



the D.O.G. byte

A Newsletter of the Department of Geography
California State University, Northridge

RONALD DAVIDSON AND JULIE LAITY, EDITORS • ISSUE No. 1, SUMMER 2009

GREETINGS FROM THE CHAIR

By Darrick Danta, Department Chair

Greetings and welcome to the inaugural edition of the DOG Byte! These are exciting times at the Department given our outstanding faculty, excellent facilities, and cutting-edge programs. We're continually working to revamp our GIS and cartography offerings, expand our environmental program, keep field studies strong and, of course, offer a variety of human and regional courses. Our goal has always been to provide the highest quality geographic education possible. We are currently working to bolster career preparation so that CSUN geographers will be even better prepared for employment in these changing conditions. Of course, all of these programs require resources, and as we see budgets sink, my hope is that alumni and friends will rise to the occasion and help us maintain our high level of quality by making a financial gift to the department: see the back page for details on how you can help.

MEET A GEOGRAPHER: DR. JAMES HAYES

The newest addition to the Geography faculty at CSUN is **Dr. James Hayes**. Jim enhances the department's offerings in biogeography, most notably in landscape ecology and forest dynamics. Born in Chicago, Illinois, Jim crossed state lines to



Jim Hayes explores the Santa Monica Mountains.

obtain a PhD at Indiana University. He was a “born biogeographer,” exploring the woods and swamps at a young age, even if it meant delving into weeds on the side of a railroad track in Chicago. Jim enjoys plants because, unlike animals, they don’t move!

Jim first ventured west when working on his dissertation in landscape ecology in New Mexico. He was interested in forest succession in Ponderosa Pines, most notably in stands of forest trees intermixed with open meadows. How does this mosaic develop and how is it affected by, and influence, fires? Jim raises the question of whether the large, severe fires that we now see in the west are as bad for the forest as conventional wisdom suggests.

The mountain vegetation of California also has a mosaic pattern, related to the many microclimates that exist. This pattern is very different from that of the rolling hills or level plains of Indiana. Jim is now looking to work locally, with two projects based in the Santa Monica Mountains. The first examines Valley Oak dynamics, looking at the population structure (number of old trees, age of the stand, recruitment of seedlings, etc.) and relating it to disturbance in the area (grazing, recreation, fires, etc.). Graduate student **Kathryn Ward** is helping him with this project. His second study looks at remote sensing measures of fire severity and compares them to field-based measures. **Bedoor Mohammad**, a graduate student in our department, is assisting in the remote sensing aspects of the work.

As a new faculty member, and recent transplant to California, Jim is still trying to get his bearings. When he lived in the Midwest, the mountains of the west were “mysterious things existing in another part of the world.” As he slowly unravels the mysteries of our state, he hopes to bring more students with him on field-based excursions. Next semester, he will teach a graduate seminar on Landscape Ecology, pulling together ideas from both biogeography and human geography, examining the urban–wildland interface of southern California.

When not studying plants, Jim hopes to continue to develop his skills in tae kwan do, improve his ability to ride horses so he can pursue endurance events in the mountains, and take up surfing! He reflects with regret that his celebrity encounters to date have been limited, but he has had one encounter, which he may reveal to you if asked. Please stop by and welcome Jim to our department.

OUT AND ABOUT

In this section, we highlight some of the geographical journeys of our faculty, students, and alumni.

Peru

A very lucky group of 15 students accompanied **Ed Jackiewicz** to Peru during the intersession break (January 2009) for a ten-day trip to study the cultural and environmental geography of the Andean region. Highlights of the trip included visits to the colonial city of Cusco, the ruins in the Sacred Valley near Cusco, Machu Picchu, and Lake Titicaca. Along the way, students learned about the architectural achievements of the local people and their connections with natural and spiritual worlds. On Lake Titicaca, they visited an island made entirely of reeds from the lake and spent the night with a local family on the island of Amantani. Most of the trip was spent at elevations of between 10,000 and 14,000 feet above sea level, which created some challenges, but the rewards of experiencing the region were worth it. A change of diet was also in order. Many students took advantage of the opportunity to eat guinea pig and alpaca!

Plans are in the works for a trip to South Africa in June 2010. Highlights will include a 2-3 day safari, city tours of Capetown and Johannesburg, and the opportunity to attend the World Cup of soccer! Please contact Ed for additional details and updates.



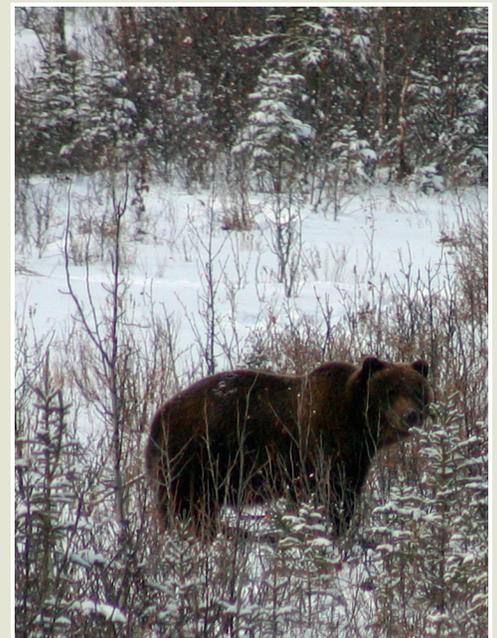
Undergraduate students Mark Jacobi and Jessica Walt above Lake Titicaca.

Alaska

In October 2008, three faculty from Northridge (**Jim Allen**, **Darrick Danta**, and **Julie Laity**), a graduate student (**Tina White**), a former graduate student and faculty member at Santa Monica Community College (**Vicki Drake**), and a CSUN geography graduate and cartographer at the InfoGraphics Lab, University of Oregon (**Alethea Steingisser**), departed for the Association of Pacific Coast Geographers Annual Meeting in Fairbanks, Alaska. The meeting was a great success, with many interesting papers, excellent guest speakers, and delightful entertainment. All of the geographers took advantage of the opportunity to explore Alaska, with many of us driving the 576 km from Anchorage to Fairbanks. The scenery was fabulous (though often covered in snow and ice) and the wildlife viewing opportunities unparalleled!



Some delighted tourists stand before a calving glacier (from left to right: Julie Laity and husband Saverio D'Agostino; Darrick Danta and wife Sara).



A grizzly bear at Denali National Park.



A pod of orcas at Kenai Fjords National Park.



A bald eagle watches the river at Talkeetna.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...SUE SCOTT

In this section, we revisit some of the people who once made the Department of Geography home. This time we caught up with **Sue Scott**, former Administrative Support Coordinator from 1988 to 2006, before her retirement to her dream farm in northern California. Sue is busier than ever, volunteering at Handi-Riders and babysitting for her young granddaughter. To top it off, she has just acquired a new warmblood horse, Kasbah, who is a “rescue.” So now Sue and her husband John are building a shelter, fixing fences, and trying to construct an arena!

FACULTY AND STAFF ACTIVITIES

Doug Fischer recently received a grant with collaborators at Channel Islands National Park for research on the effects of fog on the hydrology of Santa Rosa Island... **Shawna Dark’s** two boys are keeping her busy in Pasadena... **Steve Graves** won the Richard Morrill Public Outreach Award from the AAG for his research on predatory lending. He and Marta have two kids at home and host most of the parties, taking the baton from **Bill Bowen**... **Yifei Sun** is working on a NSF-funded project analyzing technology innovation in China’s information communication sector... **Warren and Sarah Bland** continued their travels during Warren’s semester off campus, enjoying a two-week trip through Vietnam in January. They found the Vietnamese amazingly friendly to Americans. They can’t quite figure out why... **Ron Davidson** has a new baby daughter... **Julie Laity** won the CSUN Preeminent Scholarly Publication Award for her book *Deserts and Desert Environments*, published by Wiley/Blackwell... **Jim Hayes** is gearing up to run a half-marathon in Long Beach in October of this year... **Darrick Danta** completed his term as President of the Association of Pacific Coast Geographers. His Presidential Address on the San Fernando Valley’s adult film industry brought howls from the wolves assembled for the banquet in Fairbanks, Alaska.



Sue Scott and her husband John.

How Do I Get to Grandma's House?

By Raul Martell

Raul Martell graduated from the csun Geography Department in 2008, with a specialization in Environmental Geography. He was immediately hired by NAVTEQ, a Digital Mapping company that provides maps and detailed geographic information to some of the world's leading manufacturers and online mapping sources, including Yahoo.com, Maps.com, Google, BMW, and Toyota. We thank him for his contribution to this newsletter.

Digital mapping is more widespread and commonplace than most people realize. Emergency crews use digital maps to route themselves to crime scenes and emergency situations. Long-haul commercial truck drivers use digital maps to minimize driving time and navigate away from overpasses too low to pass under. And students? Consider the countless searches for the nearest Denny's or McDonald's around college campuses at 1:00 in the morning.

Geographic knowledge plays a large role in digital mapping. Collecting, adding and correcting data within a map database requires knowledge of GIS, Excel, government data sources and other sources that help verify the information collected in the field. Zip codes, city limits, property lines, speed limits, and access restrictions are just a few of the things that are put into maps



A NAVTEQ geographic analyst collects data on everything from which lane he is in to what fast food restaurants are nearby. The headset is for audio notes.



NAVTEQ's SUV takes six simultaneous videos for Google's "Street View" images and to gather data for map updates.

that aren't always seen, but are there to help those wanting to make a cross-country trip, or just find their way to grandma's house.

If you are a CSUN graduate with an interesting job in geography, we would like to hear from you! Please contact either Ron Davidson (rdavids@csun.edu) or Julie Laity (julie.laity@csun.edu).

JOIN THE GEOGRAPHY COUNCIL

By Shane Western, Geography Council President

Members of CSUN's Geography Council experience extracurricular activities and gain exposure to professional opportunities in geography. As many know, geography is a broad subject, which gives the council an incentive to be involved with a wide variety of events. Past field trips include hiking trips in the local mountains, wilderness navigation outings, beach cleanups, habitat restoration projects, camping trips, and academic lectures. The Council looks forward to more enjoyable and rewarding trips this spring and summer, including to the California Geographical Society conference in Solvang. Getting involved with the Geography Council is a way to express your ideas, build relationships and learn while having a great time with fellow students. Click the "Geography Council" link at the Geography Department home page (<http://www.csun.edu/csbs/departments/geography/>) to learn about upcoming activities or join the Council.

STUDENT NEWS

Congratulations to MA student **Lisa Baughn** for receiving the 2009 Nathan O. Freedman Memorial Award for Outstanding Graduate Student at CSUN. On top of that, Lisa won a critical language scholarship to study in Turkey this summer. Lisa also works on development of Harvard University's Islam in the West website: www.euro-islam.info. Hearty handshakes as well to recently-graduated MA students **Anna Dvorak** and **Patrick Kahn**, who have both been accepted into the PhD program at UCLA. Several of our grad students gave outstanding talks at this year's AAG meeting in Las Vegas. Only one, however, **Aleksandra Ilicheva**, got the rare opportunity to play Liberace's favorite Baldwin piano at the Liberace Museum. Photographic proof below:



Aleksandra hits the town between AAG conference sessions in Las Vegas.

We would also like to congratulate the winners of the Fall 2008 Geography Department Awards:

Romy Beattie

Shoshana Sokol Memorial Award

Armen Haritouni-Noshahr

Ross Scholarship

Doron Weinstein

Geography Undergraduate Award

Joel Osuna

Geography Undergraduate Award

Ryan Reynolds

Robert and Karen Newcomb Fellowship

Jeremy Patrich

Robert and Karen Newcomb Fellowship

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GIS Day is November 18! Learn about Geographic Information Systems and the high demand for geographers with GIS skills in both the private and public sectors. Visit <http://www.gisday.com/> for more details.

Consider joining the International Geographic Honor Society, Gamma Theta Upsilon (GTU). With enough student interest, we hope to establish a chapter here at CSUN. If you are a geography grad student or geography major and would like to join, see Professor Hayes.

Los Angeles Geographical Society Free Public Lecture Series (www.lageographic.org) Please see the website for a full listing of the Fall 2009-Spring 2010 talks. The following CSUN faculty will present this year:

Dr. Helen Cox. Global Warming and Meeting Our Energy Demands. Sept. 11, 2009

Dr. Julie Laity. Deserts and Desert Environments: The Role of the Wind, Nov. 6, 2009

OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP THE DEPARTMENT

The Department of Geography offers scholarships, field studies/special courses, and many lab courses. Please consider making a contribution to the Department so that we can continue to augment our program offerings and student opportunities. Your donation is tax deductible, and can be directed toward the Department's General Fund, or any of the following:

Center for Geographical Studies

Robert Howard Field Studies Fund

Geography Student Scholarship

Michael Tamburro Scholarship

Shoshana Sokol Memorial Award

Robert and Karen Newcomb Fellowship

Stanley Ross Scholarship

Send checks payable to "CSUN Foundation" to us at:

Department of Geography

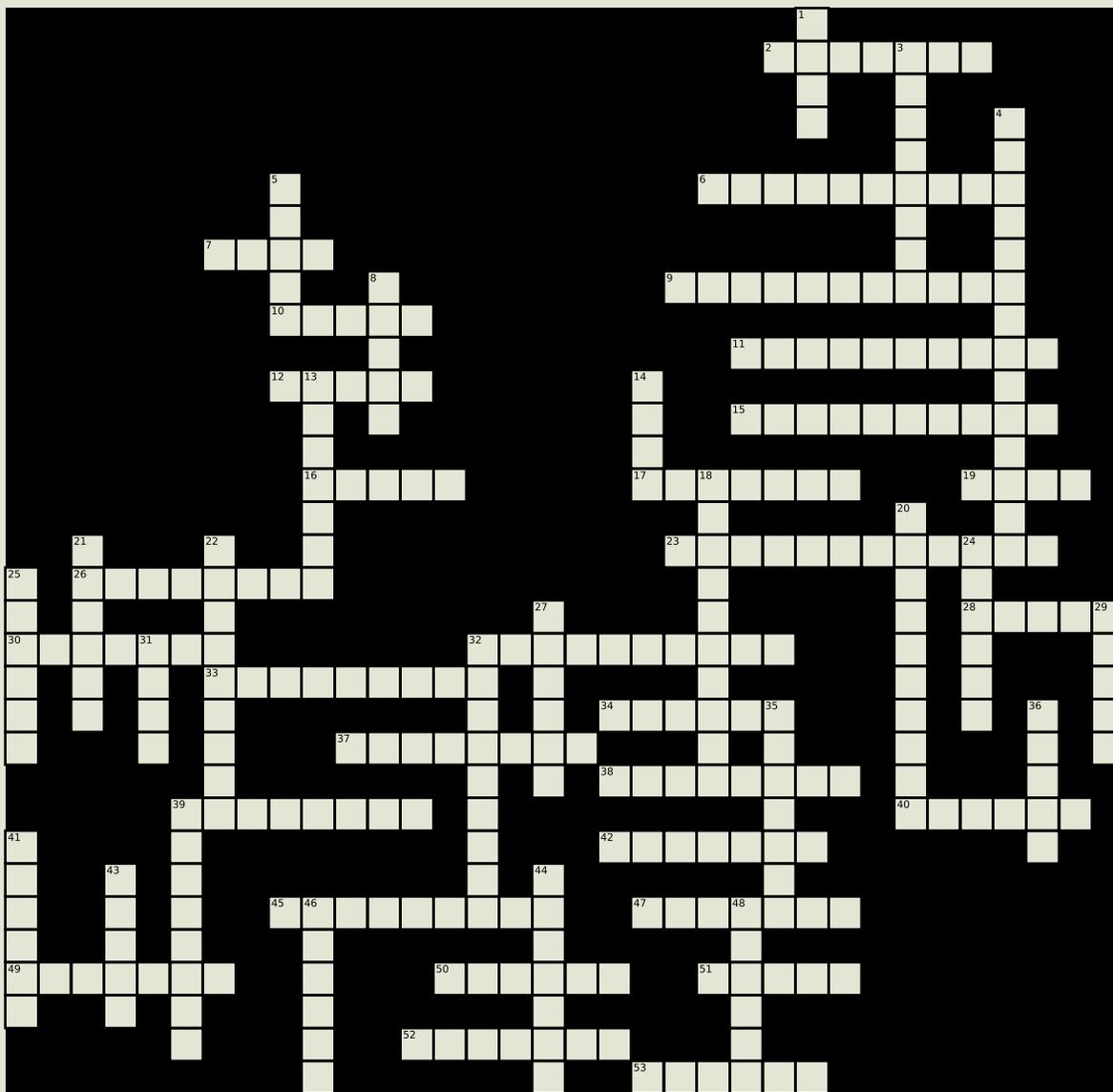
California State University

Northridge, CA 91330-8249

To make a secure gift online with a credit card, go to: <https://www.csunalumni.com/default.aspx?page=GIVEinformationGift>.

Under Designation, select College of Social and Behavioral Sciences; under Account select Geography. If you would like to support a specific Scholarship, type the name of the Scholarship in the "Special Designation" box.

Geography



- | Across | Down |
|---|--|
| 2 Islamic temple spire | 1 Chinese basketball star Yao _____ |
| 6 His Endurance was stuck in Anarctic ice | 3 Country named for Cecil Rhodes |
| 7 Circular ocean current | 4 Istanbul, to Ataturk |
| 9 The land between the Tigris and Euphrates | 5 The _____ According to Garp |
| 10 Landform at river mouth | 8 "Guns, Germs, and _____" |
| 11 Porn center of the San Fernando Valley | 13 Mountain chain once called the Northern Andes |
| 12 Upper fork of the Colorado River | 14 A cartographer, not a game of chance |
| 15 Father of LA Aqueduct | 18 Geography's home at CSUN |
| 16 Where they invented kim chee | 20 Landscape, to Gunther |
| 17 GIS: Geographic Information _____ | 21 Minority Islamic population |
| 19 It's made of either sand or saliva | 22 Latitude's sister |
| 23 It has the lowest elevation in North America | 24 A global city |
| 26 Rolling Stones geography title? | 25 Shaking hands, in Seoul |
| 28 Bukowski's South of No _____ | 27 Portuguese-speaking nation in South America |
| 30 Geo + graphy means earth plus _____ | 29 Equatorial climate |
| 32 Northridge had a bad one in 1994 | 31 Country between Syria and Iran |
| 33 "Unknown land": terra _____ | 32 Apollo 8's famous photo of home |
| 34 North African desert | 35 World's oldest Christian nation |
| 37 Climbed because it's there | 36 Home of the "world's largest thermometer" |
| 38 Mercator product | 39 Street bordering CSUN |
| 39 Kansas' northern neighbor | 41 Payday lender foe |
| 40 Winds near the equator | 43 Sony's home country |
| 42 Warm sea surface near Peru | 44 Horn of Africa nation |
| 45 First California mission | 46 Former VP candidate Palin's home state |
| 47 Its needle points north | 48 "City of a Thousand Spires" |
| 49 Imaginary line that divides the earth in two | |
| 50 Desert between LA and Vegas | |
| 51 Crack in the Earth | |
| 52 River of ice | |
| 53 Biome of little rain | |