

The Explorers Club

Northern California Chapter

June 2008

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

The Northern California Chapter of
The Explorers Club
requests the pleasure of your company
on the occasion of the 100th birthday of
Marguerite Van Auker Walsh
at a tea to be held at
DOER Marine, Building 19
1827 Clement Avenue, Alameda, California
Wednesday, June 25, 2008
4 p. m. to 7 p. m.

R.S.V.P.

(details for response and directions are on page 4; please respond early)

A Tea for Marta

Rarely does an opportunity such as this come along. Indeed anything similar may not pass again. Our chapter is fortunate.

It has come our way because one of the most esteemed members of the Club, Captain Don Walsh, will be in the Bay Area on June 25. We know him as one of the pair of members that hold the record for going the greatest distance from mean sea level—while still on the planet—accomplished almost fifty years ago in a bathysphere lowered deep into the Marianas Trench. The deepest place known in the world's oceans. Chapter member Don, together with the Trieste co-designer* Jacques Piccard, reached a depth of 35,916 feet on January 23, 1960. People who have tried to break this record do not come close, and all have given up—the crushing 16,000-pounds per square inch pressure is clearly more a challenge than the thin air of Everest.

But wait! the fact that a member of the Walsh-Piccard explorers is in town is nice, but Don spoke to us just a couple of years ago.

We will have *another* world traveller in our midst. Don's mother, Marta, has ventured to some sixty countries, cruised the world's oceans, and frequently kept up with her globe-trotting son. What is even more special is that she has done all of this since retiring. She worked a full term in the East Bay and raised Don as a single mom. Now, she is returning 'home' to celebrate her 100th birthday!

We shall all gather in Alameda where she raised Dr. Walsh. Chairman Sylvia Earle and President Liz Taylor have generously offered their DOER Marine facility overlooking the yachts and sailboats of Oakland's estuary. Mona's Table, a local Alameda caterer schooled in her ways at the century-old Alameda Women's Club, will provide the traditional touch.

To make this truly unique, this is the first time The Explorers Club has so honored a centenarian to our knowledge. Representatives from the Explorers Club headquarters will be here to make this recognition.

So, do come. We have made a suggested donation amount to cover our costs—it has been the tradition of this chapter to pay for any event by those attending. If, for any reason, this creates a hesitance, come anyway!

The Chapter Chair

Our newsletter for June 2008 is devoted to the celebration we plan for Marta Walsh. Reports on the successful weekend on the Monterey Peninsula will follow in our first newsletter in the Fall.

Do join the tea party. Reserve early.

—Lee Langan (FN99)



Marta and Don, 1932

*with his father, Auguste Piccard



Marguerite Grace Van Auker Walsh (Marta) is from Adrian and Wyandotte, Michigan. She met Joseph McDonough Walsh (J. Don) at a dance; he was from Detroit. After high school graduation both of them worked for a year or two before deciding to come out to California in the late '20's. They were married in San Francisco in 1928. When she became pregnant with me, they moved to Berkeley. I was born at the Alta Bates Hospital on 2 November 1931.

They were divorced in about 1937, and she raised me as a single mother. It was almost the height of the depression, and it was tough for her. We originally lived in Alameda on Clinton Street, which then was beach-front property. In '42 or '43 we moved to Lea Court near City Hall. In '44

or '45 she moved to East Oakland near Fremont High School. Since I had so many friends in Alameda, my dad arranged for me to be enrolled there. Marta and I lived on Vicksburg Avenue, about four blocks south of High Street. I 'commuted' every day by bicycle (about 7 to 8 miles each way), as funds were tight. I got appointed to the Naval Academy in 1950; after that I did not get home that much.

For most of her working life, Marta worked at Montgomery Ward's regional center on 14th and Park Street in East Oakland. Eventually she was promoted to Head Cashier for the big mail order center. Deciding that the male-dominated management at Wards was not going to let her go any higher, she took a job at Mills College where she was the Head Cashier until the time of her mandatory retirement.

She was very good a saving funds for the future. So when she retired she was prepared to 'see the world' and had the resources to do it. She went all over the globe, maybe over 60 countries. In 1956, I went with her on the first trip to Europe with a month of leave in between assignments. Marta and I rendezvoused in London, then to France, Holland, Italy and Germany.

When Elder Hostel began, she started traveling with them. Two years ago I took her to Hawaii aboard a Celebrity Cruise. (Our third cruise together: the first to Alaska, the second from Fort Lauderdale to Los Angeles via the Canal. Then back to Florida!)

Marta's leisure time activities until I left home was sunning herself on the beaches in Alameda, bridge card games, playing her piano (she was very good and is blessed with perfect pitch) and enjoying opera, symphonic music and ballet. She did a lot of serious reading and art work. She first started painting while in high school and did not quit until arthritis made



The Auker girls:
Barbara (left), Billie, Helen, Marguerite
(circa 1934-35)

it too difficult (same reason she stopped the piano.) She took many art courses and taught a few herself. After some 80 years of oils and pastels she was pretty good.

Marta lived in Riverside for more than 20 years to be near her mother and some of her siblings; Joan and I lived nearby in Palos Verdes Estates. When we moved to the ranch in Oregon, we asked Marta to join us. She has always been independent so we all understood that she had to have her own house, which she does. She had never owned a new car; we gave her a new Honda Civic which she has piloted around the area since 1993.

-Don Walsh (HON61)



June 2008



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A Tea for Marta 25 June — Alameda Marina

June LOCATION

Date Wednesday,
June 25, 2008
Place: DOER Marine,
1827 Clement Avenue
Alameda, CA 94501
Time: 4:00 - 7:00
Cost: \$20 donation, each

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 **June 25 2008**
at

Marta's Tea
Alameda, CA

Cost: \$20 donation, each.

Name: _____

Address (if changed): _____

Guest(s): _____

If you desire a car pool from the
Peninsula call Helen Klaben Kahn
650 888-4058!

Directions to DOER Marine Offices, Alameda

DOER Marine occupies the entire
building with the roof-top signage;
enter on the right center as viewed
here. Nearest access from I-880
is by either the 23rd Ave Bridge or
Fruitvale Ave Bridge.

