

The Explorers Club Northern California Chapter

December 2004

Chair: Stephen E. Smith
925 934-1051
nauticos@oceanearth.org
Vice-Chair: Lee Langan
415 567-8089
lee@langan.net
Treasurer: Anders Jepsen
925 254-3079
ajviking@aol.com
Webmaster: Mike Diggles
Newsletter: Lee Langan
Roster: Sue Estey

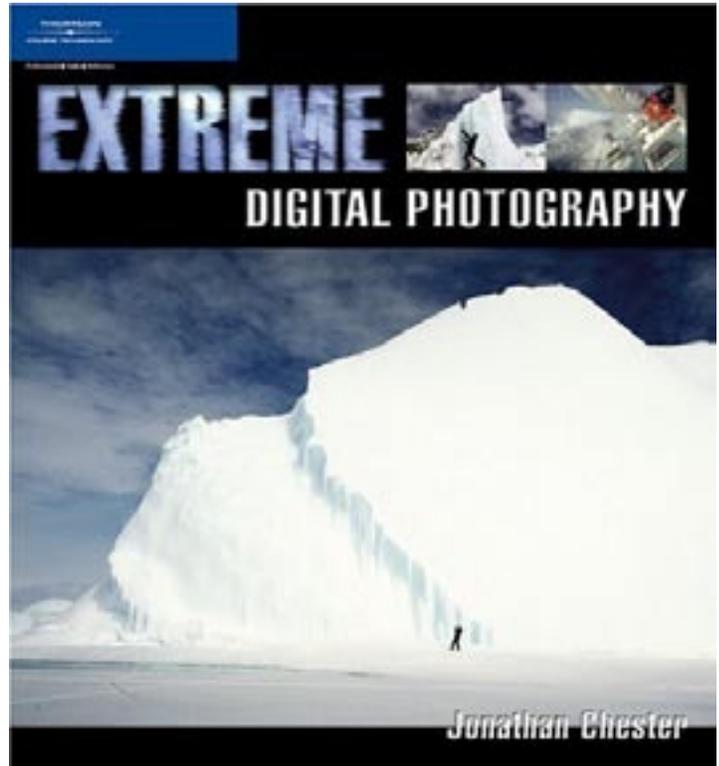
Web site: <http://www.diggles.com/ec/>

San Francisco December 19, 2004 Jonathan Chester

Extreme Digital Photography Going Digital On and Off the Trail

There is a profound revolution happening in still photography that affects how many of us now take, store and share photographs. In 2004, 90% of all new cameras sold have been digital. For outdoor enthusiasts and explorers, digital photography presents some special challenges. It is still possible, however, to capture all the beauty, action, drama and novelty of all outdoor activities with digital cameras, providing you're familiar with the basic features and functions of the cameras, cards, batteries and storage options. In certain specialized applications digital even offers distinct advantages over film capture.

In this keynote presentation, digital photography veteran and author of *Extreme Digital Photography*, Jonathan Chester, will provide a gentle introduction to the digital world. Jonathan begins by recounting his adventures in the evolution of digital photography in extreme locations starting with the ground breaking 'live' web expeditions: *Virtual Antarctica* in December, 1995, followed by the *Virtual Galapagos* in May, 1996. Covering the first descent of the Tekeze River in Ethiopia for Microsoft's online travel website, *Mungo Park*, later in 1996, was the next and the most challenging of digital Jonathan's assignments. Images



of these expeditions illustrate what was possible back then, even with what seems like very basic equipment today. Other digital assignments have taken Jonathan mountaineering in Canada, to Everest Base Camp in Nepal to cover the ascent of Everest by blind mountaineer Erik Weihenmayer, and to Ladakh in Northern India for the online magazine, *Slate*. Jonathan's most recent all-digital photography expedition was to the Antarctic Peninsula leading a team of 11 photographers and cinematographers.

Today, digital photography is now also possible for the regular traveler. Using affordable compact cameras, or camera cell phones and cyber-cafes, travelers are sharing their adventures with friends and family from on the road via photo blogs.

Digital photography technology has advanced rapidly. In less than ten years the equipment has progressed to the point that now with the aid powerful pocket cameras, PDA's and satellite phones, trekkers to the North and South Poles and expeditions all over the world are transmitting photos, videos and stories directly to expedition blogs or websites. GPS data can also be transmitted to interactive online maps pointing to the team's real-time position.

Jonathan will give examples and hints of how to join this exciting new world of digital photography with examples from his latest book. Leading digital photogra-

LOCATION

Date Sunday, 19 December 2004
Place: Sinbad's Pier 2 Restaurant
Embarcadero, San Francisco
Time: 5:30 pm, hosted nog!
6:15 dinner, hosted wine
Cost: \$45 (by December 18)
\$50 (on meeting date)

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

Reservation Form on page 5
Please reserve promptly!

An early
Sunday
evening
in
San Francisco

Come enjoy
the City's
garlands.

Stay for an
explorer's
lecture and
Christmas
egg nog
& mulled
wine!

continued on page 2

Continued from page 1

phers from all facets of adventure and extreme activities were interviewed for the book: including photojournalists, Peter Menzel, Tim Wimborne; adventure photographer, Corey Rich; underwater specialist, Jim Watt; surf shooter, Kurt Jones, and Everest mountaineer, Didrik Johnck. Examples of these great photographers' all-digital work is also included in the presentation.

Jonathan will bring some copies of his book for a signing. This could be a special Christmas gift (it was just released on November 10th!)

Jonathan Chester: *Extreme Digital Photography* ISBN: 1-59200-388-5, October 2004 (192 pages)

important bird areas, in search of endemics and threatened bird species.

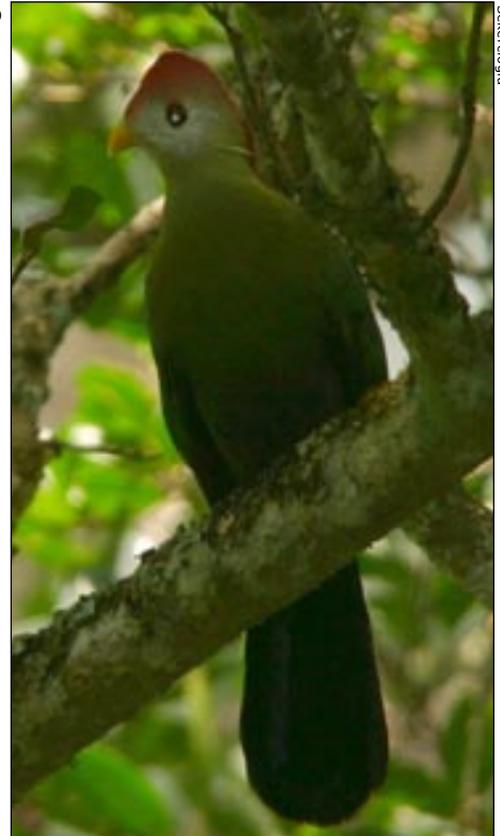
The emptiness of the country of eleven million is tragic—destroyed canopy, buildings pock-marked or destroyed by the ravages of war during the last quarter of the 20th century, transport systems virtually nonexistent—and gives wonder how it will recover. Yet, there is oil, diamond, copper, gold, uranium and more; the attractions that brought the colonial Portuguese remain. A bonus: much of the countryside is gorgeous.

The challenge of the expedition was to make a rapid assessment of the bird life and, in this, they were success-

ful: “We saw birds you’ve never seen before!” Cagan’s long lens captured close-up pictures of beautiful and rare avians, from tiny species smaller than your hand to meter-high bustards. The names, familiar I am sure to birders, flew past me. Look for yourselves at Dr. Sekercioglu’s web sites: <http://www.naturalphoto.com> or <http://www.stanford.edu/~cagan/main.html>. In these you will find birds plus the extent of his travels and exceptional photographic documentation.

If you would like to go birding with Cagan, check out “Biyotema Birding Tour May, June 2005 “ at <http://www.turkishbirding.com>

Red-crested Turaco



Sekercioglu

Angolan Birding Cagan Sekercioglu San Francisco

It is a good thing that birds fly, especially in Angola. There may be more land mines remaining in place than anywhere else on earth; it is dangerous going for people and vehicles straying off the travelled pathway. And, the travelled pathway is tough going too. Amidst all of this, Cagan Sekercioglu took us along on his 2004 Ornithological Expedition showing splendid photographs of some of the 921 bird species of this African landscape. They managed to log more than half.

The area he covered, and the diversity, is akin to the dimensions of California. It was a three-week expedition focused around Caconda, Gabela, Mt.Moco & Tundavala,

Cagan Sekercioglu with Chair Steve Smith



LANGAN

Gabela Akalat



Sekercioglu

The waste of war; refuse of the civil war that raged 30 years and laid waste to much of Angola. In this old tank, Cagan could still move the turret!



Sekercioglu

Go & Tell

A quick pen recorded a few comments by our busy members during the table talk:

Alan (MN'84) and Becky Nichols have completed the third leg (of four) cycling along the web of roads that comprise the Silk Road. Previously Alan had ridden through the 'stans' and in western China; in June this year he road 2700 miles from Istanbul across Turkey and northern Iran to connect at the Uzbekistan border. In 2005, he plans to complete the route with a 1700-mile link to Xian, China. Look for a future talk!

Gene (FN'02) and Sybil Boudreau travelled through northern Kenya earlier this year to lands of ancient tribal natives. They return to the Tarahamura's of Mexico's Sierra Madra this spring. And, they will again host the chapter on May 20th; look forward to this. Gene can put anyone in touch with guides through this pristine mountain region; if interested, call him.

Sue Estey (FN'92), an experienced cyclist, managed to break a vertebrae and wrist-- when moving too slowly along San Francisco's Embarcadero!

Over the New Year's holidays, Eve Iverson (CO'86) plans to take the 30th anniversary cruise of her semester aboard the 'World Campus Afloat' (Chapman College). In 1974, they circumnavigated South America. This year, a shortcut through the Panama Canal on the successor program 'Semester at Sea' (University of Pittsburgh). She is willing to shop for you, should you like!

Anders Jepsen and his HDSolar installation in Solano County.



Anders Jepsen (FN'02) introduced his son Eric, a raptor bander, who also tracks owls; Eric uses a deep woofer, at night, to draw their calls. He locates the site by GPS and takes a bearing on the hoots he hears. In daylight he can often find the nest! Anders also reported installation of a new solar technology which produces one kw of electricity and 10 kw of heat, a breakthrough in solar efficiency.

Mike Diggles (FN'92) and friends climbed Amelia Earhart Peak in the Sierras this Summer. His wife Deena, broke her leg descending; it is okay now. He also just returned, in one piece, from taking sixty 11-year-old students to Yosemite.

Lee Langan (FN'99) took a three-week journey through southern China, from Hong Kong to Yunnan's Tibetan border with his son and his son's lady friend. They journeyed on a wide vari-



The *Alma*, under sail.



Lesley Ewing and a band of friends aboard the *Alma* on SF Bay.

ety of transports, from plane to sampan. He confirms: China is booming!

Lesley Ewing (FN'93) invited several friends aboard the *Alma*, the historic hay scow at Hyde Street Pier. They sailed the Bay on a sunny day-- a prize she won at last year's Ocean Film Fest gala. She also introduced her friend Libby Engles, former chair of the Society of Woman Geographers.

Charles Townes (FN'78) and his wife Frances, both avid birders, attended; he despite having spent the night before making observations at Mt. Wilson Observatory. He used two telescopes, visible and infrared, and 'observed' that stars change all of the time and are hardly the stable lights they seem to the naked eye. (We note that this year is the 40th anniversary of Dr. Townes' Nobel Prize for inventing the laser; our speaker, of course, used a tiny red one to point at the projections.)

Upcoming Event

Saving Pacific Islands

Duane Silverstein
January 28, 2005

We have organized another special evening for our members. On the last Friday in January, after the gala reception of the Ocean Film Fest, we will have a presentation by Duane Silverstein (FN'04), Executive Director of Seacology, the not-for-profit organization dedicated to preserving the environments and cultures of islands throughout the world. He will discuss the special efforts they make, and some of their successes, in maintaining many threatened isles of the vast Pacific. (Duane previously ran the Goldman Environmental Prize for years.)

Come visit the reception and then join us for this lecture. It will be a wonderful evening for those intrigued with the sea. Watch for details in our next newsletter, but save the date!

Over the weekend, following the lecture and reception, will be the actual film presentations at Cowell Theater, Fort Mason—a collection of infrequently seen footage all within the ocean theme. You can find details at

www.oceanfilmfest.org

Krist Jake (FN'78), originator of San Francisco's Ocean Film Festival, enjoying a brisk day on the *Alma*.



The Winemakers Dance

Exploring Terroir in the Napa Valley

Jonathan Swinchatt and David G. Howell (FN'86)

A Director's Circle Book

243 pages, 7 x 10 inches, 64 color photographs, 17 diagrams, 22 maps, 3 tables
University of California Press, Berkeley, ISBN 0-520-23513-4

The authors, both geologists, are also talented wordsmiths. With frequent clever metaphors and excellent graphics, they link plate tectonics, which created the higgledy-piggledy bedrocks of the Coast Ranges of California, to the world-renowned wine produced by the artisans of the Napa Valley. The *terroir* they investigate is a complex mixture of the soils and the art of viticulture. The underpinnings are science. The 'winemakers dance' is the understanding of each branch of science and the art of decision making at each step in the creation of exceptional wine.

For the connoisseur of fine wine this book is a splendid exposition of the many factors that justify the careful and subtle distinction between the producers of the same grape, much less various combinations. For the neophyte, the book offers an insight into what can be appreciated, a reality that different wines justify a careful consideration. For most wine drinkers, between these, it gives grist for the delight of conversation while enjoying the good wine of Napa Valley in particular, and the world's wines by extension. They even offer several suggestions for investigative wine tastings

The complex geology of the Napa Valley wine growing area is described as it relates to the soils and drainage of world-class vineyards, as it relates to the climatology, and as it relates to the diversity available in site selection. All of these impact on the resulting quality of the wine. The science of wine making is mollified by the grapes grown, and these are the product of their variety, their vineyard and the attention of their grower. Swinchatt and Howell explain, in easy reading style, the factors that contribute to decisions that are made in the process. They posit that grape farming, viticulture, is not agriculture, but rather, it is horticulture.

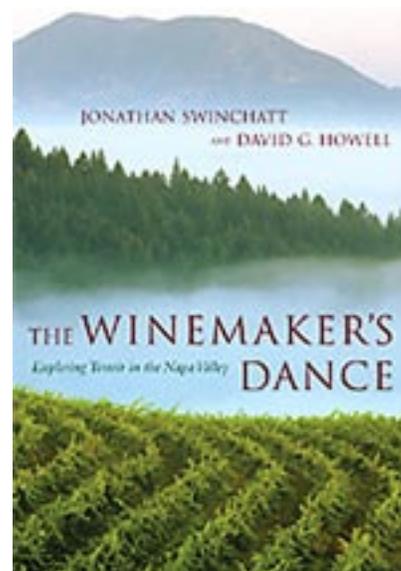
Throughout the book, sidebars elucidate an understanding of various aspects of the dance: the prose of wine description, the tannin effect, microclimate impact, and more. Embedded, as well, are two tours, along Highway 29 and along the Silverado Trail. These describe views of the critical geologic features and point out some of the greatest wineries the world has to offer.

The authors have managed to give new insight, from a new direction, to processes of ancient times: geologic times and the age-old art of making wine. In the end they urge that you let your growing knowledge of the complexity and underpinnings of *terroir*, and the genesis of style and the character of wines, be your guide to trust your palate. Educate yourself and enjoy your choices!

If you want to look at a chapter-before you read, and I do suggest you read it, go to:

www.winemakersdance.com

—Lee Langan, FN'99



The Chapter Chair

Dear Northern California Explorers:

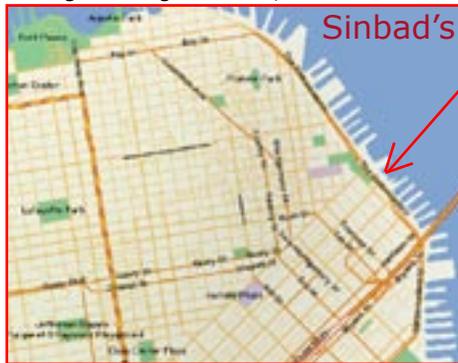
As we approach the close of our Club's Centennial celebration, I am pleased to report that it has been another great year for the Northern California Chapter. We've had a parade of wonderful speakers, enjoyed camaraderie, and experienced some very special events. Those of you who attended ECAD will no doubt remember it as one of the highlights of your experience with the EC. The speakers on the dais at that event remind us of the very special group of individuals who make up this organization and the incredible breadth of their interests and endeavors. We are fortunate indeed to share in the intellectual and physical challenges that our club fosters. Many of you have continued trailblazing this past year, carrying the Explorers Club flag to all parts of the globe, and contributing to scientific and personal achievement. To each of you we send our thanks and congratulations for your dedication, efforts, accomplishments, and your representation of our Chapter.

The NC Chapter continues to flourish and set a standard for others to meet. We are among the largest of the chapters, host one of most active and diverse programs of activities, and are frequently mentioned as a benchmark to which all chapters should aspire. We certainly benefit in this regard from the area in which we live and work, without doubt one of the richest in terms of individual achievement, innovation, and diversity. The individuals who present at our meetings are best of class, and we thank them for sharing of their time and experiences. 2005 promises to continue this tradition and we invite and encourage all members to participate in upcoming meetings.

In order to maintain our improved financial condition we will once again be soliciting nominal dues as the new year arrives. Those of you who remitted your dues, in 2004, have directly contributed to the success of our endeavors. As detailed in previous columns, hosting dinners and venues is an expensive proposition in the Bay Area, and our meetings are generally not money-making events. In this regard we re-iterate our special acknowledgment to the many of you who have given additional generous contributions to the Chapter and opened your homes and hearth to hosting and fund raising. We also thank our recent meeting sponsor, Redwood Creek Winery, and hope to foster additional corporate relationships in the coming year. Beyond fund raising, I offer my personal thanks to the many members who have given generously of their time and individual energies to help maintain and grow the Chapter.

In closing, we sadly acknowledge the passing of a number of fine Chapter members in the latter part of 2004, including William Burks Terry FN'53, William Siri FN'55, Carlton Skinner FN'62, Allan Parnell Bennison FN78, Alzeda Kistner MN'87, and Jerry Hughes AE'98. Each of these accomplished individuals contributed

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



substantially to the values and success of this organization and will be sorely missed. Such losses remind us that we need to continue building our tradition through recruitment, a responsibility that rests with each of us. As we embark on our second century, we pause to reflect on both the contributions of those have preceded us as well as the certainty of exciting accomplishments yet to be realized.

Best wishes of the Holiday Season to you and yours.

Hope to see you on December 19th. —Stephen E. Smith, FN'96

Evolution

@ The Explorers Club

We end our calendar year, the midst of our 'academic year', with a splendid presentation by Jonathan Chester—he has enlightened us before. In May, 2000, he spoke about his ascent of Mt. Minto in the Antarctica and his ship experience in getting there! And, who can forget *The World of the Penguins* or *A is for Antarctica*. We have scheduled this meeting for a late-afternoon, early-evening just before Christmas week. The City stores are all bedecked; the Sinbad venue overlooks the skyline and Bay. Come and enjoy it all, and we will be serving holiday cheer.

The season of speakers is completed; we had a bounty of excellent presentations from which to chose. It was difficult, but we hope those who do speak will educate and delight you, and those we could not fit into our schedule will be patient for another time. Note that we have taken to shifting venues and dates to fit various opportunities; keep a wary eye to the newsletter and web announcements.

May the season of reflection and giving be good to you and yours.

—Lee Langan, FN'99

NOTE: AN EARLIER TIME (5:30) THAN USUAL.

Please reserve _____ spaces for December 19, 2004, at Sinbad's, San Francisco. Cost \$45 each; \$50 on meeting day. Prospective members are very welcome.

Contact Steve (right) to assure a reservation so we can advise the restaurant.

Name: _____

Address (if changed): _____

Guest: _____

Please mail this form to:
Dr. Stephen E. Smith
402 Via Royal
Walnut Creek, CA 94596
or, preferably:
nauticos@oceanearth.org
or call 925 934-1051

meal choice (please circle):
meat – fish – vegetarian

Northern California 2004-2005 Event Calendar

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

October 19, 2004	Peter Pyle	"Birds on the Farallons & Across the Pacific"
The City Club, San Francisco		
November 19, 2004	Cagan Sekercioglu	"Angolan Ornithological Expedition 2004"
Sinbad's Restaurant, San Francisco		
December 19, 2004	James Chester	"Extreme Digital Photography"
Sinbad's Restaurant, San Francisco		
January 28-30, 2005	Duane Silverstein	"Saving Ocean Islands"
San Francisco		
February 25, 2005	David Moyer	"Operation Deep Freeze"
San Francisco		
March 19, 2005	ECAD	"101 Years of The Explorers Club"
Waldorf Astoria, New York		
March 25, 2005	Andrew Urbanczyk	"Transpacific Raft Expedition (A Guinness World Record)"
San Francisco		
April 2005	Kirk Usher	"Biking Performance Physiology in the Himalayas"
San Francisco		
May 2005	Gene & Sibyl Boudreau	Northern Kenya Exploring
Sebastopol		
June 18, 2005	Chapter Picnic	Contact Anders Jepsen to help: < ajviking@aol.com >
Angel Island		

**Please note venues and dates with care.
December 19th is a SUNDAY meeting at
Sinbad's Restaurant in 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.)

December 2004

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

