

A Sublime Time in Anaheim

by Dorene S. Smith

The selection of the Anaheim/Orange County area for the 1998 AALL Annual Meeting necessarily brings one thought to most people's minds: Disneyland! But Anaheim and Orange County have much, much more to offer than just amusement. Orange County has many cultural and historic sites, as well as sporting events, beaches, shopping malls, restaurants and yes, amusement parks. And the fun doesn't have to stop there. The Anaheim/Orange County area is an excellent choice for any convention due to its central location in Southern California—just 30 miles south of downtown Los Angeles and 100 miles north of San Diego. This article will give you a brief introduction to all the things to see and do while in Southern California.

Family Attractions

Family attractions abound in the Anaheim/O.C. area. First, of course, is Disneyland, built by Walt Disney in 1955 and billed as "The happiest place on earth." It has eight theme "lands" and more than 60 rides and attractions. Not too far from Disneyland, just west of Anaheim in Buena Park, is Knott's Berry Farm. Knott's truly was once a roadside berry stand, the birthplace of the boysenberry. Today Knott's is a 150-acre theme park with rides, shows, and attractions celebrating California and the West. Adjacent to the park are 30 shops and restaurants that make up the California Market Place. Just down the street from Knott's Berry Farm are two themed dining attractions. Medieval Times offers 11th century entertainment—a show of feats of skill and combat performed by costumed knights on horseback, along with a meal served by authentically dressed wenches. Just next door is another themed restaurant: Wild Bill's Wild West Dinner Extravaganza. Wild Bill's provides old-fashioned western entertainment—a western show with lariat twirling, western skills and contests, and can-can dancing accompanied by a family-style meal. Audience participation is encouraged. Within blocks of these two dining shows are two "museum attractions"—the Movieland Wax Museum (with more than 300 figures of movie and television stars in authentic settings), and Ripley's Believe It Or Not Museum (featuring oddities and strange sights from journalist Robert Ripley's travels, as featured in the comic strip of the same name). One last family attraction to consider is Wild Rivers, a themed waterpark featuring 40 water rides and attractions.



Orange County's largest museum is the Bowers Museum of Cultural Art in Santa Ana.

photo credit: Anaheim Visitor and Convention Bureau



The Balboa Pavilion at sunset.

photo credit: Anaheim Visitor and Convention Bureau

Cultural Enrichments

If you favor the cultural, don't despair. Contrary to popular opinion, California does have culture. The Anaheim/O.C. area has many museums, art galleries, and performing arts venues. The Bowers Museum of Cultural Art in Santa Ana is Orange County's largest museum. The displays include the art of indigenous people from America, including exhibitions on pre-Columbian and Native American art, and historic California artifacts. Don't miss the Bowers Kidseum, featuring interactive adventures for kids. It is

the nation's only hands-on cultural art museum for children. Also in Santa Ana is the Discovery Museum of Orange County, another big hit with kids. It is a fully restored 1898 Victorian house filled with interactive displays. Children can play a pump organ, look through a stereoscope, talk on a hand-cranked telephone, and explore many aspects of daily life from a hundred years ago. For true California culture, don't forget to visit the International Surfing Museum located in Huntington Beach—"Surf City, USA." Home to the US Open Surfing Championship, Huntington Beach is rated the "most heavily surfed beach on the West Coast" by *Surfer's Almanac*. The Surf Museum is home to a collection of some of the most significant artifacts in the history of surfing. Another must-do is a visit to the Mission San Juan Capistrano. Famous for the swallows' return every spring, the Mission is beautiful any time of year with its 10 acres of gardens, fountains and arches, Indian cemetery, and early California historical museum. For a different type of California history, visit the Richard Nixon Library and Birthplace in Yorba Linda. While there, visitors can tour the farmhouse where Richard Nixon was born and reared and visit the

burial sites of President and Mrs. Nixon. Lovely gardens and sculptures can be enjoyed at the Sherman Library and Gardens, located along Pacific Coast Highway in Corona del Mar. The gardens provide a museum of living plants, displayed amidst a setting of fountains and sculptures, and an abundance of seasonal flowers. Highlights include a cactus and succulent area, an outdoor tea garden, a central garden with extensive flower

beds, a rose garden and a tropical conservatory. For artistic ventures, visit the Orange County Museum of Art. The Orange County Museum of Art's 6500-piece collection chronicles California's unique art history. If you are a fan of environmental art, a visit to the Wyland Galleries, located in the heart of Laguna Village, is a must.

Performing Arts Opportunities

The Anaheim/Orange County area is home to many lively venues for performing arts as well. One unique example is the Festival of Arts and Pageant of Masters, which takes place July 8 through August 30, 1998. The Festival of Arts includes more than 160 artists displaying fine paintings, sculpture, ceramics, and jewelry on six park-like acres adjacent to the Pacific Ocean. The Pageant of Masters features nightly recreations of classical and contemporary artworks—mostly paintings and statuary—with live models and a full orchestra staged in a 2500-seat amphitheater. For plays and musicals, visit the Orange County Performing Arts Center, a leading presenter of national and international performing artists and companies.

Outdoor Enjoyment

But don't spend all your time indoors, for the sunny California climate inspires outdoor fun, especially in the summer. For those who prefer to relax in the outdoors, the fabled California beaches are a fine place to start. Orange County has a 42-mile coastline comprised of many public and state beaches. Many beaches have volleyball courts, fire rings, showers, and restrooms. Which beach you visit depends upon what activities you want to pursue. If surfing is your goal, try Doheny or Huntington Beach. If you would like to try skin-diving, head to Corona Del Mar State Beach, where offshore reefs attract schools of fish to observe. Into building sandcastles? Newport Beach has contests for budding sand architects every summer. If you would like to try your hand at fishing, head to Seal Beach, where you can try your luck from the pier. (The pier also offers a selection of restaurants for any unlucky anglers.) Wherever you decide to go, for that quintessential California experience, a picnic on the beach can't be beat.

Sports Offerings

For the more active-minded outdoor fans and sports enthusiasts, there are a multitude of options to choose from—from participatory to spectator. In the spectator column, Anaheim is home to the American League Anaheim Angels. Just across the freeway from Anaheim Stadium is Arrowhead Pond, home ice to the Mighty Ducks hockey team and the Anaheim Splash indoor soccer team. This sports and entertainment complex also hosts a variety of other popular sporting and entertainment events. If horses are your game, consider a trip to Los Alamitos Race Track. Just West of Anaheim, it is the country's premier quarter horse facility offering quarter horse racing from April through December, on a Thursday to Sunday night schedule.

Shopping Galore

Anaheim/O.C. also has many wonderful venues for those of you who would like to partake of that great indoor sport — shopping! Fashion Island is Orange County's premier open-air shopping center with more than 200 specialty shops, services, restaurants, a seven-screen cinema, and department stores. A combination marketplace and community gathering point, Fashion Island is located 20 minutes south of Anaheim. Just five minutes south of Disneyland, MainPlace/Santa Ana is contemporary, Southern California shopping at its best! MainPlace has 190 specialty stores, the Main Course (15 eateries), five restaurants, and a six-screen theater complex. A full-service concierge desk, language bank, and currency exchange complement the extravaganza of stores. Also not to be missed when visiting Orange County is South Coast Plaza, Orange County's answer to Rodeo Drive. The plaza itself, located in Costa Mesa, is divided into three shopping areas (South Coast Plaza, South Coast Plaza Village, and the Crystal Court), and is one of the nation's most elegant and distinctive shopping centers. Don't forget to ride the carousel in Carousel Court, sure to bring back happy childhood memories, and guaranteed to be loads of fun.

On the Water

There are many opportunities for fun afloat as well. The Balboa Island Ferry travels from Balboa Peninsula to Balboa Island daily, with 24-hour service in the summer. Balboa Island, a man-made island built just before World War I, has many interesting shops and restaurants. On the nearby peninsula, you will find Balboa Pavilion, a stately, turn-of-the-century Victorian building built in 1905. Today it offers dining and boating facilities and serves



Is this a) The Mighty Ducks hockey team trying to make the best of a bad ice situation, or b) a typical lovely day at the beach?

photo credit: Anaheim Visitor and Convention Bureau

as a terminal for sight-seeing cruises and passenger trips. You can board a boat there to make the 22-mile trip to Santa Catalina Island. The island is a great place to hike, bike, scuba-dive, golf, fish, or shop. The island's architectural landmark, the Casino, was built by chewing-gum magnate William Wrigley, Jr., who once owned the island. It now houses a movie theater, art gallery, and the Catalina Island

Museum. Other fun sea-based activities include dining cruises, bio-ecological cruises, and sportsfishing charters.

From the inland valleys to the coastline and beaches, Orange County/Anaheim is packed with things to do and sights to see. Your visit to Anaheim for the Annual Meeting is sure to be a memorable experience.

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