In November 2000, Geographic Expeditions’ traverse of South Georgia Island successfully repeated Ernest Shackleton’s heroic 1915 crossing. Under the leadership of Dave Hahn, Jim Sano (MN03), Jim Williams (FN93), Mark Tucker and Al Read, fifteen clients skied and snowshoed across the glaciers to Stromness. It was the first successful guided expedition ever to retrace Shackleton’s route. Here are paraphrased excerpts from the Exum Mountain Guide website which has details of this expedition: (www.exumguides.com/?page_id=886),

After sailing five days from Ushuaia, Argentina, they roped up into five parties and climbed on skis and snowshoes, five miles up onto the Murray snowfield at 2,100 feet. The next morning they climbed the Trident Ridge to the head of the Crean Glacier. This is the crux of the route and where Shackleton slid into the unknown. The Explorer’s Club Flag was planted on the pass. Gail force winds crossed the glacier; to turn back was not feasible. The crossing continued at a harrowing pace, but certainly less so than Shackleton’s. In addition to the subject of this talk, Mr. Sano was formerly a Special Assistant to the Superintendent at Yosemite National Park, overseeing park naturalist/interpretive programs, coordinating several key elements of Yosemite’s General Management Plan, and serving as a member of its search and rescue team.

In November 2009, Geographic Expeditions will repeat Shackleton’s South Georgia crossing in November 2009, with Peter Hillary (F187) joining. Our speaker, Jim Sano, is the President of Geographic Expeditions. The company provides a wide array of travel services, with a focus on remote destinations, complicated logistics and special interest travel. In 2008, Geographic Expeditions received the following awards: Travel and Leisure, World’s Best Tour Operator; Conde Nast Traveler, Top Travel Specialist; Departures, Top Ten Adventure Outfitters; National Geographic Adventure, Best Outfitters on Earth.

Mr. Sano was the founding President of the Mono Lake Foundation; a National Council member of the World Wildlife Fund; and a founding Director of the Natural Step and the Yosemite Restoration Trust.

Mr. Sano is the recipient of five United States National Park Service Special Achievement Awards and four Pacific Asia Travel Association Awards and four Pacffic Asia Travel Association (PATA) Gold Awards. He has spoken widely on travel, tourism and the environment, frequently in a keynote address. He is special counsel to the World Bank on Sustainable Development and Eco-tourism and to Nobel Laureate Jose Ramos Horta on sustainable development with Ambassador Richard Holbrook.

Ascending (upper) and descending (left) the Trident Ridge, South Georgia; seemingly endless numbers of penguins.
Doug Finley loves the sea and confinement with a half-dozen friends aboard a sailboat for months. He spoke to us on May 15, about two attempts to traverse the fabled Northwest Passage over the top of Canada, from east to west. The second, in the same 57’ Cloud Nine, became the first sailboat to make the trip in a single season. The first was stopped by ice.

The adventure is getting there with a safe return; the exploration is observing during those long days. Less than 200 vessels have made the passage in total; Cloud Nine owner Roger Swanson (MN05), after three tries (one before Doug joined), is among these.

Doug’s talk was a photo reminiscence of the experience. This is a stark land, and you are rarely not that far from shore. It is a stark sea too. While the warming of the Arctic allowed the 2007 passage, ice was always near. Beautiful and dangerous. Moving behemoths that rocked and crushed. When you were on watch, you looked to be sure you did not get close. In the fog, this became scary.

Each of the tiny villages up North are an experience. Summer is an active time and the folks are friendly and busy preparing for the cold that returns. They hunker in most of the Winter. The crew went ashore, at most to gather a few supplies and to stay with adequate fuel. The boat had about an 1800-mile range. (The distance from Halifax to Kodiak was more than 6000 miles; it included the required crossing of the Arctic Circle, going and coming.) They did not stay long, unless the weather demanded.

Roger’s wife was the weather woman; with a satellite connection they could download Arctic ice maps for their location with ease. This helped a lot and gave them the added confidence that allowed them to select the exacting route through the channels.

NorCa Emergency Medicine Hike

If you are in need of emergency medical treatment, Dr. Paul Freitas is exactly the person who you would want to help. He is cool, knowledgeable, communicative and engaged. He wants to make sure you get the best for what ails you. On May 9, more than a dozen explorers trekked locally in the foothills of Mount Diablo, east of San Francisco; they imagined they were off someplace distant in the world. (Borges Ranch fit the bill.) The weather and locale were beautiful, but several accidents occurred. This was, after all, advertised to be an ‘emergency medicine’ field trip. Cells phones were to be satellite phones capable of reaching medical help if need be.

Not far into the hike, our chair’s wife stumbled off the trail with a severe twisted (or was it broken) ankle. We gathered, and with some jocularity we contacted the doctor (out of sight, but reached by phone.) Someone had adhesive tape, and we were talked through the steps to bind the ankle so it could flex in the walking direction but was secure laterally. As Becky stood, she felt better; the doc appeared to critique—clearly something was lost in translation. The tape cast was not exactly right, and we all learned the correct approach. (The doctor learned too: “tape above the sock,” did not consider the fact she was wearing anklets!)

Three more injuries occurred, and the hikers (and victims) became more and more serious each time. This was a wonderful learning experience. Chair Emeritus Langan ‘passed out’ with heat exhaustion; Ski Patroller Von Hurson ‘fell’ from a rock ledge and broke her femur, requiring a make-shift stretcher. While carrying her along to a ‘helicopter pickup point’, Chair Nichols ‘collapsed’ with a heart spasm. What to do? Fortunately Dr. Freitas was on the phone—sometimes requiring the necessity of relaying because of the lack of connection availability. These became pretty realistic.

At lunch in a wooded hallow, Paul spoke about the reality of emergency medicine on expedition. (He is an Emergency Trauma Physician at John Muir Hospital in Walnut Creek for his ‘day job.’) He gave each hiker a good grade and complimented those who came along to benefit from the actual training. If we were on a distant expedition he encouraged the use of a Spot locator, which would assist in finding someone even if a satellite phone was not available. Von Hurson spoke about the benefit she observed from the vantage of one who works the winter mountains helping rescue. She shared the details of her always-with-her, less-than-a-pound first aid kit.

This was the second of hands-on field trips organized by Chairman Alan Nichols. A great new NorCA series to be continued.

NorCA Annual Angel Island Picnic

It has been observed before but here we were, a bunch of world class oceanographers, photographers, astroscientists, geologists, biochemists, cyclists, writers and more—gathered for a relaxed outing for explorers on an endangered island. The State of California has threatened to close Angel Island State Park, a jewel in San Francisco Bay. By ferry from Marin and the City and by Chair Emeritus Schmieder’s Cordell Explorer from Berkeley we gathered to enjoy camaraderie, hiking, shared viddles and wine and stories. We commiserated with the rangers, and vowed to communicated our disdain. The hours whiled away swiftly.

Those aboard the Cordell Explorer were treated to an encirclement of the Bay, traveling beneath the bridges and absorbing the breathtaking sites. We slowed past the Jeremiah O’Brien hauling Rick Saber (MN01) busy with his E’Clampus Vitus tasks. We
On our March ‘Picture Hike’, several photographers provided results for a gallery: gallery.me.com/langan Mort Beebe judged the following as the ‘winners’ in a blind evaluation: 1st place, Alan Nichols “Hikers” (above) 2nd & 3rd place. Von Hurson “Blue Water” & “Hidden Treasure”

The Corner Chair Welcome home from your summer expeditions. We have an exciting Fall ahead of us. Congratulations to Sardars Char Rygh and Ken Howery for summiting Mount Shasta on our June field trip.

Kay Schmieder is putting together a unique “Story Hour” for our January meeting—presentations of short stories by member authors, about their published books; let me know of any members who have published books that might be of interest to us all.

Thank you to all members who have paid their voluntary dues. It’s inspiring in these times. If anyone would like to join this honor roll please send your check for $25 or paypal this amount to Sue. Be sure to give her your physical address as well.

Thanks to Lee Langan’s good idea and Don Dana’s good offices we’re discussing with the California Academy of Science to hold meetings there and include their members as guests at our lecture series. I’ll keep you posted. Let me know if you do or do not like the idea.

Continue to look for some help on membership applications and public relations. I look forward to being together again at our next meeting with Jim Sano who will continue to look for some help on membership applications and public relations.

Volunteer’s Dues Our Chapter is the only organization I’ve ever belonged to where annual dues are voluntary—but we’re a unique group anyway! Please pay your Calendar Year $25 to Sue Estey via check or Paypal. All Hail to our dues paying benefactors. — Alan

Chair Emeritus Langan, Honorary EC President Walsh, Chair Emeritus (& Capt.) Schmieder, Chair Nichols aboard the RSS Cordell Explorer

rounded the hidden Coast Guard station on Goat Island and watched the lengthening new span that will soon replace the erector-set.

Obituaries We lost a stalwart member of The Explorers Club (and the NorCA Chapter) last Spring: Eva Spitz-Blum (MN84) died on May 4. She frequently made the trip from Portola Valley to our meetings, enlivening them with her presence, and she always managed to give more than asked in her financial support of the Chapter. Eva was surprising; her energy belied her 90 years; her breath of exploration covered the world; she was a respected Stanford psychoanalyst. At her memorial her daughter described her last days. She had known her disease was terminal for years, and she accepted this with care for those who tended her to the end. She never dwelled upon her death before it became clear, but then she shared herself with her family and medical caregivers. Her daughter’s homily was one of deep love with the recognition of the finality that awaits all.

Thierry Thys (MN04) died on August 19 when his motorized glider crashed in Idaho’s White Knob Mountain Range. Thierry, who spoke at the chapter (in October 2003) on his patient and low-level helicopter flight across Siberia, was an avid pilot. His Russian experience concluded a 1995-2000 flight around the world; his own rules: “I own and fly the aircraft; there are no sponsors, corporate or government help.” In 2002, he and a friend flew a motorized glider round trip from Carson City to Point Barrow; in 2003, the two flew to Tierra del Fuego and back.

West Coast Explorers Club Annual Dinner Alas, a conflict in dates; the Southern California Chapter has rescheduled their WECAD Program at the Bowers Museum of Cultural Art in Santa Ana, California (www.bowers.org). This 4th West Coast Annual Explorers Club Dinner (NorCA sponsored two Golden Gateways in the ‘90s) will begin with a 6-pm reception in several wings of the museum. The dinner program begins at 7 pm and will include a presentation of the Ralph B. White Award for Oceanographic Exploration to Dr. Anatoly Sagalevitch (FI98), the MIR pilot. Contact LAHamilton@bowers.org.

### Northern California

#### Calendar of Events

(Venues will be identified as soon as known.)

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<td>September 25</td>
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### Earlier 2009 Meetings

- **January 30**: Malcolm Potts & Martha Campbell
- **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
- **May 9**: Paul Freitas, MD, Medical Emergency Field Expedition, Mt. Diablo
- **May 15**: Doug Findley, Sailing the NW Passage, GGYC
- **June 6**: Angel Island Picnic
- **June 13**: Mt. Shasta Climb

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**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**

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