

The Explorers Club

Northern California Chapter

November 2008

In color at our web site: <http://www.diggles.com/ec/>

Tiburon—November 21, 2008

Leela Hutchison

The Cave of Crystals

An Early Exploration of Gigantic 'Gems'

In 1794, among trees and a spring, in the low hills southwest of Chihuahua, Mexico, early prospectors found a vein of silver ore exposed. They named the locale Naica (a Tarahumara word for 'shady place.'). It was one-hundred years later that a claim was made for a mine, and Naica became a pueblo, a small town. Throughout the 20th century and still, the mine has prospered as a world-leading lead, zinc, silver and gold resource. Extensive workings exist, interrupted only during the Mexican revolution of the 1920s and '30s.

In 1910, very large crystals were discovered at a below-surface depth of about 400 feet. The chamber became famous as a source for large museum-grade selenite crystals—clear beautiful structures, a variety of the easily-scratched mineral gypsum. The *Cave of Swords* became well known to mineral collectors.

Our speaker, Leela Hutchison, is a gemologist, a graduate of the Gemological Institute of America. While selenite is not hardy enough to be a gem, the crystal form is suitably a collectable. A native of El Paso, she became aware of the Naica crystals, and had the good fortune to run

into a consultant to the owners of the mine in the year 2000, when staying just across the Arizona border at Aqua Prieta—their mutual interest: visiting and helping the Tarahumaras of the Sierra Madre Occidental. He showed her some pictures of a new chamber that had just been discovered, more than twice as far below the surface! Subsequently named the *Cave of the Crystals*, it is a phenomenal world-class wonderland of even larger crystals.

Their meeting led to a discussion of how to resolve photographing these giants—the heat is intense; the air 100% humid; cameras fogged and failed. Her new friend needed someone willing to assist in his attempts to solve the picture-taking endeavor; Leela's rock-climbing skills and fearlessness prompted an invitation to be his assistant.

She will tell us of the results, with some splendid photographs! Her visit in 2001, was early in the new discovery—look at her in shorts, then, and visitors today in air-conditioned suits! She probably will not go back; it IS dangerous! She is turning current exploration time to some opportunities in southern New Mexico.

Note venues and dates with care.

Tiburon, CA!

Our next event is at 6:30 on Nov. 21, a Friday evening, at the Dana home.



An enormous geode filled with huge selenite crystals was discovered in 2000; our speaker was there in 2001. By 2008, suitably suited explorers continued observations.



This month the National Geographic Society broadcast a TV show featuring the Cave of the Crystals and their November issue contains NGS-quality pictures and graphics. (There is also a feature article on the Tarahumara, a subject we featured at our September 2007 meeting.) Come see and hear about one of the early explorations to the cave—a 21st Century discovery.



Read NOTE Below

Don and Jeanne Dana have invited us to be guests at their Tiburon home for our November 21st meeting. A generous offer for their fellow explorers. You will be delighted with the conviviality which will precede the talk! Be sure to reserve early so plans can be made.

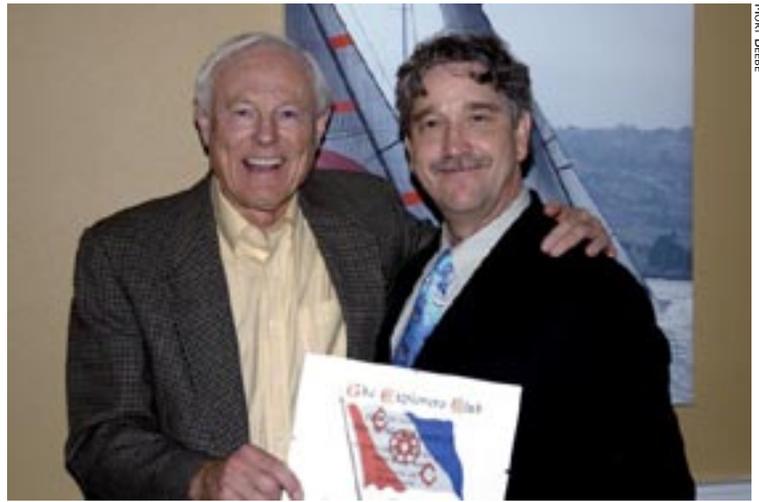
Slow, Low-Flying Race Around the World

San Francisco

While preparing the November newsletter an unusual motor sound persisted from the sky over San Francisco—a glance revealed the arrival of the Airship Ventures new zeppelin! This is the first rigid lighter-than-air craft to fly in the USA since its predecessor, the *Hindenburg*, crashed in 1937. Beginning the last week in October, this smaller 747-sized version—now safely held aloft by non-combustible helium—will lift tourists around the San Francisco Bay Area. For a fee. See www.airshipventures.com for all of the details. (There is a contest to name the ship, which is based at Moffett Field.)

A week before the zeppelin's arrival in San Francisco, at our October meeting, we were visited by Don Hartsell (MN04) who spends all of his waking hours thinking about lighter-than-air ships of all sizes. He spoke to us about plans for the 2010 Airship Race around the world. As Commissioner and Managing Director of the World Air League, Don is responsible for all organizing details of this first-of-it's-kind challenge.

The air race is conceived to be in sixteen stages circumnavigation the globe; the winner will be that craft that has the best (shortest) time accumulated as the sum of participating in each of these legs. Each segment will be a local and worldwide event, broadcast widely and combined with a fair and festivities surrounding the arrival of the floating behemoths. Don poses that it will be the most watched event in history, given TV exposure and those observing the flyovers. The competing sky ships (more than a half-dozen are signed up already) will travel from the Greenwich Prime Meridian across Europe, southward to Africa and the Middle East, across the Indian Ocean to Equatorial Asia and through the Orient, island hop across the Pacific to San Francisco, south to Central America, then north to the Maine coast, crossing the Atlantic back to Greenwich for an exciting finish to an historic race. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is cooperating as a partner in the promotion and siting of the race, which will visit many



Vice Chair Alan Nichols welcomed our speaker Don Hartsell at the Golden Gate Yacht Club and presented him with a certificate acknowledging his talk.

iconic sites on the World Heritage list. Don predicts the winner will be the team with the best navigator.

The airship race was conceived by Don as he completed a major project digitizing materials for the University of Texas. He wanted to find a life-changing challenge, and he has. He is traveling the world gaining support and has accomplished this to achieve a critical mass—the race will go on, he is assured. And, he was convincing to the chapter attendees. If you would like to get involved contact Don at his website: www.worldskyrace.com. A number of members of The Explorers Club are already so.

Can we look forward to the newly-named airship based in the Bay Area as a competitor? It has passed the two-year certification and is among the fifty or so candidates now flying. (LL)



Airship Ventures zeppelin as captured by the SF Chronicle upon arrival in the Bay Area October 26 and, as projected, from the AV website (below)



SPECIAL NOTICE: Many organizations have converted to email as the *sole* means of providing newsletters; we have resisted, but we would like to send as many as possible to be green and fiscally responsible. PLEASE notify us at nauticos@oceanearth.org if you will accept email-only communication. We encourage you to do so; act now.

A Special Event — Short Notice!

Come Meet and Hear From Erden Eruç (MN04)

Rower Extraordinaire — November 6th

<http://www.cyc.org/speakers/erdeneruc.html>

Hello friends.

Above is the link to the information page that Corinthian Yacht Club has provided about my November 6th presentation.

The presentation will take place in Tiburon at the club house.

There will be dinner beginning at 6pm and I will begin my presentation at 7pm about my row across the Pacific Ocean from California shores to the Papua New Guinea waters. This singlehanded crossing by oars was especially meaningful for me since we raised about \$47,000 for charity during that crossing to benefit the rural primary school children in regional boarding schools in Turkey.

If you can join us, I will be thrilled to get a chance to see you again, and some of you I will meet in person for the first time. If you have friends in the Bay Area who are rowers, kayakers, sailors, climbers, bicyclists, philanthropists or just interested in a good story, please feel free to inform them of the RSVP page above.

above.

With my warmest regards.

Erden Eruç (MN04)

President, Around-n-Over



Erden Eruç, at sea, and his 312-day route to New Guinea! May 2007 in San Francisco Bay (below)



Don Brians

<http://www.Around-n-Over.org>
<http://www.HumanPoweredJourney.com>

Would you consider helping us?

New Members & Changes

At the October meeting of The Explorers Club Board of Directors some fifty new members were elected. Our chapter benefits from the following changes and additions:

Susan Anderson, MD, Woodside, CA (MN08)
Barbara Berg, Carmel, CA (MN08)
Tremain Jones, Santa Cruz, CA (SN05), reinstated
Daniel Liebowitz, MD, Woodside, CA (FN66), reclassified
Alan Nichols, JD, Belvedere, CA (FN84), reclassified
Paul Stoicheff, Murpheys, CA (SN08)
Robert Swan, Truckee, CA (FN86), reinstated

Congratulations to all! Explorers are brought into the club by personal one-on-one contact; find a candidate and encourage them to join. Its fun.

(F = Fellow; M = Member; S = Student; N = National)

The Chapter Chair

We are hosted for our November meeting by Don (MN06) and Jeanne Dana at their home in Tiburon. This offer was made last Spring and gratefully accepted. Don, you remember, was our speaker in May 2007 at a meeting in Portola Valley—his subject: rowing from Asia to North America if you were early man—a demonstration of other-than-the-need-for-a-land-bridge.

Their generosity is another demonstration of the kindness of our membership. We have been hosted by several members over the recent past. (A benefit, I might add, as it allows attendees to stretch their budgets to include those meetings that are not hosted!)

Our meeting on Friday the 21st is very timely. We were not aware of the coincident articles published by the National Geographic Society adding details about the crystal cave. Our talk, which will provide a view by an early-entrant explorer therein, was scheduled last year! Come, enjoy—reserve early.

In October we had a 'virtual election.' Our small chapter is fortunate to have experienced volunteers to carry it forward and, after consultation with previous chairs, Alan Nichols was recommended to follow my era. He will take over at our January meeting. It is important that we continue to change our leadership; it keeps the chapter healthy and invigorated. (I will comment upon those events that have occurred during my chairmanship in the next newsletter.) Be assured I am delighted that Alan will take the helm—a good early sign is the line-up of speakers for the balance of the year.

We have, in the past, asked for approval from the membership at a meeting; this year we chose to recognize the reality of our leadership: a few individuals step forward, and those that do become vetting by experience in managing the chapter's affairs. Prior chairs are consulted when a change is appropriate (the historic reign of a chair is 2-4 years.) Those present at a given meeting are but a small percentage of the chapter, so we accept that the Chair is *de facto* an appointed position, by the emeritus chairs. Any one who wishes to be considered, step up and volunteer to help some aspect of the chapter.

Alan will present his officers in January. He began the process at a meeting of 'activists' on October 24th at his home; ideas and needs were shared. Again, if you want to be involved contact him. As he says: "The NorCA Chapter needs Explorers interested in becoming SuperExplorers by helping out with public relations, meeting hosts, program support (equipment operation and speakers), membership and Sirdars, field trips, or photos and articles for the newsletter or anything else our Chapter Expedition should be doing. Email sacred-mountain@att.net, call 415 789 9348, or write 9 Peninsula Rd, Belvedere, CA 94920 to sign up."

It has been my experience that December is a busy time for all. Adding a 'meeting' for the Chapter simply compounds that. Nevertheless, last year we gathered at the Langan home to exchange some holiday cheer. We shall again, on December 7, from 1-4 on a Sunday afternoon. You are all welcome. Details will follow.

November 2008



Chair: Lee Langan
415 567-8089
lee@langan.net
Vice Chair: Alan Nichols
415 789-9348
ahnichols@att.net
Treasurer: Anders Jepsen
925 254-3079
ajviking@aol.com
Secretary: Stephen E. Smith
Webmaster: Mike Diggles
Newsletter: Lee Langan

Crystal Caves, the Dana Home
21 November — Tiburon, California

**Northern California
2008 Calendar of Events**

(Venues will be identified at time of event.)

Our next Meeting

November 21 (Friday) Leela Hutchison
Giant Cave Crystals
Dana home, 34 Paseo Mirasol, Tiburon, CA

Future Meeting Schedule

December 7 (Sunday) Lee Langan
Holiday Gathering
January 30 . . Malcolm Potts & Martha Campbell
Sex and Population, Golden Gate Yacht Club
February 27 Orville Magoon
Doomsday Doctor, location TBD
March 27 Payne Johnson
Trail of the Conquistadors, GGYC
April 25 Christopher Whittier
Stories of Gorilla Country, GGYC
May 15 (TBD)
June (TBD). picnic

Meetings earlier this year

April 4 Felicia Nutter
The Marine Mammal Center GGYC
April 23 Jeff Morgan
Global Heritage Fund New Sites GGYC
May 30 Nancy Black
Whale Watching off Monterey
Hicks' home, Garrapata Beach, Big Sur
June 25 Marta Walsh at 100
DOER Marine, Alameda
September 27 Art Ford
Tourism in Antarctica
Liebowitz home, Woodside
October 18 Don Hartsell
Lighter than Air. GGYC

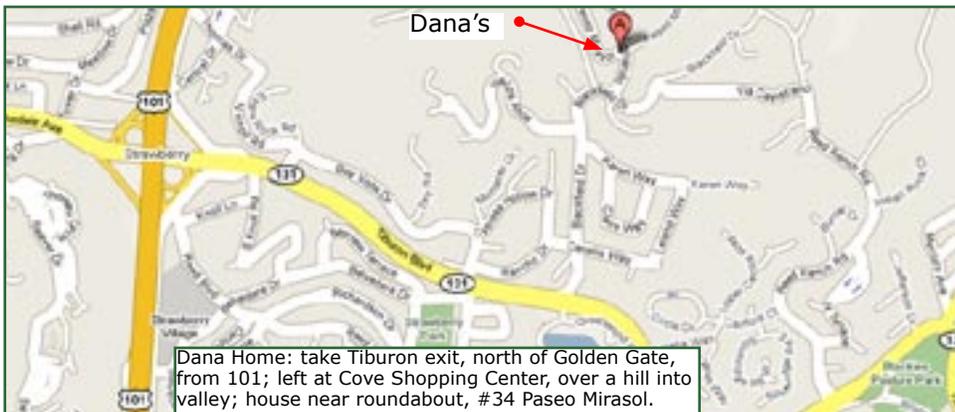
Send address changes and
corrections by email to Steve at
nauticos@oceanearth.org

November LOCATION

Date Friday, November 21, 2008
Place: The Don & Jeanne Dana home
34 Paseo Mirasol, Tiburon, CA
Time: 6:30 - reception
7:15 - supper
8:00 - talk
Cost: guests of the Dana's
Please mail information (to right),
early response, to Dr. Anders Jepsen
23 Dos Posos
Orinda, CA 94563
or email ajviking@aol.com
or call (925) 254-3079

Reserve ___ spaces for **November 21 2008** at
Hutchison talk at Dana's
Tiburon, CA
Cost: guests of the Dana's
(Chapter donation of \$20 suggested!)
Name: _____
Address (if changed): _____
Companion: _____

If you desire a car pool from the
Peninsula call Helen Klaben Kahn
at 650 888-4058!



Dana Home: take Tiburon exit, north of Golden Gate,
from 101; left at Cove Shopping Center, over a hill into
valley; house near roundabout, #34 Paseo Mirasol.