On Friday, November 17, Jordan Fisher Smith will discuss his award-winning book about an event that led to a dramatic change in the way our society works to preserve our natural beauty without changing it too much.

In the summer of 1972, Harry Walker hitchhiked away from his family’s Alabama farm to see America. Nineteen days later he was killed and partially eaten by an endangered grizzly bear at Yellowstone National Park. An environmental activist convinced Harry’s parents, simple dairy farmers who’d never so much as contested a traffic ticket, to sue the Department of Interior for alleged mismanagement of the grizzly that not only caused their son’s death, but also threatened to drive the great bear to extinction in the 48 contiguous United States.

When the case went to trial in 1975, two of the greatest wildlife biologists of the twentieth century testified against each other in what became a referendum on some of the most fundamental issues we face today in conserving wild places: when nature has been disrupted by human beings, how do we go about repairing it? How much should we try to control or manipulate it in order to heal it? And, what happens when we get it wrong?

Engineering Eden was awarded the Silver Medal for nonfiction at the 2017 California Book Awards, and was longlisted for the 2016 PEN/E.O. Wilson Award for Literary Science Writing. The Wall Street Journal calls it “an intensely reported, rousingly readable and ambitiously envisioned book.”

Jordan Fisher Smith’s interest in the ecology of national parks is not a recent one. He spent 21 years as a park ranger in California, Idaho, Wyoming, and Alaska. His last book, Nature Noir, a memoir of part of that time, was an Audubon Magazine Editor’s Choice and a Chronicle Best Books of 2005 pick. The New York Times called Nature Noir “eloquently meditative” and the Boston Globe judged it “daringly original and gorgeously nuanced.” Newsweek said of Smith, “He writes about the natural world with more grace than anyone since Edward Abbey.” Smith has also written for The New Yorker, TIME.com, Men’s Journal, The Daily Beast, and Discover. He appeared in and narrated a documentary film about Lyme disease, “Under Our Skin,” which was on the 2010 Oscar shortlist for Best Documentary Feature.
THE OCTOBER CHAPTER TALK BY MR. DIRK ROSEN WAS ABOUT CORALS, THEIR IMPORTANCE IN THE OCEAN HABITAT AND THE THREAT TO THEM BY CURRENT FISHING PRACTICE. THE CORALS WITH WHICH MOST OF US ARE FAMILIAR ARE THE ONES THAT OCCUR BETWEEN THE OCEAN’S SURFACE AND ABOUT 10M DOWN WHICH ARE WHAT WE SEE WHEN WE’RE SNORKELING. SCUBA divers go down deeper, say to 75m (150-200 feet); in some cases even deeper, like at the Cordell Bank off Point Reyes where some of our Chapter’s current members worked 30 years ago. All illustrations are from the talk.

In keeping with the plan to study the sea without damaging the sea life there, Rosen’s work with MARE is performed by a Remote Ocean Vehicle (ROV), a water-borne drone. The system is a vehicle equipped with lights and camera that operates on a tether from a surface vessel to which it sends its images for recording and analysis. His target subject is the corals that grow in the company of sponges and other structure-forming invertebrates in a zone from 50m to 750m. This is also the target zone from which much of the ocean fishing industry gets its harvest.

The pictures shown here were among those seen at the meeting. Rosen refers to those deep corals as “a lush garden” which is the habitat of hundreds of species of marine life; 65% of all corals live below 50 m. In fact they are animals and the graph to the right shows their longevity and that of their cousin, the sponge, relative to other life forms.

The deep ocean is a fragile and irreplaceable habitat. Growth rates of some deep-sea corals have been estimated at less than 35 um per year, about the thickness of a very fine human hair. Individual deep-sea corals over 1,000 years old are common. The oldest living coral is the 4,200 years old black coral found 150m down off the coast of Hawaii. The oldest known sponge is 11,000 years old. The presence of these groups at depth provides many spatial niches which constitute the habitat and spawning ground of fishing industry target fish such as rockfish, sharks, and octopus.

All of these areas are under threat by the modern fishing practice of bottom-contact trawling (see right). As the net is dragged along on the bottom, while it is netting the fish it is also decimating their habitat, so the result is not only the capture of the target fish but also the damage to the habitat the fish population needs to recover.

(Continued bottom page 3)

(Sherman’s Lagoon copied from San Francisco Chronicle, November 7, 2017)
The First Honorary Charles De Y Elkus Founder’s Award
Presented to Mike F. Diggles FN’92 on 27 October 2017.

Mike Diggles has been a member of the Explorers Club and of the Northern California Chapter since 1992. Since that time Mike has been a tireless supporter of the activities of the Chapter, and responsible for the development of the Chapter website and of the first website for the National Club. He continues with those activities to this day.

A LITTLE HISTORY OF OUR CHAPTER by Lesley Ewing FN’93.

Those who have read the chapter roster might remember that our chapter started on February 12, 1973, at the St. Francis Yacht Club. At that first meeting, Charles de Young Elkus FN’54 was elected the first Chapter Chair; he served in that role from 1973 – 1975. He was joined on the board by Richard “Klondike Dick” Finnie EN’38, who was elected as Vice-Chair. Joseph Rychetnik, FN ’67 was elected Secretary, Editor and Program Manager; and Richard “Dick” Fullerton, was elected Treasurer.

One of Charlie Elkus’s enduring interests was in the rights, culture, and well-being of Southwestern American Indians. He explored much of the homeland of the Southwestern Indians and was a past Director of the Intertribal Indian Ceremonial Association of Gallup, NM. He was instrumental in forming an extensive collection of Indian art and artifacts which is now in the California Academy of Sciences.

In 1936, he accompanied Norman Nevills on his first trip from Mexican Hat, Utah to Lee’s Ferry (near what is now the Glen Canyon Dam) on the San Juan and Colorado Rivers. Later, in 1953, he participated in an Expedition to the Navajo Mountain and Navajo Canyon that carried Flag #48, going with Carl I. Wheat, Samuel B. Ballen (Dallas), Charles M. Gooding (Los Angeles), Clifford V. Heimbuchener and Paul Heyneman (whose son Don is currently a member of the Chapter), with guides Buck Whitehat age 61, and Ephraim Crank, both from the Rainbow Plateau.

The following year, Charlie became a Fellow of The Explorers Club. To me, there seems to be a lot that can be learned about each explorer through the people who are his or her sponsors. Charlie was proposed for membership by Carl I. Wheat, of Berkeley, (led 1953 Flag Expedition #48, Navajo Mountain and Navajo Canyon). His application was seconded by Francis P. Farquhar (two time president of the Sierra Club and member of the 1949 North Pole Expedition) and Garfield D. Merner, who spent the years of 1924 – 1925 in the High Sierras, climbing Fin Dome, Mt. Whitney and Dragon and then on August 24, 1949, he was in a flight over the North Pole. There was also a letter of recommendation from Serge Korff, President of both The Explorers Club and American Geographical Society and a physicist who led worldwide observations of cosmic rays in the 1940’s and 1950’s, using balloons, aircraft and mountaintop observatories – the drones of his day.

Charlie put his legal talents to work for the club by drafting the Chapter’s first By-Laws; these were only recently replaced by the current version that Steve Smith helped to develop. Charlie was elected to the Explorers Club Board of Directors in 1974, and served there on the Legal Committee where he was instrumental in the formulation of procedural rules for the Chapters.

Charlie died too soon, on May 25, 1976. Some members might remember him. Many more remember his widow – Gerry Elkus, who remained active in our chapter for many years. We did not have Charlie or Gerry here to present this first Chapter Founder’s Award, but we did have their daughter, Nancy de Young Elkus, who represented the Elkus family as well as the latest generation of the Northern California Explorers Club family.

Dirk Rosen Talk (continued from previous page)

In the discussion at the end of the presentation, it was pointed out that on both coasts of the USA, the problem of over-fishing and loss of fish populations has been the same, but with different recovery results. In the northeast, on the Georges Bank, when fishing for Cod was finally stopped, the Cod’s habitat had been so badly damaged that the cod population has not yet recovered. Off the coast of California, where many fishing sanctuaries have been established and bottom drag fishing prohibited, recovery of overfished populations has been noteworthy.
HONOR ROLL
PAID UP DUES FOR 2017

Members
Jim Alexander
Linda Alexander
James Allan
Julia Amaral
Robert Anderson
Susan Anderson
Guitty Azarpay
Joan Bekins
Richard Blake
Joan Booth
Sheldon Brenner
Keith Chase
Doug Cheeseman
Ted Cheeseman
Sandra Cook
Alan Cooper
Thomas Cromwell
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Mike Diggles
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Lesley Ewing
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Susan Fox
Paul Freitas
Peter Hemming
Tom Hall
Mike Herz
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Don Heyneman
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Jordan Hollarsmith
Jim Hurson
Van Hurson
Alan Hutchinson
Dana Isherwood
Krist Jake
Anders Jepsen
Steven King
Ronald Klein
Jonathan Knowles
William Kruse
Keith Kvenvolden
Alison Lallonte
Lee Langan
Ellen Lapham
Scott MacBeth
James Prigoff
Sandra Ross
Becky Rygh
Rick Saber
Schneider, Bob
Steve Smith
James Weil
Ed Von der Porten
Mondechau Winter

Sirdars
Barry Booth
Marion Blumberg
Karoli Clever
Will Cooper
Wendy Crowder
Joy Durighello
Sandra Fish
Anna Freitas
Louise Geraci
Gerald Griffin
Louise Heyneman
David Hirzel
Ann Hutchinson
Nancy Isaac
Kathy Jepsen
Fred Johnson
Kathy Judd
Joe Kidd
Margot Komarmy
Christopher LaFranchi
Karine Langan
Liz McLoughlin
Bonny O’Keefe
Tom Patterson
Laura Phelps
Aldeana Saber
Kay Schmieder
R Stewart
Z Stewart
Judy Van Austen
Robert Van Austen
Mark Weiman

From the Chair
The October meeting was a busy one. During my meeting introduction I reported on a few current initiatives being developed at EC Headquarters as well as in our Chapter. To summarize: 1) NY is preparing a new membership card, a couple of your chapter officers took part in the selection of its imagery, and we would love your opinion once you receive it, 2) NY HQ is starting new programs to increase participation by and retention of our newer and younger Club members.

Our chapter will be developing some similar programs here. I discussed our new Lending Library of books by our EC Members, Sirdars, and Speakers as well as our experimental book swap. More details on these programs will be included in the next newsletter.

I also briefly mentioned a new website which helps raise money for non-profits by returning a portion of your dining-out meal costs to our chapter. Please visit https://www.groupraise.com/organize for more information on this interesting program.

We are also seeking a Chapter Videographer to help us prepare very short videos for distribution with the President’s Monthly Video Report from NY – please contact one of the Chapter officers if you would like to volunteer.

Lastly we had a most special event, the presentation of the Chapter’s first official Chapter Award: The Charles L. Elkus Founder’s Award, presented to Mike Diggles FN’92 who has provided long-term support and service to the Chapter. We were honored to have our new award presented by Nancy Elkus, daughter of our founder Charles Elkus, to Michael F. Diggles, FN’92, our long-time webmaster, in recognition of his unwavering service and support of the Chapter for over 25 years. Congratulations Mike!

Finally, we had a wonderful presentation by our speaker Dirk Rosen who gave us insight into the importance of coral (a topic dear to my heart) and some of the many threats it faces, including those posed by highly destructive fishing methods. Dirk shared a selection of fascinating videos of our California deep-water coral gardens and their evidently non-photosynthetic inhabitants. For those of you unable to attend, Dirk’s organization MARE, has some of these deep ocean videos available for view at: https://www.maregroup.org/video.html. I encourage you to check them out. Thanks so much to Dirk.

Stephen E. Smith FN’96

Founder’s Award Winner Mike Diggles and Nancy

Art Ford, Aldeana Saber and Keith Kvenvolden

Inscription on first Founder’s Award

Pam Rich and Speaker Dirk Rosen
November 2017 Issue
Northern California Chapter
Established 1973

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

2017
November 17 . . . . . . . . . . Jordan Fisher Smith
Engineering Eden . . . . . Grace Lutheran Ch
December 17 . . . . . . . . . Holiday Party
2018
January 26 . . . . . . . . . . . . Grace Lutheran Ch
Climate Change on Mt. Everest. . . Dr. John All
February 23 . . . . . . . . . . Dr. Sherry Wren
Surgical Approaches in the Ebola Crisis . . TBA
March 30 . . . . . . . . . . . . Ms. Kimberly Chambers
April 27 . . . . . . . . . . . . Alan Eustace
The Stratospheric Jump . . . . . . TBA

Earlier Chapter Events
2016
June . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Crissie Field
September . . . . . . . . . Dr. Dave Schmieder
November 18, 2016 . . . Dr. Bob Schnieder
2016 Heard Island Expedition . . . Grace Lutheran Ch
December 1 . . . . . . . . . Holiday Party
Home of Chapter Chair Joan Boothe

2017
January 27 . . . . . . . . . . David Helvarg
The Blue Ocean . . . . . . . . Grace Lutheran Ch
February 23 . . . . . . . . . . . . David Rumsey
Rumsey Map Center . . . Stanford University
March 31 . . . . . . . . . . . . Eric Weiss
Expedition Medicine . . . . . Grace Lutheran Ch
April 28 . . . . . . . . . . . . Sandy Ross
Afghanistan pre-Taliban . . . . . Grace Lutheran Ch
May 26 . . . . . . . . . . . . J.R. Skok
Seeking Life Signs on Mars . . Spencers, Berkeley
June 24 . . . . . . . . . . . . Chapter Picnic
October 27 . . . . . . . . . . . . Dirk Rosen
Save Deep Sea Corals . . . Grace Lutheran Ch

Send address changes and corrections by email to
ecnca@oceanearth.org

OTHER EVENTS, EXPEDITIONS, etc.
HOLIDAY PARTY: December 17, 2017 at the home of Joan and Barry Boothe
2435 Divisadero Street, San Francisco CA 94115

BOOK NOOK
(RECENT PUBLICATIONS BY CHAPTER MEMBERS)
When Your Life Depends On It. Extreme Decision Making Lessons From The Arctic.
Brad Borkan & David Hirzel, 2017, Terra Nova Press, PO Box 1808, Pacifica, CA 94044
Vivid Memories of an Interesting Life
Col. John H. Roush, Jr. Self Published, 2017, Marketing Services @xlibris.com
Muddy Boots -- essays of a field biologist.
Meg Lowman F'97 and Lowell Thomas Awardee '02. Peppertree Press, and on Amazon.com

All in the Family:
The disastrous fires in Northern California touched us all when the home of Von and Jim Hurson in Santa Rosa was lost to the flames. We all grieve with the Hursons and extend to them our sympathy and wishes for a quick recovery.

CHAPTER MEETING Friday
November 17, 2017

Date: Friday, 17 November 2017
Place: Grace Lutheran Church
3201 Ulloa Street at 33rd Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94116
Time: 6:30 - reception
7:15 - dinner; 8:00 - program
Meal Options: Chicken Monterey or Stuffed Pork Tenderloin
Veggie option — Vegetarian Lasagna
Cost: $49 in advance, $60 after 14 November; Students: $35.
(2017 dues: Members $25, Sirdars $50)
Please mail reservations, checks & dues to Joan Boothe
email: Joan at hoodooskr@aol.com; or Call 415-233-1697 or
mail to 2435 Divisadero Street, San Francisco CA 94115

We have an established PayPal account.
With an account, you can sign up and remit your meal costs, dues, etc. to the NorCA Chapter
There is a PAYPAL BUTTON on our website (www.explorersnorca.org); easy to use!