



From left: Mark Brown, Rec and Parks City Attorney; Anne Waisgerber, Senior Park Ranger and Griffith Park Visitor Center Project Director; Rec and Parks Commissioner Christopher W. Hammond; and Park Ranger Joe Tafaya.



A look inside the new Visitor Center.

A Fresh Welcome

■ Visitor Center in Griffith Park is refurbished.

Story by Anne Waisgerber, Senior Park Ranger; Photos by Angel Gomez, Club Member Services Manager

REC AND PARKS — A new welcome awaits those who venture to Griffith Park. Rec and Parks opened its refurbished Visitors Center to the public Sept 22.

After several months of collaborating with Griffith Park Visitor Center Project Committee members Anne Waisgerber and Marie-Claire Sallaberry on planning for refurbishment of the aging and nondescript Ranger Station lobby, the Griffith J. Griffith Trust commissioned a private exhibit design firm, Universal Exhibits, in March 2005 to consult on final project and exhibit design, construction and installation.

Primary project elements included replacing a decayed wood ceiling, adding security and exhibit lighting, retiling stained and worn flooring, creating exhibits that feature park plants, animals, geology, and geography, including a 3D fiberoptic map of Griffith Park, installing a multimedia display, historic and current photos of Griffith Park and its benefactor Colonel Griffith J. Griffith, accompanying text panels, and installing and equipping an attendants' station and gift shop.

Supplementing the construction effort was the Rec and Parks facility repair staff, which refurbished a men's and women's restroom by replacing aging fixtures and configuring interior space to allow for wheelchair accessibility in compliance with ADA standards.

The Visitor Center exterior courtyard area was also improved by rebuilding a decayed wooden trellis, repainting walls, repairing security lighting, and replanting decorative landscaping with native specimens.

The Griffith J. Griffith Trust provided the funding necessary to build the Griffith Park Visitor Center. Park staff and visitors are indebted to Trust members Mr. Van Griffith, (great-grandson of Colonel Griffith J. Griffith), Ms. Clare Darden, and

Mr. Mike Eberts for their generous contribution, which has made possible the creation of a modern public space that duly recognizes the remarkable gift which park benefactor, Griffith J. Griffith, bestowed upon the citizens of Los Angeles. This project gives fitting recognition and pays deserved tribute to the unique urban landmarks, attractions, wildlife, geology and recreational opportunity that are now shared by millions.

The grand opening took place Sept. 22. Guest speakers included Councilman Tom LaBonge, Rec and Parks Assistant General Managers Jim Combs and Kevin Regan, and all three Griffith Trust members.

These individuals volunteered their time and talent to assist Marie-Claire and Anne Waisgerber with several aspects of the project: Muriel Kotin from the Audubon Society help to choose the birds on display and assisted with the text on the panel. Anne Mullins is translating our GPVC brochures into Spanish. Susan Immer assisted with the text for the history and Griffith wall displays. Fitz Munoz helped us prepare the history wall photos for display. Paul Wolfe worked with MC to design the door logo. ■



Muriel Kotin, San Fernando Audubon Society, helped to choose the birds on display and assisted with the text on the panel.



The front desk at the Visitor Center.



Albert Torres, Chief Park Ranger, 32 years.



From left: Mark Mariscal, Rec and Parks Metro Region Superintendent; Marie-Claire Sallaberry, Griffith Park Visitor Center Project Coordinator; William Maple, Universal Exhibits Senior Designer of the Griffith Park Visitor Center; Anne Waisgerber, Senior Park Ranger, Griffith Park Visitor Center, Project Director; Clare Darden, Griffith Trust Member; and Jon Kirk Mukri, Rec and Parks General Manager.



William Maple stands next to an exhibit.