

# Griffith Park News & Updates

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## Hello from Park Services Office in Griffith Park

“One year ago, our Department Operations Center activated in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As the welfare and shelter arm of the City, the Emergency Management Division and our Recreation and Parks staff stepped in to the call with compassion and commitment to serve all Los Angeles residents.

While the majority of the state and nation were told to stay home, we were asked to step into lifesaving and courageous work. We transformed recreation centers into shelters for people experiencing homelessness. We stood up over 500 isolation trailers for containment and quarantine. We converted park spaces into summer camps, cooling centers, smoke relief centers, voting sites, alternative learning centers, and COVID-19 testing sites. And now proudly assisting in the vaccination roll out and distribution.

Taking care of our community gained a whole new definition as we maintained public park grounds and provided safe, clean places for people to find refuge, and even advocate for important causes.

With sadness, we also remember and recognize the employees we lost this past year—those who departed us from natural causes or from the unrelenting sting of the coronavirus. They are deeply missed and will never be forgotten.

Thank you to everyone in the Department. The best of RAP shines and continues to forge the **way to success because of your hard work and dedication.**

We'd also like to send a special thank you to our Emergency Response Action Team (ERAT) for making sure all emergency operations during this activation run efficiently, timely, and with care. Thank you to the people behind the DOC logistics, operations, planning, finance, public information, and coordination teams. We send a huge thank you to **Jimmy Kim, Sonya Young Jimenez, and Brenda Aguirre.** For the past twelve months, they have continued to rise to many challenges while leading us all well as the City's residents, their loved ones, our families, and each other.”

- DOC

*“Adopt the pace of nature.  
Her secret is patience.”  
– Ralph Waldo Emerson*

## Updates from Stefanie Smith, Acting Superintendent of Griffith Region

- The Griffith Park Advisory Board next meeting is scheduled for March 25, 2021 at 6:30pm via Zoom. The agenda can be found on our Griffith Park [webpage](#) or the Advisory Board's Facebook page 72 hours prior to a scheduled meeting. This month GPAB welcomes **Councilmember Nithya Raman**.
- Park Closures: Griffith Observatory, carousel, Travel Town, Autry Museum, LADOT DASH to OBS, Bronson Caves, Parkline Shuttle.
- Big thank you to **LADWP** for partnering on the Wonderview pedestrian gate. The gate will allow for pedestrian access from sunrise to sunset and allow for the park to be secured at night.
- **Greek Theatre**: Check frequently for updates for drive-in movies at the Greek!  
 March 19, 2021: **Toy Story** at 7:30 PM  
 March 20, 2021: **Chicago** at 7:30 PM

- **At the Autry: Women in the Archives**



- **Vernal Equinox Saturday, March 20**  
**Local noon coverage begins at 12:00 noon, PDT**  
**Sunset and evening observing begins at 6:30 PM, PDT**

Join Griffith Observatory for two

live online programs (YouTube) celebrating the spring equinox. Both presentations will be hosted by Griffith Observatory's Astronomical Lecturer Dr. David Reitzel and Observatory Program Supervisor Mr. Patrick So. The local noon program will include a special presentation by Observatory Director Dr. E.C. Krupp on the meridian and the equinox.

### LOCAL NOON

What is the astronomical significance of the equinox? How does it relate to the seasons? Join us online for live coverage of local solar noon with Griffith Observatory's meridian arc instrument located in the Gottlieb Transit Corridor. [Tune in at 12:00 noon, PDT](#)

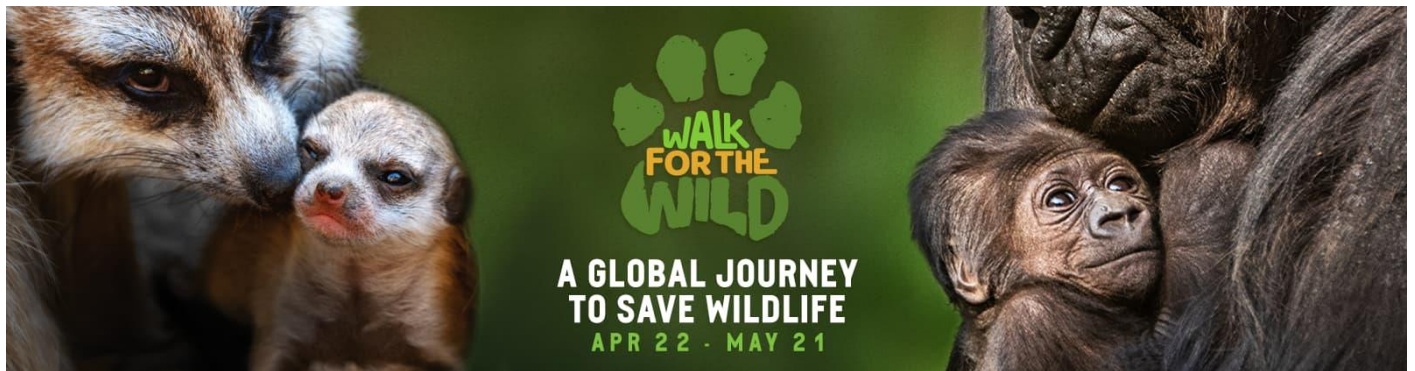
### SUNSET AND EVENING OBSERVING

Why is the direction of the sunset predictable? Why does the sunset produce such beautiful colors? In this online broadcast we are going to use the Observatory's instruments to confirm the course of the sun. Weather permitting, we transition into evening observation which will include live views of the Moon and the Orion

nebula accompanied by music from our Samuel Oschin Planetarium shows. [Tune in at 6:30 p.m., PDT](#)  
 For updates on all your Observatory and astronomy news, [subscribe to Look Up!](#), Griffith Observatory Foundation's free e-newsletter.



- **Council District 4** is seeking a new representative to the Los Angeles Equestrian Advisory Committee following the passing of longtime board member Lynn Brown. Brown was a tireless advocate for the local equestrian community and served on the LAEAC, Griffith Park Working Group, and was the Deputy National Trail Coordinator for ETI. Local community members are currently holding a GoFundMe to place mounting blocks in Griffith Park in her memory. If you would like to serve on the Los Angeles Equestrian Advisory Committee please contact [CD4](#).
- **Click the photo to learn more and register.**



- 2021 LFNC Governing Board Elections, register to vote (click on the photo)



## CELEBRATING GREAT WOMEN IN GRIFFITH PARK!

Highlighting amazing women in Griffith Park



**Becky Colwell**, General Manager of the Greek Theatre



Gardeners, **Maria Soria** (21 years with the department) and **Dora Hernandez** pictured here with **Stefanie Smith**, keeping our park clean and beautiful!



**Captain Sharie Abajian**

- **Denise Verret**, CEO and Director of the L.A. Zoo and Botanical Gardens, leading the effort on conservation. [Click here to learn more.](#)
- **Clare Darden**, The Griffith J. Griffith Charitable Trust: Along with Van Griffith and Mike Eberts, Clare Darden's accomplishments can be seen all over the park. A few of her contributions include improvements at Travel Town, Griffith Observatory, Boys and Girls Camps, Visitor Center Educational Center along with the restoration and repair of the relief work at the Visitor's Center, the Fire Memorial sign commemorating the lives lost battling the parks historic fire, mobile security cameras for the Park Rangers, restoration of faux bois railing in Fern Dell and the Griffith J. Griffith Statue at the entrance to the park, plus much more! She is a fierce protector of the park ensuring Griffith's vision be maintained and honored.
- **Laura Howe**, Volunteer Coordinator, Friends of Griffith Park. Laura served on Griffith Park Advisory Board from 2015 – 2020 and is the Volunteer Coordinator at FoGP leading the volunteer efforts for over 10 years in countless cleanups, tree plantings and tree care throughout all of Griffith Park, notably the Bird Sanctuary, Fern Dell, and Fern Canyon. [Friends of Griffith Park: Become a member today!](#)



Photo: Laura Howe and Captain Torres

- **Brenda Aguirre** has been employed by the City of Los Angeles since 2006 and is an Emergency Management Coordinator in the Department of Recreation and Parks, responding to the COVID-19 pandemic by overseeing up to 25 emergency shelters established as part of Mayor Garcetti's "Stay at Home" order.

"As the one year mark comes on this current activation I cannot help but stop and reflect. I would have never expected to become an Emergency Manager and a few months later have to respond to a once in a lifetime event. I am humbled by the resilience of my coworkers who weathered a storm of unknowns, who faced fear head on in responding to this emergency and having to come into work each day to shelter people in a congregate setting. They set their fears aside, supported each other, and found some fun in their work. They touched lives. I am in awe of just how many people have perished from this earth as a result of the pandemic. We sheltered thousands, had to troubleshoot unimaginable issues and kept each other going. Now we closed our shelters, ramped up our MPOD vaccine locations and look to adjusting life again. For me, I kept my head down and focused on the mantra below. I couldn't let the situation overwhelm me. Now vaccinated, still trucking along, volleying issues as they arise, and planning for the new normal. I am grateful. Simply grateful to have survived the vice grip and lived through the this extraordinary time in our lives. I thank a handful of diehard coworkers who stuck through it since March 2020 we had some very rough moments but the ones that stick with me are the laughs!"

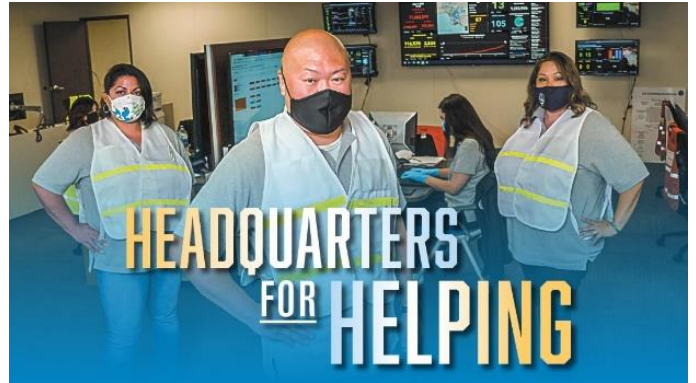


Photo: Jimmy Kim, Sonya Yong Jimenez, and Brenda Aguirre

- Welcome to our new **Park Ranger Sonya Sharp!**  
"I graduated from Chaparral high school in 2007 and went on to graduate from UC Riverside in 2011 where I studied Botany and Plant Sciences. Prior to joining the Park Ranger family, I studied Botany & Plant Sciences with a concentration in Ecology, Systematics and Evolution at the University of California, Riverside. As much as I enjoyed studying and teaching my expertise in Botany, I could not find my niche right after I graduated from UCR. I realized that I wanted to be more interactive and explore the diversity of our community. I decided to start a new journey and I obtained many different law enforcement positions. I helped many people with different backgrounds who come from different walks of life which gave me so much experience and insight and is something I will always cherish. I enjoyed helping others and I really felt I was making a difference in people's lives. At the same time, I also knew that I had all this knowledge in Botany which is quite rare to have and I felt it would be neat if I could share this. I found out about the Park Ranger position almost 4 years ago and I knew right away that this was what I wanted to do. This is a goal that I have been pursuing and spoke to my parents almost daily about joining the Park Rangers. I felt that I was 'made' for this position because of my knowledge in plant sciences and my compassion to help others. I look forward to serving our communities in the parks and sharing my knowledge with others. I am very proud and thankful to have this opportunity to become an LA City Park Ranger."



Stefanie Smith, Acting  
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## FLASHBACK!



*Click the photo for the article.*

**No smoking in the Park! Fines up to \$1,000.00**

