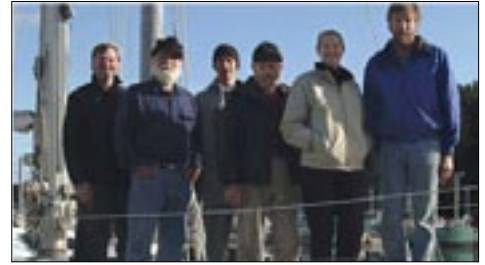


The Explorers Club Northern California Chapter

May 2009

In color at our web site: <http://www.explorersnorca.org>

Note venues and dates with care.
San Francisco, CA!
Our next event is at 6:30 on
May 15, a Friday evening,
at the Golden Gate Yacht Club.



San Francisco—May 15, 2009 Doug Finley Sailing the Northwest Passage

On *Cloud Nine*, 73 days and 6640 miles from Halifax

On July 17, 2007, *Cloud Nine*, a 1975 Bowman 57-foot ketch, arrived in Halifax, Nova Scotia. On September 29, she docked at Kodiak Island. She and her crew of six became the first American sail boat to traverse the Northwest Passage, east to west, and the first to traverse in one season. Douglas Finley was aboard, and he will tell the tale at our May meeting.

This was the third try by Minnesotan Roger Swanson (MN04)*, the boat's owner. Ice turned the same boat back in 1994, and again in 2005. (Doug was aboard then too, when ice surrounded the boat.) In 2007, global warming had beaten back enough ice to allow transit. The distance from the Arctic Circle going-north to the Arctic Circle going-south was 3433 nautical miles; it took 34 days to complete this formal 'passage', but they also had to get to and from the Arctic Circle.

Area buddy, Chris Parkman, and Matthew Drillio, have returned to a more normal life.

Doug Finley, a San Rafael native, retired after twenty-seven years of piloting cruise and cargo ships through the Panama Canal. Clearly he continues to be drawn towards the ocean as evidenced by these long exploratory sails in the Far North. He also volunteers as Chief Mate on the Jeremiah O'Brien. He sails the Bay on the *Tuck-A-Roo* (a forty-footer) with his wife, Anne,

The first private sailor to have navigated the Northwest Passage was Roald Amundsen, who did it aboard the 45-ft *Gjoa* back in 1905. *Gjoa* was on display in Golden Gate Park for many years; it is gone, but Amundsen's bust can be seen just north of the busy Beach Chalet at the west end of the park.

The first single season passage by a private vessel, a converted ocean going tug, was in 1994. George Gowen (MR96) and photographer Robert Glenn Ketchum's (FN88) traversed with William Simon (former Secretary of the Treasury); the trip is documented in *Northwest Passage*. Since then several have done so, including other members of the club. A sailboat passage has been done by several, including Dr. John Bockstoe (FE69) who took two years, before 1994. A single season passage by a sailboat remains quite something.

Successful in his latest attempt, Swanson has put the boat up for sale in Seattle. Photographer David Thoreson has produced a television documentary. The other participants, Roger's wife Gaynelle Templin, Doug's Bay

*Skipper Roger Swanson is from Dunnell, Minnesota. He has cruised Antarctica twice, the Northwest Passage three times and circumnavigated four times.



NorCA Medical Expedition

On May 9, beginning at 9 AM, Dr. Paul Freitas, an Emergency Trauma physician, will lead us on Mt. Diablo to demonstrate life saving techniques for helping someone who might be injured on an expedition. You'll need good walking shoes for the moderate three-mile hike. May want to bring your digital camera or video to capture the excitement. Sign up by sending email to sacred-mountain@att.net

Details of the exact locations, and directions, will be sent to all who register by May 7. ACT NOW!

Administering Help to Great Apes

The endangered gorillas accept care, remain friends San Francisco

Gorillas, the great apes of legend, lore and Hollywood, live an increasingly endangered and cloistered life in Central Africa and in the western lowlands. With the help of caring humans the mountain gorillas are now holding their own. Our speaker on April 24th, Dr. Christopher Whittier, is one of those who care; he shared stories from his twenty-some years as student and veterinarian including years working with these wild animals.

Wild, yes, but they are amazingly close to humans in their emotions, reactions, desires and social interactions. DNA is remarkably similar too. Some experienced researchers observe, “They just don’t speak!” Alas, like humans, they sometimes fight among themselves; the males are big, like 400 pounds, so they can cause real hurt. The veterinarians are careful to stand back when this happens: nature heals and has done so for ages. Chris showed some dramatic comebacks for fighters on the losing end.

One of the goals of foreign veterinarians at the Mountain Gorilla Veterinarian Project is to build a cadre of trained local wild animal medical professionals as part of the effort to take care of the gorillas. Typically a couple of outsiders participate as teachers and researchers; Chris has served this role. The routine is to get to know the ape families, They spend time watching, making observations (often from the waste left when the families move from their sleeping sites.) The vets only intervene medically when they find a man-contributed injury—a snare or poacher injury or, perhaps, a illness transmitted from a human visitor. When they do take on a patient they take the opportunity to learn as much as they can about the individual.

Dr. Whittier first visited Africa for his ‘year abroad’ as an undergraduate at the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. He was drawn to his avocation by films like *The Planet of the Apes* and *King Kong*, and found himself in the field among the chimps of Jane Goodall and the gorillas of Dian Fossey. Time has passed swiftly, and he has spent long periods in and around the volcanic national parks of the mountainous borders of Rwanda, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Wars, genocides and human conflict all around at times; he focused upon the gorillas.

His story of an orphaned gorilla reflected so much about the harsh world. The gorilla families would not accept the female child into their midst. The MGVP hospital camp was fortunate to rescue another orphan, a young male. His photos and description of the raising of these children and attempts to introduce them was a true insight into the reserve we creatures have.

Chris Whittier and his veterinarian wife Dr. Felicia Nutter (who spoke to us a year ago about the Marine Mammal Center) are focusing their studies upon understanding the health impact that can pass between man and the primates (and other animals.) There are numerous inter-species illnesses, and this is a speciality in its infancy. They clearly are capable, and we wish them success.

For more information on MGVP, see www.mgvp.org. A couple of books by Dr. Whittier, DMV, PhD:

- Eckhart G. & Lanjou A. (Whittier, CA, contributing photography): *Mountain Gorillas: Biology, Conservation & Coexistence*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2008.
- Turner PS. (Whittier, CA, photography): *Gorilla Doctors*, Houghton-Mifflin, Boston. 2005.



Chris and Felicia in Rwanda, in the field with the gorillas

A gallery of Whittier’s patients. Each has a name and has made a connection with their doctor.



Speaker Whittier with Chair Alan Nichols (and Chris’ photo)



HELP WANTED

Members who have written published books for our Story Night, next Fall.

Local Chapter calendar-year dues-paying members @ \$25 support the newsletter.

A reminder: we would like to send as many notifications and newsletters as possible by email to be green. Please notify Steve Smith at nauticos@oceanearth.org if you will accept email-only communication. Note that our new web address for the chapter: www.explorersnorca.org



LANGAN

Chairman Alan Nichols inaugurated a series of field trips for the NorCA Chapter on April 18. It was great fun. A baker's dozen members met high on Mt. Tamalpais and were led down Cataract Trail to Alpine Lake by Mort Beebe (MN78). Mort is a professional photographer who knows the Bay Area so very well (get a copy of *San Francisco*, a must for any member's coffee table, now in its third edition!) Mort counseled the group of exploration picture taking.

Each photographer has promised to upload some pictures, from which Mort will select three 'winners' and two honorable mentions. May be late May before all are considered, but check the web site: gallery.me.com/langan



LANGAN

All of the photographers were enchanted by the vista toward the City beyond the Golden Gate National Recreational Area (top); the organizers: Chair Alan Nichols and Photo-leader Mort Beebe (above); on the trail leading down the slope of Mt. Tam (right).

Chapter Stimulus-Package Bailout

Because of the great turnout this year and the economy and, thanks to our donors, all Sirdars and Members *who've paid their voluntary annual dues before our next meeting* only need to pay \$45 in advance for dinner at our May 15 meeting.

Busy, Busy June 13th

You can go north into the field or south to a gala dinner. Take your pick, but let the organizers know, please.

Sacred Mountains of California, Mt Shasta Climb Chair Alan will lead a field trip to the summit of Mt Shasta, one

of his *Peaks of Gold, the Sacred Mountains of California* (manuscript for publication). We'll use a mountain guide, and porters are available; this is a strenuous although non-technical climb. Arrive Thursday, the 11th; base camp Friday; summit climb Saturday; return Sunday. Crampons, ice ax, boots, etc. are rentable. For logistics, details, signup and a copy of the relevant chapter from his book, email Alan: sacred-mountain@att.net.

West Coast Explorers Club Annual Dinner Chapter Chair David Dolan invites us to attend the second Southern California Chapter-sponsored WECAD Program, again hosted by the Bowers Museum of Cultural Art in Santa Ana, California (www.bowers.org) and its President,

Dr. Peter Keller (FN84). The details of the program will be forthcoming but in the meantime, you may wish to plan a visit Southern California that weekend for this event. This gala dinner comes on the heels of the Santa Barbara event last January 24th (co-sponsored by the Explorers Club Board, the So. California Chapter and the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History.) Plan the date: June 13.

June 6th, Saturday NorCA Angel Island Picnic

Not a lot of room to announce such a great event, but mark your calendar. Look for a reminder card/email. Bob Schmieder's *Cordell Explorer* will come from the Berkeley Yacht Harbor.

The Corner Chair

Chris Whittier, our "gorilla" speaker "from the heart of Central Africa", drew a great group at our last meeting (understandably with our evolutionarily homo-sapien interest in ourselves) and lived up to everyone's high expectations. Also fun to see **Felicia Nutter** again, last year's lecturer on the marine world. They both are slated to become members if we can finish the paper work.

Member **Mort Beebe** covered himself with glory leading us down the Cataract Trail at Mt. Tam and dispensing his famed photographic wisdom; **Jim and Von Hurson** even walked back up the three-mile trail and **Becky Nichols** made a nine-mile hike out of it, her Mt. Tam death march!

Welcome Home to **Sue Estey** and **Tom Patterson** from their Fiji diving adventure in spite of the revolution there, "Indians v. Hometowners". The elegant **Sandy Ross** and **Ed** were prominent at the head table at the last meeting to celebrate Ed's feature article in the *Explorers Journal* with his Green Banded Snapping Shrimp on the cover. And the dinner was so much smoother: thanks to **Char Rygh** and **Gerry Elkus** hosting us a table at a time and friendlier with our table hosts, **Tom and Liz Hall, Joan and Barry Boothe, Lee Langan, and Bob and Kay Schneider**.

Behind-the-scenes heros—**Steve Smith, Sue Estey** and **Mike Diggles** have been keeping our lists up to date of dues payors, meeting attendees, sirdars, friends, and sup-

porters. It's not easy, and it's essential to our operations.

Our November Story Hour is back on track. If you've published a book and are willing to tell us about it, email me.

Thanks to **Kay Schneider**, Story Hour Coordinator, **Bob Higgins**, Speakers Committee, and **Von Durson**, Field Trip Coordinator, newly minted "SuperExplorers" for chapter support.

"The only way not to get lost on an expedition is to find your self." Xuan Zang. China's "Columbus" in the 7th Century.

—Alan Nichols (FN84)

PS: Our Chapter is the only organization I've ever belonged to where dues are voluntary—but we're a unique group anyway! Please pay your \$25 to Sue via check or Paypal. All Hail to our dues paying benefactors

May 2009



Chair: Alan Nichols
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Vice Chair: Anders Jepsen
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ajviking@aol.com
Treasurer: Sue Estey
510 526-2216
sestey@earthlink.net
Secretary: Stephen E. Smith
Webmaster: Mike Diggles
Newsletter: Lee Langan

Emergency Medicine | Finley's NW Passage
9 May — Mt Diablo | 15 May — Golden Gate Yacht Club

**Northern California
Calendar of Events**

(Venues will be identified at time of event.)

Our next Meetings

May 9 (Sat) Paul Freitas, MD
Medical Emergency Field Expedition, Mt. Diablo
May 15 (Fri) Doug Findley
Sailing the NW Passage, GGYC

Future Event Schedule

June 6 (Sat) Angel Island Picnic
June 13 (Sat) Mt. Shasta Climb
June 13 (Sat) Southern California WECAD
November (TBD) Story Night

Earlier Meetings

June 25, 2008 Marta Walsh at 100
DOER Marine, Alameda
September 27 Art Ford
Antarctic Tourism, Liebowitz home, Woodside
October 18 Don Hartsell
Lighter than Air, GGYC
November 21 Leela Hutchison
Giant Cave Crystals, Dana home, Tiburon
December 7 Holiday Gathering, Langan home
January 30 Malcolm Potts & Martha Campbell
Sex in 21st Century, Golden Gate Yacht Club
February 27 Orville Magoon
Tsunamis—Real and Personal, GGYC
March 27 Payne Johnson
Stephens' 1839 Search for the Mayas, GGYC
April 18 Mort Beebe
Photography Field Expedition, Mt. Tam
April 24 Christopher Whittier
Stories of Gorilla Country, GGYC

Send address changes and
corrections by email to Steve at
nauticos@oceanearth.org

May LOCATION

Date Friday, May 15, 2009
Place: Golden Gate Yacht Club
1 Yacht Road, San Francisco
Time: 6:30 - reception, no-host drinks
7:15 - buffet dinner, wine
8:00 - speaker

Cost: \$55 (in advance); \$60 (15th)

Please mail information (to right),
to Dr. Sue Estey
216 Carmel Avenue
El Cerrito, CA 94530
or email sestey@earthlink.net
or call (510) 526-2216

Reserve ___ spaces for April 24, 2009 at
Christopher Whittier at GGYC
San Francisco, CA
Cost: \$55
(Chapter 2009 Dues: \$25)

Name: _____

Address (if changed): _____

Companion: _____

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

USE PAYPAL!

We have established a PayPal account.

For those of you who have these accounts, you can sign up and remit dinner costs to the
NorCA Chapter by transferring money to: explorersnorca@gmail.com

