



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE BY RICK BALTHASER

REFLECTIONS ON 2011 AND LOOKING FORWARD TO 2012!

Happy New Year fellow Saddleback Canyon Riders!

I hope that you all had a wonderful Christmas and Holiday Season!

2011 was certainly a banner year for Saddleback Canyon Riders, with a lot of great, well-attended events.

We had a year that was filled with awesome Member Meetings, including our August Members Meeting that was held outdoors at O'Neill Park with a campfire.

We also had many productive Trail Maintenance Days that were well attended and showed our continued commitment to the park. And, we worked hard and very closely with the park to help them implement many equine related improvements that we are currently using and enjoying.

Our club showed both a presence and commitment to the community and other equine related organizations by participating in American Horse Products' Customer Appreciation Day, the Pancake Breakfast at the 'Great Rancho Campout' in Rancho Santa Margarita and the Medieval Charity Faire in Costa Mesa.

Of course SCR is certainly all about having fun times with our horses, and we sure did with Month End Rides, Moonlight Rides and fan-

tastic Play Days that were all super fun, well attended and ramped up to our big Buckle Play Day!

And there were parades! ... The Swallows Day Parade, our Trabuco Canyon 4th of July Parade and the Laguna Niguel Christmas parade!

Heck, we even had terrific Saturday Movie Nights in the Park as well as a couple of great movie nights out on the town!

None of the above stuff happens on its own ... there are very well attended Board Meetings, Park Meetings and a LOT of planning, implementing and plain old hard work by our 'Dream Team' of Members and Board Members that aren't afraid to dive in and Git 'R Done! THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH for all of your hard work and commitment to our club in 2011!

We also keep everyone informed and up to date with our Monthly Newsletter, website and lots of email and now Facebook communication! Again, thank you all for your hard work!

2011 was definitely a fantastic year for Saddleback Canyon Riders and it was all summed up at our annual Christmas Party that was generously hosted by Jim and Vicki Iacono at their home. We got to hang out with our friends, enjoy great food, drink and music, recognize our amazing
(Continued on page 7)

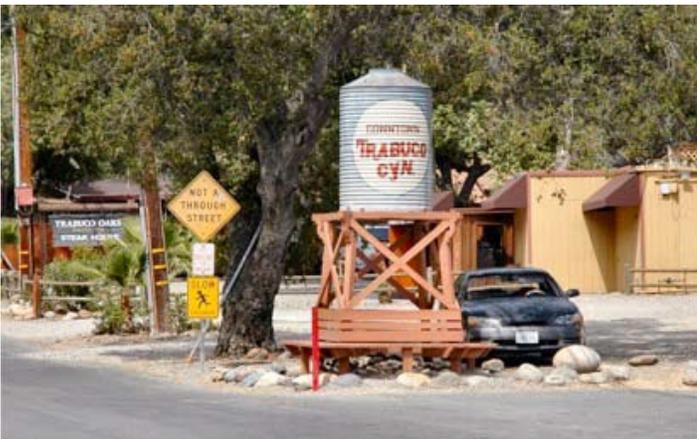


THE HISTORY OF TRABUCO CANYON

BY BY STEVE CONKLING

WHERE THE HE** IS TRABUCO CANYON? – A BRIEF HISTORY (PART 1 – FIRST CONTACT)

The first humans moved into Orange County some time over 8,000 years ago, perhaps as much as 12,000 or 14,000 years ago. Sites occupied by these first people are common throughout Orange County, and



approximately 2,000 have been identified. At the time European explorers came into the area, they identified two groups – a southern group that occupied the area south of Aliso Creek, and a northern group that occupied the rest of the Los Angeles Basin. Each of these groups were “missionized” and ultimately relocated as neophytes of the Catholic Mission system. The southern group, who called themselves Acjachemem, became affiliated with Mission San Juan Capistrano and are called to this day the Juaneño, while the northern group, who called themselves the Tongva, became affiliated with Mission San Gabriel Archangel and are called the Gabrieliño. The maze stone, pictured here, was found in 1885 by J. C. Joplin on a ridge between Bell and lower Trabuco Canyon. The maze stone was brought to Bowers Museum in the early thirties.

Spanish exploration of Mexico, South America, and Alta California occurred from the discovery of the New World in 1492, but it wasn't until over 250 years later that the first ground exploration of Orange County began. Gaspar De Portolá led an expedition of 64 men along the coast of Alta California, leaving San Diego on July 14, 1769. Sargent Don José de Ortega and seven men acted as lead riders, staying several days ahead of the main group to scout the best passage for the group. Ultimately this route would become known as the “El Camino Real” (King’s Highway) and later as Highway 101.

The Portolá expedition came along the Pacific Coast until they reached San Mateo Creek (at the edge of Orange/San Diego County). From there, the expedition went



Figure 1 - Maze Rock in Trabuco Canyon

inland up Christianitos Creek (site of the first Baptism in Alta California), and into Orange County near the current edge of the Talega Development in San Clemente. The Expedition went north to the (*Continued on page 3*)

THE HISTORY OF TRABUCO CANYON (CONTINUED)

Arroyo Trabuco
(Rancho Santa Margarita) and then north-
west along the foothills of the Santa Ana
mountains.



Figure 2 - Maze Rock Today at Bower's Museum

The first written description of Orange County is presented in the diary of Friar Juan Crespí. Crespí was born in 1721 in Spain. He came to the new world by sea in 1749, and was stationed in Sierra Gorda, Queretaro. In 1767, he came to the missions of Lower California, and in 1769 he was appointed as the recorder and chaplain of the Portolá expedition. His diary, called "A Description of Distant Roads," contains his descriptions of that journey. He then was appointed as a missionary at Monterey and later at Carmel. In 1774, Crespí participated in the first Northwest

Coast expedition of the Spanish Government, reaching the present-day British Columbia/Alaska boundary. He died on New Year's Day, 1782.

From the Diary of Juan Crespí, "A Description of Distant Roads"

July 24, 1769 – "... On going about another league over good-sized tablelands, we came down to a pleasant stream [Trabuco Creek] and hollow all lined with a great many large sycamores and large live oaks, so that the entire bed of this hollow looking so handsome makes a very agreeable effect, seeming like a fig orchard. On going about three hours, in which we must have made three leagues, we made camp upon a very long tableland of dark friable soil upon the east side of this spot, where there is a little height just on the way down to this hol-

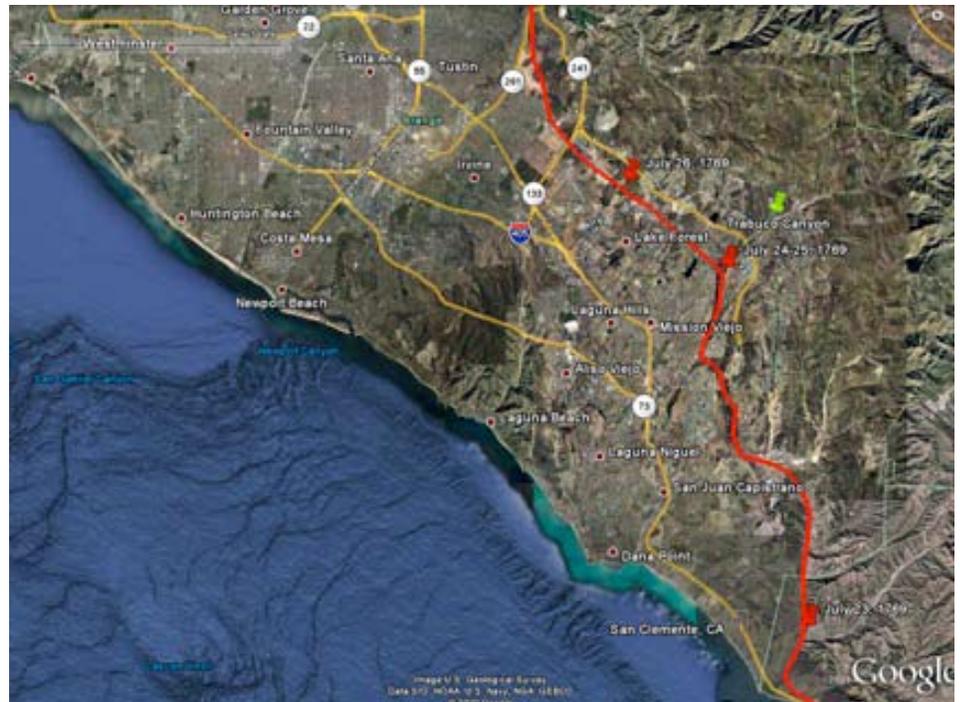


Figure 3 - Route of the Portolá Expedition through South Orange County

low, which lies beside it [now called the Plano Trabuco]. A grand spot, here, for a good sized mission. (Continued on page 4)

THE HISTORY OF TRABUCO CANYON (CONTINUED)

There is a stream in this hollow with the finest and purest running water we have come upon



Figure 4 - Fr. Juan Crespi

so far; we are in the depth of the dry season, but a good flow of water is running: three or four regaderas worth of water might be gotten from it at a time....

"The scouting soldiers that found this place said that they had made out six islands from a high knoll belonging to the spot. [It appears this high point is the tall hill located behind the Mission Hills Christian School, just south of Rancho Santa Margarita Parkway] On our reaching here Father Fray Francisco Gomez and I, with Lieutenant of Volunteers Don Pedro Fages and a soldier of his, went to this same knoll; we did not see the six they had spoken of, but did see two islands clearly, which they say are San Clemente and Santa Catalina, the latter lying straight across from ourselves where we are and about three leagues away, with the bight of San Pedro at about four or five leagues' distance from this spot.

"We made camp close to a village of the most tractable and friendly heathens we have

seen upon the whole way; as soon as we arrived they all came over entirely weaponless to our camp. Twenty-two heathen men came over with some women and children and have stayed almost the whole day long with us. I have said some things to them about God – "love-God," amar a Dios – and we have been having them kiss the crucifix and the rosary cross many times, which they have done without reluctance. There are some very pretty, fair-haired little children, whom I have had repeating the Acts of Faith, Hope and Charity. These Indians here, alone, have won my heart completely, and I would have stayed with them gladly....

"They have given them some beads, with which they seem pleased. Some of the seeds which these poor wretches live on have been



Figure 5 - A Trabuco

gotten from them by barter, and a great deal of sage refreshment. They smoke on their baked clay Indian pipes a great deal. They have very good baskets, bowls, and a sort of rushwork-wickerweave baskets made very close-woven of rushes, and very fine. They give it to be understood that up-country are people like ourselves, dressed the same as soldiers, wearing swords and hats and having mules – pointing to the mule train we have with us. What this is, who can tell?"

July 25, 1769 - ... "On the tableland, where we made our camp there (Continued on page 5)

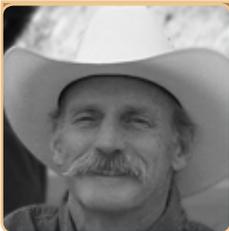
THE HISTORY OF TRABUCO CANYON (CONTINUED)

is a very large live oak, the only one upon that tableland, and all of its soil is cropland, very dark friable soil. A great many coyotes and wolves have been heard on all of these last days' march, while in the daytime the scouting soldiers have come across as many as ten or twelve wolves together in a pack, seen very close at hand.

July 26, 1769 Saint Anne's Day. We set out at about three o'clock in the afternoon from here at the Saint Francis Solano [Trabuco] stream and hollow, carrying water in the two barrels and in butts, in order to break the march to the watering place found by the scouts, as they say it is a bit of a distance. On setting out from this spot we left through a small hollow to the northeastward, in which there were a great many grapevines, bitter gourds [Coyote Gourds], and many rose of Castile bushes [Wild Roses], with everything very grass-grown with dry grass and the soil very dark and friable everywhere, without any stones. In this way we traveled about two hours and a half over low-rolling, very grass-grown knolls and tablelands, up hill and down through three or four hollow's with very good soil and a great deal of sycamore trees. We saw six antelopes [it is still unclear if this really meant deer,

there isn't any record of antelope in this area in 1769], and a great many hares. After these two and half hours, in which we must have made two leagues and a half, we came onto a large plain, with grass everywhere, although burnt off by the heathens. As there were unburnt patches, a halt was made, and we set up our camp upon the side of a high, very low-sloping knoll. We caught sight of a very green patch in the midst of the burn; they examined it and found two little springs that although small-sized yielded sufficient for the people, and even some of the mounts could be watered there. I named them The Two Small Springs of San Pantaleón, and we spent the night close by them. [This is Tomato Springs, located on the 241 at Portola Parkway (Irvine)] Opposite them there was a small dry lake.

Trabuco Arroyo got its name through an accident. At the time of the Portola expedition, or perhaps a year or so later, a soldier lost his army-issue gun, or trabuco, in the arroyo. Though a search was made, the gun was never found, but the stream became known as Trabuco Creek. In the 1970s a badly rusted trabuco was found in the canyon. It is now on display at the Bowers Museum.



TRAIL BOSS TIDBITS BY JIM SCHICHT

I hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and Santa was good to you and your riding partner.

I am riding again and looking forward to leading rides again this new year. We have moon

light rides, month end rides, playdays and just plain old riding.

Remember during the winter your riding partner gets sweaty with their long hair, so make sure you use a cool down blanket, or blanket to keep your riding partner dry, warm and healthy.



IN THE SADDLE WITH SPIKE WILKS

BY RICK BALTHASER

.... SPIKE ... SPIKE ... SPIKE ...

Fellow SCR members, you would think that if the President of the club (as well as a dear friend and across the dirt road neighbor) casually called and asked her if she would liked to be interviewed for the January "In the Saddle" article, she would immediately say "Sure ... of course ... why not?"

Nope.

Didn't go down like that. Not surprising, her first reaction was "Why me? ... There are others that would probably be much better." I of



course could have been swayed by her crafty feminine charm and let her off gracefully, but this seasoned old journalist smelled a story ... I knew I had her on the hook And I was NOT going to let her off that easily.

So, after what seemed like weeks of painful negotiations with her team of attorneys (Bob) she finally agreed to be interviewed. (That last line may have been slightly exaggerated for dramatic effect, she actually reluctantly agreed to swing by later that afternoon with the caveat that I provide a relatively strong adult beverage so that she could stay hydrated for the interview).

Spike grew up in Arcadia, California with her two younger brothers, Tom and Hal. For those who aren't familiar with Arcadia, it's a small town that's about 40 miles east of Chatsworth, which is a small rural area in the northwest San Fernando Valley.

Spike apparently was born with the name Spike. When I casually mentioned that Spike

was a unique name, and asked if it was her birth name, she looked me square in the eye and calmly said that it was the name that her Dad gave her before she was born, making it quite clear that, yes, technically it is her birth name.

There is an interesting and 'timely' (I interviewed Spike the day before the Rose Parade) fact about Spike's life that I knew prior to our interview, and knowing Spike, I highly doubt she would have mentioned it, even with my aggressive '60 Minutes' style of interviewing. When Spike was a teenager, she was chosen to be a Rose Parade Princess and served on the court, a highly coveted and well deserved honor.

At the beginning of our interview, Spike let it slip that her attorney (Bob) told her to 'change the subject' if she didn't feel comfortable 'tooting her horn' about her life. So, when I asked her about what it was like serving on the Rose Parade Court, I somehow, and I'm not sure how this happened, learned that her favorite restaurant is La Perlita.

Spike has worked at *(Continued on page 7)*

IN THE SADDLE WITH SPIKE WILKS (CONTINUED)

a number of different and interesting jobs ... Beautician, Polygraph Examiner, Full-time Mom, for a security company and for her husband Bob's law practice.

Bob and Spike moved to Trabuco Canyon around 1991, just as Saddleback Canyon Riders was getting started. In fact, Spike's brother Tom and his wife Susie who were living in Trabuco Canyon were among the founding members.

Bob and Spike have owned many horses while in Trabuco, including Quarters and Arabians ... but gravitated to Missouri Fox Trotters, of which they have brought quite a few back from Missouri. They are currently without horses at the moment, but have their beloved yellow lab Sarah and of course the hundreds of hummingbirds which seem strangely attracted to Spike.

They share four grown boys: Richard, a Paramedic ... Andy, a bartender/surfer ...

Jason, a pilot and Reagan who works in the entertainment industry.

Some quick and possibly little known facts about Spike: She likes Garth Brooks (although he's got nuthin' on Bob) ... Is a Golden Spoon addict Makes mean brownies ... Likes to vacation in Alaska and fish for salmon Would like to go to England ... May own a Llama someday ... Loves the pure and innocent smell of horses.

Spike is one of those special members, who you just know, that the club would not be the same without her. In 2006, President Jeff Kermod created a special 'President's Award' to honor one outstanding member for that year. It is a proud tradition that our club continues to this day.

Spike Wilks is the very first name on the plaque.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (CONTINUED)

Board Members (and our new Board Member Kristen Holden) and engage in a fun and crazy cowboy gift exchange!

We also awarded our 'Participate and Win' (P.A.W.) winners: Sue Seroski, Evelyn Ortega and Patti Gomez, the 'Patronize our Park' (P.O.P.) winners: Kristen Holden, Evelyn Ortega and grand prize winner Jeff Kelly and President's Award winner Karen Hopkins! It all added up to be a wonderful wrap up for a truly terrific year!

On another note, like life itself, there were tough and sad moments for our members and

club in 2011. We unfortunately lost our very long time member Mickey Weldon, and he is greatly missed. And, of course we consider our horses as family members, we were all terribly sad to lose Captain, CJ and Whiskey Bill in 2011.

Finally, I'd like to add that I feel both blessed and honored to serve as your President in 2011 and look forward to a fantastic 2012!

Happy New Year and THANK YOU to you all for making ETI 357 – Saddleback Canyon Riders such a wonderful organization!



ETI 357 ON THE MARCH

BY JAMES M. IACONO

CHESTNUTS WALKING DOWN AN OSO PARKWAY.....

ETI 357 did not let the holiday season go by without sending a group of equestrian ambassadors out into the community to share their unique recreational lifestyle. Evelyn Ortega, Susan Mahler, Melina Hann, Tracy Tuttle, and the twin Jims- Schicht and

reliable of an animal partner to carry, pull, jump, climb, and river-forged Santa's butt



around the world than the horse! (Who came up with "reindeer?" Ever heard of a one-deer open sleigh?)

The group spent the morning sharing their smiles and their steeds with grateful paraders of all ages. Thanks to all those

Iacono- packed up their "reindeer" in an early morning December 10th mist to head south to share their western connection in the local coastal town of Laguna Niguel for the 2011 edition of their annual Holiday Parade.



Thousands lined Crown Valley and OSO Parkways to catch a glimpse of entries from near and far meant to buoy the spirits of the attendees for the Holiday Season. Saddleback Canyon Riders showed just maybe how Santa has the ability to make his worldly rounds. Most have seen "War Horse" this holiday season, but our Club introduced "Elf Horse". There is no more

mentioned above who showed up ready and willing to kick off the holiday season representing our club in a memory-making family- friendly event . Cheers!



TREASURER'S REPORT

BY VICKI IACONO

ETI - CORRAL 357 FINANCIAL REPORT FOR PERIOD ENDING November 30, 2011

Ending Bank Balance (Bank of America)								\$10,365.11
DEPOSITS:								
Deposits Made After November Closing:	\$0.00							\$ 0.00
Sub-Total for beginning Balance + Deposits								\$10,365.11
EXPENSES:								
Ck#	Source:	Reason:	Amount:	Ck #	Source:	Reason:	Amount:	
1484	Sue Corley	Costume winner	\$50.00	1485	ETI	membership	\$84.00	
1487	D Kelly	playday supplies	\$45.00	1488	J Iacono	newsletter	\$20.00	
Total expenses paid in – November 2011								(\$199.00)
UNPAID CHECKS ISSUED IN THIS PERIOD								
Ck#	Source	Reason	Amount					
1490	ETI	membership	\$28.00					
Total Outstanding Checks November 2011 - i.e. Spending:								(\$ 28.00)
Funds on hand in checking as of 11-30-2011								\$10,337.11
Petty Cash on Hand as of 11-30-2011								\$ 400.00
Corral FUNDS On Hand at 11-30-2011:								\$10,737.11
SUBTOTAL CORRAL FUNDS:								
Less Reserves:								
1.- MAU as of 11-30-2011								(\$ 779.89)
Total Corral Funds Committed To Reserve:								\$(779.89)
NET - NET - NET Funds on Hand in Checking, Petty Cash to credit of : Corral 357								\$ 9,957.22



WHO ARE THE SADDLEBACK CANYON RIDERS?

The Saddleback Canyon Riders are ETI Corral 357. Established in 1991, we are one of the largest ETI corrals in California with members from South Orange County and points beyond. We are a family-friendly equestrian group based in Trabuco Canyon at the foot of the majestic Saddleback Mountains. Our Corral is committed to supporting and helping maintain O'Neill Regional Park and other local riding trails.

WHAT IS ETI?

Equestrian Trails, Incorporated is a family oriented riding club established as a nonprofit corporation in 1944 with the Charter to be "Dedicated to the Acquisition and Preservation of Trails, Good Horsemanship, and Equine Legislation."

With its combined membership, ETI has successfully worked to keep our trails open and add more equestrian facilities. The more members we have backing equine legislation and trail preservation, the more likely the State, County and City Officials will be to comply with our needs.

ETI Corral 357
PO Box 1026
Trabuco Canyon, CA 92678