

The Explorers Club

Northern California Chapter

April 2012

In color at our web site: <http://www.explorersnorca.org>

16 Years of Reef Research

Diving for Science in Micronesia

Stephen E. Smith, Ph.D.

San Francisco

April 27, 2012

In the early 1990's a young couple named Bruce and Katrina decided to do what most of us only contemplate in daydreams. They quit their jobs, sold their possessions, and moved to a remote tropical island in the Pacific to pursue a new adventure. Employing local materials and seldom-used traditional methods they began creating an ecologically sensitive resort with a restaurant, a dive shop, and thatched ocean-front bungalows. By the end of 1995, the resort was open for business, and they began to seek ways by which they could contribute to the preservation of the environment beyond their resort, in particular the essentially pristine coral reef system that surrounded their island. One of the first efforts was to advocate the installation of a mooring buoy system which would provide protection for both the island's fishermen and the coral reef itself, a novel concept in the mid '90's.

In 1996, our chapter member (and former Chair) Stephen E. Smith FN96 took the first group of volunteer divers to the island of Kosrae, Federated States of Micronesia, to support the creation of the *Kosrae Reef Protection Project*. Sixteen years and many volunteers later, there are more than 60 mooring buoys permanently installed on the 43 miles of fringing reef. Many of the buoy locations have been subsequently designated as permanent ecological monitoring sites where data are collected on the health of the reef fish and coral.

In 2008, instruments were installed to collect water temperature data at various reef locations every 15 minutes throughout the year.

Since 1996, volunteer divers, in association with the 501c3 non-profit **Oceanearth, Inc.**, have traveled to Kosrae annually to continue data collection and assist in buoy maintenance. The monitoring project has acted as a catalyst to bring together a broad range of government and local stakeholders to focus on reef preservation, increase community awareness, enhance environmental education and encourage local participation.

Project scientific data have helped support the efforts of resource managers to create marine protected areas. While Kosrae is both unique and in the forefront by having the most well-protected reef in the Pacific region, it faces increasing environmental and economic pressures which will inevitably lead to difficult resource decisions in the future.

Steve's presentation will bring both a historical and environmental perspective to the challenges that Kosrae and the Pacific islands will face in the future with regard to this incredibly complex ecosystem. Along the way we will also learn a bit about the amazing coral animals and ultimately why we should care about them.

Dr. Smith has been a member of the Northern California Chapter since 1996, serving in the roles of Vice Chair and Chair, and as the current Chapter Secretary. He

LOCATION

Note venues and dates with care.

In San Francisco, CA, our next meeting is at 6:00 on April 27, a FRIDAY evening, at the City Forest Lodge south, off Seventh AVENUE.



Steve installing a probe in Kosrae's pristine water. - Northern California Chapter Buoy marks a Kosrae study site.



has also worked with the National Club by providing analytical work and participates as a reviewer for the Student Grant Program. He currently serves as the Diving Safety Officer for Saint Mary's College and, in his spare time, pursues a real job in the world of energy project development.

Micronesia's Kosrae Island; the Sleeping Lady (left)



LOST FOR 400+ YEARS, NOW FOUND

San Francisco — March 30

The *Member Moment* on April 27
(last-minute cancellation; next month!)



The painting of the *San Felipe* in distress is by Gordon Miller, a Canadian artist, based on Raymond Aker's plans and a model from those plans by San Diego modeler Dr. William Brown. The setting is based on our reconstruction of how the ship grounded and remained settled in the sands off the beach for at least a year before she was destroyed by a storm. (Gordon shows the storm building in the background.) The scene is shown at low tide.

Visit <http://www.gordonmiller.ca/>, and consider Miller's book: *VOYAGES, To the New World and Beyond*; Douglas & McIntyre, September 2011 (Hardcover, 11½" x 10", 200 pages, 91 paintings, 25 drawings and 5 maps.)

Ed showed many treasures found in the sands of that desolate coast; some as complete as this Ming Dynasty cup.



Ed Von der Porten has rooms full of china, very old china, some in great condition, some not so great, but each piece tells a tale. Together they tell a fascinating story about a lost ship which disappeared from its builders, never to be found for hundreds of years. Ed found it. He related his exploration at the March 30 meeting of the Northern California Chapter.

Ed is a ship historian, a marine archaeologist, a now-retired teacher. In 1997, he and his late wife, Saryl, stumbled upon a book, *Chinese Porcelain in Colonial Mexico*, and within it were pictured fragments of Ming bowls found along a Pacific beach. His curiosity was peaked, and became ever more so as he tried to find out more about this location. It was two years, and many clandestine meetings, before he finally gained enough trust to be allowed in on the secret location. It remains a secret to this day, except for those who Ed has encouraged to help on his expeditions—each individual trusted with this knowledge has kept their pledge. (That in itself is remarkable in this age of the Internet.)

In 1999, he was taken ashore along a desolate western desert, where shifting winds and dunes cover and uncover vast swaths of land in brief hours. A few hardy souls landed with him in rubber boats. Shortly after landing the first piece of porcelain was found, a whole cup with a monkey motif. Over the next few days they knew they had struck it rich—not with doubloons but with the porcelain treasure of a lost cargo from the *San Felipe*, that long-lost Manila Galleon. These dishes and cups outlasted the weather, the salt sea, the burning sun. Virtually all else is gone—maybe some remnants may be found beneath the waves. The 2500' artifact field, defined over many return trips (that continue to this day) points to the wreck—in the waves, a difficult place to excavate.

Meanwhile the Institut Nacional de Arqueologia y Historia recognizes this site as a national find and honors Ed and his team with

support and official documentation to continue the expeditions. A museum is being built at Ensenada to house the artifacts. Monographs have begun to filter out which will culminate in a full documentation.

Ed showed many examples of the porcelain with each piece contributing a small bit of information. He has deduced that the cargo was a 'sample' cargo being sent to the barbarians of the West to see what the recipients may want in the future. Things moved slowly in the late 1500s (the wreck occurred in 1576); the voyage from the Philippines probably took five or six months. Three ships were known to have been lost (and are now located); yet the trade was robust. This was the direction the Spanish took to bring Asian goods, via Mexico and Central America, to Spain. (The Portuguese went east, around Cape Horn.)

Explorers Club President Alan Nichols, Chair Emeritus Robert Schmieder, speaker Edward Von der Porten, Chair Anders Jepsen



NorCA Chapter 2012 Contributors

Allan, James
Amaral, Julia
Anderson, Susan
Azarpay, Guitty
Beebee, Mort
Belcher, George
Belcher, George
Blake, Richard
Blumberg, Marion
Bogardus, Peter
Boothe, Barry
Boothe, Joan
Cassell, Jay
Chase, Keith
Cheatham, Dan
Chokas, Ann
Clinch, Nick
Cook, Sandra
Cooper, Alan
Cromwell, Thomas
Crowder, Wendy
Diggles, Mike
Durbin, Thomas
Dyal, Palmer
Ehrhart, Ken
Ehrhart, Loretta
Engstrom, Dafne
Engstrom, Mats
Estey, Sue
Ewing, Lesley
Ford, Art
Freitas, Anna
Freitas, Paul
Glacy, Char
Glanz, Gina
Glanz, Ron
Guzy, Michael
Hall, Tom
Haringsma, Henry
Herz, Michael
Heydorn, William
Higgins, R. J.
Hurson, Jim
Hurson, Von
Jepsen, Anders
Jepsen, Kathy
Kennard, David
King, Steven
Kobal, Daniel A.
Kobal, Lois Z
Komarmy, Margot
Kutz, Dida
Kvenvolden, Keith
Langan, Karine
Langan, Lee
Lidicker, William
Long, Elgen
McFadden, Ian
McGann, Mary
Merdinger, Charles
Mueller, Neal
O'Kane, Teresa
Perkins, Shelby
Pickworth, Diana
Piper, Bob
Prigoff, Jim
Ross, Ed
Saber, Rick
Smith, Mark
Smith, Ronald
Smith, Steve
Soper, Scott
Taylor, Susan
Walsh, Don
Weiman, Mark

From the Chair— One of the great things about this club is the potential for excitement and surprise. Neal Mueller, a new member in 2010 told us about his proposal to row across the Arctic Ocean this summer. Talk about adventure! As you can imagine, he got lots of questions. Then there was the spontaneous and loud *skaal* to our new National club president, Alan Nichols, who in his usual modest fashion blamed it all on past NorCA Chair, present national director Lee Langan. And our Member Moment, past Chair Lesley Ewing's talk about her present activities getting our coastal dwellers ready for the next seismic tsunami. And our long time Fellow member, Ed Von der Porten's terrific talk on his archaeological research on the Manila galleon lost off Baja. And a party to celebrate Alan's becoming the president of the national club. What a chapter!

And the beat goes on, with two field expeditions in addition to our regular meetings before we pause for the Summer – a visit to the old New Almaden mercury mine, and of course our annual expedition to Angel Island in June. See you there!
—Anders Jepsen PhD FN03

Row, row, row, row: four in the Arctic this Summer— Neal Mueller MN10 spoke to the chapter attendees about his summer plans: not exactly Summer Camp, but Neal is a participant in great adventures. With three friends (one another member of TEC) he plans to row across the Arctic Ocean from one continent to another, a feat never entered into the record books. He figures it will take, depending upon winds, currents and ice breakup, about a month and a half. In the Arctic Summer, the four will rotate two-hour rowing shifts to row 24/7.

This is not just an adventure. While it certainly is, they plan to research whale migrations and plankton content in the frigid waters. After all their 29-foot boat is mighty close to the water surface.

Want to help? Any amount will assist; they figure the outlay is about \$1000 each day. Hopefully the transit will be done under \$50,000—raised a bit at a time. They will film the process to create a documentary, but according to rowing record rules they cannot touch land nor resupply enroute. Once the oars drop, they are off to the finish.

Visit their website: www.arcticrow.com.

From the Board— There was rather dramatic news at The Explorers Club Board Meetings in March. The membership elected a new President, our very own Alan Nichols! The election of five new Directors, as the Class of 2015, preceded their first meeting with ten remaining Directors. At this session, on March 18th, I nominated former NorCA Chair and current national Ombudsman Nichols as an option to President Karnath, who had served for three years. The fully attended Board (15 members) listened to the plans of both candidates, offered questions to both and held a secret ballot. Alan emerged.

This change of administrations was not anticipated, and it has resulted in some consternation with the outgoing management. Nevertheless, it was the will of the membership. As is the tradition with the end of each yearly term, all officers and committee chairs volunteer their resignation. With this year's change, the replacements are numerous. (They will have been announced by the time of this publication.)

The transition is going smoothly, and there are great hopes that some of the turmoil mentioned in last month's report is behind us. While this is not assured, Alan's experience as Ombudsman places him in a unique position of knowing all sides of the issues. His calm demeanor and professional qualifications give him an opportunity to build upon the successes achieved by President Karnath for the continued improvement of our venerable Club.
—Lee Langan FN99

Member Moment, 30 March: Lesley Ewing FN93— My awareness of the Explorers Club came from working on the first generation of Deep Flight submersibles with Sylvia Earle and Graham Hawkes. At the time I was doing some research on sea-level rise and climate change and the vehicles piqued both my vocational and avocational interest. I never flew either of the submersibles that I helped build, but did have the opportunity to fly the 2-person *Deep Flight Aviator* in the Tongue of the Ocean off of the Bahamas, in the Sea of Cortez off of Baja, and in Monterey Bay, and I got my "pilot's" license—#007.

My career path as a coastal engineer was not going to lead to a lifetime of sub-sea exploration. And, much to my dismay, the Hawkes vehicles are easy to use so there was little chance I could parlay my license into a career as a sub-sea chauffeur. Rather than the extremes of the ocean deep, I've focused on exploring other coastal extremes – the hurricanes, tsunamis, erosion, rising sea levels that can change our coastlines in unimaginable ways. I've been to Galveston twice since Hurricane Ike, Samoa and American Samoa once since the Samoan tsunami, and Japan three times since the Tohoku tsunami – all with the purpose of learning how we can more safely live, work and recreate within the narrow band of coastal land between hinterland and ocean. We cannot stop the extreme events from occurring; the only things we can change are the consequences.

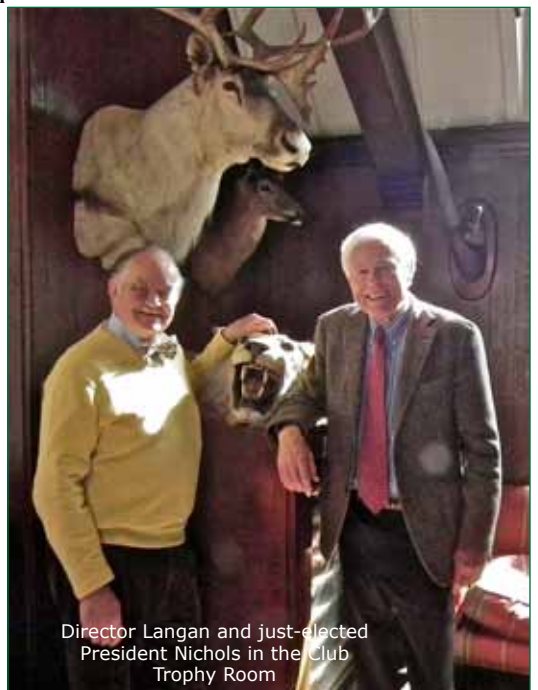
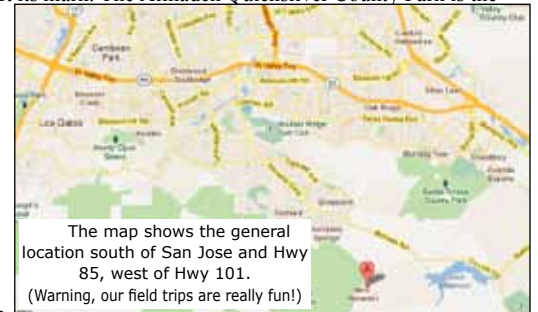
Explorers Club NorCA FIELD TRIP, New Almaden Mercury Mines— Remember shining your dimes with the mercury spilled from the thermometers you accidentally broke? The balls of fluid metal were a fascination to children and adults alike. They were an essential to the gold miners. Alas, science now classifies Hg as a contaminant in our fish supply, and the glass vials are replaced by silicon chips and digital displays. BUT, go back in time: our Chapter is visiting the "New Almaden Mercury Mines" in a field trip on Saturday, May 12th, with an evening supper potential on Friday, the 11th.

Join for the overnight or the one-day venture. Our leaders will be: Marsh Fey, on the history; Steve Smith, on the ecology; Mike Diggles, on the geology and topography. Meet at the Almaden Mines Museum, south of San Jose/Campbell, for the trek: 10:00 AM to approximately 4:00 PM.

We will visit the site of the first mining in California, learn how mercury contributed to the growth of California, and how it has left its mark. The Almaden Quicksilver County Park is the site of over 135 years of mining activity and the former home for nearly 2000 mining families. Located along the Coast Range's Capitancillos Ridge, over 4000 acres offer one of the most spectacular displays of wild flowers at this time of the year.

For the more venturesome, there will be a dinner the evening before our hike. The Mansion Motel, or nearby, is recommended for an overnight stay.

To participate, **contact Von Hurson (707 545-6880 or <trekking@sonic.net>) or Rick Saber (415 457-0345 or eagle@rsaber.com)**. Members & friends are welcome. Details will be sent to participants.

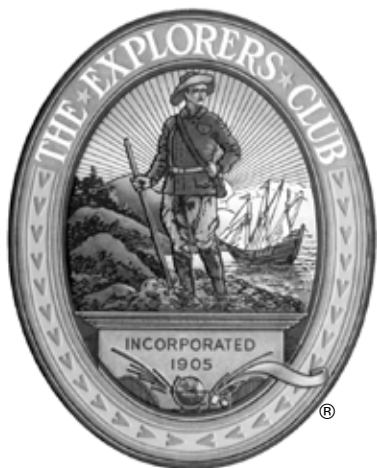


Director Langan and just-elected President Nichols in the Club Trophy Room

Dues cover the costs of our newsletter!

Add Your Name by sending \$25 to Treasurer Joan Boothe

April 2012



Chair: Anders Jepsen
925 254-3079
ajviking@aol.com
Vice Chair: Rick Saber
415 457-0345
eagle@rsaber.com
Treasurer: Joan Boothe
415 346-5934
hoodooskr@aol.com
Secretary: Stephen E. Smith
Webmaster: Mike Diggles
Newsletter: Lee Langan

April 27, 2012 – Coral Reefs

Northern California Calendar of Events

(Venues are identified as soon as known.)

Our Next Event

April 27 Stephen Smith
16 years at Kosrae City Forest Lodge

Upcoming Events (2012)

May 25 Joel Tracey/John Wilus
Fremont's Canon City Forest Lodge
June 9 Angel Island Picnic

Earlier Chapter Events (2011/12)

February 25 Don Dana
Ethiopian Research Expedition University Club
March 25 Tom Cromwell, MD
Medical Disasters University Club
April 22 Robin Ziegler
Google Earth University Club
May 20 Alan Nichols
Dead Men Tell Tales. California Academy
June 11 Angel Island Picnic
September 23 Jim Westerman
The Osireion, Egypt UC Faculty Club
October 28 Jay Gregory
Discovering Bolivia University Club
November Joan Boothe/University Club
Otto Nordenskjöld's 1901-03 Saga of Survival
December 5 Rick & Aldeana Saber
Member Reception Tiburon
January 27, 2012 (Friday). Expedition Medicine
Matthew Lewin, MD City Forest Lodge
February 24 Joshua Glovin
HOT Ocean Exploration City Forest Lodge
March 30 Ed Von Der Porten
New Findings of San Felipe. City Forest Lodge

Send address changes and corrections by email to Steve at nauticos1@oceaneearth.org

USE PAYPAL!

Friday, April 27, San Francisco

Date: Friday April 27, 2012
Place: City Forest Lodge
254 Laguna Honda Blvd
San Francisco, CA 94116-1409
(415) 753-8326
Time: 6:00 - reception
7:15 - dinner — 8:00 - talk
Cost: \$49 in advance; \$60 after 25 Apr
Students: \$35. (2012 dues \$25!)

Reserve spaces for April 27, 2012
Cost: \$49 (for members and sirdars)
\$35 for card-carrying students

Name:
Address (if changed):
Companion:
Meal choice:

Please mail information to Joan Boothe, 2435 Divisadero St., San Francisco, CA 94115 or email hoodooskr@aol.com or call (415) 346-5934

Please reserve by Apr 25!

We have an established PayPal account.

For those of you who have an account, you can sign up and remit dinner costs to the NorCA Chapter by transferring money to: explorersnorca@gmail.com
There is a PAYPAL BUTTON on our website (www.explorersnorca.org); easy to use!

April Meal Options (select your choice)

Oven Roast Turkey – Tri-tip Beef – Vegetarian Stuffed Peppers

Last January, the City Forest Lodge was sought out as a meeting place in the heart of San Francisco. Location details should be researched in advance as the lodge is hidden in a driveway just south along Seventh Avenue as it turns into Laguna Honda Boulevard. The Lodge has the catering and space needs we require, and our meetings this year have proved it is working!

There is parking, and the location, while unfamiliar to many, is easy to find tucked away just across from the City's Laguna Honda Hospital. Once the lot is full, park within the neighborhood, just uphill to the west.

Muni access is VERY easy from downtown via the light-rail Taraval 'L' Line and Ocean View 'M' Line. Exit at the Forest Hill station and walk a block north. These lines can be reached by BART and the Peninsula's CalTrain. (Forest Hill Station is located deeper underground than any other Muni Metro station; so much so that, unlike other stations, most people use an elevator to reach the platform at Forest Hill.)