



# CEAC Newsletter

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## September 2008

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE COUNTY ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA

### A PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

By  
**George Johnson**  
September 2008

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In my last quarterly message I hinted we would be hiring a new CEAC Program Manager, in conjunction with CSAC, to help meet our growing needs and provide dedicated support to CEAC. By now I hope you have had the opportunity to meet our newest CEAC family member, Merrin Gerety. Merrin comes to us from Nolte Engineering, where she was involved as an affiliate CEAC member. Her background and knowledge make her an ideal fit for CEAC. Please join me in welcoming Merrin to this great organization.

Now that we are into September, one would think the state would have adopted a budget. However, we all know that is not the case. The legislature must have taken the entire summer off as an extended vacation. What else would explain their inability to pass a budget? I can only hope that by the time you read this message, our state leaders will have put aside partisan politics and developed a responsible budget. Regardless of what happens at the state level, the constituents we serve as County Engineers expect us to continue to provide services to keep our respective communities functioning.

The state budget problems make it increasingly difficult on counties to adequately maintain our local streets and roads. Because of the estimated \$15 billion state budget shortfall, we have experienced a five month deferral of gas tax subventions to help the state with their cash flow needs. By statute, full payment of the gas tax deferral should be received by the end of September. The repayment of monthly gas tax subventions from FY 07/08 will be paid by the State Controller on September 30. However, monthly payments from FY 08/09, beginning in July, will not be paid until the state adopts a budget. Additionally, the state is threatening to borrow our Proposition 42 funds this new fiscal year. The

## A PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE (CONT.)

gas tax subvention deferrals combined with the potential Prop 42 grab, will cause even greater cash flow problems for our respective road funds.

In addition to the state's road funding problems, we have heard from FHWA that we should expect a delay in reimbursement on our federally funded projects. The combination of these financial challenges has caused Riverside County to delay desperately needed road rehabilitation projects. During difficult financial times, we should be assisting the ailing economy by pushing contracts out to construction to keep the construction industry working, rather than complicating a distressed economy by holding back needed projects and adding to our deferred maintenance backlog.

While we have all been struggling with the summer's financial challenges, many of our counties were challenged by the surprise of an early fire season. It seems as if every county from Santa Barbara north, was on fire at sometime during the summer. We are just now entering our traditional high fire season and can only hope we are not hit with another series of wildfires.

I want to remind our CEAC members of two important, upcoming CEAC events. On October 30-31, we will convene our third annual CEAC Policy Conference at the CSAC Conference Center in Sacramento. All of our policy committees convene at the Conference to develop our legislative priorities for the coming year. We then submit our legislative priorities to CSAC for consideration at the annual CSAC Conference in December. This one and a half day Policy Conference is a good opportunity for all of our members to become more involved.

The annual CSAC Fall Conference will be held from December 1-4, in San Diego. In addition to our normal conference activities, we will be joined this year by NACE President Sue Miller, County Engineer, Freeborn County, Minnesota and our NACE Executive Director, Tony Giancola. Sue and Tony are excited about attending the CSAC Fall Conference, so I encourage you to attend this important conference so we can impress our NACE representatives with our commitment to County Engineering and camaraderie.

Speaking of NACE, as your CEAC Representative, I attended the NACE Board of Directors meeting in Kansas City, Missouri on July 12, 2008, held in conjunction with the annual NACo meeting. The Board adopted the NACE legislative/regulatory positions and priorities and the 2008-2009 strategic plan priorities. I have attached copies so you can gain a sense of the NACE priorities.

Our CEAC Scholarship Committee, chaired by Scott McGolpin, has been busy selecting three very deserving scholarship recipients. The 2008 CEAC Memorial Scholarship Awards have been presented to:

1. Shannon E. Barcal, University of the Pacific  
San Joaquin County – Civil Engineering
2. David C. Biswanger, California State University at Fresno  
Fresno County – Land Surveying
3. Chris Johnson, California State University at San Jose  
Santa Clara County, Civil Engineering

## A PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE (CONT.)

Congratulations to these deserving students. Hopefully they will become CEAC members one day.

The Scholarship Committee is now accepting nominations for the annual CEAC Engineer of the Year Award. Please, take the time to nominate the many worthy candidates we have throughout our organization; submit your nominations to your respective Regional Directors for consideration. The Regional Directors will select one nominee from each region and submit the nominations to the Chairman of the Scholarship Committee. The Scholarship Committee will review the applications and select the California County Engineer of the Year. The award will be presented at our annual CEAC Fall Meeting. The California Engineer of the Year award winner will be submitted to NACE for consideration for the NACE Engineer of the Year award. It would be great to see one of our worthy CEAC members recognized nationally for their outstanding service to County Engineering.

I look forward to serving as your CEAC President the remaining three months, and hope to see all of you in Sacramento at our Policy Conference and in San Diego for our annual CEAC Fall Meeting.

### CLODS?

Could these be part of the infamous 'Tres Pinos' Committee?



## National Association of County Engineers

A. R. Giancola, P.E. Executive Director

### NACE LEGISLATIVE/REGULATORY POSITIONS & PRIORITIES

(Approved by the NACE Board of Director - July 14, 2007; Amended April 20, 2008)

1. **Support an aggressive Safety Program for making local roads safer through a "Toward Zero Fatalities" policy goal which focuses on the reduction of fatalities and serious injuries over the next transportation authorization by one-half. In this effort to achieve "Toward Zero Fatalities" the below specific legislative actions are recommended:**

**o Improve the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) and the ability of greater access to and assured funding from it for local road safety improvements.**

Improving the HSIP should build on the success of the Safe Routes to School Program and should have a dedicated traffic safety professional in every DOT to assist implementation with federal safety funds for low cost safety improvements on low volume roadways and promote the use of HSIP funding for appropriate countermeasures deployed to reduce lane departure crashes and intersection crashes. We encourage the continuation of collecting crash data on all public roads and encourage investment on rural roadways regardless of the availability of state specific data. Nationwide data documents that over 50% of fatal crashes occur on rural roadways and we would encourage the HSIP to dedicate a minimum of 50% of the formula allocation to a central safety fund in each DOT to target investments on rural roadways with the highest fatality rate.

**o Support the continuation of the High Risk Rural Road Program (HRRR) and recommend higher levels of funding. A \$1 billion program is recommended over the authorization.**

**o Implement Project Streamlining for Low Cost Safety Improvement Projects.**

FHWA needs to modify regulations regarding the ability to access federal aid dollars for low cost safety improvement projects on local roads that do not involve capacity increases, acquisition of real estate, and are under \$100,000 in value. The current project review and approval system is prohibitive for small projects at the local level with limited staff to efficiently access available federal aid dollars. Regulatory and procurement relief is needed so local road professionals can execute safety improvement projects in a timely manner.

2. **Preserve and enhance the set aside for Federal Highway Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation Program (HBRRP). Raise the current limit of a minimum of 15% for off-system bridges to a new minimum limit of 25% or greater if the State DOT and State Association representing local interests mutually agree (formally) to another method.**



## NACE NEWS (continued)

3. Support Congressional action now for legislation to raise the federal gas tax by 3 cents to avoid a cut in the FY 2009 highway program. Long term in the next reauthorization the federal gas tax should be raised an additional 7 cents to achieve a \$73 billion program by 2015. NACE would consider supporting other alternative methods to increase federal revenues to meet the above goals. NACE opposes the use of rescissions of unobligated highway contract authority as a means to offset highway related or non highway related budget activities.

Congress should take the necessary steps to prevent the Federal Highway Trust Fund from reaching a negative balance prior to the end of SAFETEA-LU and also make certain that SAFETEA-LU is fully funded at its approved levels for the life of the program; however, not at the expense of State or local highway agencies. The recently released National Surface Transportation Financing Commission report supports fuel tax increases. In the near term and to avoid a cut in the FY2009 highway program, the current 18.4 cent federal gas tax would have to be raised the equivalent of 3 cents. In the longer term and to achieve a \$73 billion highway program by 2015, the federal gas tax would have to be raised by an equivalent of an additional 7 cents in 2010. Another long term option to increase revenues is to index the fuel tax to annual increases in the CPI, which would raise \$82 billion for the highway account in 2021.

The above are priority issues. Other issues are noted below for opportunities to keep in mind to improve the legislation or to outline concerns.

- Expansion of funding support for the Local Technical Assistance Program, which is included in the Technology Deployment and Education Budget of FHWA. Raise funding from present \$11 million per year to \$15 to \$20 million a year from FY 2010 to 2015.
- ~~Expand the Federal Emergency Review Program to include all public roads thus allowing funds to be available to off-system highways.~~
- Recommend support for the principals contained in H.R. 3611, the Metropolitan Congestion Relief Act.
- Remain opposed to any federal efforts to change the definition of the Clean Water Act from navigable waters to "waters of the United States."
- Remain opposed to issuance by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) of any standard or any other official guidance on performance measurement.
- Support greater use of automated traffic law enforcement.
- Support the use of motorcycle safety programs.
- Support the increase use of renewable and alternative fuels programs as long as such programs are not advanced at the expense of State and local highway agencies.
- Oppose any increases in vehicle size and weights as part of the next reauthorization unless set-aside funding is provided for the improvement of all roads.

# NACE NEWS (continued)

- Oppose efforts by the Congress to expand the definition and scope of the Clean Water Act.
  - Appointments to NACo committees (Transportation, Telecommunications, Environment and Land Use, Emergency Management, Rural and Large Urban Action Caucuses, etc.)
  - Active involvement on NACo technical committees (Affiliate Services, Sustainability Leadership Team, Information Technology, GIS, etc.)
  - Active involvement and positions on emerging regulatory issues (MUTCD changes, Phase II Stormwater, wetlands, air quality, etc.)
- O Update publications/Provide Training Opportunities
- Appoint a task force to review the viability of continuing updates to the NACE Action and Training Guides.
  - Explore the promotion of technical publications useful to our members and produced by other organizations
- O Maintain existing and grow membership
- Maintain corporate members, promote corporate member growth and expand corporate member involvement in NACE activities. Explore more corporate benefits (i. e. articles in newsletters, website advertising, logo links, etc.).
  - Explore value added opportunities with other corporate members similar to the NACE/3M safety grant program. Contact 3M to determine if an extension of this program can be made beyond December 30, 2008.
  - Continue outreach to States to affiliate with NACE (i.e. Hawaii, etc.)
  - Visit the Oklahoma, Mississippi, Kentucky, and Wyoming State affiliates and encourage increased participation in NACE activities.
  - Expand NACE membership in affiliated states (Texas, Missouri, Florida, Colorado and Kansas). The President should visit the State Affiliate meetings and conferences whenever possible. In the President's absence, other NACE Officers and/or the Executive Director should visit targeted State Affiliate's meetings/conferences particularly less active or non-100% ones. Use NACo conferences to market NACE to targeted states.
- O Get the most out of partnerships with other organizations
- Work with FHWA, Forest Service, National LTAP Association, AASHTO, NICET, ATSSA, US Army Corps of Engineers (PAVER) and the National Center for Pavement Preservation on useful programs and activities for our members.
  - Pursue formal partnerships with other organizations such as ITE.
- O Review the committee structure and leadership to determine future direction and emphasis
- Continue pavement management and roadway safety working groups and explore projects with the FHWA and other agencies.
  - Get State Directors more involved with activities and in promoting NACE membership.
- O Promote National Transportation Week in May of each year, National Work Zone Awareness week in April of each year and Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day on Oct 10<sup>th</sup> of each year and activities by our 30 NACE state affiliates. Target specific states to work with our partner organizations.



# COUNTY ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA



## OFFICERS 2007-2008

### **PRESIDENT ~ GEORGE JOHNSON**

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Transportation and Land Management Agency  
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### **NORTH BAY ~ BIRGITTA CORSELLO**

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Martinez, CA 94553

### **SACRAMENTO-MOTHER LODE ~ VACANT**

### **SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY ~ TOM FLINN**

Director of Public Works  
County of San Joaquin  
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### **SOUTH CENTRAL COAST ~ PAUL GREENWAY**

Acting Director of Public Works  
County of Monterey  
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### **SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ~ IGNACIO OCHOA**

Director of Public Works  
County of Orange  
PO Box 4048  
Santa Ana, CA 92709

September 16, 2008

To: Public Works Directors and Department Heads  
County Engineers Association of California Policy Committees

From: George Johnson, President, County Engineers Association of California

RE: Call for Legislative and Policy Proposals for 2009-10 Legislative Session

The upcoming County Engineers Association of California (CEAC) Fall Policy Conference is intended to provide the CEAC membership an opportunity to submit and review legislative and policy proposals for the following two-year legislative session and develop the priorities for 2009-10. This process offers staff the lead-time needed for any legislative proposals that may require CSAC approval during the CSAC Annual Meeting.

The action request form is attached should you have any legislative proposals. If you are asking for CSAC sponsorship of the legislative idea, you also need to complete the attached form "CSAC's Bill Proposal Format".

We have also attached the existing policy documents as background to assist you with this request:

- CEAC 2007-08 Policy and Legislative Priorities
- CEAC 2007-08 Legislative and Administrative Policy Guidelines.

Please submit all action requests through your Public Works Director or Department Head. This makes it easier on staff to collect all the action requests as well as ensures no duplication from within the same county.

Establishing the Association's policy and legislative priorities is an important effort that deserves your attention. We need your suggestions so that CEAC can assist in helping you to achieve change or new programs that can assist you with your jobs. The CEAC organization is a powerful voice that can accomplish greater results than any one individual may achieve on his/her own.

Please return the forms and any other relevant information to Merrin Gerety at [mgerety@counties.org](mailto:mgerety@counties.org) or by fax at (916) 441-5507 by Monday, October 6, 2008. Please feel free to contact Merrin at (916) 327-7500 ext. 507 with any questions as well.

Once we receive all the proposals, the relevant policy committees will review the action requests and present recommendations to the CEAC Board of Directors at the close of the Fall Policy Conference on October 30-31, 2008.

**Register Now !**  
**CEAC Fall Policy Conference**  
**October 30-31 in Sacramento**



# FALL POLICY CONFERENCE AGENDA

## Thursday, October 30, 2008

9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

**Flood Control & Water Resources Policy Committee**

*Chair: Jeff Pratt, County of Ventura*

CSAC Conference Center (1020 11th St., 2nd Floor)

**Surveyor Policy Committee**

*Chair: Mike Emmons, County of Santa Barbara*

CSAC 1st Floor Conference Room (1100 K St.)

11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

**General Session/ Lunch**

**A CEAC Refresher – What we're Doing for you Today**

CSAC Conference Center (1020 11th St., 2nd Floor)

**Moderator:**

George Johnson, CEAC President

**Speaker:**

Miscellaneous

1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

**Solid Waste Management Policy Committee**

*Chair: Birgitta Corsello, County of Solano*

CSAC 1st Floor Conference Room (1100 K St.)

**Land Use Policy Committee**

*Co-Chairs: Wes Zicker, County of Placer*

*Stuart Edell, County of Butte*

CSAC Conference Center (1020 11th St., 2nd Floor)

3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**Oversight and Special Tasks Committee**

*Chair: Tom Flinn, County of San Joaquin*

CSAC Conference Center (1020 11th St., 2nd Floor)

**Quarterly Regional Meeting**

Northern California County Engineers Association + North Coast County Engineers Association

Reports: Safety, CEAC, Co-op, ITS, Caltrans, and regional issues.

CSAC 1st Floor Conference Room (1100 K St.)

5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

**Hospitality Reception: CSAC Center**

CSAC Conference Center (1020 11th St., 2nd Floor)

## Friday, October 30, 2008

8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

**Transportation Policy Committee**

*Chair: Pat Minturn, County of Shasta*

CSAC Conference Center (1020 11th St., 2nd Floor)

10:15 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

**Board of Directors Meeting (working lunch)**

CSAC 1st Floor Conference Room (1100 K St.)

12:30 p.m.

Adjourn





# Droppings

*from out of the past*

## **“CEAC/CLODS at the North Pole”**

By

**Dave Gravenkamp, CEAC Historian**

As mentioned in the last *Droppings*, Bill McIntosh is not only a resource for answers to our history, but has provided numerous suggestions for topics. The County Route Marker Program (Bill's brainchild) has been offered as a subject at least a half dozen times.

For this edition of the *Droppings*, Bill not only suggested the subject, but contacted Jim Pott for the necessary background information and provided his personnel endorsement of Jim as an outstanding member of CEAC and the CLODS.

The following is a written and pictorial account of Jim and Lois Pott's 1997 trek to the North Pole, representing CEAC and the CLODS (on their own time and expense), on a Russian ice-breaker.

Jim's story: Follows on the next page.

# DROPPINGS (continued)

## CLOUDS AT THE NORTH POLE [90° NORTH TO SCIENTISTS]

In July, 1997, on assignment from the Old Crow (Bill McIntosh), Lois and I visited the geographic North Pole. We thus joined about 8,500 people who had preceded us. But we were two of only 1,500 who had arrived by ship by 1997. In a sense, we were pioneering CLOUDS.

It was aboard the Russian nuclear icebreaker *Sovetskiy Soyuz* (at 25,800 tons displacement, about twice the displacement of the largest Canadian or U.S. icebreakers.) The trip was arranged by Stanford Travel Study through Quark Expeditions through the Russian Government to the “privatized” Murmansk Shipping Company. There are foreign exchange advantages to a uniform July vacation season and the ability to reassign officer crew quarters to receive foreign tourists.

Our ship bracketed itself atop 90°N according to the readings on the several shipboard GPS units and verified by several dozen handheld GPS units of attending passengers on the bridge when we arrived at the Pole. There was going to be little chance of future assertions that the trip was all a fraud as in the Apollo 11 trip to the moon.



passengers

While we were at 90°N at the shipside barbeque, some skied, some swam [it was about 0°C], some watched the Russian sentries posted on the perimeter, some took pictures of such a large vessel appearing so high and dry in the ice, and some partied at the barbeque held next to the ship.

During the barbeque, the ship moved about 5,535 feet away from its arrival point in five hours due to the rotation of the Arctic Ocean ice [GPS verified]. Yes, there was lots of ice. Contrary to enviro reports, some ice was as thick as 20-ft. It sometimes took several “butting” tries to break through the large pressure ridges in the ice.

It was a memorable adventure to witness the making of house-sized “ice cubes” from this flat, unadorned flatness while riding in such a powerful piece of equipment and not being able to tell the difference between night and day. In some of the polar fog, we couldn’t see the horizon and felt like we were at the bottom of a giant, white pond.

We even got to rescue a bona-fide polar explorer who became sick two weeks into his planned solo trek from the Pole to Ellsmere Island 500 miles away. He only made 0°20’ of latitude. These polar explorers are a special breed.

~ Jim Pott



## DROPPINGS continued



Jim Planting the CLODS' Banner at the North Pole



Bill's endorsement:

The photos and technical information for this story were furnished by the CLOD who should be named "CLOD of The Decade". That person bears the CLODS' name "The Admiral Bird", which was given to him after his expedition to the North Pole. That person is of course Jim Pott, aka James T. Pott, aka Jim Teapot, former Director of Public Works for Santa Clara County and President of CEAC in 1972; he would have been President of NACE had he not left Santa Clara County in the late Seventies. Jim has done so much for CEAC and NACE through the years.

# CALIFORNIA PAVEMENT PRESERVATION CENTER

By M. Stroup-Gardiner

California Pavement Preservation Center



Over 330 representatives from local, regional, state and federal agencies, industry and academia attended the third annual *California Pavement Preservation Center Conference* held April 9-10 in Newport Beach.

Participants shared their considerable expertise and wide-ranging experience in the areas of pavement preservation for both flexible and rigid pavements. Over 30 exhibitors were on hand to share their knowledge on specific pavement preservation treatments and techniques. A number of pavement preservation tool box treatments were included in the conference. **All of the presentations are available for download at [www.cp2info.org/conference](http://www.cp2info.org/conference).**

Two of the new highlights of the conference were the first annual presentation of the Pavement Preservation Task Group (PPTG) awards, and a section on how to initiate, fund and implement pavement preservation programs.

## AWARDS CEREMONY

The nominating committee presented eight awards in three categories: *Individual Award*, *Program Award*, and *Project Award*.

The first individual award was presented to **Dr. Shakir Shatnawi** for his vision, innovation and dedication; without him there would have not been a PPTG. Shatnawi also recognized the need for education, technical assistance and independent assessments of innovation projects, which led to the establishment of the California Pavement Preservation (CP<sup>2</sup>) Center at California State University-Chico.

The second individual award was presented to **Gary Hildebrand**. Hildebrand also is a co-founder of the PPTG.

And the third individual award was presented to **Bill Robertson**, director, Department of Public Works, Bureau of Street Services, City of Los Angeles. Robertson has displayed an exceptional understanding of what it takes to implement pavement preservation. His community communication programs and methods serve to educate both the decision makers and the general public about the needs, options and benefits of pavement preservation programs. He has used innovative processes and materials to preserve, maintain, and rehabilitate more roads per dollar spent.

Three program awards were presented to agencies whose use of progressive pavement preservation techniques resulted in documented benefits of pavement preservation, while at the same time provided the best maintenance to construction dollar ratio.

The first program award was presented to **Santa Barbara County** for its use of a pavement preservation program developed in 2001. The second was presented to **Contra Costa County** for its pavement preservation program which, with 750 lane miles, has one of the best pavement condition index in the Bay Area. The **City of Lakewood** was the recipient of the third program award. The city demonstrated its political will in using funds to resurface approximately 80 percent of their street mileage with rubberized asphalt concrete.

The two project awards were presented for installations which have demonstrated significant advances in the development and use of new technologies which resulted in significant favorable public comments. The first project award was presented for the 2007 **Lake County** Cape Seal Project, Buckingham and Riviera

West Subdivisions. The second project award was presented to the **City of Watsonville** for its 2005 Chip Seal Innovation project, in which 27 roadways throughout the city were selected for a three-part surface treatment.

## PAVEMENT PRESERVATION PROGRAM FUNDING

Another new component to the annual conference was a section on how pavement preservation programs are initiated, funded, implemented and managed by local and regional agencies.

**Scott McGoupin** and **Kevin Donnelly** provided a presentation *Getting Ahead in Pavement Preservation: Santa Barbara County's Perspective*. The Santa Barbara County system consists of 1,667 lane miles of asphalt pavement, 110 major bridge structures, 48 traffic signals, over 15,000 street trees, concrete hardscape improvements, and over 4,100 drainage facilities. Topics covered included a brief description of the evolution of the pavement preservation program in Santa Barbara County, challenges to implementing a pavement preservation program, and its Road Maintenance Annual Plan (RdMAP) and the success of its emulsion program (rejuvenating fog seals and cape seals).

**Congratulations to Santa Barbara,  
Contra Costa and Lake  
Counties on your awards!**



# BEDROLL CONFERENCE

Tom Hunter, CLOD and Retired Director of Public Works for Plumas County, reported a successful Bedroll Conference July 16 –18 at Camp Conery at Lake Almanor in Plumas County.

A total of 41 CEAC members and affiliates braved the forest fires and associated smoke in the area to attend.

The Thursday morning sessions included presentations by Our Glorious Leader, George Johnson, CSAC staff members Kiana Buss and Merrin Gerety, and Barry Lemming of Caltrans. During the afternoon those in attendance watched an exhibition of a fire extinguishing system of various capabilities at the Plumas County Yard.

Twenty-two attendees were able to also participated in a round of golf in a rain of ashes with the following winners:

Long Drive: Randy Murphy - Glenn County and Dennis Anderson – 3M

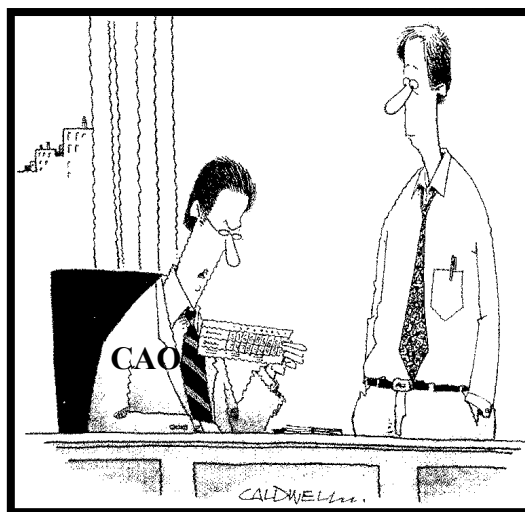
Closest to the Pin: Scott Straub – Caltrans and Jim Towns - Western Emulsions

Low Gross: Frank Martin - Psomas and John Lester – 3M

Calloway: Martin McIlroy – Taber, Scott Waite – Siskiyou County, Peter Rei and Cy Hobbit – Tuolumne County

Ladies Low Gross: Merrin Gerety and Kiana Buss - CSAC

**Next year's Conference Chair is Wes Zicker of Placer County. Remember: All members and affiliates statewide are welcome to attend.**



**"I asked for ballpark figures, Rei,  
These are golf scores."**

# Big Sur sanctuary's condors show resilience

By **TRACIE CONE**

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**BIG SUR** — As wildfire whipped toward a remote sanctuary of the endangered California condor last month, the rare birds got their biggest test in survival after years of pampering by biologists: They had to live completely on their own.

Forced away by flames, their scientist handlers could only hope the birds' animal instincts would kick in. To their delight, they did.

The birds found fresh air, and food — a beached whale and decaying California sea lion at the edge of Big Sur's cliffs. After the blaze swept through the area, many even returned home.

"It's incredible. They did just what they're supposed to do," said Kelly Sorenson, executive director of the Ventana Wildlife Society, which runs the sanctuary. "I was honestly thinking we'd lose four to six birds. You can rebuild pens, but we only have a limited amount of time to restore a species."

The Ventana Wildlife Society near Big Sur is the only nonprofit in California to prepare captive-bred condors for life in the

wild, making it an integral part of conservation efforts to save the condor from extinction.

Flames from the 188-square-mile fire in the Los Padres National Forest last month destroyed the society's aviary and release pen and thousands of dollars worth of equipment. The fire also displaced the 43 free-flying birds the society monitors and forced a hasty rescue of seven 1-year-old chicks and their adult mentor by the U.S. Coast Guard.

For 17 days, biologists were cut off from the sanctuary, monitoring the wild birds by electronic transmitters.

"We felt so helpless," Sorenson said.

The vulture was declared an endangered species in 1967, when its population — estimated to be 50 to 60 birds at the time — was in sharp decline because of poaching, habitat destruction and lead poisoning.

In the 1980s, the U.S. government approved an ambitious and costly conservation plan that brought the last of the nearly two dozen surviving California condors into captivity for a captive-breeding program.

After teaching the newborns with puppets and other tools how to survive in the wild, reintroduction into forests started in the 1990s. While there have been some setbacks (powerlines have proved a difficult obstacle to navigate), there are now 332 condors, half of which are living supervised in the

wild in Arizona, California and Baja California, Mexico.

Sorenson was at the remote sanctuary the night of June 21, entertaining donors, when he saw a black cloud blow in over the coast.

"I had an eerie feeling," Sorenson said. "We know it's dangerous. I told my donors we needed to get out of there."

By the time Sorenson and his group reached the highway, he could see four plumes of smoke rising from the mountains behind him.

The next day, the Ventana Wildlife staff sought to rescue the seven 1-year-old juveniles and one adult mentor from the sanctuary.

They were not ready to be released into the wild to fend for themselves. The birds had to be taken to a sanctuary the group operates with federal biologists from Pinnacles National Monument.

All told, biologists have tentatively accounted for all but two birds: a chick that had been in a nest high in a redwood tree and another older condor that was released into the wild two years ago.

Last week, Sorenson and Burnett returned to the burned-out sanctuary and hiked to the edge of the feeding site. At the top of a charred Ponderosa pine the alpha male of the group surveyed his blackened canyon.

Burnett pumped his fist.

"They survived on their own without us," Sorenson said. "It shows us they can do it."

# CALENDAR OF FUTURE EVENTS

## **CEAC Fall Policy Conference**

October 30 –31, 2008

Sacramento

Conference Hotel: Sheraton

**\*\*\*\*Register Now\*\*\*\***



## **CSAC 114th Annual Meeting**

December 1—4

San Diego

(Note: Conference days are Monday through Thursday)

**\*\*\*\*Registration Open Until Friday November 14th\*\*\*\***

A great opportunity to get together with your County Supervisors and other Public Works officials in discussions of opportunities and challenges facing our Counties today. Wonderful speakers, workshops, topical committee meetings and of course an extensive array of vendors in the exhibit hall.

An exciting **Guest Program** has been coordinated by President George Johnson's spouse Luann, including a Tuesday morning of Bunco and hat making and an opportunity to show off those hats during a High Tea at Crown City Antiques and Tea Parlor in Coronado on Wednesday. Don't forget the opportunity to visit some exciting shopping areas. For any questions about this program feel free to contact Luann Johnson at (909) 948-5947 or Merrin Gerety, CSAC, at (916) 327-7500, Ext 507.

## **2009 Joint Spring Meeting of CEAC and Public Works Officers Institute**

March 25 –27, 2009

Monterey

Downtown Convention Center

# WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

## June 2008 Quiz Question

*Fill in the blank:* When Charles Lindbergh began his record-setting first solo transatlantic flight in May 1927, he began from \_\_\_\_\_, where his aircraft, the "Spirit of St Louis", had been built by the Ryan Aeronautical Corporation.

*Tie breaker:* What is the generally accepted estimate of the native population of California before the arrival of Europeans?

**Congratulations** to Brian Lee of San Mateo County for having the best answer for the second straight Newsletter. He correctly answered **San Diego, California** as the beginning point of Charles Lindbergh's flight across the Atlantic. Also, the generally accepted estimate of the native population before the arrival of Europeans is **300,000 to 310,000**.

## September 2008 Quiz Question

What do the following words have in common?

1. Banana
2. Dresser
3. Grammar
4. Potato
5. Revive
6. Uneven
7. Assess

Send your responses to the Newsletter Editor by November 1, 2008.  
Don't let Brian Lee win three straight!

### **ATTENTION:**

General Members, CLODS, Affiliate Members, Committee Chairs  
Regional Directors, Board Members, Spouses, and anyone else.

**YOUR NEWS, INFO, AND PHOTOS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!**

Send c/o the CEAC Newsletter Editor at the address shown on the front  
page or by e-mail to [sandramiller455@aol.com](mailto:sandramiller455@aol.com).  
You may also phone at (909)797-4322.



# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

**A young woman** went to her mother and told her about her life and how things were so hard for her. She did not know how she was going to make it and wanted to give up. She was tired of fighting and struggling. It seemed as soon as one problem was solved, a new one arose.

Her mother took her to the kitchen. She filled three pots with water and laced each on a high fire. Soon the pots came to boil. In the first she place carrots, in the second she placed eggs, and in the last she placed ground coffee beans. She let them sit and boil, without saying a word. In about twenty minutes she turned off the burners. She fished the carrots out and placed them in a bowl. She pulled the eggs out and placed them in a bow. Then she ladles the coffee out and placed it in a bowl. Turning to her daughter, she asked, "Tell me what you see?"

"Carrots, eggs, and coffee," she replied.

Her mother brought her closer and asked her to feel the carrots. She did and noted that they were soft. The mother then asked the daughter to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hardboiled egg. Finally, the mother asked the daughter to sip the coffee. The daughter smiled as she tasted its rich aroma. The daughter then asked, "What does it mean, mother?"

Her mother explained that each of these objects had faced the same adversity, boiling water. Each reacted differently. The carrot went in strong, hard and unrelenting. However, after being subjected to the boiling water, it softened and became weak. The egg ad been fragile. Its this outer shell had protected its liquid interior, but after sitting through the boiling water, its inside became hardened. The ground coffee beans were unique, however. After they were in the boiling water, they had changed the water.

"Which are you," asked her daughter. "When adversity knocks at your door, how do you respond? Are you a carrot, an egg or a coffee bean?"

**Think of this:** Am I the carrot that seems strong, but with pain and adversity do I wilt and become soft and lose my strength?

Am I the egg that starts with a malleable heart, but changes with the heat? Did I have a fluid spirit,. But after a death, a breakup, a financial hardship or some other trial, have I become hardened and stiff? Does my shell look the same, but on the inside an I bitter an tough with a still spirit and hardened heart?

Or am I like the coffee bean? The bean actually changes the hot water, the very circumstance that brings the pain. When the water gets hot, it releases the fragrance and flavor. If you are like the bean, when things are a their worst, do you get better and change the situation around you? When the hour is the darkest and trials are their greatest, do you elevate yourself to another level? How do you handle adversity? Are you a carrot, and egg or a coffee bean?

May you have enough happiness to make you sweet, enough trials to make you strong, enough

## “JEST” - A – MINUTE

**Walmart** has put out a press release stating that they have sold out of all ammunition in Alabama.

A spokesman for Walmart said that since Russia invaded Georgia, there has been a run on guns, ammo, bows & arrows, and knives.

A shopper was heard commenting that “What happened in Georgia ain’t going to happen here.”



**Eleven people** were hanging on a rope under a helicopter, 10 men and 1 woman.

The rope was not strong enough to carry them all, so they decided that 1 had to leave because otherwise they were going to fall.

They weren’t able to choose that person until the woman gave a very touching speech.

She said that she would voluntarily let go of the rope, because, as a woman, she was used to giving up everything for her husband and kids, or for men in general, and was used to making sacrifices with little in return.

As soon as she finished her speech, all of the men started clapping .....

**An irate customer** called the newspaper office, loudly demanding to know where her Sunday edition was.

“Ma’am,” said the employee who answered, “today is Saturday. The Sunday paper is not delivered ‘til Sunday.”

There was quite a pause on the other end of the phone, followed by a ray of recognition.

“So that’s why no one was in church today.”

**I took my dad** to the mall the other day to buy some new shoes. We decided to grab a bite at the food court. I noticed he was watching a teenager sitting next to him. The teenager had spiked hair in all different colors, green, red, orange, and blue. My dad kept staring at him. The teenager would look and find him staring every time.

When the teenager had enough, he sarcastically asked, “What’s the matter old man, never done anything wild in your life?”

Knowing my dad, I quickly swallowed my food so that I would not choke on his response, knowing he would have a good one.

And in classic style he did not bat an eye in his response. “Got drunk once and had sex with a peacock, I was just wondering if you were my son.”