

# The Explorers Club

## Northern California Chapter

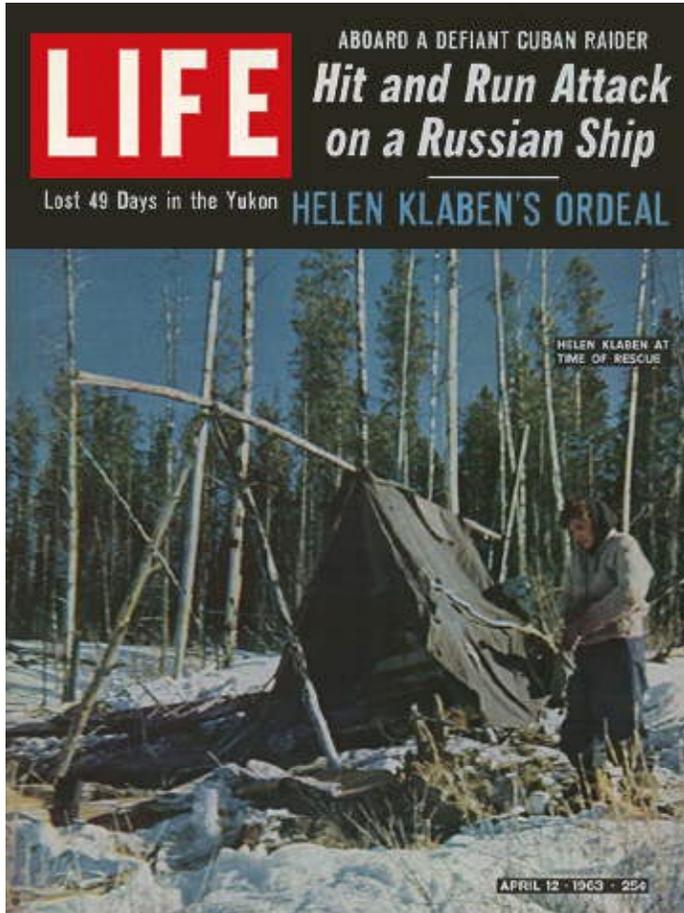
February 2007

In color at our web site: <http://www.diggles.com/ec/>

Note venues and dates with care.  
Our next meeting is at 6:30 on  
February 23rd, a Friday, at the  
Golden Gate Yacht Club, San Francisco.

Sholastic Books printed a 185-page book  
in 1967. It was widely used in classrooms.

Life magazine featured her rescue  
in it's April 12 issue.



"When you're lost in the Wild,  
and you're scared as a child,  
And Death looks you bang in the eye,  
...it's dead easy to die,  
It's the keeping-on-living that's hard."

*The Quitter*, 1912, Robert W. Service (1874-1958)

San Francisco  
February 23, 2007  
Helen Klaben Kahn

"Hey! I'm Alive"  
A True Story of Survival

The Yukon is a frigid, frightful place in Winter. Forty-four years ago this month our speaker learned this first hand. As a 21-year-old college student Helen Klaben hitched a ride to the 'outside' (from Alaska to San Francisco) in a small plane piloted by Ralph Flores. The estimated time of travel was three days. As is the custom, they were using the Alaskan Highway as a guide and for safety. "The longest runway in the world!" pilots like to call it. After refueling they left Whitehorse, against the advice of the Canadian Transport folks, and continued east into what became a blinding snow storm. Their way was lost, and the plane crashed, 'somewhere' north of the highway. The fuel tanks remained in tact, but Helen sustained a crushed foot and broken arm; Ralph a broken jaw and cracked ribs. They were not prepared; they were lost; their radio was broken. They didn't have any survival gear and hardly a picnic lunch. It was very cold; records showed dips to -45 degrees.

Forty-nine days later they were found, alive! The story made headlines around the world and the experience still holds the record for winter survival in those conditions. It was a profile in courage acknowledged by President Kennedy.

Hear this tale of survival firsthand. Listen to one who has been in the most dire of conditions and lived to tell. She was not a trained mountaineer or explorer, but necessity and grit brought her to be an feminine example of the folks written about by Canada's bard, the Scot Robert Service. Unlikely indeed.

Helen Klaben Kahn is still a curious world traveler. She will talk about what kept them going during those desperate days and long nights of cold, pain, starvation and psychological conflict. She will answer questions for a lively exploration of the meaning of life for Explorers!

You could see the made-for-TV movie, starring Sally Struthers and Ed Asner, or read Helen's book (*Hey, I'm Alive*, 1964)



— I'm going to wait and listen first. Come welcome our newest applicant to the Club!



## Kayak the World! Olaf Malver San Francisco

Olaf Malver showed slides from the far places of the world where he has paddled with clients who become friends as they seek out rivers and coast lines rarely if ever traversed by modern men and women. He enjoys the title of CEO, *Chief Exploration Officer*, of his eight-year-old adventure, *Explorers' Corner*. He also enjoys the travels he makes most of each year. He takes pride, with justification, in seeking those parts of the world that are unknown. There are many. It takes experience, knowledge, skill and diplomacy to bring a handful of people and their kayaks and tents to remote sites. The rewards are finding great beauty, meeting people who live in sometimes harsh environments, passing among animals on their terms and absorbing the solitude of nature.

The pictures of floating and paddling among icebergs in both polar regions provided an awareness of scale not appreciated in those taken from ice breakers or small cruise vessels that offer cabin comfort. Olaf has managed to get permits to visit protected locals; all he leaves with are pictures.

The Kamchatka Peninsula is pristine and unvisited; there are hundreds of waterways waiting; it is estimated that more Arctic bears live here, undisturbed by man's encroachment, than anywhere on earth.

Olaf took us on a photo journey from atop a 14,000' volcanic mountain, hiking to a kayakable river, to the sea. A bit like hiking from Mauna Kea's observatories to the pali cliffs along the Pacific. On another trip, in northern Laos, the boaters paddled along a Mekong River tributary through a 10-kilometer tunnel in the karst mountains; placid in the tropical growth at each end, but a true challenge in the pitch dark within! He took us to Madagascar and an outer island of the Galapagos too.

Olaf, a Dane, began his love of far-flung travel in Greenland, along the *Arctic Riviera*. Pristine beaches are found along Greenland's northeast coast in summer, but be aware the icebergs are floating nearby. He discovered the kayak, based upon an old Inuit design, was a splendid way to see this coast. After completing his Ph.D. in chemistry, he was drawn to invite others to join him in the North. This led to participation in the growth of eco-travel in the late twentieth century and to his founding of his own company in 1999. In addition to managing trips, he is now working with the Government of Georgia and the United Nations to develop tourism in the haunting beauty of the Caucasus.

Many of Malver's clients are first exposed to the world's wilds on these trips; they frequently become more involved in the appreciation for and participation in exploration. You can go too:

[www.explorerscorner.com](http://www.explorerscorner.com).

Double kayaks in Greenland (above, left) and Croatia.

Dr. Olaf Molver and Chapter Chair Lee Langan after his talk.

## Annual Dues

Thank you to the 15 members who responded in January with their voluntary contribution; this is a plea, not unlike those heard on National Public Radio for an expanded response. To repeat, each member of the Northern California Chapter is asked to volunteer an annual payment of \$25, as Chapter Dues. This amount is now payable.

The dues paid to our New York Headquarters cover the privilege and rights of membership and the costs of administering the Club. No other chapters have a local drop-in facility, and those members that are 'residential' to New York pay an added fee for this privilege. The rest of us are welcome anytime.

Our dinner meetings are priced to cover the costs of each event. We have newsletters mailed to some 350 people and added expenses that seem to crop up. Thus, the Chapter dues. Non-member newsletter recipients are urged to respond as well!

## The Chapter Chair

The Golden Gate Yacht Club welcomed our return with good food and drink and a cozy fire on a wintry San Francisco evening. Redwood Creek Winery provided wine for our supper. Olaf Malver excited the group. A memorable meeting. We look for a repeat on February 23rd.

Helen Klaben Kahn came to her second meeting in anticipation of joining The Explorers Club. After a few minutes of conversation we urged her to retell her story of survival to us all. February worked for us both, and I am sure you will be pleased. Helen never thought she was placing herself in harm's way, as many explorers know they do. She was a passenger, and pilot judgement brought her there. Nevertheless, she rose to the occasion and lived to tell of an experience no one would relish. As the recent tragedy of the Kim family in Oregon's Cascade forests reminds us, being lost can happen when least expected.

In March, at the time of ECAD (the Explorers Club Annual Dinner), the Chairs of the thirty domestic and international chapters gather to discuss the state of The Explorers Club. Thursday is a full day of presentations and questions and answers—about half from the administration's perspective, half from the Chapter perspective. In preparation for this meeting I welcome any comments, ideas, initiatives or observations you wish me to make. Please email me how you might improve upon the operation of the Club, its benefits, its limitations—whatever is on your mind. We have a new President, Daniel Bennett, and he is receptive to Chapter input.

On Friday, March 16, there is a member's reception at the Clubhouse; on Saturday, St. Patrick's Day, after watching the Fifth Avenue Parade (it goes on ALL day long!), the ECAD will be held at the Waldorf Astoria. If you plan to attend, let me know please. Sunday is a full day of exploration presentations.

Our experiment using the U. S. Post Office print/mail service seemed to work well! I upload the newsletter, and you receive it in a couple of days! Splendid.

—Lee Langan (FN99)



## Exploration in Maya's Forest

Your Chair had an opportunity to attend a fund-seeking presentation on current Maya exploration which may be of interest. Professor David Freidel has spent 30 years in Southern Mexico and Central America learning all he can about the ancient and modern Maya, for they are the same people. He compares the civilization that rose and faltered, from the Yucatan to Guatemala and beyond, to the great civilizations along the Nile, the Peloponnesus, those surrounding the Anchor Wat. Each is a complete and complex world of cities and villages; kings, queens, armies and surrounding populace; interconnecting roadways and attendant commerce rose and collapsed. What is left are the modern descendants. The indigenous Indians of the Central American forests and mountains are no less related to their ancestors than are the Greek fisherman or the citizens of Athens, or the peoples of Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand. The past is present; the glories of this past are hidden in its rubble.

Since his graduate work at Harvard, Freidel has taught and researched from Southern Methodist University. He brought three graduate students to San Francisco on February 1, to tell details of his current focus on a remote Mayan site, located on a beeline between Tikal and Palenque: El Peru-Waka.

Should you wish to make a non-profit gift, let Lee know.

## Ugo Conti's 'Proteus' Emerges



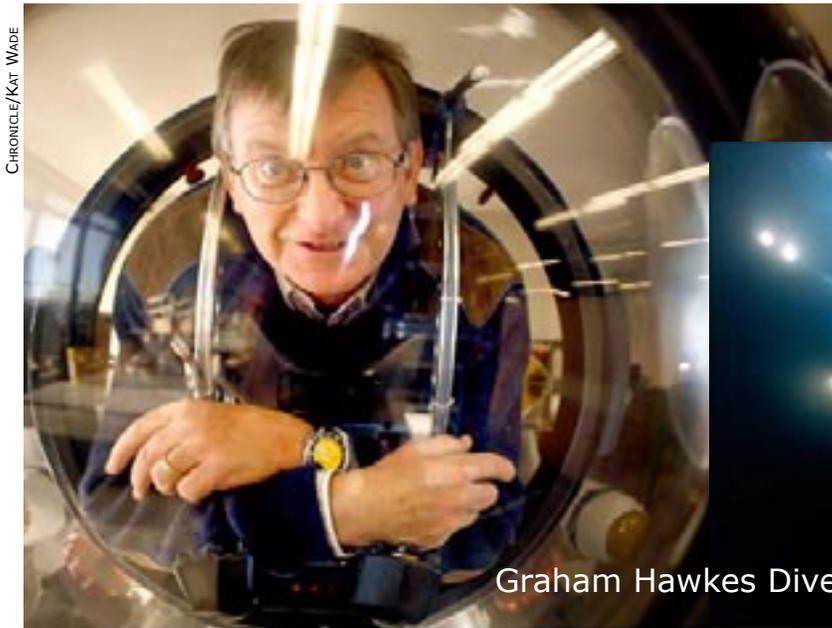
CHRONICLE/PAUL CHINN

Ugo Conti spoke to our club in 2002 and charmed us with his affection for the shallow-draft *Aria*, an inflatable catamaran he and his wife Isabella built for boating along the western coast of North America. She was spacious, comfortable and easy to navigate close in to shore.

At that talk Ugo, who holds two doctorates (geophysics and electrical engineering), said he had embarked upon the design of a vessel which would allow safe and speedy ocean travel. What

was then his secret has emerged from his Marine Advanced Research, Inc. with a public demonstration on San Francisco Bay on January 18th. As reported by the Chronicle's Carl Nolte, "The *Proteus* is 100 feet long, 50 feet between the outsides of the twin hulls, and is powered by two 355-horsepower Cummins marine diesels. It displaces 12 tons fully loaded. Fuel is stored in the flexible pontoons, and the vessel, Conti says, has a range of thousands of miles. It can carry 2 tons of cargo, and can be operated by a crew of two." Some call her a "spider" on the Bay; Ugo says she is a new class: a "wave-adaptive-modular" vessel.

Congratulations Ugo!



CHRONICLE/KAT WADE

## Graham Hawkes Dives Deeper

There is a wonderful article published in the San Francisco Chronicle Magazine, February 4, 2007, which features the accomplishments and ambitions of Chapter member Dr. Graham Hawkes (FN86 & Explorers Club Beebe Award Winner '04.) His focus is, and has been for many years, on making it affordable for people to explore beneath the surface of the sea. His Deep Flight undersea planes are bringing this possibility ever more close.

Author John J. Geoghegan III has encapsulated Graham's enthusiasm and background with a reasonable rationale to

proceed with all due haste! Ninety-five percent of the earth is hidden by water; it has always been too expensive to "go there!"

Times are changing and Hawkes is at the forefront in opening the undersea to the potential for vast exploration. "Hawkes' philosophy, part of the cheaper, better, faster school of exploration, is similar to that of Burt Rutan, who built *SpaceShipOne*, the first privately built spacecraft to put a person into space. Both projects are models of private enterprise and individual initiative, though Deep Flight costs a fraction of SpaceShip One's \$20 million and

flies in the opposite direction."

Two other Chapter members have been certified to be Deep Aviator copilots: former Chair Lesley Ewing (FN93) and Mort Beebe (FN78). They both speak in rapture about their time beneath the surface. Photographer Amos Nauchum (MN04) has captured beautiful pictures of the Deep Flight planes (see above.)

Graham is designing a version of the Deep Flight Aviator to go as deep as is the ocean, into the Marianas Trench. Wouldn't it be something if Capt. Don Walsh could pilot it!

AMOS NAUCHUM

February 2007



Chair: Lee Langan  
415 567-8089  
lee@langan.net  
Vice Chair: Alan Nichols  
415 789-9348  
ahnichols@att.net  
Treasurer: Anders Jepsen  
925 254-3079  
ajviking@aol.com  
Secretary: Stephen E. Smith  
Webmaster: Mike Diggles  
Newsletter: Lee Langan

**Northern California  
2006-2007 Calendar of Events**  
(Venues will be identified at time of event.)

Our next Meeting  
February 23, 2007 (Friday) Helen Kleben Kahn  
Hey! I'm Alive  
Golden Gate Yacht Club, San Francisco

Future Meeting Schedule  
March 17, 2007 (Saturday) . . . . . ECAD  
The Importance of Polar Places  
New York City, Waldorf Astoria

March 23, 2007 (Friday) . . . . . Craig Childs  
Tracking Vanished Peoples Across Southwest

April 20, 2007 (Friday) . . . . . Phil Rasori  
Ceremonial Dress in New Guinea . . . . .

May 18, 2007 (Friday) . . . . . OPEN  
..potentially held on the Peninsula

June 16, 2007 (Saturday). . . . Annual Picnic  
Angel Island (contact Dave Moorer)

Meetings earlier this Season  
September 17 . . . . . Gene & Sibyl Boudreau  
Tarahumara Expedition (Lee Langan)  
Boudreau Home, Sebastopol  
October 13 . . . . . James G. Moore  
King, 40th Parallel, Discovery of the West  
Golden Gate Yacht Club, San Francisco  
November 8 . . . . . Ed Ross  
The Lives of Insects (Exhibition)  
Presidio Officers Club, San Francisco  
December 8 . . . . . Jeff Morgan  
Global Heritage Fund in El Mirador, Petén  
Marines' Memorial Club, San Francisco  
January 19, 2007 (Friday) . . . . Olaf Malver  
Kayaking the Frontiers of the Seven Seas  
Golden Gate Yacht Club, San Francisco

**February LOCATION**

**Date** Friday, 23 February 2007  
**Place:** Golden Gate Yacht Club  
1 Yacht Road, San Francisco  
**Time:** 6:30 pm, no-host drinks  
7:15 dinner; 8:00 talk  
**Cost:** \$50  
Reach Anders at  
[ajviking@aol.com](mailto:ajviking@aol.com)  
925 254-3079  
Reservation Form ---->  
Please reserve promptly!

Please mail information below, with payment,  
to Dr. Anders Jepsen  
23 Dos Posos  
Orinda, CA 94563  
or email [ajviking@aol.com](mailto:ajviking@aol.com)  
or call 925 254-3079

Reserve \_\_\_ spaces for **February 23, 2007**, at Golden Gate Yacht Club, San Francisco.  
Cost \$50 each.  
Prospective members are welcome.  
Drinks are no host for the evening! Wine hosted at table.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address (if changed): \_\_\_\_\_  
Guest(s): \_\_\_\_\_

INCLUDE ANNUAL DUES!

