CLUI Exhibit Explores
Strangely Familiar Radio Beacons

VOR (Very high frequency Omnidirectional Range) antennas are radio beacons, part of a nationwide network of navigational aids used by civil and military aviation. While their function is consistent, their shapes and coloration can vary, and their enigmatic forms hint to the all-too-unfamiliar parallel universe of communication technologies.

*The VORs of Texas* exhibit was featured in the CLUI Los Angeles Exhibit Hall from May 15 to June 14, 1998. The exhibit was a typological photographic research project exploring the context and form of all the VOR antennas in the state of Texas, and included a color photograph of each of the more than 70 antennas in the state. It was the product of the field research and photography of CLUI researcher and Texas Projects Coordinator Mark Curtin, over the course of the past three years.

VORs are radio sentinels, guiding airplanes across the crowded skies of the continent. Like a lighthouse, they are often located in remote areas, but rather than emitting light, they perpetually broadcast coded pulses that are received and interpreted by the avionic equipment on board airplanes: machines talking to machines in the arcane language of electronics.

Because the antennas are sited by the needs of aviation, their context on the ground represents an unintentional visual field, rich with unexpected components. The landscape around each VOR offers clues to its environment - cactus, swamp grass, furrowed crops, and in the background a forest, city skyline, or the distinct silhouette of the Guadeloupe Mountains. In this way, the collection of VOR photographs is an incidental survey of the landscape of Texas.

Wendover Residence Program Completes Successful Summer

The Center's Wendover Residence Program operated at full capacity this Spring and Summer, with more than ten different artists working at the CLUI complex for various lengths of time. The program, started by the CLUI in 1995, assists artists and other researchers interested in exploring and interpreting the unique landscapes in the vicinity of the small town of Wendover, which is located on the edge of the Great Salt Lake Desert of Utah. Successful applicants to the program live and work at the Center's studio and exhibition hall complex, located amidst the ruins of the old Wendover bomber base.

Among the Summer projects are:

- John Reed and Jennifer Odem's self-propelled kinetic sculptures, including the *Fugitives* series of wind-powered enscribing devices designed to roam the salt flats.
- Jeremy Kunkel built several camera obscuras around the old bombing range, and the project was documented by fellow downtown L.A. artist Gronk, who is currently editing a video production about the installation of the work and the area.
- Alice Konitz, an artist from Dusseldorf, Germany, transformed an old travel trailer into a reflective light box on wheels, which is on display outside the Center's studio.
- Kelly Coyne's *Tragic Trajectory* model rocket performances.
- James Harbison will return this Fall to install his sound sculpture, created during his six-week stay last Spring.

continued next page
The VORs of Texas
Continued from page 1

Each photograph of an antenna represents a journey for the photographer, who at times had to travel under escort on military training ranges, across the service lanes and runways of commercial airports, and onto countless byways and dirt roads into the diverse terrain of the State, over the past three years. Like animal subjects of a photographic safari, the photographs sometimes confront the antennas head on, and at other times as a distant, elusive specimen, poking out of a wooded hilltop, but otherwise obscured in its habitat.

A color poster of all the VORs of Texas will be available from the Center in coming months.

Wendover Residence Program
Continued from page 1

Activity at the Wendover Residence Program generally slows down from October to March, when temperatures at Wendover can begin to drop below the comfortable range. Next year brings programs from the SimpArch team, and an installation of photographs from Jennifer Steensma, resident at Wendover in May of this year.

CLUI Map-Makers Attend World-Wide GIS Conference in San Diego

Members of the Center were on hand at the recent week-long GIS conference in San Diego, to learn the latest about the technology. GIS (geographic information systems) is the rapidly developing field of processing spatial data with computer-based cartography. “The Center is dedicated to applying its data layer to this global digitization revolution,” said CLUI cartographer Chris Kahle. The annual conference is sponsored by ESRI, the company that makes the software which is the standard of the industry.

CLUI Intern John Alvarez Masters the Art of GIS

John Alvarez of Torrance, California was awarded the Summer internship position at The Center, a full-time paid position made available by the Getty Multicultural Internship Program. John is an undergraduate at the State University of Los Angeles, specializing in computer cartography. Over the Summer, besides getting married, he has been instrumental in developing The Center's GIS (geographic information system) platform. "His resume mentioned several years experience as a military intelligence specialist, which raised some eyebrows," said CLUI director Matthew Coolidge,"but after meeting him we decided even if he was a mole, he's a heck of a nice guy and he'll do great work, which he has."
A Visit to the Rainbow Gathering

Field Report by Erik Knutsen and Doug Harvey

The annual Rainbow Gathering took place over the fourth of July weekend, as it has every year since 1972, and as usual, it was held on National Forest land. This time it was at the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest in the hills of eastern Arizona, where the gathering lasted a few weeks and hosted an estimated 25,000 people at its peak, over the holiday weekend.

As some Rainbows like to say, the Rainbow Family is the "largest non-organization of non-members in the world." Though there is a group of annual Gathering organizers, there are no leaders or official spokespersons for the Family. Rainbowness definitely means different things to different people, but at the Gathering there are some traits and inclinations which appear to be shared by the majority, including being naked in mud; drumming in drumming circles, deep into the night; embracing some stylistic elements of Native American traditions; and sharing the act of bowel emptying.

The Rainbows make a point of not getting permits for their use of public Forest Service land (though for some of the earlier Gatherings they did). There is a pleasing irony in the fact that because the Rainbow Gathering is a collection of individuals and not a group, they do not need permits. The essence of this semantic battle has been considered and contested by the National Forest Service for some time, and the federal agency is said to have a special full time unit to manage the annual Rainbow Gathering.

Authorities also claim to have spent nearly $500,000 for law enforcement at this year Arizona gathering, which was attended by over a hundred Federal, State and County law officers. A lot of money spent on what is well known to be a free event!

Field Reports

The Center for Land Use Interpretation is dependent on a network of volunteers and supporters all over the world, many of whom submit information on unusual and exemplary locations they encounter in their travels. Unsolicited field reports and site characterizations are welcome, and a list of sites in specific regions that need further looking into can be sent to those who wish to volunteer some field research time. Information packets for field researchers are available by request.

Angola Prison and Prison Museum

Field Report by Melinda Stone

The Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola is one of the largest and most notorious prisons in the country, and is perhaps the only prison with a prison museum outside its gates. It is home to around 5,000 inmates, more than 80% of whom will never be discharged, and many of whom will be buried within the confines of the prison's own graveyard.

Informally called "the farm" by wardens and inmates (and the subject of a recent documentary film by that name), the 18,000 acre penitentiary is the largest prison in the United States, by area. The vast holdings are mostly agricultural, as the inmates work the fields around the prison, the same fields that were worked by plantation slaves from Angola, Africa, in 1869 when the prison was founded as a private plantation.

The Angola Prison Museum features "Old Sparky," a solid oak electric chair, last used at Angola in 1991 (when the state converted to the lethal injection death method). Arranged to appear as it did in its final electrocution, the chair exhibit includes leather straps used to restrain prisoners' feet and arms, a hood to cover the face, and sponges that, when moistened with a saline solution, help to conduct electricity. Photographs of Old Sparky's victims surround the static display.

Other exhibits include the inmate weapon cabinet, showcasing crude weapons, tattoo machines, and drug paraphernalia clandestinely fashioned by prisoners out of a wide array of unlikely, but available materials, including the carriage return of a typewriter and the metal from the bottom of a boot.

Though there are other prison museums, such as the San Quentin Prison museum, which features a gas chamber, and of course the former prison-turned-tourist attraction of Alcatraz, the Angola Prison Museum is a worthwhile visit. The museum is open Monday through Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Sunday 1:00p.m. to 5:00p.m.
Every few months, the Land Disposition Company holds a public auction, where it is possible to drive home as a land owner for as little as a few hundred dollars. The fantasy of land ownership it seems, is still attainable to almost anybody, though the reality of land ownership may come as a surprise.

The majority of property being sold are small lots on subdivided sections of desert, often without any services such as water or power. Some properties might be surrounded by other lots, and thus not even have any public access to them. The buyer also inherits any legal or title problems, not to mention hazardous materials, that may be associated with the land.

Bidders are encouraged to check out the land before buying, including going to the site and researching the title. It is unclear how many people actually do.

Usually held in the function room of a Marriot-type hotel, on the fringe of a California city, like Irvine or Cerritos, the auctions take all day, and over 200 properties are sold. There is a peculiar tension in the air during the frenetic bidding, as tuxedo clad auction spotters point and yell like football coaches, running up and down the carpet between the rows of chairs. Excited and slightly confused bidders seem to be taking a plunge into the unknown.

While there may be some incredible deals at the auction, most property goes for a couple of thousand dollars or more. Many of the properties being sold have loan terms, and the amount being bid is for the amount of the down payment, and the successful bidder must then take over the fixed monthly payments for the coming years.

Commonly, the properties are in the deserts surrounding Los Angeles, on the fringes of semi-developed places like California City, Adelanto, or Ridgecrest. The least expensive properties are undeveloped western subdivisions such as Deming Ranchettes, in southern New Mexico, and Burns Junction, in southeastern Oregon.

And what sort of land can you buy for a few hundred dollars? We dispatched a researcher to one of the areas with house lots that sold at several Land Disposition auctions for less than $500, a place known as the Beryl Townsite, Utah.

Beryl turned out to be a rail siding in a wide, open plain in south western Utah, 15 miles from the nearest paved road. The next town down the rail line is Lund, which is mostly abandoned, and the road between them is barely passable after a rain. North of Beryl (pronounced “burl”) begins some of the emptiest part of Utah, extending through the Wah Wah Mountains and then the Sevier Desert.

The Beryl townsite has three or four buildings: one is a tiny residence which once was a post office. Another is a railroad box car, converted into a storage container, and a third is a crumbling shed. The grid of the subdivision is contained within the usual square mile section, no doubt former railroad property. The roads that divide the blocks are discernible in some cases, but currently passable in none, to anything less than a four wheel drive. The best way to get around is to walk, though even that is difficult at times, as the ground is lumpy and soft like soda cake, and muddy in low places. The terrain is flat-ish, with mounds covered in scrub.

Like most subdivisions, the streets in the grid all have names, on the map at least, and at one point the names seem to have been painted on four inch square posts located at some intersections, but only the faintest remnants of paint remain.

Just over the train tracks and down the road outside of the townsite grid, are a few more buildings, including an incongruous suburban looking house, not quite finished, but by the looks of it, recently abandoned. In fact, this was the house where three weeks earlier, the occupants, a family of three, were killed in a double murder followed by a suicide. Shreds of police line caution tape, blowing in the wind, surrounds the property.

Land Disposition: The Dream of Land Ownership, and the Reality of the Beryl Townsite

Land Monopoly is not only monopoly, but it is by far the greatest monopolies; it is a perpetual monopoly, and it is the mother of all other forms of monopoly.

-The best investment on Earth is earth!

-It is a comfortable feeling to know that you stand on your own ground. Land is about the only thing that can't fly away.

-Louis Glickman, business executive

-Anthony Trollope

[Quotes from the Land Disposition Company's auction catalog]
The Compression of Time and Asphalt
A Visit to the Pavement Research Facility

The Pavement Research Facility, near Baton Rouge, Louisiana, is a torture chamber for roads. On the six acre site, strips of asphalt are hammered, vibrated, and pounded, while being precisely monitored and, at the end of it all, dissected.

The star attraction at the Pavement Research Facility is the Accelerated Loading Facility (ALF), a device used to simulate and accelerate vehicle loads on a sample stretch of roadway. The 100 foot long machine runs a weighted wheel assembly across the asphalt in one direction, for a duration of ten seconds, then returns the wheel to the starting position, and runs it across the surface again. The loaded wheel looks like one rear dual-wheel of a typical truck, and has regular truck tires, which have to be replaced often during long tests. By running ALF 24 hours a day, it is possible to compress the effects of 20 years of road use into one month.

In the nine parallel lanes that can be spanned by the moveable ALF machine, normal road types are constructed and worn out, and experimental aggregate mixtures and layers are tested. Levels of rutting and cracking are observed, and a "post-mortem" is conducted on failed surfaces, to better understand the dynamics of destruction.

Test pavements are built with full-scale construction equipment and closely model normal highway construction. Strain gauges and other instruments are placed within each test section to monitor pavement response to loading. The information is then transmitted to a computer-controlled data acquisition system which allows instant access to pavement response data on moisture, temperature, and strain.

Based on an Australian design, ALF is unusual. Only two other machines of this type exist in the United States, both are located at the Federal Highway Administration's Turner Fairbank Research Facility in McLean, Virginia.

Other facilities at the six acre Pavement Research Facility include laboratories for concrete, soil, and geosynthetics, and the Falling Weight Deflectometer, a "nondestructive" device that measures the durability of a road surface by dropping a heavy weight on it, as well as the Dynaflect device, which vibrates a 1,000 pound weight on the road surface for long intervals.

The Pavement Research Facility is located 5 miles south of Baton Rouge, just across the Mississippi River on Rt. 1, and is operated by the Louisiana Transportation Research Center. Visitors are welcome, though call ahead at (504) 767-9112.

Unusual Real Estate Listing # 187
Sea-Arama Marine Animal Park

Sea-Arama, an abandoned and crumbling ocean theme park in Galveston, Texas, is for sale. Opened in 1966 as one of the first ocean theme parks in the nation, the Sea-Arama property features more than 25 acres with a four acre lake, and a 50 foot long, 200,000 gallon aquarium. The main building, called the Oceanarium, is a good example of 1960's resort-modern architecture, and contains vintage receipt books and brochures from the original Sea-Arama resort, scattered all over the floor.

In 1988 it was the number one tourist attraction in Galveston, and the property was valued at around $6 million. Visitors came from all over to watch trained dolphins, sea lions, and whales perform, and fish the four acre man-made lake. In the late 1980's, the larger and more flashy Sea World Park opened up in San Antonio, leading to the demise of Sea-Arama. New owners will have to find a new use for the dolphin show tank, housed in the main building, as animal rights groups have made dolphin shows a thing of the past. Sea-Arama's dolphins were auctioned off to other marine parks when the resort shut down in 1990.

The property has been abandoned since that time, despite several attempts to reopen it as an RV park. Recent prospective buyers have had to hack their way through the overgrowth to get to the front door.

Asking price: About a million dollars, give or take.
**Books, Noted**

This book zips all over the place, and covers some new territory in between. Suitably, it expresses a sensibility that combines the seemingly disparate poles of coastal Maine and northern New Mexico (and what they iconographically represent), places where the author, a grande dame of land/art/culture theory, hangs her hats.

**Taking Measures Across the American Landscape**, by James Corner and Alex MacLean, Yale University Press, 1996
A large format book with wonderful aerial photographs of human-induced landscapes across the country (by Alex MacLean), as well as some interesting graphics by James Corner, a landscape architect.

**Dreamland: Travels Inside the Secret World of Roswell and Area 51**, by Phil Patton, Villard, 1998
A good overview of the cultures and perspectives surrounding the classified Groom Lake Base in the Dreamland airspace of Nevada. Especially learned and vivid in its account of the secret aviation history related to the base, and the community of civilian "interceptors" who try to learn about what transpires inside the now notorious Area 51.

**Big Dams and Other Dreams: The Six Companies Story**, by Donald E. Wolf, University of Oklahoma Press, 1996
The "Six Companies" group was created to build the Hoover Dam, and consisted of what would become, as a result of the success of the dam, the largest building and engineering firms in the world - among them Bechtel, Kaiser, and Morrison-Knudsen. This book, written by a civil engineer, is a much-needed account of the development of these companies, which through massive private and government construction projects, literally shaped the world.

**Atlas of the New West, Center of the American West, University of Colorado at Boulder, W. W. Norton and Co., 1997**
An entertaining "new" (postmodern?) atlas of the contemporary West, this large format publication features a variety of thematic maps depicting the distribution of things such as microbreweries, cowboy poetry festivals, superfund sites, Patagonia outfitters, and private jet airports, across the geographic area defined by the authors as the New West - which doesn't include most of California, something the authors have since publically regretted. Lots of tables, charts, and text too, as well as photographs by James Corner.

An official history of the first years of the Sandia Corporation, as it grew out of the Manhattan Project and into the primary organization responsible for the creation of nuclear weaponry. (Availability note: though out of print, copies are often available from the Otowi Station Bookstore in Los Alamos, and the National Atomic Museum in Albuquerque).

**If You Poison Us: Uranium and Native Americans**, by Peter Eichstaedt, Red Crane Books, 1994
An account of the effects of the uranium mining boom on the Four Corners area of the southwest. This area had perhaps the highest concentration of uranium mines and mills, many of which were on Native American land. The legacy of radioactive contamination is only beginning to be addressed.

**Juarez: The Laboratory of our Future**, by Charles Bowden, Aperture Press, 1998

Mike Davis follows up 1990's "City of Quartz" with this second book, mostly about the "natural" terrors of L.A., including the underrated threats posed by mountain lions, tornadoes, and plague-infested squirrels. The second in the trilogy of books Mike Davis is working on, the third of which is about environmental history and war, which we look forward to with even greater interest.

Largely about the radioactive legacy of nuclear weapons development and testing, and the subsequent scattering of radioactive wastes across the Southwest. Kuletz focuses especially on the Native American populations so adversely affected by this cold war fought on American soil.

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**A Selection of Feedback**

*Readers and Viewers Respond...*

*...To the Chesapeake Model Project...*

I read with great interest and some sadness your [booklet] “The Chesapeake Bay Hydraulic Model: A Miniaturization of the Largest Estuary in the United States.” As a Corps of Engineers employee at the Model for nine years and the last federal employee to leave the site, I have many interesting and wonderful memories of the facility, its capabilities and the people who worked there. It was a team effort of federal employees, contractors, and the wonderful energy and enthusiasm of the many co-op students that worked at keeping the tides running and the data collected. Your article captured the activities very well but an empty building cannot give one a sense of the “spirit” of the place. Thank you for your interest and efforts. The existence of the Chesapeake Bay Model had a positive effect on many people and activities associated with the model. It was a great learning experience in responsibility and resourcefulness and a wonderful place (and way) to learn about the Chesapeake Bay. This is in addition to the science and engineering information produced by the tests that were direct input into the Corps projects.

Thanks for reminding me of a wonderful time of my career.

Ginny Pankow
Navigation Data Center, US Army Corps of Engineers

*...and to Field Installations...*

Don't you consider your submersions, burials, sound emitting devices as litter? For example, some SED’s [sound-emitting devices] are cemented into the ground out in the middle of the desert. No one is ever going to take these items to the dump. They are going to sit in the beautiful areas you put them in forever....I would like to know if you think it is ok to litter the environment with items your organization thinks should be there. Would you approve of me going all over the country littering the landscape with lets say household trash, just because I wanted to?

Kenneth Christian
Colorado.edu

If we considered our field installations as litter, we would feel no need to place them in the landscape. There are plenty of fine examples of that type of installation already.

-E Ed.
THE CENTER FOR LAND USE INTERPRETATION SHOP

Ordering Information:
Please add $3.00 shipping and handling for the first item, $0.50 for each additional item, and 8.25% tax if ordering in California. Make checks or money orders payable to The CLUI. Mail to: The Center for Land Use Interpretation, 9331 Venice Boulevard, Culver City CA 90232. Phone: (310) 839-5722

CLUI PUBLICATIONS

The Nevada Test Site: A Guide to America's Nuclear Proving Ground
The only book available that describes the nation's foremost weapons and R&D field test facility. Praised by both antinuclear activists and Department of Energy officials!
60 pages, with fold-out map and over 100 illustrations and original CLUI photographs. $12.50

Hinterland Catalog
Illustrated catalog of the 100 sites featured in the 1997 CLUI exhibit: Hinterland: A Voyage into Exurban Southern California.
112 pages. $12.50

Route 58: A Cross-Section of California
Illustrated tourbook to this remarkable, 210-mile roadway. A perfect weekend-long trip from Los Angeles.
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"An inexhaustive investigation of urban content."
Self-guided tour of a portion of Oakland, California's industrial waterfront. Published by the CLUI.
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The Center’s quarterly newsletter with a minimum donation of $25.00
Keeps you up to date on Center activities, as well as site reports on unusual places, book reviews, and more.
Eight pages. The donation also gets you on the mailing list for notices and invitations for Center events.
Back issues available for $2.00 each.

CLUI NOVELTY ITEMS

CLUI Pocket T Shirt
Quality gray 100% cotton T shirt with CLUI emblem on the pocket. Specify size (XL,L,M,S)
$15.00

CLUI Mug
Standard issue mug, with CLUI emblem. We guarantee that you will get out of it everything you put into it.
$7.00

CLUI Theme Cards
Two sets of seven gift cards, with envelopes, featuring photographs from the CLUI Collection. Themes:
Funny Signs
Hinterland Sites
Box of seven: $12.50
Individual cards: $2.00/ea

Suggested Photo Spot Post Card and Tour Book
Full color book with 20 Suggested Photo Spot post cards, depicting the sites with the Photos Spot sign in the foreground. Also contains directional information to guide people to the Photo Spots, scattered across the country. Published with the support of the Hemingway Western Studies Center.
46 pages, in color, spiral bound.
$14.95

Photo Spot T Shirt
Features the Photo Spot sign reproduced on a shirt. Be a walking Photo Spot.
$15.00

The Photo Spot Project Video
The video of the CLUI’s Photo Spot Project, by Melinda Stone. (15 minutes)
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Miniature Tourist View Cameras
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The Lay Of The Land
Newsletter

The Quarterly Newsletter for The Center for Land Use Interpretation (CLUI)
a nonprofit research organization dedicated to finding the common ground in issues of land use.

Note from the Home Office:
This summer has been a time of basking in the air conditioning of our Los Angeles office, where we've been working with our mapping software, writing grants, and doing research for upcoming exhibits. Field reports in this issue reflect trips made by some of the California-based members of CLUI, such as to Louisiana, Arizona, and Utah.

Upcoming exhibits at CLUI, Los Angeles include Subterranean Renovations, an installation celebrating the unique world of show caves (a suitable subject by which to cool off from what some are calling the “hottest Summer on record”!), which opens in October, and an exhibit examining the largest restricted ground-space in the United States, a 4,700 square-mile landscape in Nevada called the Nellis Range Complex. This exhibit will open in December. Both of these programs will have CLUI publications associated with them.

Thanks for your continued interest in The Center, and thanks to the hundreds of you who support us with donations and purchases of our publications!

A note about our web site:
We've switched servers, and now are hosted through the kindness of Jon Hartzog of w00f.com, so note the new address: www.clui.org. We still have a few bugs to work on, and we'll be doing a major re-do of the site in the future, so hold-on.