

# The Explorers Club

## Northern California Chapter

October 2004

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## San Francisco — October 19, 2004

### A Special Event: Peter Pyle, Exotic Foods & Redwood Creek Wine at the beautiful City Club of San Francisco

Great Trans-Pacific Migrations  
From Albatross to Turtles  
and Sharks to Shorebirds.

#### Dr. Peter Pyle

Peter Pyle works at the Institute for Bird Populations (IPB) and has spent a lot of time on the Farallon Islands. Most people never see these ocean lands on the Pacific's horizon; they are the home of myriad birds and sea lions and migrations of large fish pass annually. Peter will share his experiences with our chapter at the first meeting of the 2004-05 season.

The Pacific Ocean covers over 69 million square miles of, for the most part, hostile territory for migrant animals. No place to land and little to eat! Yet, many species need to navigate these waters to take advantage of seasonal food resources or protected areas to raise their young. Through the advent of state-of-the art satellite-tag technology, we are discovering some amazing things about how far these animals travel and the methods they use to get where they are going. Whereas north-to-south migrations are considered the norm, there is a strong, heretofore unrecognized east-to-west component to Pacific migrations. Peter's talk will travel from Siberia to Baja California, the Gulf of the Farallons to Hawaii, and Indonesia to Point Reyes, in quest of some of these great trans-Pacific

Redwood Creek Wines  
and The Explorers Club  
Partner for

#### "A Taste for Adventure"

Redwood Creek Wines of California and The Explorers Club are inviting local Explorers Club members, some public and the media to journey through a series of *A Taste of Adventure* events in select cities nationwide. During these events, attendees will have a rare opportunity to discover North America's most adventurous foods paired with the wines of Redwood Creek, followed by a lecture by one of America's leading explorers. The *Taste of Adventure* events are an extension of the weekly public lecture series at Club headquarters in New York, of which Redwood Creek recently became the sponsor.

The first of the regional *Taste of Adventure* events will be held in San Francisco on October 19th and is being hosted by the Northern California chapter. Members of the Northern California chapter, members of the public and the local press are invited to attend this special evening. Club President Richard C. Wiese will be on-hand, along with Redwood Creek's winemaker, Cal Dennison, and Gene Rurka, the Club's expert on exotic foods. This is the first time the 'exotic' hors d'oeuvres made famous at our Annual Dinner will be served under Club auspices outside of New

#### NEW LOCATION

**Date** Tuesday, October 19, 2004  
**Place:** The City Club, 155 Sansome  
San Francisco  
**Time:** 6:30 pm, wine & food  
8:00pm, speaker  
**Cost:** free, however,  
limited to 70 members

Reach Lee at [lee@langan.net](mailto:lee@langan.net)  
or 415 567-8089

Reservation Form on page 5  
Please reserve promptly!



both articles continued on page 2

migratory pathways.

Peter will also discuss the Farallon sea lions and their hunter, the Great White Shark.

Peter has been working for IBP since 1996. He attended Swarthmore College during the 1970's while working seasonally on the Hawaii and other Pacific Island Forest Bird Surveys. In 1980, he did an internship for the Point Reyes Bird Observatory (PRBO) Land-bird Program. In 1985, Peter became a biologist on the Farallon Islands, a post he held until 2003. During this period, while splitting time between PRBO & IBP from 1996 through 2003, Peter authored or co-authored over 100 peer-reviewed papers and three books.

Among banders he is best known for his *Identification Guide to North American Birds, Part 1\**, which includes detailed criteria for aging and sexing land birds in the hand. (He is currently working on Part 2, to cover water birds, raptors, and game birds. )

\* Pyle P. 1997. Identification Guide to North American Birds - Part 1. Slate Creek Press, PO Box 219, Bolinas, CA 94924-0219, USA. 732 pp. ISBN 0-9618940-2-4.



Peter Pyle, banding

above: alligator treat at 100th ECAD

below: migrating bird solo at sunset



LANGAN



York. And the first time that intrepid diners will be assisted in the proper wines to drink with the exotics!

Following a reception and

brief presentation featuring exotics and wine, Peter Pyle will deliver his lecture.

The *Taste of Adventure* event will be held from 6:30 pm to 9:00 pm at The City Club, a beautiful venue in downtown San Francisco located at 155 Sansome Street, between Bush and Pine, on the 10th floor of the tower next to the Pacific Coast Stock Exchange Building. The event is free, but reservations for chapter members and their lady or gentleman are limited to a total of seventy. Other guests will be wait-listed. Members will be notified if space for their guests becomes available. This event is by reservation only; see the reservation form on page 5 of the newsletter for details on responding.



## Merle Green Robertson Fêted at the Legion of Honor

On September 4, Merle was honored by a gathering of Maya scholars from around the world. The occasion was the opening of the impressive *Courtly Art of the Ancient Maya* exhibition which had just moved from its time at the National Gallery in Washington, DC. It will be in The City through January 2, 2005, but do not dawdle; it is an insight that demonstrates the visual magnificence of ancient Maya art with over 130 masterworks drawn from some 30 public and private lenders. (See the museum web site for details: [www.thinker.org](http://www.thinker.org).)

Merle was acknowledged for her extensive contributions to our understanding of these arts; Museum Director Harry Parker hosted the evening dinner.



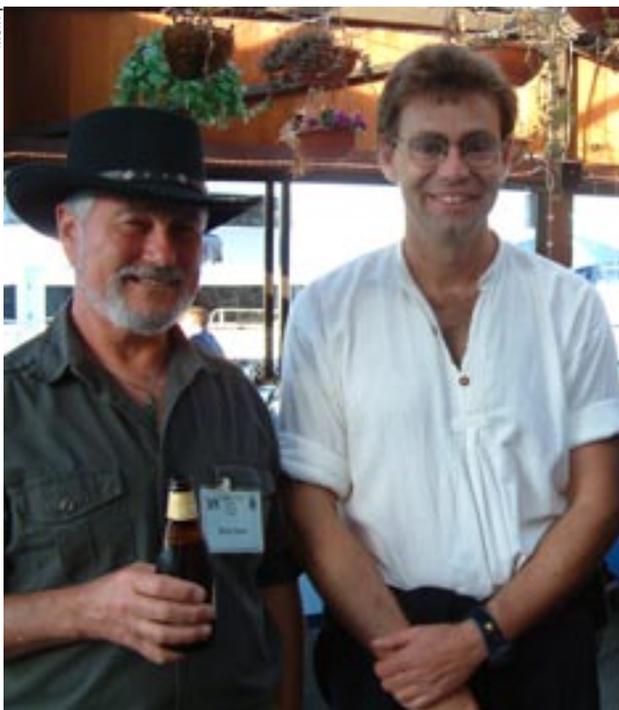
Merle & Michael Coe

## Enduring Patagonia! Greg Crouch San Francisco

There is a great deal of fear involved in climbing a mountain the hard way. It helps you think clearly about the ever-present dangers. Reaching the peaks of Patagonia is hard, and fearful. Greg Crouch sheds this fear with humor shared with his team. For the winter assault he described this night, the four-man team spoke different languages—and his jokes did not generate the guffaws that relieved his fright. Nevertheless, the quartet found a way, and fear was overcome with success and self confidence. After weeks of traversing snow and ice, and the occasional rock face, they reached the summit and returned safely. Looking at the glorious photos, I vowed to learn the other guy's language before such a climb! (It won't be necessary...)

From the view of a non-climber, Greg Crouch's fascinating talk on a winter ascent of Patagonia's lofty spiral, Cerro Torres, sent chills through me. His summertime first conquest of the same daunting peak had the same effect. In a well-crafted slide presentation, some with music to lead the rapt audience into the majesty of these southern mountains, he moved from an overview of his affection for the vast

Cap'n Crunch (Rick Saber) & our speaker, Greg Crouch



lands of south Chile, from the sea to the peaks, to an enthusiastic remembrance of his winter achievement with three then-acquaintances, now friends.

Climbing is a labor of love. His vivid reflections of those daunting places, confronted while ascending to the 10,000' summit, made your muscles twitch. The brilliance of the Patagonian Ice Cap, the largest block of ice outside of the contiguous polar regions, and the solitude reflected in his and his fellow climber's photos, offered a clear insight into what drives anyone to such a challenge. Patagonia is just wonderful.

There are long periods of tedium in the long winter nights and waiting-out the storms. Greg considers himself a champion at this patient task for he knows what awaits when the sun allows access. The evening was a delight listening to a consummate mountain climber.

Crouch serves on the Patagonia Land Trust. His pictures of the beautiful foothill *estancias* that they have managed to obtain for conservation, offer a place, for those unable to reach the heights, to enjoy this undamaged land so reminiscent of the early times in the western USA. Contact the Trust, if you are interested in their work—of if you want to go South.

His next project is a new book on seeking out those planes lost while the private pilots helped in WWII by flying the Burma 'Hump'. He heads for China this Fall. While we await his findings, check out *Enduring Patagonia\**, from which this evening's talk was drawn.

\* *Enduring Patagonia: The Winter West Face* is available in hardcover, paperback or digital format on Amazon (and elsewhere.)



## Carlton Skinner Chapter Chair Emeritus is dead

Carlton Skinner, Chairman of our Chapter from 1985-89, died on June 22, at the age of 91. Gov. Skinner was appointed by President Harry Truman to be the first civilian governor of Guam, in 1949, establishing the island's first university and writing the constitution that it still uses today.



Solange & Carlton Skinner

The appointment followed his command of the first racially integrated warships in the U.S. military. From 1943 to 1944, he was a Coast Guard lieutenant commanding the weather ship *Sea Cloud* in the North Atlantic. Dismayed by the military's practice of keeping ship crews segregated, when he got command of the *Sea Cloud*, he was given his chance to prove his point. The *Sea Cloud* shipped out of Boston with a fully integrated crew of 173 men. He parlayed the *Sea Cloud's* achievement into successfully commanding a second integrated crew aboard the patrol frigate *Hoquiam*. The U.S. Navy then, with his consultation, integrated its destroyer escort *Mason*, and in the ensuing decades the Navy and Coast Guard dropped all racial barriers. The *Sea Cloud* was retired as a naval vessel, but today, rigged with three masts and sails, it is a commercial luxury yacht.

After leaving the governor's post in 1953, he went on to live all over the world, as a chief financial officer for several companies including American President Lines, Colt Industries and Fairbanks Morse. In the late 1960s, he settled in San Francisco and established Skinner & Co., a management and financial consulting firm. In 1967, Gov. Skinner met French anthropologist Solange Petit while both were on the South Pacific Commission, and the two married in 1970. Gov. Skinner is survived by his wife.

(These details were excerpted from the SF Chronicle.)

## Will Siri

helped define the meaning of science as adventure; he died August 24 at 85.

Chapter member Will Siri, was co-leader of the first American expedition to summit Mount Everest (he did so three times), helped rescue Sir Edmund Hillary's climbing team from an icy crevice (on Mt. Makalu) and hiked the Sierra with Ansel Adams. He was



Jean & Will Siri

a leading researcher in biophysics at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, a job that began after he helped create the atomic bomb as a member of the Manhattan Project from 1943 to 1945. He was a president and director of the national Sierra Club during the dynamic period of the 1960s and 1970s, as it grew from a mostly hiking-oriented club to an environmental policy powerhouse. After he retired from LBNL in 1982, he helped lead a host of other ecological protection groups, from the Bay Institute to the Save the Bay Association.

Born in Philadelphia, Siri earned a bachelor's degree in science at the University of Chicago in 1942. After Los Alamos, he joined UC Berkeley as a researcher in 1945; he teamed up with John Lawrence—'the father of nuclear medicine'—to research technologies to help the human body. Around this time, he also decided to take his mountain climbing ambitions to new heights. Throughout his climbs, Siri conducted tests on how altitude and thin air affected dizziness, appetite and red blood cell counts. Most of the tests were on himself.

Will Siri was rendered inactive over the past decade as Alzheimer's robbed him of his robustness, but the mark he left in the previous years elicits awe from those who knew him. Will's wife, East Bay Regional Parks board director and former El Cerrito Mayor Jean Siri, views their 54 years of marriage as every bit the adventure that his many climbing forays were.

(These details were excerpted from the SF Chronicle.)

## Expedition News

Published for 10 Years

The Northern California Chapter subscribes to *Expedition News* and makes it available to members on our web site.

Ten years ago this month, *Expedition News* started as a simple idea: create a forum for explorers to post their projects so that sponsors, the media, and other explorers could participate. At the time, e-mail was still in its infancy; most copies of EN were either mailed or sent by fax. Today, between the web site\*, e-mail and snail mail subscriptions, and quarterly excerpts in the Explorers Club *Explorers Journal*, approximately 10,000 people each month read about projects that "stimulate, motivate and educate."

[www.Expeditionnews.com](http://www.Expeditionnews.com)

## Membership Drive Eagle Scout Association

Dr. Michael Manyak, one of our most active and effective Club Board members, has proposed that The Explorers Club communicate with the Eagle Scout Association in an initiative to seek out qualified potential members for our esteemed Club. Our Board of Directors agreed that this organization, which boasts 120,000 exceptional gentlemen, would be an excellent source of potential members. Dr. Manyak has volunteered to contact the Eagle Scout Association by way of that organization's newsletter, but he would first like to secure a commitment from the chapters to assist in this initiative. The New York Headquarters is requesting that each chapter provide two names of individuals who could assist in coordinating Eagle Scout Association membership applications that might come in from the Chapter region. Contact Steve Smith if you are interested. We have no way of knowing how many applications this initiative might bring forth, but it would be best to prepare for an avalanche! The Club is also seeking out the Girl Scout equivalent organization.

Members will note the announcement in the Log that the Boy Scouts will recognize twenty Club members at the 2005 National Scout Jamboree to be held at Camp A. P. Hill in Virginia.

## Ocean Film Festival

Second Annual!



The second annual San Francisco Ocean Film Festival, celebrating the sea with inspirational films and lively discussions on oceanography, saltwater sports, and coastal cultures, is only four months away .

Mark your calendars and plan to spend time at the San Francisco waterfront venues the weekend of January 28-30, 2005. The three thematic venues— Ft. Mason's Cowell Theater, the San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park, and the Visitor Center — will remain the same as last year.

Chapter member Krist Jake is the founder of this successful event. You can check their web site for details:

[www.oceanfilmfest.org](http://www.oceanfilmfest.org)

## Art Ford

From Antarctic to the Arctic

Chapter member Dr. Arthur Ford made his first transit of the historic North West Passage, following Amundsen's 1903 route via Lancaster Sound, in July and August 2004 on the Russian ice-breaker *Capt. Khlebnikov*. Art reports, "Fantastic trip, including seeing the graves on the beach from the lost Franklin expedition." He asks, "Has the club Flag ever been carried through NWP, at least in the opposite direction that Amundsen took? If not, I may be going again next summer!"

Art has spent long periods in the Antarctic and acted as lecturer on several tours to the South.

## The Chapter Chair

Dear Northern California Explorers:

Greetings and welcome to a new season of Northern California Explorers Club meetings. To those of you who have felt the void of the traditional September opening—my apologies. Not atypically, your officers have been traveling extensively during August and September and we judged that our October event would make a stellar way to reconvene.

Although we are starting a little late this year we are starting with a bang! Thanks to the great efforts of member Morton Beebe and the above-and-beyond-the-call coordination of Vice Chair Lee Langan we have a most elegant and unique event planned for our October 19th opening. Fair warning: this gathering will be strictly limited to individual EC members and one significant other. In attendance will be representatives of the New York chapter as well as members of the press and specially invited guests. So, make sure to read the details, and get your RSVP in as soon as possible. You definitely won't want to be left out; especially if you are partial to North American crickets in pepper jelly or rosemary rattlesnake. My mouth is watering already.

On a personal note, this has been a full summer for me, encompassing multiple trips to the east coast, and my annual expedition to Micronesia. Our work in Kosrae, FSM continues. Unfortunately, for the first time since we began our studies in 1996, we have observed bleaching on the reef. Although its significance is unknown, the observation is troubling. Those of

you who share an interest in the ecology of our world's reef systems are undoubtedly aware of the stress they are experiencing. We are hopeful that we are observing a limited event. Next year's monitoring session will help determine whether this is a transitory or chronic condition. By way of shameless advertising, we are always looking for volunteer divers to help us in this endeavor. Let me know of your interest, we will even supply the air!

I want to extend a warm welcome to some new members of the Northern California Chapter. The following individuals have had their memberships approved by the Board so far in 2004: Amos Nachoum, Duane Silverstein, Mary Stoll, Thierry Thys, David Moorer, Tierney Thys, Lynn Rothschild, Sean Savoy, Andrew Jameson, and student members Rebecca Dell and Kyle Rothschild-Mancinelli. Welcome to one and all, we'll look forward to seeing you at the next meeting.

—Stephen E. Smith, FN'96

The City Club is on the 10th floor of 155 Sansome Street; street parking is available after 6:00; BART and cable car access.



City Club of San Francisco

## Evolution

@ The Explorers Club

Summer is past and our new season is upon us, none too soon! The opening event will be exciting for, among other things, we have a great speaker, and this is the first time the 'exotics' are being featured outside New York. Some folks get a bit queasy at the thought of consuming these morsels; don't be. They are prepared so well, you can eat any and go away boasting how good they are and how brave you are. It's an 'explorer' thing. Besides, unlike the crowds surrounding the tables at ECAD in New York, we are being served an appropriate wine for each exotic. How splendid.

I note that there is a push to increase membership by appealing to Boy Scouts that have achieved who would qualify. This is a good source.

I feel we have excellent sources in the Bay Area, and we should be alert and encourage locally. There are a large number of explorers at our universities and local laboratories. Seek them out; encourage them; build our ranks. We all benefit! The Explorers Club is a bargain at any level and well worth it for the camaraderie and knowledge gained.

You may note that there are several 'open' slots for speakers later in the year; we do have several discussions underway but they are not concluded. Meanwhile, if you have suggestions, give me a call; the meetings will fill quickly.

—Lee Langan, FN'99

### The October 19th Meeting is a Special Event

It is hosted by the Redwood Creek Winery as part of the *Taste of Adventure Series* in cooperation with the Explorers Club headquarters.

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ spaces for October 19, 2004, at The City Club of San Francisco. There is no cost; however, the event is limited to 70 members and their lady or gentleman.

Contact Lee at [lee@langan.net](mailto:lee@langan.net) or 415 567-8089 to assure a reservation). Prospective members will be accepted if room allows; you will be notified.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address (if changed): \_\_\_\_\_

Lady or Gentleman: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail this form to:

Lee Langan  
2660 California Street  
San Francisco, CA 94115

NOTE!

Your name must be on the accepted list to attend.

## **Northern California 2003-2004 Event Calendar**

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

**October 19, 2004 Peter Pyle  
The City Club, San Francisco**

**"Birds on the Farrollons & Across the Pacific"**

November 19, 2004 Çagan Sekercioglu  
Sinbad's Restaurant, San Francisco

"Exploring in Angola"

December 19, 2004

Explorers 'Social'

January 28-30, 2005 Krist Jake  
San Francisco

"The Ocean Film Festival"

February 2005

open

March 19, 2005 ECAD  
Waldorf Astoria, New York

101 Years of The Explorers Club

March 2005

open

April 2005

open

June 2005

open

June 18, 2005

Chapter Picnic

Contact Anders Jepsen to help: <[ajviking@aol.com](mailto:ajviking@aol.com)>

**Please note venues and dates with care.  
October 19th is a TUESDAY meeting at  
a new venue, The City Club of San Francisco**

**In full and lively color!**  
To experience this newsletter in color,  
see the 'pdf' version at our web site.

(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.)

*October 2004*

Dr. Stephen E. Smith  
The Explorers Club  
Northern California Chapter  
402 Via Royal  
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

