

# SOUTHLAND GEOGRAPHIC NOTES



## Los Angeles Geographical Society Newsletter

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### Upcoming Events:

April 7th *Thai Project 2005: Rural Education and Sustainable Agriculture Training.* By Greg Lee

April 7th: Due date for student scholarship applications. (See page 4 for more information.)

April 28<sup>th</sup>: Due date for T-Shirt design contest. (See page 7 for more information.)

May 5th: 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Geography Student Research Presentation Night

December 1: **Annual Banquet (never too early to mark your calendar!)**

### President's Column

I am happy to report that LAGS is doing well with successful recent events and exciting new developments for the Society. My goals for LAGS for this year are: to increasingly reflect the importance of geography; to enrich our meetings with excellent presenters; to provide opportunities for our students to help us expand the field of quality geographers produced in Los Angeles.

We ended 2005 with a well-attended banquet featuring a lively and informative lecture on future trends in California by author Bill Selby, professor of geography at Santa Monica City College. The raffle was one of the best ever raising over \$400 for the scholarship fund. Taix Restaurant gave us great food and service so we have already booked this year's banquet for December 1, 2006.

The year 2006 is getting off to an exciting start for LAGS. The LAGS council met on a Sunday in January to catch up on business and plan this year's activities. Thank you LAGS council! We have two new council members: Cesar Espinoza is the student representative and is designing an LAGS T-shirt. Zia Salim who received an LAGS student scholarship last year is now the newsletter editor. You can see that the newsletter looks good. We aim to get newsletters out in March, August, October and January. We would like letters and articles from the members. Here is your chance to get into print or onto the web! We would like to build a history of LAGS with input from those who have been members for many years. We have so much to learn from you. And I would like to hear from the newer members just starting out in the world of geography. **Con't Pg. 4**

## Recent Lectures

### **Annual Banquet – Bill Selby: “California: 21st Century Landscape Evolution” – by Gary Booher**

The Los Angeles Geographical Society returned to Les Freres Raix French Restaurant for its Annual Banquet on Annual 2, 2005. Approximately 80 persons attended, including many students, who enjoyed the unique perspective of presenter Bill Selby, author of the comprehensive textbook *Rediscovering the Golden State, California Geography* (John Wiley & Sons, 2nd ed., 2006) and Professor of Geography at Santa Monica College.

The presentation format was a diversion from the slide presentations that we typically have enjoyed, but nevertheless was very informative through his very informal interaction with those attending. During the course of the evening, Mr. Selby highlighted and expounded on some of the pressing issues of California in the 21st Century.

If it were ranked by itself separate from the rest of the United States, California by itself is nearly the 6th largest economy in the World. Just by itself, the Los Angeles region is not far behind. However, there is a great disparity between low and high wages within the economy, as the middle class has shrunk over recent decades.

Despite the economic prowess of California in the Global economy, there is much that has been neglected while economic growth rampaged. California has no effective economic preparation for disaster, and is waiting for one to happen with its aging infrastructure.

The population of California has also been diverse, and historical examples were provided of how diversity has always been present in the population. Recently, there has been significant immigration into California and several countries now have their second largest population residing in the Los Angeles area. Most notable are large populations of Korean and Vietnamese immigrants.

However, despite continuing population growth, California has experienced a recent net out-migration of its population to other states during some years, which sometimes includes net out-

migration for ALL ethnic groups in California's population to other states. Though all groups occasionally experience this net out-migration to other states, the traditional majority population of European-descended whites is moving out at a higher rate, and the new majority population is now an assemblage of minority group populations, with Latinos and Asians growing the fastest in share of the overall California population.

Recently, there has been a shift in residence for the overall population. Migration had been outward in past years because of the affordability of housing on cheaper land on the fringes of the large urban centers. However, the distances are now great for journey-to-work, as well as there being little available land that is even remotely close or affordable, and there has been some reversal of settlement trends.

More infill has occurred as the few remaining empty lots are developed, while other older, lower density development is bulldozed for newer development with higher residential density and commercial intensity. This is a trend that is affecting all major California cities, and includes the very recent adaptive reuse of underutilized structures in the central business districts of the major cities into the popularly known “Lofts”

As urban density and stress increases, urban livability has become a major concern for most of us who live in Los Angeles. A few cities have experimented with breaking down the urban sprawl by creating community-based urban villages with pedestrian-friendly environments. Santa Monica first reversed the trend by narrowing the streets and widening the sidewalks in its downtown commercial district, which has created a trend as other cities copied their model.

Transportation has also become a primary concern as journey-to-work has increased from more distant residences in the out-lying suburbs and as travel times have increased due to increasing congestion due to reliance on the automobile. The solution may be in reducing those distances through the recent trend for movement back to the inner city in higher density development and adaptive reuse to “Lofts”. More alternate forms of urban transportation may also be needed and inevitable.

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Another problem for this region, because of its climate and low rainfall, is how to provide enough water for the ever increasing population. The solution will probably require more efficient utilization of water, through conservation of the existing water supply. Much water is now used for water-hungry landscaping rather than the more efficient planting of drought-resistant plants. Also, reduction in how wastewater is disposed and processed may reduce another drain on the existing water resource.

Bill Selby closed his presentation by challenging many in the audience to also write such a book on California geography. There is so much information in the newspapers that is relevant to the evolving landscape of California and its geography in the 21st Century. Mr. Selby invited input for the third edition of his textbook. You may send your information, data, and comments to him via e-mail at [wselby@smc.edu](mailto:wselby@smc.edu).

**February Lecture – Yonni Schwartz: “Nepal: Katmandu, Trek Around Annapurna Massif & the Sanctuary” – by Richard Raskoff**

On February 3rd, members were treated to an outstanding slide-illustrated lecture on Nepal by Yoni Schwartz. Yoni has a PhD from USC Geography and is a Resource Officer for the Angeles National Forest and President of a small adventure travel company. His trip to Nepal over several months took him to altitudes of 4,000 feet to over 18,000 feet. During his journey, he traveled the three major regions of this area: the Himalayan mountains, foothills, and lowlands. The lowlands are drained by many rivers that eventually empty into the Ganges.

His travels took him from densely populated Katmandu through many rural villages and outlying settlements. It was in Katmandu with its congested streets where three-wheeled vehicles created tremendous air pollution. He hurriedly left such urban places to trek the countryside where his photographs showed substantial changes in architecture and building materials from the adobe in low lying areas to bricks and stones at the higher elevations.

It was interesting to view his photos of Buddhist temples, prayer wheels, and distinctive structures. One site in particular caught this viewer’s

attention: a temple where there were three eyes and a nose on each side of the building and the eyes on each side of the four sided temple would watch and see all. This was a distinct contrast to another Hindu temple that had a sculptured bull above the entrance where only Hindus in bare feet were allowed admission. Near this particular temple, Yoni found many small stores with seated shopkeepers. Most Buddhist temples are accompanied by Sadhus, holy men who wander from temple to temple, living off donations. In low lying areas, populated mainly by Hindus, Yoni’s slides showed a number of funeral pyres along the banks of a river where daily pilgrimages were made by bereaved family members. They would put the covered body of their deceased member on top of wood and ignite it. This cultural tradition is depleting the local forests. One wonders whether solar crematoriums which use no such resources would be a good introduction to their culture.

From this urban environment Yoni went to Tibet and returned to the western part of Nepal when he did a circuit around the Annapurna massif. For his route, he was using a book that detailed a trip in these parts that would last from 21 to 25 days and the trek would take you from 3,000 feet with climbs to high mountain passes at 18,000 feet. Along this route, he experienced all the climate changes, from the sub-tropical to the alpine tundra. Vegetation, geology, and landforms were distinctive in each of these regions.

Yoni’s trek began by bus, where he traveled with a small backpack. Yoni crossed many hanging bridges across raging rivers where he got accustomed to the rhythm of the sway as he inched forward. He noticed at low elevations, people were of Hindu background whereas at the higher elevations, people were of Buddhist background. At one point, there was no access by vehicles and the only way to continue was on foot. Not only did trekkers travel in this manner, so did the traveling salespeople who moved huge volumes of their wares by backpacks. These backpacks are a contrast to the western backpack because they have a feature that fits over the forehead of the carrier so that the weight is not wholly on one’s back. It’s not uncommon for porters to carry from 150 to 200 pounds on their backs, walking barefooted.

The landscape at lower elevations was amazingly

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green. The hillsides were distinctive with rice paddies whereas at higher elevations, deforestation was noticeable. At one point, Yoni went off the trail with a very light backpack to skirt a glacier at high elevations and escape from the view of a military garrison. If people were stopped, they would have to pay some kind of monetary penalty. He noticed four porters get four or five dollars a day for carrying heavy loads and he noticed that the wealthy people in the villages at high altitudes send their kids to private schools in the lowlands at a cost of \$25 per month.

Yoni noticed rock gates at the entrance to each high altitude village with Buddhist prayer wheels. Also at the high elevations, rocks were used in the construction of houses and buildings and dirt was used as filler. To this viewer, these structures appeared like big earthquake death traps. There was evidence of glacial erosion and deposition where, on occasion, landslides have covered entire villages resulting in high death tolls.

On one of his last adventures he found a set of hot springs at the base of a mountain. He must have been so grimy at this point he went into the hot springs, clothes and all. His pictures of mountain passes were often panorama style, showing the contrast of snow and glacial covered peaks. On his last hike on a trail that continued to the town of Pokhara, he took three days to get to a sanctuary where he found many elaborately carved wood constructed temples. If his experience, beautifully photographed pictures, and entertaining stories are any indication of how he conducts his travel company's visitors to exotic and remote places, this would be an experience each of us would relish.

### ***LAGS T-Shirt Design Contest!***

The Los Angeles Geographical Society is excited to announce its first ever T-shirt design contest. This is your opportunity to get your artistic and/or photographic abilities to work! The design can include original art work (i.e. text or drawings) or photographs and must incorporate a Geographic theme. See page 7 for official rules and have fun designing!



### **Attention All Students: Brighten your resume & bank account with the help of the Los Angeles Geographical Society!**

There are two exciting opportunities students should note:

#### Scholarships

Apply for an annual scholarship of \$500. These are awarded to distinguished undergraduate Geography majors attending community colleges and four-year universities. 2006 Applications must be received by Friday, April 7.

#### Student Presentations for May Meeting

Submit an abstract to present a poster, map, or paper at our 4th Annual Geography Student Research Presentation night scheduled for Friday, May 5th. Visit

[http://www.lageographic.org/lecture\\_s/AGSP/AGSP\\_2005\\_Gallery.htm](http://www.lageographic.org/lecture_s/AGSP/AGSP_2005_Gallery.htm) for photographs from 2005's successful student meeting.

For information on both opportunities, please visit the website at [www.lageographic.org](http://www.lageographic.org) OR contact Julienne Gard at: [juliennegard@hotmail.com](mailto:juliennegard@hotmail.com)

#### **President's Column (continued from page 1)**

We would certainly welcome more members to please send your contributions and comments to us at [lagnews@yahoo.com](mailto:lagnews@yahoo.com). Be sure to check out our classy website [www.lageographic.org](http://www.lageographic.org) designed and maintained by Edwin Cabnal.

We would welcome more members to the council and we are always looking for meeting presenters. If you would like to spend time with a fun group, we can always use more talent and help. You can email me at [lagnsprez@yahoo.com](mailto:lagnsprez@yahoo.com).

We have had two first-class lectures this year: Yonni Schwartz's talk about Nepal and Matt Ebner's talk about the Karakoram Highway. On April 7th Greg Lee will be talking about the Thai project that he worked on in 2005, and May 5<sup>th</sup> will be the student presentations. Please join us. We are looking for students to present at the May meeting and also hope they will apply for our \$500 scholarships which have an April 7, 2006 deadline. (See details above on this page)

I look forward to seeing you at all of our events.  
*Remember: Without Geography we are Nowhere*  
**Kris Jones, President**

**March lecture – Matt Ebiner: “Islamabad to Kashgar on the Karakoram Highway” –  
Reviewed by Ana Martinez, Los Angeles City College Geography Student**

I have never been interested in Physical Geography thorough my years of study. After attending the lecture presented by Mr. Matt Ebiner my view on Geography has changed dramatically. Attending the lecture gave me a new perspective and appreciation of Geography. The Karakoram Highway presentation was an interesting history, journey, and culture evolved into one.

The Karakoram Mountains are the second highest mountain range in the world and the Karakoram Highway was built in 1978. It was first used only for trade between China and Pakistan and in 1986 the Highway was opened for all. The 800-mile route was difficult to build through steep, jagged mountains, and Pakistan built a monument for all the lives lost during the highway's construction. The Karakoram Mountains have extremely dramatic relief with tilted, folded rocks, created by shifts of the Earth's tectonic plates.

Since the opening of the highway the area now uses more English due to the foreigners passing through. During Mr. Ebiner's journey he encountered many Afghan refugees who lived in inhumane conditions. Mr. Ebiner stated that he also enjoyed shopping in the local market areas and photographing the many different people and their surroundings. He described that the men predominantly wore beards and controlled the majority of the businesses. In some of the villages adult women were completely covered and rarely allowed in public. It was illegal to take pictures of these women, but acceptable to take photos of girls before they reached puberty.

Mr. Ebiner stated that the first day on the Karakoram trip was a 16-hour bus ride. He passed the Hunza Valley, which had been an independent kingdom less than 40 years ago. Hunza Valley had very little flat land and included the village of Altit. Many of the roof tops on the small houses of Altit were covered with apricots drying in the sun to store for their cold winter.

During his journey he also hiked up a U-shaped valley to Ultar Glacier. Mr. Ebiner continued his journey and crossed a scary footbridge above the Hunza River. Viewing the bridge reminded me of an Indiana Jones movie.

He reached the China and Pakistan border, where he entered the Xinjiang region of China. He encountered Tajik people who appeared more Middle Eastern than Chinese. Since the highway receives foreign travelers now, some locals have now become small merchants selling food and souvenirs.

In Kashgar (also known as Kashi), the Uyghur men wore Muslim caps and spoke a language related to Turkish. The cemetery had graves located above the hard, dry ground. Chinese influences had led to new architecture. In 1997, during his journey, China was getting Hong Kong back, which was celebrated and advertised during his trip. The world's largest outdoor market was held in Kashgar each Sunday with 100,000 people arriving on foot. The marketplace sold everything necessary, including livestock, vegetables, bread, and other products. The market was predominantly run by conservative Muslim men.

I found the presentation extremely interesting overall because of the way it was presented by Mr. Ebiner, where he found a way to make learning interesting and entertaining. I now have a new perspective and appreciation on Geography.

**Editor's Note**

I would like to start by thanking the people who contributed to this newsletter and helped review the draft. In the next couple of issues, I will be continuing to produce the newsletter that you are used to while also helping to move our newsletter in new directions. Possible avenues include revamping the format, having more of a presence on the website versus the mailed version, and small changes in content. As Kris wrote, your ideas, comments, and submissions are definitely welcomed – the newsletter is first and foremost for you. What would you like to see more (or less) of? Please mail any suggestions to our address at LA City College or to my email address: lagsnews@yahoo.com. I look forward to hearing from you and seeing you at the lectures!

--Zia



# Los Angeles Geographical Society

**54th Annual Program  
Fall 2006-Spring 2007**

## ***Free Public Lecture Series***

***Los Angeles City College, 855 N. Vermont Ave, Los Angeles, CA  
First Friday of the month (unless otherwise indicated), 8-9 pm, Franklin Hall,  
Room 101***

***Complimentary refreshments after the lecture.***

| <b><i>FALL 2006</i></b>  | <b><i>SPRING 2007</i></b>  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>September 8</b><br/><b><i>New Zealand's<br/>Magnificent Nature</i></b><br/><b><i>Matt Ebiner</i></b><br/>Geography Professor, El Camino College</p>  | <p><b>February 2</b><br/><b><i>Pyramids, Sacred Caves, &amp;<br/>Ballcourts: An Illustrated Short<br/>Journey Through the Maya<br/>Realm and Beyond.</i></b><br/><b><i>Sergio Garza</i></b><br/>PhD Student, University of California: Riverside</p> |
| <p><b>October 6</b><br/><b><i>The Geography, People<br/>and Culture of Pakistan</i></b><br/><b><i>Asad Hasnat</i></b><br/>International Student, Pasadena City College</p>   | <p><b>March 2</b><br/><b><i>Applied Geography: Putting the<br/>Earn into Learn</i></b><br/><b><i>Greg Lee</i></b><br/>Geography Professor, Pasadena City College</p>   |
| <p><b>November 3</b><br/><b><i>California Weather and<br/>Climate: From Tranquility<br/>to Severity</i></b><br/><b><i>Jeff Brown</i></b><br/>Graduate Student, Cal State Los Angeles</p>   | <p><b>April 6</b><br/><b><i>Namibia: From Sand Dunes to<br/>Wildlife with a Desert Ecology<br/>Class</i></b><br/><b><i>Cristy Brenner</i></b><br/>Geography Professor, Saddleback College</p>  |
| <p><b>December 1</b><br/><b><i>Annual Banquet<br/>Exploring Tibet – Roof of<br/>the world</i></b><br/><b><i>Yonni Schwartz</i></b><br/>PhD Candidate, Lecturer, President of Peaceful<br/>Edge Adventures, National Forest Service</p> | <p><b>May 5</b><br/><b><i>Student Presentations and<br/>Posters from California Colleges<br/>and Universities</i></b></p>  |



## Los Angeles Geographical Society

CA Corporation # D-0301820 LA0GS

Dr. Richard F. Logan Scholarships  
McKnight-Clemons Scholarships  
Free Monthly Public Lectures  
Local Field Trips

<http://www.LAGeographic.org>  
[LAGeographicalSociety@yahoo.com](mailto:LAGeographicalSociety@yahoo.com)

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Address changes through the Mail Box or via E-  
mail: [LAGeographicalSociety@yahoo.com](mailto:LAGeographicalSociety@yahoo.com).

Southland Geographic Notes is published several  
times per year.

## Los Angeles Geographical Society T-Shirt Design Contest

### Contest Rules:

1. All T-shirt designs must be submitted to the Los Angeles Geographical Society via email by April 28th, 2006.
2. The design must be submitted in JPEG format with a minimum of 200 DPI.
3. T-shirt designs will be used on short sleeve T-shirts only.
4. Designs are limited to one side and may be either for the front or back of the T-shirt.
5. All entries must include original art or photographs. We will not accept any designs that feature:
  - Existing registered trademarks (i.e. John Deere, Chevrolet, Spiderman logo)
  - Tobacco, firearms, alcohol and/or sexual connotations
  - Distortions of the LAGS emblem
  - Previously copyrighted materials
6. Only one winning design may be selected from each participant, but each participant may submit up to three designs.
7. The winning T-shirt design selected will become the property of the Los Angeles Geographical Society.
8. The winner will receive a free T-shirt and a one-year membership subscription to the Los Angeles Geographical Society. The winner will be announced at our 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Geography Student Research Papers and Poster Presentations on May 5<sup>th</sup> 2006.

### Submit to:

Los Angeles Geographical Society at  
[lagns@lageographic.org](mailto:lagns@lageographic.org). Please include "LAGS T-Shirt Contest" in the Subject line.

Include:

Original art/photograph in JPEG format

Designer's name/phone/email

For questions, please contact Cesar Espinosa at

[cespinos@csulb.edu](mailto:cespinos@csulb.edu) or call

(213) 453-4410





**Los Angeles Geographical Society**  
Los Angeles City College  
855 North Vermont Avenue, Box # 1259  
Los Angeles, CA 90029

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Yes, send Newsletter via E-mail**

Renewal     New Application (referred by \_\_\_\_\_)     Address Change

| Type of Member                      | Dues  | \$ | Membership Dues and Scholarship Donations are Tax-Deductible pursuant to law.  |
|-------------------------------------|-------|----|--|
| Student                             | \$ 5  |    |  |
| Senior                              | \$ 10 |    |  |
| Regular                             | \$ 15 |    |  |
| Family / Household                  | \$ 20 |    |  |
| Life                                | \$150 |    |  |
| Scholarship Fund – Richard F. Logan |       |    |  |
| Scholarship Fund – McKnight-Clemons |       |    |  |
| <b>TOTAL AMOUNT</b>                 |       |    | <b>Write Checks payable to “LAGS”<br/>and Mail to:</b><br><br><b>Los Angeles City College</b><br><b>855 North Vermont Avenue, Box # 1259</b><br><b>Los Angeles, CA 90029</b> |

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