

# The Explorers Club Northern California Chapter

April 2003

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UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE DAILY



## San Francisco April 25, 2003 Martin A. Pomerantz

### Observing the Universe from the South Pole Astrophysics in Antarctica

Astrophysicist Martin A. Pomerantz, president-emeritus of the University of Delaware's Bartol Research Institute, was honored by having an observatory bearing his name at the U.S. Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station. He worked in Antarctic research since 1959 and conducted experiments at the South Pole since 1964.

Dr. Pomerantz has led a number of National Geographic Expeditions; worked on eight national and international scientific committees; served on the board of trustees for the Franklin Institute; edited the Journal of the Franklin Institute; served on the editorial board for Space Science Reviews; and participated in five professional associations.

His cosmic ray research, with instruments on the ground, aboard balloons, on ships, aircraft, and even an early satellite, carried him to many sites

around the earth. These experiences led to his first visit to the South Pole, where he recognized a number of potential advantages for the new field of solar seismology—probing the sun's heretofore invisible interior by “listening to its ringing”. With expert collaborators, he conducted first-time campaigns in other subfields of astronomy, all of which revealed that the South Pole was the best site in the world for conducting this astrophysical research. Come to hear of these experiences and experiments.

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#### LOCATION

**Date:** Friday, 25 April 2003  
**Place:** St. Francis Yacht Club  
San Francisco  
**Time:** 6:30 pm, no-host cocktails  
7:30 pm, dinner  
**Cost:** \$55 (by April 21)  
\$60 (if posted afterwards)

Reach Steve at 925 934-1051  
or, preferably,  
[nauticos@oceaneearth.org](mailto:nauticos@oceaneearth.org)

Reservation Form on page 5  
Please reserve promptly!  
NO MEAL WITHOUT RESERVATION

The elevated two-story structure, dedicated in 1995, is 1 km from the main South Pole Station; 270 m<sup>2</sup> of interior space houses equipment for four projects: the Antarctic muon and neutrino detector array (AMANDA), the South Pole Infrared Explorer (SPIREX), the cosmic background radiation anisotropy experiment (COBRA), and the Advanced Telescope Project (ATP). Two nearby telescopes, SPIREX and PYTHON, can also be controlled from inside.

The observatory sits in the 'dark sector,' where electromagnetic noise, including light and radio waves, is minimized.

#### The Martin A. Pomerantz Observatory

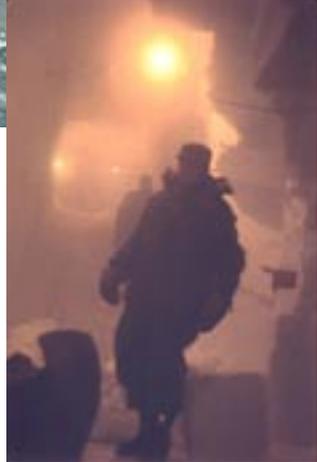


LINDA WYGODA



Everywhere is 'up' signs from a time past (1957)

MORT BEEBE



An ice cave to mine drinking water (1957)

### The South Pole is at 9301'.

Pomerantz at the 'solar-polar' telescope during 1986-87 season



AL 12/87

Continued from page 1

On March 4, the residents of the South Pole Station began moving into a huge enclosure on stilts above the snow. The New York Times concludes it resembles an economy motel, complete with windows! It replaces the old geodesic dome built thirty years ago to cover three internal structures hidden from the eternal cold. You had to bundle up to go outside to see the snow extend north in all directions, except for the four months of winter darkness. The dome was for about thirty people; 200 can live in the new building.

The stilts are a new architectural approach to keep the station from being buried—at least to reduce the problem. Blowing snow creates dunes over any structure. With the stilts the aerodynamics helps whisk the ground beneath. As shown, the old dome

appears to have sunk deep into the snow surface. Once the new quarters are complete, and everyone and everything is moved, the dome will be cut apart and shipped back; nothing gets left at the pole.

Chapter member Mort Beebe, who it was noted was a speaker on an Antarctic Explorers Club voyage in late 2002, was at the Pole, with his camera in 1957. The top photo is his picture of the pre-dome Pole.



Dome built 1974-75

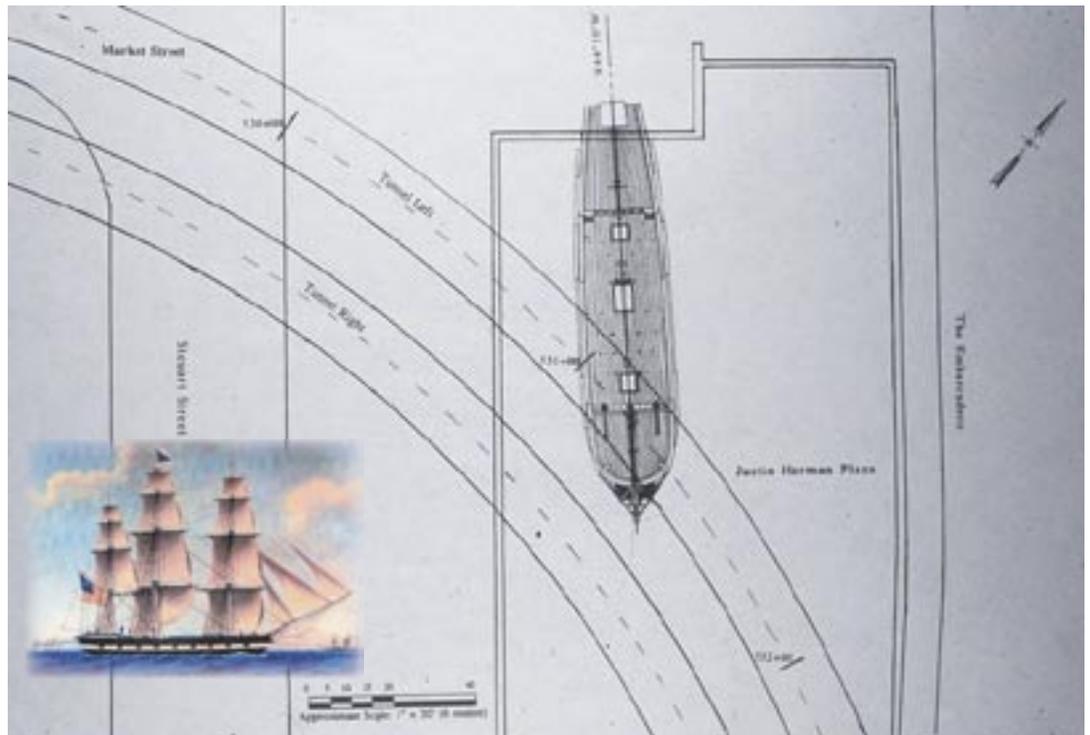
Quarters built 2000-03



Steven McLachlan/Jerry Marty

The sailing ship *Rome* was scuttled after its crew left to find gold. She lies buried beneath the City's Justin Herman Plaza.

## Urban Archaeology James Allan San Francisco



On March, 30, Jim Allan spoke about finding old marine relics in the streets of San Francisco and searching for an enticing ship that just 'has to be there' in from Point Arena. His illustrated talk was an instructive insight into the ways things get found, the investigation and documentation that follows and the need to give them up, in the end.

Each of the three venues he discussed involves intensive historical research and on-sight probing, evaluation and analysis—often under intense fiscal and construction pressure. Tiered regulations, from City, State or Federal building codes, require that knowledgeable archaeologists be called when a cultural artifact is encountered during construction projects. There are practical as well as academic reasons: those digging want to know what to expect that impedes their progress and researchers what to see if something valuable can be recovered before being lost forever.

Dr. Allen spoke of the heavy-duty mining techniques used to tunnel when extending the MUNI Light Rail Vehicles from their Market Street terminus up onto The Embarcadero toward the CalTrans Station. Initial progress was measured in 10-15 feet each day, until they encountered the *Rome's* bow. Progress slowed to a few inches each day, for months, as bits and pieces were

recovered. Allan's research was able to confirm the ship in the path of the entry tunnel and to assure that a parallel exit tunnel would miss it.

Building a residential tower near Pacbell Park encountered remnants of Tichneor's ship-repair yard. Specifically the remains of a mule-powered tow that pulled ships out of the bay onto wooden rails, for repairs. The oldest repair yard in San Francisco Bay. What was deemed of value rests now in the Maritime Museum; the redwood, still solid, into a land fill.

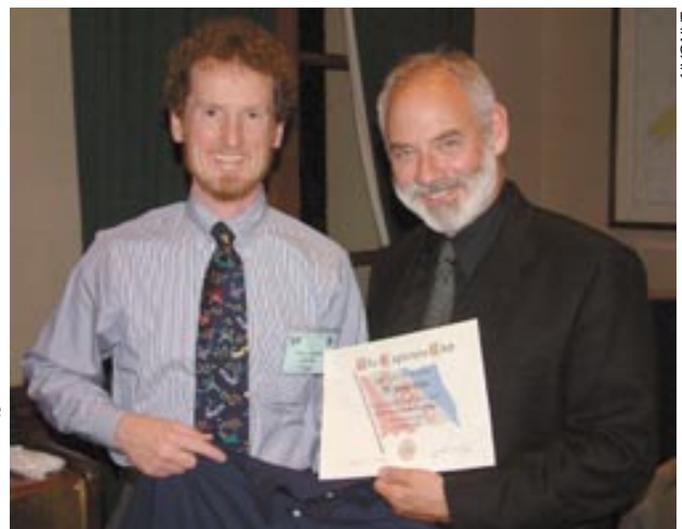
He then spoke of an on-going search for the old Russia packet *Il'men* (earlier the *Lidia*) just north of Point Arena. An official in the Russian

American Company, Kyrill T. Khlebnikov, kept meticulous notes on everything! How many steps to here from there on a given day! A nit-picker; said to have been the chief accountant. From his journal, which survived, it is known just where and how the Il'men floundered trying to round the point. While a lot of sand has filled the area since, she has to be there. If you want to help, contact Jim

[allan@sscl.berkeley.edu](mailto:allan@sscl.berkeley.edu)

This was exploration close by! As you walk to the new Old Ferry Building reflect upon the Ship *Rome* lying under your steps; going to the ball park, think back to the ship repairs of yore, right there.

Chair Steve Smith presents The Explorers Club certificate (and a nice shirt) to Dr. James Allan (right) after his talk.



LANGAN



## A Broken Record

British Chapter member, David Hempelman-Adams, succeeded in his record bid to walk 300 miles to the Geomagnetic North Pole, solo and unsupported. Turns out he had a broken ankle for the last 100+ miles! He hauled his Kevlar sled 300 miles to arrive on April 6. Hempelman-Adams has summited the highest peaks on all seven continents and holds several other records.

## Sad. Damn!

No matter what your political stand, here is a explorer's tragedy reported by John F. Burns in the New York Times:

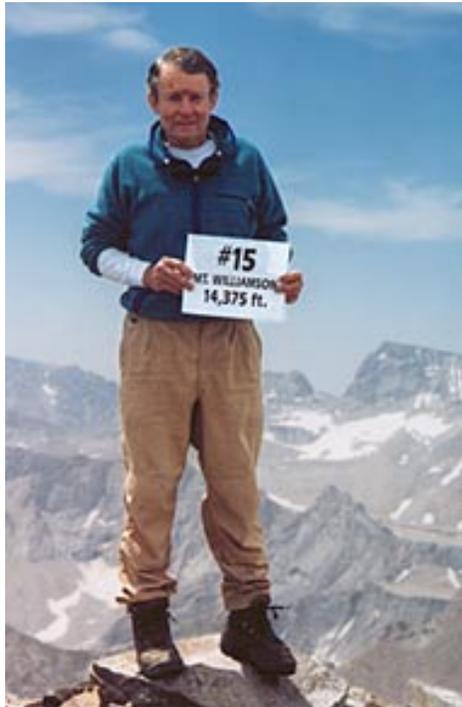
BAGHDAD, Iraq, April 12 — The National Museum of Iraq recorded a history of civilizations that began to flourish in the fertile plains of Mesopotamia more than 7,000 years ago. But once American troops entered Baghdad in sufficient force to topple President Saddam Hussein's government this week, it took only 48 hours for the museum to be destroyed, with at least 50,000 artifacts carried away by looters.

EVOLUTION (continued from page 5)

the standards very high indeed. I ask, as I briefly did last month, that you give some thought to someone you would like to hear. Someone who might respond with a presentation to meet the standards we have come to appreciate.

I have already begun the process, but it will stretch out into the Summer. Keep the central tenant in mind: exploration, far and wide, into the deep and to the heights, striving to understand the unknown and going to return to tell

## Climb Every Mountain



In late June, 2002, Chapter member Frank Castle (LF'72) completed his goal of ascending all 15 peaks in California over 14,000 feet. These included Mt. Whitney via the East Face, Mt. Sill via the Swiss Arete, and culminated with Mt. Williamson, the second highest of the group. The photo shows Frank on the summit, with Mts. Whitney & Russell in the background.

Frank owns Castle Fine Arts; it is a great treat to visit his web site:

<http://www.castlefinearts.com/>

## Out of Africa

The L.S.B. Leakey Foundation, in collaboration with the California Academy of Sciences, will bring noted paleoanthropologist David Lordkipanidze from the Republic of Georgia to San Francisco for a public lecture,

about what is found. We especially seek those from the rich intellectual environment of the Bay Area that may not be familiar with our organization. We can learn from them and hope to entice the speakers and their colleagues to join with us.

Email your ideas, please:

<[lee@langan.net](mailto:lee@langan.net)>. Land mail to 2660 California Street, San Francisco 94115.

—Lee Langan, FN'99

titled *Early Humans Out of Africa: Evidence from the Caucasus*, on Thursday, **April 24, 2003** at 7:30 p.m.

When and why did our ancestors leave their motherland and begin global colonization? Recent excavations led by Lordkipanidze at the site of Dmanisi in the Republic of Georgia revealed a spectacular find announced in July 2002—the discovery of the skull of a small-brained early human, dated to be 1.7 million years old—that brings new evidence to address these questions. The skull represents the oldest undisputed hominid remains ever unearthed outside of Africa and the first good evidence we have for the identity of African emigrants.

Tickets (\$6, members; \$8, non-members) from the California Academy of Sciences, 415.750.7128.

<http://www.leakeyfoundation.org/>

<http://www.calacademy.org/>

## 75th Anniversary First Transpacific Flight

On May 31, 1928, Australian pioneer pilot Charles Kingsford-Smith lifted off from the new Oakland Airport in a Boeing-modified Fokker VIIb Trimotor, the *Southern Cross*, on the first leg of an unprecedented trans-Pacific flight. With Australian Charles Ulm as co-pilot, Americans Harry Lyon, as navigator, and James Warner, as radio operator, the fragile plane reached Brisbane, Australia with stops in Hawaii and Fiji, in eight days.

On **May 31, 2003**, the 75th anniversary of this historic flight will commemorated at the Western Aerospace Museum, 8260 Boeing Street, North Field, Oakland International Airport. Speakers will include the sons of Smith and Warner and the great-grandson of the donor who made the flight possible. News footage of the flight will be screened. Admission only \$5, lunch \$10, coat and tie dinner \$50. For reservations call (510) 638-7100!

<http://www.westernaerospacemuseum.org/>

**May 30, a great talk  
on the Maya  
(in PALO ALTO!)**

# The Chapter Chair

Dear Northern California Explorers:

I had the great pleasure to travel to New York to attend my very first ECAD (Explorers Club Annual Dinner) at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel. It is a weekend of meetings and activities for club officers, members, and staff that culminates with the grand dinner ceremony.

It was my privilege to attend the Chapter Chairs meeting at the Explorers Club proper. We had a number of valuable presentations from club officers, including President **Richard Wiese** and Honorary President **Jim Fowler**. There were more than twenty chapter chairs and representatives present—including the chairs of the British, Polish, and India Chapters. This was a highly informative meeting with very spirited discussions of club issues. After accounting, membership, and technology presentations, much of the balance of the time was devoted to addressing headquarters/chapter relations, an issue of long-standing. It was clear that there remains much that needs to be addressed and improved, at least in the view of the chapters represented.

At the same time, there seems to be movement in the right direction on organization and the infrastructure of club finance, club archives, and improved technology for communication. It should be noted, that although the New York headquarters represents the largest individual 'Chapter', some 80% of the membership of almost 2000 is regionally based. Further you should be pleased to learn that the Northern California Chapter is now tied for third place with Texas in terms of membership. (I fully expect we will soon stand alone as the third largest chapter, behind New York and Washington D.C.)

You might also find it of interest that the monetary value of our club facilities and archives is substantial. Recent professional appraisals of the building and a selection of the library returned a rather amazing valuation. I plan to report further on this topic in a future column.

Saturday evening brings the actual ECAD dinner, a gala black-tie event. Attendees from our chapter included **Mort and Danielle Beebe, Graham and Karen Hawkes** and recent chair **Lesley Ewing**. One of the new additions this year was a live auction lead by a Christie's auctioneer; this evolved into a spirited battle between attendees vying for trips and books.

The highlight of the evening is, of course, the speakers. Let me give you an idea of the quality of those who addressed us: **Jim Fowler** (who you may remember from *Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom with Marlin Perkins*) brought rare cheetahs, an owl, a falcon, and a komodo dragon. **Steve Fossett**, first person to circumnavigate the globe solo by balloon, spoke both of his success and the near-fatal failures that preceded the achievement. A congratulatory video from **Richard Branson** of Virgin Airlines (his chief competitor) was shown. Captain William Anderson, skipper of the submarine *Nautilus* during its historic 1958 transpolar under-ice expedition, won the Finne Ronne award. **Dr. Allen Counter** presented an inspirational review of his efforts to gain recognition for Matthew Henson, the black gentleman who accompanied Robert Peary to the North Pole. Dr. Counter was instrumental in having Henson elevated from relative obscurity to being recognized for his contributions to exploration, resulting in his re-interment in Arlington National Cemetery, having a Naval ship named after him,

and leading the National Geographic Society to bestow its highest honor, the Hubbard Medal, something unacceptable in the earlier era. **Jim Cameron**, writer, producer, and director of films such as *Aliens, The Abyss, Terminator 2,* and *Titanic*, spoke of his adventures in filming the new IMAX movie *Ghosts of the Abyss*. Last, but not least, **General Chuck Yeager** acted as an exemplar of 'the right stuff'.

Allow me to express my appreciation for the privilege of attending ECAD on behalf of our chapter. This event is both illuminating and energizing. One leaves inspired not only by the speakers and their exploits but also as a result of the opportunity to interact with the diverse, interesting and intriguing fellow members. Next year is our 100th Anniversary celebration. Mark your calendars now. It will, no doubt, be spectacular. —Stephen E. Smith, FN'96

## Evolution

@ The Explorers Club

One of my official duties for our Chapter is to define the calendar for next year, the 31st of this chapter, as New York gears for the Centennial. I have the good records of Steve and Lesley to review programs over the past decade. And, I have had the good fortune to attend many talks since becoming active.

We have been very fortunate; there have been extraordinary people addressing our small (albeit intent) group. We are, to a degree, spoiled by having their achievements packaged so we can ask away at each meeting. It is not easy to create a talk; it takes concentration and devotion. Some are more practiced, but all devote creative energy for us. Think! All do so as a generous gift.

Those who have drawn the program together are also devoted and have set

Continued on page 4

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

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ spaces for April 25, 2003, at the St. Francis Yacht Club. Cost: \$55 each by Apr. 21; \$60 if postmarked thereafter (contact Steve at [nauticos@oceanearth.org](mailto:nauticos@oceanearth.org) or 924 934-1051 to assure a reservation).

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

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

Guests: \_\_\_\_\_

**Dr. Stephen E. Smith**  
402 Via Royal  
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

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 UCSF, Laurel Heights	Chris McKay	"From Antarctica to Mars: The Search for Life"
January 31, 2003 St. Francis Yacht Club	Tom Joyce	"Hajj - The Journey of a Lifetime"
February 28, 2003 St. Francis Yacht Club	Anne Keiser	"Sir Edmund Hillary and the People of Everest"
March 28, 2003 St. Francis Yacht Club	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:  
St. Francis Yacht Club**      **Observing the Universe from the South Pole"**

May 30, 2003      Terry O'Brien      "Fair God and Feathered Serpents".  
Palo Alto Sheraton Hotel

June, 2003      Chapter Picnic

Please note venues with care.  
The April 25 meeting is at  
St. Francis Yacht Club, San Francisco.

**In full and lively color!**  
To experience this newsletter in color,  
see a '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.)

### *April 2003*

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

