

Angel's

Be Alive!

Angel Gomez, Director of Member Services

# Vasquez Rocks



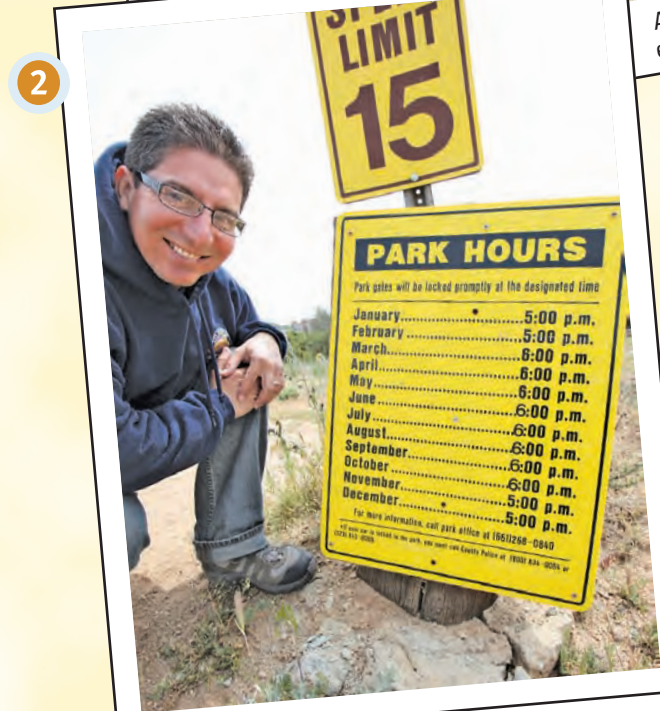
1

Angel standing in front of the Vasquez Rock Sign and entrance to the park

## Hello again!

First, I want to thank readers for following this column in *Alive!* It is truly a pleasure to go out and cover interesting places to visit and explore.

So far, we have explored beach paths, bike paths, mountains trails and islands off the coast (Catalina Island). This month, we travel north of Los Angeles to Vasquez Rocks (1). This natural area park is 905 acres acquired by LA County in the 1970s. It is in the Agua Dulce vicinity between the Antelope Valley and the Santa Clarita Valley, just north of Los Angeles and seen easily by motorists driving the Antelope Valley Freeway. Vasquez Rocks has been used innumerable times in motion pictures, various television series and in moving and still photography advertisements, and continues to be used in them today (2).



2

These are the Park hours of operation.

## History:

The rock formations are part of the San Andreas Fault (3). In 1873 and 1874 Tiburcio Vasquez — one of California's most notorious bandits — used these rocks to elude capture by law enforcement. His name has since been associated with this geologic feature. Vasquez Rocks was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1972 due to its significance as a prehistoric site for the Shoshonean and Tataviam peoples.

## Activities:

Climbing the large sloped rocks is the most popular activity. Other activities include a history trail tour of its previous visitors, the Tataviam Indians and Spanish settlers. Additional activities include campfire nature talks, hiking (4), horseback riding and other equestrian programs, an Easter sunrise service, and lunching at picnic areas in the park. School tours and organized youth group campouts require a reservation from the park management, reachable by telephone at (661) 268-0840. Other uses allowed at the park are movie filming, weddings, and large picnic and party groups, which must be arranged in advance.



3

Look for these standing bulletin boards for information

## Directions:

From Los Angeles, drive north on Interstate 5 to State Route 14. After you leave the Canyon Country portion of Santa Clarita, take the exit at Agua Dulce Canyon Road. At the end of the off ramp, turn left. The road passes through the southern part of the rocks, and then makes an abrupt right turn. A short distance further, Agua Dulce Canyon Road makes an abrupt left turn, but the park entrance is straight ahead on Escondido Canyon Road. The park entrance is the immediate right. Parking and use of the park is free.





5

Angel climbs the amazing Vasquez rock formation.

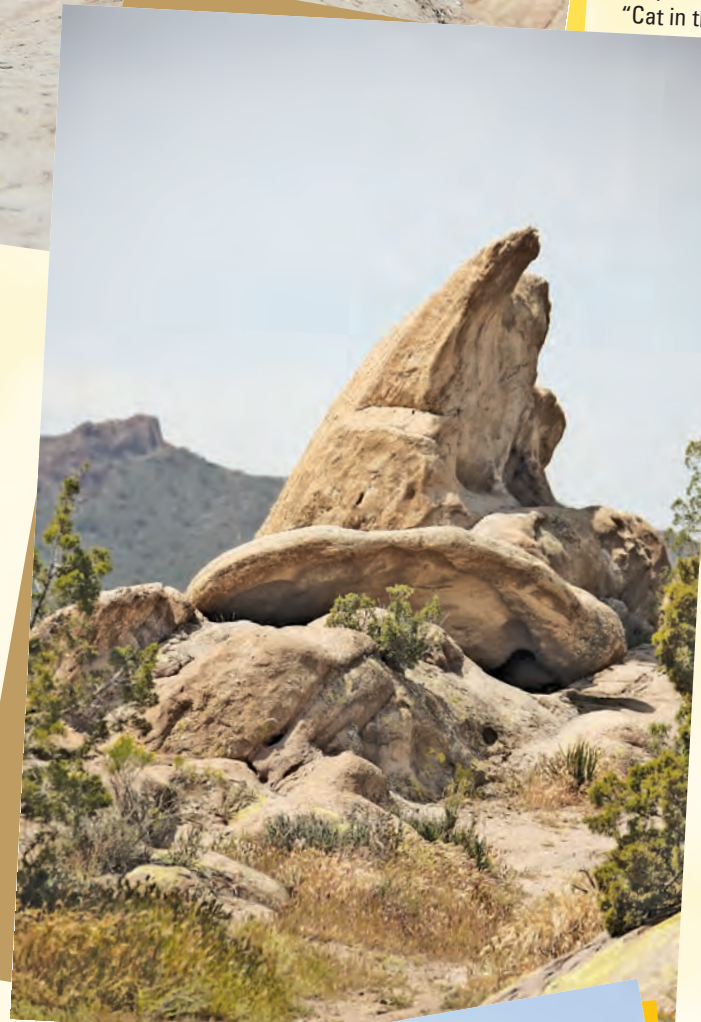
Do you see the "Cat in the Hat"?

Star Trek fans sometimes recreate the events that transpired at Vasquez in the original series' episode "Arena" (5).

Vasquez Rocks is a popular site for orienteering, where participants find locations within the park's rugged terrain using a map and compass. The Los Angeles Orienteering Club sponsors several events each year here.

Great caution should be taken in hiking this area (6). Always bring a good map (do not rely on the free map given to visitors at the location) and a supply of water. It is very easy to become lost. If a hiker becomes lost, he/she should climb to the highest point available and look at the surrounding area for direction (7), but this isn't always helpful. A map then becomes essential. If you have small children, please make sure you watch very closely, as there are snakes in the area. Usually, they come out to get some sun and then go back into the brush or under rocks. We did see a rattlesnake (8) in the area. I would have saved the mouse, but I was too late (sorry, Mickey). So, go out and explore the area and take a lunch, climb a rock and enjoy the views, they are breathtaking (9).

Don't just read this article, take a short drive up to Vasquez Rocks, and take plenty of pictures. I can't wait to go back and explore more of the surrounding areas. If you make some time and swing by, please send me your pictures. I would love to see them. Here is one fun shot (10).



9

Angel climbs to the highest point he can find.



7



10

It looks like Angel climbed to the top of a rock formation. Or, did he?

As always, **Be Safe and Be Alive!**



6

There are plenty of side trails to explore



4

Angel passes a portion of the Pacific Crest Trail

**DANGER!**



8

A small but dangerous rattlesnake. **BE CAREFUL!**