

# The Explorers Club Northern California Chapter

November 2017

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

## LOCATION

Note venues and dates with care

Friday, 17 November 2017

[Grace Lutheran Church](#)  
[3201 Ulloa Street at 33rd Ave](#)  
[San Francisco, CA 94116](#)

## ENGINEERING EDEN

### The True Story of a Violent Death, a Trial, and the Fight over Controlling Nature by Jordan Fisher Smith

On Friday, November 17, Jordan Fisher Smith will discuss his award-winning book about an event that led to a dramatic change in the way our society works to preserve our natural beauty without changing it too much.

In the summer of 1972, Harry Walker hitchhiked away from his family's Alabama farm to see America. Nineteen days later he was killed and partially eaten by an endangered grizzly bear at Yellowstone National Park. An environmental activist convinced Harry's parents, simple dairy farmers who'd never so much as contested a traffic ticket, to sue the Department of Interior for alleged mismanagement of the grizzly that not only caused their son's death, but also threatened to drive the great bear to extinction in the 48 contiguous United States.



Harry Walker's last camp

When the case went to trial in 1975, two of the greatest wild-life biologists of the twentieth century testified against each other in what became a referendum on some of the most fundamental issues we face today in conserving wild places: when nature has been disrupted by human beings, how do we go about repairing it? How much should we try to control or manipulate it in order to heal it? And, what happens when we get it wrong?

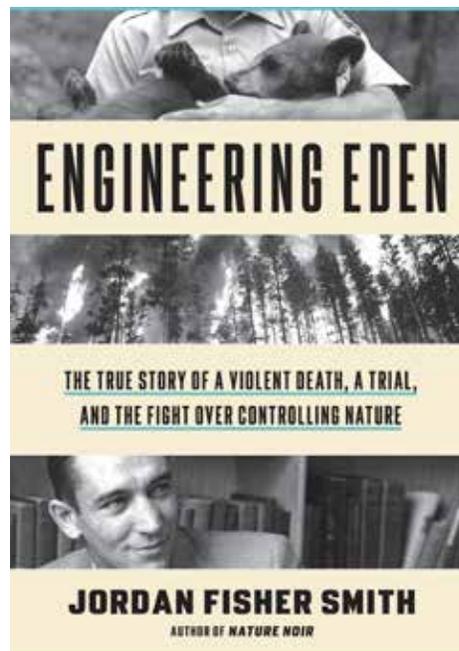
*Engineering Eden* was awarded the Silver Medal for nonfiction at the 2017 California Book Awards, and was longlisted for the 2016 PEN/E.O. Wilson Award for Literary Science Writing. The *Wall Street Journal* calls it "an intensely reported, rousingly readable and ambitiously envisioned book."

Jordan Fisher Smith's interest in the ecology of national parks is not a recent one. He spent 21 years as a park ranger in California, Idaho, Wyoming, and Alaska. His last book, *Nature Noir*, a memoir of part of that time, was an Audubon Magazine Editor's Choice and a Chronicle Best Books of 2005 pick. The *New York Times* called *Nature Noir* "eloquently meditative" and the *Boston Globe* judged it "daringly original and gorgeously nuanced." *Newsweek* said of Smith, "He writes about the natural world with more grace than anyone since Edward Abbey." Smith has also written for *The New Yorker*, *TIME.com*, *Men's Journal*, *The Daily Beast*,

and *Discover*. He appeared in and narrated a documentary film about Lyme disease, "Under Our Skin," which was on the 2010 Oscar shortlist for Best Documentary Feature.



Airlifting carcass of grizzly bear out of camp.



Jordan Fisher Smith

# THE RACE TO SAVE THE OCEAN'S OLD-GROWTH FOREST

by Dirk Rosen, Founder and Executive Director  
Marine Applied Research & Exploration (MARE)

The October Chapter talk by Mr. Dirk Rosen was about corals, their importance in the ocean habitat and the threat to them by current fishing practice. The corals with which most of us are familiar are the ones that occur between the ocean's surface and about 10m down which are what we see when we're snorkeling. SCUBA divers go down deeper, say to 75m (150-200 feet); in some cases even deeper, like at the Cordell Bank off Point Reyes where some of our Chapter's current members worked 30 years ago. All illustrations are from the talk.

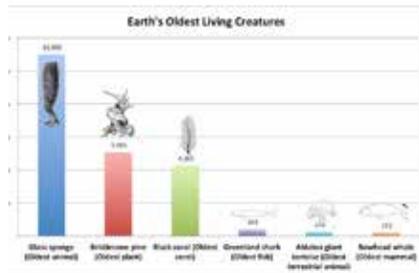
In keeping with the plan to study the sea without damaging the sea life there, Rosen's work with MARE is performed by a



Remote Ocean Vehicle (ROV), a water-borne drone. The system is a vehicle equipped with lights and camera that operates on a tether from a surface vessel to which it sends its images for recording and analysis. His target subject is the corals that grow in the company of sponges and other structure-forming invertebrates in a zone from 50m to 750m. This is also the target zone from which much of the ocean fishing industry gets its harvest.



The pictures shown here were among those seen at the meeting. Rosen refers to those deep corals as "a lush garden" which is the habitat of hundreds of species of marine life; 65% of all corals live below 50 m. In fact they are animals and the graph to the right shows their longevity and that of their cousin, the sponge, relative to other life forms.



The deep ocean is a fragile and irreplaceable habitat. Growth rates of some deep-sea corals have been estimated at less than 35 um per year, about the thickness of a very fine human hair. Individual deep-sea corals over 1,000 years old are common. The oldest living coral is the 4,200 years old black coral found 150m down off the coast of Hawaii. The oldest known sponge is 11,000 years old. The presence of these groups at depth provides many spatial niches which constitute the habitat and spawning ground of fishing industry target fish such as rockfish, sharks, and octopus.

All of these areas are under threat by the modern fishing practice of bottom-contact trawling (see right). As the net is dragged along on the bottom, while it is netting the fish it is also decimating their habitat, so the result is not only the capture of the target fish but also the damage to the habitat the fish population needs to recover.

(Continued bottom page 3)

(Sherman's Lagoon copied from San Francisco Chronicle, November 7, 2017)



**The First Honorary Charles De Y Elkus Founder's Award  
Presented to Mike F. Diggles FN'92 on 27 October 2017.**

Mike Diggles has been a member of the Explorers Club and of the Northern California Chapter since 1992. Since that time Mike has been a tireless supporter of the activities of the Chapter, and responsible for the development of the Chapter website and of the first website for the National Club. He continues with those activities to this day.



Von Hurston

**A LITTLE HISTORY OF OUR CHAPTER by Lesley Ewing FN'93.**

Those who have read the chapter roster might remember that our chapter started on February 12, 1973, at the St. Francis Yacht Club. At that first meeting, Charles de Young Elkus FN'54 was elected the first Chapter Chair; he served in that role from 1973 – 1975. He was joined on the board by Richard "Klondike Dick" Finnie EN'38, who was elected as Vice-Chair. Joseph Rychetnik, FN '67 was elected Secretary, Editor and Program Manager; and Richard "Dick" Fullerton, was elected Treasurer.

One of Charlie Elkus's enduring interests was in the rights, culture, and well-being of Southwestern American Indians. He explored much of the homeland of the Southwestern Indians and was a past Director of the Intertribal Indian Ceremonial Association of Gallup, NM. He was instrumental in forming an extensive collection of Indian art and artifacts which is now in the California Academy of Sciences.

In 1936, he accompanied Norman Nevills on his first trip from Mexican Hat, Utah to Lee's Ferry (near what is now the Glen Canyon Dam) on the San Juan

and Colorado Rivers. Later, in 1953, he participated in an Expedition to the Navajo Mountain and Navajo Canyon that carried Flag #48, going with Carl I. Wheat, Samuel B. Ballen (Dallas), Charles M. Gooding (Los Angeles), Clifford V. Heimbucher and Paul Heyneman (whose son Don is currently a member of the Chapter), with guides Buck Whitehat age 61, and Ephraim Crank, both from the Rainbow Plateau.

The following year, Charlie became a Fellow of The Explorers Club. To me, there seems to be a lot that can be learned about each explorer through the people who are his or her sponsors. Charlie was proposed for membership by Carl I. Wheat, of Berkeley, (led 1953 Flag Expedition #48, Navajo Mountain and Navajo Canyon). His application was seconded by Francis P. Farquhar (two time president of the Sierra Club and member of the 1949 North Pole Expedition) and Garfield D. Merner, who spent the years of 1924 – 1925 in the High Sierras, climbing Fin Dome, Mt. Whitney and Dragon and then on August 24, 1949, he was in a flight over the North Pole. There was also a letter of recommendation from Serge Korff,

President of both The Explorers Club and American Geographical Society and a physicist who led worldwide observations of cosmic rays in the 1940's and 1950's, using balloons, aircraft and mountaintop observatories – the drones of his day.

Charlie put his legal talents to work for the club by drafting the Chapter's first By-Laws; these were only recently replaced by the current version that Steve Smith helped to develop. Charlie was elected to the Explorers Club Board of Directors in 1974, and served there on the Legal Committee where he was instrumental in the formulation of procedural rules for the Chapters.

Charlie died too soon, on May 25, 1976. Some members might remember him. Many more remember his widow – Gerry Elkus, who remained active in our chapter for many years. We did not have Charlie or Gerry here to present this first Chapter Founder's Award, but we did have their daughter, Nancy de Young Elkus, who represented the Elkus family as well as the latest generation of the Northern California Explorers Club family.

**Dirk Rosen Talk (continued from previous page)**



In the discussion at the end of the presentation, it was pointed out that on both coasts of the USA, the problem of over-fishing and loss of fish populations has been the same, but with different recovery results. In the northeast, on the Georges Bank, when fishing for Cod was finally stopped, the Cod's habitat had been so badly damaged that the cod population has not yet recovered. Off the coast of California, where many fishing sanctuaries have been established and bottom drag fishing prohibited, recovery of overfished populations has been noteworthy.

**HONOR ROLL  
PAID UP DUES  
FOR 2017**

**Members**

Jim Alexander  
Linda Alexander  
James Allan  
Julia Amaral  
Robert Anderson  
Susan Anderson  
Guitty Azarpay  
Joan Bekins  
Richard Blake  
Joan Boothe  
Sheldon Breiner  
Keith Chase  
Doug Cheeseman  
Ted Cheeseman  
Sandra Cook  
Alan Cooper  
Thomas Cromwell  
Richard Dehmel  
Mike Diggles  
Tom Dolan  
Don Dvorak  
Elaine Dvorak  
Palmer Dyal  
Scott Ellis  
Sue Estey  
Robert Eustace  
Lesley Ewing  
Art Ford  
Susan Fox  
Paul Freitas  
Peter Hemming  
Tom Hall  
Mike Herz  
Bill Heydorn  
Don Heyneman  
Robert Higgins  
Jordan Hollarsmith  
Jim Hurson  
Von Hurson  
Alan Hutchinson  
Dana Isherwood  
Krist Jake  
Anders Jepsen  
Steven King  
Ronald Klein  
Jonathan Knowles  
William Kruse  
Keith Kvenvolden  
Alison LaBonte  
Lee Langan  
Ellen Lapham  
Scott MacBeth  
James Prigoff  
Sandra Ross  
Becky Rygh  
Rick Saber  
Schmieder, Bob  
Steve Smith  
James Weil  
Ed Von der Porten  
Mordechai Winter

**Sirdars**

Barry Boothe  
Marion Blumberg  
Karoli Clever  
Will Cooper  
Wendy Crowder  
Joy Durighello  
Sandra Fish  
Anna Freitas  
Louise Geraci  
Gerald Griffin  
Louise Heyneman  
David Hirzel  
Ann Hutchinson  
Nancy Isaac  
Kathy Jepsen  
Fred Johnson  
Kathy Judd  
Joe Kidd  
Margot Komarmy  
Christopher LaFranchi  
Karine Langan  
Liz McLoughlin  
Bonny O'Keefe  
Tom Patterson  
Laura Phelps  
Aldeana Saber  
Kay Schmieder  
R Stewart  
Z Stewart  
Judy Van Austen  
Robert Van Austen  
Mark Weiman

**From the Chair**

The October meeting was a busy one. During my meeting introduction I reported on a few current initiatives being developed at EC Headquarters as well as in our Chapter. To summarize: 1) NY is preparing a new membership card, a couple of your chapter officers took part in the selection of its imagery, and we would love your opinion once you receive it, 2) NY HQ is starting new programs to increase participation by and retention of our newer and younger Club members.

Our chapter will be developing some similar programs here. I discussed our new Lending Library of books by our EC Members, Sirdars, and Speakers as well as our experimental book swap. More details on these programs will be included in the next newsletter.

I also briefly mentioned a new website which helps raise money for non-profits by returning a portion of your dining-out meal costs to our chapter. Please visit <https://www.groupraise.com/organize> for more information on this interesting program.

We are also seeking a Chapter Videographer to help us prepare very short videos for distribution with the President's Monthly Video Report from NY – please contact

one of the Chapter officers if you would like to volunteer.

Lastly we had a most special event, the presentation of the Chapter's first official Chapter Award: The Charles L. Elkus Founder's Award, presented to Mike Diggles FN'92 who has provided long-term support and service to the Chapter. We were honored to have our new award presented by Nancy Elkus, daughter of our founder Charles Elkus, to Michael F. Diggles, FN92, our long-time webmaster, in recognition of his unwavering service and support of the Chapter for over 25 years. Congratulations Mike!

Finally, we had a wonderful presentation by our speaker Dirk Rosen who gave us insight into the importance of coral (a topic dear to my heart) and some of the many threats it faces, including those posed by highly destructive fishing methods. Dirk shared a selection of fascinating videos of our California deep-water coral gardens and their evidently non-photosynthetic inhabitants. For those of you unable to attend, Dirk's organization MARE, has some of these deep ocean videos available for view at: <https://www.maregroup.org/video.html>. I encourage you to check them out. Thanks so much to Dirk.

**Stephen E. Smith FN'96**



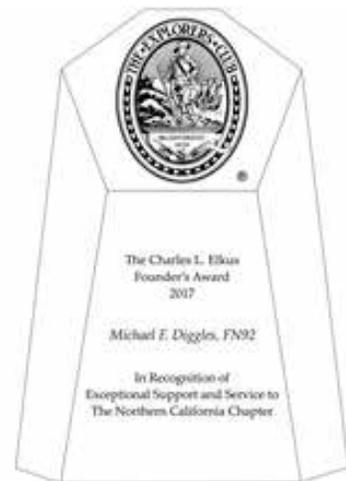
Founder's Award Winner Mike Diggles and Nancy



Art Ford, Aldeana Saber and Keith Kvenvolden



Pam Rich and Speaker Dirk Rosen



Inscription on first Founder's Award

*November 2017 Issue  
Northern California Chapter  
Established 1973*



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Vice Chair: Lesley Ewing FN'93  
lesleycoastal@gmail.com  
Secretary: Von Hurson MN'10  
Trekking@sonic.net  
Treasurer: Joan Boothe MN'07  
hoodooskr@aol.com  
415-346-5934  
Webmaster: Mike Diggles FN'92  
Newsletter: Anders Jepsen FN'03  
ajviking@aol.com  
925-322-8893

**Chapter Calendar of Events**  
(Venues are identified as soon as known.)

2017  
November 17 . . . . . Jordan Fisher Smith  
Engineering Eden . . . . . Grace Lutheran Ch  
December 17 . . . . . .Holiday Party  
. . . . . .Home of Joan and Barry Boothe  
2018  
January 26 . . . . . .Grace Lutheran Ch  
Climate Change on Mt. Everest. . . Dr. John All  
February 23 . . . . . Dr. Sherry Wren  
Surgical Approaches in the Ebola Crisis . . TBA  
March 30 . . . . . .Ms. Kimberley Chambers  
Swimming With Sharks Before Breakfast . . TBA  
April 27 . . . . . Alan Eustace  
The Stratospheric Jump . . . . . .TBA

**Earlier Chapter Events  
2016**

June . . . . . Crissie Field  
September . . . . .Drakes Bay Field Trip  
November 18, 2016 . . . . . Dr. Bob Schmieder  
2016 Heard Island Expedition . . Grace Luth Ch  
December 11 . . . . . .Holiday Party  
Home of Chapter Chair Joan Boothe

**2017**

January 27 . . . . . David Helvarg  
The Blue Ocean . . . . . Grace Luth Ch  
February 23 . . . . .David Rumsey  
Rumsey Map Center . . . . Stanford University  
March 31 . . . . . Eric Weiss  
Expedition Medicine . . . . Grace Luth Ch  
April 28 . . . . . Sandy Ross  
Afghanistan pre-Taliban . . . . Grace Luth Ch  
May 26 . . . . . J.R. Skok  
Seeking Life Signs on Mars Spengers, Berkeley  
June 24 . . . . . Chapter Picnic  
. . . . . Angel Island  
September 22 . . . . .Dr. Anders Jepsen  
Drones to map landmines . . . Grace Luth Ch  
October 27 . . . . . Dirk Rosen  
.Save Deep Sea Corals . . . Grace Lutheran Ch

Send address changes and  
corrections by email to  
ecnca@oceaneearth.org

**OTHER EVENTS, EXPEDITIONS, etc.**

**HOLIDAY PARTY:** December 17, 2017 at the home of Joan and Barry Boothe  
2435 Divisadero Street, San Francisco CA 94115

**BOOK NOOK  
(RECENT PUBLICATIONS BY CHAPTER MEMBERS)**

When Your Life Depends On It. Extreme Decision Making Lessons From The Arctic.  
Brad Borkan & David Hirzel, 2017, Terra Nova Press, PO Box 1808, Pacifica, CA 94044

Vivid Memories of an Interesting Life  
Col. John H. Roush, Jr. Self Published, 2017, Marketing Services @xlibris.com

Muddy Boots -- essays of a field biologist.  
Meg Lowman F'97 and Lowell Thomas Awardee '02. Peppertree Press, and on Amazon.com

**All in the Family:**

The disastrous fires in Northern California touched us all when the home of Von and Jim Hurson in Santa Rosa was lost to the flames. We all grieve with the Hursons and extend to them our sympathy and wishes for a quick recovery.



Rick Saber

**CHAPTER MEETING Friday  
November 17, 2017**

Date: Friday, 17 November 2017  
Place: Grace Lutheran Church  
3201 Ulloa Street at 33rd Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94116  
Time: 6:30 - reception  
7:15 - dinner; 8:00 - program  
Meal Options: Chicken Monterey or Stuffed Pork Tenderloin  
Veggie option — Vegetarian Lasagna  
Cost: \$49 in advance, \$60 after 14 November; Students: \$35.  
(2017 dues: Members \$25, Sirdars \$50)  
Please mail reservations, checks & dues to Joan Boothe  
email: Joan at hoodooskr@aol.com; or Call 415-233-1697 or  
mail to 2435 Divisadero Street, San Francisco CA 94115

**We have an established PayPal account.**

With an account, you can sign up and remit your meal costs, dues, etc. to the NorCA Chapter  
There is a PAYPAL BUTTON on our website ([www.explorersnorca.org](http://www.explorersnorca.org)); easy to use!