



# ECOLOGY & EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGY

NEWSLETTER

FALL 2011

## DISCOVERING NATURE

Photo: Ann Cutting (Stunt Ranch)

## NEWSLETTER

Dear Alumni and Friends:

Welcome to the newest edition of the Friends of Biology Newsletter, which connects alumni and friends of the former Departments of Biology, Botany, and Zoology, and the current UCLA Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. Our newsletter this fall begins with alumni events and reports on the exciting research our faculty are carrying out, and goes on to include many news pieces on alumni.

Our Department continues to teach a conceptually broad and rigorous undergraduate curriculum for students in the following majors: biology, marine biology, and ecology, behavior and evolution. Many of our biology majors continue on to earn professional degrees. We offer the popular and stimulating Marine Biology Quarter and Field Biology Quarter, which we consider our capstone courses. Students study local marine and terrestrial California ecosystems and visit a range of ecosystems around the world in places such as Australia, Ecuador, Kenya, Mexico and Tahiti.

Our graduate program attracts top students from all over the world, many of whom receive distinguished fellowships from the National Science Foundation, the Environmental Protection Agency and many other agencies. Our graduate student dissertations are

conceptually based projects, often with field sites around the world, which apply the latest tools and techniques. Students often pursue topics at the interface of ecology and evolution, and at the frontiers of other disciplines such as biomathematics, geography and engineering.

Our distinguished faculty members are recipients of many honors and awards for internationally recognized research accomplishments. As teachers, we are proud that six members of our faculty have received UCLA's Distinguished Teaching Award since 2005. Many interdisciplinary collaborations across campus, such as those with the Center for Society and Genetics and the Institute of the Environment and Sustainability, underscore the Department's position on the leading edge of research and global issues.

We are proud of the numerous accomplishments of our students and faculty. We hope that you will consider partnering with the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology in our effort to sustain our excellence by supporting capstone academic programs such as the Field and Marine Biology Quarter. These programs continue to have a major impact not only on educating our future researchers and teachers

but also contribute to the knowledge of marine ecosystems all across the Pacific.

To learn more about ways that you can help to enhance the future scholarship and research within our Department with a philanthropic gift, please visit [www.eeb.ucla.edu/giving.php](http://www.eeb.ucla.edu/giving.php).

It may have been a long or short time since you last experienced biology at UCLA. We hope this newsletter will inform you of the exciting new faculty, research and developments that consistently make headlines and contribute to the field. As part of our academic community, you will be invited to lectures and events throughout the year, which we hope you can attend. We have a special section on alumni news, so please send us news ([eebchair@eeb.ucla.edu](mailto:eebchair@eeb.ucla.edu)) about yourself and other UCLA Biology friends or alumni. Updating your contact information is very easy at <http://alumni.ucla.edu/eebupdate>. And check out our new BruinWorks alumni group at [bruinworks.com](http://bruinworks.com).

Daniel T. Blumstein  
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**You are invited!** The Fall seminar for Ecology and Evolutionary Biology's "The Curious Naturalist" seminar series will feature Professor Joan Silk from UCLA's Department of Anthropology and the Center for Society and Genetics. RSVPs are not required, but the limited seating is first come, first served.

"The Curious Naturalist" Seminar Series  
Thursday, November 10 at 7:30 pm  
1425 Physics and Astronomy Building  
Joan Silk: "What are Friends for? The Adaptive Value of Social Bonds"

If you missed this lecture, it has been videotaped and will be posted soon on our EEETV webpage. On this page you can also watch other great lectures by EEB faculty -- check them out!  
[www.eeb.ucla.edu/eebtv.php](http://www.eeb.ucla.edu/eebtv.php)

**The next UCLA Alumni Day will be in May 2012!** Come back to UCLA, and join other alumni to celebrate being a Bruin. Keep an eye on [www.alumniday.ucla.edu](http://www.alumniday.ucla.edu) for news, and to see photos and video of the 2011 UCLA Day! We look forward to seeing you at the EEB table at the Info Fair!

**Dinner for 12 Strangers** is a global phenomenon and you can be a part of it! For more than 40 years this UCLA tradition has brought alumni, faculty and students from all generations together to enjoy good food and great conversation. For more information, see [alumni.ucla.edu/events/dinners/2012/default.aspx](http://alumni.ucla.edu/events/dinners/2012/default.aspx).



# FACULTY NEWS AND RESEARCH

One of the goals of this newsletter is to help you stay in touch with the latest developments in biology. Never before have the biological sciences played such a pressing role in society, ranging from the innovations emerging from genomics and computational biology to the biological changes caused by global climate change and landscape alterations. Our faculty conduct high-profile, cutting edge research. Here's what we are doing now!

Professor **Dan Blumstein's** recently published book, *The Failure of Environmental Education (And How We Can Fix It)*, was listed as one of seven education books to take to the beach this summer by Time Magazine. The book, co-authored with conservationist Charles Saylan, was published by the University of California Press. You can read a sample chapter and some reviews here. Also, check out Dr. Blumstein's "Eating Our Way to Civility," "a blog and a book to inspire challenging conversations about our environment and sustainability while having fun and delicious dinner parties." UCLA Today recently published an article, "10 Questions for Daniel Blumstein: Breaking dinner-party taboos." A recent paper by former Fulbright postdoctoral scholar, Raquel Monclus, along with undergraduate Taylor Cook and Professor Blumstein, on how litter sex ratio influences social behavior in yellow-bellied marmots that was published in *Biology Letters* has been featured on the BBC website.



Professor **Malcolm Gordon** and three co-editors have published *Survival in a Changing World*, a special issue of the leading international journal of comparative animal physiology, the *Journal of Experimental Biology*. The issue contains 15 papers presented at a symposium on the effects of global climate change held at Awaji, Japan, in 2009. The symposium was organized by Dr. Gordon, with the co-editors and committee members. The keynote address was delivered by EEB faculty member and Institute of the Environment and Sustainability Director **Glen MacDonald**.

From the [UCLA Newsroom](#): "The most widely used methods for calculating species extinction rates are 'fundamentally flawed' and overestimate extinction rates by as much as 160 percent, life scientists report May 19 in the journal *Nature*. However, while the problem of species extinction caused by habitat loss is not as dire as many conservationists and scientists had believed, the global extinction crisis is real, says **Stephen Hubbell**, a distinguished professor of ecology and evolutionary biology at UCLA and co-author of the *Nature* paper."



Professor **Jamie Lloyd-Smith** has been selected as a UCLA Hellman Fellow in recognition of his innovative research on the ecology of infectious diseases. The fellowship will support his study of leptospirosis, a bacterial disease, and its impact on California sea lions. Leptospirosis causes annual outbreaks in the coastal population of California sea lions, resulting in many sea lion deaths and creating risks of disease exposure for other species, including humans.

Professor Emeritus **Park Nobel** was featured in the [UCLA July 2011 Magazine](#). "The world's leading expert on cacti biology, UCLA plant physiological ecologist Park S. Nobel is an evangelist for the environmental

benefits of the fleshy, water-wise plants known as succulents —and he's turned his backyard in Southern California's exclusive Bel Air neighborhood into a one-of-a-kind desert garden."



Professor **John Novembre's** group has published a paper in *Nature Genetics* on a novel method for recombination rate inference that was applied to produce a high-resolution recombination map for African Americans. A [Nature Genetics News and Views piece](#) in September covers the paper. The research provides insights into how recombination takes place in admixed individuals and will aid medical genetic studies in African American populations.

Professor **Philip Rundel** has been honored with a Distinguished Teaching Award for 2011 by the UCLA Academic Senate. During his teaching career, many students (among them the future Dean of Life Sciences at UCLA, Victoria Sork, and the future Professor of Environmental Science and Engineering, Richard Ambrose) have found their lives changed by his contagious enthusiasm and extraordinary teaching. Dr. Rundel is also the faculty director of Stunt Ranch Santa Monica Mountains Reserve, where each year over 3,000 schoolchildren from all over the Los Angeles area have an encounter with nature, sometimes their first.



[USA Today](#) reported on research by **Christine Scoffoni**, a UCLA doctoral student in ecology and evolutionary biology, and Professor **Lawren Sack** on why leaves tend to be larger in wet climates and smaller in drier, hotter ones. “Occasionally, obstructions in a leaf’s veins, such as an air bubble, block water from being ‘pumped’ through the system. These obstructions, known as embolisms, are more likely to occur in the leaves of plants living in climates where water is scarce.”

Professor **Tom Smith**, Director of the Center for Tropical Research of the Institute for the Environment and Sustainability, has received a grant of more than \$831,000 for climate science projects in California from the California Landscape Conservation Cooperative. His project will integrate existing data on intraspecific variation of multiple species in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreational Area with climate data and space-borne measurements of the environment to identify areas with high intraspecific variation. In addition, Dr. **Kevin Njabo**, a postdoctoral fellow, and Dr. Smith and their colleagues recently found H1N1 flu virus prevalent in 89% of domestic swine they sampled in villages in Cameroon. The findings are significant because influenza viruses in pigs can mix into much more virulent strains that can spread quickly. The study is part of a multi-country collaborative effort funded by the Fogarty International Center at the National Institutes of Health to examine spillover and transmission of the H1N1 flu virus between animals and humans.



Professor **Blaire Van Valkenburgh**, in collaboration with Drs. Brent Craven (Penn State) and Charles Wysocki, (Monell Chemical Senses Center, Philadelphia) has been awarded a National Science Foundation award for their proposal, "Collaborative Research: Reconstructing Airflow in the Nasal Cavity of Mammals. ‘

Adjunct Professor **Xiaoming Wang**, a vertebrate paleontologist with the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, led a team to the Tibetan Highlands that discovered a species of woolly rhinoceros dating to about 3.7 million years ago, about a million years before other known woolly rhinos. The findings are published in the Sept. 2, 2011 issue of the journal [Science](#). Dr. Wang can be seen discussing the team’s search on [YouTube](#).

Professor **Robert Wayne** and a number of colleagues have published a study indicating that wolves in the eastern U.S. are hybrids of gray wolves and coyotes and that eastern coyotes are wolf-coyote-dog hybrids. In the study, published in the journal [Genome Research](#), 16 researchers from around the globe, led by Dr. Wayne, used information from the dog genome to survey genetic diversity in dogs, wolves and coyotes.



From the [UCLA Newsroom](#): “In new research that could have implications for improving fertilization in humans and other mammals, life scientists studied interactions between individual sperm and eggs in red abalone, an ocean-dwelling snail, and made precise chemical measurements and physical models of these interactions. They are the first scientists to do so. By simulating the natural habitat of the abalone in the laboratory, the scientists were able to determine the conditions under which sperm–egg encounters and fertilization were most likely to occur. ‘If we can understand the basic physics, chemistry and biology of reproduction, then moving from one species to the next is like dotting I’s and crossing T’s,’ said the study’s lead author, **Richard Zimmer**, a UCLA distinguished professor of ecology and evolutionary biology.” In addition, Dr. Zimmer and colleagues (Jeffrey Riffell, University of Washington; Roman Stocker, Massachusetts Institute of Technology) have received an NSF award for their collaborative research on the physics of gamete interactions. This project will run from Sept 1, 2011 to Aug 31, 2014.

# UNDERGRADUATE NEWS

**Tim Hipp** (Biology) and **Janice Chan** (Ecology, Behavior, and Evolution) were awarded Joseph Epperson Memorial Scholarships for the Winter 2011 Field Biology Quarter in Nicaragua, taught by Greg Grether and Debra Shier. Four undergraduate students were awarded the Whitcome Summer Research Fellowship this year: **David Kidd** (Amarasekare), **George Lai** (Van Valkenburgh), **Courtney Neumann** (Blumstein), and **Taylor Cook** (Blumstein). **Janice K. Chan** won a Dean's Prize at the UCLA Science Poster Day in May 2011 for her research with Dr. Tom Smith.

Over 200 students received B.S. degrees at Ecology and Evolutionary Biology graduation ceremonies this Spring. The keynote speaker at the departmental ceremony was our alumnus Dr. Gary Small '73 (Zoology). **Gary Small**, MD, is Professor of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences and Parlow-Solomon Professor on Aging at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, where he is also Founding Director of the UCLA Memory Clinic and Director of the UCLA Center on Aging. Dr. Small has authored more than 400 scientific publications, as well as the international bestseller, "The Memory Bible." In 2002, Scientific American magazine named Dr. Small one of the world's top 50 innovators in science and technology.

# GRADUATE NEWS

Seven of our graduate students received the University's prestigious Dissertation Year Fellowship awards for the 2011-12 academic year. The students and their research subjects:

**Christine Creese** (Sack) - From leaves to landscape: Causes and consequences of variation in fern form and function

**Ryan Ellingson** (Jacobs) - Endemism in the Gulf of California: Phylogeography, selection and ecological speciation in North Pacific estuarine gobies

**Neil Losin** (Grether) - The evolution of interspecific territoriality in invasive *Anolis* lizards

**Jolene Moroney** (Rundel) - Evolutionary and ecological drivers of invasion in the annual thistle, *Centaurea melitensis*

**Hilton Oyamaguchi** (Smith) - Exploring mechanisms of diversification in the Amazon and Brazilian savanna gradient

**Sara Painter** (Fong/Vance) - The influence of population density and sex ratio on the reproductive success of a temperate reef fish, *Lythrypnus dalli*

**Raul Sedano** (Smith) - Patterns of historical and contemporary evolution in avian Tanagers of the Tropical Andes

The National Geographic News Watch recently featured [a series of photographs](#) of invasive species in Florida by Ecology and Evolutionary Biology doctoral student **Neil Losin**.

Dean's Prizes at the 2011 Undergraduate Science Poster Day in May were awarded to **Janice K. Chan** (EBE) and **Allison S. Quan** (Biology).



**Andrew Kaddis**, a senior Biology major and Spring 2011 graduate, was one of three students honored in May with the 2011 Charles E. Young Humanitarian Award, one of the most prestigious honors given to UCLA undergraduates.

From the [UCLA Newsroom](#):

He was honored with the humanitarian award for his work with foster youth through the Bruin Guardian Scholars Program, an on-campus, student-run organization that reaches out to foster youth in high schools in Los Angeles County.

# RECENT MASTERS AND DOCTORAL GRADUATES

Doctorates in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology were awarded in Spring 2011 to **Allison Alvarado** (Smith), **Brittany Enzmann** (Nonacs), **Kenichi Okamoto** (Amarasekare), and **Katherine Pease** (Wayne).

# NEWS FROM STUNT RANCH

The 2010 Annual Report from UCLA Stunt Ranch-Santa Monica Mountains Reserve is now [online](#) with a master listing of classes, research, and publications from 1995 to 2010.



# IN MEMORIAM

## OWEN RAYNAL LUNT (1921 – 2011)

Owen Raynal Lunt, known to everyone as “Ray,” was a soil scientist by training, a scientific administrator by choice, and a compassionate friend to many. He was born to Owen and Velma Jackson Lunt on April 8, 1921, in El Paso, Texas, where he grew up. He entered Brigham Young University in 1938, graduating with a B.A. in chemistry in 1947. His undergraduate career was interrupted by a Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS) mission to Argentina and a stint in Naval Aviation during World War II. He next completed a Ph.D. in agronomy at North Carolina State in 1951, after which he immediately joined the UCLA faculty.

His scientific career at UCLA weaved through various departments, beginning with Irrigation and Soil Science followed by Ornamental Horticulture in the long-gone College of Agriculture, where he became a Professor of Plant Nutrition. In 1972 he became a Professor of Biology in a series of four departments in the College of Letters and Science (currently the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology), from which he retired as emeritus professor in 1993. He passed away on April 3, 2011, a few days before his 90th birthday.

His professional life led to approximately 70 research publications and travels to 12 countries as a scientific advisor (often involving his fluency in Spanish). An important contribution was a paper published in *Ecology* in 1973 dealing with the diffusion of oxygen in soils and its requirement for roots. This publication involved an early recognition of the physiology of roots in situ, an important topic of modern research.

He was chosen by the dean of the medical school, Dr. Sherman Mellinkoff, for an administrative position as Director of the Laboratory of Nuclear Medicine and Radiation Biology in 1968. He skillfully carried out the often confusing and changing missions of the U.S. federal government agencies involved with this

topic, as promulgated by the AEC, ERDA, EPA, DOE and other acronyms. The laboratory evolved away from radiation biology, which was a hot topic in the 1950s and 1960s, eventually morphing into the Laboratory of Biomedical and Environmental Sciences, which he directed until his retirement in 1993.

He loved teaching about soils and civilization. Indeed, he taught a course in Soils and Environment for over 20 years, including a few times pro bono after he retired. The course, unique at UCLA, covered the general properties of soils as well as their environmental and cultural implications, including the worldwide distribution of soil types, their hydraulic and biological properties, and their management with respect to plant growth and distribution. . . .

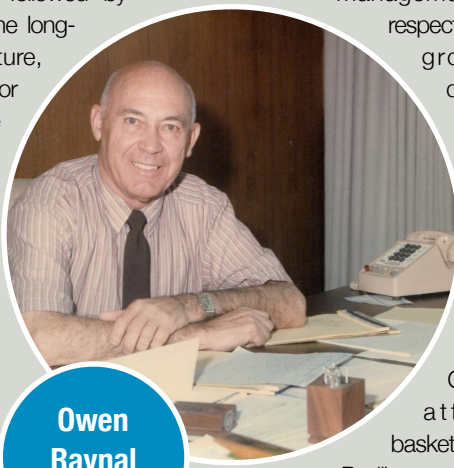
Ray loved sports, which he knowledgeably discussed. Indeed, he and his dentist son David (he also had two daughters, Carol and Janet) attended the first basketball game at Pauley Pavilion and passionately attended UCLA football games. Plus he was an avid handball player!

Ray was a man for all seasons. He dealt patiently and earnestly with the Washington bureaucracy, members of the labs he directed, and members of his faith, all with dedicated commitment. His soft-spoken manner provided an ongoing model for compassionate leadership.

Park Nobel

## PETER P. VAUGHN (1928 – 2011)

We regret to report that Emeritus Professor Peter P. Vaughn passed away in April 2011. Professor Vaughn studied Permian reptiles and taught vertebrate morphology and vertebrate paleontology. Dr. David S. Berman, Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History, has commented, “I will always be especially indebted to Peter P. Vaughn for not only his patient guidance as instructor and mentor, but also instilling in me that there is no richer experience in paleontology than the excitement and satisfaction that comes from discoveries made in the field and lab.” Among Dr. Vaughn’s other doctoral students were John Heyning, Stuart Sumida, and Thomas White.



Owen Raynal Lunt



Peter Vaughn

# ALUMNI NEWS

Some of our alumni find us, and sometimes we find them. If we find you first, we'll ask you for permission to include your news on the web. If you'd like to let others know what you are doing, please email us at [eebchair@eeb.ucla.edu](mailto:eebchair@eeb.ucla.edu).

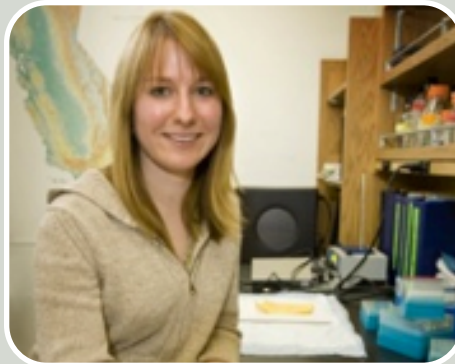
## 2010s

**Jacob S. Kopp '10** served as an Army Ranger, Special Operations Combat Medic, and member of the Joint Special Operations Task Force during two combat tours before attending UCLA. While here, he continued his service as Acting First Sergeant and Battalion Medical Officer for the 445th Civil Affairs Battalion in Mountain View, Ca. He is now halfway through a master's degree at Columbia University and is currently a principal and Vice President of Marketing for a fast-growing manufacturing company in the mining and minerals sector.



**Bridgett vonHoldt '10** PhD (Wayne) writes, "I am a post-doctoral researcher in Dr. Brandon Gaut's lab, in the Ecology and Evolutionary Department at UCI. My research interests broadly include evolutionary/population genetic analysis of domesticated species, as well as exploring how genetic variation is shaped by selection. My dissertation research focused on understanding genetic structure among the endangered gray wolf populations, and exploring how genome variation among wild and domesticated canids was shaped by the domestication process. For my post-doc, I am exploring the dynamics of transposable elements (TEs) through comparative analyses of domesticated plant genomes. Methylated TEs are transcriptionally deactivated, but there is likely an impact on nearby gene expression.

By intersecting the genome, methylome and transcriptome of two domesticated rice subspecies (*Oryza sativa*), I am investigating how TE insertion and deactivation is acted upon by selection to maintain genome stability."



**Nelli Boykoff '06** received an MD from Mayo Medical School on a full academic scholarship, and is now a Neurology resident at Stanford University School of Medicine.



## 2000s

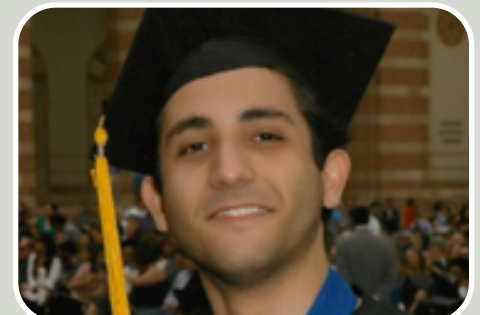
**Michael Ahdoot '07** is a medical student at Stanford University. He writes, "At UCLA I was an American Lit and Bio double major. I graduated with college honors. I got accepted to Stanford Med School and deferred for a year. During that year I traveled extensively to the Middle East, all over Africa and S. America. At Stanford I engaged in research in tumor immunology and reconstructive surgery. I plan to become a surgeon and begin residency in 2012."



**Mindy Cherg Clements '01**, who graduated with a double major in plant biology and history, earned an MBA at UC Davis. She writes, "I am now working for the Environmental Protection Agency in Chicago in the Superfund office and am the acting supervisor for the site assessment program. My group assesses hazardous waste sites in the midwest for inclusion into the National Priority List for clean up. I use my life science degree every day as the agency is mainly staffed by environmental engineers and scientists."

**Winnie Fan Joe '01, '02** Ed.M., is a science teacher at Oak Avenue Intermediate School in Temple City, California. Winnie is married to Stephen Joe '01 Bio, an engineer and photographer. She advises a Builders Club, moonlights as a photographer, and is a mom to two beautiful children. You can see Winnie representing science on the TV show Wipeout at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZiYhzGDugk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZiYhzGDugk).

**Behdad Javdan '09** is a student at the UC San Francisco School of Dentistry.



**John Andrawis '07** is a medical student and a '10 business student at the University of Chicago, as part of an MD/MBA program.



**Jennifer Leonard PhD '02** (Wayne) is a permanent researcher at the Doñana Biological Research Station in Seville, Spain ([www.ebd.csic.es/website1/Principal.aspx](http://www.ebd.csic.es/website1/Principal.aspx)).

**Michael Mount '05** received a D.O. from Western University of Health Sciences, College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific, and is a surgeon in Spartanburg, South Carolina.

**Nicholas Nidzieko '00** (Marine Biology) received a PhD in Civil and Environmental Engineering from Stanford University. He is an Assistant Professor at the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, at Horn Point Laboratory. He writes, "the MBQ was a really important experience for me, and my current interests as a coastal physical oceanographer tend towards interdisciplinary work as a result of my marine biology background at UCLA. At present, my research includes modeling the fate of particles representing *T. Gondii*, which infects California sea otters, and field work investigating tidal variability of nitrate uptake in estuaries."



**Saengdao Philavane '02, EdM'04**, writes: "After graduating from UCLA, I taught science at Hawthorne High School in the Centinela Valley Union High School District for five years. I then moved to Singapore and have been teaching at the Overseas Family School in Singapore ever since. I'm starting my fourth year teaching IB Biology, IB Environmental Systems & Societies, and grades 9 and 10 Middle Years Programme/IGCSE in Science. I love living in Singapore and I travel every chance I get. I got married this year and I'm expecting our first son to be born in November! Life is very good right now. . . . My education at UCLA has definitely opened up many doors for me

and I am so grateful. I still keep a UCLA pennant hung up in my classroom and have ever since I became a teacher. I'm an extremely proud Bruin! Go Bruins!!!" The picture shows Saengdao at a triathlon in Bintan, Indonesia.



## 1990s

**Carolee Caffrey '91** PhD (R. Gibson) is Adjunct Assistant Professor of Biology at Hofstra University.

**Elissa Elliott '90, MEd '91**, is the author of *Eve: A Novel*, as well as a podcast and a blog, both called "Living the Questions."



**Lisa Gunn Adams PhD '93** (Gordon) is an Assistant Professor of Biology and Biology Education in the Department of Biology and Physics at Kennesaw State University, located just north of Atlanta. Adams' research program deals with establishing student monitoring programs using the Basic Observation Buoy (BOB). BOB is a low cost, educationally friendly, monitoring

device that is made primarily of PVC tubing. The buoy is assembled by students and serves as a platform for sensors that continuously sample the water. Students collect data on various parameters, like pH, Dissolved Oxygen, Salinity, and Temperature levels of protected waters, like tidal creeks, estuaries and lakes. BOB has been implemented in many users groups, ranging from middle school to university level students. Students are able to share their data with their community and contribute to the coverage of our existing coastal monitoring efforts. Adams is the Chair of the Education and Outreach Southeast Coastal Ocean Observing Regional Association (SECOORA), which is part of the Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS).



**Keane Lai '93, MD**, is an Assistant Professor of Pathology at USC. His most recently published paper is "Extracellular Matrix Dynamics in Hepatocarcinogenesis: a Comparative Proteomics Study of PDGFC Transgenic and Pten Null Mouse Models." (*PLoS Genet.* 2011 Jun; 7(6):e1002147. Epub 2011 Jun 23.)



## 1980s

**Edmund Brinkis** '84 received an MD from New York Medical College and is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and Rehabilitation and Chief of the Division of Adult Reconstruction of the University of Florida College of Medicine, Jacksonville.



**David Castanon** '81 writes, "I graduated from UCLA with a double major in Biology and Geography-Ecosystems Conservation and Analysis. I am currently Chief of the Regulatory Division of the US Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District. The Corps Regulatory Program is the federal government's most important program for protecting wetlands and other aquatic ecosystems. I manage a talented and committed team of multidisciplinary scientists and professionals in such fields as ecology, various biology specialties, fluvial geomorphology, environmental engineering, and planning. Our team of regulators is located in several offices: Los Angeles, Ventura, Carlsbad, Riverside, Phoenix and Tucson. These professionals evaluate permit applications from a broad range of public agencies, businesses, and private land owners who desire to build projects within wetlands, rivers, streams, lakes, or the ocean. Major infrastructure (highways, rail, renewable energy, pipelines, port expansions), mixed use or residential housing, construction on military bases, as well as private developments by individual land owners require Corps permits when they will affect aquatic resources whether on public or private land. The program annually affects about \$50 Billion worth of

construction projects within the Los Angeles District's area of responsibility: Southern California from the Mexican Border to the Monterey County Line and Mono Lake as well as the State of Arizona. Evaluation of these applications requires thorough environmental analysis, application of a watershed perspective, and compliance with a wide range of federal environmental statutes: Clean Water Act, National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act, National Historic Preservation Act, Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, Clean Air Act, and others. This program is challenging and often controversial in that the Corps is charged with balancing environmental protection with economic needs of society and private property rights which means that affected parties (land owners, neighbors, businesses, environmental groups, and elected officials) are rarely fully satisfied. However, the Corps regulator's 'honest broker' role and ability to personally affect how projects are designed and built results in tremendous job satisfaction."



## 1970s

**Steven C. Gerken** '77 founded Avitacor, a Life Sciences management consulting firm, in 2005, and has been serving as President since its inception. Dr. Gerken brings over 30 years of experience in the life sciences to Avitacor and is currently consulting as the Chief Business Officer for Global Bio Therapeutics USA, a gene therapy company, to help develop its proprietary gene expression platform into approved therapies for treating a variety of human diseases. Dr. Gerken started in San Diego biotechnology as a bioinformatics scientist

at Sequana Therapeutics, the first company to focus on commercializing the human genome project, bringing his expertise in human genetics and bioinformatics from the University of Utah Human Genome Center. Previously, Dr. Gerken conducted postdoctoral studies in developmental genetics at the University of Utah in the lab of Nobel laureate, Dr. Mario Capecchi. Dr. Gerken most recently held various positions within Chugai Pharmaceuticals, notably as a director of Informatics. His responsibilities included bio and chemical-informatics for new drug development, and information technology for corporate and global operations. Dr. Gerken received a Ph.D. in Molecular Biology and Biochemistry from the University of California, Irvine, and he received his MBA from the Rady School of Management at the University of California, San Diego. He also studied International Business Management at the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, India.



**Guy Hasegawa** '75 (Zoology), PharmD UCSF '79, is the senior editor for manuscript development of the American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy, and the co-editor of *Years of Change and Suffering: Modern Perspectives on Civil War Medicine*. He writes, "I became interested in researching medical topics and writing about them in pharmacy school and ended up publishing numerous articles in pharmacy journals during my career as a pharmacist and editor. After I moved to Maryland, I became acquainted with Civil War enthusiasts and with the National Archives and other historical repositories and found that I could combine my interests in history, medicine, and writing by researching topics in Civil War medicine. I've published several scholarly articles on

Civil War medicine and co-edited and contributed a chapter to *Years of Change and Suffering*. I'm actually working on my own book now. I also give talks regularly on topics in Civil War medicine. More details are available on my website ([www.cwmedicine.com](http://www.cwmedicine.com))



**Michael J. Novacek** '71 received a PhD in Paleontology from UC Berkeley, and is Senior Vice President and Provost of Science and Curator of Fossil Mammals at the American Museum of Natural History. From the AMNH website: "Dr. Novacek's studies concern patterns of evolution and relationships among organisms, particularly mammals. His interests have ranged from paleontological evidence to new data on DNA sequences. He has led paleontological expeditions to Baja California, Mexico; the Andes Mountains of Chile; and the Yemen Arab Republic in search of fossil mammals and dinosaurs. He also is one of the team leaders of the joint American Museum of Natural History/Mongolian Academy of Sciences ongoing expeditions to the Gobi Desert, begun in 1990. The Mongolian expeditions marked the first return of a Western scientific team to the country in over sixty years and have received worldwide scientific and public attention for their spectacular findings. In 1993, Dr. Novacek was one of the discoverers of the Gobi's Ukhaa Tolgod, the richest Cretaceous fossil vertebrate site in the world. Dr. Novacek is the author of more than 200 titles, including articles in the international scientific journals *Science* and *Nature*. He has also authored popular books on the Gobi expeditions, *Dinosaurs of the Flaming Cliffs* (1996) and on his experiences in the field, *Time Traveler* (2002) (each recognized as a New York Times Notable Book of the Year) as well as

*Terra: Our 100 Million-Year-Old Ecosystem-and the Threats That Now Put It at Risk* (November, 2007). " He is a Fellow in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Recipient of the Roy Chapman Andrews Society Distinguished Explorer's Award, and the Lowell Thomas Award from the Explorer's Club.



**Robert W. Putnam** '78 PhD (Gordon) is a Professor in the Department of Neuroscience, Cell Biology, and Physiology at Wright State University Boonshoft School of Medicine.

**Jacalyn M. Spizman** '71 (Zoology), MPH '75, D. Env. 79 is a senior hazardous substances scientist with the California Environmental Protection Agency Department of Toxic Substances Control, where she currently serves as a Remedial Project Manager charged with oversight of investigation and cleanup of state and Federal hazardous waste sites. Prior to joining DTSC in 1986, she spent ten years in Washington D.C., where she held a variety of positions in consulting, industry, and the public interest sector. During this period, she also founded and served on the Board of Directors for Metropolitan Washington Environmental Professionals, a multi-disciplinary professional organization. Dr. Spizman has been involved with the University of California Extension's Certificate Programs in Hazardous Waste Management since 1986, teaching workshops at numerous UC campuses. She has also served on the Technical Advisory Board for the hazardous waste management and site remediation certificate programs for UC Davis and UCLA. Most recently she developed and taught the "Legal and Regulatory Framework" course for UCLA's Certificate

Program in Hazardous Waste Site Investigation and Remediation. She has also given numerous technical presentations at industry conferences and trade shows, conducted special one day workshops on "Career Opportunities in the Environmental Field," and in 1989 authored a companion book entitled "Careers in Hazardous Waste Management: A Job Hunter's Guide to the Hazardous Waste Management Field." One of the original "Earth Day" generation of environmental scientists, Dr. Spizman has been professionally involved in the environmental field since the late 1970's. As such, she has a unique perspective on how the environmental field has evolved and changed since its inception. She also enjoys and has given many presentations to elementary, junior high and high school students over the years.

## 1960s

**Ira Blitz** '66 BA (Zoology), MD, graduated from the UCLA School of Medicine in 1970 and did a residency at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. He is presently an obstetrician/gynecologist at Kaiser Permanente in Baldwin Park, California.

**Diane Buxbaum** '60 (Zoology) received an MS in Environmental Health from Hunter College and an MPH from Columbia. She is an environmental scientist at the US Environmental Protection Administration, working on compliance assistance and enforcement in Region 2, EPA. She holds positions at the City and State level of the Sierra Club and works on a variety of environmental issues, among them cleaning a polluted canal near her residence in Brooklyn and addressing the nexus between population X environmental degradation of land and aquatic environments X global climate change.



**Richard Cicinelli '68** received his MD from UCLA in 1972, and is a psychiatrist who has been in practice for nearly thirty years. He received his undergraduate and medical degrees at UCLA and his psychiatric training at Langley Porter, University of California San Francisco. His sub-specialty interests include addiction psychiatry, Jungian psychology, and individual psychotherapy.



**Jack E. Dixon '66** (Zoology) received a PhD in Chemistry from UC Santa Barbara. Dr. Dixon is a Professor of Chemistry at UC San Diego, and an HHMI Chief Scientific Officer.

**Richard Eisenberg '63** (Zoology) received an MS and PhD in Pharmacology, also from UCLA, and is a Professor of Behavioral Science and an Adjunct Professor, Physiology and Pharmacology at the University of Minnesota Medical School Duluth. He is one of the Founding Faculty of the medical school and served for 29 years as Head of the Department of Pharmacology. His research interests involve the effects of drugs of abuse on the neuroendocrine axis, with a focus on the action of morphine and other opioids on the hypothalamo-pituitary-adrenal system. His work has been supported by numerous grants from NIDA to study dependence and tolerance to subcategories of opioids using the neuroendocrine system. His educational efforts have resulted in the authorship of MacPharmacology®, MacBrainLesion™, and MacMedVirology™, a series of computer-assisted instruction modules that have been used in many institutions. Most recently, he has completed the production of an interactive multimedia CD-ROM on alcoholism (Understanding The Alcoholic™). He has also produced a similar program on

Geriatric Therapeutics, funded by NIA. He is a past president of the Association of Medical School Pharmacology Chairs and serves as editor of the organization's Knowledge Objectives in Pharmacology.



**Steven D. Feinberg '67** (Zoology), 68 MPH, received his MD from UC Irvine. He is a physiatrist and pain specialist in Palo Alto, CA, and an Adjunct Clinical Professor at Stanford School of Medicine Department of Anesthesia, Pain Management Center. Dr. Feinberg is a past president of the American Academy of Pain Medicine, and serves on the Board of Directors of the American Chronic Pain Association. He is the Chief Medical Officer of American Pain Solutions. Dr. Feinberg has been married (happily) to Erica for 44 years and has four happy and healthy married adult children and four grandchildren (soon to be seven).



**Stanley M. Kopelow '61** (Zoology) received his MD from the University of California California College of Medicine, later UC Irvine, and has been in practice for over thirty years, specializing in diseases and surgery of the retina and vitreous. He has had a special interest in diabetic retinopathy. Dr. Kopelow was the co-investigator of the National Collaborative Diabetic Retinopathy Study from 1971 to 1976 and the principal investigator for the Early Treatment for Diabetic Retinopathy study from 1979 to 1989. These studies established the current guidelines for laser treatment for diabetic retinopathy. Dr. Kopelow has authored over thirty-five scientific papers on diabetic eye disease and has given numerous lectures and presentations at scientific meetings. His current practice is limited to the diseases of the retina and vitreous. He still has a special interest in diabetic eye disease, as well as macular degeneration.



**Marvin S. Schwab '68** (Zoology) is the congregational rabbi at Temple Beth Shalom in Santa Fe, New Mexico. From the temple's website: "Unlike many of his colleagues, Marvin Schwab did not set out to become a rabbi. After graduating from UCLA with a degree in zoology, Marvin followed a secular path for twelve years, working first as a medical technologist and later in computers and quality control. But the study of Talmud and the traditions of Judaism exerted an inexorable pull and a 1979 trip to Israel with his friend, Rabbi David Lieb, proved to be a life-changing experience." He writes, "I suspect I may be the only Zoology major who has become a rabbi. There are two other pieces that you

may want to add. 1) I am known as the rabbi that saves your soul and hard drive on the same day. 2) I truly value the education that I received at UCLA. There are bits and pieces of it that I think of and use on a weekly if not daily basis.”



## 1950s

**Robert Bleier '51** writes, “I graduated UCLA in 1951 with a BA in Zoology. I continued on with the intent of getting a Masters degree in Zoology under the guidance of my mentor Dr. A. Mandel Schechtman. It became clear in short order that working alone in the Vivarium, a group of labs, near what was a bridge connecting the Quad with the Administration Building, was not my desire. The large New Zealand Rabbits, my companions there, were bright, but non communicative. I decided on a Health service profession and considered Dentistry. I applied and was accepted to the UCSF School of Dentistry (a fine recommendation from Dr. Schechtman helped). I graduated from UCSF in 1956 with a DDS. I was associated for six months, after getting my license, with Dr. H. Mintzer in North Hollywood. After six months I then opened my own office in Chatsworth and practiced there for thirty-two years. While that was going on I got married to Merium Rosenthal and had three children, Alicia, Joshua and Gena Beth. I retired in 1988. One of my patients was a Professor of Ceramics at CSUN. He asked me what I had in mind to keep active after a Dental career. I hadn’t thought about that, he invited me to come to his studio at CSUN. I was immediately hooked on working with clay. I was at CSUN ceramics

and sculpture for 22 years until they thought that I should have graduated by then! By the way, I taught Dental Materials at the UCLA School of Dentistry for many years, it was a great experience!” Pictured: one of Dr. Bleier’s sculptures, “Tall Two-Headed Horse.”



**Charles F. Gehlbach '55** (Zoology), MD, is a jazz trumpeter and retired physician in Auburn, California. His band is “Dr. Bach & the Jazz Practitioners” – check out their [videos](#) on YouTube. He writes, “This is an ultra high energy group of talented and experienced musicians who show their enjoyment while playing Dixieland, Swing, Dance, Blues, and Gospel. We perform with eight musicians. We have a male vocalist in the band, and we also have our vivacious female Vocalist. The band features a Tuba - Banjo sound for Trad tunes, and a String Bass – Guitar sound for Swing. We have performed at the Jazz Clubs in Monterey, Sacramento, Redding, Stockton, Modesto, Santa Rosa, Pismo Beach, Three Rivers and Fresno. We also have played at the Nevada County Fair, the Auburn Fair, The Placer County Fair, and the California State Fair. We have played in the Sacramento Jazz Jubilee for the last ten years, and have been in the Festivals in Modesto, Graeagle, Jackson, and San Jose. We also play Dixieland Church Services for several churches from Auburn to the Bay Area. We definitely are tuned into playing FOR the audience.”



## 1940s

Elaine Dimitman Henley '47 (Zoology) received her MD from UC San Francisco in 1951. Dr. Henley, an endocrinologist, is Clinical Professor of Metabolism, Endocrinology and Nutrition at the University of Washington.

## 1930s

Sanbo S. Sakaguchi '39 (Zoology) received an MD from Marquette University in 1943. The story of his family is told in “Overcoming Tragedy at Manzanar: The Story of the Sakaguchi Family,” published April 13, 2007 in the Japanese American National Museum Magazine ([www.discovernikkei.org/en/journal/2007/4/13/janm-magazine/](http://www.discovernikkei.org/en/journal/2007/4/13/janm-magazine/)). Dr. Sakaguchi practices medicine with his sister, Dr. Mary Oda, in San Fernando, California.



## GIVING TO THE DEPARTMENT

If you are interested in giving to the UCLA Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, please visit [www.eeb.ucla.edu/giving.php](http://www.eeb.ucla.edu/giving.php). Your donation, regardless of amount, has a powerful impact and is greatly appreciated. Alumni interested in making a gift to the Department by endowing a scholarship, supporting faculty research, or making a planned gift or other gift, should contact Dounia Sadeghi, Assistant Director of Development, Life Sciences, at 310-825-3277 or [dsadeghi@support.ucla.edu](mailto:dsadeghi@support.ucla.edu).

Alumni and friends who are, or wish to become, Chancellor's Associates may now direct their annual gifts to the UCLA Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology and retain all the benefits that have traditionally been given to Chancellor's Associates. For information, visit [www.uclafund.ucla.edu/gtg/donorrecognition.aspx](http://www.uclafund.ucla.edu/gtg/donorrecognition.aspx).

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## WE WANT YOUR PICTURES

Do you have photographs of your time at UCLA as a graduate or undergraduate student? Please forward them to us at [eebchair@eeb.ucla.edu](mailto:eebchair@eeb.ucla.edu), and let us know who appears in the picture. We'd like to publish them in the next newsletter to stir some alumni memories. Please include the names of the people shown, the year of the photo, and the story or event behind it.

## NETWORKING FOR ALUMNI

[BruinWorks](#) is the online, interactive network exclusively for UCLA graduates. This dynamic site allows alumni to connect professionally and personally, search for college friends, post jobs and resumes, and re-connect. There you can join the brand new Ecology and Evolutionary Biology Alumni group. This group is for alumni who graduated in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology; Organismic Biology, Ecology, and Evolution; Biology; Botany; Zoology; Agriculture; Biology; Ecology, Behavior, and Evolution; Marine Biology, as well as Plant Biology, Zoology, and Botany. We invite you to sign up, start networking and, no matter where you are, be part of our online alumni community!



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