

Los Angeles Geographical Society *Southland Geographic Notes*

Fall 2008



www.lageographic.org

Annual Banquet

Moscow: A Globalizing City?

Dr. Dmitrii Sidorov

Associate Professor of Geography,
California State University, Long Beach

This year we are privileged to have a special authority about Moscow, Russia. Dr. Sidorov is from Moscow and is an Associate Professor of Geography at California State University, Long Beach who teaches courses about World Cities and also the Geography of Russia. Dr. Sidorov received his Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota.

Dr. Sidorov will show us the landscape of Post-Soviet Moscow and highlight changes that have occurred since the Soviet period. As with other globalizing cities, Moscow exemplifies contradicting tendencies within the new spatial urban order, which may also allow comparison of Moscow and Los Angeles, as well as comparison of the old and new Moscow.

Similar changes have occurred in many globalizing cities of the World, including polarization of the city, development of a service economy, suburbanization, emergence of exclusive communities, social activism against in-fill construction (NIMBY), grand projects instead of general planning, and immigration tensions. This should be very informative about the World city of Moscow.

ANNUAL BANQUET

December 12, 2008

Taix Restaurant

1911 Sunset Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90026

6:00 pm – Social Hour

7:00 pm – Dinner

8:30 pm – “Moscow”

\$30 – Members

\$35 – Non-members

Menu – Short Ribs

Grilled Salmon

RSVP by December 1

(Return enclosed form and
check to LAGS mail box.)

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September Lecture Blue Nights in Corsica: Boundedness and Island Identity

Dr. Ray Sumner,
Professor of Geography
Long Beach City College

by Vienne Vu, Geography Instructor
Orange Coast College

Dr. Sumner gave a very interesting lecture on Corsica, a Mediterranean island controlled by France. She explored concepts related to islands. Islands can represent escape, adventure, individualism, and prison. "Islandness" can also refer to being bounded (by water), isolated, connected with flows, being closed or open, and being on the on the edge or the periphery of an area.

Corsica is an island that is isolated and at the same time connected. Its strategic location between France and Italy has made it an important connecting piece. It has been controlled by the Pisans, Genoese, French, British, Moors, Romans, and Carthaginians.

Corsica can also be seen as being closed and open. In one way there has been much outmigration, as young people have left the island in search of professional jobs, leaving behind a more elderly population. On the other hand, immigration has occurred as French Algerians have taken advantage of job opportunities in the tourism sector.

Corsica can also be viewed as being remote. It is 160 km from France and 80 km from Italy, so more Italian tourists are attracted to it than French tourists. Today its remoteness makes it dependant on France for economic assistance and infrastructure.

Dr. Sumner talked about a few of the transformations of Corsica. The island has a dual nature: the coast is more touristy and picturesque, while the interior is more rugged, mountainous, and more tied to Corsican culture. There are many heroic figures that have left an imprint on Corsica: Napoleon was born here and Corsican hero Pascal Paoli is still widely admired. The final transformation was that of Corsican nationalist movements. These movements promote the teaching, preservation, and usage of traditional language, which is the basis of their cultural identity.

The "Blue Nights" mentioned in her title refer to nights when men dressed in black bomb empty buildings, usually in January when the tourists are not there, as a symbol of Corsican autonomy. French words on road signs are crossed out and rewritten in Corsican, the moor's head symbol of Corsican nationalism appears everywhere, the nationalist movement has tried political separation from France but has not been successful (possibly because of important French economic contributions).

Overall, the lecture gave a fascinating glimpse of the island and its unique peoples, culture, and situation.



Photograph: Hillside houses in Corsica
Source: Lonely Planet Images

October Lecture The World's Most Endangered Forest

By Dr. Thomas Gillespie,
Professor of Geography
University of California,
Los Angeles

by Melissa Alamina, student
El Camino College

I had the opportunity to listen to Dr. Thomas W. Gillespie from UCLA at Los Angeles City College. Dr. Gillespie was focusing on the topic of the world's most endangered forest. I actually found him to be a really good speaker because I find the subject of geography can be a little bit boring sometimes but he made the speech actually really interesting. I think a lot of it had to do with the fact that when he talks he has a lot of action and verbal context that keeps the audience focused and entertained.

Gillespie was able to describe exactly how you are able to determine which forest is the most endangered. The four questions you have to find out are: current extent of forest, areas protected, plot data and species list, and the levels of endemism. One of the important things to finding out the extent of the forest is by measuring the richness and structure by the number of trees in a certain length and height. This helps us to be able to tell how big the forest is.

The most important thing in collecting any kind of data and trying to determine something like this is to make sure you collect different info from all kinds of different places. This is the process that Gillespie

had done when he gathered his data. He also said it took two to three days to collect it than another two to three days to process it.

The main forests that Thomas Gillespie studied were in Fiji, the Marquesas, the Marianas, New Caledonia, and Hawaii. When he collected this data he had a process to doing so: he used GIS and remote sensing, created databases, and extended small and diverse fragments of this data. Finally, once he collected all his data and came to his conclusion he found that the world's most endangered forest is actually near home, in Hawaii. Hawaii is the world's most endangered forest because out of all the other forests it had the highest fragment of 24, 5 size, 20 protection, 119 species, and 41-51% endangered endangered.

I really liked Thomas Gillespie's speech because he not only gave us information on how to determine the world's most endangered forest but he also gave us stories to go along with his adventure and made me laugh! One of the stories I found funny was when he was talking about the iguana and how it was rare and got to another island by riding on a log and how he found that more interesting than anything else. It was a humorous geography story.

I would have to say all in all the speech was better than expected. I didn't really know what to expect but I actually walked out with extra knowledge and it was entertaining. If I was going to UCLA I would love to take a geography class with him!

Editor's Note:

More information on Dr. Gillespie's research can be found at:

<http://www.geog.ucla.edu/tdfpacific>

2008 Scholarship Awards

A mission of the Los Angeles Geographical Society is the encouragement of talented students to continue their training and studies in Geography. To accomplish this goal, the Society awards annual scholarships for both community college and undergraduate students.

These scholarships are based on merit, and represent a cash award of \$500 each. The 2008 scholarship applicants represent a pool of very talented students, which made the decision-making process challenging. The awards were presented on Student Presentation Night, where students from various colleges and universities present their geographic research.

The 2008 recipients for Richard F Logan Scholarships for Upper Division students were:

Katherine Sims, CSU Long Beach
Juliet Kahne, USC

The 2008 recipients for McKnight-Clemons Scholarships for Community College students were:

Pam Patipanavat, Santa Monica College
Lynne Day, El Camino College

We greatly appreciate the generosity of our members and their donations to the two Scholarship Funds. Donations can be noted on the membership renewal form contained herein.

If you are interested in finding out more about scholarships, information and deadlines can be found by going to www.lageographic.org and clicking on "Scholarships".



Los Angeles Geographical Society

Free public lectures on geographical topics are offered once a month from September through May (except for January). Invited guest speakers, featuring students and faculty, present research topics, travelogues, and other interesting geographical topics from the U.S. & around the World. Lectures are usually held on the first Friday of each month at 8:00 PM in the Chemistry Lecture Hall at Los Angeles City College.

www.lageographic.org
LAGeographicalSociety@yahoo.com

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

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