



On tour with Ranger Rose Masters. In the background is a list of every Japanese person who lived in the camp.



Manzanar Gift and Book Shop.



Ranger Rose Masters and me in front of the mess hall replica.



The Military Police Sentry Post.

# Manzanar — Inyo, Calif.

## Hello again, everyone!

This month we head to Manzanar National Historic Site, one of the ten camps where more than 120,000 Japanese Americans were imprisoned during World War II. Manzanar is in California's Owens Valley between Lone Pine and Independence, about 230 miles northeast of Los Angeles.

The word *manzanar* means "apple orchard" in Spanish. We did not find any apple trees in the area, but we were told there was one apple tree standing somewhere in the camp area. Sounds like something we need to look into. Let's begin.

## History

Manzanar National Historic Site was established to preserve the stories of the internment of nearly 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II and to serve as a reminder to this and future generations of the fragility of American civil liberties. Relocations recur throughout the history of Manzanar and the Owens Valley. The Paiute and early settlers as well as Japanese Americans all were uprooted from their homes. American Indians began utilizing the valley almost 10,000 years ago. About 1,500 years ago, the Owens Valley Paiute established settlements here. They hunted, fished, collected pine nuts, and practiced a form of irrigated agriculture. Miners and ranchers moved into the valley in the early 1860s and homesteaded Paiute lands raising cattle, sheep, fruit, wheat, and other crops.

The military forcibly relocated nearly 1,000 Owens Valley Paiute to Fort Tejon in 1863. Many Paiute returned to the Owens Valley and worked on local ranches. The town of Manzanar developed as an agricultural settlement beginning in 1910. Farmers grew apples, pears, peaches, potatoes, and alfalfa on several thousand acres surrounding the town.

The DWP began acquiring water rights in the valley in 1905 and completed the Los Angeles Aqueduct in 1913. By 1929 Los Angeles owned all of Manzanar's land and water rights. Within five years, the town was abandoned. In the 1930s local residents pinned their economic hopes on tourism. With the onset of World War II, tourism diminished.

In 1942 the U.S. Army leased 6,200 acres at Manzanar from Los Angeles to establish a center to hold Japanese Americans during World War II. Though some valley residents opposed the construction of the internment camp, others helped build it and worked here. Among these

were a few Owens Valley Paiute, whose own families had been exiled earlier from these lands. (History is courtesy [www.nps.gov/manz](http://www.nps.gov/manz)).

## Our Visit

I was really excited about traveling up to Manzanar. I looked it up online and there is lots of information about this place. I would say it is about two-to-three-hour trip from Los Angeles. When we arrived I thought, is this the place? From the road, I could see only a sign and a guard shack. Hmm.

So, we stopped and took a few photos. However the real treat was in the interpretive center. The building is very low key (from the outside), but once you go inside you will be amazed, with all the information inside. There is a book section, a theater, and lots of photo exhibits. I was really impressed! Amazing!

The rangers and employees in the store were all very friendly. They took time to show us around and answer any questions we had.

I want to thank everyone at Manzanar for the warm welcome, especially Ranger Rose Masters. Thanks, Rose!

A little trivia: Her grandfather was Keith Bright, who was involved in getting this to become a national historic site, which finally happened in 1992.

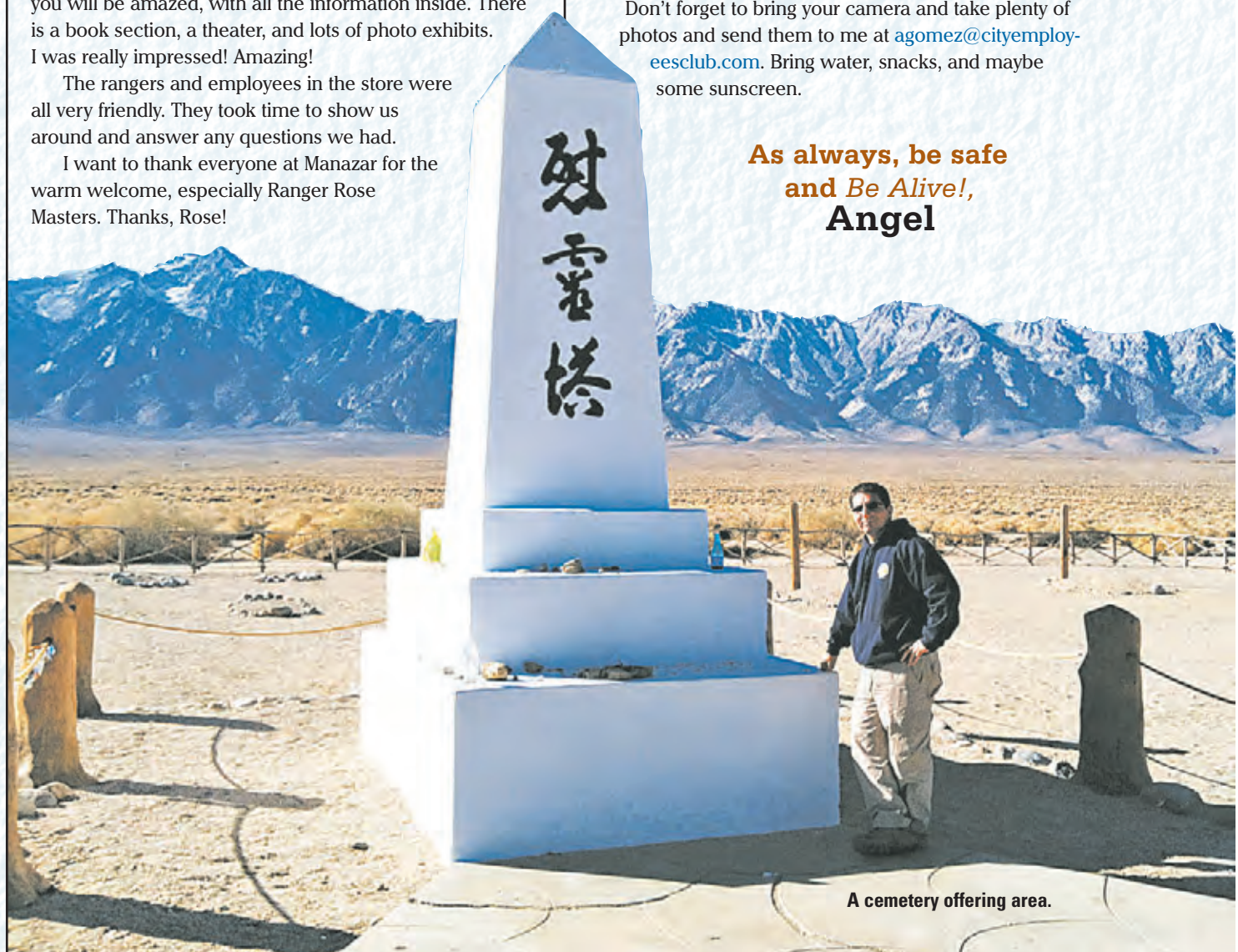
We walked around the area, and Ranger Rose was nice enough to take us on a short tour, then to the kitchen area, which she actually helped put together.

There is a self-guided driving tour, and that is about 3.2 miles long. The signs tell you what was at that location when the camp was operational. The tour is very interesting. There is so much history that you need to stop by, even if it's just for a few moments. There is also a free movie that explains the history about Manzanar. This place is a must-see for everyone.

Please make sure to stop by and tell them City Employees Club of Los Angeles sent you.

Don't forget to bring your camera and take plenty of photos and send them to me at [agomez@cityemployeesclub.com](mailto:agomez@cityemployeesclub.com). Bring water, snacks, and maybe some sunscreen.

As always, be safe  
and Be Alive!,  
Angel



A cemetery offering area.

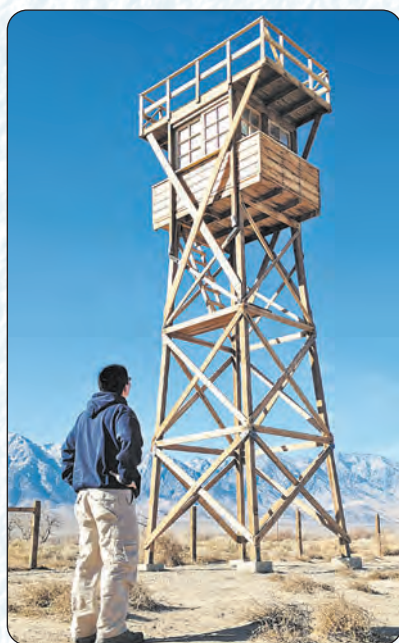
Angel Gomez,  
Club Director of Sales

# Angel's *Be Alive!*

Send your photos to me at [agomez@cityemployeesclub.com](mailto:agomez@cityemployeesclub.com). I would love to see them!



The first Street sign with area description.



A guard tower overlooking the camp.



A model of a Manzanar camp.



Manzanar Information post with the gift shop in the background.



Manzanar Theater ("Remembering Manzanar," a 20-minute movie, plays there.)



Special thanks to John Hawkins, our "Be Alive!" photographer.

## Manzanar National Historic Site

On the west side of U.S. Highway 395, nine miles north of Lone Pine and six miles south of Independence.

The 814-acre site is open every day from dawn to dusk.

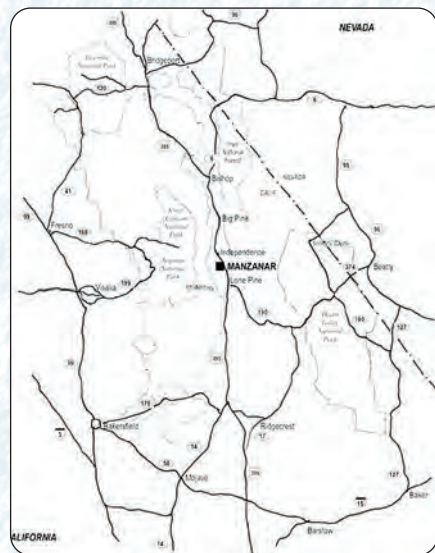
**SUMMER HOURS:**  
(April 1 - Oct. 31) 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

**WINTER HOURS:**  
(Nov. 1 - March 31) 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Closed Dec. 25. • Free admission • Free parking.

**VISITOR INFORMATION:**  
(760) 878-2194, ext. 3310.

**DIRECTIONS:** From Los Angeles: Take the Golden State Freeway/I-5 north toward Sacramento. Take CA-14 north toward Lancaster/Palmdale. Remain on CA-14 for 118 miles. Continue on US-395 north for 80 miles. Manzanar is nine miles north of Lone Pine on the west side of US-395.



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