



# *Las Angelitas del Pueblo*

## *Newsletter – Winter 2020*

*El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument*  
[www.lasangelitas.org](http://www.lasangelitas.org)

### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

#### **Las Angelitas Events**

**All tours suspended until further notice.**

**Spring General Meeting (Cancelled)**

**Annual Awards Luncheon**

Monday, June 15, 11 am  
Avila Adobe Courtyard

#### **Pueblo and Related Events (Dependent on COVID-19 situation)**

**Cinco de Mayo**

Tuesday, May 5, 11 am – 8 pm

**LA Opera: “Viva La Zarzuela”**

Saturday, May 16, 1 pm – 4 pm

**Blessing of the Animals**

Postponed from April to sometime in June  
See updates at [www.olveraevents.com](http://www.olveraevents.com)

**Ecuador Independence Day Parade & Festival**

Sunday, August 10, 11 am – 6 pm

**Los Angeles City Birthday Celebration**

Saturday, August 29

6 am: Walk/bike ride tracing the historic Pobladores route starting at the San Gabriel Mission

10 am: Birthday celebration in the Plaza

Dash rides provided back to San Gabriel Mission for those doing the walk or bike ride

**Mexican Independence Day**

Saturday & Sunday, September 12-13,  
10 am – 8 pm

**Muertos Art Walk** (Seasonal marketplace featuring arts and crafts and other Dia de Los Muertos-themed handiwork from local L.A. artisans)

Saturday, October 3, 10 am – 8 pm

**Taste of Italy**

Saturday, October 10

Charge for admission (ages 21 and over only)

Tickets: [www.iamla.org/taste-of-italy](http://www.iamla.org/taste-of-italy)

### **Pueblo Closure**

To comply with Mayor Eric Garcetti's *Safer at Home* Emergency Order issued on Thursday, March 20, Olvera Street, the Biscailuz Building, and all museums are now closed through April 19. Olvera Street food businesses can operate under the rules in the Mayor's Order. See the General Manager's letter at the end of this newsletter for details.

### **President's Message**

It's somewhat difficult to write a President's Message, given the passing of Michael Fujita and the disruption of our lives because of the COVID-19 coronavirus. We were planning on honoring Michael at the General Meeting in April, but we have cancelled this meeting given the virus situation and the Mayor's emergency order. Hopefully, we'll be able to hold the Appreciation Luncheon in June (or sometime later this year), and will honor Michael then. We have included Michael's biography on page 7 of this newsletter.

In terms of COVID-19, it's really hard to be sitting at home instead of giving tours, especially since this time of the year is typically our busiest with all the school tours. It's also disappointing that we cannot certify the great students who were in the docent training class that ended earlier this month (see page 2). Hopefully, we'll have a return to some kind of normalcy soon.

Turning to more pleasant things, I hope everyone had a good time at the Holiday Party at El Paseo Inn. The Board of Directors has tentatively decided to return to El Paseo Inn for this year's Holiday Party early in December.

I'm also happy to announce that we toured 19 more visitors in 2019 than we toured in 2018 (6,855 versus 6,836). Many thanks to all docents who lead our tours during the year, especially those who pitched in when we were short-handed.

We are taking nominations for the main Board of Directors positions: President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Please email your nominations by April 15 to Mark Trevor at [trevortvl@aol.com](mailto:trevortvl@aol.com).

Stay safe, keep your social distance, and I look forward to seeing everyone and be leading tours again.

Dave McMenamin, President

## News

### New Pueblo General Manager

As many of you may have heard, in February Mayor Garcetti appointed Arturo Chavez as the new General Manager at El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument, replacing Chris Espinosa (who moved to Office of the Chief Legislative Analyst in City Hall in early February). Most recently, Arturo was Senior Advisor for City of Los Angeles Councilmember Gil Cedillo. Arturo introduced himself to the Board of Directors at our March meeting, and helped lead the behind-the-scenes tour for the new docent training class. Lisa Sarno is also no longer with El Pueblo Management.

### Introducing the New Docents

We concluded the 2020 Docent Training Class with a wonderful behind-the-scenes tour led by Michelle Garcia-Ortiz, Don Sloper and Arturo Chavez. This included ending with a visit to America Tropical:



L to R: Wally Mees, Julie DaVanzo, Araceli Ramos, DiDi Cottingham, Ana Herrera, Steven McCall, Dave, Mirek Szepietowski (Frank DaVanzo was not able to attend the final class).

Once we start giving tours again, the new docents will be shadowing veteran docents on their tours. They may also be asking if they can give one or two topics in tours they are shadowing, in which case before starting your tour you should decide with them which topics they will give and approximately how long they will talk for each topic. Following the full tour, but not in the presence of any of the tour goers, discuss their presentation with them, including what was good and what needs improvement. This is a great group of new docents—hopefully, we can certify them quickly once things get back to normal.

### Reminder: Some Rules for Student Tours

If walk-in guests want to join a student tour (because there are no docents available at the time for a walk-in tour), you must ask the person in charge of the student tour (usually the teacher) if it is OK for the walk-ins to tag along.

You should tell the walk-ins (preferably in front of the person in charge of the student tour) that if they take photos, they cannot include any of the students in the photos.

You should tell the person in charge that they are responsible for keeping track of the students (and keeping them under control). They know the students and we don't, so they are responsible for making sure that no one gets lost. In addition, remind them that phones should only be used for taking photos, not for talking, texting or any other uses.

### Non-Tour Volunteers Needed

We still have a number of non-tour volunteer positions. So far, we have received no response for any of the opportunities, which are listed below. Please email [news@lasangelitas.org](mailto:news@lasangelitas.org) or call Dave at 818-434-9463 if you are interested in one or more of these:

**Assistant Secretary:** Assist the Secretary as needed, especially during times the Secretary is on vacation. The specific duties would be determined by the Secretary and the Assistant Secretary.

**Tour Scheduling and Statistics:** Maintain SignUp.com and input the data from the tour sign-in sheets into a spreadsheet, which automatically calculates the tour statistics. This requires coming to the office the last day of the month or early in the next month to complete the tour statistics and to create the tour sign-in sheets for the new month.

**Docent Directory, Membership:** Maintain the member master list and Docent Directory

**Events Coordinator:** Set up speakers for the General Meetings and Field Trips

**Webmaster:** Update and maintain the Las Angelitas website. At a minimum, this involves changing information about docent training classes and periodically checking that links to other websites still work (which is easy).

**Social Media Coordinator:** Maintain and update Facebook and Instagram for Las Angelitas.



## Exhibits in the Pueblo

Since all museums are currently closed, we hope some of the end dates will be extended once the museums reopen

### St. Joseph's Tables: Expressions of Devotion, Charity and Abundance

Tuesday – Sunday, 10 am – 3 pm,  
Italian American Museum, Through May 17, 2020

Explores the cultural-religious tradition of St. Joseph's Tables, large food altars, tracing the history of this practice and showcasing its contemporary manifestations in communities across the United States.



### Impact on Innocence: Mass Incarceration

Thursday – Sunday, 10 am – 3 pm,  
Museum of Social Justice, Through July 19, 2020

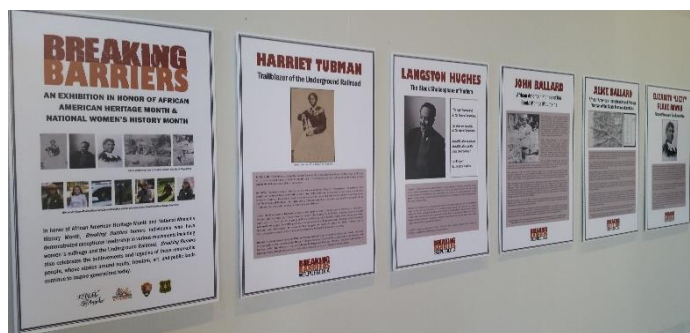
From the Museum of Social Justice website: "Over 241,000 people are currently behind bars in California. Artist Deborah McDuff's larger than life black and white charcoal drawings depict the raw emotion of children and families left behind in our mass incarceration epidemic."



### Breaking Barriers

Friday – Sunday, 10 am – 3 pm  
Gateway to Nature, Through April 12, 2020

Historic exhibition in celebration of National African-American Heritage Month and National Women's History Month. Presented by the National Park Service, the United States Forest Service, and El Pueblo Historical Monument



Highlights some of the women of the Santa Monica Mountains National Park, which was established in 1978.

### Red Envelope Show 2020

Tuesday – Sunday, 10 am – 3 pm  
Chinese American Museum, Through March 29, 2020,



The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Red Envelope Show is an exhibit of red envelopes decorated by contemporary artists from across the United States, celebrating the Year of the Rat. Presented by the Friends of the Chinese American Museum and El Pueblo Historical Monument

## Happenings in and Around the Pueblo

### 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Prohibition in Los Angeles

January 20, 2020

The following article appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* 100 years ago, January 20, 1920:



The article is as follows:

"WINE worth more than \$100,000 flowed into the gutter yesterday on North Alameda Street. Thirty-five thousand gallons of alcoholic beverages that had been pressed from California grapes went into the sewer, in accordance with the new prohibition laws. The red flood represented the entire stock of the North Cucamonga Winery, 845 North Alameda Street...

"The wine was destroyed by U. S. revenue officers in accordance with a provision of the law that all alcoholic beverages in storage yesterday should be done away with. An electric pump was rigged up and, through a hose that sprayed a continuous stream of spears and headaches. 15,000 gallons of the wine were sent to the sewer during the morning and 20,000 gallons during the afternoon.

"The stock was owned by James L. and Giovanni Vai, brother-proprietors of the company, who declared that they found all methods of disposing of the wine too expensive and so had decided to allow its destruction.

They will refit their establishment and use it for the manufacture of soft drinks.

"The value of the destroyed wine they placed at from \$2.50 per gallon up.

"Soon after the red river of joy-water began to flow, a sorrowing and thirsty crowd gathered, and Policeman J. P. Vaughan thereafter had his hands full. All the prohibition laws, including the Eighteenth Amendment, notwithstanding, newsboys got into the gutter to scoop up a few drops with their hands...Inhabitants of the area slipped sundry but not very sanitary drinks past the police guardian...

"The effect on the fish in a wine-polluted ocean has not been learned."

The following is another photograph of the wine being pumped into the gutter:



The article also recounts the following incident (illustrating the dangers of the consumption of alcohol):

"A little drink of 'bootleg' whiskey, taken sometime early yesterday morning, landed Raymond Coulter, 20 years of age...first in the City Jail on a charge of intoxication, then in the Receiving Hospital for treatment for poisoning, and later in the detective bureau to report the loss of \$150.

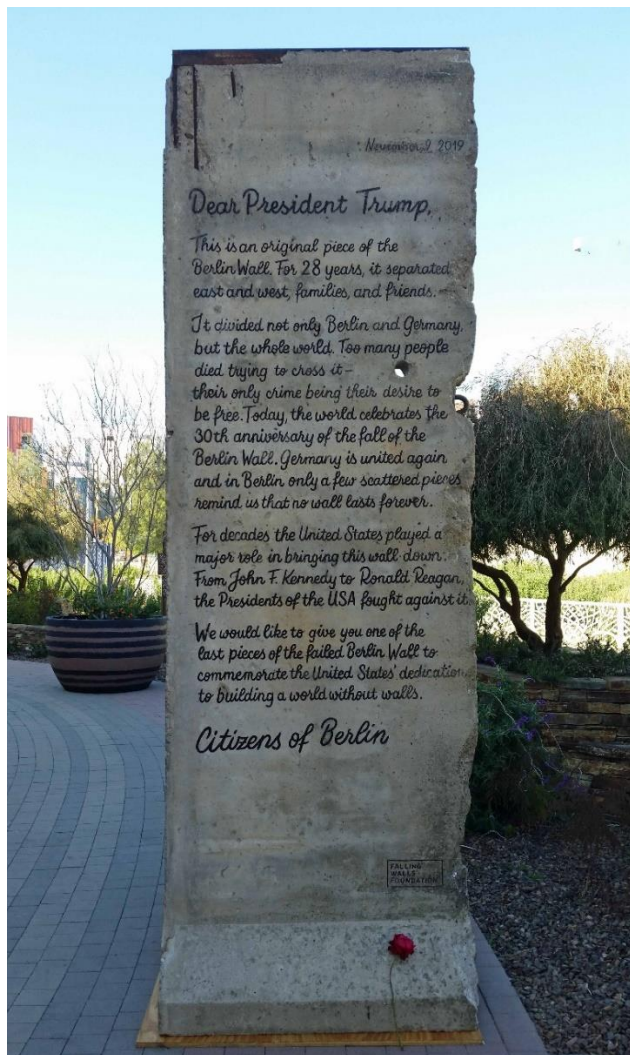
"According to the account Coulter gave the detectives, he was given the drink of whisky by a kind stranger. After taking the drink in an alley in the downtown district, he forgot everything until we waked up in the City Jail with a pain just above his belt and no money in his pockets."

Special thanks to Meg Sullivan for investigating the end of Prohibition in Los Angeles following Marc Beherec's presentation at our Fall General Meeting, and for sending this article to us.



## Happenings in and Around the Pueblo

### Wall Against Walls Comes to Paseo Walkway



The Wall Against Walls, a 2.7 ton section of the Berlin Wall, was arrived at La Plaza de Cultura y Artes' Historic Paseo Walkway in early February. After traveling cross-country, the 12-foot-tall section of the Berlin Wall – called the *Wall Against Walls* – was placed just inside the arches of LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes' newly-renovated Paseo Walkway, where it will be on display for an indefinite period of time. Visitors to the Walkway can read the message, meant as a “thank you” from Berliners to the United States and its people.

On November 9, 2019, the 30th Anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, Berlin residents attempted to gift U.S. President Donald Trump with the “Wall Against Walls,” a 2.7-ton section of the wall itself. A letter inscribed on the side of the wall of that begins: “Dear President Trump, this is an original piece of the Berlin Wall. For 28 years it separated East and west, families and friends. It divided not only Berlin and Germany but the whole world.” It was refused.

### Union Station Ceiling Restoration

The historic ticketing hall in Union Station is currently walled off for the restoration of its ceiling. The following photos show a section of the ceiling before restoration, the same section after it was cleaned, and then after it was repainted. In addition, the close-up on the lower right shows that the ceiling material being restored is acoustic tile with holes in it.



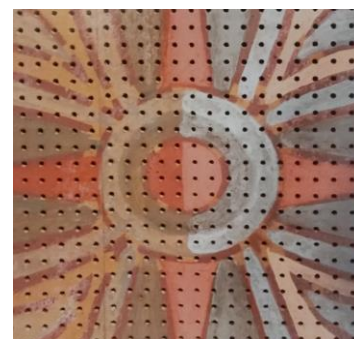
PRIOR TO CLEANING



CLEANED



REPAINTED



### Stories of Migration: A Community Response (Transportapueblos: Los Resilientes)

The completed sculpture for this project, discussed in the Fall 2019 Newsletter, was moved from the Plaza, where it was constructed, to El Paseo Walkway. Prior to the Pueblo shutdown, it was scheduled to remain on the Walkway until mid-March. This is one of a series of coyote sculptures positioned along the route taken by immigrants through Mexico from its southern to its northern border.



## Spotlight on the Pueblo

### The Mysterious Chinese Tunnels

The following discussion is adapted from “Los Angeles’ Mysterious Chinese Tunnels” by Don Sloper (September 2004, “News ‘n Notes,” Chinese Historical Society of Southern California).

Most Las Angelitas docents have been asked about the Chinese tunnels at one time or another. This is one of Los Angeles’ most persistent urban myths, which arose from the basements beneath some of the building in the Pueblo, together with a utility tunnel constructed beneath Sanchez Street in the 1960s.

The foundations and basements for some of the Pueblo buildings, such as the Merced Theater and the Garnier Building, were constructed by digging a trench and stacking up rocks (typically round ones) in it. A small portion of one of these walls is still visible in the basement of the Merced Theater:



The basements in these buildings were often divided with partitions separating various occupants, typically with connecting doors within the partitions. During construction of the 101 Freeway (in the 1950s), the southern end of the

Garnier Building was demolished, which exposed the basements. This resulted in rumors of the discovery of mysterious secret Chinese tunnels. Then in the 1960s, an underground utility tunnel was dug under Sanchez Street to carry utilities between the Garnier Building and Merced Theater.

When Las Angelitas started tours of the Plaza in the late 1960s, the tour included a visit to the “tunnels,” described as follows in Don Sloper’s article:

“Picture the situation: you go down a narrow stairway, the docent used a flashlight because there were few or no lights, the basements were spooky with cobwebs and rough rock walls (remember the round stones; they left lots of space for dust and spiders to collect). The basements are subdivided into rooms and passageways, so the docent would issue dire warnings, particularly to school children, not to wander off into the dark. Eventually, the tour group would go through the 1960’s utility tunnel and into the basement of the Garnier Building, which looked a lot like the basement of the Merced Theater, then eventually emerge on the other side of Sanchez Alley from a different building than they had entered. The docent would talk about the Chinese occupants in the Garnier Block. When there were no children on the tour, conversation could include the city’s Wild West heritage, the 1871 Chinese Massacre, and the fact that there were formerly prostitution, gambling and opium dens in the Plaza Area. It took only a small leap of the imagination or a careless docent to make one believe that you were in the secret Chinese tunnels that ‘everyone’ knew existed.”

The underground tours ended following the Northridge earthquake in 1994, which caused extensive damage to the foundations and the buildings themselves. Since then, millions of dollars have been spent to reinforce and save the buildings. Now the basements mostly have reinforced concrete walls with steel beams. In addition, there are electric lights that turn on automatically using motion detectors, replacing the need for using flashlights. Even if we could have tours that travel from below the Merced Theatre to below the Garnier Building, it just wouldn’t be the same experience that it once was.

In addition, the Pico House, Merced Theatre and Masonic Hall are scheduled for a considerable amount of additional retrofitting and construction. This includes converting the them into the public access TV station for the City of Los Angeles (which includes creating usable space (break room, storage, etc.) in the basements, making them just part of the buildings above and no longer “mysterious.”



## Our Dear Michael



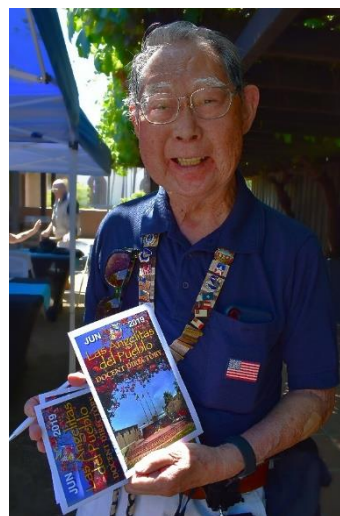
Michael Michihiko Fujita was born on June 13, 1937 in Oakland, California. His father was active in the Japanese American community and was arrested by the FBI just prior to Pearl Harbor. He was put into a U.S. prison and kept there during the War.

Meanwhile, Michael (3 years old), his sister Yoshika (10) his brother Masaaki (Tom, 5), his baby brother (1, who died last year) and his mother were put into four internment camps beginning with Santa Anita Race Track and finally in Tule Lake. Michael said that some of his best memories were living in the internment camp because the kids had instant friends to run around with while the parents were so busy with their thoughts.

When the War ended in August 1945, Michael's father was finally out of prison, but the United States government had destroyed their home, so they had nothing to go back to. They were shown pictures of their formal home in Oakland totally blown up. Not able to go back home, they went from Tule Lake to Portland, Oregon and on Christmas Eve 1946 they took a ship back to Fukuoka Japan (where the family were farmers). In 1953 their mother, who had already suffered so much, died leaving the four children. Michael's sister Yoshika took over the role of a mom, giving up being a student in an all-girls school.

In 1957 Michael returned to the United States, moving to Texas to live with Yoshika and her new husband, an American G.I. Michael then enlisted in the Air Force in El Paso, Texas, and retired from the Air Force in 1962.

He then traveled to California where his older brother Tom was working as an engineer. Tom sent him to Pasadena Art Center School of Design where he became a graphic designer. Upon graduation, he started "Graphic Arts Services," which he ran until his retirement. Michael then volunteered with the Doheny Mansion (2003), the Getty Center (2004) and Las Angelitas del Pueblo (2009). Over the past few years, Michael was a member of the Las Angelitas Board, maintaining and updating the Docent Directory and Master Membership List.



Michael passed away on January 29, 2020 at St. John's Health Center in Santa Monica. Per the family's wishes, there was no memorial service. Michael's affairs are being handled by his brother Tom and his dear friend Mariko Fukuda Blackburn. Michael's ashes will be returned to Japan to join his parents and his baby brother.

This is a real loss for everyone. It's hard to imagine a Las Angelitas gathering without Michael there taking photos and just being his kind and wonderful self.

Cards about Michael's passing can be sent to:

Tom Fujita  
11337 Nebraska Ave. #305  
Los Angeles California 90025

Special thanks to Mariko for providing much of this biographical information about Michael, and to Mario Hernandez for providing photos of him.

### Editor: Lindsay McMenamin

Contact me with history tidbits, news or notes, and interesting articles written by you:

[news@lasangelitas.org](mailto:news@lasangelitas.org)

Deadline for next newsletter: May 1, 2020

### Tour Statistics

#### Number of People Toured, Annual Totals

2019: 6,855

2018: 6,836

2017: 8,102

# CITY OF LOS ANGELES

CALIFORNIA



**ERIC GARCETTI**  
MAYOR

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**EL PUEBLO DE LOS ANGELES  
HISTORICAL MONUMENT**

ARTURO CHAVEZ  
General Manager

125 PASEO DE LA PLAZA, SUITE 300  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012

TEL: (213) 485-8855  
TDD: (213) 473-5535  
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Date: 3/20/2020  
To: El Pueblo Staff, Non-Profit Partners, Stakeholders, Olvera Street Merchants  
From: Arturo Chavez, General Manager *Arturo Chavez*  
Subject: *Safer at Home* Emergency Order and El Pueblo Closures (Mar. 21 - Apr. 19)

In accordance with City of Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti's *Safer at Home* Emergency Order\* all non-essential businesses must cease operations and close to the public effective 12:00 a.m. Saturday, March 21, 2020 through 11:59 p.m. Sunday, April 19, 2020, or unless otherwise stated.

All non-essential businesses and establishments located at El Pueblo Historical Monument must adhere to this order, including:

- **All museums located at El Pueblo Historical Monument, including:**
  - America Tropical Interpretive Center
  - Avila Adobe Museum
  - Chinese American Museum
  - Gateway to Nature Center
  - Italian American Museum of Los Angeles
  - Museum of Social Justice
  - Plaza Firehouse Museum
- **All on-site partner offices, including those operated by:**
  - Box 15 (Plaza Firehouse)
  - California State Parks
  - Council of Mexican Federations in North America (COFEM)
  - Friends of the Chinese American Museum (FCAM)
  - Historic Italian Hall Foundation (HIHF)
  - La Plaza United Methodist Church
  - Las Angelitas (Tour Office)
  - Museum of Social Justice
  - National Park Service (NPS)
  - United States Forest Service (USFS)
  - San Diego County Water Authority (SDWCA)

[CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE]



- **and All Olvera Street Merchant non-essential retail businesses.**
  - According to Mayor Garcetti's address made March 19, 2020, "*Many establishments not covered in previous orders, including clothing and some other retail stores, are ordered to 'cease operations that require in-person attendance by workers at a workplace.'*"
  - Olvera Street Merchant food retail businesses may continue to operate on a take-out/take-away and/or delivery basis only. Furthermore, Olvera Street Merchant food retail businesses may only operate if they are able to abide by the Mayor's previously shared directives, including maintaining the social distancing (six feet) requirement at all times (staff and patrons included) both inside and outside the establishment, and ensuring that there are less than ten (10) people within the establishment at all times.

Access to El Pueblo Historical Monument, including Olvera Street, Biscailuz Building, and museums, will only be granted until 11:59 PM today on Friday, March 20, 2020. After this date, on-site partners and retail shops may contact El Pueblo Historical Monument's General Manager Arturo Chavez, or El Pueblo Property Management Staff Walter Shreck or Darlene Lopez to request access through April 19, 2020.

In addition, please note that all entertainment and events scheduled to take place at El Pueblo Historical Monument have all been cancelled through Sunday, April 19, 2020.

The health and safety of our community continues to be El Pueblo Historical Monument's highest priority. The Department will continue to implement city, county, and statewide requirements and recommendations to protect our City's residents, visitors, and workforce.

\*Mayor Eric Garcetti's *Safer at Home* Emergency Order:  
<https://tinyurl.com/lamayor-saferathome>

\*Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Link: <https://corona-virus.la/fag>