

The Explorers Club

Northern California Chapter

November 2010

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

Poison Birds of New Guinea Dr. John P. Dumbacher FN10 San Francisco — November 19, 2010

In New Guinea, when you ask someone how far is it to the village or to the other side of the mountain, they say, “*ino longwe, tupela haua tasol*” or “not a long-way, just a couple hours.” Often it ends up taking several days to get there. My most recent trip was a special one. It was nearly three years since an earlier visit, and apart from my home, PNG is my favorite place. The forests are beautiful and wild, the local people are lovely and alive, the animals are strange and fantastic. PNG is home to the world’s largest butterflies and walking sticks, poisonous bird species, and forests that pulsate with the sound of insects and birds. In early 2009, we traveled to the limestone karst country below Mt. Bosavi in Southern Highlands Province. Don’t be fooled by the province name; it was well out of the mountains and in the steamy-hot lowlands. This is rugged landscape strewn with jagged uplifted limestone and streams that disappear underground and appear again somewhere else. Here we studied birds on behalf of the California Academy of Sciences, and (along with colleagues from Smithsonian, Bishop Museum, Oxford University, PNG Institute of Biological Research, and other institutions) we studied mammals, insects, bats, plants, etc., surveying the area’s life and highlighting some of the gems that New Guinea has to offer.

In the Fall, we sailed with Bruno and Carmen Montel, on their beautiful yacht, *Dalai*, to begin working in the islands of Milne Bay Province. We were surveying bird populations on a few islands in the major groups of the Louisiade Archipelago, and we were experimenting with traveling by sailboat. Sailing is a “green” way to get around—we were mostly powered by wind, using solar to recharge batteries, and using the boat as a “base camp” so that we had less impact on the islands we visited. We sailed to Panapompom. The main goal was, of course, to study the birds of the Deboyne Island Group, but we were all excited to be in the archipelago of the great sailing canoe architects and builders. The lagoon between Panapompom and Panaete is very shallow near Panaete—too shallow for our boat, which has a 2.5 meter draft—so we anchored off the northeast side of Panapompom Island. This was an excellent decision for the birds, as Panapompom Island was higher and had more variation in habitats and geology. So, there were many diverse birds. Besides we were close to Panaete—just a short sailing canoe ride away.

Jack will speak about this field work. Dr. Dumbacher is Curator and Department Chair of Ornithology & Mammalogy at the California Academy of Science—and an new member of The Explorers Club!

On our way east toward Panapompom Island, we worked on the islands of Hummock and Hasard, and we anchored in their lagoon. Here we also encountered many sailors, including young boys who sailed smaller, single-boy versions of the larger sailing canoes. As we pressed eastward, we saw more and more sailing canoes, some larger, some with many passengers, and some with slightly different designs.



Note venues and dates with care.
San Francisco, CA
Our next meeting is at 6:00 on November 19, a **FRIDAY** evening, at the University Club.

— — —
THEN: a social gathering at the Chairman’s home in Belvedere.

— — —
THEN a dinner meeting in Honolulu at the Pacific Club

(NO MORE NEWSLETTERS UNTIL JANUARY; YOUR EDITOR HAS GONE SOUTH!)



Poison birds? Here is a hint: poison beetles! (above)

On our first day in camp, we set up our mist-nets and started working. One of the first birds we caught was this male King Bird-of-Paradise (below). I personally think that this is the most drop-dead gorgeous bird in the forests of New Guinea. The red feathers on the head and back sparkle in the light like spun glass, and the mouth is colored day-glow green. They perform an amazing display dance, all to impress the females, and the BBC was able to capture some of this on film.



How to Get Your Word Out in a Big Way!

San Francisco

It's a long way from reflecting under a piñon tree on the high mesas surrounding Boulder, Utah, to the office suites of the leading media moguls of television, but Explorers Club Director Josh Bernstein has made that journey. He did so by promoting his survival skills, throughout the world. On October 29, Josh shared the highlights of what he has learned in how to get the media, especially broadcast media, involved in telling your story.

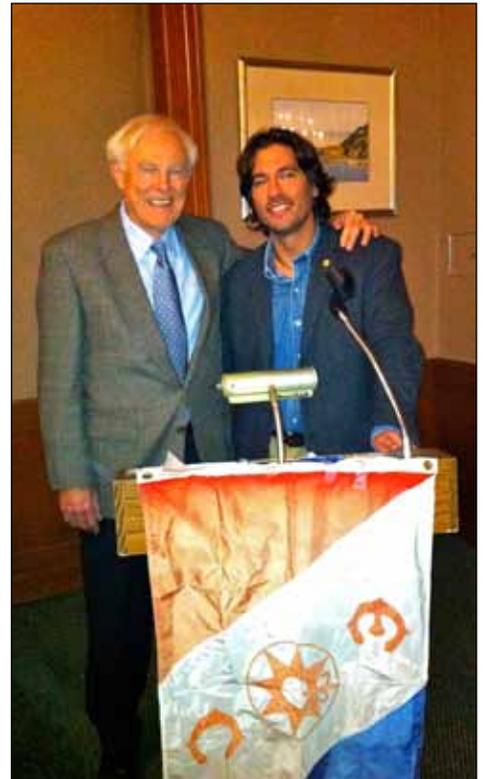
A good NorCA turnout listened as he outlined a whose-who of modern television's key decision makers, those men and women that impact upon what is shown on the world's screens. Like it or debate it, if an explorer wants to report findings to a large audience, wants to educate on a broad swatch, wants to become known, he or she can use the 24/7 presence of television as a helpmate. Because this medium is so dominant in people's lives, it is constantly seeking good programs and good presentations. That said, how does one person's content get selected over another? Not without hard work, contacts and old-fashioned networking.

Josh shared who was who, those to whom a *sizzle reel* might take the the story of one's expedition to an extended, appreciative audience, beyond the confines of academia or the classroom or an Explorers Club lecture. Not all results can find such a fit, but those that do can reward the explorer with support for future expeditions and exposure most helpful in spreading important findings.

From YouTube to the National Geographic Magazine, from a Flag Expedition to The Explorers Journal, from the cool nights of the Colorado Plateau to the heritage sites of the world, the media reach out as a help to an explorer's need for communication. Bernstein shared his success with his fellow members in a clear and helpful manner. One may not want to take their story as far as he has, but he told how to do it. You have to understand the landscape, appreciate its scale, and convince these folks you are the expert you have become. You have to attend the events they do and see what others are doing. You have to expand your story outline from a few moments into a brief visual that you can submit, when you get the chance.

This was a behind-the-scenes evening that opened a lot of eyes. It was an exposition of the how-to requirements for much of today's exploration scene.

Anders Jepsen's comment: Josh's presentation on media-oriented exploration was a sharp contrast to that which we saw at the May meeting at Stanford, where the history of the exploration of Antarctica was reviewed. Yet, explorers of the past also had to be promoters to get funding for their adventures. Today the media is so sophisticated, and it's often easy to travel anywhere in the world, that one almost forgets how tough it used to be—how tough it still can be—for serious researchers to do their exploration. If television programs inspire young people to try a life of research, adventure and exploration, then they're worth it.



Director Josh Bernstein (right) and Chapter Chair Alan Nichols after the talk at San Francisco's University Club

Mark Your Calendar for the busy balance of 2010!

In December we have two meetings!

On December 5, a Sunday, there will be an late afternoon holiday reception at the home of 'The Martha Stewart of the Silk Web', Becky Rygh and our Chairman, Alan, at their home in Belvedere, 9 Peninsula Road, from 3 to 6 pm. Google it! All members and their partners are welcome, as guests of the Nichols. Those who have attended in the past know of the wonderful hospitality. The new members, announced on the next page, are most welcome and encouraged to join this tradition.

On December 13, a Monday, at the Pacific Club in Honolulu, Alan will present the findings of his recent Flag Expedition to Mongolia. Not to be missed—however, if it is, the talk will be repeated in May in San Francisco.

Mark you calendars and be sure to respond with a reservation to Sue Estey at least one week before either of the events. **This is very important and certainly respectful to the planners.**

Pilgrimage to Mongolia Sacred Mountains, Chinggis Qa'an, Roy Chapman Andrews All Gods of Their Time

Alan Nichols FN84
Pacific Club, Honolulu, December 13, 2010



Expedition team on top of CHINGGIS QA'AN—he's under us, somewhere! (l-r: Becky Rygh, Von Hurson, Alan Nichols, Max Nichols)



Trail to sacred mountain BAGA BOGDO (Little Buddha), the Gobi, Mongolia.

Our New Members — Welcome

We Win!!!

Our Chapter met the challenge issued by Club President **Lorie Karnath** at this year's annual dinner to qualify the most new members between March and October. Thanks to the activities of 59 people, including the applicants, our chapter brought in 26 new members—Fellows, Members, Associates, and Students. That was more than the 2nd and 3rd place runnerup chapters put together. The announcement of our success came in an email to me from the President congratulating the chapter on the very day of our last meeting. Perfect timing!

Our "Call to Arms" program for explorers to share the benefits and joys of membership in our Explorers Club is a model for chapters throughout the world. In the long run the viability of this Club is dependent on new members, both financially and "spiritually".

Congratulations to **Robert Higgins**, our membership chair, and all the members who initiated new applications and acted as sponsors. All new members, and their sponsors, are invited to our Chapter Reception on November 19 at the University Club **as our guests** (free drinks and hors d'ourves, no less). It will be an exciting evening with one new member **Jack Dumbacher**, Ph.D., as our speaker: discussing his thirteen years in New Guinea and "Poison Birds". Come along, bring a guest, and meet our initiates. At least two are coming all the way from Hawaii.

As soon as the new members are *activated** (hopefully before our Nov 19 meeting), the Chapter will be awarded \$5000 for Chapter grants to carry out the purposes of the Explorers Club.

As Chinggis Qa'an's Mongolian warriors would say: **HOORAY!!!**

Thank you all. —Alan Nichols FN84

* *activated*: administrative talk for accepting your membership and paying the dues. Believe me, it is very worth it!

member	status	sponsor	second
Mr. George Belcher	Fellow	Alan H. Nichols,	Robert J. Higgins
Nathaniel J. Dominy Ph.D.	Fellow	Alan H. Nichols,	Donald E. Dana
John P. Dumbacher Jr., Ph.D.	Fellow	Alan H. Nichols,	Rebecca L. Rygh
Mr. Donald D. Dvorak	Fellow	Robert W. Schmieder	Alan H. Nichols,
Ms. Elaine S. Dvorak	Fellow	Robert W. Schmieder	Alan H. Nichols,
Fred T. Mackenzie Ph.D.	Fellow	Alan H. Nichols,	Cameron S. McNaughton
Dr. Mary L. McGann	Fellow	Robert W. Schmieder	Alan H. Nichols,
Dr. Marco G. Meniketti	Fellow	Alan H. Nichols,	Edward P. Von der Porten
Guido C. Pigliasco Ph.D.	Fellow	Suzanne S. Finney.	Alan H. Nichols,
Dr. Seth Shostak	Fellow	Alan H. Nichols,	Angela M.H. Schuster
Mr. Jason Bradley	Member	Peter H.D. Hemming	Alan H. Nichols,
Mr. Charles A. Davis Jr.	Member	Alan H. Nichols,	Candida L. Kutz
John H. Felix Ph.D.	Member	Alan H. Nichols,	Rebecca L. Rygh
Ms. Yvonne Hurson	Member	Alan H. Nichols,	Joan N. Boothe
Mr. John Jerney	Member	Morton P. Beebe	Alan H. Nichols,
Megan K. McCorriston Ph.D.	Member	Alan H. Nichols,	Rebecca L. Rygh
Mr. Neal Mueller	Member	Alan H. Nichols,	Kenneth A. Howery
Capt. Philip J. Sammet	Member	Alan H. Nichols,	Candida L. Kutz
Mr. Frederick B. Slaughter	Member	Alan H. Nichols,	Charlotte E. Rygh
Ms. Christine L. Hoffman	Associate	Alan H. Nichols,	Charlotte E. Rygh
Mr. Jeffrey T. Holmes	Associate	Alan H. Nichols,	Charlotte E. Rygh
Mr. Holden Bibas	Student	Alan H. Nichols,	
Ms. Briana Evans	Student	Alan H. Nichols	

Travels to New York

The Lowell Thomas Dinner has grown to be a traditional event offered by The Explorers Club each Fall. It is a time when explorers within, and yet to be within, the membership, are recognized. It is a very endearing time: the recipients are genuinely thankful for the acknowledgement of their accomplishments. They appreciate the support that the activity to which they devote their energies receives, obvious to all who attend. The evening doubles as a fundraiser for the Club. It works!

In the past this dinner was held elsewhere in the city, but this year the entire club building was transformed into a dining/reception/presentation venue. Attendees wandered through the treasures of the Trophy Room on the top floor to the more-public library and lecture room on the second floor. The decor was exotic; even a human-sized 'tropical bird' flitted among the guests and rose between floors, gymnastically. Large video screens allowed all proceedings to be viewed throughout. It was a festive evening.

The LTD, like the ECAD, is a good time to visit The Explorers Club in New York. Not only are so many Fellows and Members around and about, but the essence of the Club can be experienced. On Friday before the dinner, a day-long symposium was held by the award-ees—this year's theme: extinction. All those who attended enthused about the quality of the talks and comments.

On the weekend's Sunday President Karnath honored our Honorary President Don Walsh at a luncheon. A fitting conclusion to the period of camaraderie. Yes, it is an expense to spend several days in New York City, but it is an expense that returns memories and meetings that you cannot find anywhere else.

Plan to attend ECAD; it is a long weekend on an even more grand scale, at the Waldorf on March 19, 2011. It is a meeting that combines friendship and fund raising, a celebration of learning and exchanges while raising the monies we need to keep our venerable club alive and well. It is!

Kosrae — Chair Emeritus Smith's Project

Twenty-five hundred miles southwest of Hawaii, 5 degrees north of the equator lies the island of Kosrae, part of the Federated States of Micronesia. This 42-square-mile island is surrounded by a rich fringing coral reef, recognized as one of the most pristine in the Western Pacific.

Since 1996, our member Stephen E. Smith FN96 has led a group of island stakeholders and government researchers in a collaboration with Oceanearth, Inc., a California 501(c)3, to effect a long-term monitoring program assessing the health of the reef system. Annually, scientists and lay volunteer divers join together to assess the extent and health of the coral cover as well as performing inventories of non-coral species targeted for food and the aquarium trade.

See a short video on that project at <http://vimeo.com/channels/kosrae>. Project information is available at www.oceanearth.org.



November 2010



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Secretary: Stephen E. Smith
Webmaster: Mike Diggles
Newsletter: Lee Langan

Poison Birds — 19 November — University Club

Northern California Calendar of Events

(Venues will be identified as soon as known.)

Our Next Events

- November 19 Poison Birds of New Guinea
Jack Dumbacher University Club
December 5 Alan & Becky Nichols
Chair's Member Reception Nichols home, Tiburon
December 13 Mongolian Flag Expedition
Alan Nichols Honolulu

Future Events

- January 21, 2011 Story Night
member tales University Club
February 11 Adventures with a Purpose
Richard Bang University Club
March 19 ECAD
Maya Prophecies Waldorf-Astoria
March 25 Medical Exploration in Iraq
Tom Cromwell, MD University Club
April 22 The Storied Ice
Joan Boothe University Club
May 20 Dead Men Tell Tales
Alan Nichols University Club
June 18 Angel Island Picnic

Earlier Events (2010)

- April 30 Seth Shostak
Are We Alone in Space? University Club
May 8-9 Seashore Field Trip/lunch
Point Lobos, Monterey Peninsula, Hick's home
May 21 Left Bank/Rive Gauche
Music of the Antarctic Expeditions Stanford
June 5 Angel Island Picnic
July 1 Marcel Robischon
'Discovering the Redwoods. University Club
September 17 Don Johanson
Lucy and Our African Origins University Club
October 29 Expeditions and the Media
Josh Bernstein University Club

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

USE PAYPAL!

November 19: University Club, San Francisco

Date: Friday November 19, 2010
Place: University Club
Time: 6:00 - reception (note change)
7:15 - dinner
8:00 - talk
Cost: \$49 in advance; \$60 on the 19th
Students: \$33. (2011 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

Reserve ___ spaces for November 19, 2010
Poison Bird of New Guinea
Cost: only \$49 (for members and sirdars) \$33 for card-carrying students
Name: _____
Address (if changed): _____
Companion: _____

Please reserve by Nov. 16!

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.