

The Explorers Club

Northern California Chapter

February 2002

Web site: <<http://www.diggles.com/ec/>>

San Francisco February 22 Bonita Chamberlin

'Inside Afghanistan' A View You Will Not See on CNN

Dr. Chamberlin is a geologist, not a journalist. She has been to this poor land-locked striking country many times over the past two decades.

Before the events that have unfolded in front of our eyes over the last few months, she planned to speak of the jewels that were uncovered during the Soviet incursion. After the Russian defeat, gems were exposed as a result of bombing. Perhaps this is the case once again. We will ask.

Nevertheless there are more pressing details with which she can enlighten us so we can understand our most-recent ally more fully and humanely. She has adventures and explorations to speak about, but it is the people and their plight that she will try to bring into our focus. Especially the women. A scourge has been removed; what remains? Come listen and ask and learn.

Date: Friday, 22 February 2002

Place: Ft. Mason Officers Club
Ft. Mason, Franklin at Bay
San Francisco

Time: 6:30 pm, no-host cocktails
7:30 pm, dinner

Cost: \$45 (by Feb 19)
\$50 (if posted afterwards)
call Steve at (925) 934-1051

Reservation Form on page 5
Please reserve promptly!



About 27 million people live in Afghanistan in an area near the size of Texas, population 21 million. The average lifespan is 47 years.

Noetic Sciences

Dr. Marilyn Schlitz
at Ft. Mason Officers Club on
March 29

Marilyn Schlitz (FN'98) is Director of Research at the Institute of Noetic Sciences and senior scientist at the Geraldine Brush Cancer Research Institute at the California Pacific Medical Center.

Trained in medical anthropology and psi research, Marilyn has published numerous articles on cross-cultural healing, consciousness studies, distant healing and the discourse of controversial science. She has conducted research at Stanford University, Science Applications International Corporation, the Institute for Parapsychology, and the Mind Science Foundation, has taught at Trinity, Stanford and Harvard

universities and has lectured widely—including talks at the United Nations and the Smithsonian Institution.

She serves on the Editorial Board of *Alternative Therapies*, is the leader of Esalen's Center for Theory and Research Working Group on Distant Healing Intentionality and is on the Scientific Program Committee for the Consciousness Center at the University of Arizona, Tucson.

San Francisco Geneticist Elbert Branscomb

Exposing Our Genetic Code
(Throughout Antiquity)
Unfolding the Genome

Once again those who missed the scheduled lecture of the Chapter, missed an evening of enlightenment. Elbert Branscomb opened showing a Quicktime movie, less than a minute long, which communicated the complexity of life at the cellular level: a white blood cell 'chased' a bacteria

through a maze of red cells until the prey was caught and absorbed! Before our very eyes we observed this gene war; this time the white cell won; other times the bacteria escapes. Each cell has a genome which defines how to conduct this life or death battle.

From here Dr. Branscomb juggled a blitz of questions while showing and rotating three-dimensional models of protein molecules, microscopic slides of DNA 'strings', 'gene'ological trails of our ancient ancestry and details of what has been learned about the make up of all creatures, large and small. This was exploration at the nano-nano level and across a world map.

Genomes contain the code, the recipe if you will, to create each of thousands of proteins. Each designed to do a specific, elegant task within a body. These can be pumps, motors, catalysts, detectors, signals, structures, the timing and how-to—a huge assembly of the components of life. It all works, but there can be a runaway: a cancer can develop. Understanding these recipes offers the potential to stop these growths. There are already successful examples!

Having defined the genome, we now have the machine for proteins, but it will take a long time to understand their interactions and roles. The 'storage' media for the genome is DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid), likened to a medium like magnetic tape. The string of amino acids (only four such!) in a sequence along the DNA, three billion or so long, define the code of life. This is the genome, the information ON the DNA. Whereas the digital computer is fundamentally based upon a base-two,

on/off, sequence, the genome is based upon a base-four sequence. We begin to understand how computer applications use complex instructions stored as base-two (bits). Genomes conceptually derive their enhanced complexity from the added complexity of base-four. Simple elegance in both cases.

Everytime a cell replicates, all of this complexity is duplicated! There can be one alignment error in a hundred million which contributes to change. In the chaos of life, disruptions can make more changes. Nevertheless, the basic genome sequence remains stable. When a new being is created genomes are combined from those of the parents, and so life goes on. "The medium (DNA) is ephemeral; the message, the pattern written on it, is eternal!"

The talk ended with a discussion tracing the ancestry of human genomes. Mitochondrial comes only from one's mother, and this has allowed the tracing of human ancestry to the onset of homo sapiens in Africa, perhaps 150,000 years ago. Eve was there.

Dr. Branscomb suggested a good read for more detail*. He also observed that the differences in all humans are very small indeed, as proven in their genome sequence! Race and cultural differences are all, in a real sense, superficial.

The evening could have continued with the enthusiastic interchange between our speaker and those present. It was 'called' for time!

* **The Seven Daughters of Eve: The Science That Reveals Our Genetic Ancestry**, Bryan Sykes, W.W. Norton & Company; ISBN: 0393020185; Hardcover, 320 pages (July 9, 2001)





It Shined!

Those able to attend enjoyed their trek on the new Betsy Crowder Trail in San Mateo County; you can walk it any time!

Wendy Crowder and Elsa Roscoe along Wendy's mother's trail



Each of these subjects deserves more space and discussion; alas...

Go & Tell in January

Eve Iverson (CO'86) is back from a Fulbright six months in Egypt. She is teaching at Emory High School. Recent world events have placed her on call as an expert in pack animals and the organization of large herds! Humvees go only so far in Afghanistan...

Diana Pickworth-Wong (FN'01) is back home after months of digging early Paleolithic settlements in the Yemen deserts. She is focusing on writing about her findings until things quiet in the Middle East.

Ron Reuther (FN'74) announced the Amelia Earheart Seminar which will be held at the Western Aerospace Museum in Oakland on May 17-19. Ask him for details (and the cruise on the refurbished FDR yacht, the Potomac).

And, of course, there was more.

USGS Evening Lecture

Thursday, February 21, 2002, 7:00 pm
United States Geological Survey, 345 Middlefield Road, Menlo Park, CA, Building 3, Second floor, Conference Room A

Secrets Of A Frozen World Science and Life in Antarctica

Arthur B. Ford (FN'98), Geologist and Polar Wanderer, Author of Encyclopaedia Britannica article on Antarctica

- Learn about Earth's highest, driest, windiest, and coldest continent
- Though it has 90% of the world's ice (70% of the world's fresh water), Antarctica is also the world's largest

desert

- Was Antarctica---once the site of lush tropical vegetation---a migration pathway for Australia's strange animals?

- Antarctica's blue-ice fields have yielded some 20,000 meteorites, including samples of Mars and the Moon

To review the colorful lecture flyer see <http://online.wr.usgs.gov/kiosk/Feb02.pdf>.

On Board The M/S Endeavour
Antarctica/South Georgia/The Falkland Islands — November 14-December 3,

Mort Beebe (FN'78) will be a guest lecturer on this 2002 Explorers Club travel; contact him directly or email ectravel@saver.net

Magical Machu Picchu, Lost City of the Inca

A 2002 scenic calendar was available at our January (and December) meeting from Wright Water Engineers, Denver. Thank you! Beautiful photos by Ruth Wright (FN'83). The Machu Picchu Paleohydrological Survey Project began in 1994. See <http://www.wrightwater.com/wpi/wpihome.html> for more details and other projects. Contact them if you wish a calendar.

Treasures of the Manila Galleons

An exhibition at the San Diego Maritime Museum, on the tall ship 'Star of India', throughout 2002

Manila Galleons were laden with gold and treasure; and, consequently, were the targets of seagoing marauders for 250 years. This exhibit explores the

Manila galleon trade, the original commercial link across the Pacific.

Shown are recently discovered pieces from the cargo of a ship that wrecked on the shores of Baja, California, about 1575 -- the earliest known Manila galleon shipwreck. These include precious luxury items such as furniture, ivories, silks, objects of silver and gold, and Ming porcelain intended for the tables of the wealthy in Spain and the New World. Other items: Spanish silver and pieces of eight that loaded down galleons on their voyages from Acapulco to Manila. The exhibit includes artifacts from a galleon that wrecked in Northern California in 1595, yielding porcelain fragments that were later incorporated into tools and ornaments by California Indians.

On display will be the only privately owned document in the world signed by the explorer who gave San Diego its name: Sebastián Vizcaíno. The exhibit also includes specially commissioned paintings and models, weapons from the period, and more.

If you are interested in searching for Manila Galleons, or this particular exhibition, contact Ed.

—Edward Von der Porter (FN'80)

Expedition Medicine Minimizing Risk in the Field

A seminar to be held at the New York Headquarters on March 21, 2002 (Thursday before ECAD.) The \$50 fee includes lunch and the all-day conference on practical information for expedition leaders and members. Contact Marisa Collazo (212) 628-8383.

Yosemite National Institutes

Diggles Helps to Expose Youth to Exploration

Mike Diggles escorted this troupe for a six-day visit in November 2001



DIGGLES

Yosemite National Institutes (YNI) is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to providing educational adventures in nature's classroom to inspire a personal connection to the natural world and responsible actions to sustain it.

The Yosemite Institute was founded in 1971 in response to:

- the beginning of a local and national environmental consciousness;
- a growing demand from teachers interested in utilizing parks as classrooms, but unable to manage the logistics of providing high-quality programs for their students; and
- the National Park Service's interest in encouraging private partnerships to help expand its educational and interpretive mission.

Based on the successes of Yosemite Institute, Headlands Institute was established in 1977 and Olympic Park Institute in 1988. Instruction is hands-on, science-based and conducted in an advocacy-free atmosphere. The effort

is to instill an emotional and intellectual connection with nature, which in turn encourages environmental stewardship.

CELEBRATE YNI's 30 YEARS WITH DR. JANE GOODALL May 10, 2002

In 1997, Yosemite National Institutes began a partnership with Dr. Jane Goodall's Roots and Shoots environmental youth program in order to achieve a common vision of teaching youth the power of environmental awareness and stewardship. Come join in "Celebrating a New Generation of Environmental Heroes" with Jane Goodall. The event is on Friday, May 10, at 8:00 p.m. in San Francisco's historic Herbst Theatre. Tickets are \$25, plus a \$2 handling fee. Call (415) 392-4400.

Evolution

@ The Explorers Club

I was taken aback by the enthusiasm when Elbert Branscomb's spoke on January 25 before a vitally interested group of explorers. Not by our intent interest; not by the satisfaction in grasping what is happening with this new understanding; not by the energy of the extraordinarily qualified speaker. After all we are used to listening intently and learning from experts.

But, was Dr. Branscomb an 'explorer'? Yes, I know the Club carefully speaks of 'field' exploration; it also bristles at 'adventure' seeking. Yet, this geneticist, delving into the intricacies of the code of life, extrapolates these findings to the evolution of man and the geographic distribution of this development. If this is not field exploration, I am stumped. Does he have to visit ruins?

I submit The Explorers Club should broaden its scope to be all inclusive of 21st-Century explorers.

It should be but a branch of our members that slosh about the untrammelled world. Those in lab coats whose minds seeks to solve much the same secrets of life contribute mightily. The cross fertilization is essential to our scientific understanding. Carbon-14 dating or genome tracing shed light on the artifacts we uncover. Ground-penetrating radar or magnetometry often allow an efficient triage of new and old sites. Minuscule GPS locators allow our return to hidden locations and prove our

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Greetings from the Chair

Dear Northern California Explorers:

I had the pleasure of going to San Diego for the recent Board of Directors meeting and got a lot of news about what is going on with the Club. Joan Bekins, Mort Beebe and Alan Nichols were there as well, and all contributed to the meeting and likely have their own views of what was going on. There were several wonderful after-meeting events so we all had lots of time to talk individually with the Board members, officers and other folks from some of the chapters.

The Lowell Thomas Fund is doing well – apparently it will be possible to pay for all the necessary roof work and still have over \$500,000 for an endowed fund.

The Youth Grants Program made a number of awards last year and will make more awards this year. There is money available for grants in 2002. If anyone knows a deserving high school or college student who would be a worthy recipient of a youth grant, I have applications, they are available from <youth@explorers.org> and are due by February 28, 2002.

There are nine candidates for the five new Board positions. Ballots should be out soon and to make your vote count you need to *follow the directions*. Vote for no more than five candidates; any ballots with write-in votes or comments will not be counted, your name and address need to be legible and you must be current on your dues.

Faanya Rose announced that she would not seek a third year as president. She will remain on the Board

another two years, but as soon as the vote for directors is over, the directors will meet to elect a new president (that all happens at ECAD.)

While the building crisis has been addressed, the Board still was very concerned about the financial stability of the club. The are also struggling with the question about the make-up of the club in 2020 or 2050 and what they, as the Board, can do to get new members who will continue the traditions of the club through the next century.

New York — ECAD

March 23, 2002

The theme of ECAD this year will be “The Future of Exploration Inner and Outer Space” and the key speakers will be Dan Goldman and Bob Ballard. Mort Beebe has been asked to help with the video documentation of the event, so if you want to be immortalized on the ECAD video, let Mort know how to find him in the Waldorf.

Mort Beebe is the chair of the Centennial Celebration for the Club. He has some excellent ideas and suggested to the Board that we might consider having a year of events— in London, New York and San Francisco. Other ideas are in the kettle, so if you have suggestions for 2004/2005, contact Mort.

Joan Bekins was inspired by the Board meeting and developed some recommendations for an Explorers Club Education campaign— a series of 5 or 6 books on Explorers, with a short blurb on the club in the beginning, that will inspire children to become explorers. She wrote a wonderful letter to the

Board and will probably share it with others who would like a copy.

The Board was very interested in hearing comments and talking with members. I am equally sure that they would welcome letters or e-mail from members. Check it out for yourselves or go to New York and talk with folks in person. ECAD is an excellent opportunity, but it is not the only time to make your opinions known.

—Lesley Ewing, FN'93

Evolution @ The Explorers Club — continued from page 4

path. All this technology has been the result of human exploration.

Surely our heritage is in-the-field exploration. This is wonderful and exciting. But, think just how many contribute to these expeditions in very significant ways. Reflect upon the exploits of space and oceanography. Is it only the astronauts or divers who qualify? Only those on board ship or those who document the findings? Only the archaeologists who dig? Or, those who manage? Do the mountain climbers left at base camp qualify?

Why do we separate these endeavors? I, for one, would love to see the Explorers Club flag engraved on a MEMS nano-machine! By a member.

—Lee Langan, FN'99

Please make your checks out to The Explorers Club, Northern California Chapter and mail with this form to:

Please reserve ____ spaces for February 22, 2002, at Ft. Mason Officers Club. Cost: \$45 each by February 19; \$50 if postmarked thereafter (call Steve at (925) 934-1051 to confirm and assure a reservation).

Name: _____

Address (if changed): _____

Guests: _____

Stephen E. Smith
The Explorers Club
402 Via Royal
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

meal choice: (please circle)

meat

fish

vegetarian

Chapter Officers

Chair: Lesley Ewing
510 527-7899
lewing@coastal.ca.gov

Vice-Chair: Stephen E. Smith
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Chapter Calendar for 2001-2002 Season

February 22	San Francisco	Bonita Chamberlin — Afghanistan
March 29	San Francisco	Marilyn Schlitz — noetic sciences
April 26	San Francisco	Amos Nachoum — big animal photography
May 31	not set	
June	not set	Chapter Picnic

Ron Reuther passed on this oddity culled from the Internet— 8.02pm on February 20 is an historic time. At that moment, something will happen which has not occurred for 1,001 years and will never happen again. For sixty seconds only, time will be read in perfect palidromatic symmetry, 2002/20.02/20:02. A similar sequence has only ever happened once before (1001/10.01/10:01), but it will never be repeated because the clock only reaches 23.59! Enjoy.

Please note venues with care. They sometimes change, but the most recent is accurate!
The February 22 meeting is at the Ft. Mason Officers Club 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.)

February 2002

Lesley Ewing
The Explorers Club
Northern California Chapter
1679 Tacoma Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94707-1826

