

# The Explorers Club Northern California Chapter

March—April 2006

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## Two Meetings — Two Great Speakers — New Location March 24th and April 7th

Alan Nichols  
Crossing the Silk Web  
Istanbul to Xian  
10,000 Miles on a Bicycle!  
March 24, 2006



Captain Don Walsh  
At Sea to See  
Famous Sunken Ships  
Eating with Ghosts of the Deep  
April 7, 2006



### NEW LOCATION

**Date:** Friday, 24 March 2006  
**Place:** Golden Gate Yacht Club  
The Marina, San Francisco  
**Time:** 6:30 pm, no host drinks  
7:15 dinner  
**Cost:** \$50

Reach Anders at  
[ajviking@aol.com](mailto:ajviking@aol.com)  
925 254-3079

Reservation Form on page 5  
Please reserve promptly!

Alan Nichols (MN84) is a practicing attorney, a quintuple-bypass heart survivor, an author, and an expert on sacred mountains of the world. He also rides a bike. Indeed he has done so from the Mediterranean to China along the route made so famous to all by

continued on page 2

Don Walsh (HON61, Explorers Medalist'01) is a retired naval deep submersible pilot (the first), a Ph.D. Oceanographer who has taught and written over 200 publications, has worked in the Arctic and Antarctic on over 50 expeditions, is a member of the National Academy

continued on page 3

### NEW LOCATION

**Date:** Friday, 7 April 2006  
**Place:** Golden Gate Yacht Club  
The Marina, San Francisco  
**Time:** 6:30 pm, no host drinks  
hosted hors d'ouerves  
7:45 speaker  
**Cost:** \$20 (PLEASE RESERVE)

Reach Anders at  
[ajviking@aol.com](mailto:ajviking@aol.com)  
925 254-3079

Reservation Form on page 5  
Please reserve promptly!

Alan Nichols pedaled 10,000 miles on the Silk Web (a.k.a. Silk Road) from Istanbul, Turkey to Xian, China in four journeys from 1989 to 2005. This is an historic first.

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# Cycling the Silk Web

**LEGEND**  
 Journey 1: 1989  
 Journey 2: 1998  
 Journey 3: 2004  
 Journey 4: 2005



March 24,  
2006



Marco Polo, among others, the famous *Silk Road*. Only he has renamed it, upon appropriate reflection over weeks of riding, as he chose his way: the *Silk Web*. There simply is not just one way that travellers and trades people have connected the Far East and Europe. It is a tangled web of choices in remote and often harsh and often lovely lands. There are long stretches of parsed flatlands and rugged high passes. Alan's bicycle trek took him approximately 10,000 miles on four separate trips beginning in 1989 and ending in 2005.

Becky Nichols was the field manager making sure a camp and meals were available during the last two segments: across Turkey and Iran and, last Spring, across China. (In December 2003, Alan and his son, Shan, spoke to the Chapter about crossing the 'stans': Uzbek-, Tajiki-, Kazakh-, Kyrgy-) Becky has put together all new photos,

and some video clips, to illustrate the entire trip, but the emphasis is on China.

Come hear the enthusiasm that Alan brings to having completed this long-held dream—indeed, having done so after the heart surgery! He has many reflections gained during the solitude of cycling.



The paved roads were more dangerous than inferred here; heavy truck transports, pot holes, and mud slowed elsewhere. For a change of pace, Alan took to horseback, briefly (left).

## iViva Concha! Musical Opening Invite

On May 5, 2006 (Cinco de Mayo), the world premiere showcase of *Viva Concha! Rose of the Presidio*© by Candace Forest will open for three performances at San Francisco's vintage opera house, The Victoria Theatre, 2961 16th Street. Tickets from \$20 - \$30 are available online at [www.victoriatheatre.org](http://www.victoriatheatre.org).

*Viva Concha! Rose of the Presidio* is based on a true story of the 1806 love affair between San Francisco's Concha (Concepción) Arguello and famous Russian explorer, Nikolai Rezanov. The staged musical event will showcase the talents of an international cast and commemorate the 200th anniversary of the celebrated lovers, who have been immortalized in anthologies and school textbooks for more than a century.

Chapter member Eve Iversen (CO86) has done research on Concha

and was closely involved in the development of the musical; she wants to gather a group of explorers to join in the opening. **Call Eve at (510) 232-2817 soon so tickets can be arranged.**

An excellent review of Concha's plight was written by Chronicle reporter Carl Nolte on February 18, 2006:

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2006/02/18/MNG0EHB6VE1.DTL>

# The Best Lunches I Have Ever Had: Lousy Food but Great Ambience Several Miles Beneath the Sea

of Engineering, has travelled to over 112 nations, served in two wars, graduated from the Naval Academy and Texas A&M and was born in Berkeley. In 2001, he was cited as one of the great explorers in the Life Magazine book, "The Greatest Adventures of All Time".

With Jacques Piccard he dove *Trieste* to the deepest place in the World Ocean: 35,840 feet. While still on earth these two men were farthest from sea level than any others, ever. The feat has never been duplicated.

We have a treat in store for us. For this occasion we have invited volunteers from the San Francisco Ocean Film Festival to join the evening. Guests are welcome.

Over the past four decades, Dr./Capt. Walsh has participated in diving operations with more than two dozen submersibles including more recent expeditions to the wrecks of *RMS Titanic* (12,500 feet) and the WWII German battleship *Bismarck* (15,500 feet) using two Russian Mir submersibles.

This evening's talk will describe the 12-14 hour dives to those famous shipwrecks, and what it was like to enjoy a modest box lunch while sitting on the decks of these ships. It is interesting to know that these dive programs were for paying tourists. In the past seven years nearly 80 have made

the two-mile trip down to *Titanic* and about 12 to *Bismarck*.

A brief history of each ship's loss will be given to provide a context for the diving operations. Don will even tell you how anyone can join these expeditions.

April 7,  
2006

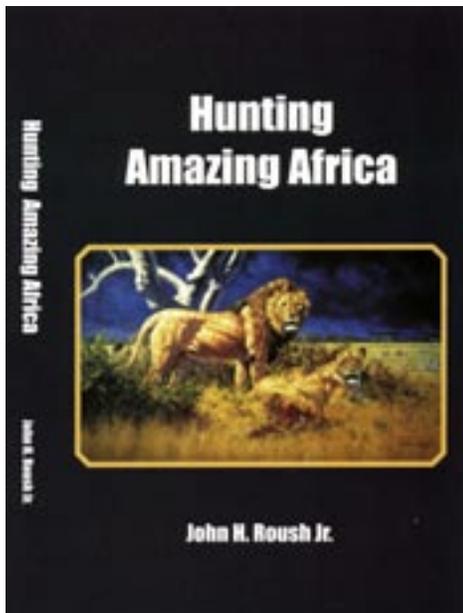


above: At North Pole 2004 (with Russian nuclear powered icebreaker *Yamal*)

lower left: At Franz Josef land Arctic 2004 (also with *Yamal*)

lower right: At Drygalski Ice Tongue, West Antarctic 2003. (taken during the '02-'03 circumnavigation of the Antarctic with Russian icebreaker *Kapitan Khlebnikov*)

page 1: In front of Russian Mir submersible after 2003 *Bismarck* dive (on board Russian research ship *Akademik Keldysh*)



## Hunting Tales After the Big Five

In this book, just published, Col. Roush (FN80) presents a dramatic collection of the hunting experiences of over a hundred men, as well as those in which he was engaged. The sharing of stories of the hunt is one of the wonderful components of being an avid outdoorsman. In this book the stories are given enough detail that one can visualize the experience. The book is graced with fine photographs and illustrations. (Several of these tales have been submitted to the Explorers Club planned

"Tales Told Around the Campfire.")

Soft-cover copies are available from the author at 600 Deer Valley Road, #2E, San Rafael, CA 94903-5517 (fax) 415 499-5112.

You can also contact John, or Amazon, for his earlier books: *Enjoying Fishing Lake Tahoe, the Truckee River and Pyramid Lake* and *Hunting Dangerous Game with the Maharajas*.

Be the first Chapter member to review it!

# Diverting Eons of Damage

## James McLane & John Rutherford

### San Francisco

It was not apparent to most listening that rain is a problem in the Valley of the Kings, but with a bit of thought this became obvious. Indeed, rain, in the form of desert flash floods has been a problem always. As our speakers pointed out, the ancients created diversion streams and dams to prevent damage from water. In time, however, these wore away. Modern authorities were reminded of what can happen when a major storm occurred in 1995. John Rutherford (FN76), an Egyptologist since the mid 1970's, responded to a request to study the problem, and his bid was selected in 1996. The project was to be confidential until complete.

John and his team, supported by USAID, The California Academy of Science and the American Research Center in Egypt, investigated how water damages the priceless tombs of the New Kingdom. As the work progressed Architect Jim McLane became co-Director. This evening Jim spoke of "the greatest artistic experience of my life!" and their accomplishments to create a demonstration of how all the tombs can be protected.

For more than a decade they studied the site which contains 62 tombs ranging in age from about 3000 to 3,500 years\*. Their work to survey the surface and underground had to be considerate of the thousands that visit each day. (At any given time about a dozen tombs are open to the public; the Egyptians change these and allow tombs to 'rest,' to recover from the impact of tourists and their shuffling and breathing in the tunnels.) Once the catchment basin and the various channels of flow were understood, the research team set about to determine how damage might be mitigated.

It is apparent that serious floods have occurred at least every 100 years or so (see adjacent figure.) Considering the elevations surrounding the valley, the combination of water-soaked soils, abrasion and rock-joint movements have done major damage to some tombs. Besides silt filling the tunnels, the Enos Shale which underlies many tombs will swell when wet. The path of least resistance for this force to be relieved becomes the voids of the tombs; they become crushed from below.

The Valley of the King Protection Project sought to alleviate this damage. The basic answer: diversion. At KV 34, they have build wall barriers to allow even strong water flows to spill around the tomb openings onto the tourist walk paths. They have elevated the entrance paths to prevent spillage into the tombs. The Egyptian craftsmen have surfaced these barriers so they blend in with the terrain, hardly to be noticed yet clearly 'modern' and not to be confused as part of the ancient structure.

To protect the interiors from the onslaught of visitors, proposals have been made to create a transparent seal just away from the walls; thus, the damaging humidity would be mitigated. Some of the remaining art is so spectacular that something must be done. (It was noted that this is a problem the world over at irreplaceable archeological and historical sites.)

Our speakers have made a good start to show practical ways to add protection and still keep these treasures available to see.



This remaining column of debris, trimmed away to access Tomb KV18, shows the layer upon layer of silt buildup since the tomb was sealed, then opened and looted. From these layers past inundating floods can be dated. The frequency of occurrence is about each century.

Our speakers, John Rutherford and Jim McLane (right)



\* This month it was announced that a 63rd tomb, probably from the 18th Dynasty, was found adjacent to King Tut's. 'Google' "Tomb Found in Egypt's Valley of Kings."

# The Chapter Chair

Dear Northern California Explorers:

This newsletter is a double issue, the second this year for the same reason: there is too little time to publish between the meetings! In December we crowded three meetings into a month—Arlene Blum, Chuck Merdinger and Robert Johnson; all were worth arranging our schedule to meet theirs. We have long been urging Explorers Club Medalist Don Walsh (and Chapter member) to leave his ranch in southern Oregon to speak with the Chapter. April 7th became available, and so we have two outstanding meetings announced within.

Alan Nichols, your Vice Chairman, will summarize his four-trip odyssey along the Silk Web in a talk planned before knowing Don's schedule. It is well worth not changing the date. Alan and Becky have put together a colorful summary of their entire route of travel. Even if you managed to attend

Alan's summary of the Uzbekistan to Kyrgyzstan segment (December 2003), this talk is all new. No one has ever before traversed this fabled route between East and West by bicycle.

We will attend a new venue for both of these meetings: the Golden Gate Yacht Club. The facility has a spectacular view of the Bay from a new vantage than that we have enjoyed along the Embarcadero. The parking is ample and at no cost. The management is welcoming. We shall give it a try in our search for the best place to feature our interesting and informative speakers.

This issue of the newsletter brings new support from our members: Sibyl Boudreau has undertaken the printing and distribution of the hard-copy version of the newsletter. I shall retain the gathering and layout tasks, as editor, but her assistance will halve the effort to get each issue to our members and friends. Thank you for the welcomed help.

While mentioning the newsletter let me remind all of you that submissions are

encouraged. Your thoughts about exploration; your comments on our speakers; interesting events, far or near; your suggestions that are related. Send these to me, preferably by email and electronic means.

I will be attending the annual meetings of The Explorers Club in New York in mid-March. You can expect a report next month. Several members will be at the ECAD to enjoy this over-the-top event, as well.

Mark your calendar for the upcoming lets-get-some-explorers-together evening at the Victoria Theater on Cinco de Mayo in San Francisco's Mission District. Eve Iverson's research into a love-lost saga of the early Presidio has been developed into an opera! She invites you to attend the May 5th evening performance as a group. Contact Eve at (510) 232-2817 to arrange tickets.

In closing I bring the sad news that we have lost a lovely lady and grand supporter of our Chapter. Dan Liebowitz's wife, Rusty, died on February 26. She was a charming hostess for many an afternoon reception at their home in Woodside over the years. She also was a frequent attendee, and she was with Dan at his talk in September. On behalf of all our members I offer condolences to Dan and the family. —Lee Langan, FN99

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ spaces for March 24, 2006, at Golden Gate Yacht Club, San Francisco.

Cost \$50 each. Prospective members are welcome.  
Dinner wine is courtesy of Redwood Creek Winery!

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

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

Guest(s): \_\_\_\_\_ meal choice (please circle):  
meat - fish - vegetarian

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ spaces for April 7, 2006, at Golden Gate Yacht Club, San Francisco.

Cost \$20 each. Prospective members are welcome.  
Hors d'ouerves. Wine is courtesy of Redwood Creek Winery!

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

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

Guest(s): \_\_\_\_\_

If not paid yet, please:

also enclose your Chapter Membership 2006 Annual Dues of \$25.

Please mail these forms to

**Dr. Anders Jepsen**

23 Dos Posos

Orinda, CA 94563

or, preferably, email

[ajyiking@aol.com](mailto:ajyiking@aol.com)

or call 925 254-3079



## **Northern California 2005-2006 Event Calendar**

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

October 14, 2005 (Friday)	Dan Liebowitz	The Last Expedition, Stanley Across Africa
Delancey Street, San Francisco		
November 18 (Friday)	Arlene Blum	Breaking Trail: A Climbing Life
Sinbad's Restaurant, San Francisco		
December 7th (Wednesday)	Charles Merdinger	Remembering Pearl Harbor on the USS Nevada
Marines' Memorial Club, San Francisco		
December 9th (Friday)	Robert Johnson	Photographs at the new museum
DeYoung Museum, San Francisco		
January 13, 2006 (Friday)	Doug Capone	Planet of the Prokaryotes
The Dolphin Swim Club, San Francisco		
February 24 (Friday)	James McLane	Egypt -Exploration and Preservation of Ancient Sites
Sinbad's Restaurant, San Francisco		
March 24 (Friday)	Alan Nichols	Cycling The Silk Web
Golden Gate Yacht Club, Marina, San Francisco		
April 7 (Friday)	Don Walsh	Deep Sea Visitation!
Golden Gate Yacht Club, Marina, San Francisco		
May 19 (Friday)	Edward von der Porten	Galleons in the Dunes
June 17 (Saturday)	Dave Moorer	Annual Chapter Picnic

**In full and lively color!** To experience this newsletter in color, see the PDF version at our web site.

**Please note venues and dates with care.**

**At 6:30 on March 24th AND April 7th, FRIDAY meetings at Golden Gate Yacht Club**

Send address changes and corrections by email to Steve at [nauticos@oceanearth.org](mailto:nauticos@oceanearth.org)

*March—April 2006*

Lee Langan

The Explorers Club

Northern California Chapter

2660 California Street

San Francisco, CA 94115

