

The Explorers Club

Northern California Chapter

November 2005

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Mark your calendars! This newsletter tells of three coming events.

(With the busy-ness of the holidays there will not be adequate time to have separate announcements.)

So mark you calendars now!

Arlene Blum

a women on top of the world
November 18th

Charles Merdinger

history never to forget
December 7th

The DeYoung

the newest great museum
December 9th.

Breaking Trail A Climbing Life

Arlene Blum has played a ground-breaking role in opening the sport of high altitude mountaineering to women. A biophysical chemist by training, she has just completed her second book and works as a keynote speaker and leadership and cross-cultural trainer.

Best known for leading the first American—and all-women's—ascend of Annapurna I, considered one of the world's most dangerous and difficult mountains. Arlene also led the first women's team up Mt. McKinley, was the first American woman to attempt

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Remember Pearl Harbor

Dr. Charles Merdinger (FE78) has had a long and productive career as a civil engineer, naval officer and academic administrator. He is a Rhodes Scholar and served in the Navy through three wars, but his first assignment perhaps is the most memorable: he was aboard the *USS Nevada* when she was sunk at Pearl Harbor on that Day of Infamy, December 7, 1941. It is this recollection he will share with us on its 64th anniversary.

If one skips through Chuck Merdinger's accomplishments, you define an exemplar explorer. Beyond

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Masterworks of American Photography

We will join the American Society of Media Photographers Northern California for a special evening to celebrate the opening of the new de Young Museum in San Francisco. Robert Johnson, Photography Curator, will provide his insight into this featured exhibit.

Shortly after the development of photography in France and England at the end of the 1830s, the medium was introduced with great fanfare and enthusiasm to the United States. Since those early days, photography has become an important creative medium

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NEW LOCATION

Date Friday, 18 Nov 2005
Place: Sinbads Pier 2 Restaurant
Pier 2 Embarcadero,
San Francisco
Time: 6:30 pm, no host drinks
7:00 dinner, hosted wine
Cost: \$45 (by November 17)
\$50 (on meeting date)

Reach Anders at
ajviking@aol.com
or 925 934-1051

Reservation Form on page 5
Please reserve promptly!

NEW LOCATION

Date Wednesday, 7 Dec 2005
Place: Marines Memorial Club
609 Sutter Street,
San Francisco
Time: 6:30 pm, hosted drinks
7:00 dinner, hosted wine
Cost: \$60 (by December 6)
\$70 (on meeting date)

Reach Anders at
ajviking@aol.com
or 925 934-1051

Reservation Form on page 5
Please reserve promptly!

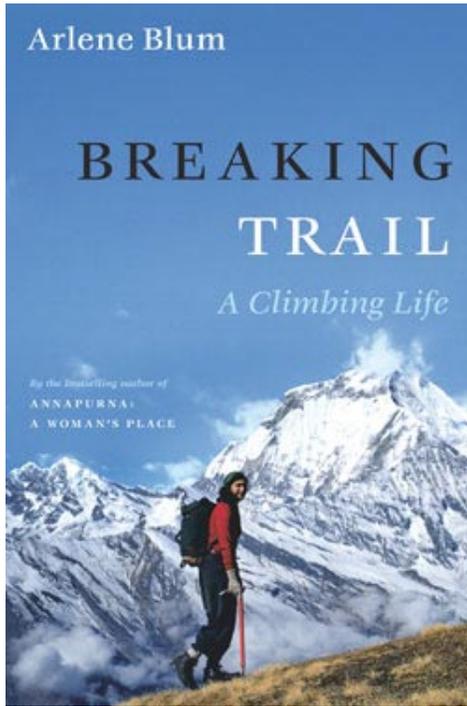
NEW LOCATION

Date Friday, 9 Dec 2005
Place: New DeYoung Museum
50 Hagiwara Tea Garden Dr,
San Francisco (GGPark)
Time: 6:00 pm,
Cost: \$10.00 general admission
\$7.00 seniors

Free for members of Fine Arts
Museums of SF: de Young Museum,
and the Legion of Honor Museum.

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Mt. Everest, and has played a leading role in more than 20 mountain expeditions worldwide. She made the first traverse of the Great Himalaya Range of Bhutan, Nepal and India and hiked the length of the European Alps with her baby daughter on her back.

Annapurna: A Woman's Place, has inspired tens of thousands of readers over the past 25 years. *Fortune* magazine recently selected it as one of "75

books that teach you everything you really need to know about business," and *National Geographic Adventure* magazine included it as one of the "hundred best adventure books of all time."

Arlene Blum's awards include a Gold Medal from the Society of Women Geographers, an honor previously given to only eight other women including Amelia Earhart, Margaret Mead, and Mary Leakey. She is the founder of the annual Berkeley Himalayan Fair and her articles and photographs have appeared in many publications including *National Geographic*, *Smithsonian*, and *Science* magazines.

"*Breaking Trail: A Climbing Life* was published by Scribner on October 15, 2005, the anniversary of my leading the first Americans and the first women to reach the summit of Annapurna I, one of the world's most dangerous, difficult peaks.

"In my memoir I search for answers to the classic question of why a woman would risk her life to stand atop an icy mountain. The reader journeys with me from my overprotected youth in Chicago to the tops of some of the world's highest peaks. I explore how my childhood fueled my need to climb—and how, in turn, my climbing liberated her me from childhood.



Arlene Blum, descending through icicles Annapurna, 1978

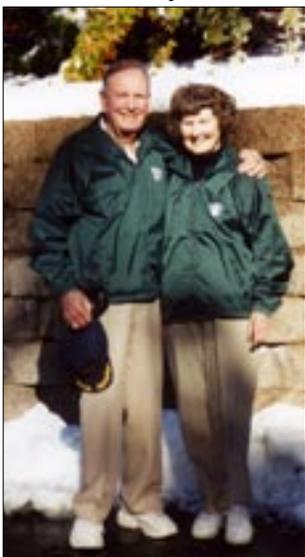
"In *Breaking Trail*, I share the exhilaration, the dangers, and the joy of my evolution from a hilariously inept beginning climber to a renowned expedition leader. I also discuss my scientific research which has led to the banning of two cancer-causing chemical previously used as a flame retardant on children's sleepwear."

Blum holds a doctorate in biophysical chemistry, and has taught at Stanford University, Wellesley College, and U. C. Berkeley, where her research was instrumental in banning tris and Fyrol, two cancer-causing chemicals as well as the pesticide DBCP. Dr. Blum plans to continue this research to facilitate the regulation of similar chemicals and help protect our health and the environment.

the U. S. Naval Academy (which he attended and where he later taught) he served maintaining public works and civil engineering standards throughout the world until retiring in 1970. He then served as college president and administrator at Washington College, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, Aspen Institute and foundations too many to list. He authored "*Civil Engineering Through the Ages*," is a Distinguished Eagle Scout, a Papal Knight and All-American athlete.

Come listen about that surprise Sunday morning long ago that brought America into World War II. For those of us who remember that day Chuck will provide rare insight; for those too young to know, this is a

Charles & Mary Merdinger
60th Wedding Anniversary
21 Oct '04 - Incline Village

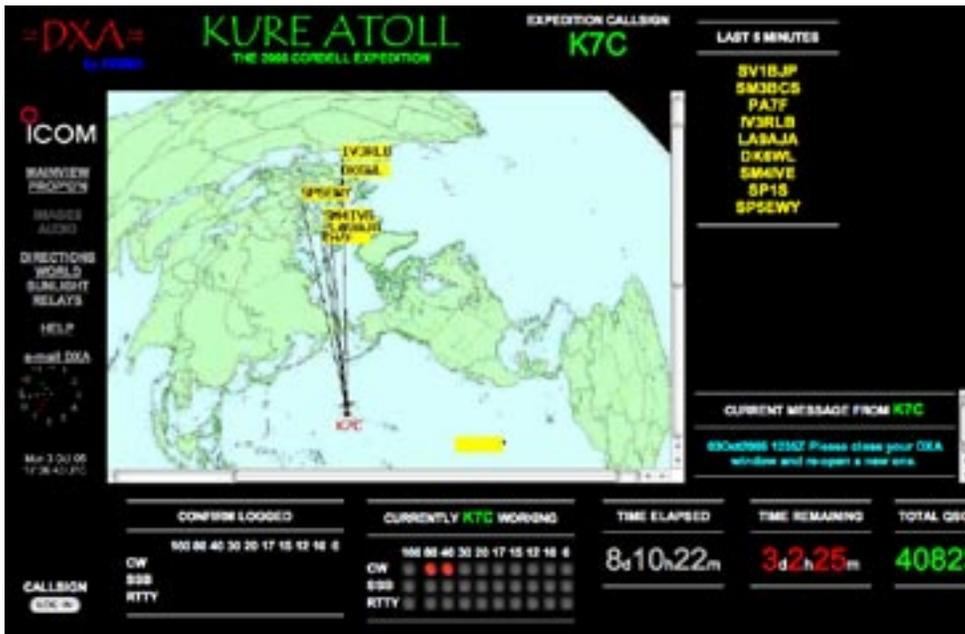


USS *Nevada* (BB-36) afire and down at the bow, after she was bombed by Japanese planes while attempting to get to sea. Men in *Nevada*'s main top, manning 0.50 caliber machine guns.



USS *Nevada* after being refloated 12 Feb '42 (right); at sea in the 1930's (below).





Realtime display during operations from Kure Atoll, as available on the web (left). Green Island, up to 25 feet above sea level (above). The dozen hams who took part in September-October 2005 (below) and organizer Schmieder on site!

A DXpedition is travel to an exotic place by amateur radio operators, considered so because of its remoteness or because there are very few hams active from that place. Our former chairman, Dr. Robert Schmieder, organized such an expedition this Fall on Kure Atoll. October's *National Geographic* notes this as the outermost Hawaiian isle, some 1200 miles west of those more familiar. There isn't much there, about 1.5 by 0.5 miles of land. Midway is some 55 miles to the southeast. You have to have special permit to set foot on shore, as it is a protected wildlife preserve.

For two weeks a multi-disciplinary group of highly experienced radio amateurs and field scientists 'activated' Kure for radio amateurs worldwide, using the callsign K7C. They also implemented an innovative satellite-internet system ('DXA') for real-time display of the expedition activities. In addition to the radio operations, the team conducted activities in support of the wildlife sanctuary on Kure and contributed to upgrading of the residual research facilities on the island. For the curious, roam their website and learn! <http://www.cordell.org/KURE>

An Island Holiday At least an Atoll Hamsite



Kneeling: AD6E, NØAX, WA1S, DJ9ZB, NI6T.
Standing: K6SRZ, N7CQQ, W6KK, N6HC, DJ5IW, VE7CT, KK6EK (Schmieder)

Continued from page 1, DeYoung



in American cultural life through its application in the areas of fine art, science, and documentary projects.

The de Young Museum has played an important role in the history of American photography, having hosted the historic F64 group exhibition in 1932. With the opening of the new de Young, a designated gallery for the rotating display of photography has been inaugurated, which recognizes the importance that the Fine Arts Museums place on photography as a creative medium.

In addition, Catherine Wagner, noted Bay Area photographer, will join us to share her exhibit *Four Perspectives on*

Christopher Columbus. She is inaugurating the Connections Gallery with her show, *Re-Classifying History*.

The Museum welcomes us until 8:45 pm. Come early and be sure to visit the nine-story tower before sunset.

Herzog & de Meuron's wonderful construction, from above & opening night.



The Hindu Kush Destroys as it Builds

People suffer now after the mountains rumble.

7.6-scale quake destined to kill even more as Winter approaches.

Over 7,000 injured, over 500,000 Pakistani victims are without shelter in the bitter winter of the Himalayan/Karakoram range! As of two weeks ago the toll had risen to 73,276 confirmed deaths. It has killed at least 17,000 children. One high UN official stated that there are not enough warm tents in the world to protect victims of the quake against the brutal storms that have already begun.

You may be familiar with these figures and have already sent money via your most trusted relief organizations. But did you know that you can also send your old winter gear, outworn ski clothes, tarps, tents? Here in Ladera, where I live, a community of about 500 families donated a full U-haul truck-load of warm blankets, coats, sweaters, parkas, and woollies. Today one of us drove it to the HIDAYA Foundation's collection site in Milpitas from where it will be container-shipped by air to Pakistan. The HIDAYA Foundation has an affiliate there, the HIDAYA Trust <<http://www.hidaya.org>>, is a charitable organization helping the Pakistan earthquake victims.

The Palo Alto educational community has rallied to raise funds for the survivors of the earthquake. The Adopt-a-Tent/Save a Life drive at Addison Elementary school alone will buy 22 tents, holding some 50 to 60 people each. In Pakistan large tent cities have been established at key points to which survivors are walking, limping, being carried from their remote villages for shelter, medical treatment and eventual relocation. 122,000 tents, have been distributed so far according to SAQuake.org, an alliance of professional and NGOs. About 400,000 additional tents are needed. The tents are purchased in China at low cost, \$100/tent. For more information on how to help, visit <www.squake.com>

Explorers, mountaineers! Can we help too?

—Eva M. Spitz-Blum (MN84)



A Kashmiri boy touches the hand of his grandmother in a small mountain village of Lamnian, east of Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan-administered Kashmir. (November 1, 2005)

Homeless Kashmiri children



Isherwoods in Asia}

That Rascal Sir Henry Stanley! Dan Liebowitz & Charles Pearson San Francisco

Co-authors Liebowitz (MN66) and Pearson abridged their vivid tale about the last great expedition to cross Africa, using slides and quotations from their new book. It is an adventure story of intrigue, of brute force and gumption, of true exploration into the unknown. There was a purpose; indeed, it turns out there were many purposes. Henry Stanley led a complicated life and organized a complicated trek that took years and the lives of many. In the end, each member gained some recognition and some reward. Stanley perhaps the most: his published tome of two volumes and 1100 pages sold 150,000 copies.

For those of you who missed the first-hand presentation by the authors, you do have a chance to enjoy their effort. Read the book! It is a great Christmas idea. (Editors' note: I did so and enjoyed the authors' comments

too. I regret being uncharacteristically *sans* camera at this very successful event, with both authors present!)

Dr. Liebowitz generously donated the proceeds of the sale of their book after the talk to the Northern California Branch, for which we are all very grateful. Thank you!

Dan Liebowitz with Richard Wiese, Explorers Club President. Dan delivered his talk at the Club headquarters in New York in September.



Bill Isherwood (FN70) & Dana have moved to Seattle—well their U.S. address is now in the Northwest. They still spend most of the time in China, sometimes in their Beijing apartment. Here is a summary of the recent activities of these busy explorers:

“Dana and I have been busy ‘exploring’ Asia. I recently got back from a trek in Sikkim (a beautiful trip in to Kanchenjunga), while she has gone on to visit the major Buddhist sites in Nepal and NW India, with one of her Buddhist teachers from California.

“Other trips this year included the Trans-Siberian Railroad, with a 10-day stop at Lake Baikal to travel around (by hovercraft, as the ice was still partially covering the lake), Cambodia, Hainan Island, and (for Dana) a crossing S to N of Mongolia. Her Mongolia trip ended at Lake Hovsgol, to which we are now planning to return next summer with our kayak to try a circumnavigation.

“Of course, I’m still keeping busy working for the Institute of Tibetan Plateau Research, and teaching on the Juneau Icefield in the summer.

“Don’t know if we’ll make it to California during our holiday return to the US or not, but give our regards to all our friends for us.”

The Chapter Chair

Dear Northern California Explorers:

There is much to talk about elsewhere in this issue and space is limited so this column will be a very brief one. I'll catch up next time in what I expect will be my last missive as Chair of the Northern California Chapter. As you no doubt are aware, elections having been held and confirmed, we enter the next era of leadership with the arrival of the New Year. I'm pleased to report that the chapter will be in good and capable hands under the leadership of Lee Langan. At the same time, there will be continuity of experience which is important when organizing events, supporting the membership, and continuing the good work of the Club overall.

Our next two meetings are indeed special. November 18th features Arlene Blum, part of the first team of women climbers to summit Mt. McKinley (Denali). Her new book has been very well received and was recently reviewed by the S.F. Chronicle. Following that, December 7th, brings us a very unique opportunity, as our member Charles Merdinger will recount his eye-

witness experiences on the anniversary of that infamous day at Pearl Harbor. Most fittingly, our venue for this event will be the Marine's Memorial Club in San Francisco. Please reserve these dates and join us for two remarkable presentations.

On a more personal note, please also join me in sending good thoughts and support to former Chapter Chair Ron Reuther, and Gerry Elkus, stalwart supporters both of the Northern California Chapter. We wish Ron a speedy mending from his recent surgery and best wishes for a full recovery.

More next time, in the interim, very best wishes for a safe and joyous holiday season. —Stephen E. Smith, FN96

Evolution

@ The Explorers Club

The Delancy Street venue was an experiment in a different approach to our meetings: a 'cocktail-party' buffet (the beef was delicious!, the tidbits ample and tasty, the dessert a bit late.) I listened to many comments and, on balance, they fell into two areas:

1) there was not adequate seating for the

food nor was it clear that the trays of hor d'ouerves were all there was to eat or 2) the chance to visit and mix before, and particularly after, was much enjoyed by all. My critique: the venue is too small for our meetings. Unfortunate because the food is good, a seated dinner would be within our price range, and the staff are great.

For the balance of 2005 we shall: return to Sinbads because it is big enough, try the Marines Memorial Club, a nice midweek spot during the festive holidays and visit the newest museum in the City, in fact, the world! We shall then reflect and seek out the best venue we can settle upon.

I appreciate your support in the recent election and will do my best to fill some big boots. Your branch has been guided by some extraordinary members; I am a bit humbled. As I move to the other column on this page, a grateful thank you to my guide toward this honor, Steve Smith. He has been a stalwart chairman, an earnest champion of our Branch for its members and at New York, a hard organizer and a good friend. Fortunate we are, he is just stepping aside and will remain active!

—Lee Langan, FN99

Reserve ___ spaces for **November 18, 2005**, at Sinbads Restaurant, San Francisco.
 Cost \$40 each; \$50 on meeting day. Prospective members are welcome.
 Dinner wine is, once again, courtesy of Redwood Creek Winery!
 meal choice (please circle): meat – fish – vegetarian

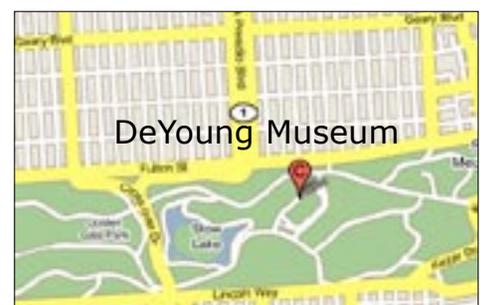
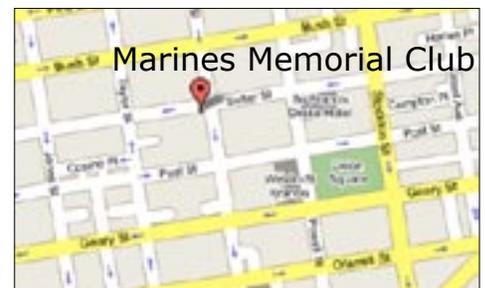
Name: _____
 Guest(s): _____

Reserve ___ spaces for **December 7, 2005**, at Marines Memorial Club, San Francisco.
 Cost \$60 each in advance only. Prospective members are welcome.
 Wine and beer are hosted for the evening!
 meal choice (please circle): meat – fish – vegetarian

Name: _____
 Guest(s): _____

Reserve ___ spaces for **December 9, 2005**, at DeYoung Museum Cafe, San Francisco.
 Museum entry fees paid on site; food available at cafe; we need a head count!

Name: _____
 Guest(s): _____



Please mail these forms to
Dr. Anders Jepsen
 23 Dos Posos
 Orinda, CA 94563
 or, preferably, email
ajviking@aol.com
 or call 925 254-3079

Please reserve for each meeting you wish to attend.
Note: new contact, our Treasurer!

Northern California 2005-2006 Event Calendar

(Mark the dates! Venues will be identified at time of event.)

October 14, 2005 (Friday) Dan Liebowitz The Last Expedition, Stanley Across Africa
Delancey Street, San Francisco

November 18 (Friday) Arlene Blum Breaking Trail: A Climbing Life
Sinbad's Restaurant, Pier 2, San Francisco

December 7th (Wednesday) Charles Merdinger Remembering Pearl Harbor on the USS Nevada
Marines' Memorial Club, 609 Sutter Street, San Francisco

December 9th (Friday) The New DeYoung Photographs at the new museum
DeYoung Museum Cafe, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco

January 13 (Friday)

February 17 or 14 (Friday)

March 18 (Saturday) ECAD (NYC)

March 24 (Friday) Alan Nichols The Silk Web

April 21 (Friday)

May 19 (Friday)

June 17 (Saturday) Dave Moorer Annual Chapter Picnic

(unlisted events are all in the process of confirmation; see subsequent newsletters for the update.)

Please note venues and dates with care.

November 18th is a FRIDAY meeting at Sinbad's Restaurant in San Francisco

December 7th is a WEDNESDAY meeting at Marine's Memorial Club in San Francisco

December 9th is a FRIDAY meeting at the DeYoung Museum Cafe in San Francisco

(When copying the URL addresses be sure to keep them all on one line; most are also available as links on our Chapter web site.)

November 2005

Dr. Stephen E. Smith

The Explorers Club

Northern California Chapter

402 Via Royal

Walnut Creek, CA 94596

