

The Explorers Club

Northern California Chapter

October 2002

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San Francisco October 25 Reid W. Dennis

"Chasing the Ghost of Amelia Earhart"

Amelia Earhart was lost 65 years ago while trying to fly around the world. It is a familiar story of exploration gone sadly wrong. Because she and her navigator were never found, because it was at the onset of World War II, because it happened suddenly and 'mysteriously' the disappearance has been a puzzle whose solution is avidly sought. Reid Dennis is among those who have done so intensively.

Reid has followed her course, coproduced a movie for the National Air & Space Museum and PBS with David Kennard (see our newsletters Sept/Oct 2001), and continues to be a force in trying to solve what happened. While making the documentary he



flew his former Navy, 1955 'Albatross'; this is an adventure in itself. A wonderful plane capable of low-and-slow flight, and the post-WWII evolution of the classic Grumman Goose. 466 were made. His was the photography platform for the film, *The Final Hours*

— *Amelia Earhart's Last Flight.*

After the 1997 documentary gig, like our September speaker, Reid continued around the world in his Albatross— for two and one-half months, with his wife Peggy. They logged 26,347 nautical miles (30,300 statute miles); it was the first time any amphibious aircraft had circumnavigated the world. He made it all the way around!

Reid founded Institutional Venture Partners in 1980 and remains active. He has accumulated over 8,000 flight hours and has six aircraft.

He is also an avid opera fan and for over a decade was the chairman of the San Francisco Opera Association. He likes model trains too— a hobby he shares with his Woodside neighbor, Dan Leibowitz.

Date Friday, 25 October 2002

Place: St. Francis Yacht Club
The Marina
San Francisco

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

Cost: \$55 (by Oct 21)
\$60 (if posted afterwards)

Reach Steve at 925 934-1051
or, preferably,
<nauticos@oceanearth.org>

Reservation Form on page 5



A couple of Albatross photos-garnered from the web.

(Thank you Bruce Maddison!)

Gives an idea of the scale of this beauty, which has a wing span of almost 100 feet..





San Francisco Engineer/Geophysicist/Oceanographer Ugo Conti

Ugo Conti holds two doctorates: from UC Berkeley, in geophysics and oceanography, and from Rome, in electrical engineering. He says he is first and foremost an engineer; a friend spoke up to say he was also a perfectionist.

Ugo began by sharing a vivid memory from just after World War II, when his father took him to the Mediterranean Isle of Ponza. They arrived at dawn to view a spectacular image of the island and sky, from the sea, that he will never forget. He has blended similar experiences throughout his life for they led him to travel extensively at sea. He shared this love, showing beautiful slides, with an avid audience.

From a small run-about skiff, he and his wife, Isabella, graduated to a 50' ketch in the 1960s. It took them around the world on a two-year journey.

He began to experiment with Zodiac craft for ease of access to the shore and found that they would speed along under sail. He built an innovative inflatable sail boat, square rigged, and took a solo journey across the Pacific to Hawaii, to assuage his mid-life doldrums. After spending months on the islands (remember he could pull into very shallow coves), he deflated the craft, packed into a crate, and shipped it home!

Ugo then designed and built Aria (shown above), a powered, inflatable catamaran, which offers spaciousness as well as a shallow draft. He and



Isabella have travelled the waters of western North America extensively with her.

He enthusiastically shared his

The *Onward* at a cascade falls in Tribute Channel, British Columbia. (after three days of rain!)



sense of awe and fear and respect for the sea and its land borders. It has been a life-long embrace. Having recently sold his geophysical company, he is now embarked on the design of a vessel which will allow safe and speedy ocean travel. Just how, remains his secret, for now.

Read about his travels in *Crazy by Design*. As Lesley has noted a few copies may be purchased through her (donated to the chapter by Ugo.)

Go & Tell September 2002

Bob Fabry spent three and one-half weeks in Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa; returned with 600 digital photos.

Roy Clayhorn spent time in the United Emirates and on the Red Sea, siting GPS locations at buoys tied to pristine coral reefs.

Tom Hall & Liz McLaughlin spent four months on board the *Onward* along the Inland Passage, between Vancouver Island and the mainland BC. Visit their web site <www.bikenfly.org> to see wonderful pictures and a running commentary. A splendid web log. As one can see from the photo below there were many sights to behold.

We all sang happy birthday to Harry Hicks!

Graham Hawkes confirmed plans for 007's ocean dive on the *Deep Flight Aviator*. (007 is Lesley Ewing's as-

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Marin Educator Wins National Conservation Award

Joan Linn Bekins



Joan Linn Bekins, FN'86, has won the 2002 ChevronTexaco Conservation Award for her environmental programs designed for children. Joan's field trips, as she joined naturalist-teacher Elizabeth Terwilliger (Marin's Mrs. 'T') inspired a 35-year volunteer commitment to broadening children's environmental education programs nationwide. For this effort to teach youth about conservation, Bekins was named one of eight winners of the 48th annual ChevronTexaco Conservation Awards.

Joan is best-known for producing five award-winning "Tripping with Terwilliger" educational-habitat films that have been seen by 60 million youngsters throughout the United States! To expand the number of children benefiting from outdoor experiences, she also formed the Terwilliger Nature Guides in 1970. The program has recruited and trained over 600 docents to lead school field trips using Mrs. T's unique teaching techniques that emphasize environmental responsibility.

"Mrs. T was right in focusing on younger children", says Bekins. "If you introduce children to the outdoors when they're young, they develop an awareness and love of nature for the rest of their lives."

In 1975, she founded the non-profit Terwilliger Nature Education Center, a resource for the public and educators. The books and tapes she has published as well as classroom kits, trips and nature vans have served 65,000 school children each year in seven San Francisco Bay Area counties.

Other 2002 winners include: Sylvia McLaughlin and Dwight Steele for their lifelong efforts to protect San Francisco Bay; Dr. Lisa Dabek of the Roger Williams Park Zoo in Rhode Island who works to save an endangered species of kangaroo; Keep Houston Beautiful for their model programs to prevent urban litter, reduce crime and rejuvenate neighborhoods; Virginian's Carey Crane and Chandler Van Voorhis, for GreenWave Radio, a program that brings businesses and environmentalists together to find solutions to environmental challenges; and, Kansas City's Anita Gorman for spearheading the creation of the Discovery Museum and other efforts to bring nature to urban areas.

Each winner received a cash prize and travel and accommodations to receive the award in Houston on September 26.

An independent panel of leading conservationists selects the winners. More than 1,000 volunteers, professionals and organizations have received this award since it was founded in 1954 by the late Ed Zern, a nationally recognized sportsman, humorist and author. (Before the merger, it was the Chevron Conservation Award.)

It is worthwhile to review Joan's ideas for The Explorers Club, published in our April 2002 chapter newsletter. With the above recognition, and realization of her past successes, they bring a new and practical meaning.

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signed number.) He has tried to get permission to dive beneath the Golden Gate Bridge but authorities are a bit testy at this time; still a possibility. He has placed a Stanford Photonics camera on board and, in response to a question, stated, "Any shipwreck is

vulnerable to us now!" Exciting.

Amos Nachoum swam again with the Great Whites in South Africa. Spent 45 minutes in 55°F water with an entranced eleven year old.

Alan Nichols and his son, Shan, bicycled 2600 miles along the ancient

Silk Route, staying north of the Afghan troubles.

Ed and Sandy Ross spoke of their efforts to put together an expedition to the Valdivian site in Ecuador (Sep02 newsletter.) Be in touch if your can join or know someone who is interested.



The Explorers Club Travels

The Journey of Odysseus

The Explorers Club has an extensive series of travel opportunities that members can share. Chapter member Merle Greene Robertson (FN'90) recently took that opportunity when she joined the 'Odysseus Tour' for the last half of September. The Sun Bay's passengers, just under 90 in very pleasant

accommodations, retraced the route of Odysseus' legendary homeward journey outlined by Homer in *The Odyssey*— at least a good judge of this ancient travel. At over a dozen dockings they were met by local specialists to visit archaeological sites dating from Mycenaean and Homeric times in Turkey, Greece, Malta and Italy. On board there were related lectures. A delightful way to gain insight into ancient Greece and to explore the Mediterranean.

Above is a glimpse at some of her digital record:

The 5th-century BC Doric Greek Temple at Segesta, Sicily, an almost perfect 'miniature' of the Parthenon — Merle with the Tour Director and Sevice Director during the crew's galley party (left) — the *Sun Bay*, home for a fortnight — Faanya & Robert Rose on board (she is the immediate past president of The Explorers Club).

Evolution

@ The Explorers Club

On October 19, our Chair has asked for help, well call it *participation*. This is a very active chapter; it is impor-

tant for all who have the time to come and discuss our governance and the nitty-gritty tasks that must be done to maintain our vitality.

We live in a wonderful place full of active people. There are explorers

here that do not even know we exist; there are others who feel they are too involved already. It will take an effort to reach these people and to convince them to join in our programs, to the benefit of all. —Lee Langan, FN'99

Musings from the Chair

Dear Northern California Explorers:

Happy Fall. The past few days, it has seemed to me like Fall has arrived in the Bay Area. The leaves are turning color and falling from the trees, the air is a bit cooler, and it is getting darker earlier and earlier. I've been thinking about the Explorers who winter over in Antarctica who are just starting to get some sun again, and I marvel again at the many places explorers go, and the many incredible things that our members do.

The September dinner was our first in several months and many of the people who came shared their various tales and summer activities. And there are always new tales to share for future meetings. Our dinner speaker, Ugo Conti entertained us with his memories on the high sea, and what I thought was his unique perspective that once he had gone from California to the South Pacific, he thought it would be easier to continue the loop rather than come back the way he had gone. Ugo generously donated several copies of his book, *Crazy by Design*, to the chapter, so if anyone would like to read about his trip, we still have 2 or 3 copies that can be acquired at upcoming meetings.

I continued throughout the weekend with the aquatic theme that Ugo started on Friday. First, I went to the wave organ that is just past the St. Francis Yacht Club. Several of you know this treasure, and more of you should experience it. The October dinner will again be at the St. Francis YC, so plan to arrive 10 or 15 minutes

early, walk to the end of the access road (past the Golden Gate Yacht Club and the light beacon) and experience the wave organ for yourselves.

My second aquatic activity was to go whale watching with Heidi Tuira and Steph Dutton (who spoke at the chapter dinner in April 1998.) We saw six blue whales and a pod of Risso's dolphins. Also onboard was Pat Henry, the first and/or oldest woman to solo around the world in a sail boat. She spoke about her trip, read from her book (*By the Grace of the Sea*) and, at one point, gave the same explanation for going around the world that Ugo did – that she only liked sailing in one direction. It was almost *déjà vu*.

Now that I am back on land, I am planning the working meeting for the morning of **October 19th**. As I said in the last newsletter, and at the September dinner, this is open to everyone. Please come if you want to get more involved with the chapter. Gerry Elkus and Ron Reuther have graciously offered to let us use their house. It can hold many more people than my bungalow, so please do not let your worries about space stop you now.

Everyone and anyone has something to contribute – serving as an officer on the board, helping with membership, putting together the roster, finding new venues for meetings, finding speakers for coming years, working on the Dan Reid Memorial Scholarship, fund raising, or coming up with other projects.

Please **RSVP** so we can make sure we have coffee and nosh enough for the group.

—Lesley Ewing, FN'93

Yes! I (we) do want to join the discussion on October 19, 9:30 A. M

Name(s):

Please RSVP:
Lesley Ewing
lewing@coastal.ca.gov
1679 Tacoma Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94707-1826
510 527-7899

We will meet at the home of
Ron Reuther and Gerry Elkus
300 San Rafael Avenue
Belvedere, CA 94920



Please make your checks out to The Explorers Club, Northern California Chapter,

and mail with this form to:

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

Please reserve _____ spaces for Oct. 25, 2002, at The St. Francis Yacht Club.
Cost: \$55 each by Oct 21; \$60 if postmarked thereafter (contact Steve at <nauticos@oceanearth.org> or 925 934-1051 to assure a reservation).

Name: _____

Address (if changed): _____

Guests: _____

meal choice: (please circle)

meat

fish

vegetarian

Northern California 2002-2003 Event Calendar

(Mark the dates! Future venues to be determined)

September 27, 2002 St Francis Yacht Club	Ugo Conti	"Outer Adventure, Inner Journey"
October 25, 2002 St Francis Yacht Club	Reid Dennis	"Chasing the Ghost of Amelia Earhart"
December 6, 2002	Chris McKay	"From Antarctica to Mars: The Search for Life"
January 31, 2003	Tom Joyce	"Hajj - The Journey of a Lifetime"
February 28, 2003	Anne Keiser	"Sir Edmund Hillary and the People of Everest"
March 28, 2003	Jim Allan	"In the Deep and In the Dirt: A Look at California's Maritime Archaeology"
April 25, 2003	Martin A. Pomerantz	"Astrophysics in Antarctica: Observing the Universe from the South Pole"
May 30, 2003	Terry O'Brien	"Fair God and Feathered Serpents".
June, 2002	Chapter Picnic	

Please note venues with care. The October 25 meeting is at
San Francisco's St. Francis Yacht Club!

(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 2002

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

