

President's Column

As with nearly every geographer I know, I love traveling and am endlessly fascinated by landscapes. One thing in particular that always strikes me is the transition from one place to another. Especially while driving, I find myself taking careful note of the nature of the changes I am experiencing. How sudden are the changes? Why are they occurring? What historical events played a role in the changes? I suppose this sounds familiar to many of you.

In May of 1989 I had an experience that has remained vividly imprinted in my memory. Taking a cue from a friend, I decided to take a solo backpack trip for several days in the Sierra's Emigrant Wilderness. I headed for a chain of remote lakes, situated near tree line about fifteen miles south of Highway 108. In itself, this was an amazing experience. I walked alone through miles of beautiful, remote country and didn't see another human for three days. On the morning of the fourth day, I awoke at first light. I had made plans a week earlier to meet up with a friend that evening in San Francisco. As I anticipated the day ahead, it became apparent that my journey through space and time would be a profound one.

I hastily packed my belongings and began trudging cross country, the sky still dimly lit. Not only were these lakes

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Celebrating California's Desert Landscapes

The first time I set eyes on the Anza-Borrego Desert was my first winter after earning my B. A. in Geography from UCLA. Even though I grew up in western San Diego County - less than 2 hours from Borrego Springs - I never visited, and only knew of the desert from the daily weather reports in the local paper. As with many of my generation growing up in the suburbs of southern California, the desert conjured images of a hot, barren, life-less wasteland to be avoided at all costs. Little did I know how pivotal the desert would become in shaping who I am today.



My first introduction to the desert was on a UCLA geography field trip to the Mojave. By this time the geography bug had bitten, and after just one day of tromping around on fans, flows, and exposed faults, I was hooked. My fascination and love of the desert grew with every trip, and places like Death Valley, Joshua Tree, and the East Mojave became like second homes to me. Yet, it wasn't until after I graduated that I finally ventured south of the 34th parallel and into the western Colorado Desert for the first time.

On my first trip into the Anza-Borrego Desert I camped amongst the Junipers, Mojave Yuccas and weathered granitic boulders at Culp Valley on the western edge of the State Park. A storm blew through overnight and I awoke to an inch of freshly fallen snow and a brilliant sunrise over the

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Calling all Students

"You can't win if you don't play," or so went that old lottery advertisement. Well the same could aptly be said of participation in the CGS. You can't reap the benefits of this organization if you don't attend and get actively involved in the CGS conferences.

As student and a geography professional, I have come to value what the CGS conferences offer me. The annual meetings allow me to be part of a geographic community of students, colleagues and mentors from all over our diverse state. They permit me to showcase my work and skills to the community of California geographers. Further still, the conferences enable me to actively network with people I know will be instrumental in my future. The people I am meeting at the CGS conferences might tomorrow be future employers, collaborators or fellow employees.

I strongly encourage my fellow geography students to attend this year's conference in Borrego Springs, March 16-18, and start making the connections that will make a difference in your scholastic and professional careers.

Robert O'Keefe
Student Representative for Southern California
California State University, Northridge



Get A Life...!

Life Membership in CGS, that is

Life Membership includes:

- ❖ Lifetime membership for the cost of 10 years of regular dues (at \$25/yr.)
- ❖ Lifetime subscription to the *CGS Bulletin* and the *California Geographer Journal*.
- ❖ Recognition for supporting the CGS at the highest membership level.

Join the growing list of CGS life members !

It's easy! Just fill out and mail in the membership application (available online at www.calgeog.org) along with your \$250 check made payable to the CGS. It's a win-win situation – you'll have no more annual membership dues to pay and the CGS will be a stronger organization because of it!

Congratulations!

New CGS Life Members

Melanie Renfrew
Dan Scollon
Bill Selby
Stephen Slakey

Redding Reflections (and Looking Ahead to Borrego Springs)

As a geography student at the University of Southern California, I read articles and interpret maps on a regular basis. This past year, I read my own – to you, at my first professional geography conference: the California Geographical Society Annual Conference in Redding.

Do you remember your first paper presentation? The butterflies, the questions, meeting the experts in your field? Or the horror of technical difficulties as I turned to the overhead screen anticipating a map I had spent countless hours perfecting only to face blankness.

The beauty of cartography is turning a blank screen into an array of colors and symbols. I am proud to say that I explained the missing colors and meaning of that blank screen to my audience for approximately five minutes – and later, I did so while the screen fell down behind me (at LAGS a few weeks later.)

In life, our experiences fill with the colors of roads, rivers, keys and legends as we explore. The people, the places – next to us, ahead of us, behind us – are part of a larger, broader, intricate structure called geography.

In November of 2005, I traveled to Phoenix to attend the Association of Pacific Coast Geographers annual meeting and saw William Selby, a scholar I admire very much, speak on California. Five months later, our paths led us again to a room at a conference, this time while he listened to my presentation. And to my astonishment, as we discussed his book I love, he complimented *me* on my research.

“This is what scholars do. Welcome to the club,” my academic advisor wrote in a congratulatory email to his student presenters. A club of geographers. Really, a club of the globe.

At CGS, passion became pride, and I once again look forward to the people, places and experiences at this year’s conference in Borrego Springs - Hope to see you there!

Marina Jordan-Viola
USC Student Geographer

Mike “Mountain Man” Murphy Takes Students on the Journey of a Lifetime

(Excerpt from an article by Kimberly Sherman in the Clovis United School District newsletter *Today*, Sept. 15, 2006)

Gettysburg Elementary School conceals a “Mountain Man,” otherwise known as fifth grade teacher, Mike Murphy. He began teaching in 1988, and during his 18-year career he has taken more than 90 kids backpacking to one of America’s most challenging hiking destinations—Mount Whitney.

Student interest builds at the beginning of each school year when Murphy shares his many mountain-climbing stories with his class and offers to take students with him on his next journey provided they pass P.E. testing and weigh at least 80 pounds. (ed. note, They also must work very hard all year.) “Only the strong survive, just like Marine Corps boot camp,” Murphy said speaking of his young students. “This trip changes lives. I’m not making backpackers, I’m making responsible adults.”

The annual trip is one not taken lightly by either teacher or student. Murphy has hiked over 3,000 miles, the majority being personal voyages along the Mount Whitney Trail. His dedication and experience encourages parents to feel comfortable with their children in his care. This past year was no exception. Murphy escorted the five participating students, along with two other teachers, several former students, additional chaperones, and his wife on the trip of a lifetime. For Murphy, the best part of the trip was seeing the joyful faces of his students at the top of California’s highest mountain (14,497’).

Mike Murphy is a CGS life member and long time CGS board member.



Gettysburg students, Tim Casagrande, Damiana Gumiran, Rose Garcia, Cooper Couchman and Skyler Quammen atop Mt. Whitney with their teacher Mike Murphy. Photo by Dawn Couchman

In Memoriam: George Nasse

On April 17, 2006, California lost a great friend and citizen with the passing of George Nasse. Following an afternoon handball game, George slipped away while watching television. Besides handball, George enjoyed gardening, as well as hiking and camping with friends, family, and students.

Quiet and unpretentious, it took nearly a year before I learned that George was among the first marines to land at Iwo Jima and then again at Pusan in South Korea. In this, George stands as one of the great Americans of his generation.

George enjoyed studying and talking about his Albanian roots. Without access to Albania during the Cold War, he studied the Arbereshe (Italo-Albanian) enclaves in Italy and the United States, and the Arvanites (Greco-Albanian) in Attica and Peloponnesos. With the support of a Fulbright-Hayes Research Award, he earned a PhD in Geography from the University of Michigan in 1960, followed by the publication of his dissertation, *The Italo-Albanian Villages of Southern Italy*, in 1964.

Besides befriending and mentoring students, George served the community and academe in many ways. He worked with Habitat for Humanity and gave papers in New Delhi, Marguette, Boston, and all around the State of California. He served as Acting Chairman of the Department of Geography at CSU Fresno, and as President of the California Geographical Society, 1969-70 (known then as the California Council for Geographic Education). In addition, he was a popular guest lecturer on campus, as well as with community groups in Fresno.

George retired from teaching in 1995 and earned the honor of Professor Emeritus of Geography at CSU Fresno. He was loved and respected by one and all and will be deeply missed. He is survived by his wife Mary and his four children, Steve, Tom, Beth, and Kris.

Paul Vander Meer
Professor Emeritus
CSU Fresno

2005-2006 Awards & Scholarships Contributors

John Aubert	Max C. Kirkeberg
Cristy Brenner	Joe Leeper
Robert & Bobbe' Christopherson	Gordon Lewthwaite
Barbara Cleghorn	M.P. McIntyre
Richard Eigenheer	George Nasse
Richard Ellefson	Philip Nelson
Lisa Fischer	Sally Otton
Dolly Freidel	Clement Padick
Don Gauthier	John Passerello
Jennifer Gillespie	Philip Pryde
David N. Hartman	Debra Sharkey
David Hendrickson	David Swenson
Bill Holder	Lin Wu
Rebecca Huntoon	Jenny Zorn
Melinda Kashuba	

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Annual Outstanding Educator Award

The CGS Awards Committee is seeking nominations for the Outstanding Educator Award. This award recognizes a California college or university geography educator who has demonstrated excellence in teaching. The award will be presented on Saturday, March 17, 2007, at the Borrego Springs Conference Awards Banquet.

Nominations are due by February 15, 2007.

Any CGS member may nominate a worthy candidate. To nominate an individual, send a letter of nomination along with the names and phone numbers of two additional references to:

Debra Sharkey
Cosumnes River College
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Celebrating California's Desert Landscapes (Continued from page 1)

Salton Sea, 50 miles away and 3500 ft. below. From a nearby overlook, I could see the desert landscape unfold before me - towering snowcapped mountains, narrow palm lined canyons, deeply incised badlands, and a textbook perfect graben complete with a bajada and clay playa that rivaled those of Death Valley. The beauty and diversity of this "unknown" desert instantly captured my imagination and fueled my passion for teaching and learning about arid lands geography.

Since that fateful weekend 17 years ago, I've made hundreds of trips to the Anza-Borrego Desert, each one as fresh and exciting as the first. I've had the good fortune of being able to teach in San Diego County, and I've shared the Anza-Borrego Desert with over a thousand students in the past 10 years. This year, I am honored to share this quintessential desert landscape with my fellow geographers at the 61st Annual Conference of the California Geographical Society.

In partnership with Cuyamaca College and the Anza-Borrego Institute, I cordially invite you to the 61st Annual CGS Conference in Borrego Springs, CA, March 16-18, 2007. Located on the western edge of the Colorado Desert, Borrego Springs is surrounded by the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park - California's largest state park and one of the largest desert preserves in California. It offers a great diversity of arid landforms and vegetation, and with luck, we will catch the peak of the desert wildflower bloom!

By now you should have received your registration packet with complete information about field trips, lodging, meals, paper and poster presentations, etc. This year's conference will be unique in that all conference activities will be held in one place - the Palm Canyon Resort in Borrego Springs.

The Palm Canyon Resort is centrally located less than one mile from the town center, and only a few hundred yards from the State Park Headquarters and Visitor Center. Both lodging and camping are available at the resort and early reservations are strongly encouraged. Please refer to the conference registration materials - in print or on the CGS website - for more information about reservations at the resort, or call the resort directly at (800) 242-0044 and ask for the CGS rate!

This year's field trips are intimately tied to the conference theme of "Celebrating California's Desert Landscapes," and span the spectrum of geographic inquiry drawing on physical, human and environmental themes. Among the sites to be visited are the Borrego Badlands, the Salton Sea, Calcite Mine, Old Borego, Borrego Palm Canyon, Maidenhair Falls, the Julian Gold Country, and the Marshal South Historic Home Site. Full descriptions are available with the conference registration materials—be sure to register early to reserve your spot!

Our keynote speaker will be Park Superintendent, Mark Jorgensen. He will share his unique perspectives on park preservation, management, and promotion. In addition, we have arranged a star-gazing party at the conclusion of the address.

The Presidential Plenary speaker will be Dydia DeLyser, associate professor of geography at Louisiana State University. She's an award winning teacher, author, and scholar. Her research on place, landscape and regional identity in California and the American West is original in approach, and her writing offers a fresh and accessible perspective in cultural-historical geography. Her most recent work, *Ramona Memories*, is winner of the 2005 AAG Globe Book Award.

Once again, our annual conference will offer a premier venue for students, both graduate and undergraduate, to make academic presentations in the field of geography. The atmosphere is both supportive and professional. As an added benefit for 2007, we will be offering the highest cash awards for prize-winning presentations ever. Be sure to join us at the Saturday evening awards banquet to help congratulate this year's winners!

This year's conference promises to be another great experience for all attendees, building on the strength of past conferences and laying the foundation for the future. Please join us and help make 2007 another great year for CGS!

This year's conference also marks the end of my tenure as the *CGS Bulletin* editor. For the next issue, I will be handing over the reigns to Crystal LoVetere, assistant professor of geography at Cerritos College. She has many great ideas for improving the Bulletin and will no doubt carry on the past editors' pursuit of excellence for this publication. It has been a great pleasure to serve as editor for the past 4 years, and I look forward to continuing to read the Bulletin with interest for many years to come. See you in Borrego Springs!

Michael Wangler
2007 CGS Conference Coordinator,
and outgoing *CGS Bulletin* Editor

Geography Wins One for U.S . Military Personnel

Recently, Congress passed a law capping the interest rate of loans made to members of the military to 36%, outlawing check holding, and protecting service persons from a variety of other abuses at the hands of 'predatory lenders'. Part of the 2007 Defense Authorization Bill (HR 5122), this legislation is in part a result of the media attention generated by a 2005 article co-authored by Steve Graves, entitled "Predatory Lending and the Military: The Law and Geography of 'Payday' Loans in Military Towns" (Ohio State Law Journal, 66:4 pp 654-832).

News media, including the New York Times, Washington Post, the USA Today, and ABC World News Tonight, reported the findings of the Graves-Peterson studies which found that military zip codes are heavily targeted by lenders who make loans at over 400% APR.

Dr. Graves, with ample help from CSU Northridge staff cartographer David Deis, produced a number of maps that were used during congressional hearings to demonstrate the geographic concentration of predatory lenders around the gates of many US military bases. Many congressional staffers and other consumer activists lauded the effectiveness of the Graves-Peterson maps in making a strong case for this legislation, that had been thwarted for many years by powerful opposition.

Steve Graves

CGS Welcomes Two New Geographers

Julia Skye Wangler

Born August 07, 2006

(in San Diego)

6 lbs, 12 oz

21.0 inches

Proud Parents:

Michael Wangler & Donna Troy



Sophia Marguerite Ebner

Born August 27, 2006 (in West Covina)

7 lbs, 15 oz

19.5 inches

Proud Parents: *Matt & Suzan Ebner*



President's Column *(Continued from page 1)*

miles off the trail, but the ground had also been covered by a light dusting of snow. After an hour or so, I joined a small, barely visible track, which then intersected with another trail, only slightly larger. Down the trail, step after step, I remained alone with my thoughts. Suddenly, a voice from just off the trail bid me good morning, virtually assaulting my solitude. He seemed friendly enough, but the experiencing was unsettling nonetheless.

As the morning progressed, the trail became wider and more populated. Backpackers were replaced by day hikers and anglers. Finally, I arrived at the trailhead at Kennedy Meadows, my first chance in days to buy an ice cream sandwich and take a look at a newspaper. Still, this wasn't quite civilization by most standards. The phone – there was just one – worked only sporadically, and there were no permanent year around residents. As I departed in my car, I felt as though I was traveling light speed in comparison to my pace over the previous few days. I drove the two lane highway past forested vistas and wound my way downhill through small mountain hamlets. I was startled when I encountered my first traffic light.

Transitioning from the Sierra foothills to the San Joaquin Valley, the human imprint became more evident. Sonora, Oakdale, Manteca.... Oak woodlands eventually completely gave way to pastures, orchards, row crops, housing developments, and strip malls. It was a blur. But still, the landscape was mostly open and agrarian. As the afternoon waned, though, my target destination loomed. Pleasanton, Hayward, Oakland.... Wilderness would be hard to find here....

As the sun touched the horizon, I exited the tunnel at Yerba Buena Island and climbed the western span of the Bay Bridge. I flashed back to the start of my day. With San Francisco's glorious skyline emerging from my dashboard, I was alternately amazed and conflicted. In the span of one day, I had exchanged my life as hermit in the wilderness for one as an urbanite among millions. It was a wonderfully ironic experience that I'm still trying to process almost eighteen years later.

I hope that we can share more stories such as these when CGS meets this March for our annual conference in Borrego Springs. Until then, safe travels....

Spatial regards,

John Aubert



Student Learning Outcomes

Depending on where your campus is in the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accreditation cycle, you have either completed SLOs (student learning outcomes), are authoring SLOs, or are assessing SLOs. This is in response to changes in the accreditation requirements, which now call for learning outcomes to be explicitly stated within every course outline of record. Additionally, degree programs are also required to have SLOs. Simply put, SLOs are the overarching themes of your course or discipline, and when students complete your class they should be able to demonstrate an understanding of these themes. Authoring SLOs for geography is particularly challenging as the discipline spans the natural and social sciences, in addition to having skills based courses such as GIS and physical geography laboratory.

In 1984 the Joint Committee on Geographic Education of the National Council for Geographic Education (NCGE) and the Association of American Geographers (AAG) established the “Five Themes” of geography, which is a good starting place for authoring SLOs. In conceptualizing SLOs I found it easiest to start with the program level SLOs, as the course level SLOs will eventually have to be tied to the program level SLOs.

At the 2006 CGS meeting, I hosted a workshop on SLOs for the purpose of seeing what my fellow geographers had to say on this topic. During the workshop, we brainstormed on program level SLOs that could also be used for courses. We asked ourselves, what are the themes and concepts that we cover in all of our courses? We divided the information into two categories – skills and content. Here are the results of our brainstorming:

1. Demonstrate cartographic literacy / Interpret maps (SLO)

How do students meet this SLO in their geography classes?

- interpreting map data
- creating maps
- using map essentials
- identifying spatial patterns / interrelationships
- spatial analysis
- mental maps

2. Identify interrelationships between humans & the environment (SLO)

Examples from geography courses:

- plant domestication
- folk culture – housing, dress & food
- land use, resources & industry
- population distribution & climate
- global warming, deforestation, pollution

3. Understand how diffusion influences global distributions & characteristics

Examples from geography courses:

- Columbian Exchange
- human migration – religion, language, etc.
- invasive species
- barriers to movement and migration / push & pull factors
- economic geography – transportation, goods, services

This is by no means a comprehensive or definitive list of geography SLOs, as each campus has their own individual requirements and format. However, SLOs are intended to be broad categories so that individual instructors can maintain their academic freedom and use a variety of pedagogical methods for covering the SLOs in their courses. Broad SLOs also allow for pedagogical freedom in assessing student achievement and remove the threat of standardized testing.

Workshop participants agreed that seeing what other geography departments have done would be of great value to those of us who are just beginning this process. In response, CGS has created an SLO page on the website and hopes to serve as a “Geography SLO Clearinghouse”. We are hoping that those of you who have completed SLOs will send us a link or document that we can post for other faculty to review and use as guidelines. Steve Graves, webmaster, also suggested placing assessment tools on the site.

Irene Naesse

The California Geographical Society,
Anza Borrego Foundation & Institute, and Cuyamaca College
warmly invite you to the
61st Annual CGS Conference
in Borrego Springs, California
March 16-18, 2007



Conference Headquarters - Palm Canyon Resort

Conference Hotel:

Palm Canyon Resort

<http://www.palmcanyonresort.com>

Reservations: 800-242-0044 (Ask for the CGS rate)

Field Trips include:

- Intensive Water Management in Arid Southern California
- Calcite Mine and Slot Canyons Hike
- Borrego Badlands All-Terrain Backcountry Excursion
- Borrego Palm Canyon Hike
- Old Borrego Tour
- Birds and Natural History of the Anza-Borrego Desert
- Marshal South and the Ghost Mountain Experiment
- Earthquake Faults & Hot Springs of Anza-Borrego
- Return to San Diego via the Julian Gold Country
- Maidenhair Falls Hike



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