

the Bone Pilgrim

October 1999

Welcome Back!

Welcome back to another semester of American Studies at CSUF. Our student association got off to a great start with a big turnout for the first organizational meeting. This year we are privileged to have the help of Jill Anderson and Leila Zenderland who have teamed up as faculty advisors.

The association held its first event at BJ's on Friday, September

24th, where students and faculty joined for an evening of food, drink and socializing. If you missed the event, don't worry; there's plenty of other exciting activities coming up this semester. Check out our news briefs and our website for upcoming events. With walking tours of Little Saigon and Los Angeles, museum visits and more socializing, it should be a full semester.

Say Goodbye to *The Bone Pilgrim*

Every year or so, *The Bone Pilgrim* is forced to run an article detailing the origin of the newsletter's elusive and obscure name. Taken from Elliott West's *Growing Up with the Country: Childhood on the Far-Western Frontier*, bone pilgrims were children of the nineteenth century who gathered the bleached bones of slaughtered bison which were then sold to be made into fertilizer, corset stays, and buttons. But rather than keep that tradition going, **we have decided to change our name. And we need your help.**

We've decided to hold a contest to pick a new name for the student association newsletter. There is no spe-

cific criteria for submissions other than that they be creative and clever. They may, like our last name, have historical significance, but they may just as well be something that describes what it is we do in American Studies, or have a more general origin. An as yet undetermined prize will be awarded in addition to the pride of knowing that you've made a mark in the department's history.

Drop off entries at the American Studies Office, EC 622, or email them to xenobulb@aol.com. Make sure to include your name and a phone number or email address so we can let you know if your name replaces *The Bone Pilgrim*.

Upcoming Events

- **October 16: Walking Tour of Orange County's Little Saigon.** See Page 3 for an interview with our tour guide, Dr. Son-Kim Vo.
- **October 23: Orange County Historical Conference.** See page 2 for details.
- **November 6: Museum of Contemporary Art — "In Memory of my Feelings: Frank O'Hara and American Art."** This Liberal Studies sponsored event is open to all. Self-tour followed by discussion led by Terri Snyder. Contact Dr. Snyder at 278-3748 for more information.
- **November 12: L.A. County Museum of Art—Tour of their exhibit "The Fashionable Child of the Nineteenth century."** Look for flyers and check our department website as the date nears.
- **November 13: Graduate/Faculty Colloquium. 7p.m.**
- **December 4: Dr. Steiner's Walking Tour of Historic Downtown Los Angeles.** More info in the next newsletter.

Orange County Historical Society Comes to Campus

American Studies students have the opportunity to participate in "Building Bridges to Orange County History," an Orange County History Conference to be held at California State University, Fullerton. The conference, back after a ten-year hiatus, is scheduled for October 22-24, 1999. The purpose of this conference "is to build bridges of understanding between different groups now calling Orange County home, such as bridges between generations, between the academic community and the historical societies, between teachers and students, and between the past and the new millennium."

The program for Friday, October 22, will consist of workshops in Archives and Records Management, Historical Preservation, Historical Organization Management, and Oral History and Genealogy. Workshop costs range from \$30-35 and are scheduled from 1:00PM - 5:00PM.

A welcome reception for all conference participants will be held Friday evening at the historic George Key Ranch in Placentia (a few short blocks from campus). Tours of this turn-of-the-century citrus ranch as well as living history interpretations will be offered in addition to an hors d'oeuvres buffet.

The program for Saturday, October 23, will consist of panels covering a wide array of topics and issues pertaining to Orange County history. Registration will be available on the day of the conference for \$30. Some of the topics scheduled are:

- Curriculum Guide for Teaching Local and Orange County History, by and for Teachers
- Linking Orange County, California, and the American West
- History of Laguna Beach Art Colony and Google Architecture
- Video Histories of the Santa Ana River and of Irvine
- Using Landscaping to Interpret Historic Sites; and Building Common Interests in Santa Ana Canyon
- Boy Scout Jamboree and Markers of Meaning in County History and Culture
- Using Family History to Bridge Back to Early Orange County

Sunday, October 24, 1999, is a day during which conference participants have the option of visiting Heritage House on the grounds of CSU Fullerton Arboretum for tea, or exploring other historical venues around Orange County. You might want to visit the Bradford House in Placentia, Heritage Hill Park in Lake Forest, take a docent-led walking tour of W.P.A artwork in downtown Fullerton, or relax on a bus tour of historic Anaheim that concludes at the cemetery.

Registration forms are available in the American Studies department office, EC 622, or by contacting Tracy Smith, Conference Coordinator (and former AMST graduate): tsmith@wahoo.sjsu.edu or by phone, (714) 278-5808.

Please mark this exciting conference on your calendar today!

News Briefs

* The ASSA is happy to welcome Mike Steiner back from his year as a Fulbright Professor in Hungary. Stop by and talk with him about his fascinating experiences in Hungary. He strongly encourages students interested in studying American Studies in Eastern Europe to visit his office, EC 608, to discuss possibilities for student exchanges.

Though we finally have one professor back, three others will be leaving us for sabbaticals this school year. Karen Lystra has already begun a year-long sabbatical made possible by a National Endowment for the Humanities grant. She will spend the year at the Huntington Library putting the finishing touches on her Mark Twain book. Additionally, John Ibson and Allan Axelrad have received one-semester leave awards to pursue their respective book-length research projects. They will both be gone in the Spring, Dr. Ibson looking at men's relationships as evidenced in American photography and Dr. Axelrad pursuing his research on James Fenimore Cooper.

Don't get too disheartened because we also have a new addition to our American Studies full-time faculty. Jill Anderson has joined the department this fall as a full-time Lecturer. New to Southern California, she has recently come from Rutgers University in New Jersey. She is in the process of completing a dissertation entitled "The Triumph over Passion": The Poet in Early Nineteenth-Century American Culture." Stop by her office, EC 671, to welcome her to our campus.

* The American Studies program at the University of Kansas is seeking 1 page abstracts for its second Annual Graduate Student Conference (run by former AMST graduate Deborah Whaley) to be held April 14-16, 2000. The unusual topic for the conference is: "Memory, Autobiography and DNA." For more information please see our department's web site and read the call for papers link. The due date for proposals is January 15, 2000. Interested graduate students are encouraged to explore this great opportunity.

* The Associated Students, CSUF, Inc. is offering 4 scholarship opportunities for students on campus. Applicants must have strong community and campus involvement as well as meet other requirements. Applications are due by Friday, Oct. 29, 1999. For more information and an application go to TSU-207 or call (714) 278-3295 or 278-4224. Be sure to look for other scholarship opportunities on campus!

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Meet Dr. Son-Kim Vo

By Kristen Goo

The American Studies Student Association would like to invite everyone to join us on Saturday morning, October 16th, 1999, for a walking tour of the Little Saigon neighborhood of Orange County. We will meet at 9:30 a.m. in front of the Asian Mall at the Three Statues Phuc, Loc, and Tho, 9200 Bolsa Avenue (close to Magnolia) in Westminster. The tour will be guided by Dr. Son-Kim Vo who is a professor and founder of the Intercultural Development Center and the Vietnamese Language Program here on campus.

I recently interviewed Dr. Vo and found her to be an extremely interesting individual. I was equally intrigued by her explanation of the history of the creation of Little Saigon.

Professor Vo was first introduced to America as a young international student in 1961. In Vietnam she earned a bachelor's degree in Biology and Education and became a high school teacher. She later obtained her M.A. degree in Botany, as an international student at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. Several years passed before the School of Education at the University of Saigon recognized Dr. Vo's talent and sent her to the University of Southern California, where she received a Ph.D. in Education in January 1975. Just a few months after her return, the government of South Vietnam fell to the communists in April 1975.

In June 1981 Prof. Vo escaped Vietnam in the dark of night and began an arduous journey to the United

States. On a small frail wooden rowboat, she, along with her aged father, husband, and others, sailed across the turbulent Pacific Ocean. After 4 nights, they finally reached the shores of Malaysia. Three months later Dr. Vo and her family flew to the United States.

Prof. Vo soon found work with the Saint Anselm's Cross-Cultural Community Center. Later she became the executive director of the Vietnamese Community of Orange County, Inc., one of the most active non-profit or-

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ganizations in the United States. In 1984 after a competitive selection, Dr. Vo worked for the California Department of Social Services as a Special Consultant on Refugee Affairs. In 1988, she found her way to Cal State Fullerton, as a director of the Intercultural Development Center (IDC). Shortly after that she started what ultimately became the Vietnamese Language Program. Her dedication to education was clearly visible when Cal State Fullerton's budget could not fund the Vietnamese Language Program and she volunteered to teach this class without pay. Dr. Vo, through perseverance and strength, has definitely beaten the odds that faced her and

has significantly contributed to this community.

Dr. Vo is also an expert on the history of Little Saigon. She was the editor of four volumes of oral history on the development of the Vietnamese community of Orange County. Since she believes that it is important for students to understand and be informed about this neighborhood, she graciously introduced Little Saigon to me in advance, by explaining why it is located in Westminster and how it got its name.

When Vietnamese refugees first came to California in 1975, they were put in Camp Pendleton. Volunteers, mainly from churches, went to Camp Pendleton to sponsor families and help them obtain basic necessities. Before the camp closed, nine or ten families were left in the refugee camp. These families were either too large in size or had limited English skills that made it almost impossible for sponsors to find them employment.

An American who owned an apartment complex decided to sponsor these remaining families and consequently took them to their new home in Westminster. The owner of the building then went to local church members and asked them to help these Vietnamese families. The church members responded enthusiastically and donated all sorts of gifts and appliances.

The news soon spread, by word of mouth, to other refugees that had been sent to the East, South, and Midwest. These families in Westminster were being sent to school instead of to work and were still able to

(Continued on page 5)

Observations On a Semester Abroad

By Toni Castro

Last spring I had the pleasure of spending my semester in the city of London where I participated in the London Semester run through the CSU system. Not only did I get to meet people from around America and the world, I also got to immerse myself in a culture that was not my own. I did not truly realize how different our two cultures were until I got there. I always assumed that the two cultures were similar because a) we both speak English; and b) many of our American social and political systems were taken from the English tradition. As a student of American Studies, I observed some differences and similarities between the two countries.

I noticed that the English could sure point out all the loud Americans that rode the tube in the morning on the way to the University of London (yes, I was one of those loud Americans). The English would immerse themselves in their newspapers or some sort of reading material so that they would not have to talk to anyone. I of

course always asked people what they were reading and they looked at me like I was some kind of freak for interrupting them. I later realized that this was often their only "private" time.

Another thing that made me realize just how different we really are was the fact that young American students have this fascination with alcohol, perhaps because it is something that is forbidden to us until we are twenty-one, and the English are allowed to drink when they are eighteen and sometimes even earlier. In England much of the population goes to the pub for a few hours after work and socializes over one or two pints of ale. The children even go to the pub, for some of the pubs in smaller towns have playgrounds. Many Americans, on the other hand, go to the pubs or bars with one intention: to get drunk. No, we are not a society of alcoholics, but we are taught that alcohol is a social evil that should be drunk in moderation.

As a final observation, I once heard this quote, "A per-

(Continued on page 5)

Families Across Cultures: An Organization That Promotes Cultural Understanding

By Maria Torres

When students think about campus life, they have a tendency to remember only mandatory academic activities like classes. Besides classes, however, life on an American university campus has much more to offer. Because they promote different types of activities, campus clubs and organizations can enrich the students' experiences by helping to develop social and personal skills like leadership, organizational abilities, and teamwork.

Campus organizations represent one of the best features of American life: people getting together for a common purpose. They help create a sense of belonging--an impor-

tant element for all students.

Among the many clubs on this campus, there are a few that stand out for their commitment toward promoting understanding and cultural awareness. One of them is *Families Across Cultures (FAC)*, a group that includes adult re-entry and international students, their families, and friends. *FAC* is a collaborative program co-sponsored by the Office of International Education and Exchange and the Adult Re-entry/Women's Center. It started as a pilot project last fall "to provide networking opportunities among students who may share similar experiences and feelings about adjusting to a new campus environment and community," says

Lay Tuan Tan, Associate Director of the Office of International Education and Exchange and *FAC* Program Director. "Anyone can join *FAC*, regardless of their major, ethnic background, or age," she continues.

FAC offers its members the opportunity to compare what they learn about the United States with cultural phenomena observed in their home countries. Current members come from Benin, Brazil, Chile, Dominica, Finland, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Lebanon, Malaysia, Senegal, South Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam, just to name a few. Because *FAC* embraces such a diversified

(Continued on page 5)

(Vo: Continued from page 3)

live a comfortable lifestyle and enjoy California weather. As a result, and due to the harsh weather conditions in some locations, other refugees slowly started going to Westminster, gathering specifically around Westminster Ave. The Vietnamese population started to grow, and a number of prominent professionals, such as doctors and pharmacists, began to settle there.

At this time the corner of Bushard and Bolsa was largely vacant, so rents were very inexpensive. People in the surrounding

areas, including those that lived on Westminster Avenue, started to transform that area into a thriving community. Soon this community would flourish and become known as Little Saigon.

Little Saigon acquired its name in a very controversial manner. The owner of that business district was Chinese, and he proposed that they call this neighborhood Chinatown. Some of his opponents wanted the area to be called Asiatown to welcome all other Asians. But the Vietnamese community rejected both proposed names and sug-

gested the name Little Saigon, because there already was a Little Tokyo and a Little India. In 1989 Governor Deukmajian officially named that area in Westminster, where the last of the Camp Pendleton refugees had resided, Little Saigon.

Prof. Vo intends to make our walking tour of Little Saigon different from just visiting "American type" shopping centers; instead, she wants to emphasize Vietnamese culture. She plans to take the participants to several places, including music stores, herbalist shops, imported and domestic art galleries,

and a grocery store.

After completing our tour, we will also stop for lunch in a Vietnamese restaurant. As Prof. Vo stated in her interview, she "hopes that this tour will change the view of Americans and make Americans more aware of Vietnamese culture: the lifestyles, the food, and the attitudes of the people."

The American Studies Student Association along with Professor Vo invite and encourage everyone to join us and learn more about the fascinating customs and lifestyles of the Vietnamese-American community.

(London Semester: Continued from page 4)

son who speaks three languages is trilingual, a person who speaks two languages is bilingual and a person who speaks one language is American." While in Europe I realized the importance of learning another language. The world is increasingly becoming a global community and the need to know more than one language is a necessity. In America, we do not immerse our children in a foreign language until high school. I felt that the Europeans looked down upon my fellow travelers and me because we only knew English.

I met so many interesting characters that made my semester abroad rich. This experience changed many students' lives forever. Many found themselves, while others fell in love. Traveling abroad gave me many new and worthwhile experiences that I will forever cherish.

(FAC: Continued from page 4)

group, valuing ethnicity and understanding among peoples are goals to be achieved when planning the semester activities. For this fall semester, for example, the organization will be offering several activities like "getting to know each other" events, games, a concert, field trips, an open house, and theme gatherings and dinners.

Besides social and cultural events, *FAC* encourages academic collaboration with universities in other countries. At the moment, members are discussing an agreement that will allow CSUF students to publish essays on their cultural perspectives in a book to be published in cooperation with the Department of Germanic Letters of the University of Bahia, Brazil. Other activities and events include guest speakers from American Studies, Speech Communication, the Health Center, Public Safety, and Phi Beta Delta Honor Society. Some events also include panel discussions with members speaking about their own countries and cultures. *FAC's* unique mission is to embrace all students interested in interdisciplinary academic experiences with an intercultural perspective. Students who feel that *FAC's* goals and objectives match their interests should contact the Office of International Education and Exchange at UH 244 for more information.

Call For Articles

-We are always open to submissions for upcoming issues. We are interested in both article suggestions and your own original pieces. If you saw the Spring 99 issue, you know that we would like to expand the newsletter to include articles that would reflect the diversity of our department. Anything from news to creative works will be considered. Drop off articles in EC 622.

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