The scientific hunt for extraterrestrial intelligence is about to enter its sixth decade, and we still haven’t uncovered a confirmed peep from the cosmos. For that matter, we still don’t know if life—at any level of intelligence—exists beyond Earth. Could this mean that finding aliens, even if they’re out there, is a project for the ages—one that might take centuries or longer?

New technologies for use in the search for extraterrestrial biology suggest that, despite the continued dearth of hard evidence for life elsewhere or signals from other societies, there is good reason to expect that success might not be far off—that within a few decades we might find evidence of sophisticated civilizations.

Why this is so, what contact would tell us, and what such a discovery would mean, are the subject of this talk on the continuing efforts to establish our place in the universe of thinking beings.

Seth Shostak is the Senior Astronomer at the SETI Institute, in Mountain View, California. He has an undergraduate degree in physics from Princeton University, and a doctorate in astronomy from the California Institute of Technology. For much of his career, Seth conducted radio astronomy research of galaxies, and he has published approximately sixty papers in professional journals.

He has written several hundred popular magazine and Web articles on various topics in astronomy, technology, film and television. He lectures on astronomy and other subjects at Stanford and other venues in the Bay Area, and for the last six years, has been a Distinguished Speaker for the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics. He is also Chair of the International Academy of Astronautics’ SETI Permanent Study Group. Every week he hosts the SETI Institute’s science radio show, “Are We Alone?”

Field Trips for NorCA Explorers

Unique to our chapter, our Field Trips give you ongoing opportunities to explore the world around us! Calendar two upcoming ones: April 17 and May 8/9. To join, please email Von Hurson <trekking@sonic.net> as soon as possible. Details will be sent to those who sign up.

Our reception on April 30th will be hosted by Maplink of Santa Barbara. Will Spicer will bring along a copy of their “Earth” Atlas (see page 3)!

San Francisco — April 30, 2010
Seth Shostak. PhD: When Will We Find ET?

SETI is trying

San Francisco, CA
Our next meeting is at 6:30 on April 30, a Friday evening, at the UNIVERSITY CLUB.

Note venues and dates with care.

San Francisco — April 30, 2010
Seth Shostak. PhD: When Will We Find ET?

The Explorers Club Northern California Chapter
April 2010

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

Seth Shostak (below) has edited and contributed to a half-dozen books. His most recent tome is “Confessions of an Alien Hunter: A Scientist’s Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence” (National Geographic). His most recent article is in The Explorers Journal, “Exploring the Final Frontier, a Quest for Life in the Cosmos.” (Spring 2010)
Bob Richards’ company, a private venture looking for added capital, reflects the enthusiasm of Silicon Valley in its epitome. His far-out idea is to go to the moon, routinely. He is well along to provide a freight company that will get your experiments there. Once this becomes a success, and he is competent it will, he will work toward making the round trip.

For now, his first attempt will be to carry 50 kilograms safely to the moon’s equatorial surface for one two-week day. If you have something to ship contact Odyssey Moon (www.odysseymoon.com); it will cost as little as two-million dollars per kilo, a trifle when compared to the cost of paying to ride aboard the space shuttle—if it were to go to the moon, beyond the International Space Station.

By partnering with NASA, in effect hiring their technology and skills, Dr. Richards is able to focus on a much more modest mission than ‘Moon 1.0’, the nation’s placement of Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin on the moon’s surface on July, 20, 1969. This modesty allows him to reduce the costs greatly (he need not amortize the research) and to sell the freight service at an affordable amount. Customers have lined up: universities and private companies studying how materials react over time in low-gravity space. By sending robotic experiments on a one-way trip, and returning the data, the cost of understanding space effects is greatly reduced.

We have but scratched the surface out there: six manned landings (and only twelve robotics) within an area comparable to all of the Americas. Sure we have photos, but our experience from earth says there is so much we do not know. Richards, and his team of true space experts (look at his web site to see the depth of skills) hope Odyssey Moon’s capability will grow, fueled by private capital, to become a major enterprise in the commercialization of the moon based on international cooperation.

We shall watch; they hope to blast off within a couple of years. In so doing they also hope to win the carrot awaiting, the Google Lunar X Prize of $30 million. If successful they would become another private venture into space, akin to Rutan’s commercial space flights. Already commercial communications has a $160 billion annual flow of enterprise usage—with a large host of international satellites carrying the news and views of the world.

Richards peaks well beyond his confidence for success to fly to the moon; he sees this as a small practice step toward reaching further into space. We wish him well.
The Corner Chair  — Thanks to Von Hurson and Didi Kutz, the Monterey Affair has sprung two unique field trips to the Monterey area. The first trip was to the Sea of Cortez, and the second was to the Monterey Peninsula. Our members met with von der Porten, Von der Porten, and Kutz, and enjoyed the picturesque scenery and the unique marine life. The second trip was to the Santa Barbara area, where members were able to explore the beautiful beaches and the rich marine life. The Corner Chair members are grateful for the efforts of these wonderful volunteers, who are dedicated to the preservation of our ocean treasures. (The Corner Chair is a chapter of the California Association of Marine Scientists.)

A Visit from Earth  — “Exploration is more an attitude than a status, an inspiration more than perspiration, and a journey more than a destination.” Xuan Zang, 627 AD, “Journey to the West”

ECAD Weekend — Bagpiper Kyle, his mom Lynn, Alan, Becky, Char and Ken Howery attended from our chapter. President Lorie inspired us all with her efforts — financial, administrative, personal. There was more “transparency” about the financial report than I’ve ever experienced. Membership is up while its down with most nonprofits these days.

Go & Tell  — Former resident chapter member (now in San Diego, but he keeps in touch and remains on our roster) Frank Castle LF72 on the summit of Mt. Spigot, Continental Peninsula, Antarctica (December 2009) Frank has now summited mountains on all seven continents, including a first ascent of Mt. Bokkra (17,500 ft) in the Siuqiang Range of China.

Diana Pickworth FN01 sneaked away to Yemen for the Easter Break, spending the time artist-wise and editing poetry. She reports, “it is wonderful and swimming in the Indian Ocean a joy never to be missed. We had a Palm Sunday service here...only seven brave souls, and four children who cheerfully carried the real palm stalks.” She will attend the ICAANE (International Congress on the Ancient Archaeology of the Near East) conference at London University and the British Museum in mid-April.

Photographer Sara Shoemaker MN99 opened “A Mermaid’s View” at the Ucross Foundation Art Gallery in Clearmont, Wyoming on February 27th; it will run until May 21. “The bold, glossy colors of my underwater photography work were an exotic contrast to the snow-dusted frozen mountains and prairies of North Eastern Wyoming.”

To keep our feet grounded on terra firma, for our April meeting our predinner reception will be hosted by Maplink; this Santa Barbara company has published the largest and most complete atlas in existence (64 pounds; available for under $6000.) The book will be on display and on sale; our chapter gets a commission! Bill Spicer of the Southern California Chapter will be on hand to allow a touch and feel.

To get a sense of the beauty and scale of this immense project look at:

http://catalog.maplink.com/maplink/maplink/earth_atlas.html
April 2010

When Will We Find ET?
30 April — University Club, San Francisco

April: UNIVERSITY CLUB

Date: Friday, April 30, 2010
Place: University Club
800 Powell St., San Francisco, CA

Time: 6:30 - reception
7:15 - dinner
8:00 - talk

Cost: $49 in advance; $60 on the 30th
Chapter 2010 dues: $25

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

Please reserve by April 26!

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

There is also a PAYPAL BUTTON on our website (www.explorersnorca.org); easy to use!

University Club,
Atop Nob Hill
where the cable cars cross

The University Club has Valet Parking for $20; the Brocklebank Garage on Sacramento is only $10!
Other nearby garages are expensive. Some street parking. Muni (cable cars OR Sacramento #1) is very near; BART & CalTrans connections are easy. Car pool! The University Club is wheel-chair accessible.

April 2010

Northern California Calendar of Events
(Venues will be identified as soon as known.)

Our next Events
April 17 ................ Organic Wining
Sonoma Valley & Boudreau’s home
April 30 ................ Seth Shostak
Are We Alone in Space? . . . . University Club
May 8 .................. Seashore Field Trip
Point Lobos, Monterey Peninsula

Future Events
May 21 ............... Music of the Antarctic Expeditions
Left Bank/Rive GaucheStanford Geology Corner
June 5 ............... Angel Island Picnic option: ride with Capt. Schmied from Berkeley
July 1 ............... Joint Meeting with Dendrology Society
Marcel Robinson . . . . . University Club
September 17 .......... planning
October 29 .......... Expeditions and the Media
Josh Bernstein . . . . University Club
November 19 .......... planning
December 5 .......... Alan & Becky Nichols
Chair’s Member Reception Nichols home, Tiburon

Earlier Events (2009-10)
September 25 .............. Jim Sano
Retracing Shakleton, GGYC
October 30 .............. Diana Pickworth
Yemen Archaeology, GGYC
November 20 .............. Nathaniel J Dominy
Tsavo Lions of yore, Dana home, Tiburon
December 5 .............. Fofe Gonzales
Cave Field Expedition
December 12 .............. Alan & Becky Nichols
Chair’s Member Reception Nichols home, Tiburon
January 29, 2010 .......... several
Story Night . . . . . . . . . University Club
February 26 . . . . . . . . . Reginald Barrett
The Elusive Fisher . . . . . University Club
March 26 .................. Bob Richards
Oydissey Moon . . . . . . . . University Club

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

Chair: Alan Nichols
415 789-9348
nicholsalan9@gmail.com
Vice Chair: Anders Jepsen
925 254-3079
ajviking@aol.com
Treasurer: Sue Estey
510 526-2216
sestey@earthlink.net
Secretary: Stephen E. Smith
Webmaster: Mike Diggles
Newsletter: Lee Langan

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