

# The Explorers Club

## Northern California Chapter

January 2005

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San Francisco January 28, 2005 Duane Silverstein

### ISLAND EXPEDITIONS Saving the Environment with Win-Win Projects

Until the tsunami on the Indian Ocean, the very thought of islands conjured up images of romance and tranquility. While it is true that on many of the world's islands one might find swaying palm trees, lagoons teeming with marine life or waves gently lapping on a sandy beach, the

importance of islands goes far beyond their striking beauty. Islands are the Earth's great repositories of biological diversity. But island ecosystems and cultures are threatened as never before. In the last four hundred years the majority of the world's plant and animal extinctions have taken place on islands. Biologist Dr. Peter J. Bryant

has called the unprecedented rate of species extinctions on islands "one of the swiftest and most profound biological catastrophes in the history of the earth."

Chapter fellow Duane Silverstein is one of the world's leading island explorers, having visited 87 islands, some as the first westerner to visit many island villages. Duane is executive director of Seacology, the world's premier nonprofit organization with the sole focus of preserving the environments and cultures of islands throughout the globe. Too often islanders are asked to make great sacrifices to preserve the environment, but even though

many are financially indigent, they are given nothing in return for doing so. Seacology has come up with a creative, cost-effective approach to this problem. It offers island villagers a tangible benefit such as a needed school, community center or water delivery system in exchange for establishing a marine or forest reserve. In developing islands such as Fiji, for example, Seacology has built many kindergartens for the relatively small amount of \$15,000. Not only is a needed school built, but a forest or marine reserve is also created. In its brief history Seacology has preserved over 1,700,000 acres of marine and forest reserves through these win-

continued on page 2

### NEW LOCATION

**Date** Friday, 28 January 2005  
**Place:** Dolphin Club, Aquatic Park,  
502 Jefferson St, San Francisco  
**Time:** 8:30 pm, lecture  
(visit SFOFF Reception before)  
**Cost:** Free, but please reserve  
SFOFF Reception is \$50

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

Reservation Form on page 5  
Please reserve promptly!

### This will be a different format than familiar meetings.

You are invited to the San Francisco Ocean Film Reception from 6:00-8:00 p.m., before our talk.  
(The charge is \$50, see the article on page 4.)  
You may, of course, have dinner elsewhere.  
The talk is scheduled at 8:30 p.m., promptly.  
The venue is the Dolphin Club  
(a venerable San Francisco institution.)  
Our meeting is free and is open to anyone. Invite your friends!



Seacology

Seacology

win projects.

Duane will talk about Seacology's unique, cost-effective projects, showing slides from his trips to exotic and remote island locations and discussing island expeditions planned in the coming year.

For almost 20 years prior to heading Seacology, Duane was the executive director of the Goldman Fund, one of California's largest philanthropic foundations. He also headed the Goldman Environmental Prize, which has been dubbed the "Nobel Prize of the Environment" by National Geographic and news media throughout the world. Duane's work has been covered in newspapers and periodicals as diverse as *TIME Magazine*, *The Bangkok Post* and *Scuba Diving Magazine*. Articles he has written have appeared in *Asian Geographic*, *Fathoms* and many other newspapers and magazines. Duane was previously a comedy writer for one of the nation's leading comedians, so please join us on January 28 for what should be a fascinating discussion.

To learn more about his organization, visit:

[www.seacology.org](http://www.seacology.org)



Duane Silverstein visiting with Huli Wigsmen (above)  
Duane snorkling among fam coral (page 1)

## Taking Wild Digital Photos Jonathan Chester San Francisco

Jonathan Chester has taken wonderful photographs all over the world, especially in out-of-the-way places. He showed a lot of them this evening in a fast-paced presentation of what digital photography can do for the explorer and outdoors adventurer. He also showed examples of the work of other photographers who go to extremes. There were many 'oohs' and 'aahs', well deserved.

Jonathan was an early convert to digital media. After hauling about several Pelican cases filled with cameras, lenses, film and accessories for years—and waiting until his return for hopeful results—he succumbed a decade ago when he purchased an \$18,000 6-megapixel camera. It took 12 seconds to download each image. BUT, he got excellent results and immediate satisfaction—and a series of projects that called upon him to upload condensed versions of his photographs via satellite to his sponsors. Over a series of

'virtual' tours he became very knowledgeable about the entire process of taking digital pictures and transferring them from isolated places. Sponsors, or those involved, could follow the progress of an expedition in near real time.

A 3-mp camera is now available from many notable camera manufacturers for \$300 or thereabout. Prosumer 6-8mp cameras are well under \$1000. The pros now can take up-to-16mp, available for one to a few thousand dollars. Even with all the accessories one might desire (memory, tripods, cases, lenses) the cost is less than the film alternative. And, the results are exceptional. Digital photography is here and now.

In the course of showing excellent pictures (electronically, of course, using his laptop and the Club's projector), he spoke to the benefits of this new technology. Perhaps most important: you know what you get. You can make exposure changes frame by frame, if needbe (come into the igloo from the blinding snow!) You can duplicate the storage media in the field and maintain a backup capability (always have two copies before you erase the camera's memory!) The whole range of equipment is much more compact; smaller lenses, no film. You can traverse security with greater ease (no film to be exposed.) These alone are compelling reasons to take up the new technology. The primary reason for more pixels—in response to a query, "What camera should I buy?"—is to gain flexibility in cropping. Beyond 3 or 4mp (which are good for 8 by 10 prints), 6 or 8mp will allow one to select portions of the picture to use. Post-capture software is remarkable in its capability, and the 'electronic darkroom' has become a joy to many who gave up chemical processing as too restrictive



Jonathan Chester with Chair Steve Smith (right) and Vice Chair Lee Langan (left)

Puffins nest on the cliffs of Helmey Island, one of the Westmann (Vestmannaeyjar) Islands off the east coast of Iceland.



Cruising the coast of Akpatock Island in Canada's Hudson Bay Jonathan happened upon a magnificent polar bear.



and cumbersome. As to what camera: his advice is to check the web for reviews in this fast-moving technology. *Extreme Digital Photography* has

just been published; contact [jchester@extremeimages.com](mailto:jchester@extremeimages.com) or visit [www.extremeimages.com](http://www.extremeimages.com)

to obtain a copy. In so doing you can share our evening in his writings and study his findings. If you want personal attention, Jonathan holds classes.

## A Brief from Yemen

Diana Pickworth

I hope all is well and the New Year brings all sorts of splendid happenings. I am mopping up old research that was not completed, primarily early stone-age tools from a napping site north of Marib and beautiful Chinese material excavated as rescue archaeology from a disused well hole.

I am happily back in my flat after discovering my three-year absence had left it very grotty. Nicknamed 'the monastery' it is airy, serene and quiet, in stark contrast to everything outside of the door. Yemen is sunny, calm, and full of mountains to climb and paths to walk on.

The tsunami was light here; indeed, as I have no tele I did not know about it. But Fukham, a village near to Aden had high waves, and some fishing boats were in danger. Along the coast to the east there was much more damage and dangerous high tides, and they were on alert. Socotra was hit quite badly, but only one death reported.

Happy New Year to all of my Explorer Club friends.

## Chapter Elections

In our December meeting, as has been the custom for years past, 'elections' were held. In fact, past Chairs had

proposed a slate; it was unopposed and, thus, elected. We believe that this process can be improved upon. We want to be sure that all members in good standing have an opportunity to participate in the governance of our chapter.

To this end, we propose that the election process be changed. In particular any one interested in participating should contact a previous Chair of the chapter (these individuals are listed in the new roster, now available.) In the last meeting of the Spring, a slate will be proposed and presented to the membership, at the meeting and in the newsletter. On the occasion of our first meeting in the Fall a vote will be held, in person and by returned ballots. New officers will take charge on January 1st of the new year. The term of office is for at least two years; nevertheless, elections are held annually.

There are four elected officers: the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer (often combined). There are several critical chapter appointees who also participate in it's operation: the newsletter editor, the webmaster, the database/roster/publisher, and special meeting coordinators (the Spring picnic, for example.) We hope many of you will step forth to undertake these tasks: many hands make the tasks lighter and more easily completed.

We have an active chapter. Let's keep it that way! —your officers

## Diggles at Yosemite

In November, I took another 60 eleven-year olds to Yosemite for a week. This is the sixth year in a row I have done this with my friends who teach at their school in Sacramento. This year, the six naturalists from Yosemite Institute had a staff day; that left me. I hoofed the students through the forest ("What are the four kinds of trees in a mixed-conifer forest?") to Happy Isles. By this time, the drizzle had soaked all. I think I still managed to keep their attention when I gave a lecture on the *Flood of 1997* and on the *Glacier Point Rockfall* that took place a couple years later. I waited until I had my naturalist, Ceci, a few days later, before I gave my geology lecture (*Tectonic Development of the Western Cordillera*.) I took a PowerBook along to build slideshows each evening; showed the previous day's activities at breakfast.

Poke around <http://www.diggles.com/> for more stories and lots of photos. Visit <http://www.diggles.com/yi/> for Yosemite Institute stories from all six years.



SAN FRANCISCO  
**OCEAN**  
 FILM FESTIVAL



Catch the Second Wave of the  
 San Francisco Ocean Film Festival

January 28-30, 2005

Featuring inspirational films and lively discussions on  
 oceanography, saltwater sports and coastal cultures

**January 28**  
 Opening Reception  
 Maritime Museum  
 San Francisco Maritime NHP

**January 29-30**  
 Movies & More  
 Cowell Theater  
 Fort Mason Center

The second San Francisco Ocean Film Festival celebrates the joy, power and mystery of the sea with more than two-dozen select films for all ages highlighting many aspects of the sea, including saltwater sports, oceanography, and coastal cultures.

The Opening Reception will be held Friday, January 28, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Maritime Museum across from Ghiradelli Square at Aquatic Park. Partygoers will enjoy Quivira wine, sea savories and chanteys amidst nautical treasures, and this event will substitute for the Explorers Club usual dinner.

The festival also features a special free Children's Program on Saturday, January 29 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00

p.m. aboard the Eureka ferryboat at Hyde Street Pier in the San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park. Families will be treated to a fun-filled day of films, storytelling, crafts and entertainment.

A partial list of the featured films:

*Blackie*—Blackie was 12 years old when he almost broke the record for swimming the Golden Gate. And he towed someone, too. Even for a horse, that was remarkable. A little sweetness can work wonders. (U.S., 5 minutes)

*The Haunts of the Black Masseur*—This lyrical historical journey, based on the book by Charles Sprawson, explores why humans, from the ancient Greeks to Lord Byron to contemporary marathon swimmer, Lynne Cox, have been drawn to the Black Masseur – rejuvenating, sensual water. (Canada, 52 minutes)

*Short Infinity*—Wind and silence, lobster-

ing and the sea, family and friendship shape the people on Entry Island in Canada's Gulf of the St. Lawrence. This film shows us why it's a home they can't imagine leaving. (Canada, 52 minutes)

*Last Journey for the Leatherback*—Fifty years ago, the wide-ranging leatherback sea turtle flourished; today, it nears extinction. The plight of this ancient and mysterious turtle, which can weigh up to a ton, tells us much is amiss in our oceans. (U.S., 28 minutes)

*Fantastic Sea Creatures: Seahorses*—They hang out in sea grass, hiding, and prefer by nature the slow life. So it's no surprise that their mating dance takes hours. The surprise comes when the dance ends. (Germany, 5 minutes)

*Three Feet Under*—It's a dining delectable that lives, often for a hundred years, buried beneath Puget Sound. With this ribald, witty film, the geoduck clam (pronounced gooey-duck) takes wing, having hatched a song, a doll ... and the geoduck smile. (U.S., 55 minutes)

Launched in January, 2004, the San Francisco Ocean Film Festival was the first of its kind in North America. The Festival was the idea of Chapter member Krist Jake, an avid saltwater swimmer and fan of the Banff Mountain Film Festival. Its lineage can be traced to the successful 36-year old *Festival International du film maritime, d'exploration et d'environnement*, held in Toulon France.

The San Francisco Ocean Film Festival is co-sponsored by community partners, including the California Academy of Sciences, Dolphin Club, the Farallones Marine Sanctuary, Golden Gate Yacht Club, Farallones National Marine Sanctuary, The Marine Mammal Center, Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations, SF Maritime National Historical Park and South End Rowing Club.

The San Francisco Ocean Film Festival is part of the In Performance Series at the Cowell Theater at Fort Mason Center, which is supported by Grants for the Arts/SF Hotel Tax Fund, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the Fort Mason Foundation.

Tickets to the San Francisco Ocean Film Festival are priced from \$6-10 each. **Tickets for the Friday, January 28 Opening Reception at the Maritime Museum are \$50 each.** The Children's Program is free. The weekend schedule and ticket information is available online at

[www.oceanfilmfest.org](http://www.oceanfilmfest.org)

# The Chapter Chair

Dear Northern California Explorers:

Welcome to 2005! First, on behalf of the officers of the Chapter, let me express my appreciation for the kind words and support expressed at our last meeting. For those of you who might not be aware, you are stuck with us for another year—elections having been held during December’s meeting and the incumbent slate of officers having been re-elected. It may be that the outcome was influenced by the eggnog, but we are nonetheless grateful for the vote of confidence and honored to serve for an additional term.

I am pleased to report that one of our first achievements in 2005 will be the issuance of our new membership roster. A number of members have toiled over the past few months with the research and review for this major update, and we want to express our appreciation for all of their work. In particular, I want to especially thank Sue Estey for her extensive forensic and organizational efforts.

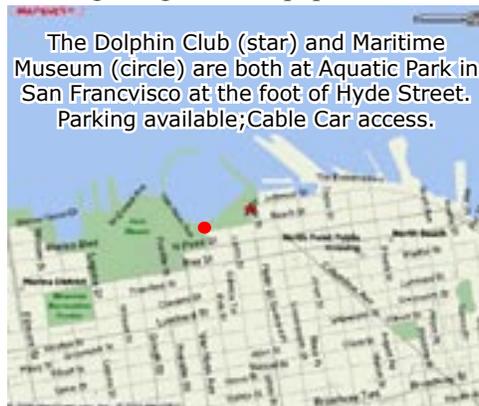
Our detailed review of the database has revealed that there are quite a number of individuals for whom we have either incomplete or clearly outdated information. To help rectify this, the current newsletter includes an insert that reflects the data that is currently on file for you (assuming, of course, you are reading your own copy!). Please take a moment to review it, make the appropriate changes, and return the completed form to me. Instructions are included. Your responses will help us immeasurably. Plus, we want to hear from each of you. Please make sure to include in your response, any comments, questions, and suggestions that you have about the Chapter operation.

The final version of the roster

should be available at the next meeting. Senior members of the Chapter (those who have been members at least 25 years) and dues paying members will receive a complimentary roster by mail. Additional rosters will be available to members at \$10 each. While our fundamental desire is that each member owns a personal copy, production costs are not insignificant, and fiscal responsibility dictates that we strike a balance between our goal to maximize distribution, and our continuing efforts to remain solvent.

In somewhat the same vein, the 2005 dues for membership in the Northern California Chapter are now due. Please refer to the form in the current newsletter. Dues remain unchanged from last year.

We have an exciting meeting and venue this month, presented in association with the San Francisco Ocean Film Festival. January’s speaker will address a topic near and dear to my heart. Duane Silverstein, Executive Director of Seacology, will tell us of his organization’s efforts to promote reef and mangrove conservation throughout the world. As some of you know, my efforts in Micronesia are similar but focused on a single island. Our Kosraen project parallels many of Seacology’s approaches to integrating the local populace in



the conservation effort, emphasizing education and self-benefit to promote an ecological ethic. I can attest that the Seacology-type model works, and I’m looking forward to an update on their continuing successes. By now, most of us recognize that the condition of the world’s coral reefs are harbinger of our environmental future. I am reminded of an old saying that what we have today is not inherited from the past, but rather is borrowed from the future. I look forward to seeing you at the Dolphin Club on January 28th.

—Stephen E. Smith, FN’96

## Evolution

### @ The Explorers Club

All are stunned by the force of nature and the tragic losses around the Indian Ocean on their Boxing Day. The constant updating of the death tally and the Internet-speed of images leave one scarcely able to comprehend the magnitude. Geophysicists give a number to the causal quake: 9.0, Richter’s value for a land shift that can do massive damage. Beneath the sea the scale of the damage was severely amplified, sadly.

It happened in a blink of time; a brief moment not enough to give most at sea level time to comprehend what was happening and what to do. The rush of water-borne debris had to be mind numbing; few were fortunate to survive. Tales being told, survival was by sheer good fortune in a sea of bad fortune.

It happened in a blink of geologic time too. Geologist Gene Boudreau reminded me of another 9.0 quake-caused tsunami; in 1755, 60,000 were killed in Lisbon. The same ‘blink’ of time. The earth pushing and shoving in ways we have begun to understand.

Explorers are normally prepared for the exigencies of nature. Some are beyond our ability to be ready, but we know this will happen again. In a blink of geologic time.

—Lee Langan, FN’99

**NOTE: A LATER TIME (8:30 promptly) THAN USUAL.**

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ spaces for January 28, 2005, at The Dolphin Club, San Francisco. Meeting is FREE; prospective members are very welcome.

Contact Steve (right) to assure a reservation so we can arrange space.

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

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

Guest: \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE: \$20 annual Chapter dues are due; please return them with this reservation or the insert.**

Please mail this form to:  
**Dr. Stephen E. Smith**  
402 Via Royal  
Walnut Creek, CA 94597  
or, preferably:  
[nauticos@oceanearth.org](mailto:nauticos@oceanearth.org)  
or call 925 934-1051

## **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, 2005	Duane Silverstein	"Saving Ocean Islands"
Dolphin Club, 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 22, 2005	Kirk Usher	"Biking Performance Physiology in the Himalayas"
San Francisco		
May 21, 2005	Gene & Sibyl Boudreau	Northern Kenya Exploring
Sebastopol		
June 18, 2005	Chapter Picnic	Contact Anders Jepsen to help: < <a href="mailto:ajviking@aol.com">ajviking@aol.com</a> >

**Please note venues and dates with care.  
January 28th is a FRIDAY meeting at  
the Dolphin Club 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.)

### *January 2005*

Dr. Stephen E. Smith  
The Explorers Club  
Northern California Chapter  
402 Via Royal  
Walnut Creek, CA 94597

