the San Gabriel Valley to once again be toys pioneers.

The WHAM-O factory in San Gabriel rolled out other well-known toys throughout the years, including Silly String, Slip 'N Slides, Hacky Sack and more.

Although the San Gabriel plant stopped manufacturing toys in the 1980s and the facility eventually closed in the 1990s, WHAM-O enjoyed its best years in San Gabriel. In its heyday, WHAM-O employed more than 1,000 local residents at a complex that included eight buildings and more a 171,000 square feet. Thanks to WHAM-O's long tenure in the city, San Gabriel was home to some of the most innovative toys ever introduced.

At right: WHAM-O, which made hula hoops and Frisbees, produced the toys in San Gabriel after its manufacturing plant moved there.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Dreamweaver Medical Associates

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Francisco Rodriguez D.O. is striving individual and a beacon in the aid of providing our community with medical care needed, including volunteering in community health screenings and promoting the importance of good health, **Dr. Rodriguez** attended many local schools and universities in California and finalized his medical degree from Western University of Health Sciences. **Dr. Rodriguez** is a general medicine physician that allows him to see patients from young to old. He is also a bilingual doctor that speaks English and Spanish fluently.

HOURS OF OPERATION:
MONDAY - FRIDAY 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Grapevine Arbor was one of the first tourist destinations in San Gabriel.

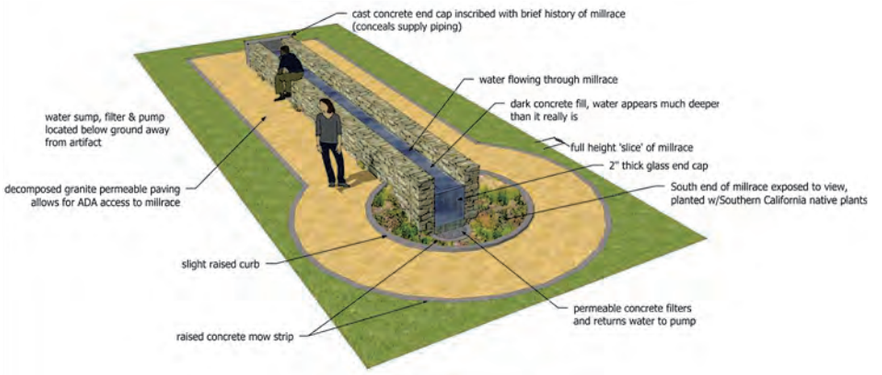
GRAPEVINE

from page 6

in the City of San Gabriel's award-winning float for the 2013 Rose Parade.

The Grapevine Arbor's beautiful Spanish-style architecture and lush garden right in the heart of the historic mission district make the park a lovely setting for parties, weddings, receptions and meetings. The once-famous inn is the current home to San Gabriel's Adult Recreation Center.

Although the inn is no more and the grapevine may be less majestic than it once was, the historic grapevine still serves as centerpiece of the popular Grapevine Arbor Park and the many amenities it offers. And, in the spring and early summer, that grapevine is still a beauty to behold.



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Excavations that were part of preparatory work for a railroad trench have unearthed archaeological opportunities.

'Gateway to America'

ACE BRINGS HISTORIC RAIL CORRIDOR INTO NEW MILLENNIUM

By AMY H. ROBERTS

The Alameda Corridor-East (ACE) Construction project for railroad-track grade separations and improvements in San Gabriel is designed to enhance current life, safety and travel in the community and throughout the region. However, the excavations that were part of the preparatory work for the trench have unearthed archeological opportunities, giving San Gabriel residents and school children an important glimpse into the region's rich history.

At a site near the San Gabriel Mission being dug in preparation for the construction rail track trench, archaeologists uncovered a trove of historical artifacts. The finds have provided an intriguing connection to the region's rich history, giving opportunities to learn more about local Spanish,Native American, and early American history.

Many of the relics uncovered were from California's Mission period, such as historic building foundations, an 1816 coin, a copper-alloy religious medallion, Native American shell artifacts, pottery sherds, and European glass beads. These are just some of the many thousands of artifacts found during the excavation.

"The archeological finds are an exciting link to the region's past and shed insight on the important history of the San Gabriel Mission, the City of San Gabriel and the Gabrieleno-Tongva Tribe," David Gutierrez, former ACE board chairman and former mayor of San Gabriel, said during excavation last year.

The dig brought the past to life for students and residents alike, as many school groups were able to tour the site, observing archaeologists uncovering pieces of history.

"The dig experience was great for our fourth-grade students in San Gabriel, because this history ties into what they are studying," said Senya Lubisich, history instructor at Citrus College.

Archaeologists involved in the project have also touted the excavation for providing glimpses into the earliest roots of the Los Angeles area.

"It's not very often an archeological dig opens up in your backyard," Lubisich said.

Although the public dig was completed in 2012, work continues to excavate remnants of Chapman's Mill, which includes a millrace and gristmill, from the site and relocate it. The mill was part of an early water-driven agricultural system in San Gabriel. Joseph Chapman, the first American to live in the region, produced its innovative design.

As part of the San Gabriel Trench Project, the ACE Construction Authority is restoring part of the millrace and relocating it to Park Plaza. The site was chosen because it puts the restored display in the approximate location of where the original millrace ran.

See ACE, page 15

ACE

from page 14

The display will also add to the Mission District's history, dovetailing well with the historical tour that local fourth-grade students take each year.

Work continues on the ACE project to depress a 1.4-mile section of track, build overpass bridges and install other railroad safety upgrades, such as gates and lights within San Gabriel. With train traffic in the San Gabriel Valley projected to increase by up to 160 percent by 2020, the San Gabriel Trench Project should help eliminate traffic delays and collisions, as well as reduce emissions at railroad crossings.

Work on the trench is also part of a larger project that will benefit the entire San Gabriel Valley region. Overall, the entire project will complete safety construction improvements at 39 crossings and 22 roadway railroad-grade crossing separations. It has been estimated that the ACE construction project will generate approximately 30,000 jobs in the area and support commerce throughout the region and beyond. Los Angeles and Long Beach are some of the busiest container ports in the world, with more than half of that cargo passing through the San Gabriel Valley.

"This vital project is an important link in our regional strategy of moving cargo containers by train rather than in diesel trucks on our freeways," Michael D. Antonovich, a Los Angeles County supervisor, ACE board member and chairman of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, said in a 2012 press release from the ACE Construction Authority.

SAN GABRIEL 100 1913-2013

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