

EX-Ls

EX-PRESS

Volume 27 Number 1
Winter 2009

In this issue:

President's Message	2
Luncheon announcement for February 19	3
From our November luncheon	4
Editor's note	6
News of our members	7
Keeping up with the Lab	7
Proposed change in governance of UC retirement and benefit funds: Follow-up	8
Trip reports	
1: Southeast Asia	8
2: Amtrak	12
The Berkeley Retirement Center	14
Blackhawk sign-up sheet	14
From the CUCRA Meeting	15
Economical Scots Anecdotes	15
Recent travellers	16
Luncheon Reservation Slip	17
In Memoriam	17
New Members	17

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**

This is my first President's Message, which seems a bit early as I have only been in office for a week as I write this. However, I'm told, that's the tradition. I found another tradition, the succession from member to 2nd Vice President, to 1st Vice President, to President, to be very helpful as I got to know the other members of the EX-Ls Board, and learned "the ropes" from now immediate past President, Jose Alonso, and his immediate predecessor, Janis Dairiki.

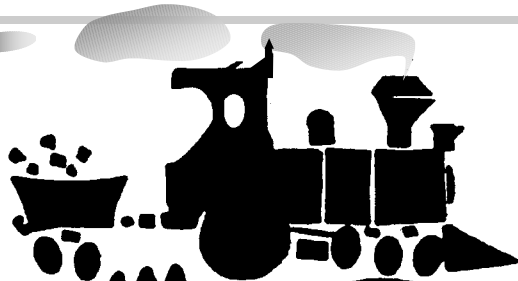
The November luncheon, held at the Berkeley Yacht Club, was well attended and I have heard only positive comments about venue and the food (realizing, of course, that no venue or menu will please everyone) and the speaker, Ron Krauss. His interesting and informative talk about cholesterol (summarized elsewhere in this Newsletter) generated lots of questions, but at some point we had to move on to other business.

At the Luncheon Mark Chekal-Bain was introduced as the Lab's new Community Relations Official, replacing Terry Powell. Mark is a resident of Berkeley, and has long been involved in local and regional politics. Most recently, he was at UCOP as the Director of Advocacy for the UC system. Patrick Cullinane was introduced as the new Director of the UC Berkeley Retirement Center. He has long been active in community health systems and in particular health problems associated with aging. (We can all relate to that.) On a more positive note, he has also been involved in efforts for continued growth of older adults, such as educational programs.

Jose would have normally presided over the election of new officers, but he was not able to attend the luncheon, and Janis took his place. Up for election were Don Grether for President, Rich Sextro for 1st Vice President, Rollie Otto for 2nd Vice President, Suzanne Stroh for Treasurer/Membership, Vicky Jared for Activities Coordinator, and Karen Springsteen for Secretary. Once the election had taken place Janis carried out yet one more tradition by handing the gavel to Don. Karen and Rollie are new Board members, and we welcome them. Karen is taking over from Per and Eleanor Dahl. We collectively thanked Per and Eleanor for their excellent efforts over a multi-year period and gave them some modest gifts as a token of our appreciation.

While our first attempt at having a wider variety of activities, Playland-Not-At-The Beach, did not work out, we are going to try again with a trip in March to the Blackhawk Museum in Danville. Suzanne is a docent at the museum and spoke about it briefly at the luncheon. As a personal note, I have been to the museum a couple of times and highly recommend it. There is a signup sheet elsewhere in this Newsletter. [See pp 14 & 15; President's letter continues on p 6.]

EX·LS Ex·press



2009 Winter Lunch

- Date:** Thursday, February 19, 2009
- Where:** Spenger's ←←←NOTE: WE'RE AT SPENGER'S THIS MONTH
1919 Fourth St.
Berkeley
- Time:** No-host Bar: 11:30 AM
Lunch Served: 12:15 PM
- Speaker:** Chris Somerville, Director: Energy Biosciences Institute
- Subject:** The development of cellulosic biofuels
- Menu:** Cedar Roasted Salmon Filet w/ Northwest berry sauce (lunch salad)
Shrimp Louis w/ 1000 Island dressing (clam chowder)
Flatiron Steak (lunch salad)
- 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, or telephone at 925-228-2145.

It is imperative that Vicky receive your reservations by February 16, 2008.

From our November Lunch

Reported by Don Grether: Our November speaker was Ronald Krauss, MD, of the Children's Hospital Oakland Research Institute (and Guest Senior Scientist in LBNL's Department of Genome Sciences), bringing us up to date on progress in cholesterol research at LBNL.

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death and, together with strokes, the leading cause of disabilities. As we all know, cholesterol is a major factor in disease of the arteries, together with high blood pressure. And we now know that low levels of inflammation are also part of the process. There are different forms of cholesterol, which can be characterized as "the good, the bad, and the ugly". High Density Lipoproteins (HDL) are "good" and Low Density Lipoproteins (LDL) are "bad". But half of the people destined to get heart disease have normal HDL and LDL levels. Which brings us to the "ugly" forms or subtypes of cholesterol, of which there are several. Pattern B is a subtype of LDL that Krauss's research program discovered and has developed tests for. It is present in about 1/3 of men and increases the risk of heart attacks by 3-4 fold. It is associated with a cluster of other heart disease risk factors including high blood triglycerides, low HDL, and a predisposition to both diabetes and high blood pressure. This combination has been called the *metabolic syndrome*.

The syndrome is genetically influenced, but we can do something about it – particularly with lifestyle changes such as exercise, and a diet that avoids sugars and includes unsaturated fats. However, many people on such diets don't respond as expected. Krauss and others have found that the genes underlying pattern B are very sensitive to carbohydrates and excess body weight. So people who have this trait can often reverse it by limiting starches and body weight. The converse is also the case and of some concern to people who go on low fat, high carbohydrate diets.

Statins have had the biggest impact on heart disease. They are very effective in reducing the body's production of cholesterol, and that causes the liver to take up more LDL from the blood. There is much evidence that lowering LDL is the major reason for the benefits of statins. However, lowering inflammation may also be part of the benefit. A recent study reported that high levels of CRP (C-reactive protein) are a marker for inflammation. While lowering CRP may be beneficial, CRP is usually not measured nowadays as using statins to lower LDL also lowers CRP.

Statins can reduce the risk by 25% to nearly 50%, but that leaves many heart attacks as well as strokes that are not prevented by statins. People remain at risk either because they don't respond to statins, or have other conditions. One of these is low HDL levels, as well as other features of metabolic syndrome. Raising HDL levels is an unproven approach, but there are limited studies. A once promising drug, Torcetrapib, was withdrawn after clinical trials showed an associated high death rate. Other treatments can be added to statins to improve HDL, pattern B, and triglyceride levels, such as niacin and fibrates. However, niacin has to be used at dosages that are accompanied by potential side effects, and so needs medical monitoring.

There are other ways to lower cholesterol, and some evidence that lowering LDL by drugs other than statins has benefits. So the evidence remains overwhelmingly strong for the benefits of lowering LDL, particularly with statins. However, there is still much to learn and do, since many don't benefit from statins. Look at the example of Tim Russert, who appeared to have metabolic syndrome, and likely would have benefited by adding a drug such as niacin.

Krauss stressed the importance of genetics. His research program is using genetic tools to identify new and unexpected players in heart disease and statin response. They are beginning to sort out differences among individuals that indicate the need to tailor our recommendations for diet to particular genetic dispositions. This approach can also be applied to drug therapy. Such tailoring of specific diet and drug recommendations may become even more refined in the future. With the testing of pattern B available from several labs, and new and better tests on the horizon, we are already in a position to apply such knowledge to optimizing approaches for reducing heart attack risk.

Luncheon Attendees:

Bob Avery	Andy DuBois	Victor & Nancy Montoya
Dick Baker	Tom & Ione Elioff	Marty Morimoto
Winnie Baker	Warren & Abby Faust	Catherine Parrott-Hawkins
Josephine Barrera	Ben & Mary Feinberg	Fred Perry
Sharon Barrett	Ed & Pauline Fleischer	Art & Lucille Poskanzer
Tom & Marcia Beales	Sherry Fuzesy & guest	Patricia Powers-Risius
Don Bell & guest Joyce Lu	Vasiliki Sotirchou	Gavin Robillard
Edward Bennett	Bill Gilbert	Stephanie Roth
Bill Benson	Don & Becky Grether	Clay Sealy
Gene & Myrna Binnall	Jim Haley	Andy Sessler
Bob Birge & guest Barbara	Harry & Kate Heckman	Rich & Joan Sextro
Borowiak	Winnie Heppler	George & Reni Shalimoff
Igor Blake	Egon & Annette Hoyer	Brenda Shank
Kay Bristol	Vicky Jared	Starr Shulman
Jerome Bucher	Nylan Jeung	Elizabeth Smith
Bob & Barbara Budnitz	A. David Johnson	Robbie & Mary Smits
Geores & Katie Buttner-	John & Ann Kadyk	Robert & Karen
Clevenger	Joe Katz	Springsteen
Mark Chekal-Bain	Matt Kotowski	Dave & Sally Stevens
Winifred Cornia	Bud Larsh	Suzanne Stroh
Donald & Pat Cowles	John & Barbara Lax	Jack Tanabe
Patrick Cullinane	Katherine Lucas	Grace & Ron Walpole
Per & Eleanor Dahl	Doug McWilliams	Allan Zalkin
Janis & Ned Dairiki	Bob Miller	Jon Zbasnik
Ted & Margaret De Castro	Ken Mirk	Speaker Ronald Krauss
Sybil Donn	Sandy Mocco & guest Jim	
Genevieve Dreyfuss	Koepfel	

Editor's Note

They say that change is good for keeping the mind alert...so as a service to our membership, Your Board has decided that luncheons in 2009 will continue to alternate between Spenger's (February and August) and the Berkeley Yacht Club (May and November). And we shall continue to put pad and pen on the tables, and we encourage you all to scribble us a note as to what you are doing; we would like to maintain – and expand – the “news of our members” – but we can't do that unless you tell us what you're doing. As always, articles or ideas for articles are welcome; the deadline for each issue is ten days after the preceding Board meeting (a full year's schedule is listed on the back cover; notice that the meetings now start at 3:00 on the dates listed); all members are welcome to attend, but until we have settled on a fixed venue (see the continuation of the President's message, below), you would be wise to check with a board member about location before attending. You can contact me at david_stevens@comcast.net, at 1107 Amador Ave, Berkeley 94707, or 510-524-2904. // dfs

President's Message (continued)

We have changed one tradition. In recent years the main area of the Lab's Cafeteria has become nearly untenable as a place to hold Board meetings as the poor acoustics were combined with voices from other, smaller meetings, and from people coming to the coffee bar. While parking is “free” various construction activities at the Lab have significantly reduced the amount of parking near the Cafeteria. So for the January 8 Board meeting we met in the conference room of the UC Berkeley Retirement Center at the kind invitation of Director Patrick Cullinane and Program Manager Andre Porter. The Center is located on Walnut Street between University and Berkeley Way, across the street and up the block from Berkeley Hardware, and within easy walking distance of the Berkeley BART station. We pretty much filled the room, but it was a whole lot quieter than the Cafeteria. There is convenient parking but it's not free. However, we learned at the meeting that we are able to get parking passes from the Center.

One disadvantage of the Center is that it does not offer folks the opportunity to “come back to the Lab”. For the April 9 meeting we have reserved what is known as the Perseverance Hall Annex, a conference room that can hold 30 people. The standard time slot is 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm and anyone is welcome to attend. Perseverance Hall is attached to the Cafeteria so you can pick up a cup of coffee on the way to the conference room. We'll see how difficult the parking will be by then, which we can take into account in deciding where to hold future Board meetings.

In mid-December we had a meeting of the ad-hoc “Historian Committee” that included Don, Suzanne, Janis, Vicky, Tom Beales, and Bud Larsh. It turned out that a better name would have been the “Records Committee” as we mostly addressed what EX-Ls materials we wanted to keep, for how long, and the means of doing so. After the meeting Suzanne drafted a policy statement and a list of what we felt needed to be kept. The Policy was voted on and passed at the

January Board meeting. We will make it available to EX-Ls members, perhaps by putting it on our website.

News of our members

Igor Blake will head eastward in February to be crowned as the 2009 New Hampshire Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year. In September he hosted an open house and hike on the 310-acre property near Newport, NH, that his mother registered as a Tree Farm in 1970, and for which Igor granted a conservation easement last year. [Note that a New Hampshire *Tree Farm* is somewhat more than a place to pick up a Christmas tree: It is a “privately-owned forest managed to produce timber with added benefits: improved wildlife habitat, water quality, recreation, and scenic values.” In Igor’s case, this includes Sugar River frontage, apple trees, open fields, and a portion of the Sugar River Trail.]

Per **Don Cowles**, contrary to what was published in the November Newsletter, **Emery Zajec** has not yet crossed the Great Divide. We were incorrectly informed by the UCOP, and we apologize to all.

Shirley Ashley has suffered a stroke, and is currently at Rounseville Rehabilitation Center, 210 40th Street Way, Oakland 94611. She should be able to transfer into an assisted living home very soon; we shall keep you posted.

Keeping Up with the Lab

Is a battery-driven house in your future? Scientists at Berkeley Lab are working on a so-called “hybrid house.” Sources such as exhaust from a dryer or the heat generated from a refrigerator would be converted into energy and stored in giant batteries.
(<http://cbs5.com/local/hybrid.house.energy.2.861216.html>)

More darkness: NASA and DOE have redefined the Joint Dark Energy Mission, which will no longer be a competition but will be a single design for which two offices will be responsible. Three-fourths of the budget will go to the head project office at NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland; one-fourth will go DOE’s project office based at Berkeley Lab, which will be responsible for JDEM’s instrumentation and flight operations.

Do you know where your protein is? Soon, no cell will be able to keep its secrets. Berkeley Lab scientists have developed a nanosized crystal that lights up on command, a feat that could allow researchers to more easily observe individual proteins as they move inside cells. The tiny beacon, which becomes luminescent after it’s zapped with ultraviolet light, can be attached to a protein and switched on when the protein does something worth spying on — like bind to a drug or move from one part of the cell to another.
(<http://newscenter.lbl.gov/feature-stories/2008/11/18/cagedquantumdots/>)

Perhaps it helped you forget: Memory loss in healthy older people, in some cases at least, may be related to the accumulation of a fibrous protein in the brain that is implicated in Alzheimer's disease, as well as a shrinking hippocampus, according to a recent Berkeley Lab-led study that evaluated more than 70 elderly individuals

Ave atque valete: Barring the unexpected, **Steve Chu** will become the Secretary of Energy in the Obama administration. As of press time, the Regents had neither announced an interim director nor begun the (international) search for Chu's successor.

(<http://newscenter.lbl.gov/press-releases/2008/12/16/obama-picks-berkeley-lab-director-steve-chu-for-energy-secretary/>)

Rehire policy: The University's policy on rehiring retirees for campus staff and Lab positions (campus academic positions are excluded) is still undergoing review.

In addition to the above, current Lab news may be scanned at <http://newscenter.lbl.gov/>.

Proposed Change in Governance of UC Retirement and Benefit Funds: Follow-up

On November 10, AFSCME started the initiative process to amend the state constitution in accordance with the provisions of proposed legislative amendment ACA5 (see the October 2008 Ex-Press), which failed to make it onto the November ballot. We believe this is an issue of great importance to our membership, and urge you to inform yourselves about the measure, which is expected to be on the ballot in June.

Trip Reports

1. A trip to Southeast Asia

Andy Sessler

Introduction: I love to travel, for I find it more informative and broadening than almost any other activity. I like to talk about my experiences and I like to talk to those who have either been on a trip or are contemplating one. Please – and this is the point of this article – contact me if you fall into one those categories (AMSessler@LBL.GOV, 510-486-4992). Since I have been to about 60 different nations there is a good chance we can find some topic of mutual interest.

Travel associated with my work has taken me many places, and I often try to take some extra time and vacation a bit. Thus last year, I had “official business” in Frankfurt and Sicily, but managed “on the side” to go to Berlin, Warsaw, Krakow, and Budapest. During this past year I went to Guangzhou and Beijing, China (at their expense), and then later to Hiroshima, Japan (also at their expense). An “official” trip to Manchester, allowed visits to York, the Cotswolds and London.

Last September my friend, Sandi, and I took a “real” vacation and went to Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia. The following is extracted from e-mail reports to my children.

Part 1: Thailand and Laos: Spent 5 days in Thailand; saw the Royal Palace and many other temples. Arranged for a put-put (a three wheel motorized “taxi”) to take us to three locations and wait for us at each. Cost 70 US cents. The only problem is he took us to places he wanted to go to: jewelry and fabric and gift shops. At each we didn’t have to buy, but we had to spend 5 minutes looking. Then he got a gasoline coupon. After three hours I started to shout and he let us out.

Went to the old capitol (about 70 km away from Bangkok) and a second excursion to the Bridge Over the River Kwai (about 150 km away).

Our hotel room in Bangkok was tiny and dark, but had wireless (but I had to stand up if Sandi wanted to go by).

Here in Laos – what a contrast – for this is a very poor nation with only 6 million in the whole country (Calif. has 30 million). Very beautiful and almost everywhere just dirt roads. Yesterday we spent the day on the Mekong River. Here our hotel room is the largest we have ever been in (and also has wireless).

Exotic and wonderful food in both countries. Sometimes just “regular”, but often extraordinary. Street vendors every 50 feet in both countries (in the cities) selling everything you need, as well as many different kinds of food. Pieces of meat on a stick, cooked over some charcoal has attracted us any number of times.

Part 2: Vietnam: We left Laos on Monday and have been in Vietnam this last week. Ha Noi is one large dump. Very poor, very dirty, very ugly. Also there is a complete personality difference between the people in Laos and Vietnam. The Laotians are all Buddhists (by law!) and they go out of their way to be kind and nice and gentle (so as to make it to Nirvana). The Vietnamese on the other hand, are loud, pushy (think nothing of cutting lines), and generally out for themselves (although I am told they are really out for their family). They seem to treat everyone this way; not only Americans (although the Vietnam War is called the War Against America, and is very much – still – in their art and in their thinking).

Ha Noi is a city of 6 million, and everyone uses a motor scooter, so there are about 3 or 4 million of them on the streets. At a red light, the scooters weave forward and when the light changes, about a hundred roar out. Crossing the street is not easy: one just keeps moving steadily and they weave around you! Telephone and electric lines are just a mess. It looks like there are separate lines for each phone, with extra coils on most poles in case they need to put in a new phone.

The country is very corrupt. Number three from the bottom of the list. The Communist Party controls the land, the airlines, the major industries, the TV and newspaper. There is no opposition allowed (or even thought about). The income tax is for those earning more than \$100

a month, so all salaries are \$100, but then there are perks and so on, so the average worker gets much more than that. (No one could live – to say nothing of supporting a family—on \$100: meals alone cost about \$200 per month per person). Many buildings, bridges, roads, etc. are unfinished as the government approves construction, and no one wants to live in the development (far away, no services, etc.) and no one will do anything about public works. The contractor gets his cut before completion and the government authorities are paid off and approve. And no one objects, and only tries – very hard and very well – not to pay income tax (which pays for all this non-sense). This is the only form of protest. Pretty sad and no obvious improvement in sight....

Both here and in Laos, no personal questions are ever asked. For example, in Ha Noi we spent a week with the same – very personable and able – guide. We talked of many things: history, local customs, geology, politics, etc. We asked him about his family, but he never asked us anything about ours. No usual questions of numbers of children, occupation, etc. Just no interest evidently. Tips are a business proposition: no smiles, “see you when you come again”, waving goodbye. None of that.

For a few days we went sailing in Ha Long Bay of the China Sea. We had a private junk, very large, with a crew of 5, and the two of us and the guide. Did some kayaking and swimming. Ate lots of sea food: many kinds of shell fish (at least 5) and regular fish. The limestone mountains are similar to those in Quilin in China.

Simple things are not always simple on foreign soil: I went to a local barber and due to miscommunication – more accurately, no communication – he cut off my beard. I had not seen my face – nor had anyone else – for the last 40 years, and it is clear that my appearance is, at best, shocking, and at worst, rather bad. Some say that I will have to stay in Southeast Asia for two or three months until my looks match my passport and they will let me into the US. Others think I should try to fly to the US on Sunday.

From Ha Noi we flew to Danang (where Pres. Johnson landed American troops and started the Vietnam War) and then drove south to Hoi An where we spent two days and then drove north of Danang to Hue (where the Tet Offensive was started and thus ended the Vietnam War). After two days we flew to Saigon and then on to Cambodia.

Hoi An is a quiet town and we enjoyed visiting the old quarter and then a whole day going to a Cham temple. In Hue we went to the Imperial City, as well as to many temples, as this was the government seat for about 150 years (until 1945). Saigon is a large city (about 9 M people with about 4 million motor scooters). Not much to see there except a thriving Chinese market, war museums, Reunification Halls, and further things like that. Our hotel had a picture posted of the hotel in 1890 and, surprisingly, it looks just the same as it does now. That was probably also true of our room, but there was no photo to prove it.

Part 3: Cambodia: We have enjoyed the transition, once again, to a Buddhist country (90% here). The gentle character of the people is in marked contrast with Vietnam. We took in the

third day of the annual festival of boat racing (which is watched, in various locations, by half of the Cambodian population). Angkor Wat is really a complex of dozens of temples and some of the smaller ones are even more striking than the central temple (which is the one always pictured). There are many steps on slippery boulders or sandy wooden stairs – not a railing in sight – and I couldn't have seen very much without the constant help of our very patient (Buddhist) guide.

We have been enjoying Southeast Asian food. We are quite used to Pho (Vietnamese noodle soup, which they have twice a day) and tend to have it at breakfast every day. The sea food is wonderful if you (like us) enjoy shrimp (giant ones), squid, crayfish, octopus, clams, mussels, regular fish (many kinds), etc. We tend not to eat red meat, although the dog looks rather tasty.

Later today we fly to Bangkok for the night and then home on Sunday. (We arrived in Bangkok on the very day that the King's sister – who had been lying in state for nine months – was buried. And we left Bangkok just before the rebels closed the airport for a week.) We have enjoyed wireless in every hotel and are most glad that we brought my lap top as I spent a few hours each day keeping in contact with general world news (NY Times and Washington Post) and my world.

2: Across America by train

Dave Stevens

I spent much of the month of October travelling cross-country by train, spending time on the Coast Starlight (to Portland), the Empire Builder (to Chicago), the Capitol Limited (between Chicago and Washington, D.C., both ways), the Northeast Regional (to Philadelphia), and the California Zephyr (from Chicago to Emeryville). Except for the Northeast Regional, which is basically a commute train, these all offer complete service, including coach, several levels of sleeping accommodations, a café/lounge car, and a diner. If you haven't been on Amtrak recently, the following may be of interest.

Smoking is not permitted on trains, and not all stops are long enough for the smokers to get off and have a puff. (Since the trains are frequently late, they depart when ready rather than at a (scheduled) time certain, and passengers are constantly warned that if they are not on board when the conductor wishes to leave they will be left behind.).

Amtrak does not own the tracks it uses, and operates over tracks owned by freight lines; the result is that freight trains take precedence over passenger trains. One result of this is that trains are frequently behind time at intermediate stations. (There is enough slack in the schedule that they often catch up at the terminus. For example, on our last leg, the train left Omaha an hour and a half behind schedule, but arrived at Emeryville almost an hour early.) Another result of using track owned by freight lines is that the track is not prepared or maintained for passenger comfort, so the ride is less smooth than on western European or Japanese trains.

Any level of sleeper accommodation is considered to be first-class service (even the tiny roomettes). This means that all meals on the train are free (alcohol excepted) and that you have access to the first class lounge – with free coffee, sodas, and snacks – in those stations that have them. (And lounge access requires only that either your arrival or departure journey is sleeper-class; it is not necessary that both be sleepers.) Other than that, roomettes can hardly be called first-class; the beds are comfortable enough, but space is very limited, and toilet and shower are down the hall. (There are three toilets and one shower in each roomette car, shared among the 14 roomettes; compartment-class travellers have *en suite* facilities.)

There is a single basic menu over the entire system. Fortunately, lunch and dinner each include specials that do change from run to run and sometimes from day to day. The food is good-to-excellent, but the dining cars seem to be understaffed, and service is slow. The wine selection is limited, but a decent value (\$13 for a half bottle of quite acceptable wine.)

The California Zephyr carries a volunteer docent from the Sacramento Railroad Museum between Roseville and Reno (both directions), who provides occasional historical commentary about the building of the railroad and the gold rush. (I believe this is a year-round activity, unless there is a shortage of docents.) The Empire Builder has several similar programs featuring park rangers during the summer (beginning in late May and ending in August or September, depending on the program).

The Atcheson, Topeka, and Santa Fe is no longer. (It merged with Burlington Northern to form BNSF.) The freight traffic is substantial, and was especially noticeable on the Empire Builder run: We met (or waited for) at least one long (~100 cars) freight train every hour. No matter in which direction you are travelling, you get to change your watch every day, as you pass between time zones.

You get more time in the Rockies in daylight on the Zephyr (through Denver) than on the Empire Builder (through Glacier National Park). You cross the Mississippi River three times between Minneapolis and Chicago (Empire Builder). Among the other rivers we crossed or paralleled in daylight are the Columbia, the Flathead, the Missouri, the Potomac, the Truckee, the Youghiogeny, the Colorado. (The Ohio is crossed at night in both directions on the Capitol Limited.)

The lounge car has antireflective windows that improve visibility but somewhat fog photography.

You receive a far better impression of the size and variety of the country from the train than you do from a plane. There was still ample evidence of the Mississippi floods earlier this year, and the train was restricted to very low speeds when traversing some of the soggy roadbeds in Illinois and Iowa. You can walk across the Missouri River on a pork-barrel bridge in Omaha. There are more dead cars than living people in some parts of the back country. Box-car graffiti flourishes everywhere there are stationary boxcars. People still wave at passing trains.

Amtrak has restored some of the larger stations in impressive style. Chicago, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. are large and busy; D.C. especially so, for it now holds an upscale mall as well as a railroad station. Some of the smaller stations, however, are cinderblock cubes (Omaha, for example, whose former palatial station has been turned into a museum) or simple platforms. Some are small enough that the train has to stop twice: once to let the coach passengers off and once for the sleepers.

In sum, if the train is going where you want to go and you have the time and you want the journey to be part of experience, take the train while boarding is still relatively hassle-free.

**From the Berkeley Retirement Center
Andre Porter & Patrick Cullinane**

- Insurance counseling: UCBRC sponsors a trained insurance counselor who comes once a month to meet with retirees who have insurance questions or issues. The visits take place on the third Wednesday of each month; UCBRC will help schedule appointments. Please see the next Centerpiece newsletter, which is due for publication in the last week of January, for more information.
- Long term care: An educational session on “Long-Term Care Insurance: Is It Right for You?” will be presented by the Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HICAP) on Wednesday, April 15, 2-4pm. It will address such questions as Should I buy LTCI? What is the best LTCI policy? What is the best company to buy from? What is the right age to buy LTCI? These sessions explain long term care and options for its financing while focusing on the features and the pros and cons of long term care insurance. The sessions also include information about available products and how they differ and offer guidelines for deciding whether or not to purchase a LTC insurance policy. Contact the Center to register. (<http://thecenter.berkeley.edu>; ucbrc@berkeley.edu; 510-643-1460).
- Retiree housing? Discussions are beginning about the possibility of UCB retirement community. You may be asked to participate in a survey to determine the level of retiree interest in such an establishment.
- For foodies: Learning in Retirement will feature a series of presentations on *Issues and Challenges in Our Food System* in March. For more information, and to sign up, please contact the Center.
-

**COME ONE, COME ALL - JOIN THE EX-LS
BLACKHAWK MUSEUM TOUR**



Date: Thursday, March 12, 2009

Time: 10:30 AM

Location: 3700 Blackhawk Plaza Circle • Danville, CA 94506 • 925.736.2277

Price per Person: \$6.00 for Seniors and \$7.00 under 65

Event: We will have special Docent-led tours of the automobile and changing exhibitions. Each tour lasts about an hour.

The Blackhawk Museum's automotive exhibition of *International Automotive Treasures*[™] presents and displays historically significant and artistically inspired automobiles from the very earliest to the contemporary for public enjoyment and educational enrichment. In every era there have been cars of special artistic and historic significance built to illustrate new ideas in styling, engineering or performance, or to satisfy a famous celebrity's individual taste. Many cars are one-of-a-kind "rolling sculptures" conceived by the world's leading designers and crafted by the most respected coach-building artisans. The exhibition presents over 90 of these great cars as *individual works of art*.

Ex-Ls cannot provide transportation to the museum for our members. If you are interested in setting up a carpool, or you wish to join a carpool please mark the form shown below.

Directions – For Map Quest directions go to www.blackhawkmuseum.org/plan_trip.html and enter your "from address" information to receive detailed directions.

To: Vicky Jared - 4849 John Muir Road, Martinez, CA 94553. Vicky must receive this reservation by March 6, 2009

From: _____

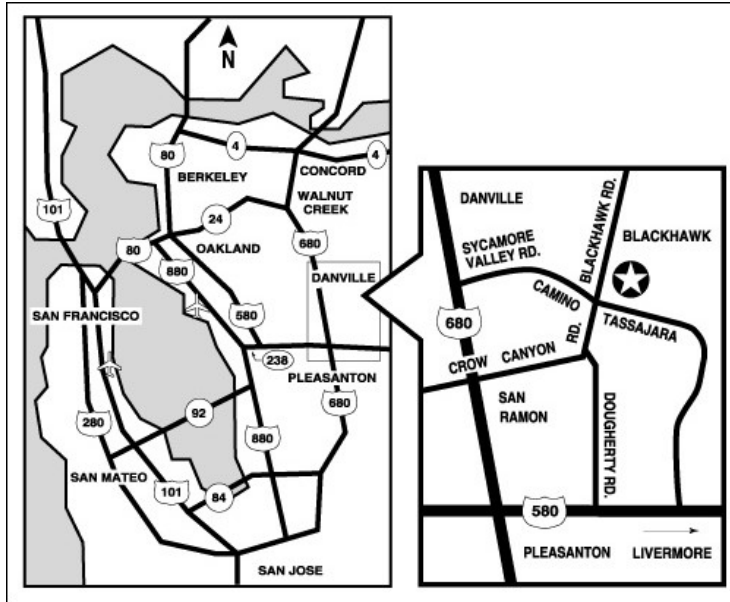
Please sign me up for Blackhawk Museum – March 12, 2009

_____ **General Admission under 65 @ \$7.00** \$ _____

_____ **Senior (65 yrs and up) @ \$6.00** \$ _____

Willing/wish to carpool: As driver: _____ As rider: _____

Please make check payable to Ex-Ls Total Enclosed: _____



Once you are on 680 south in Danville, exit Crow Canyon Road. Go east (left) on Crow Canyon Road 4.2 miles. Turn right on Camino Tassajara. The first left (at the Movies 7 Theater) is the entrance to The Shops at Blackhawk. The second right takes you into the closest parking area. The Museum is on the hill above the gated Plaza entrance.

**From the CUCRA Meeting
Tom Beales**

UCOP to concentrate on policy: UCOP is undergoing a reorganization to move its focus away from hands-on administration, much of which will be returned to the individual campuses or outsourced, to policy development. Randy Scott (a former Head of HR at LBNL) will be looking out for the interests of retirees.

StayWell: Apparently many retirees do not realize that this program is sponsored by UCOP, because the assessment materials have a StayWell return address. [If you have not done the initial assessment, you might wish to reconsider: The \$75 gift card that is your reward for doing so is real.]

Economical Scots Anecdotes

- They say copper wire was invented by two Scots fighting over a penny.
- One of them was travelling across Canada and saw a large animal. “What’s that?”, says he. “A moose”, says a travelling companion. “Och, if that’s a moose, I dinna want to see a rrrat.”
- The other walks into a Glasgow library and says to the librarian, “Excuse me Miss, d’ye hiv any books on suicide?” To which she replies, “Bog off – ye’ll no bring it back!”

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>
America by Amtrak	2008	Dave & Sally Stevens
China	2008	Sandra Stewart
China/Macau/Hong Kong	2008	Winnie & Tracy Baker
Italy (& Hungary)	2008	Sig & Cindy Rogers
Jordan (Petra)	2008	Janis & Ned Dairiki
Lancaster (CA) Poppy Reserve	2008	Bob & Valerie Fulton
Mexico (Maya Riviera)	2008	Bob & Valerie Fulton
New Hampshire	2008/9	Igor Blake
Oregon Wineries	2008	Dave & Sally Stevens
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
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
South Dakota	2008/9	Jose Alonso
Southeast Asia	2008	Andy Sessler
Spain	2008	Sig & Cindy Rogers
Wyoming (& bits of MT)	2008	Sue Wingerson

SEE YOU AT THE FEBRUARY 21 LUNCHEON

To: Vicky Jared
4849 John Muir Road
Martinez, CA 94553
Be sure to make reservations by February 16

From: _____

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

I will bring guest(s). Name(s) of guest(s): _____

Menu: Fish ___ Beef ___ Shrimp Louis ___ Vegetarian ___

Please make check payable to Ex-Ls Total Enclosed: _____

In Memoriam

Larry Custus	Emery Kozak
William Letchworth	Harvey Owren
Don Prestella	Ed Rieoux
Harry Smith	Jeanne Turturice

Welcome New Members

Bob Budnitz	Jan Pusina
Kathleen Richards	

Reminder: By now you should have received your membership renewal notice: still only \$12 a year. Please send your remittance to Suzanne Stroh, 530 Curtis St., Albany CA 94706, check payable to EX-Ls. And if you are new to the EX-Ls (i.e., not yet a member), all you need to do is send Suzanne your name, address, and telephone number; you may add your e-mail address and spouse's name, but they are not required. (However, unless you specify otherwise, they will appear in the roster when it comes out next fall.) **Continuing Members: If you haven't already done so, please check your roster listing, and let Suzanne know if there are any changes that should be made..**



LBNL EX-Ls
530 Curtis Street
Albany, CA 94706

Time Critical First Class

FIRST CLASS

US POSTAGE
PAID
BERKELEY CA
PERMIT No. 1123

EX-Ls EXPRESS – Winter 2009

Published Quarterly at the end of January, April, July, and October

Editor: Dave Stevens

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

EX-Ls BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers

President:	Don Grether
Vice-Pres #1:	Rich Sextro
Vice-Pres #2:	Rollie Otto
Secretary:	Karen Springsteen
Treasurer:	Suzanne Stroh
Activities:	Vicky Jared
LBNL Rep:	Mark Chekal-Bain
CUCRA Reps:	Bob Fulton Tom Beales
Berkeley Ret Ctr Reps	Gene Binnall Don Grether Andre Porter

BRC Liaison

Past Presidents

Jose Alonso	Bob Fulton
Al Amon	Paul Hernandez
Tom Beales	John Kadyk
Bill Bigelow	Ken Lou
Gene Binnall	Ken Mirk
Bob Birge	Conway Peterson
Igor Blake	Sig Rogers
Per Dahl	Clay Sealy

Calendar of Board Meetings & Luncheons

	L: February 19, 2009
B: April 9, 2009	L: May 21, 2009
B: July 10, 2008	L: August 21, 2008
B: October 8, 2009	L: November 19, 2009
B: January 14, 2010	L: February 18, 2010

Board meetings start at **3:00** on the dates listed above. The April 9 meeting will take place in the Perseverance Hall Annex in the LBNL Cafeteria. (Venues for future meetings are yet to be determined.) We welcome attendance by interested members.

EX-Ls Honorary Life Members

Shirley Ashley
Esther Colwell
Inge Henle
Bud Larsh

Official Address

LBNL EX-Ls
530 Curtis Street
Albany, CA 94706

Website: www.lbl.gov/ex-l-express/

Webmaster: Richard Baker [robaker@lbl.gov]