



THE WANDERER

LOS ANGELES COUNCIL OF HOSTELLING INTERNATIONAL USA

MAY/JUNE 2009

100 YEARS OF
HOSTELLING
WORLDWIDE

2009

75 YEARS OF
AMERICAN
YOUTH HOSTELS

2009 Spirit of Adventure Award: -Danna Mead-



Danna in Chiang Mai, Thailand

For Danna Mead, travelling isn't just a getaway, it's a way of life. This world traveler has amassed extended stays in a long list of countries, including Thailand, Nepal, Hong Kong, Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Tibet, Singapore, Italy, Guatemala, England, Scotland, France, New Zealand, and Honduras. She is also an avid scuba diver who has traveled to great dive sites, and has even completed a cross-country bike trek. More impressive, though, many of these trips were done as solo expeditions.

Danna's first solo trip was to Thailand in 1996. She was inspired by reading the

story of another woman who had been travelling alone, and decided that a 3-week trip on her own would be a good way to test the idea. As her departure date got close, though, Danna almost cancelled the entire trip because

she was so frightened by the idea of being in such a foreign country on her own. In spite of her fears, Danna took the trip as planned, and she was rewarded with an experience beyond what she could have hoped for. In Thailand, the people she met were very welcoming and friendly. She found it easy to travel through the country on her own. It was this trip, Danna says, that planted the seed in her mind to go on even longer solo trips, including a 6 month trek through Asia in 2000.

Despite the obvious concerns of a woman travelling alone, Danna hasn't experienced anything too harrowing. There have been a few rougher moments, however, including taking the wrong bus and ending up in the middle of nowhere alone, as well as trying to sleep under the seat of an 11-hour overnight train in Indonesia while the kid in front of her was getting sick. "The worst part was having no one to laugh about it with," Danna says.

For Danna, the amazing experiences she has



Danna in Tibet

had throughout her travels far outweigh the inconvenient negatives. Overall, Danna has found that as a solo female traveler, it has been very easy to meet people, especially locals. "The local people seem interested,"

she says. "And less intimidated."

When asked about her favorite places that she has been, Danna first mentions Thailand, partly because it was the first place she made a solo journey. Since that trip in 1996, Danna has revisited Thailand many times. Like so many travelers, she feels the need to return to those places with which she has made a connection. Also among her favorite places are Nepal and Tibet, which she describes as "magical."

Even in her daily life, Danna is actively involved in travelling. She works as the Program Director for New Directions Travel, a non-profit organization that provides high-quality local, national, and international travel vacations and holiday programs for people with mild to moderate developmental disabilities. She also volunteers as a speaker for HI-USA's very own World Travel 101 workshops given at the Santa Monica hostel.

As someone whose professional life is deeply involved in travel, Danna says

(story continued on page 5)

-Board of Directors Candidates-

The Nominations Committee is advancing the following slate of candidates for election to the Los Angeles Council of HI-USA Board of Directors.

For a Three Year Term Ending in 2012:

Brian De Lowe – Brian lives in Santa Monica, and is Vice President of Acquisitions & Development at The Kor Hotel Group. Among the responsibilities of his current position are the direction of acquisitions and business development efforts for The Kor Group in the Americas, as well as managing the assets of US and Mexican hotels. Brian is interested in a role on the Board that combines the areas of Finance, Asset Management, Strategic Development, and Hostel Development. He is also an avid world traveler, having lived in four countries and visited over 30.

Leslie Kennedy (Incumbent) - Leslie is completing a three year term on the Board and is currently serving as the President of the Board. Leslie is a resident of Long Beach, and is Director of Instructional Technology at CSU Long Beach. Previously, Leslie worked at WebCT, Inc., and was also a tenured professor at Fullerton College. She is an experienced traveler who was born and raised in Ghana, Peru, Ivory Coast, Austria, Germany, and Switzerland. She is interested in continuing to serve HI's evolving needs and priorities.

Don Khuong - Don lives in Garden Grove and is currently a Private Equity Associate with ClearLight Partners, LLC. Don would like to bring more awareness to the Council's community outreach programs, as well as expand the perceived image of HI hostels beyond an inexpensive option, focusing on the experience and environment of hostelling. Don is interested in fulfilling a financial and strategic planning role on the Board. He graduated *summa cum laude* from UCLA, and has first-hand hostelling experience.

Jayme Leslie (Incumbent) - Jayme is completing her first term on the Board, and is currently serving as Vice President. She is an Account Executive at Systech Solutions in Redwood City, CA. Jayme previously worked in Administration for City National Asset Management in Beverly Hills, where she facilitated compliance reviews on high net worth accounts. She also worked at Senior Alliance, a nonprofit organization providing free internet training and support to seniors in the greater Los Angeles area. Jayme greatly enjoys volunteering, and is looking to continue to bring her valuable experience to HI.

Danna Mead - Danna lives in Santa Barbara, and is the Program Director for New Directions Travel for People with Disabilities. She has over 10 years experience working in nonprofit environments, and volunteers as a World Travel 101 workshop speaker for the Council. Danna has a strong background in marketing, fund raising, and general nonprofit organization. She has travelled extensively in both professional and personal capacities, and is interested in fulfilling any role that the Board needs. Danna is also the recipient of the Council's Spirit of Adventure Award.

To Fill an Unexpired Two Year Term Ending in 2011:

Erin Lantz (Incumbent) - Erin lives in Dallas, Texas and is a Vice President at Bank of America. She is a graduate of Harvard Business School, and is an incumbent Board member seeking re-election. Erin is a veteran traveler who has traveled to every continent except Antarctica. She is interested in continuing to bring her expertise in strategic planning, organizational management, and fiscal discipline to the non-profit sector. She served as a Board member and volunteer for "Reading to Kids," a monthly reading club at four inner-city Los Angeles schools. Erin is also fluent in Spanish, and spent a year studying business management in Madrid.

An amendment to the Council's By-Laws will be put to a vote by HI-USA members at the June 7, 2009 Annual Members Meeting. The proposed amendment will change the number of terms a member of the Board can serve from two to three, which will align the Council's By-Laws with the By-Laws of the HI-USA national organization.

Current By-Law

SECTION 5.4 TERM OF OFFICE

The term of office for each director shall be a maximum of three (3) years. A Director may not serve more than six consecutive years. A minimum of one (1) year must elapse before a person may serve on the board again. "Year" is defined in this paragraph as the time between consecutive annual meetings.

Proposed Amendment

SECTION 5.4 TERM OF OFFICE

The term of office for each director shall be three years. A director may not serve more than three (3) consecutive, three (3) year terms.

IOU Respect International Exchange Program 2009: France

From July 31 - August 14, 2009, young people ages 18-23 from Germany, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, France, and the U.S. will gather in France for the fifth *IOU Respect* international exchange program. The program is an intensive experience of living, sharing, and learning together in an effort to bridge cultural divides.

To learn more about the program objectives, application procedures, and costs (Hostelling International-France covers all expenses while in France) visit the HI-USA National website at www.hiusa.org.



HI-USA Mission Statement

*To help all,
especially the young,
gain a greater understanding
of the world and its people,
through hostelling*

HI-USA Vision:

*That hostellers become caring
world citizens who are
catalysts for intercultural
exchange and
understanding, and who are
stewards of the earth*

Board of Directors

Leslie Kennedy, President
Jaime Leslie, Vice President
Cara Riley, Treasurer
Aimee Wyatt, Secretary
Tony Stanton, Member-at-large
Suzie Doran
Eric Foster
Ann Henry
Erin Lantz
Valerie Lopez
Donna Morris
Stephanie Pham

Wanderer Staff

John Estrada
Patrick Dunn
Mike Masten
Dave Connolly

The Wanderer is a publication of the Los Angeles Council of HI-USA with offices located at 1434 Second Street, Santa Monica, CA 90401. (310) 393-3413

Founded in 1934, HI-USA is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.
www.lahostels.org
www.hiusa.org
www.hihostels.org

LA MARATHON

May 25, 2009 - Memorial Day

-Get Involved-

Run, Bike, or Walk: Marathon or 5K

The Los Angeles Council is now looking for participants for the LA Marathon, Bike Tour, or 5K events to help reach our goal of \$10,000 to support our educational outreach programs.

To encourage participation in the LA Marathon events, HI-USA is offering to reimburse our athletes up to the full cost of their registration fee. Event participants who collect pledges for an Opportunity Drawing which will be held on June 7th can have up to 100% of their fee reimbursed, and will be eligible to participate in the drawing for some great prizes.

Opportunity Drawing

Prizes include:

-Two First Class 15-Day Eurail Global FlexiPasses (valued at \$2,100 and donated by Rail Europe)

-A standard DIRECTV® System including a satellite dish, up to three standard receivers (or two standard receivers and one DIRECTV® DVR), and three remote controls. Also includes standard professional installation for a residential setting and one year of complimentary DIRECTV® CHOICE XTRA programming including local channels (valued at over \$900, donated by DIRECTV®)

-Additional prizes are coming in daily and will be posted on our website

Collect Pledges & Donations

If you are not able to participate in any of the three athletic events, but still want to help support HI-USA educational programs, you can make a donation or collect pledges which will entitle you to tickets in the Opportunity Drawing. Here's how the drawing works:

Pledge gatherers will receive one ticket for every \$10 in pledges or donations that they raise. For example, if a pledge gatherer collects \$100 in pledges, they will receive 10 tickets in their name for the drawing.

Volunteer

We are also looking for volunteers to help us cheer on our runners and other athletes on Monday, May 25th from 8:30 am to 1 p.m. The first 100 volunteers to sign in at our site on the marathon route will receive LA Marathon T-shirts. There will be additional opportunities to win great prizes in a special volunteers' drawing.

Learn more about our Educational Outreach Programs on page 4!

If you are interested in helping us achieve our goal of \$10,000 as an athlete, donor, pledge gatherer, or volunteer, please contact our Community Outreach Coordinator, Mike Masten, at 310-393-6263 ext. 24 or mike@lahostels.org.



LA MARATHON

May 25, 2009 - Memorial Day

The Los Angeles Council of Hostelling International USA (HI-USA) is pleased to announce that it will once again be participating in the Official Charities Program of the Los Angeles Marathon, on Memorial Day, May 25, 2009.

The LA Marathon is one of the most anticipated events of the year, with athletes and citizens coming together for a day of sporting and fun! With more than 20,000 participants, 12,000 volunteers, and 1 million spectators along the course, the LA Marathon is one of the largest organized road races in the world. Unlike previous events, this year's marathon will be taking place on Memorial Day. In addition to the 26.2 mile marathon, a Bike Tour and a 5k walk/run will also take place on the day of the race.

Every year, the LA Marathon allows a select number of organizations to participate as "Official Charities," giving the selected organizations the opportunity to use the event to raise funds for the organization's programs and activities. As an LA Marathon "Official Charity" since 1996, the Los Angeles Council of HI-USA has used the event to raise funds to support its educational programs.



HI-USA and the LA Marathon: A great team!

Participation in the LA Marathon helped launch the Los Angeles Council's "Discover Your World" program in 1996. This hostel based program focuses on the environment and marine science, and is taught to 4th through 12th grade students. HI-USA has also partnered with the LAUSD Marine Science Program at Ft. MacArthur, and is now working with the LAUSD in a new "Water Science Program" which similarly addresses environmental and conservation issues. Together, these hostel-based programs offer students a way to get a "hands on" educational experience.

HI-USA has expanded its partnership with the LAUSD with its Cultural Kitchen Program. In this program, students learn about the people, geography, cuisine, government, lifestyle, and culture of a selected country. The program culminates with an overnight stay in the San Pedro hostel, where the students are exposed to the hostelling experience in addition to discussion and understanding of their focus country. The students then prepare a staple dish from the country they had been studying. This program is also being conducted with local Girl Scouts troops as a weekend program.

These outreach programs bring to life the vision of HI-USA, that "hostellers become caring world citizens who are catalysts for intercultural exchange and understanding, and who are stewards of the earth."



As one of its major fundraising events, The Los Angeles Council of HI-USA uses the LA Marathon to help support its educational programs

(Spirit of Adventure Award - cont. from cover)

it is surprisingly easy to keep her personal travel fresh and exciting. "Work is work," she says. "On those trips, I don't go off on my own." Due to the nature of her job, the tours she leads for New Directions involve private buses and nicer hotels than Danna would usually stay in on her personal trips. Because of this, her work-related travels are more isolated from the local culture than her personal ones. "When I travel alone, it's more low-budget," she adds. "I stay in hostels and try to meet people." If there is a particular place Danna wants to visit, she avoids going there for work before she has had the chance to immerse herself in the culture on her own.



Danna with local children in Tibet

By embracing foreign cultures, Danna says it is very interesting to see the difference between the general American perception of another country, and her own personal experiences. According to Danna, this is especially true for countries like Malaysia and Indonesia, which are predominantly Muslim. She says that she has learned to not judge places she doesn't know. In addition, Danna says that once she has experienced another country and its culture, such as Tibet, she finds herself much more interested when that place is in the news.



On the Mekong River near the Thailand/Laos border

When asked about the biggest lessons she has learned as a world traveler, Danna simply says, "I don't know anything." She goes on to explain that with there being so much that we don't know about other people and places, you have to travel with an open mind. "But no matter how different a place is, there are still things we have in common," Danna adds, "like the way kids smile and play."

On a more personal level, travelling alone has challenged Danna to be more outgoing. "I don't think about the things I can't do," she says. "I think in terms of what I haven't done yet."

Danna still has a long list of places that she would like to see but hasn't yet, including South America and Africa. Even as this article was being written, Danna was heading off to Puerto Rico.

The Los Angeles Council of HI-USA is pleased to present Danna with its Spirit of Adventure Award. The award will be given, along with a presentation by Danna about her travels, at the Annual Members Meeting at the Santa Monica hostel on June 7 at 12:30 p.m.

World Travel 101

World Travel 101 is a workshop series geared towards first-time travelers, and highlights vital trip planning information.

All are welcome to attend a workshop before going abroad. Speakers are regionally experienced travelers who can help you get the most from your budget and itinerary.

Workshops are held on Saturdays at 11 am in the HI-Travel Store, 1434 Second Street, Santa Monica. Admission is FREE, and there is two-hour free parking available across the street in the public parking structure. Dates subject to change. Please call to confirm, (310) 393-3413.

Workshop Schedule

May 9.....	Mature Traveler
May 30.....	Europe
Jun 13...	Women Traveling Solo
Jun 20.....	Europe by Rail
Jun 27.....	Mature Traveler
Jul 11.....	Europe
Jul 18....	Women Traveling Solo
Jul 25.....	SE Asia
Aug 1.....	India
Aug 8.....	Australia/NZ

Visit www.lahostels.org for more info on topics & schedules.

2009 Travel Grant Recipient Announced

The Los Angeles Council of HI-USA promotes and supports the pursuit of world exploration and experiential education by bestowing an annual travel grant of \$1,000. The grant is awarded to an HI-USA member and greater Los Angeles resident between the ages of 17 and 26. The purpose of the grant is to assist the recipient in realizing their goals through travel.

The 2009 Travel Grant Recipient is Jessica Lah of Brea, CA. In June, Jessica is planning to travel to Sichuan Province, China, to experience the effects of the disastrous 2008 earthquake in that region. While there, Jessica will paint, photograph, and interview displaced families that are still struggling to find a way back to their previous way of life.

Currently, Jessica is pursuing a BFA degree from Cal State Long Beach, and has been studying in an exclusive program at the Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts in Guangzhou, China.

Upon her return to California in August, Jessica plans to exhibit her collection of work that she will amass throughout her Sichuan journey. A feature story about Jessica and her trip will appear in both print and e-editions of *The Wanderer*, as well as on the Council website. Congratulations, Jessica! We look forward to seeing how your journey develops.

All HI-USA Members Are Invited To
The Annual Members Meeting!

Sunday June 7, 2009
11am-2pm

*Location: HI-Santa Monica Hostel (1436 2nd Street, Santa Monica)
Parking: Public Structure #6, across the street from the hostel*

*11am - Volunteer Awards & Board Elections
11:30-12:30pm - Reception & LA Marathon Opportunity Drawing
12:30pm - Spirit of Adventure Award Presentation*

*The 2009 Spirit of Adventure Award recipient, Danna Mead, will present photos, tell stories, and answer questions about her travels. Tours of the HI-Santa Monica hostel and light refreshments will be provided. Join us in getting to know LA-area HI Members.
Admission is FREE.*

For more information, go to lahostels.org or call (310) 393-3413

INSIDE...

Spirit of Adventure Award

Danna Mead
(front cover)

Board of Directors

Nominee Profiles
(page 2)

LA Marathon

- Volunteer on Race Day
- Collect Pledges
- Opportunity Drawing
- Run, Walk, or Bike for HI-USA: Marathon or 5K
(pages 3-4)

Travel Grant

2009 Recipient Announced: Jessica Lah
(page 5)

World Travel 101 Workshops
(page 5)

THE WANDERER

Los Angeles Council of
American Youth Hostels, Inc
1434 Second Street
Santa Monica, CA 90401

Nonprofit Organization
US Postage PAID
Santa Monica, CA
Permit No. 103

OR Current Resident



Soy inks printed on 30%
post-consumer recycled paper.



2009 100 YEARS OF HOSTELLING WORLDWIDE
75 YEARS OF AMERICAN YOUTH HOSTELS