

# The Explorers Club Northern California Chapter

February 2004

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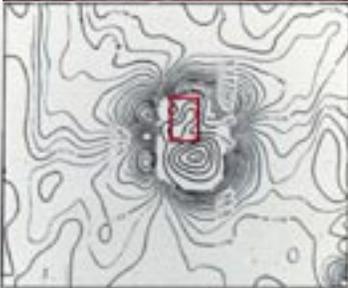
Web site: <http://www.diggles.com/ec/>

## Palo Alto February 27, 2004 Sheldon Breiner

### Remote Sensing in Archaeology The Noninvasive Search for Artifacts

Remote sensing is a technique, a geophysical technique, that allows a knowledgeable user to locate hidden objects. Not always and not all objects, but the results can sometimes be spectacular! Dr. Sheldon Breiner (FN'76) has practiced this scientific skill for all of his professional life, and he will share some of the successes. His expertise is *geomagnetics*; his tool, the *magnetometer*. He was fortunate to become involved with new ways to measure the magnetic field when it was discovered (at Stanford) that various atomic-level particles could be used as practical sensors. Some of these were dramatically rugged and uniquely portable; he went on to become a Silicon Valley entrepreneur by developing and using magnetometers around the world.

The most common-place uses of his instruments have been in geophysical exploration for oil and mineral deposits from the air, by ship and on the ground; mapping original evidence of the shifting continents on the ocean floor; undersea mining; earthquake prediction (his



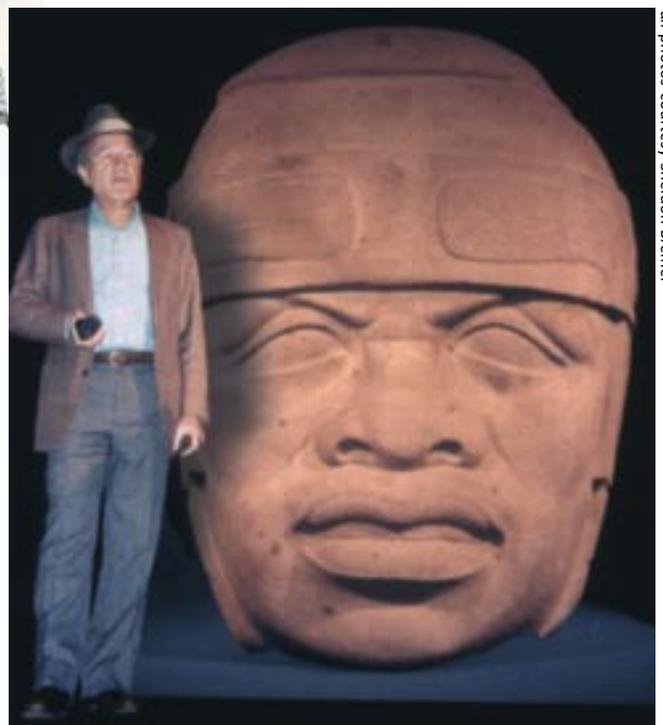
### NEW LOCATION

**Date:** Friday, 27 February 2004  
**Place:** Palo Alto Sheraton, 625 El Camino Real, Palo Alto  
**Time:** 6:30 pm, no-host cocktails  
7:15 pm, dinner  
**Cost:** \$45 (by February 24)  
\$55 (if posted afterwards)

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

Reservation Form on page 5  
Please reserve promptly!  
Guests welcome.

Sheldon Breiner (right) will present an illustrated talk on a project he directed to find the 3,000-year-old colossal Olmec head (shown at its burial site and on display at the the National Gallery in Washington) and other carved stone objects buried in the ground in the Veracruz lowlands of Southern Mexico. The magnetometer values, plotted above, led to the find in deep jungle surroundings.



all photos courtesy Sheldon Breiner

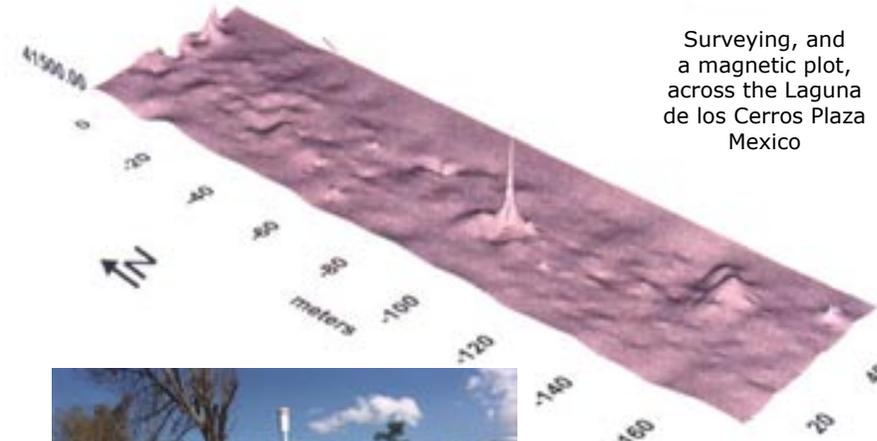
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Ph.D. dissertation), finding guns for the police, for the military and for security; and mapping the magnetic field of the earth and the planets from satellites. He is the author of the principal book on magnetometer search with over 800,000 copies in print in English, Chinese and Russian.

Always, as an avocation, Breiner has devoted these skills to archaeology, where he is often characterized as the Indiana Jones of geophysics. Using a magnetometer, he has conducted surveys at several sites in San Lorenzo, Laguna de los Cerros and other Olmec centers, to discover and excavate over 100 large monuments, some now in Museums in Jalapa and Mexico City (and copies, because they're too large, in Barcelona). Last month, he surveyed a 2,000-year-old site near Lake Atitlan in southwestern Guatemala.

Sheldon has also been involved in the search for historic ships, undersea pipelines, aircraft flight recorders, weapons, tunnels, treasure ships and tombs. The more popular searches have involved many archaeological sites such as Atlantis, and the discovery of Sybaris, a 2,500-year-old Greek city completely buried 20 feet under the surface in Southern Italy).



Surveying, and a magnetic plot, across the Laguna de los Cerros Plaza Mexico



Lake Atitlan, Guatemala, 2004



Sybaris, Calabria, Italy 1964

### ECAD Display for New York

Each year at the annual dinner in the Waldorf Astoria there are a series of large posters related to each of the club's chapters. We are offered the opportunity to create these, but often the task falls to the New York staff; it is awkward to send an assembled poster. This year we will try a new theme, and a new way to accomplish the task, to feature as many of the flag-bearers from this Chapter as we can gather between now and early March. (That means any of you need to act upon this now, in response to reading this request... recent and years before are all welcome. It IS the 100th ECAD!)

We will take each 'flag poster' with those who travel to ECAD to oversee the assembly of the larger poster.

Each flag is allocated a space for a photograph and a brief text: the choice to be decided by the bearer. Keep in mind that this is a 'poster', and it will be viewed in a busy setting. Brevity is best. Let the selected photo tell your story! Any backing board will do: foam or cardboard. Make it light to ease shipping. The maximum allocated space for each is 20 by 16 inches; smaller is okay.

Each description should at least give the flag number, the year(s), the reason and the bearer(s). Let's see what kind of response we can gener-

ate; we have no record of how many flags exist within the Chapter. In that time is pressing, send what you have to Lee Langan, 2660 California Street, San Francisco 94115. The photos will become the property of the Chapter, so use copies.

We have been advised that ECAD tickets are 'sold out'! The chapter will be represented by two tables we know: Steve Smith and his guests, Lee & Karine Langan, Mort & Daniele Beebe and guests, Frank & Ritsuko Castle, Ron Reuther & Gerry Elkus, Merle Robertson, Susan Dutcher, Graham & Karen Hawkes, Lesley Ewing. We will bring the display back to show at a future meeting.



## The Far Western Szechuan Province Dana Isherwood San Francisco

Kham regional schools do not discourage Tibetan heritage; a boy who walks while he can! Jiangyang Quxi, the Chapter's sponsored student (page bottom).



Dana Isherwood has a mission she loves, and she shared it with the Chapter at a crowded waterfront meeting. As members and their guests arrived, Sinbad's Restaurant (and vicinity) were candlelit; the electricity was all but nonexistent with a dull brown glow in some bulbs. The reception was very active with folks squinting to recognize each other and many jokes about a talk with lantern slides. The Bay Bridge and Treasure Island were glorious across the water; the Cityscape all lighted too. Into the salad course the lights returned to cheers and relief.

Dana spoke of the activities of the Khan Aid Foundation (KAF); she is Vice President and, together with her husband Bill, is on the Board of Directors. Khan is the designation for western Szechuan Province in China; it is the locale of a large number of nomadic Tibetan peoples. It is this group for which the foundation offers assistance: in supporting educational grants, in providing wheel chairs, in providing visits by medical doctors and encouraging protection of cultural treasures. Dana works with local translators, teachers, doctors and monks to seek where the funds raised by the foundation might have the most impact. KAF has established centers in a half-dozen towns in Khan, and she is looking to extending to the western border of Szechuan this year.

Her description of Khan reminded your editor of the Southwestern United States before Pearl Harbor: a beautiful and diverse area inhabited largely by nomadic tribes where the 'government' was attempting to bring the nomadic children into a 'modern' world by taking them from their families to centralized boarding schools. The



local language is discouraged (Tibetan dialects in China; Navajo and others in the US); the children and family life suffers. Yet, learning Chinese is essential because all credentials and certifications are in Chinese. A question posed at the end of her talk: is there another way to improve the lives of the nomads? The central Chinese authorities think not. (In the US the schools have now been moved into the countryside. The language and culture is now taught along with English, but this has also involved autonomous governance.)

The accompanying slides were an insight into less-urban China. The *de facto* existence of respect for the Buddhist traditions is evident in the buildings and improvements to long-standing temples, the stoic respect for the medical aid offered, the intent focus and appreciation for learning. While school is supposed to be free through the 9th grade, funds are not available. KAF helps arrange individual sponsors for individual students. (Three chapter families now offer this support as does the Chapter as a whole; contact Dana if you are interested; you will know exactly where your money helps!)

The whole area is involved in an opening-up to the rest of the world. There was recently a competition for the 'new' Shangri-la (won by Zhongdian). The town is now being trans-

formed into a tourist's image; albeit the area is already beautiful. The 'cultural police' assure that the traipsing of modernization, like satellite dishes and high rises, do not show. The 'losing' communities are also being built anew, all to host a burgeoning new tourist class: the middle-class Chinese. Large tour groups from the populated East of China are a common sight now.

China is a land area larger than the contiguous USA with five times the population. It is a fascinating place to work and an extraordinary culture to experience. Dana and Bill are doing well in learning the language and have returned to Beijing where they have a high-rise apartment. (Quite comfortably furnished from IKEA, the global Swedish store!) Some added slides showed the contrast of this metropolis to the villages of Khan.

Dana is very actively pursuing an extension of this rewarding work. Contact her to help:

[beijingdana@earthlink.net](mailto:beijingdana@earthlink.net)





Mike Diggles, Chapter Webmaster, and Steve Smith, our Chair, hold Flag 161 being 'returned' for a new use someday.

The purpose of this Flag Expedition was to document the extent of the Siskiyou Mariposa Lily (*Calochortus persistens*) and support the listing of this plant under the Endangered Species Act.

The habitat needed by *Calochortus persistens* is being invaded by the competing exotic dyer's woad (*Isatis tinctoria*), once cultivated as a source of blue dye. It is possible that overprotection from natural wildfires has led to the proliferation of dyer's woad. It is likely that fuel buildup has increased to the point that simply allowing wildfires to burn would not only control the invasive species but also threaten the endemic *Calochortus persistens*. As has been shown that wild-fire suppression causes continued fuel buildup until an uncontrolled burn takes place despite the best efforts of suppression crews to stop it. Such an event would have a high likelihood of having a severe negative impact on the survival of *Calochortus persistens*.

Michael F. Diggles, FN'92, Geologist, U.S. Geological Survey, wrote the Flag Report.

He was accompanied by: Nadine R. Kanim, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Pete Figura, Botanist, California Department of Fish and Game; and Marla Knight, Botanist, U.S. Forest Service, Klamath National Forest

## In Memoriam

**Oscar Lopp (MN'92)** was a unique individual: warm, generous, humorous, and very creative. He passed away January 10th, 2004, in Berkeley. Oscar founded, developed, and served as the executive director of the Mountain Medicine Institute, which was attended by thousands of health professionals and volunteers here in the San Francisco Bay Area. Typically there would be 2 or 3 big seminars a year held at the theater on Treasure Island. Oscar and all the participants served without pay. Oscar's full-time job was as an operations engineer at one of the salt distilla-

tion companies on south San Francisco Bay.

—Ron Reuther (FN'74)

**Jean-Pierre Hallet** died on January 1, 2004, at 77. He was not a member of The Explorers Club, yet he was internationally renowned as an africanist, ethnologist, sociologist, humanitarian, agronomist, naturalist, author, lecturer, explorer, photographer, cinematographer, artist, African art authority and collector, and death-defying adventurer.

He was best known, and revered, as the world authority on the culture, languages, and history of African pygmies in general and the Ituri Forest *Efé* clan of the Bambuti pygmies in particular. Jean-Pierre was the creator and driv-

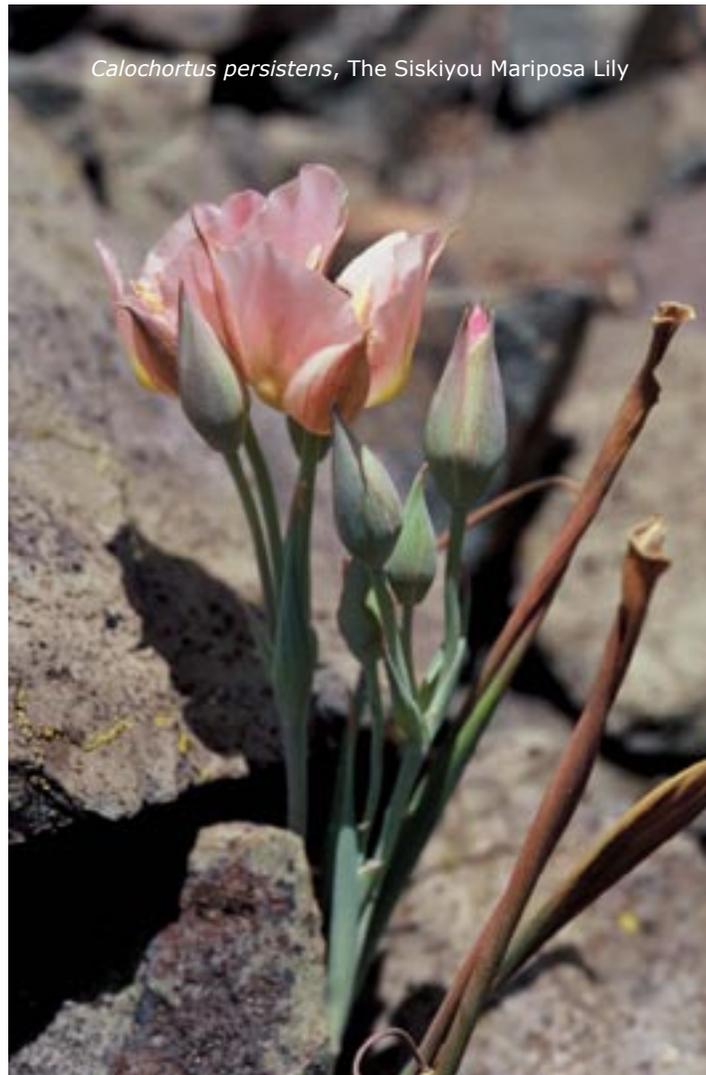
ing force behind *The Pygmy Fund*, the only organization devoted solely to the preservation of the lives and culture of surviving forest-dwelling *Efé* pygmies. African pygmies were, in Jean-Pierre's view, especially deserving of our concern and protection as the most ancient surviving human race (confirmed by DNA and genetic studies.)

Jean-Pierre could not enter a room without arresting all attention. Strong opinions, strongly—and fully—delivered, were a trademark. He was indeed larger than life, a powerful presence, one who led a full, unrestrained, unconventional, independent and important life.

— Don Heyneman (FN'78)

## The Siskiyou Mariposa Lily

An expedition to determine the remaining extent of an endangered species  
June 22-24, 2003



*Calochortus persistens*, The Siskiyou Mariposa Lily

# The Chapter Chair

Dear Northern California Explorers:

Greetings and welcome to 2004! As those of you who have undertaken expeditions know how a simple idea can grow into an amazingly complex endeavor. How, in spite of sound budgeting, insightful logistical planning, informed selection of the most-qualified participants, and careful equipment preparation, the unexpected can turn a straight-forward endeavor into a challenge of patience, perseverance, and self-reliance. Adventure is formed from the unexpected, and catastrophe just serves to make the story more colorful. All of the foregoing have been represented in my latest personal expedition – a major house renovation. An undertaking of a couple of weeks has turned into months. Simple replacements have turned into Halliburton projects. A litany of misadventures has ensued, most recently capped by the complete recarpeting of my house– with the wrong carpet. Meanwhile I continue to live out of boxes, search for phones under tarpaulins, gaze longingly at unplugged computers. Churchill said that success is defined by one's ability to go from one failure to another with enthusiasm. I now get the idea.

All of this leads me to my point, and that is an apology. Midst the wreckage of the renovation, spiced up with what in this age we euphemistically refer to as a 'reduction in force' at my company (definition: I get to do three jobs now!), I have let more than a few balls fall. Voice messages have gone unanswered, emails have been lost in the continuing blizzard of spam, and organizational needs have been left to find their own solution. So to those who have unknowingly shared in the fallout, I offer my apologies. Be persevering, keep calling, and keep those email mis-sives coming. Someday I will find my

phone. Someday this will all be over. At least now I understand why, when I initially told friends that this wouldn't take long, that, after all, its just some painting and a few changes, their eyes slowly rolled back in their heads as they turned their gaze toward the ceiling.

On to club business and a few quick points. Those of you who were unable to attend our last meeting missed an un-illuminating miniadventure in the form of a power outage. Fortunately, we were returned to operation before we had to resort to a shadow-puppet show. I stood in the dark with a group of four or five of our members and mused that we should have been better prepared, whereupon, all of these resourceful individuals pulled small flashlights from their pockets. I was both amused and impressed but, somehow, not surprised!

Readers of the newsletter will remember that we now have a dues structure in place. To those of you who have responded, I extend the appreciation of your officers and your fellow members. To those who have not, I sentence you to never-ending NPR pledge breaks. Please consider taking part in your chapter's continuing success.

On a more serious topic, we have recently lost two explorers of the first rank. Oscar Lopp (MN'92) was the founder and energy behind the Mountain Medicine Institute. This Bay Area organization provided technical seminars and training in all phases of field medicine, wilderness travel, and protection from natural hazards. The seminars were highly popular, entertaining, and uniquely informative. Members will remember Jean-Pierre Hallet's presentation to the Chapter in February 2001, "A Big Man in a Small World," when he recounted his lifetime of working with the Pygmy tribes of the Congo. A big man in both stature and heart, Jean-Pierre Hallet led a life of adventure and inspiration. We were fortunate to enjoy him as a speaker.

Both of these unique individuals will be greatly missed.

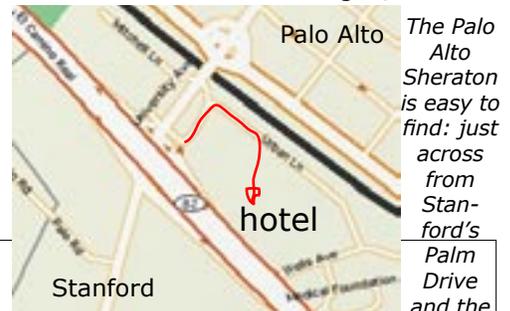
Lastly, thanks again for your support, and make sure to note the venue change for our next meeting. I look forward to seeing you in Palo Alto on the 27th. —Stephen E. Smith, FN'96

## Evolution

@ The Explorers Club

One of the pleasant experiences when attending our meetings is to listen to the activities of those assembled. 'Go & Tell' I have dubbed it. On occasion these have been summarized in the newsletter to be enjoyed by those not able to attend. Turns out it is not too easy to do. One has to hear everything that is said, know who said it, remember the guests' names and summarize the whole. Easy to miss someone. As I write I am looking at my notes from January; they are 'incomplete'. So, shall we say, "In January there were several welcome guests, two flags were mentioned in addition to the one returned, at least three intricate foreign travels were recalled and the passing of friends reported. Rick Blake brought his daughter Angela (the family supports a peer through KAF). Louise & Charles Geraci introduced Alice Spivak, the new Executive Director of the Bay Model in Sausalito, who offered the Model as a future meeting site!"

Such a report should be more complete, but what would be really helpful is for someone to step forward to take on providing this report each month! Volunteers? Contact the editor. Do not be timid; it is in the spirit of participation. —Lee Langan, FN'99



The Palo Alto Sheraton is easy to find: just across from Stanford's Palm Drive and the train depot! Parking is available. The actual entrance is the circuitous CalTrain access.

Annual Northern California Chapter dues for 2004: \$20.

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

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

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

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ spaces for February 27, 2004, at the Palo Alto Sheraton. Cost: \$45 each by Feb 24 \$55 if postmarked thereafter (contact Steve at [nauticos@oceanearth.org](mailto:nauticos@oceanearth.org) or 925 934-1051 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 2003-2004 Event Calendar**

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

October 3, 2003	Thierry Thys	"Private Piloting Across Russia"
St. Francis Yacht Club, San Francisco		
November 7, 2003	Issa Mohamed	"Ancient Manuscripts of Timbuktu"
Sinbad's Restaurant, San Francisco		
December 5, 2003	Alan & Shan Nichols	"A 2300-mile Father/Son Odyssey Through Central Asia"
Sinbad's Restaurant, San Francisco		
January 16, 2004	Dana Isherwood	"Tibet in China Today"
Sinbad's Restaurant, San Francisco		

### **February 27, 2004 Sheldon Breiner "Remote Sensing in Archaeology" Palo Alto Sheraton, 625 El Camino, Palo Alto**

March 20, 2004	ECAD	100 Years of The Explorers Club
New York		
March 27, 2004	Eugene Boudreau	"An Evening with the Tamahumara of Northern Mexico"
Sebastopol		
April 30, 2004	Rupert Isaacson	"The Bushmen of the Kalahari"
San Francisco		
June 4, 2004	Greg Crouch	"Enduring Patagonia"
San Francisco		
June 19, 2004	Chapter Picnic	Contact Anders Jepsen to help: < <a href="mailto:ajviling@aol.com">ajviling@aol.com</a> >

**Please note venues and dates with care.  
The February 27 Friday meeting is at  
Palo Alto Sheraton, Palo Alto.**

**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.)

### *February 2004*

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

