One of the more enduring mysteries of modern archaeology is how and when the first humans arrived in the Americas. For decades, scientists were convinced that the first colonists followed caribou herds across a land bridge that once connected Siberia and Alaska. Recently, with the discovery that early humans colonized Australia 30-40 thousand years ago, it is increasingly hard to challenge that early humans might have used the same boat-building and navigation skills to colonize the Americas that they used in Australia. However, clear archaeological evidence of Ice Age boats and coastal settlements in Siberia and Alaska may never be found, because the ancient coastline is now under hundreds of feet of water.

It is beyond dispute, however, that native people have been making and using several kinds of boats in the Arctic since before recorded history. Most of these boats were made entirely of locally available materials, such as driftwood and the skin of marine mammals. The largest of these boats, called an umiak in Siberia and Alaska, was certainly capable of hauling multiple families and heavy loads. Intrigued by the question of whether such a boat could have been used by early humans to colonize North America, our speaker, Don Dana, set out to build an umiak and test its capabilities during an extended voyage in the Bering Sea.

It took five years, and multiple trips to Alaska and Siberia, for Don to find native people who were willing and skilled enough to build such a primitive boat. Construction took an additional two years. The crew, consisting of marine mammal hunters from the Chukchi village of Lorino and the Inua village of Yanrakynnot, named the boat “The Beluga” after their favorite whale. In July of 2006, The Beluga set sail north under favorable winds for Cape Dezhnevo, the western edge of the Bering Strait. At our meeting, Don will show us the slides of the expedition and discuss what was learned.

Don, a member of this Explorers Club Chapter, is not a scientist, but he has enjoyed a lifelong interest in human origins, evolution, behavior, and survival. He has participated as a volunteer on expeditions researching Mayans in Guatemala, early humans in Tanzania, lemurs in Madagascar, and Broken Mammoth—perhaps the oldest paleo-indian site in North America. In East Africa, he was taught how to hunt with a bow and arrow by the Hadza, one of the last surviving hunter-gatherer cultures in the world.

Don chairs the Grants Committee for the Leakey Foundation in San Francisco, and he chairs the Science Committee for the Earthwatch Institute near Boston. In his day job, he manages the real estate for Wells Fargo Bank.
Phil Rasori completely revised his presentation to the Chapter when he realized it was 18 years to the week he had first stepped foot in New Guinea; he dug into old slides and began with originals taken in April, 1989. He has been back nine times, and his corpus of spectacular portraits has grown to a treasure trove documenting cultures remarkably different that others on earth.

As a physician who specializes in international health, especially among indigenous peoples, he has had the unique ability to gain confidence with tribes: men, women and children—that allows him to record his other professional passion as a photographer. The result is extraordinary photographs of people in hinterlands like the highlands of Papua New Guinea. Not only did he show numerous examples to the admiring group, he detailed the wigs, body paint and masks. We gained an understanding of the effort put forth to decorate oneself in this place. Each of the stages of creating ornate ceremonial masks and wigs was outlined. The materials—human hair, boars, parrots, birds of paradise, possums, sea shells, dog teeth, beetle backs—all having meaning and define the status of the wearer. If you are a Huli you immediately know who you are meeting! The same can be said of many of the 1200 cultures (and languages) that comprise the five million people of the island.

Dr. Rasori spent a dozen years as medical parl-

The Chapter Chair

April’s meeting: another astounding evening when a part of our world, unknown to most, was introduced by an explorer who brought it back to talk about it (and to see it, in his beautiful photography!) We had a decent turnout—everyone who came was pleased—but it seemed a pity more could not attend to enjoy and learn. It becomes increasingly clear we need to increase our membership. As we near the end of our academic year, it may be a futile plea; nevertheless, when you think Explorers Club, think who else would enjoy this camaraderie and opportunity to expand one’s own horizon.

We shall hold our next meeting on the Peninsula (in Portola Valley, a particularly bucolic setting most anytime); our first meeting in the Fall will again be in Sebastopol; in January (or possibly February) 2008, we have an East Bay venue and presentation scheduled. All of these are in an effort to spread around the Bay Area. (I have been listening to requests for members to meet closer to their homes.)

I would like to encourage someone to step forth to organize a web-based means that would allow car-pooling to any of these locations. There are a substantial number of Chapter members who choose not to attend, because they do not want to drive solo and return after a full evening. If we can coordinate carloads, more will attend (and a designated driver can be selected!) I look forward to hearing from someone willing to organize this. Soon.

We will not be back to the Golden Gate Yacht Club until October. This has been a real find for the Chapter: the staff is always very helpful and friendly; the view as fine as any, anyplace; the services outstanding (and the parking ample.) I particularly love stepping (and the parking ample.) I particularly love stepping forward to hearing from someone willing to organize this. Soon.

At our meeting I asked that any one interested in participating in the management or activities of the Chapter step forth; 2008 may seem a long time distant, but we shall introduce prospective candidates in September and vote in October. Contact any officer listed on page one, or Lesley Ewing, Chair emeritus.

This will be our last newsletter until Fall. Circle your calendar for June 16, a Saturday, for the Angel Island picnic: details will be posted on our web site (and we plan to mail a postcard reminder.) Plan ahead for Sunday, September 23, as well; a visit to the Boudreau’s at the time of the wine harvest is a delight.

—Lee Langan (FN09)
They arrived a bit later than planned, but Jennifer Murray and Colin Bodill landed their Bell 407 helicopter at the North Pole on April 20th! Off by only eight days from their plans at takeoff in December! On May 1st they were on their way back, in northern Quebec.

Details of the record-breaking success are at www.polarfirst.com.

**Zero South**

The success of two explorers flying from pole to pole and effectively circumnavigating South and North America bring to our attention another planned expedition scheduled for deployment in December. A not-for-profit group, which originated in Silicon Valley, Drive Around the World (DAW), has been successful in using private funding to take long-distance ground-vehicle trips to raise money for charitable causes. In doing so they undertake exploration during these expeditions.

The next planned trip is to drive a modified military Humvee from McMurdo Sound the thousand miles to the South Pole (and back)—powered by hydrogen technology. The name of the project: Zero South. In your chairman’s opinion this is a splendid exploration goal. It has all of the elements of the kind of trip that was undertaken by private money during the early days of the Club. The plan is to travel to the far end of the earth in a new way, to traverse dangerous territory known only in general terms, and to return with new knowledge of the traverse.

The Zero South project will benefit from Army’s Cold Regions Research & Engineering Laboratory (CRREL) help in surveying a route to identify and remediate dangerous, vehicle-swallowing crevasses. The trail to the Pole is critical, because it would allow overland resupplying for South Pole research facilities.

With success, the Zero South project includes plans to spend two subsequent years touring to display three vehicles and to promote non-pollution, carbon-free transport, global climate change and the importance of our polar regions.

The creative minds behind this project include several noted technologists and environmental leaders. The film director of “Who Killed the Electric Car” will produce a documentary. The Explorers Club connection includes Kristin Larson (our Chapter’s Board liaison) and Buzz Aldrin. At ECAD 2005, the DAW “Longitude Expedition” was honored having completed 41,000 miles crossing four continents and 31 countries in 15 months. It raised funds to help cure Parkinson’s Disease. Perhaps some more DAW participants will apply to the Club as explorers!

There was a bit of a brouhaha over ‘tourists’ invading Antarctica and its commercialization. Paid travel to set foot at the North Pole or to fly in space exists. Cruises are ever more common nearing or landing on Antarctic ice. Perhaps you have an opinion about this. Perhaps it is just part of the debate surrounding adventure versus exploration. However, it is difficult to conceive Zero South as a tourist adventure. It is exploration, privately funded. Exploration is always an adventure!

(Alas, adventures are not always exploration; one has to return with more than personal satisfaction and achievement.)

**Bekins’ Exhibit Ends mid-June**

Spring is here, and it is time to drive out and see the wildflowers at Point Reyes! The Bear Valley Visitor Center, near Olema, is featuring an educational wildflower exhibit of my images (in the hallway leading to the auditorium.) The Center is open every day (9-to-5, weekdays; 8-to-5, weekends. Phone (415) 464-5137.

My exhibit will be there until mid-June. Many of the wildflower pics were taken at Chimney Rock. The Rangers are helpful on where and what you will see that day. Enjoy! —Joan Bekins (FN86)
May 2007

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

Our next Meeting
May 18, 2007 (Friday) . . . . . . Don Dana
The First Americans: Siberians!
Held at Portola Valley’s Parkside Grille

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

September 23 (Sunday) Gene & Sibyl Boudreau
Meteorite Collision (Rick Blake)
Boudreau Home, Sebastopol

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 . . . . . . . Olaf Malver
Kayaking the Frontiers of the Seven Seas
Golden Gate Yacht Club, San Francisco

February 23 . . . . . . . Helen Klaben Kahn
Hey! I’m Alive! Lost in the Yukon
Golden Gate Yacht Club, San Francisco

March 23 . . . . . . . . . Craig Childs
Tracking Vanished Peoples Across Southwest
Golden Gate Yacht Club, San Francisco

April 20 . . . . . . . . . . . Phil Rasori
Ceremonial Dress in New Guinea
Golden Gate Yacht Club, San Francisco

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

Reserve ___ spaces for May 18, 2007, at Parkside Grille,
Portola Valley, CA
Cost $50 each.
Prospective members are welcome.
Drinks are no host for the evening! Wine hosted at table.

May LOCATION

Date: Friday, 18 May 2007
Place: Parkside Grille, 884 Portola Road, Portola Valley, CA
Time: 6:30 pm, no-host drinks
7:15 dinner; 8:00 talk
Cost: $50

Reach Anders at ajviking@aol.com
925 254-3079
Reservation Form ---> Please reserve promptly!

If you are challenged to find this spot: it is the first building in a small shopping center, and their phone is (650) 529-9007