Clipperton Expedition
The 2013 Cordell Flag Expedition to Clipperton Island

Robert Schmieder, Ph.D., FN’86, Chair Emeritus
San Francisco—April 26, 2013

Lying 700 miles south of Cabo San Lucas, Clipperton is one of the most isolated islands in the world. It is the only coral atoll in the eastern Pacific, and it lies at the interface between major biological provinces. A possession of France, it has a colorful past, including periods of military, colonial, and mining occupation, shipwrecks, piracy, smuggling, and murder. Clipperton attracts many scientific, fishing, diving, photographic, and amateur radio expeditions.

During February-March, 2013, Bob led a 29-person expedition to Clipperton, using a vessel chartered from San Diego. The team included 24 radio amateurs and five scientists and filmmakers from ten countries, about half from Europe and half from North America. During ten days of occupation, the team set up and operated ten radio stations, making a total of 114,000 individual contacts, new records for such expeditions. A particularly interesting aspect was the development of a “live” website that displayed near-real-time graphic displays of the radio log data, updating automatically every 60 seconds.

The team planned and carried out a variety of scientific observations and collections, including the first specimens of foraminifera, a major taxonomic group of microscopic animals important for the study of global climate. Other observations, including searches for a particular invasive ant and congenitally deformed seabirds, proved negative.

The expedition was carried out within Bob’s nonprofit organization, Cordell Expeditions. The expedition carried Explorers Club Flag #126, and a Belgian EC member, LouPhi Loncke, was a part of the team.

Bob is completing a book about the project—written in 3 weeks—that will be available at the meeting. For more information, please visit the expedition website www.tx5k.org and the expedition blog at www.ky6r.com. The live website can be seen at www.dxa2.org Bob can be reached at schmieder@cordell.org or at (925) 934-3735.

NorCA Members, Sirdars, guests are invited to a personal viewing and tour of the “SOLAR IMPULSE” aircraft at Moffett Field

TUESDAY — 23 April 2013 – 1300-1400 at Moffett Field, Mountain View, CA
ESSENTIAL: you MUST sign up by Noon on April 21 — see details and description on Page 2
Suzanne Klotz MN’12 took the Northern California Chapter into the hidden valleys of the Himachal Pradesh of Northwestern India for a glimpse of the impact of local deities on the daily life of local peoples, an impact that has existed for centuries.

The rugged nature of the lower Himalayas isolates villages and cultures—each has evolved their own impressions of animal gods, often snakes past sages and female goddesses. Each village has some building or art devoted to these deities, and the locals entreat them for the good that the gods bring and to ward off evil that might occur without proper respect. It is a complicated world in these far distant places.

Suzanne has spent nearly two decades visiting this rugged isolated part of the vast complex that is India. Over time she has taken it upon herself to study and understand how religion fits into the everyday life of the locals. The picture she has developed is one of an evolution from intra-valley conflict to a still-ancient animism subculture of the Hindu faith. This everyday impact is evident, as is the impact of religions throughout the world, in the buildings and icons at the villages and places of ‘origin’.

She has captured, in her photography, the essence of the complexity of indigenous peoples evident in these deep valleys and so common around our world.

Solar Impulse is a delicate featherweight aircraft made mostly of carbon fiber with 11,826 photovoltaics cells on its horizontal stabilizer and the upper surface of it’s 208-foot wing, just 3 feet less than that of a Boeing 747-400. Under the wing are four nacelles, each with a set of lithium-polymer batteries that generate 10 hp and a twin-bladed propeller that uses the solar energy equivalent of a small motorcycle. The entire aircraft weighs a mere 3527 pounds, less than the average family car, and has a cruising speed of 43 mph, the average speed of a scooter.

The concept born in Switzerland by Bertrand Picard and Andre Borschberg (photo above) has been described as a “beautifully simple airplane” known by its Swiss aircraft identification as HB-SIA. Its mission is a voyage to see what man can do and what lies around the next corner of man’s knowledge exploring what solar technology can really do and just how far it will take us—literally and figuratively.

After three years of flight tests from Switzerland to Spain and Morocco, weather permitting the Solar Impulse is scheduled to begin a transcontinental flight departing on May 1, with planned stops en route. Theoretically it is possible to fly nonstop, but as a single-pilot aircraft it is limited by human endurance.

Bertrand Piccard was the keynote speaker at the 2012 Lowell Thomas Dinner and copilot of the first nonstop balloon navigation around the globe for which he received the Lowell Thomas Award in 1999.

These monuments to the religions of the Himachal Pradesh extend from the 14th Century to the 21st! They are maintained by the local people to this day and have transitioned from fortresses and lookout to temples.
From the Chair—Well, the program last month was pretty intense, what with the ECAD report, talk of upcoming field trips (not even including the new solar powered plane trip to Moffet Field next week) and the great member talks. The Member Moment with Peggy Day’s story about her Tibetan orphanage was certainly dramatic, as was the presentation of Himalayan culture from Northern India by Suzanne Klotz. I am awed by the depth of interests which gets revealed by our members. We’re certainly fortunate to have all you active explorers as part of our Chapter.

Our Chapter also benefits from the relationships that President Alan Nichols and Director Lee Langan have with prominent members of The Explorers Club, as exemplified by the availability of the latest solar-powered demonstration which we will have at Moffet Field on Tuesday, the 23rd. Vice Chair Rick Saber has taken on the role of coordinator for that event and for all Explorers Club Chapters where the plane will visit. Thanks Rick, Alan and Lee.

As an active solar-power proponent myself, as well as having had a long ago relationship with the initial developer of the human powered and solar powered airplane, Paul MacCready, I certainly plan to attend to see the latest solar version which is scheduled to take off from San Francisco for the East Coast around May 1. That aircraft has already flown from Europe to Africa, and it’s a great chance to speak with the two explorer pilots, one of whom is a 3rd generation member of the Explorers Club. I hope to see you all there.

The latest example of the depth of our resources is the up-coming talk by past Chair Dr. Robert Schmieder on his most recent expedition to Clipperton Island back in February. I am sure there are other exploration stories within our ranks as well that we’d love to hear. Please tell me!

-Anders Jepsen PhD FN’03

NorCA Chapter
2013 Contributors

Allan, Jim
Barrett, Reginald
Blumberg, Marion
Bogardus, Peter
Booth, Barry
Booth, Joan
Breed, George
Cantini, Mary
Chase, H. Mary
Cheatham, Nonna
Cook, Sandra
Cooper, Alan
Crowder, Wendy
Day, Peggy
Datcher, Susan
Esley, Sue
Ewing, Lesley
Faggiosi, Richard E.
Ford, Art
Gintz, Gina
Glanitz, Ron
Guzy, Michael
Guzy, Michael
Hamer, Michael
Heydorn, William
Heyneman, Donald
Hicks, Harry
Higgins, Bob
Hirzel, David
Hodges, Eliot
Hurson, Jim
Hunson, Von
Hutchinson, Alan
Hutchinson, Ann
Jake, Krist
Jepsen, Anders
Jepsen, Kathy
Klotz, Suzanne
Klotz, Suzanne
Komarmy, Margot
Komarmy, Margot
Kutz, Dida
Kvenvolden, Keith
Langan, Karine
Langan, Lee
Lapham, Ellen
Libowitz, Dan
Long, Elgen
Maroney, Robert
McCann, Mary
McPhail, Brian
Meniketti, Marco
Meredinger, Charles
Moyer, David
Nichols, Peter
O’Kane, Teresa
Perkins, Shelby
Prigoff, James
Ross, Sandy
Roush, John
Rygh, Char
Sabre, Rick
Schmieder, Bob
Schmieder, Kay
Smith, Mark
Smith, Steve
Taylor, Susan
Van Austen, Judy
Van Austen, Robert
Van der Porten, Ed
Walsh, Don
Weil, James
Whiteside, Dede

Member Moment—Peggy Day, MN’90
In more than 25 years of travel to the Himalayas, Peggy has trekked with Sherpa Tenzin Norgay, and she counts the Dalai Lama as a friend and mentor. None other than Sir Edmund Hillary was her sponsor for membership in the Explorers Club. Her primary focus over these years has been on Tibet, Bhutan and Mongolia—three Buddhist cultures in transition. Exploring, guiding and completing projects with Himalayan communities has been their trademark.

Building and maintaining a home for 28 orphaned children within Tibet has been her dream come true. Over 14 years, six have graduated—a nurse, a beautician, a sous-chef, two waiters and a carpenter. Two girls have been accepted into medical colleges. All are doing well in school. Although the real success of this place is that the children have a sense of family and security, the government has decided to close it and others and to move the children into large institutions. With a lockdown in place, Peggy has been unable to communicate with friends in Tibet, but she will be there as soon as that changes.

In her sponsorship letter for Peggy’s EC membership, Sir Edmund Hillary described truly remarkable woman as full of enthusiasm and devoted to the welfare of the Himalayan people. Of this there is no doubt.

ECAD 2013—The Waldorf Grand Ballroom was filled to the rafters for the first Explorers Club Annual Dinner officiated by President Nichols. It was a success by all measurements. The Northern California Chapter was well represented with more than thirty in attendance, three adjacent tables overlooking the stage plus a scattering of others throughout the 1200 attendees. The evening ceremonies opened with President Alan Nichols reflecting on the impact of sacred places acknowledged by man throughout the ages in all cultures and with all individuals...think about it. Awardees were eloquent and delightfully brief; many celebrants stayed to dance into the night.

The several days included a series of special interviews, Explorer Legends (organized by Director Jim Clash). They were special: Jim Whittaker, John Glenn, Scott Carpenter, James Cameron. Sunday featured talks about a half-dozen expeditions; the weekend ended with a Safari Tea in the Trophy Room.

No one imagined Alan Nichols was recovering less than a month from his bicycle experience.

The list is building.
Add your name!

Dues go to the cost of our newsletter!
Send $25 to Joan Boothe

ECAD 2013—Peggy Day, MN’90

Flag 161 is being ‘retired’ to hang at the Lowell Thomas Building; it was carried to the top of Everest and the bottom of the Marianas Trench. Here are two who had this flag: Jim Cameron and Mike Diggles.
April 2013

The Explorers NorCA

Our Next Event
April 26, 2013 – Clipperton Isle

Upcoming Events (2013)
May 2, 2013 . . . . . non-NorCA Klotz lecture
May 11, 2013 . . . . . NorCA Field Trip
May 31, 2013 . . . . . Nicole L. Crane
June 9, 2013 . . . . . NorCA Picnic

Earlier Chapter Events (2012/13)
January 27, 2012 (Friday) . . . Expedition Medicine
February 24 . . . . . . . . . . . Joshua Glovin
March 30 . . . . . . . . . . . Ed Von Der Porten
April 27 . . . . . . . . . . . Stephen Smith
May 25 . . . . . . . . . . . John Wilus
September 29 . . . . . Return to Garrapata
October 26 . . . . . . . . . . . City Forest Lodge

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

April 26, 2013 – Clipperton Isle

Date: FRIDAY, April 26, 2013
Place: City Forest Lodge
254 Laguna Honda Blvd
San Francisco, CA 94116-1409
(415) 753-8326

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

Cost: $49 in advance; $60 after 24 Apr
Students: $35. (2013 dues $25!)

Please mail information to Joan Boothe,
2435 Divisadero St., San Francisco, CA 94115
or email hoodooskr@aol.com or call (415) 346-5934

We have an established PayPal account
For those of you who have an account, you can sign up and remit dinner costs to the NorCA Chapter by transferring money to: explorersnorca@gmail.com
There is a PAYPAL BUTTON on our website (www.explorersnorca.org): easy to use!

*APRIL Meal Options (select your choice)
Salmon, Chicken Teriyaki or vegetarian cheese ravioli

In 2012, the City Forest Lodge was sought out as a meeting place in the heart of San Francisco. The lodge is hidden in a driveway just south along Seventh Avenue as it turns into Laguna Honda Boulevard. The Lodge has the catering and space needs we require, and our meetings this year have proved it is working!

Location details should be researched in advance
There is parking, and the location, while unfamiliar to some, is easy to find tucked away just across from the City’s Laguna Honda Hospital. Once the lot is full, park within the neighborhood, just uphill to the west.
Muni access is VERY easy from downtown via the light-rail Taraval ‘L’ Line and Ocean View ‘M’ Line. Exit at the Forest Hill station and walk a block north. These lines can be reached by BART and the Peninsula’s CalTrain. (Forest Hill Station is located deeper underground than any other Muni Metro station; so much so that, unlike other stations, most people use an elevator to reach the platform at Forest Hill.)

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

Use PAYPAL!