

The Explorers Club Northern California Chapter

March 2005

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San Francisco
March 25, 2005
Andrew Urbanczyk



Captain Urbanczyk
aboard the NORD

Underway in the Pacific

Recognition as a 'World Record'

A Great Transpacific Raft Expedition A Guinness World Record

Please do not call this voyage a crazy one. If you do, you would have to use the same adjective toward me and toward my whole life. Why? At 21 I was an organizer and leader of an expedition, which crossed the tur-

bulent and cold waters of the Baltic Sea, on a raft NORD (North – in German), built from ordinary and inexpensive fir logs.

After my escape from the communist world, I sailed twice single-handed, on a 27 feet boat across the North Pacific, landing in the Guinness Book of World Records. Next was a solo circumnavigation in a 30 feet boat and after that - three attempts to circumnavigate in 100 days.

In the meantime intensive mountain climbing and flying were only innocent additions to my business adventure which allowed me to participate in the above ventures. And of course there were my books: 35 of them, published in 12 languages.

LOCATION

Date Friday, 25 March 2005
Place: Sinbad's Pier 2 Restaurant
Embarcadero, San Francisco
Time: 6:30 pm, no host drinks
7:15 dinner, hosted wine
Cost: \$45 (by March 24)
\$50 (on meeting date)

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

Reservation Form on page 5
Please reserve promptly!



CERTIFICATE

During the Raft Transpacific Expedition
the raft Nord, captained
by Andrew Urbanczyk (USA),
sailed from Half Moon Bay, California, USA,
to the US-owned Pacific island of Guam,
a straight-line distance of
5,110 nautical miles (9,463 km
or 5,880 miles), in 136 days from
26 August 2002 to 28 January 2003

Keeper of the Records
GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS LTD

Signature

continued on page 2

Why sail on a raft and why across the endless North Pacific? The answer is obvious. There are three-million sailboats on our planet and I knew not a single oceangoing raft (except the ancient Kon-Tiki resting in Oslo Museum.) Why across the North Pacific? Because nobody did it.

Thor Heyerdahl, my acquaintance since our sailing on a raft across the Baltic, called the latest expedition "The Last Great Adventure." I think he was right—there is virtually nothing great left to do on our planet. There were thousand people on Mt. Everest, over 200 sailed solo around the world, there were adventurers who circumnavigated in a balloon and pilots who flew non-stop around the globe, not mentioning endless orbits of manned space crafts.

Although the same Heyerdahl, in



The beginning of a great adventure: Andrew Urbanczyk and his seven 100-year-old redwood logs—the foundation of the *NORD*.

a tone which he never used in 50 years of our correspondence, warned me harshly about the dangers in such an excursion and about my responsibility for the crew's life.

On the day of my 65 birthday, I signed a check for 12 thousand dollars,

payable to Big Creek Lumber in Northern California and became an owner of seven phenomenal redwood logs: 41 feet long and over two feet in diameter each.

Come hear the rest of the story from the sailor himself!



Charles Townes (FN78), the Nobel laureate whose inventions include the maser and laser and who has spent decades as a leading advocate for the convergence of science and religion, has won the 2005 Templeton Prize.

Townes, 89, secured his place in the pantheon of great 20th-century scientists through his investigations into the properties of microwaves which resulted first in the maser and later his co-invention of the laser. For his research he shared the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1964.

It was the 1966 publication of his seminal article, "The Convergence of Science and Religion" in the IBM journal *THINK*, however, that established Townes as a unique voice—especially among scientists—that sought commonality between the two disciplines. Long before the concept of a relationship between scientific and theological inquiry became an accepted arena

CHARLES TOWNES WINS 2005 TEMPLETON PRIZE

of investigation, his nonconformist viewpoint jumpstarted a movement that, until then, few had considered and even fewer comprehended. So rare was such a viewpoint at the time that Townes admitted in the paper that his position would be considered by many in both camps to be "extreme." Nonetheless, he proposed, "their differences are largely superficial, and...the two become almost indistinguishable if we look at the real nature of each." The article was generated from a talk delivered by Townes in 1964 before a congregation at New York's famed Riverside Church, known for its embrace of groundbreaking perspectives on philosophy, theology and social activism.

The *Templeton Prize for Progress Toward Research or Discoveries about Spiritual Realities* was founded in 1972 by philanthropist Sir John Templeton. Given each year to a living person to encourage and honor those who advance knowledge in spiritual matters and valued at 795,000 pounds sterling, the Templeton Prize is the world's best known religion prize and the largest annual monetary prize given to an individual. The prize's monetary value is in keeping with Sir John's stipulation

that it always be worth more than the Nobel Prizes to underscore his belief that research and advances in spiritual discoveries can be quantifiably more significant than those recognized by the Nobels.

The Duke of Edinburgh will award the prize to Townes in a private ceremony at Buckingham Palace on May 4th. Townes says he intends to give a major portion of the prize money to Furman University, with substantial amounts to also go to the Pacific School of Religion, the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences, the Berkeley Ecumenical Chaplaincy to the Homeless, and the First Congregational Church of Berkeley.

Most recently, Townes has been a champion of optical searches for extraterrestrial intelligence, using methods he first proposed in a paper in the journal *Nature*, in 1961, one year after scientists had launched the first search for radio transmissions from distant solar systems. His current work uses lasers to help combine images from distant telescopes. Townes' most recent book, *How the Laser Happened: Adventures of a Scientist*, was published in 1999.

www.templetonprize.org

Deepfreeze David Moyer San Francisco

David Moyer, MD, (FN96) brought some wonderful slides of Antarctica that he took during two summers when he served as physician for *Operation Deep Freeze* at McMurdo station.

The McMurdo population numbered over 1000 in the summertime. There was a scheduled hour of sick call in the morning and another hour after lunch. Any serious medical problems, an average of one a month, were medevaced back to civilization. The population he served was so healthy that he had plenty of time to explore the southernmost continent.

He took advantage of these opportunities to fly to many parts of Antarctica and meet researchers and penguins from every walk of life. We heard about Adelie penguins, who mate for life. We saw a seal who had died years ago in the Dry Valleys.

He visited the South Pole, where the station sits on (and gradually is enveloped by) 9000 feet of ice. The average polar temperature is -56°F , but in summer, it rises to a mild -10 to -20°F . The pole is 350 miles from the nearest exposed rock, so it appears very flat.

He visited Vostok station, about 2000 feet higher, where the record low

was recorded at -126.9°F . We were especially impressed by the courage of his colleague taking the plunge, diving headfirst into the Onyx River, which runs only one month a year (or not at all, if it doesn't thaw out!)

February 2005 Explorers Club Meeting Notes

A small but select group turned out for our February meeting on a beautiful full-moonrise-over-the-bay evening at Sinbad's in San Francisco. We watched enviously the fleet of sea kayakers slipping past in the moonlight.

We met our youngest student member, Kyle Rothschild-Mancinelli (SM04). He was accompanied by his mother Lynn Rothschild (FN04), who studies microbes in extreme environments, his sister Brook, and his father, Rocco Mancinelli (FN87), who told us about sending microorganisms from the salt ponds into space to see who lives and who dies. Unfortunately (or not), he does not get to accompany them on their expeditions.

Ron Reuther's (FE74) arm was bound up due to a parachute-free fall from a plane. Luckily, the plane was on the ground, or we would have lost another member. Gerry Elkus was keeping him safe this evening.

Mort Beebe (FN78) and Danielle told of their trip to Africa to document tribal history; this was written up in our last newsletter.



Kyle Rothschild-Mancinelli
Chapter's youngest SM04

We were glad to see Charlie Geraci (MN92) and Louise, up from San Carlos, and Elsa Roscoe, who Mike Diggles had very graciously picked up in Portola Valley. Such a gentleman.

Mike Diggles (FN92) and Deanna are hoping to win the lottery for a trail permit to climb Mt. Whitney this summer.

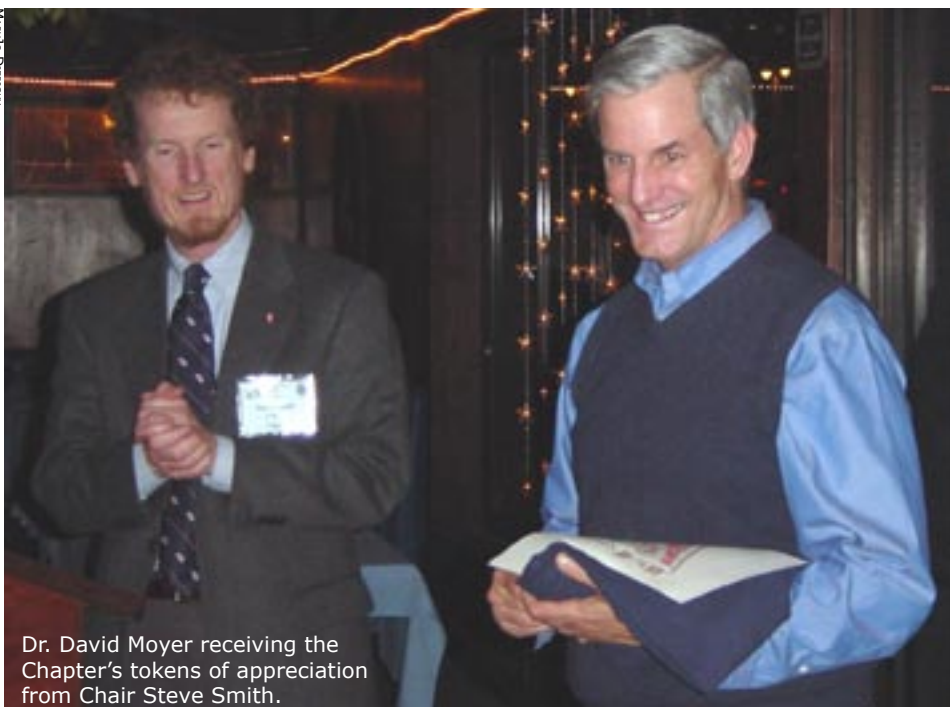
Steve Smith (FN96) and Mary Jo Dierickx are also talking of a Mt. Whitney climb, though I suspect that Steve would prefer to head for a sea mount.

Eugene Boudreau (FN02) spoke of an exploration in Africa. He and Sibyl have invited the Chapter to their home for our May meeting—it is scheduled to be on Sunday, May 29.

Rick Saber (MN01) has been chosen to succeed the recently deceased Emperor Norton II, of *E Clampus Vitus*; long live Emperor Norton III!

Tom Hall (MN97) is busy in March chairing two international health conferences. He also gave us some of the details of boat repairs that were required after they ran into submerged driftwood on their travels in British Columbia last summer. We missed Liz McLoughlin, who was sorting out her mother's home back east.

Sue Estey (FN92) is celebrating her freedom from the back brace that was required during her recuperation from a back injury sustained in a bike accident last October. She's back on her bike and training for the 63-mile *Cinderella Classic*, the women-only ride scheduled for April 2nd.



Dr. David Moyer receiving the
Chapter's tokens of appreciation
from Chair Steve Smith.

The Great Lisbon Earthquake & Tsunami of 1755

E. H. Boudreau (FN02), Registered Geologist, California #3000

The 9.0-Richter-scale earthquake that occurred to the west of Sumatra on December 27, 2004, along with its associated tsunami, killed upwards of 150,000 people, leaving many to ask, "Why?" The answer is that the Indian Plate of the Earth's crust is diving under the Burma Plate along a major fault zone hundreds of miles long, a process that has been going on for a very long time, and one that will continue far, far into the future. In 1957, a 110-foot high tsunami swept north out of the Indian Ocean to mangle the coast of the district of Baluchistan in Pakistan. Calls for a tsunami warning system for the Indian Ocean go back at least as far as 1985—all unheeded. All of this goes to prove—again—that most people don't learn from history, and that faith in their religion outweighs belief in science, which is just trained and organized common sense with no problems of an afterlife.

Already the mullahs are claiming the death and destruction were God's way of displaying his outrage over skimpy bathing suits on the beaches of the disaster zone, and a Christian missionary swears he stopped the tsunami by commanding it to halt in the name of Jesus.

Some 40 years ago I read an article that stated the religious leaders in the Moslem countries were to be counted on to fight to the death against the influence of Western civilization, which would weaken their hold on their followers. The decline in the hold superstition and blind faith had on people in the West as the advance of science stimulated their minds was plain to see. Why the godless French in the 1790s had even seized countless churches and castles, for them to be dismantled and the building stones sold cheaply to pheasants and townspeople to build decent homes with! Indeed, the 18th century was called the *Age of Reason*, and it superseded the *Age of Faith* in the West.

It has been claimed that people need a religion, with its threat of terrible punishments in the present and hereafter, to keep them from running riot. But there is a scientific basis for civil behavior in society: If you promise not to break into my house I'll promise not to break into yours, and so we can both sleep at night instead of having to stand guard. So argued such philosophers as Voltaire, even though some of them were burned at the stake by the Catholic Church. (Since the Bible prohibited the shedding of blood, the Church took the fire route to execute heretics.) Voltaire saw that the Church was not going to give up its popularity voluntarily, just as he remarked that the Jesuits had an eye for pretty boys, and he was right. However, the advance of science is an ongoing tsunami, for a man can't be taught to use his mind in one field and not another.

Just as the Sumatra earthquake of 2004 will leave a strong impact on thought in the Moslem world, the Lisbon quake and wave of November 1, 1755, added force to the Age of Reason in the West. It happened on the morning of All Saints' Day during morning mass, when the churches were full or worshipers. The shock happened along the edge of the African Plate where it slips below the Eurasian Plate, a fault zone running from the coast of Syria,

westward across the Mediterranean Sea, through the Strait of Gibraltar and out to the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. As at Sumatra, it was rated 9.0. First the magnificent stone-built churches and other religious buildings came crashing down on the heads of the praying faithful, and then the rubble caught fire. Survivors made their way to the wharves along the harbor to avoid the flames.

To their puzzlement, the water in the harbor drained out, and soon a 50-foot high tsunami raced into the harbor, over the wharves and half a mile into the heart of the city. An estimated 60,000 of the city's 240,000 people died, and 85 percent of the buildings were destroyed, including 32 churches and the Royal Palace. To prevent a reoccurrence of the disaster, the Church ordered burning of some sinners at an *auto-da-fé* (act of faith.) Reasoning people were not impressed.

Another 10,000 died in Morocco, and a 20-to-25-foot tsunami hit an island in the West Indies, 3,500 miles away from Portugal. There is still no tsunami warning system in the Atlantic.

Ed. note: In response to our request to have members participate, here we have included one member's thoughts about the broader impact of tsunamis, an exploration into the response to nature's force. Comments are welcome.



The Chapter Chair

Dear Northern California Explorers:

As I write these words, the sun is shining on the returning flowers, the birds are announcing their new construction projects, and hints of the summer to come are already being felt—in March! Having just returned from the east coast, where snow covers the ground, blustery winds continue to blow, and the temperature still settles in the high twenties, I am reminded how much I appreciate living in the bay area.

This week I will ‘bravely’ face the elements and return to New York for the ECAD celebrating our 101st year. I am especially looking forward to reconvening with the Chairs of the various chapters to learn of their progress in building membership and furthering the goals of the Club. A number of you have made suggestions for improvements and initiatives, and I will be raising these issues with the both the chapter representatives and club officers. Thank you for your suggestions, participation, and interest.

Our February meeting was a success as usual, if a bit unique. Dave Moyer’s presentation of his work at McMurdo Station with Operation Deep Freeze gave us a much more intimate sense of the day-to-day experiences of life at the pole. It’s hard to believe that only fifty years have passed since the first major scientific studies were begun with the International Geophysical Year initiative. Dave’s unflappable nature was exhibited when an uninvited, inebriated, and rather obnoxious visitor crashed the party. The young man evidently did not realize that he couldn’t hold a candle in comparison to a Polar Bear.

We were most pleased to have Kyle Rothschild-Mancinelli, SM04 in

attendance along with his family. He is the youngest member of the Explorers Club and gives us confidence of the future of our organization. In the same vein, I have received news of another of our chapter’s student members. Eve Nilson SM01, has had four cover articles published in Scholastic magazine, one of the most recognized teacher’s resources for literacy in young children. One of her stories has even been incorporated into a national standardized test for reading comprehension. Eve has studied amphibians, monkeys, and birds on various expeditions to Brazil, and is currently a student at Duke University. Congratulations Eve!

Lastly, I would note that another of our members is scheduled to receive an award for her contributions and support of the Girl Scouts. Sylvia Earle MED81 will be recognized along with Senator Dianne Feinstein on April 1st in San Francisco. Look on our website for an invitation to what I’m sure will be an interesting event. The Girl Scouts, along with the Boy Scouts are prime organizational resources for future explorers. I encourage any of you with knowledge of potential student members in either of these groups to follow-through and make a recommendation.

This month’s presentation should be especially exciting. You may have

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



already read of Andrew Urbanczyk’s exploits in the Explorers Journal. Here is your chance to attend the meeting and hear it first hand. I’ll look forward to seeing you on March 25th.

—Stephen E. Smith, FN96

Evolution

@ The Explorers Club

Let us address the prompt publication of our newsletter. In advance of the last two meetings it has arrived with less than two weeks to spare. This has caused some small consternation, for some made alternative plans—to our and their dismay the speaker has fewer present. What can be done?

May I urge those who do not have an electronic connection to pay close attention to the season’s schedule on the address page. It changes, when necessary, but is always up-to-date in the latest issue. Note, for example, that our May meeting has changed, but April and June remain firm.

The newsletter itself is published first (and in full color) at our website, and those for whom we have email addresses are notified. For those who receive it by regular mail this is often 4-5 days later: printing (at the whim of Kinko), assembly (usually an evening) and postal delivery (1-3 days.) It takes a fortnight to assemble the articles and to process and format the whole. Not a full-time task, but it is surprising the steps involved.

So, to take ‘issue’ with each issue, I urge patience and that all become aware of the speakers, schedule and venues. The responsibility of the Chapter is to keep you informed; the responsibility of the member is to reserve in advance and to participate. As we look for other places to meet and other speakers, things change!

—Lee Langan (FN99)

NOTE: We return to Sinbad’s on San Francisco’s Embarcadero.

Please reserve _____ spaces for March 25, 2005, at Sinbad’s, San Francisco. Cost \$45 each; \$50 on meeting day. Prospective members are very welcome. Annual Chapter dues are payable: just \$20!

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, 2005	Duane Silverstein	"Saving Ocean Islands"
Dolphin Club, San Francisco		
February 25, 2005	David Moyer	"Operation Deep Freeze"
Sinbad's Restaurant, 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 29, 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.
March 25th is a FRIDAY 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.)

February 2005

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

