

# The Explorers Club

## Northern California Chapter

September 2009

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

### San Francisco—September 25, 2009

### Jim Sano

### In the footsteps of Ernest Shackleton

#### A Flag Expedition to South Georgia

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](http://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. Come hear the details; a true challenge even with modern tools. Admiration for Shackleton and his men was even greater than it was before.

Geographic Expeditions will repeat Shackleton's South Georgia crossing in November 2009, with **Peter Hillary (FI87)** 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 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 addition to the subject of this talk, Mr. Sano was the leader of the 1983 American Mt. Everest Expedition, via Lho La and the West Ridge (which set the American women's altitude record); the leader of several expeditions in the Nepal Himalaya;

Note venues and dates with care.

**San Francisco, CA!**

Our next event is at 6:30 on Sept 25, a Friday evening, at the Golden Gate Yacht Club.

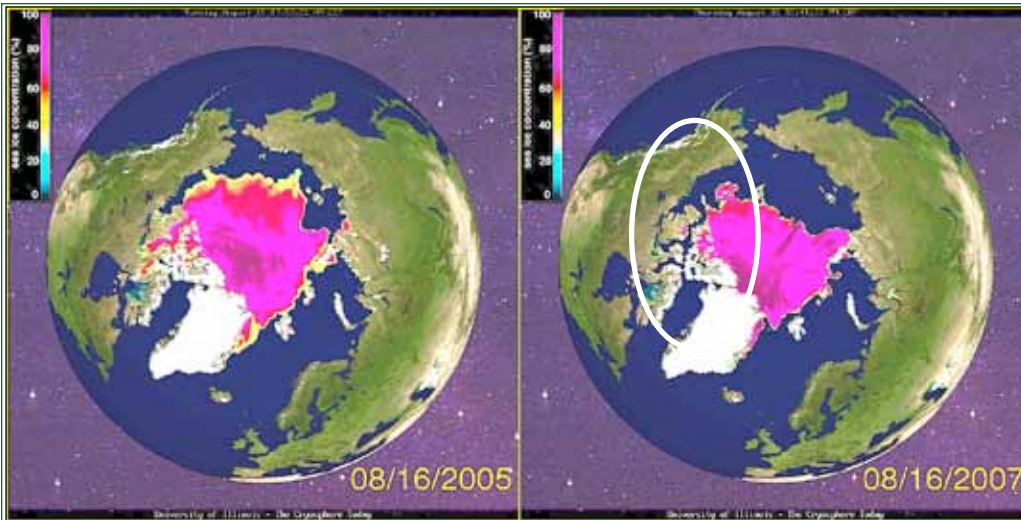


along with exploratory travel throughout the Himalaya, Latin America, and Africa. He currently serves on the National Board of The Trust for Public Land. Mr. Sano was the founding President of the Mono Lake Foundation; a National Council member of the World Wildlife Fund; and a founding Director of the 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 (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.





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.

## Sailing Through an Open Northwest Passage

### An infrequent voyage for any sailor

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

Hikers (and injured parties) on Mt. Diablo, May 2009



(or was it broken) ankle. We gathered, and with some jocularly 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 makeshift 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 hailing **Rick Saber (MN01)** busy with his *E'Clampus Vitus* tasks. We

### 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





On our March 'Picture Hike', several photographers provided results for a gallery: [gallery.me.com/langan](http://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"



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 approach that collapsed during the '89 quake.

**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

Guity Azarpay  
Richard Blake  
Barry Boothe  
Joan Boothe  
Nonna Cheatham  
Norden "Dan"  
Cheatham  
Nicholas Clinch  
Wendy Crowder  
Mike Diggles  
Susan Dutcher  
Gerry Elkus  
Sue Estey  
Lesley Ewing  
Richard Faggioli  
Paul Freitas  
Charles Geraci  
Robert Higgins  
Kenneth Howery  
Yvonne Hurson  
Ann Hutchison

Alan Hutchison  
Krist Jake  
Anders Jepsen  
Kathy Jepsen  
Keith Kvenvolden  
Elgen Long  
Liz McLouglin  
Charles Pennathur  
Alan Nichols  
Becky (Nichols) Rygh  
Charlotte (Nichols) Rygh  
Edward Pennathur  
Sudha Pennathur  
Diana Pickworth  
Bob Piper  
Elsa Roscoe  
Rick Saber  
Robert Schmieder  
Mark Smith  
Stephen Smith  
James Weil

**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 take us on a very cold adventure.

—Alan Nichols (FN84)

**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](http://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](mailto:LAHamilton@bowers.org).

Char Rygh and Ken Howery summited Mount Shasta in June



**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 then 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.

September 2009



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sestey@earthlink.net
Secretary: Stephen E. Smith
Webmaster: Mike Diggles
Newsletter: Lee Langan

Jim Sano's Cold in South Georgia
25 September — Golden Gate Yacht Club

Northern California
Calendar of Events

(Venues will be identified as soon as known.)

Our next Meeting

September 25 (Friday) . . . . . Jim Sano
Retracing Shakleton . . . . . GGYC

Future Event Schedule

October 30 (Friday). . . . . Diana Pickworth
Yemen Archaeology, GGYC
November 20 (Friday) . . . . .
Tsavo Lions of yore, Dana home, Tiburon
December 12 (tentative) . . . . . Reception
January (TBD) . . . . . Story Night

Earlier 2009 Meetings

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
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

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

September LOCATION

Date Friday, September 25, 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 (25th)
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 September 25, 2009 for
Jim Sano at GGYC
San Francisco, CA
Cost: \$55
(Calendar Year Chapter 2009 Dues: \$25)
Name: \_\_\_\_\_
Address (if changed): \_\_\_\_\_
Companion: \_\_\_\_\_

USE PAYPAL!

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

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

