REPORT ON THE SIXTY-THIRD ANNUAL MEETING
Arcata, California
September 13–17

LAST SEPTEMBER 13–17, Humboldt State University geographers welcomed over 225 of our colleagues and friends to California’s remote north coast for the 63rd annual meeting of the APCG in Arcata. Everyone enjoyed 4 days of field trips, scholarship, socializing, and exploring Humboldt County in (mostly) bright fall sunshine.

The earliest arrivals gathered Wednesday evening for refreshments and an illustrated tour of the North Coast by Chris Haynes (HSU). His penetrating regional analysis included scenes from far reaches of the Trinity Alps, the Klamath Mountains, and Smith River. Joe Leeper (HSU) followed with an illustrated exposé of the region’s three-county “Emerald Triangle.” Old hands know this was not a talk about precious stones, but about another precious commodity—cannabis. Professor Leeper took us on an up-close and personal tour of the marijuana economy, from seed to smoke, showing scenes of clandestine fields, garages, and production rooms. In the words of one attendee, “Joe’s talk started us off on a high.”

Almost 80 people collected early the next morning on the Arcata Plaza to field trip into the landscape of chainsaws and Julia Butterfly Hill (Headwaters Forest), led by Chris Haynes (HSU); or to search for Bigfoot and other natural history delights, led by Jim Wanket (UC Berkeley); or to kayak Stone Lagoon, guided by HSU Outdoor Adventures. In fine, liquid sunshine the Headwaters hikers experienced one byproduct of abundant rainfall and logging—mud! They reached the Scotia Mill just in time to witness a 1,000-year-old redwood being transformed into patio furniture. The other groups experienced the majestic forests and waterways that make this area special, although there were no Bigfoot sightings.

Sessions were well attended and ranged all over the place, from “Border Landscapes” to “Bears, Beavers, and Bison,” with some 77 papers and posters. Stephen Frenkel and Judy Walton as program chairs ensured that a minimum number of abstracts were lost, and that PowerPoint worked most of the time. The program also included
the first APCG “Student Map Competition,” directed by Margaret Pearce (HSU).

No APCG would be complete without time to network, socialize, and gossip. There was ample time for all three during the steak and salmon BBQ on the lawn outside the Geography Department, where we watched a dramatic sunset over Humboldt Bay. The following evening we gathered in the historic Jacoby’s Storehouse on the Plaza for a Presidents’ Reception hosted by HSU President Alistair McCrone, AAG President Susan Cutter, APCG President Tina Kennedy, and California Geographical Society President Carol Cox. Even Arcata’s Mayor Connie Stewart showed up to welcome the group to her green hamlet. Specially carved redwood bark chips made excellent drink tokens but didn’t quite reconcile with the official drink tally (hmm...perhaps we should send them to Florida for a recount). The Annual APCG Women’s Network Luncheon and the Chairs’ Luncheon, hosted by Paul Blank (HSU), were well attended and enjoyed by all.

The Saturday evening social hour and banquet followed 2 days of paper and poster sessions. Just prior to the dinner bell, Professor Emeritus Ben Bennion (HSU) received a small token of appreciation from his colleagues for his 29 years of service and scholarship. President-elect Roger Pearson (Institute of the Pacific) masterfully MC’d the banquet. Student awards were presented by Mark Wilson and Margaret Pearce (both HSU). Donald F. Lynch (Univ. Alaska) relayed the profound insights of the Resolutions Committee in fine, laconic style. Finally, APCG President Tina Kennedy (NAU), whose timely bout with laryngitis silenced any complaints about the meeting, found her voice in time to share an impassioned presentation on the Sierra Nevada.

The meeting concluded Sunday morning with a family-style breakfast at the Samoa Cookhouse, the oldest logging company cookhouse still operating in the U.S. With great regret, the Humboldt geographers said goodbye to our colleagues and friends from afar. We thank all those who traveled to our north coast, and look forward to convening again next fall in Santa Barbara.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen F. Cunha, Meeting Coordinator

Judy Walton & Stephen Frenkel, Program Co-Chairs