



# Pacific Petroleum Geology



NEWSLETTER

Pacific Section • American Association of Petroleum Geologists

July & August • 2008



THE FRITSCHES' GEOTREK III - 2008

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<b>Vice President</b>	<i>Karen Blake</i> 714.420.6840 keb933@gmail.com
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<b>Editor-in-Chief</b>	<i>Karen Blake</i> 714.420.6840 keb933@gmail.com

## STAFF

<b>Advertising</b>	<i>Michael Quilliam</i> 661.395.5443 mquilliam@plainsxp.com
<b>Geological Coordinator</b>	<i>Frank Cressy</i> 661.323.6828 fcressy@prodigy.net
<b>Newsletter</b>	<i>Pam Ceccarelli</i> 916.322.1110 pceccare@consvr.ca.gov
<b>Website Coordinator</b>	<i>Tim Stephenson</i> 661.395.5520 tstephenson@plainsxp.com

## MEMBERSHIP

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<b>Publications Chair</b>	<i>Larry Knauer</i> 661.392.2471 larryknauer@chevron.com
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## EVERY ISSUE

- 3 Message from the President  
Jon Kuespert
- 10 Member Society News

## THIS ISSUE

- 6 St. Francis Dam Disaster:

A tale of Failure, Tragedy and Heroism

Tony Biasotti, Wednesday, March 12, 2008  
Ventura County News

- 9 The Fritsche's GEOTREK III - 2008

Hiking the Rim of the San Fernando Valley -  
Five Mountain Ranges in Twelve Days



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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

JON KUESPERT

It is almost time for me to bid adieu as PSAAPG President. We have seen many changes during my year of living dangerously. When I started as your President in the summer of 2007 the price of oil was about \$70/bbl, today it is about \$144/bbl (it's NOT my fault)! The US economy has firmly slipped into recession territory and we are seeing housing prices fall, gasoline prices at an all-time high, and inflationary pressures increase. I am going to make a few economic comments in my waning moments, with the caveat that I am no longer running for any elected office (so ya may like this or not, but I cannot be impeached for it).

We have seen some changes in our industry. When I started in the oil and gas patch in the early '80s at Chevron in the Bay Area I was one of many development and exploration geologists in that office. We had a virtual plethora of activity in the Santa Barbara channel, San Fernando Valley, Cymric, Coalinga, Kern River, the Sacramento Valley and Midway-Sunset. The price of oil was at an all time high and things were booming. I worked with some people whose names may be familiar to you: including George Webb, Bill Hoag, Bob Lindblom, and Jim Hill. I stayed in the patch because I liked the work, and the people were fun. Virtually everything we did was by hand: maps, cross-sections, production plots, Pickett plots, SCAT plots,

typing pool letters. During the '80s we saw workstations come in, drafting departments leave, Excel software take over plotting, thermal projects proliferate, and both independent and majors consolidate to less hospitable environs. In the '90s we had among other things PCs in wide use, the birth of the Internet (where was Al Gore?), email addresses on every business card, secretarial pools disappearing,

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computer mapping, digital log evaluation, triple-combos, and .las files. In the '00s we have faster computers, file compression software, .pdf files, and virtual data rooms. Unfortunately most of the geologists, geophysicists, engineers, and technicians that I have ever worked with are gone, retired or laid off. We have gone from a hands-on paper industry to a digital one, with lots of paper still in all of our files (and according to my librarian, on my desk too).

But with all the changes that have happened in the past 3 decades there is at least one common theme that carries through. And that is the art of interpretation. The ability to analyze and synthesize disparate data from paper, and digital sources, in-house files and DOG records, old

dipmeters and tour sheets, books and websites, and 10-Ks and the local paper, is the all-encompassing theme. The worker who can access data and regurgitate that to their supervisors and peers is valuable, but the worker who can make music out of that seemingly random noise is a skill set that has always been and will always remain invaluable. On my office door is a saying "Spectacular achievements come from unspectacular preparation" – Roger Staubach, Dallas Cowboys Quarterback 1969-79. Learning how the past three decades of logging tools work and how they compare to the "ancient" logging tools is an invaluable skill. Spending the time to learn why a laterolog creates a response shoulder, or how an older dipmeter biases the data, or how field people determine water cuts from mason jars,



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[kathysmith@arrival.net](mailto:kathysmith@arrival.net)



Please volunteer to help our Section. Our actions may not always seem right but the people who do the work really care. We welcome your help. As the current leadership generation (like me) gets older and petrifies we need the fresh ideas and energy from those of you coming up in the ranks, so please get involved.

This being an election year we have many changes coming up. First we had the National elections and PSAAPG's very own Kay Pitts was voted Treasurer and former Bakersfieldite Rusty Riese Sections Vice President. Then we had the PSAAPG elections and Scott Hector is our new President-elect, Don Miller is Vice President, Donna Thompson is Treasurer, Kathy Miller is Secretary, Karen Blake is the first Editor-in-Chief, and Bob Countryman will be on the PSAAPG Foundation Board. As soon-to-be Past-President

I look forward to working this year with them and our incoming President, Don Clarke.

I will also make a November voting challenge to you. I am not going to preach for any candidate in particular, but please vote for the person you think will effect change and lead this country out of this current malaise and into the future.

Thank you for letting me be a part of your Section, and have a great summer!

Jon

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San Francisquito Canyon Road is a two-lane mountain road that winds and dips through the Angeles National Forest, heading north out of the Santa Clara River Valley.

It's easy to drive right past the site of the worst disaster in Southern California's history.

The ruins of the St. Francis Dam are a few hundred yards from the road. Even after parking and hiking down an abandoned bit of roadway, a visitor might only notice them once they're underfoot. The huge chunks of concrete in the creek bed are overgrown and hard to distinguish from the natural contours of the canyon. Here and there, a piece of steel rebar sticks up out of the rock and the dry grass.

Eighty years ago, the St. Francis Dam stood across this canyon and held back 12 billion gallons of water.

Then suddenly it didn't.

The dam broke a few minutes before midnight on March 12, 1928. The water behind it, once destined for the bathtubs and drinking glasses of the people of Los Angeles, roared down San Francisquito Canyon and turned west along the Santa Clara River through Piru, Fillmore, Santa Paula and Saticoy before reaching the sea.

Along the way, it picked up trees, boulders, houses, livestock and people. The flood killed at least 500 people and left thousands homeless.



Lucille Matzen was part of the first wave of rescue workers. In 1928, she was Lucille Johnson, a 20-year-old Salvation Army captain in Glendale.

She was called to Santa Paula on the morning of March 13. The low-lying parts of town were devastated. Bodies floated in the river and jutted out of the mud.

Waiting out the flood

"It was such a ghastly sight," said Matzen, who lives in East Ventura now. "I'll never forget it as long as I live."

Zanada von Doeren of Oxnard was 5 years old when the dam broke, but she remembers it, too. Her parents put her in the family car,

and they drove up the Conejo Grade to wait out the flood.

"We just went up there and stayed until they gave the all-clear," she said. "We were lucky; we didn't lose anything. It was the people in Santa Paula and Fillmore who lost everything."ter system retired shortly afterward and lived the rest of his life in near-seclusion.



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The Ante family in Santa Paula lost almost everything. Lupe, their 11-year-old daughter, is now Lupe Simmons and lives in Ventura with her son.

She remembers her father waking her that night and leading the family out of their Seventh Street home and uphill. She doesn't remember how they found out the dam had broken.

When they walked back a few hours later, their house was gone. They had to live in a tent near the river until they could rebuild.

"There were rows and rows and rows of tents, like the ones soldiers would live in," Simmons said.

There is no single answer as to why the St. Francis Dam broke. By modern standards, its construction and materials were subpar, and the canyon floor wasn't suitable to support it.

"It was built on top of an ancient landslide," said John Nichols of Santa Paula, who wrote a book about the disaster in 2002. "It looked like a good location, because the canyon is very narrow right there, but it was unstable."

Monument in Santa Paula

They might not have been angels — "What

if you went home after saving somebody and you kicked your dog?" Nichols pondered — but they were heroes because they rose to the occasion.

There's a monument to their deeds in downtown Santa Paula, a sculpture called "The Watchers" that depicts two motorcycle policemen who rode through town spreading the word.

There are unknown heroes, too. One woman had the grisly task of photographing all of the dead bodies at the morgue, so their families could identify them.

Her name has been lost, but Nichols' exhibit recounts her work.

"It fades in people's minds, and in some cases it fades into obscurity," he said. "Here's a significant disaster in our history, and most of the reaction I get when I tell people about it is, How come I never heard of this? Why isn't this taught in school?' I just don't know."



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Gene and Sue Fritsche and colleagues completed this hike as a Fund-Raising Project in Support of the:

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The total length of the GeoTrek is about 135 MILES and was completed over a 12-day period.

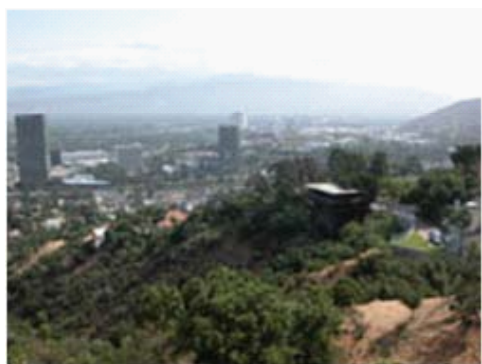
Today's Geology students represent the future of our profession and, with the cost of education going increasingly higher, they need our help to finish their degrees in a timely fashion. This event occurs only once every two years. To learn more about this event contact Gene Fritsche at: [a.eugene.fritsche@csun.edu](mailto:a.eugene.fritsche@csun.edu).

To see a perspective view of the route, read a description of the geology along the route, and see pictures taken on the day of the hike, click on the day of interest at <http://www.coastgeologicalsociety.org/GeoTrekIII.htm>.



First Day:

Assembled here, eager to be on their way, left to right, are Gene and Sue Fritsche, Doug Yule, and Jorge Vazquez.



This Day:

Looking northeast across Universal City with the Verdugo Mountains in the background and the San Gabriel Mountains behind them.



Last Day:

For this last day of GeoTrek III the participants included Syrus Parvizian, Sue Fritsche, Tony Reid, Pam Irvine, Evelyn Jones, and Gene Fritsche. Behind us is the road we had finished on when we hiked over the Simi Hills

## Alaska Geological Society

www.alaskageology.org

P. O. Box 101288  
Anchorage, AK 99510

Contact: Art Banet  
907.334.5316



Luncheon meetings are held monthly September through May, usually on the third Thursday of the month, at the Anchorage Hilton (500 W. 3rd Avenue) from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The cost is \$18 for members with reservations; no reservations add \$5; non-members add \$2. For reservations, call the AGS reservation voice mail at 907-258-9059 or contact **David Hite** at hiteconsult@acsalaska.net by noon on Monday before the meeting.

## Coast Geological Society

www.coastgeologicalsociety.org

P. O. Box 3055  
Ventura, CA 93006

Contact: Bob Ballog  
805.498.6294



Dinner meetings are held monthly September through June, usually on the third Tuesday of the month, at Biedermann Hall at Sacred Heart Church - 10800 Henderson Road in Ventura. Social hour starts at 6:00 p.m., dinner is served at 7:00 p.m., and the talk starts at 8:00 p.m. The cost of dinner is \$18 (with reservations), \$25 (without reservations), or \$10 (students and K-12 teachers); the talk is free. For reservations, please email Christine White at cwhite@dcorllc.com or make reservations online at www.coastgeologicalsociety.org. Reservations should be made by 4:00 p.m. on Friday before the meeting.

## Los Angeles Basin Geological Society

www.labgs.org

515 So. Flower Street, Ste 4800  
Los Angeles, CA 90071

Contact: Jon Kuespert  
213.225.5900 x224



Luncheon meetings are held monthly September and October; and January through June, usually on the third or fourth Thursday of the month, in the Monarch Room at The Grand at Willow Street Conference Centre (4101 E. Willow Street) in Long Beach. Lunch is served at 11:30 a.m., and the talk starts at 12:15 p.m. The cost is \$20 (with reservations), \$25 (without reservations), or \$0 (students are covered by Halliburton and Schlumberger). Reservations can be made online at www.labgs.org or by contacting **Jon Kuespert** at jkuesper@breitburn.com or (213) 225-5900 ext. 224. Reservations must be made prior to Tuesday before the meeting.

## Northwest Energy Association

dlgellar@msn.com

P. O. Box 6679  
Portland, OR 97228-6679

Contact: James Jackson  
503-771-3887



Luncheon meetings are held monthly September through May, usually on the second Friday of the month, at the Multnomah Athletic Club (1849 SW. Salmon Street) in Portland. Meeting time is at 7:30 - 9:00 am. The cost is \$15. For information or reservations, contact **Shelley Thomas** at 503-848-2947 or **Treck Cardwell** at 503-226-4211 ext. 4681.

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## **Northern California Geological Society** [www.ncgeolsoc.org](http://www.ncgeolsoc.org)

9 Bramblewood Court  
Danville, CA 94506-1130

Contact: Barb Matz  
[Barbara.Matz@shawgrp.com](mailto:Barbara.Matz@shawgrp.com)



Evening meetings are held monthly September through May, usually on the last Wednesday of the month, at the Masonic Center (9 Altarinda Road) in Orinda. Social hour starts at 6:30 p.m., and the talk starts at 7:00 p.m. (no dinner). For reservations, leave your name and phone number at (925) 424-3669, or at [danday94@pacbell.net](mailto:danday94@pacbell.net) before the meeting. Cost is \$5 per regular member; \$1 per student member.

## **Sacramento Petroleum Association**

P. O. Box 571  
Sacramento, CA 95812-0571

Contact: Rick Blake  
925-422-9910



Luncheon meetings are held monthly January through November, on the third Wednesday of the month. Location to be announced. The meetings start at noon. The cost is \$20. For information or reservations, contact **Pam Ceccarelli** at 916-322-1110 or [pceccare@consrv.ca.gov](mailto:pceccare@consrv.ca.gov).

## **San Joaquin Geological Society** [www.sjgs.com](http://www.sjgs.com)

P. O. Box 1056  
Bakersfield, CA 93302

Contact: Rob Negrini  
[megrini@csub.edu](mailto:megrini@csub.edu)



Dinner meetings are held monthly October through June, usually on the second Tuesday of the month, at the American Legion Hall (2020 H Street) in Bakersfield. The icebreaker starts at 6:00 p.m., dinner is served at 7:00 p.m., and the talk starts at 8:00 p.m. The cost of dinner is \$20 (with reservations) or \$23 (without reservations); the talk is free. For reservations, contact **Janet AcAlee** at [jmcalee@pxp.com](mailto:jmcalee@pxp.com) or (661) 395-5438.

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