

The Explorers Club Northern California Chapter

April 2004

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San Francisco April 30, 2004 Rupert Isaacson

The Bushmen, a click away from a culture's extinction



Those who have studied the chronicles of exploration know full well the sometimes unforeseen and many times unfortunate consequences that follow on the heels of discovery. Though the explorer revels in the challenge of the search itself, those who come after are more often

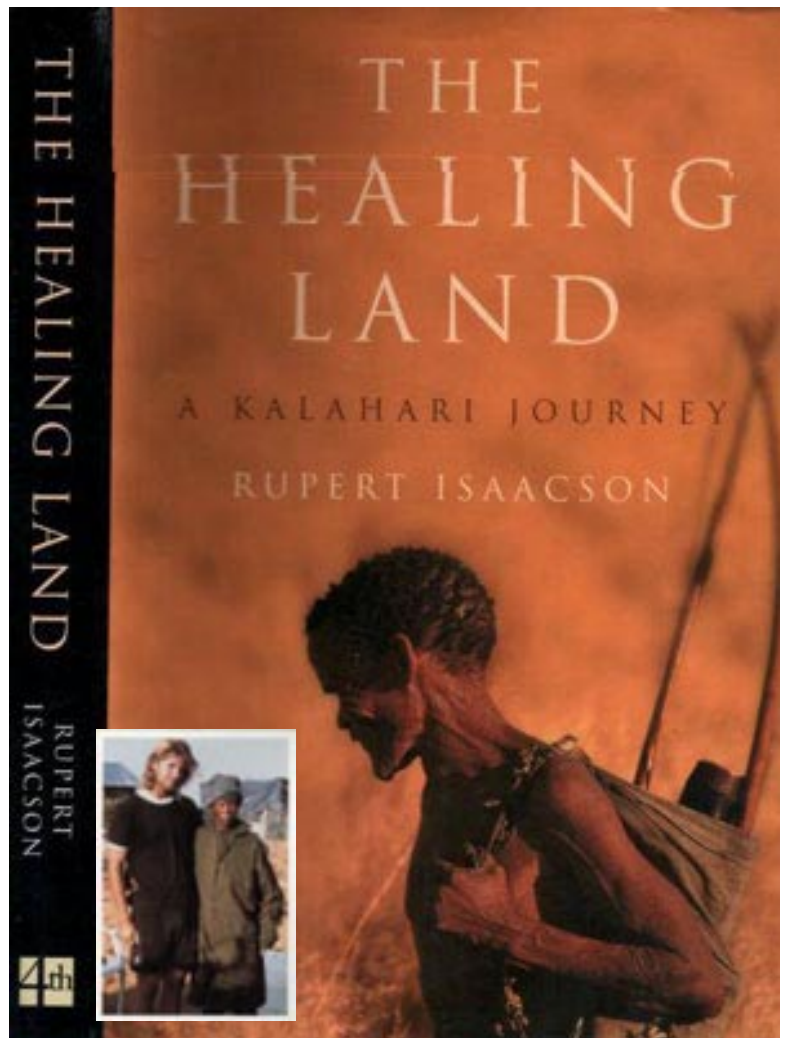
interested in the opportunities and potential wealth that the discovery reveals. For better or worse, history is replete with examples of the resultant disregard of the biosphere and dispossession of its inhabitants. In the past, the impacts of this process were often dismissed and de-personalized by those with the greater power. In the present, our vastly improved communications make the process more difficult to hide. Nevertheless, it continues. Whether it be the Yanomami or Huaorani Indians of the Amazon, the various Native Americans of North America, or the Efe Pygmies of Zaire's Ituri Forest, the story seems all too familiar. Our speaker for April brings us closer to another such story, one that is

still developing— that of the Xhmani Bushmen of Africa's Kalahari Desert.

In the 1930s, the South African government declared the indigenous Bushmen's lands a national park, "classifying the Bushmen as game to be protected with the rest of the wildlife." During the era of apartheid, the Bushmen were re-classified as human, but "the wrong kind of human." Since national parks were reserved for whites only, they were evicted. What followed was 25 years of "despair, alcoholism and violence, as well as an almost complete breakdown of their culture." Amazingly, and this is part of the tale that Isaacson will tell, the Xhmani, in 1999, won the largest land claim

in Southern African history: recovering 65,000 hectares of their traditional hunting grounds, including a large portion inside the Kgalagadi Trans-Frontier Park. Our speaker relates his observations and experiences with the participants in this story through his book *The Healing Land – The Bushmen and the Kalahari Desert* (Grove Atlantic 2003).

Although raised in London, Rupert Isaacson "inhabited a childhood world filled with images and objects from the vast southern sub-continent." Imbued with myths and memories imparted by his South African mother and Rhodesian father, Isaacson early-on developed a fascination with the exotic life



'OLD' LOCATION

Date Friday, 30 April 2004

Place: Sinbad's Pier 2 Restaurant
Embarcadero, San Francisco

Time: 6:30 pm, no-host cocktails
7:15pm, dinner

Cost: \$45 (by April 26)
\$50 (if posted thereafter)

Reach Steve at
nauticos@oceanearth.org
or 925 934-1051

Reservation Form on page 5
Please reserve promptly!

Continued on page 2

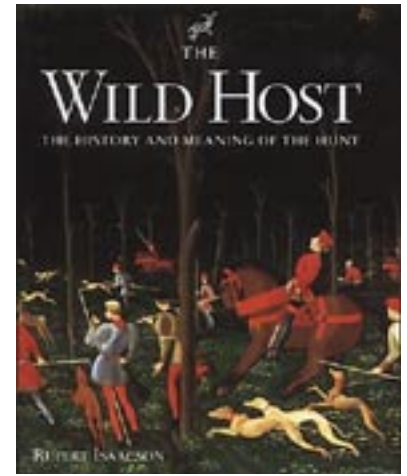
Continued from page 1

and culture of Africa. Traveling with his parents to Rhodesia for the first time, at eight, he found the land as exciting as the vision his childhood imagination had created. At 19, he returned on his own and began a journey of enlightenment— both as to the plight of the Bushmen and to a self-discovery of his personal role in the story.

A journalist and writer, Rupert Isaacson is a regular contributor to London’s Daily Telegraph, Daily Mail, Geographical and Conde Nast Traveler. He also writes for National Geographic Traveler, Geographical, Esquire and numerous other publications. He has made radio features for the BBC World Service, collaborated on several documentaries, and has authored numerous guidebooks to Southern Africa as well as a history-of-man relationship with hunting: *The Wild Host* (Cassell & Co 2002).

Make sure to join us for what should be a most enlightening and educational evening.

Rupert’s books are available at Amazon or Powell’s, as well at many local bookstores



An Explorer’s Hospitality Eugene & Sibyl Boudreau Sebastopol



Gene and Sibyl Boudreau hosted fifty members of the chapter at their home on Saturday, March 27. It was a lovely Spring afternoon; the wisteria at the entry was in full blossom, and the warmth of the home welcomed all. It was an opportunity to visit and share tales from ECAD and other travels. Gene spoke of his knowledge of the Indians of Mexico’s Sierra Madre in a unique presentation: he provided artifacts that he has collected as an auction for the assembled group. Each item was introduced with a tale of its’ significance and a story of its’ use. The Tarahumara and Mayo peoples live in these mountains as they have for times long forgotten. The auction, conducted by your Vice Chair, raised \$750— all donated to the Chapter. (And, there

obtain in the auction, the home is filled with treasures from his ethnographic visits to Northern Mexico: pots and baskets and blankets and photographs, planting tools and bows and arrows, rock specimens from the fabled mines of this region. These were mostly pieces collected in the last decade; his collection before was donated to the Smithsonian. Its museum director acknowledged the intrinsic value of this gift and the fact that the Eugene H. Boudreau Collection expanded the National Museum’s holdings well beyond anything they previously held.

Gene had many of



are a few choice pieces that will be brought to future meetings to add to this generosity!

Beyond showing the artifacts his visitors could

his publications stacked high to be taken as gifts: books and essays and prints. It was a bounty of generosity. Reviewing these will give each a great insight into this remote part of North America so close at hand.

Sibyl, meanwhile, was busy preparing a feast and keeping the libations and special snacks flowing. The roast beef and catfish melted in your mouth, and the conversation continued into the evening. People were reluctant to leave such pleasant surroundings.

Muchas gracias, Gene and Sibyl, for your thoughtfulness and open welcome. ¡Pleasantamos!



One person's ECAD Experience

It was clamorous. It was jammed. It was sometimes hard to see the speakers. The exotics were out of reach. The wild animals were tamed by the Waldorf crowd. The food was banquet fair. The wine was limited. Drinks were expensive. It was spectacularly unforgettable!

Where else on earth are you feted by the great explorers of our time? These accomplished members of our club, who have excelled so, reflected on moments, even months, of extraordinary achievement. It was wonderful to listen. The attendees, silent in their attention.

The Club's 100th commemoration featured men who first reached the five 'points' of field exploration, or those still living who had done so: Sir Edmund Hillary scaled Everest; Captain/Dr. Don Walsh descended the Marianas Trench; General Buzz Aldrin stepped on our moon moments after his partner; Norm Vaughan was a part of Admiral Perry's South Pole Expedition; David Hempleman-Adams walked to the North Pole (as well as the South, the highest peak of each continent, and so much more); Dr. Sylvia Earle holds the woman's record for ocean depths; Dr. Steve Squyres spoke of 'his' robots currently at work on Mars; Flag 132 was returned by Kenneth Lacovara and Coleman Burke, announcing the find of the largest dino bones (by far) in Patagonia. These members spoke with humble respect for our planet. Each urged conservation; each shared their accomplishment without boast. The acoustics were excellent, and associated video brought the experience close to all in the bedecked Grand Ballroom.

The Explorers Club Annual Dinner is the principle fund raiser of our year. As such there are many opportunities to spend money—most to the benefit of the club! Fortunately the Grand Ballroom of the historic Waldorf-Astoria Hotel was filled with many able to support the club. Priority seating, a silent auction and a live auction conducted by a Sotheby senior vice president (who should have had his mouth washed out with soap) which added \$50,000, all contributed to the most successful ECAD in 100 years.



Wm. Beebe Award winner Graham Hawkes and his wife Karen at ECAD.

A few other Chapter attendees (below): Castles, Beebes, Steve Smith & MaryJo Dierickx, Diana Pickworth, Ron Reuther, Gerry Elkus, Lee Langan, Merle Robertson, Susan Dutcher, Karine Langan

Each year awards of recognition are announced. This year Chapter member Dr. Graham Hawkes received the William Beebe Medal for his Deep Aviator achievements, a deserved and special reward. The chapter was well represented by at least two dozen others attending. The Grand Ballroom was grand with flags of the world's nations draped from the three tiers. The

1800 diners present did not fit, so some accepted blocked views, and others were served live video in an adjacent room. Few complained, if any, for all were part of the experience.

The speakers were exceptional, ranging from tales of their experience to hopes: to improve the lives of the Sherpa, to maintaining man's direct presence in space, to focusing upon the great unknown oceans, to respect for the fragile cultural diversity of our world. The National Geographic's Scientist-in-Residence Wade Davis was eloquent in his description of the ethnosphere and our need to learn about it, to understand it and to explore it.

The evening was long, truly memorable and inspirational; it seemed much shorter. You will certainly read details in various Club publications

— Lee Langan, FN'99



ECAD photos by Langan

More photos on page 4



Norman Vaughan he will autograph his books for our Chapter auction



Steve Smith confirming Club location with GPS

Sir Edmund Hillary delivery his address (televised insert)

Explorer Medalists at 100th ECAD (telephoto a bit shaky; they were not!)

The Explorers Club, 46 E 70th St.



Search for the Lost Cities of El Dorado

Join the Gene Savoy's
Andean Explorers
Foundation Expedition
Skilled Participants Wanted

Continuing in their quest for clues into the origins and peregrinations of the pre-Columbian civilizations of South America, the Andean Explorers Foundation, headed by American explorer, Gene Savoy (FN'69), will launch a new expedition into the Chachapoya(s) Region of northeastern Peru in summer 2004.

How did civilization come to the high jungles east of the Andes? Why

Tenoned heads found at sites in Gran Saposoa, San Martin, Peru, the city to which the expedition is returning.

did the Chachapoya(s) culture flourish amidst the cloud peaks only to be dashed by their Inca conquerors? Who were these tall, light-eyed civilizers who built monumental stone cities deep in the far-flung jungles? The answers to these questions are to be sought on the El Dorado-Gran Saposoa IV Expedition.

Join the team of expert explorers and Peruvian archaeologists as they unravel the secrets of El Dorado. Limited space is available. For an application form and detailed information, or to donate to the quest, please call toll free (877) 423-3672 or email:

expeditions@aefosc.org



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The Chapter Chair

Dear Northern California Explorers:

What do 1) Fyvush Finkel, 2) a riderless mount, and 3) biting the hand that feeds you have in common?*

Why, New York and Explorers Club Annual Dinner, of course! Once again, the Explorers Club outdid itself with an outstanding program at the Waldorf-Astoria. It is hard to imagine a more accomplished cadre of explorers sharing the stage of any venue. Having the opportunity to listen to the tales of the likes of Sir Edmund Hillary, Sylvia Earle, Don Walsh, Buzz Aldrin, Bertrand Picard, Steven Squyres, and Wade Davis, all in one place, much less all in one evening is rather overwhelming. Our own Graham Hawkes received the William Beebe Award for Oceanography; congratulations to Graham for a lifetime spent developing the means to explore our ocean environment.

Exemplary individuals these, and exemplary accomplishments all. But as important is the fact that each of these icons continues to look to the future and invest their time in ventures which benefit others. Hillary, in particular, noted that his most important life accomplishment has not been his Everest climb, but rather, his work with the Sherpa people of Nepal. A single accomplishment, no matter how great, does not define a life well lived.

No less important was the annual gathering of the Chapter Chairs, where we heard some of the latest achievements, initiatives and statistics from the Club's officers and staff. My overall impression is that we are on the right course. Inefficiencies and communications issues remain, but for the most

part I believe that these continue to be identified in an increasingly frank and non-confrontational way. I have hope that the National office will follow through on the changes and potential improvements identified.

Still, one must recognize that most of the club's work is done by volunteers, which can be a limiting factor in any organization. In this regard, I do believe that the national organization needs to recognize the willingness of the Chapters membership to contribute support beyond just the monetary. In the past, there has been a clear message that this type of support was not always welcome. In as much as 80% of the membership is not in New York, it would behoove the club to make use of the energy of those who are just as committed, but perhaps unable to be physically present in the *sanctum sanctorum*.

Also of issue is the gradual aging of the membership. Even with focused recruitment of younger members, and a 25% reduction in dues for those under 45, the club's average age remains in the mid-60s. This is particularly portentous in regards to dues revenue as an increasing portion of this group enters emeritus status.

One should additionally make note of the continuing gender imbalance—only 17% of our current membership is female. These are major challenges for the long-term viability of this organization.

On another topic, let me offer both my personal and the Chapter's greatest appreciation to Gene and Sibyl Boudreau for their most gracious and generous hosting of our March meeting at their home in Sebastopol. The food and drink was wonderful, the company

delightful, and the evening entertaining, to say the least. Lee Langan did a most amazing impersonation of a Sotheby's auctioneer. Through his hard work, and Gene's generosity, the Chapter benefited from a contribution of over \$700. Members in attendance also made off with over \$1000 worth of reading material from Gene's library. Thanks to you both for a great evening that will be hard to match.

I look forward to seeing you all at Sinbad's on April 30th for what should be a most interesting presentation.

* 1) an actor (if obscure), staying at my hotel; 2) Richard Weiss and Jack Reilly's horseback entrance to the Grand Ballroom was punctuated by Reilly being thrown by a recalcitrant mount; 3) our president capably fended off a guest whose ardor to protect endangered species led him to sink his choppers into Richard's hand during the question and answer period. Now that's adventure!

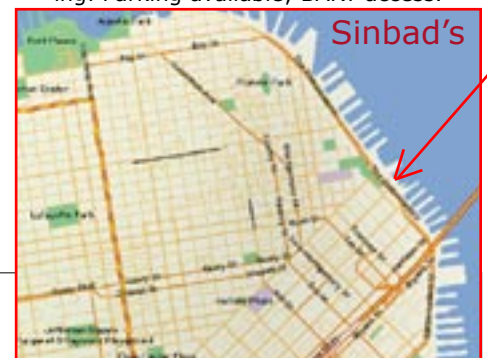
—Stephen E. Smith, FN'96

Picnic a-Planning

Anders Jepsen welcomes your suggestions and help on making this year's June 19 outing a grand success.

Don't procrastinate; good plans make great parties! Call now at 925 254-3079 or email ajviking@aol.com

Sinbad's is JUST south of the Ferry Building! Parking available; BART access.



Please mail this form to:

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

meal choice (please circle):

meat

fish

vegetarian

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

Name: _____

Address (if changed): _____

Please reserve _____ spaces for April 30, 2004, at Sinbad's, San Francisco.

Cost \$45 each by April 26; \$50 if postmarked thereafter.

Prospective members are very welcome.

(Contact Steve at nauticos@oceanearth.org or 925 934-1051 to assure a reservation). (Dues not yet paid? Send \$20, each.)

Name: _____

Address (if changed): _____

Guest: _____

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"
Sheraton, Palo Alto		
March 20, 2004	ECAD	100 Years of The Explorers Club
Waldorf Astoria, New York		
March 27, 2004	Eugene Boudreau	"At Home with the Tamahumara of Northern Mexico"
Boudreau Home, 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: <ajviking@aol.com>

Please note venues and dates with care.

The April 30 Friday meeting is at
Sinbad's Pier 2 Restaurant, 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.)

April 2004

Dr. Stephen E. Smith
The Explorers Club
Northern California Chapter
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