

# EX-Ls

# EX-PRESS

Volume 27 Number 3  
**Summer 2009**

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The EX-Ls Board of Directors and members gratefully acknowledge the  
Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory Administration  
for their continuing support.

**President's Message**  
**Don Grether**

I thought that the May luncheon at the Berkeley Yacht Club went very well. There was a near-crisis a couple of weeks ahead of time in that the owner of the catering service had a stroke and it looked as if the company was going out of business. Vicky Jared contacted a number of catering services but either their prices were well above what we have been paying or they didn't provide the same level of services, or both. Fortunately, the employees of the catering service decided to keep it going and the near-crisis was averted. However, the incident has again raised the question of alternative venues for our luncheons. Some suggestions were made at the July 9, 2009 meeting of EX-Ls Board, and Vicky is going to check them out.

The luncheon speaker, Jose Alonso, our immediate past President, gave an excellent talk that is summarized elsewhere in this newsletter. Vicky took pictures at the luncheon that will be posted on the Internet along with ones from the 25th Anniversary luncheon held in November 2007. We'll let you know the details via the newsletter and/or email when the photos are ready for viewing.

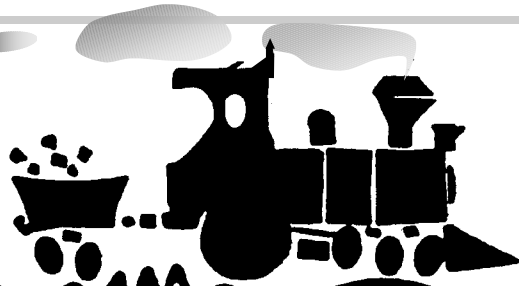
Turning now to the Lab, UC President Mark Yudof has appointed a search committee for a new Lab Director. The committee will meet for the first time in mid-August, and is being asked to make a recommendation to Yudof by December. You may read more about the committee and its membership at <http://newscenter.lbl.gov/press-releases/2009/07/01/search-for-new-director>.

We are all very aware of the State of California's budget crisis that will have a major impact on the University. The crisis should not impact the Lab directly since it is supported almost entirely by federal funds. In fact, the Lab's budget is growing due to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA – also known as the stimulus package) with ARRA funds received for both construction projects and research. Also, President Obama's budget request for DOE for fiscal year 2010 is generally favorable to many areas of importance to the Lab. Of course, the request needs to be turned into an actual appropriation by Congress, and it will be awhile before we know the outcome of that process.

Turning back to the University, President Yudof has proposed several ways to operate UC in light of the anticipated reductions in State funding. In the initial draft proposal one of these was to enforce salary reductions and/or furloughs for all UC employees, including LBNL employees. The President's office received many comments on the draft proposal, with the result that the final proposal that was submitted to the Regents at their July 14-16 meeting exempts almost all LBNL employees as well as campus employees who are supported entirely by grants and contracts rather than by via the State's general budget. You may view a video of President Yudof explaining the proposal at <http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/budget>. As of the time this message was composed we did not know the Regents' decision.

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# EX·LS Ex·press



## 2009 Summer Lunch

**Date:** Thursday, August 20, 2009

**Where:** Spenger's ←←←NOTE: WE'RE AT SPENGER'S THIS MONTH  
1919 Fourth Street, Berkeley

**Time:** No-host Bar: 11:30 AM  
Lunch Served: 12:15 PM

**Speaker:** Don Grether

**Subject:** Watch Out for the Baboons! Three weeks in a rain forest in Uganda

**Menu:** Petrale sole (lunch salad)  
Shrimp Louis w/ 1000 Island dressing (clam chowder)  
Pork loin (lunch salad)  
Vegetarian menu of the day

**Cost:** \$25 per person (PREPAID)

**Reservations:** Please make checks payable to EX-Ls. Send to  
Vicky Jared  
4849 John Muir Road  
Martinez, CA 94553

For regular mail, the reservation slip is on page 17. You may also reserve via e-mail to [jaredrv01@aol.com](mailto:jaredrv01@aol.com), or telephone at 925-228-2145.

It is imperative that Vicky receive your reservations  
by August 17, 2009.

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## From our February & May Lunches

*Reported by Rich Sextro:* Rather than provide a summary of Chris Somerville's talk, which was given several months ago, and since his work is evolving very rapidly, I have asked him for an update, which I hope to provide for the next newsletter.

The speaker for the May luncheon was Jose Alonso, who in addition to his duties as an LBNL retiree – and immediate past president of the Ex-Ls – is also director for the Sanford Underground Science and Engineering Lab (Sanford Lab). These latter activities were the basis for his talk on Life and Physics Underground. In the late 1870's, the Homestake mine started in the Black Hills of western South Dakota - stimulated, in part apparently, by field observations from George Armstrong Custer – but that's another story. One of the founding partners for the mine company was George Hearst – after whom the Heart Memorial Mining Building at UCB is named, thus providing another connection to UC and another story.

Until the end of 2001, Homestake was an active underground gold mining operation, with mining operations as deep as 8000 ft below ground and from which a total of 40 million ounces of gold was extracted. It was also the site for pioneering physics research in the mid-1960's by John Bahcall and Ray Davis, who used a tank located in a chamber at 4850 ft below ground and filled with 100,000 gallons of carbon tetrachloride to determine that the solar neutrino flux was only ~1/3 of that predicted by Bahcall's solar model (Davis shared the 2002 Nobel Prize in Physics for this work).

When mining ceased at the end of 2001, the underground de-watering pumps were left on, in part because of the interest in the physics community in developing a national underground lab at the site. However, the pumps were turned off in June 2003 and the deepest parts of the mine flooded. The State of South Dakota formed the SD Science and Technology Authority in 2004 with a mission to reopen the mine as a site for underground science. The donation of the mine to the state by the mine owners and a gift of \$70 million from South Dakota philanthropist T. Denny Sanford – along with \$35+ million from the state – were the drivers for the formation of Sanford Lab.

Jose's talk highlighted the brief history of Sanford Lab and described the immediate tasks at hand in preparing the mine for scientific activities. In 2007, the National Science Foundation selected Homestake as the site for a Deep Underground Science and Engineering Lab (DUSEL) proposal and by mid-2007, re-entry into the mine began. In March 2008, dewatering began, with Jose punching the 'start' button. Just days before his talk, the water pumping reached the 4850 ft. level, down from ~4530 ft. when dewatering started (at the end of June 2009, dewatering was approaching 5000 ft.). Fortunately, the mining operation left a fairly substantial water treatment facility for treating and releasing the water pumped from the mine. Reaching 4850 ft. is a significant achievement because this is the level where some of the first underground physics experiments will be conducted. Rehabilitation and additional infrastructure development has begun, focusing on the "Davis campus" (the cavern in which Ray Davis' tank was located).

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Two ‘early’ physics experiments will be located at the Davis campus, the Large Underground Xenon (LUX) experiment designed to search for dark matter in the form of weakly interacting massive particles (Jose claims to have a T-shirt that says “Nerds searching for WIMPS”) and Majorana, which is a neutrino-less double beta decay experiment. Another cavity will support a detector designed to detect neutrinos generated at FermiLab, ~900 miles away. These experiments are dependent upon the shielding from cosmic rays that the underground laboratory provides. At 4850 ft., the shielding depth is ~4000 meters of water equivalent (mwe), while for the deeper reaches of DUSEL, it is projected to be 7200 mwe. These can be compared with the shielding depths at two of the other underground labs, the Sudbury (Ontario) Neutrino Observatory at 6000 mwe (currently the deepest) and at Gran Sasso in Italy at ~3000 mwe.

Jose also described some of the current science activities already in place at Sanford Lab, including geophysics and hydrology experiments being conducted by several universities, including UCB. There is also quite a bit of interest in underground microbiology, which is the basis of some current research at the 2000 ft. level, as well as ideas for proposals in LBNL’s Earth Sciences Division.

In addition to the current focus on rehabilitating the mine infrastructure to support the current science proposals, Sanford Lab is providing support to the consortium developing the DUSEL proposals for NSF. That consortium is led by Kevin Lesko of LBNL’s Nuclear Science Division; NSF is expected to make funding decisions in 2011. In the meantime, Jose is racking up the frequent flier miles, learning to use a miner’s hardhat and light and generally adjusting to life underground. Its not clear when he will really retire....

*Luncheon Attendees:*

Bob Avery	Genevieve Dreyfus & guest Vonnie Gurgin	John & Barbara Lax
Jose & Carol Alonso & guest Jeanette Ibargoyen [Jose was the speaker]	Ed & Polly Fleischer	Richard McDonald
Dick Baker	Trudy Forte	Doug McWilliams
Winnie Baker	Bob Fulton	Bob Miller
Edward & Mildred Bennett	Bill Gilbert	Donald & Bert Miller & guest Ed Lofgren
Gene & Myrna Binnall	Don & Becky Grether	Ken Mirk
Bob Birge	Connie & Ed Grondona	Victor & Nancy Montoya
Kay Bristol	Jim Haley	Mack & Ann Morgan
Jerry Bucher	Harry Heckman	Marty Morimoto & guest Mako Nakae
Geores & Katie Buttner- Clevenger	Ingeborg Henle	Rolf Muller
Patrick Cullinane	Paul & Nancy Henrickson	Torlief Myhrer
Per & Eleanor Dahl	Winnie Heppler	Rollie Otto
Janis & Ned Dairiki	Diana & Clifford Hopper	Fred Perry
Tom Downs	Egon Hoyer	Conway Peterson
	Vicky Jared	Mike Press
	A. David Johnson	Senta Pugh-Chamberlain & guests Bernard & Margaret Harvey
	John & Ann Kadyk	
	Donald Landis	
	Bud Larsh	

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Sig & Cindy Rogers	Ben Shuey	Ralph Thomas
Andy Sessler	Robbie & Mary Smits	Grace & Ron Walpole
Rich Sextro	Karen Springsteen	Dick Wolgast
George & Reni Shalimoff	Dave & Sally Stevens	Allan Zalkin
Brenda Shank	Jack Tanabe	Jon Zbasnik
Claire Shigley	Clyde Taylor	

### Editor's Note

The peripatetic seminar is a well-established academic tradition; your Board of Directors has decided to follow that tradition for at least another quarter: Our October meeting will be in Room 3075 in Building 90, October 8, at 3:00 (see the calendar on the back cover). If you are planning a trip to Tunisia any time soon, I recommend you read Andy's Excellent Adventure further on in this newsletter. Remember to let me know if you would prefer to receive the newsletter electronically, in either Word or PDF format. If you have comments on the newsletter in general, or suggestions for articles, you can contact me at david\_stevens@comcast.net, at 1107 Amador Ave, Berkeley 94707, or 510-524-2904. // dfs

### News of our members

**Doug McWilliams** is in the Baseball Hall of Fame! He writes "I continued my work with Major League Baseball for many years after retiring from the Lab. Two years ago the National Baseball Hall of Fame accepted my life's work in "Baseball Photography" – more than 30K negatives and prints. I'm almost ready to deliver them after a lot of work putting images in order and identifying the images.

"My second interest is museum curating, and working with their photo collections. On May 23rd an exhibit on the old Pacific Coast Baseball League goes up for six months at the International Terminal of the San Francisco Airport. It covers 1903 to 1957: 250 items with many original uniforms."

**Claire Shigley** asked about the impact of the L'Aquila quake on the Gran Sasso national laboratory in Italy. **Jose Alonso** sent us the following report: "In the discussion following my talk at the last luncheon (May 21), brief mention was made of the large Italian underground lab at Gran Sasso. On April 6th a large earthquake struck the area, causing severe damage to many of the towns in the Abruzzo Valley region. Hardest hit was the town of L'Aquila, with around 10,000 buildings severely damaged, resulting in around 300 fatalities. A thorough account can be seen at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2009\\_L'Aquila\\_earthquake](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2009_L'Aquila_earthquake). The Gran Sasso laboratory is just a few miles from L'Aquila, and also very close to the quake epicenter.

"We were very concerned about our colleagues, and a phone call with Eugenio Coccia, Director of Gran Sasso a few days after the earthquake provided us with the good news that the laboratory itself had been unaffected, and all personnel had suffered at most minor injuries. The laboratory

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remained closed for several days while a thorough safety assessment was performed, but in the end received a clean bill of health.

“The biggest problem for the lab was that the majority of its staff live in L’Aquila, and many had lost their homes. Even if a house had not collapsed in the main quake, the severe aftershocks that occurred in the following weeks posed the risk that a building, weakened by the main quake might then collapse. As a result, most of the town remained closed for many months; in fact, areas are still closed. Staff members had to live in tent cities, or with friends or relatives and faced long commutes. Though the Lab is now open again and fully operational, the aftermath for its staff will remain for a long time to come while rebuilding occurs.

“Our best wishes have gone out to all of our colleagues there.”

**Dave and Sally Stevens** are back from an extended (nearly six weeks) trip in and around Great Britain and Ireland, and can report that sun makes travel there vastly more comfortable than the usual weather in that area. You will undoubtedly hear more about this trip in a future issue of the *EX-Press*.

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Note from the Editor: We do not object to the anonymous expression of thoughts and opinions on the notepads we distribute at the luncheons, and we discuss them at our board meetings, but beginning with this issue of the newsletter we decline to publish them. On the other hand, we really do want to hear what you are doing, and are willing – nay, eager – to publish almost any signed contribution.

### Keeping Up with the Lab

Principal sources: <http://newscenter.lbl.gov/> & <http://berkeleylabreport.blogspot.com/>

**Bye-bye Bevatron:** Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory’s Bevatron, built by the Atomic Energy Commission—the forerunner of the Department of Energy—in the early 1950s, is slowly being demolished thanks to \$74 million of stimulus funding. It is expected that by 2011, all traces of it will be gone.

**Higgs still in hiding:** The BaBar collaboration submitted two papers to Physical Review Letters last month, both searching for the hypothetical light-mass Higgs boson, the particle suspected of giving objects their mass. While the Large Hadron Collider at CERN will search for a heavy-mass Higgs that lies outside the BaBar experiment’s energy range, other theories predict another, lighter Higgs within BaBar’s reach. Both papers found no evidence of a low-mass Higgs in the BaBar data set.

**Pocket accelerators?** Giant particle accelerators like the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) have become the poster children for big science. These gargantuan structures hurl particles at velocities close to the speed of light, in the hopes of uncovering the most basic constituents of

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matter and energy. But when Wim Leemans gets his way, particle accelerators will be just another piece of lab equipment, no more obtrusive than a gene sequencer or a desktop printer. Leemans heads up the BELLA program at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, where researchers are figuring out how to accelerate particles over inches, not miles. Now, armed with new funding, the BELLA team looks to pack even more punch into a small space.

**Getting down and dirty:** Eight years after the Homestake gold mine here was shut down, Lead, SD, is fashioning an unlikely economic-stimulus plan from the warren of tunnels the miners left behind. This past week, the mine was rechristened the Sanford Underground Laboratory at Homestake. The event celebrated the first steps toward transforming the mine into a place for scientists to hunt for fundamental particles difficult to find on the earth's surface. After working in underground labs in Canada and Japan, Berkeley Lab physicist Kevin Lesko sees Homestake as a way to make the U.S. the center of the underground physics world.

**Long-term memory:** A memory technology to beat all memory technologies has been developed by the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and the University of California, Berkeley. "The shuttle memory has information density as high as one trillion bits per square inch and thermodynamic stability in excess of one billion years," says project leader Alex Zettl.

**Renewal for Old Town?** Berkeley Lab has applied for \$45 million in federal stimulus funding for demolition and remediation of Old Town and to prepare it for construction.

### **Legislative and University matters with potential impact on retirees**

#### 1. Governance of the University of California

Two issues with respect to the governance of UC have arisen in recent months. The first, as previously reported, was an initiative constitutional amendment proposing that the governance of UC pension and retirement systems be transferred from the Regents to a to-be-created board of trustees. The second was a legislative constitutional amendment, raised in both the Assembly and the State Senate, proposing that all governance of UC be subject to direct regulation by the State Legislature. Both of these issues are currently inactive, but in the current climate of economic uncertainty and political maneuvering it is not unreasonable to expect one or both of them to be reactivated. Should this happen, we shall try to keep you informed.

#### 2. Public service pensions

In this area, too, there have been two proposals for initiative constitutional amendments that would have a direct impact on PERS retirees (as well as teachers, fire fighters, and others in public-service area): the first would have allowed the state to renegotiate benefits for vested employees and retirees, and the second – which might be interpreted to apply to UCRS as well – would impose "additional, annual taxes on California residents who receive income in excess of \$40,000 from pension distributions, social security, and the cash value of health care benefits."



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The first of these (renegotiation) failed to gain enough signatures to qualify for a ballot, but the second (increased pension taxes) is still in circulation. It is initiative 1360 (09-006) “Tax on pension distributions and health care benefits”; please read it carefully before you act if you are asked to sign it or it appears on the ballot next June.

You can follow the progress of all proposed amendments on the (state) Secretary of State’s website, [www.sos.ca.gov](http://www.sos.ca.gov); click on “Ballot Measures” under the “Elections” heading.

### 3. UCOP Post-Employment Benefits Task Force

The Office of the President has created a task force to develop a comprehensive long-term approach to UC obligations for post-employment benefits. The task force consists of a Steering Committee and a Work Group with representation from a “cross-section of UC stakeholders” (both Marian Gade, chair of CUCRA, and Charles Hess, chair of CUCEA, are members of the Work Group). [There are no LBNL representatives in either group. //ed] Its purview includes funding, benefits policy, and benefits design. The task force plans to hold a number of listening sessions at UC locations in the fall.

### **Medical Screening Program**

The DOE medical screening program for former workers at DOE national laboratories has been expanded to include LBNL. To be eligible to participate, individuals must have worked at one of the Labs for one year or more of cumulative time, or have worked around beryllium or in construction or maintenance for any period of time. The purpose of the screening program is to offer medical evaluations to former Lab workers who suspect they may have been exposed to harmful substances and want to find out more about their health status. The process consists of:

- 1) a private interview conducted with a program staff member;
- 2) a medical exam, with tests based on potential occupational exposures, held at a Kaiser Permanente Occupational Medicine Clinic;
- 3) a complete set of screening results, including a summary letter with recommendations, sent directly to participants.

For more information, contact Elisa Rossetti, MPH, Program Manager, at 925-551-7844 or toll-free at 1-800-460-0628, or check out the program website at [www.bu.edu/formerworker](http://www.bu.edu/formerworker).

### **From the Berkeley Retirement Center Patrick Cullinane**

Fidelity Retirement Services: The Retirement Center has initiated a partnership with Fidelity Retirement Services to provide investment education for retirees. The first session was in late July and concentrated on how to interface with your on-line accounts at [netbenefits.fidelity.com](http://netbenefits.fidelity.com). We hope the mutual schedules of the Center and the Newsletter will allow us to provide timely notice of future sessions. In the meantime,

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you can contact the center directly to ask about this – or any other programs – and request that you be added to their announcement list.

New ID cards: If you haven't gotten your new Retirement Center ID card, valid through June 20, 2012, you may get one by applying in person (at 1925 Walnut St., Berkeley), by phone (510-642-5461), or by e-mail ([ucbrc@berkeley.edu](mailto:ucbrc@berkeley.edu)). A current ID card is required to access most BRC services, including Learning in Retirement, insurance counseling, access to the Scholar's Workstation, and the Art Museum.

Art Museum tour and tea: Friday August 7 2pm-4pm

Can art inspire conservation? Can conservation inspire art?

*Human/Nature: Artists Respond to a Changing Planet* began six years ago in the form of these questions, triggering an unusual collaboration and an extraordinary and circuitous journey. BAM/PFA, in partnership with the Museum of Contemporary Art-San Diego (MCASD) and the International Conservation Organization commissioned eight of the world's most thoughtful and innovative artists to travel to UNESCO-designated World Heritage sites and to create new works of art in response to their experiences there.

Attendees are invited to enjoy a light tea after the tour. Contact the Center at [ucbrc@berkeley.edu](mailto:ucbrc@berkeley.edu) or by phone at 510.642.5461 to register.

Website: More information on Retirement Center programs can be found at <http://thecenter.berkeley.edu>.

### **Trip Reports**

#### **1: France: Bob & Barbara's Best Bathroom Barge Trip Bob Birge**

Our memorable trip to France in the fall of 2008 was a nice blend of daily challenges and rewards. We were inspired to share some of these with you, in the hopes you'll learn what to expect if you go – or perhaps just enjoy the experience vicariously.

To get to Southern France from SF, we started with a 4 AM shuttle bus from our motel near the airport to catch a 6:30 AM plane to Paris via Philadelphia. Luckily we were able to avoid waiting for an hour in the tourist class line because we had an upgrade on the overnight section from Philadelphia to Paris and so we were allowed to go into the first class line. Arriving in Paris at 2 AM SF time, we wandered about helplessly for some time, until we finally found out it was necessary to catch an airport train to a different terminal. From there we caught the TGV (*très grande vitesse*, or very high speed) train to Montpellier on the south coast of France.

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We nearly missed the TGV because we didn't know we needed a stamp on our train tickets to board the train, and it was only because we met another member of our group who pushed us to the front of a long line – much to the displeasure of those still in line – that we were able to get on. It sure would be nice to know all of this before arriving!

The TGV is amazing; it is possible to walk down the aisle of the train going 180 miles per hour without falling over (unlike on the Amtrak train we'd been on recently that was unsteady and bumpy while going only 75 mph). We wandered into the next car to get a bite of lunch, *croque monsieur* and a cup of soup from a quick lunch counter.

Getting off the TGV is as much of a challenge as it had been getting on; the train waits only very briefly at each station, so the stronger members of our group formed a line and handed down all the luggage in record time.

We spent two nights in Montpellier. Although the hotel in Montpellier was only a few blocks from the station, we elected to take a taxi with another couple to avoid dragging heavy bags. After driving many blocks we realized we were going in the wrong direction and found out that the driver thought we were going to a similarly-named hotel in a local suburb! Once that was rectified, we went back towards the hotel and then the driver had to pull out a card and use it to open a gate in the street leading to the hotel neighborhood.

The next night, we met the people who would be our traveling companions for the next two weeks. What an eclectic group it was: five other couples, including folks from Ohio, Oregon, and California. For the most part, they were real “foodies” and good conversationalists. We talked about politics, election campaigns, social and philosophical issues, and recipes, among other topics. We even found out what Sudoku was (we're still working on completing an entire puzzle one of these days). Our director started some fascinating dinner table discussions by asking us such questions as “What in your life has been your greatest accomplishment?” There were lots of laughs, some almost tears, and many shared experiences.

On the third day, we boarded the two barges that would be our home for the next six days. We then sailed along a canal that ran alongside the Mediterranean Sea. There were eight people on our barge, *L'Étoile*, and five (with the tour guide) on the other, *Caroline*. Each couple had a small cabin, and ours was special: It was the only one with single beds rather than a double. Here's the story of how we got it: About a week before the trip, we were all asked to submit our names to a lottery to determine which couple would get it. Everyone else refrained from entering their names and so we lost by default – but got lots of gratitude from the group. The beds were so narrow that to turn over without falling out was a major effort. The space between the bed and the nearby wall was less than a foot, so putting on socks and shoes became a contortionist's nightmare. **But in our small bathroom the shower was enclosed by a cylindrical glass enclosure, keeping the water away from the toilet and sink! The other cabins had king or queen size beds but their showers watered down everything in the bathroom! So perhaps we won after all.**

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This was definitely a foodie's tour. Our woman skipper, who owned the boat, was a gourmet cook. Our tour guide had worked as a chef in SF making dinners for wealthy clients. Our meals were superb. The two barges moved along the canals together and tied up alongside each other when we stopped for the night. At dinner we all ate together in *L'Étoile*. Breakfast included several pastries bought that morning at local shops, with homemade jams, juices, coffees, yogurts, cereals, and other delicacies. One night we stopped in a local village and bought six dozen oysters which we ate on board either raw or barbecued.

Our boat brought us back near Montpellier in time for an afternoon cooking lesson, in French, at a famous three-star restaurant. Only two of us in the group spoke French, but we were not much in demand because the chef used enough gestures to explain what he was doing. The trip continued with visits to small villages in the area over the next four days. We stopped at Aigue Mortes and Arles, and ended near Avignon, where we took the TGV back to Paris.

At the Paris station, a porter came by with a baggage cart and offered to take our bags to the taxi stand. Our fellow passengers were worried that we might lose our bags, but on the contrary, when we reached the long line waiting for a taxi our porter knew some of the drivers and managed to flag one down without our having to wait in line.

Our adventures and excursions in Paris were numerous and exhilarating. We took fascinating walks along the west bank of the Seine, enjoying the artists and street vendors, visited museums, and the Jardin Tuilleries, with its gorgeous fountains and flowers. One night we went to a concert at the beautiful Sainte Chapelle; there, due to the kindness of an usher, we were led to an elevator that bypasses the winding stairway to the beautiful stained glass windows upstairs.

We continued to eat well in Paris. I had made reservations for three restaurants before leaving home. (Note to the wise: If using email to make reservations, it is advisable to write in French. Otherwise you often don't get a reply.) One night we had dinner at Le Dôme, specializing in fresh fish. Fresh indeed, as Barbara discovered, evidenced by a tiny crab still moving on her plate.

Our last night in Paris we first had cocktails at one of our group member's elegant penthouse. Breathtaking views including the Notre Dame, the Eiffel Tower and the Arc de Triomphe. Then out with our whole group for dinner and fond farewells as we were all departing the next morning.

Coming home, we traveled by tourist class – but with our good memories and our own beds to greet us, it wasn't so bad.

## **2: Andy's Excellent Adventure: Tunisia**

### **Andy Sessler**

Our Tunisian adventure actually began in Sicily, where I had been for a workshop. Sicily is a wonderful place: If you want to see Roman tiles, don't go to Rome (although there are some

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good mosaics in the ancient seaport of Ostia Antica), but go to the Imperial Villa, near Piazza Armerina. If you want to see Greek temples don't go to Athens (although the Parthenon is quite something to see), but go to Segesta, Sicily, to see a wonderful temple and then to Agrigento in Sicily or Ephesus in Turkey where there are much more extensive Greek cities than you would find anywhere in Greece. If you want to see one of the world's most beautiful cathedrals (fantastic mosaics; a combination of Arabic designs and Christian motifs) go to Palermo. And, of course, there is ever-smoking Mount Etna. And Tunisia is just a ferry ride away.

Actually, I had been in Tunisia once before, but that was, first of all, long ago and, secondly, by accident. We were on sabbatical, at CERN in Switzerland, 1966 to 1967, and I was assigned the task of finding us, for Christmas week, some ski arrangements. Well, I was busy doing physics and by the time I got around to thinking about the vacation all the places were full. In desperation I asked a travel agent for a suggestion. "Why not go to Tunisia?" was the reply. "It is cheap to stay there, it is an inexpensive country, the government is sponsoring tourism, and, furthermore, it isn't far away". The family – to a person – thought this was a really bad idea. But we went, and had a hotel/motel room that had nothing but a sandy beach between us and the sea. At the end of the week I was ready to return to work, but the family was so-enjoying that we stayed on another week. Well, they enjoyed the hotel and the food (French influence) and some Moslem families with which they had become friendly, communicating in French, the second language for all parties. Friendship even extended to having dinner at their place and the wives performing belly dances for my wife (in exchange for her doing some modern dance movements). No men of course; belly dances are only for husbands.

This time our intention was to go and see a bit of what was once Phoenicia, and, especially, to explore the ruins at Carthage. So, the day after my Workshop, May 2, we took the ferry across to Africa (about a ten hour ride). Leaving Palermo, passengers are told to arrive 2 hours before departure, which we did: 9:30 AM. Getting a ticket, as a result of a web reservation, was easy and fast. However, then we had to get through Italian passport control. Well, the office didn't open for another two hours and then it took an hour to get perhaps 50 people through. There was a long line, much "cutting of the line" and an official who took forever to look at the passport, compare it with a list of passengers, and then give a BIG stamp. All that would have been the cause of our missing the boat, except that the boat was two hours late leaving (engine trouble).

The ferry is very comfortable (a bar, a sun deck, electronic games, and a cafeteria) and we had a pleasant trip (quiet waters). We arrived in Tunis, which is the main city in Tunisia, at about 11 PM after an all-day ferry ride.

The first day, rather than taking a tour, we found, and learned how to get a ticket, and rode, the local railroad (suburban line; only about \$1.50 per person) out to the Hannibal-Carthage stop. (You will remember how, during the second Punic War, the famed Phoenician general Hannibal led an army with elephants through Spain and then into Italy, by crossing the Alps, and thus surprised the Romans.) We wandered around after leaving the station, climbed a hill, and found

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the Carthage museum and even some Phoenician ruins. (There are very few Phoenician ruins as the Romans destroyed all they could find.)

Then on to lunch, where, simply stated, the waiter cheated us. He pointed out an item on the menu and I actually asked him to point again (in fact just to be sure): it was about \$6. We asked for one, and also some cuscus. At the end of the meal, a bill came with 2 x \$30 (plus some other items like 0% beer; Moslem country). We had already eaten, so we – meekly – didn't complain. (Would it have done any good?) We didn't have enough money with us, but came close enough, apparently, because we didn't end up in debtor's prison or washing dishes....

The next day we wandered in the medina and this time, just in case, I took a bit more money. However, a pickpocket took my cash. Must have had a tiny hand, for every time *I* go into my pocket I sure can feel it. Only cash was taken (as I purposely leave passport and credit cards and most cash in the hotel), but still a bad, and the second bad, experience. Well, it is good we are rich and it might have been a worse experience, but nevertheless....

For lunch, we found a supermarket and bought some food (really a mess of food—for only \$2) and ate in our hotel room. For dinner we had salads, a pizza, and three beers, all for about \$15, which is reasonable, for food and transportation is very cheap in Tunisia. Of course unemployment is high: we see many at coffee shops, some well dressed, most not. What they do for work is a mystery to me. Western dress is worn by everyone. Because they were there for so long, French is the second language for most people, so it is rather easy to manage (a lot easier than, say, managing in Japan).

The next day we looked on the web to get the train schedule, found the train station and took the Grande Line to Sousse and back. Round trip was about \$13 for 4 hours of train riding. In Sousse we wandered the medina and went to the Rabat and a fine private museum. This last was in a house built many hundreds of years ago, where the owner at the start of the last century had been the first owner to take only one wife. There were many interesting and fine artifacts about, including an oil lamp, whose concept was developed by the Romans. It was used for love making and lit at the start of the sex act, which was supposed to last until the lamp went out, thus both showing the prowess of the man and ensuring the satisfaction of the woman.

The main museum – highly regarded in the guidebook, and requiring a bit of walking to get there – we found to be closed for the year. For lunch we had a local sandwich, which is a half of Arab bread filled with vegetables and meat and then squeezed in a waffle iron sorta thing: very delicious and only about \$2.

On our last day we went to the archeological museum after riding the local trolley system to get there (\$0.5) and then crossing streets (an art in itself: the drivers in Tunis are reasonably polite and stop for pedestrians so one just walks out into a stream of high velocity cars in hope that they stop. They always did.) The museum, the Bardo, is fantastic. Never have I seen so many, and such fine, Roman tile mosaics, or so many fine statues (from Carthage). There were a number of

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Venus statues that, if they weren't off in Tunis, would be as well known – or better known – than the Venus de Milo.

Human rights, actually any rights, are non-existent in Tunisia. Everything is controlled by a benevolent – but very tight – dictatorship. The dictatorship – extending over the last few decades – has done much for the country, but it controls everything. The control extends to TV (so everyone has a TV dish so as to get foreign TV; I never saw so many dishes!), newspapers, political talk (make any criticism and one ends in jail), etc.

Our last night in Tunis was delightfully inexpensive as we didn't have a hotel room. I can just hear, "I knew you would end up sleeping on the street". Not so; we slept in the hotel lobby. Our flight left at 2:35 AM, so we had to be at the airport at 12:30 AM, which meant leaving the hotel at about midnight. Actually the airline moved the flight an hour earlier than it said on our tickets and they never bothered to tell us. If we hadn't re-confirmed (and the hotel assured us that was un-necessary) we would have missed the flight! We were going home in one day, and that was about right, for we landed in San Francisco at noon, which got us home at 2:00 PM and with a 9 hour time change we were traveling for about 23 hours. Might as well start at 3 AM, as at any other time, for no matter how you cut it, we would be completely mixed up.

After recovering, we were able to look back on one of our most interesting trips. And, although we lived dangerously; i.e., eating fresh salad and eating in very dubious-looking – and rather dirty – local restaurants, neither of us got sick.

I recommend Tunisia – and not just for the great beaches, which is the attraction for most Europeans – but for everything else.

#### Recent Travellers



The purpose of this column is simply to provide the names of recent (covering only the last calendar year and this one) travellers, so that those who are considering these same destinations might have a potential source of useful information and helpful hints. (Not all of these have been previously reported in the EX-Press.) Please let me know if you think this is a useful addition to the EX-Press. Also, please let me know if you have taken an interesting trip in the last year or so.

<u>Destination</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Traveller(s)</u>
Amazon River	2008	James Bettencourt
America by Amtrak	2008	Dave & Sally Stevens

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China	2008	Sandra Stewart
China/Macau/Hong Kong	2008	Winnie & Tracy Baker
Egypt & Jordan	2009	James Bettencourt
France: Paris & canals	2008	Bob Birge
Italy (& Hungary)	2008	Sig & Cindy Rogers
Jordan (Petra)	2008	Janis & Ned Dairiki
Lancaster (CA) Poppy Reserve	2008	Bob & Valerie Fulton
Machu-Picchu	2008	James Bettencourt
Mexico (Maya Riviera)	2008	Bob & Valerie Fulton
New Hampshire	2008/9	Igor Blake
Oregon Wineries	2008	Dave & Sally Stevens
Patagonia	2009	Bill & Mabry Benson
Philadelphia and environs	2008/9	Dave & Sally Stevens; Brenda Shank & Bud Larsh
The Pinnacles (CA St Pk)	2008	Geores Buttner
Peru & Galapagos	2008	Tom & Marcia Beales
Portugal	2009	Bud Larsh & Brenda Shank
Red Rock Canyon (CA St Pk)	2008	Bob & Valerie Fulton
Rome	2008	Janis & Ned Dairiki
St. Martins	2008	Bud Larsh & Brenda Shank
Salt Lake City (Mormon Library)	2008	Sally Stevens
Silk Road (China to Turkey)	2008	Diana & Cliff Hopper
South Dakota	2008/9	Jose Alonso
Southeast Asia	2008	Andy Sessler
Spain	2008	Sig & Cindy Rogers
Tunisia	2009	Andy Sessler
Uganda	2009	Don & Becky Grether
Virginia	2009	Sig & Cindy Rogers
Wyoming (& bits of MT)	2008	Sue Wingerson

### A Dialogue

ATTORNEY: Doctor, before you performed the autopsy, did you check for a pulse?

WITNESS: No.

ATTORNEY: Did you check for blood pressure?

WITNESS: No.

ATTORNEY: Did you check for breathing?

WITNESS: No.

ATTORNEY: So, then it is possible that the patient was alive when you began the autopsy?

WITNESS: No.

ATTORNEY: How can you be so sure, Doctor?

WITNESS: Because his brain was sitting on my desk in a jar.

ATTORNEY: I see, but could the patient have still been alive, nevertheless?

WITNESS: Yes, it is possible that he could have been alive and practicing law.



**SEE YOU AT THE AUGUST 20 LUNCHEON**

**To: Vicky Jared  
4849 John Muir Road  
Martinez, CA 94553  
Be sure to make reservations by August 17**

**From: \_\_\_\_\_**

**I plan to attend the Ex-Ls luncheon >> \$25pp << PREPAID**

**I will bring guest(s). Name(s) of guest(s): \_\_\_\_\_**

**I \_\_\_ would like to carpool / \_\_\_ am willing to drive**

**\_\_\_ Please seat me close to the speaker and screen**

**Menu: Fish \_\_\_ Pork \_\_\_ Shrimp Louis \_\_\_ Vegetarian \_\_\_**

**Please make check payable to EX-Ls Total Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_**

**In Memoriam**

**John Ainsworth                      Chris Butler  
Aloke Chatterjee                    Manuel Chaves  
Ben Gordon                          Benjamin F. Green  
   John F. Yeager**

**Welcome New Members**

**Donald Foster    Gudrun Kleist**

**Lost Members:** Mail addressed to the following members has been returned, with no forwarding address. We would appreciate hearing from anyone who could let us know where and how they are.  
-Al Amon  
-Esther Colwell



**LBNL EX-Ls**  
**530 Curtis Street**  
**Albany, CA 94706**

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**EX-Ls EXPRESS – Summer 2009**

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Editor: Dave Stevens

*Deadline for newsletter submittals is 10 days after the preceding Board meeting*

**EX-Ls BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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**Calendar of Board Meetings & Luncheons**

	L: August 20, 2009
B: October 8, 2009	L: November 19, 2009
B: January 14, 2010	L: February 18, 2010
B: April 8, 2010	L: May 20, 2010
B: July 8, 2010	L: August 19, 2010

Board meetings start at **3:00** on the dates listed above. The October 8 meeting will take place in **Room 3075 in Bldg 90** at the Lab. (Venues for future meetings will be determined on a case-by-case basis.) We welcome attendance by interested members.

**EX-Ls Honorary Life Members**

Shirley Ashley  
Esther Colwell  
Inge Henle  
Bud Larsh

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