

# The Explorers Club Northern California Chapter September 2011

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

## The Osireion at Abydos Jim Westerman Berkeley — September 23, 2011

Abydos lies along the Nile downriver of the fabled sites at Luxor. Travel around the large bend in the river to a site where few do. Here was the capital of early dynastic Egypt before the center of government moved to Memphis. Here remains one of the finest New Kingdom temples, built under Seti I. Behind the temple lies the *Osireion*, a space identified with the afterlife, in honor of Osiris. Few visitors come; Egypt offers so many riches and time can be short.

James Westerman FN98, director of the Abydos Research Project, will give a presentation on his archaeological analysis of the Osireion and reveal his new discoveries while addressing some of the fundamental questions about Osireion resulting from his 25-year, systematic investigation of this unique structure.

“Our findings indicate that the people who built this structure were superb engineers,” says Westerman. “Our discoveries shed a new light on the site, design, and religious implications of the Osireion. We are trying to answer six fundamental questions about the structure: 1) Why was it built? 2) When was it built? 3) How was it built? 4) Why was it built in water? 5) Where is the source of the water? 6) What, if anything, is in the voids in the core of the building?”

Jim Westerman and expedition members at the Osireion, on a Flag trip (left).  
The subsurface site, behind Seti's Temple, is often filled with water



**NEW LOCATION**  
Note venues and dates with care.  
**In Berkeley, CA,**  
our next meeting is at 6:00 on  
September 23, a **FRIDAY** evening,  
at the University of California  
Faculty Club.



In addition to being director of the Abydos Research Project, James Westerman has distinguished himself with his investigative work at Machu Picchu, Peru, and on The Island of the Sun, Bolivia, where he has also made major discoveries.

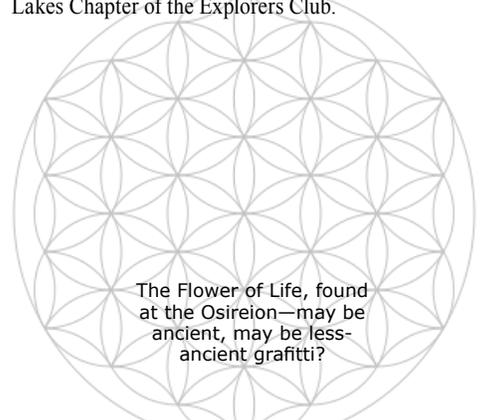
He is the Chapter Chair of the Chicago/Great Lakes Chapter of the Explorers Club.

### About the Osireion

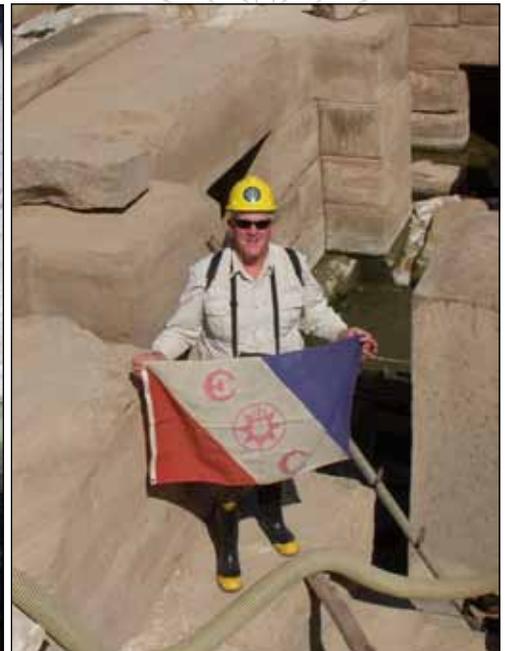
This building, buried in the sands west of the Seti I Temple—one of the most impressive and unique religious edifices in Egypt—was first discovered in 1902-03 by archaeologists Mrs. Flinders Petrie and Ms. Margaret Murray. Their preliminary excavations uncovered the first stones and rooms. Further excavations took place from 1912 to 1914, under the leadership of Eduard Naville. Expedition work stopped during WWI, but field work was resumed in 1925-26 under the leadership of Henri Frankfort. From 1926 on, no further physical archaeological investigations took place until 1986, when James Westerman began his investigations of the structure.

### About James Westerman

As noted, Westerman started his technical investigation of the Osireion in 1986 and, under the auspices of the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities, and has worked ever since on the project with a series of Egyptologists and geologists. Westerman has published original papers about the Seti I temple; has excavated in the Seti I temple; and has used advanced scientific techniques to make new discoveries in the Osireion.



The Flower of Life, found  
at the Osireion—may be  
ancient, may be less-  
ancient graffiti?



# African Hall Gala & Chinggis Qa'an San Francisco — May 20



Alan Nichols FN84 completed his term as chairman of the Northern California Chapter in grand style by arranging a dinner for 130 at the California Academy of Science's *African Hall* on May 20. He spoke eloquently about his research and subsequent 2010 flag expedition to Mongolia tracing the steps of paleontologist Roy Chapman Andrews (a former president of the Club) and seeking the burial place of Chinggis Qa'an. He put forth his deductions as to why the 13th century ruler of the world was not where centuries of explorers and grave hunters have sought. He used his extensive understanding of sacred mountains, his readings about the funeral cortège of Qa'an after his death in August 1227, and his own traverse of the landscape, twice. As a result Alan has pinpointed a high mountain of the Qin range just north of the Yellow River. Everything fits, and he plans to return to the site, which he and his grandson Max climbed. He is sure he will be successful in solving the mystery of where the remains of the great Chinggis Qu'an rest.

Alan shared comparative pictures found in the treasure trove of Andrews 1920's expeditions with 2010 views at several locations as the earlier route was traced. Urban Mongolia is now a modern country, but the outback has changed little. Vehicles still get stuck! The mountains remain a challenge. It was a rewarding insight into the Andrews expedition which located huge dinosaurs—and, more importantly, found eggs to prove how these beasts were born.

*SuperExplorers* have worked closely with Chairman Nichols to grow our chapter to be among the most active in *The Explorers Club*—with expanded membership, interesting field trips, building meeting attendance, the establishment of the Sirdar participation, and noticeable camaraderie. Seven were honored at the dinner and each was given a wonderful *The Exploration Medal*—a beautiful etched-crystal paper weight. It was a bit of a love fest as the mutual respect between each awardee and the outgoing chairman was confirmed by all.

The newly elected Chapter Officers were introduced: Dr. Anders Jepsen FN03, Rick Saber MN01, Steve Smith FN96 and Joan Boothe MN07. It is clear they are poised to

maintain the enthusiasm that exists within the chapter—in our 38th year it is passed on as vibrant as it has ever been. Emeritus Chairs Dr. Bob Schmieder FN86, Dr. Leslie Ewing FN93, Dr. Steve Smith FN96, Lee Langan FN99 and Alan Nichols FN84 each looked on with confidence that their efforts continue.

A new member, Dr. Jack Dubacher FN10, the Director of Mammalogy & Ornithology at CAS, managed to make available the facilities of his world-acclaimed museum for this evening; it is hard to imagine a more “exploration-oriented” venue. The African Hall contains spectacular dioramas and several African penguins frolic at one end. Alan Cooper FN10 brought together his geologist-musicians, *The Left Bank/Rive Gauche Trio* (with Julianne Stafford and Larry Schemel), to play during the reception while the adjacent hall was available for our exclusive visit. Nancy Elkus joined those who visited the wonderful collection of Southwestern arti-

facts donated to the museum by her father, Charles (our chapter's founder) and grandfather—a treasure of silver, turquoise and pottery collected in the first half of the last century.

Glimpses from the African Hall gala: being seated (top); new Chair Anders Jepsen (left) with Chair Emeritis Steve Smith; the Left Bank Trio; the penguins; Alan Nichols, our speaker; Charlotte Rygh's gift cards; the Super Explorers (l-r) Sue Estey, Lee Langan, Mike Diggles, Chair Alan, Kay Schmeider, Von Hurson, Joan Boothe & Steve Smith.



**NorCA Chapter  
2011 Contributors**

- Randolph K. Adler Jr.
- James Allan
- Guitty Azarpay
- Barbara Berg
- Barry Boothe
- Joan Boothe
- Eugene Boudreau
- Tammy Camp
- H. Keith Chase
- Dan Cheatham
- Ann Chokas
- Nicholas Clinch
- Alan Cooper
- Wendy Crowder
- Mike Diggles
- Jack Dumbacher
- Susan Dutcher
- Don Dvorak
- Elaine Dvorak
- Palmer Dyal
- Sue Estey
- Joann Franklin-Knox
- Charlene Glacy
- Gina Glantz
- Ron Glantz
- Henry Haringsma
- Peter Hemming
- Don Heyneman
- Harry Hicks
- Robert Higgins
- Ken Howerly
- Jim & Von Hurson
- Alan Hutchison
- Anders Jepsen
- Kathy Jepsen
- Fred O. Johnson
- Barbara Kanowick
- David Kennard
- Margot Komarmy
- Dorothy Koo
- Candida Kutz
- Keith Kvenvolden
- Joan Mary Lamphier
- Lee & Karine Langan
- Matthew Lewin
- Sara Shoemaker Lind
- Eigen Long
- Scott Macbeth
- Mary McGann
- Charles Merdinger
- David Moorer
- Marguerite Moriarty
- David Moyer
- Neal Mueller
- Linda-Lee Myers
- Nancy Nenow
- Michael Powers
- James Prigoff
- John Richardson
- Ed & Sandra Ross
- Peter Rundquist
- Carina Trowbridge
- Sabharwal
- Rick Saber
- Bob Schmieder
- Kay Schmieder
- Hank Skade
- Mark A. Smith
- Ron Smith
- Stephen Smith
- Patti Stack
- Phil Trowbridge
- Ed Von der Porten
- Saryl Von der Porten
- James Weil
- Dede Whiteside
- Robin Ziegler

**NOT JUST ANY PICNIC, MY FRIENDS**

The Explorers Club NorCA Chapter manages to do “phenomenal” well. Take June 14. A mere picnic? Not on your life! The day provided perfect “Three Bears” weather – “not too hot and not too cold”—when nearly 30 adventurers crossed the Bay to Angel Island, either via Bob Schmieder’s *Cordell Explorer*, or the local ferry. What makes an Explorers Club event so amazing are the people – and we certainly have no shortage of amazing people! Throw a group of these souls together and prepare for conversation that certainly isn’t of the “normal” kind. It’s about past explorations, exciting experiences, voyages, research and plans for more explorations. Walking around, you could hear countless conversations you’d want to stop and listen to – little snippets of so many things you didn’t know about people’s achievements and exciting lives. Then there was the Food—far, far above the average! Rick and Aldeana thought ham would make a lovely entree, which it did. Of course with all the other delectable delights that materialized on the table at Angel Island, a rather sobering amount of ham remained after the festivities! For the group game, Rick had contrived a *Mad-Max Explorers’ Challenge*—complete with navigational hazards and pylons. Proclamation Awards for the winning teams included promissory notes payable in 2050! Upon return to the Berkeley Harbor. to our point of departure, we continued the fun with yet more food, wine and happy camaraderie. Now we saw Captain Bob at his most relaxed and contented best, with Kay at his side and a plate of his favorite dessert: cherry pie. All was right with the world. A special thanks to Bob Schmieder, and all who came to share the day. From start to finish it was exceptional. Next time, let’s not stop when we reach Angel Island. I’m sure there are a lot of places to explore, and things to discover, if we just keep going. Oh, and don’t forget the ham!

—Von Hurson MN10



**From the Chair—** Taking over as Chapter Chair from Alan Nichols is an intimidating assignment, following on the heels of his final meeting in May at the California Academy of Sciences, where he presented his Mongolia expedition talk. Alan has done a terrific job of getting a lot of members involved by creating his *Sirdar* program and introducing field programs as a key part of the Chapter activities. This in addition to leading the charge to gain new Explorers Club members and serving on the Legal Committee and as Ombudsman of the National club. Thank you, Alan!

Continuing, it looks like an exciting year ahead for the Northern California Chapter—starting with Egypt in September and moving on to Bolivia in October before hearing about an Antarctic survival story in November. In January, with the National Board of Directors meeting in San Francisco, Lee Langan is corraling several of the Directors to deliver their own stories for a National Story Night program. The 2012 spring and summer season will also include a couple of field expeditions led by Von Hurson. You’ll hear more about them later.

Recognizing that Alan’s Stanford isn’t the only major university in the Bay Area, our first meeting will be held at the UC Berkeley Faculty Club, my alma mater. October and November meetings will be back at the University Club located at the top of Nob Hill in San Francisco.

Finally, this year I will be introducing the *Member Minute* as a regular feature of our meetings. This will provide a chance for a very brief presentation by a member about how they came to be in the Explorers Club. I will do the first one, and would like to hear from any other member who would volunteer to do a Member Minute at a subsequent meeting. —Anders Jepsen, PhD FN03



Capt Freitas (below); Sue with glimpse of Tom (right); on board *Black Pearl* (above)



**A GRIPPING TALE OF ADVENTURE ON THE HIGH SEAS**

The morning of May 14 was breezy and cool, with gray and white scattered clouds. We had loaded supplies when I glanced down at the stern of the boat we were about to board and stopped short, taking a quick breath, as I stared at the name: *Black Pearl*! A chill ran down my spine and looking over my shoulder I half expected to see Pirate Captain Jack Sparrow or a salty, mangy, grizzly, un-bathed and unshaven member of his crew. Instead of the double-masted *Black Pearl* of legend, with its 13 sails and armament of cannons and guns it was, instead, a sleek *Catalina 38* with its modern day claim to fame: having sailed to Hawaii in the 2003 *TransPac* race. On this day it was waiting to carry our merry crew—Alan and Becky Nichols, Rick and Aldeana Saber, Jim and Von Hurson and our Captain, Paul Freitas, with his First Mate Anna. Throughout our voyage, Captain Paul alternately turned the helm over to Alan, Rick, Jim and Von, who each took their turn, thrilled with a chance to steer a segment of our course. Enroute to rendezvous with Tom Patterson, Sue Estey and new *Sirdar*, Ann Chokas, we looked behind to see Tom’s *Wyliecat 30*, closing fast – a flashback to where the pirate-crewed *Black Pearl* is being over-taken by the *HMS Interceptor*? With its semi-opaque, silver-gray, carbon fiber mainsail the *Wyliecat* took on an almost ghostly look as it caught up, then passed the *Catalina*, before slowing to tie up to us as we dropped anchor about 500 feet off Tiburon Cove. While we feasted, we took turns boarding the *Wyliecat*, an exotic, monohulled beauty with its carbon fiber mast and “wishbone” boom – a peek into the future of radical boat design. After lunch, the two ships parted, and we returned to the Richmond Yacht Harbor from whence we had departed. The *Black Pearl* slid softly into its berth, and we basked in the glow of a beautiful day of wonderful memories spent with friends. Thank you Paul, Anna, Tom and Sue.

—Von Hurson MN10

Add Your Name to the above list by sending \$25!

**From the Board—** In June your Board met in Berlin, and traveled to Warsaw, recognizing our international scope. Business

was done, chapter members were met, and each board member learned new things about these exceptional locales and member achievements. Polish enthusiasm is infectious; Berlin an extraordinary city. The Pergaman and Natural History museums a particular delight. —Lee Langan FN99



Ghetto Monument segment, Warsaw >

September 2011



Chair: Anders Jepsen
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Vice Chair: Rick Saber
415 457-0345
eagle@rsaber.com
Treasurer: Joan Boothe
415 346-5934
hoodoskr@aol.com
Secretary: Stephen E. Smith
Webmaster: Mike Diggles
Newsletter: Lee Langan

September 23 — In Egypt with Jim Westerman

Northern California Calendar of Events

(Venues will be identified as soon as known.)

Our Next Events

September 23 . . . . . Jim Westerman
The Osireion, Egypt . . . . . UC Faculty Club

Upcoming Events

October . . . . . Jay Gregory
Discovering Bolivia . . . . . University Club
November . . . . . Joan Boothe
Norden Skjold's Antarctic Tale . . . . . University Club
December 5 . . . . . Rick & Aldeana Saber
Member Reception . . . . . Tiburon
January 28, 2012. . . . . Story Night
Board Member tales. . . . . University Club
Scheduled meetings being worked upon:
February 24, 2012
March 30, 2012
April 27, 2012
June 1, 2012
June 22, 2012 . . . . . Angel Island Picnic

Earlier Chapter Events (2010-11)

February 25 . . . . . Don Dana
Ethiopian Research Expedition . . . . . University Club
March 25 . . . . . Tom Cromwell, MD
Medical Disasters . . . . . University Club
April 22 . . . . . Robin Ziegler
Google Earth . . . . . University Club
May 20 . . . . . Alan Nichols
Dead Men Tell Tales. . . . . California Academy
June 11 . . . . . Angel Island Picnic

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

Send address changes and corrections by email to Steve at nauticos1@oceanearth.org

USE PAYPAL!

September 23, Berkeley

Date: Friday September 23, 2011
Place: University of California Faculty Club, Berkeley Campus
Time: 6:00 - reception, 7:15 - dinner, 8:00 - talk
Cost: \$55 in advance; \$60 on the 23rd
Students: \$35. (2011 dues \$25!)
Please mail information to Joan Boothe, 2435 Divisadero St, San Francisco, CA 94115 or email hoodoskr@aol.com or call (415) 346-5934
Reserve \_\_\_ spaces for September 23, 2011
Cost: only \$55 (for members and sirdars) \$35 for card-carrying students
Name: \_\_\_\_\_
Address (if changed): \_\_\_\_\_
Companion: \_\_\_\_\_
Please reserve by Sep 20!

In a quiet, wooded glade on the Berkeley campus—close to everything but removed from the crowds and chatter—is a treasure most people know little about, the Faculty Club. Make your way to the campus: parking is available off Bancroft Way. Stroll to the Faculty Club as shown to the right. Parking reservations (for \$10) can be made a week in advance (call Joan Boothe), but it should be readily available without this need.

