The Vaka Taumako Project of the Pacific Traditions Society is an educational and research effort to train a new generation to build and navigate using completely authentic methods, materials, and designs of the Polynesians of Taumako in the southeast Solomon Islands, and to train student videographers and guide documentation and production of video recordings for archiving and for popular and scholarly publication.

Supporting Vaka Valo Association programs that:
* Train youth to build vaka and navigate using ancient designs, methods & materials
* Honor & protect Taumakoan cultural heritage & intellectual property rights
* Accommodate local and international students at Lata Voyaging School of Taumako
* Revive and create more sustainability, resilience, bio-diversity and food security
* Reopen ancient seaways & re-establish peaceful voyaging partnerships and networks
* Write, video, archive, and make films about ancient cultural knowledge of voyagers
* Create and participate in cultural exchanges, presentations, and demonstrations

Mimi George Ph.D. is a sailor and cultural anthropologist who studies how ancient voyaging knowledge provides answers to global needs today. She has documented: rituals of Austronesian people in Papua New Guinea; a small, mixed-gender crew wintering on a sailboat in Antarctic sea-ice doing science; connections between hunters and herd-ers around the Bering Straits; the only Polynesian community still building vessels and navigating using only ancient materials, designs and methods; and ancestral lights that signal land. George describes the sustainability and happiness that voyaging arts bring to practitioners, and how women and children drive the cultures. In 1996 Dr. George helped to establish the Vaka Taumako Project, which preserves and perpetuates authentic Polynesian seafaring culture on Taumako. Her presentation will be drawn from her varied and exciting career; she is based in Hawaii.

Look for the Zoom invitation emailing early the week of the 30th.
Friday, 25 September, the NorCA Chapter of the Explorers Club a special treat: Dr. Sylvia Earle MN’81 and her daughter Liz Taylor MN’95 spoke about their past experiences in deep ocean exploration and their current effort to save the oceans. **Mission Blue** is working to inspire an upwelling of public awareness, access and support for a worldwide network of marine protected areas to rejuvenate those selected areas of the ocean: **Hope Spots**.

Earle spoke of the male-only barriers that stood in the way of female participation in exploration in earlier days, mentioning specifically the 1953 sealab project for which she was fully qualified but from which she was excluded because she was a woman. A follow-up image of the ‘aqua babes’, a 5-female dive project team, suggested that things had since gotten somewhat better.

A historical review of deep submersibles that began in the 40s and 50s showed the development from the first system, Alvin, through the system used by Explorer Club Fellow Don Walsh Ph.D. and Jacques Piccard when they made a record maximum descent into the Challenger Deep on January 23, 1960, to set a record in the Mariana trench that prevailed until Explorer James Cameron (below) went even deeper about 10 years ago, using Kermit, the green dive machine shown above.

For shallower dives beyond the limits of free and SCUBA divers, simpler systems that didn't require elaborate surface support needed to be developed. Earle and her then-husband Graham Hawkes worked to develop independent systems for single-, 2- and 3-person designs (below) that opened up to ocean down to 3000 feet. The top slide above shows a team picture with Earle in an early unit, surrounded by the project team which included her daughter, Liz Taylor, the co-presenter. Using such a system, Earle has been able to obtain many interesting pictures from the deep water; examples included a luminescent spiral coral, an unusual green fish and two pink fish swimming, seemingly buddies, leading her to the observation that such behavior shows that fish, like other animal life, can develop friendship with other individual fish.

Currently, Earle and Taylor are the driving forces behind **Mission Blue** which has identified key areas of concern in the ocean, **Hope Spots** that are special places critical to the health of the ocean - the “Earth’s blue heart”. Some Hope Spots are already formally protected, many others still need defined protection. Under Dr. Earle’s leadership, the Mission Blue team has launched a global effort to shed light on these vital ecosystems and ignite support to safeguard them as marine protected areas. More than a dozen expeditions have been led by Mission Blue around the world to explore Hope Spots highlighting research, conservation and educational efforts, influencing policymakers and creating compelling documentaries that educate and inspire the public.

Dr. Sylvia Earle is President and Chairman of Mission Blue. She is a National Geographic Society Explorer in Residence, and has been called “Her Deepness” by the New Yorker and the New York Times, “Living Legend” by the Library of Congress, and “First Hero for the Planet” by Time Magazine. A former chief scientist of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and a leading American oceanographer, she was among the first underwater explorers to make use of modern self-contained underwater breathing apparatus (SCUBA) gear, and has identified many new species of marine life.
Greetings to autumn. Our 2020-2021 season is off to a wonderful start. We were treated to an amazing presentation by Her Deepness and the Subsea Concierge, otherwise known as Sylvia Earle, MED’81 and her daughter Liz Taylor, MN’95. At times zoom can seem rather mechanized; but, this conversation with Sylvia and Liz, accompanied occasionally by their dark chocolate lab, seemed like we were talking with them in their living rooms. Their ocean protection efforts are a multi-generational undertaking; we saw photos of Sylvia, Liz, Liz’s children, and many of the school groups, students, and researchers who have been with them on voyages over the years. They also talked about the Ocean Hope Spots, the latest program from Mission Blue and one of these spots, San Francisco Bay, is in our backyard. We can enjoy it now with social distancing and once things get more stable, we’ll have new motivation to learn about and study this special area that is so close to home.

We have plans for the rest of the calendar year and are working on the rest of the program year. Later this month, Mimi George will be talking about the Vaka Taumako Project. Then on November 20th, Cheryl Leonard will give the presentation she was planning originally for our March 2020 meeting— one of our first 180 degree turns in response to Covid 19. Then in place of our end of year holiday party, we have some special ideas for a zoom event. We’ll have more details in the next newsletter and for a holiday announcement. In preparation for this special zoom meeting, we’d like you to help with a few events -- with photos of recent explorations, with recipes for holiday treats or with some special skill you can share with a group in about 10 minutes -- tying knots, identifying feathers, etc.

- Photos -- send your jpgs to Anders with some information about the photo location, date taken and significance (ajviking@aol.com).
- Recipes -- send your recipes to Lesley with some information about why the dish is special for your holiday (lesleycoastal@gmail.com).
- Special talents -- send a note to Lesley or give her a call (lesleycoastal@gmail.com; or 510-459-0858)

I hope to see many of you on the October zoom meeting and for other events.

Lesley Ewing, FN’93

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**GOT A GOOD EXPLORATION PICTURE?**

With the Annual Holiday Party Zoom happening in December, I’m organizing a review of some of the exploration pictures from past Holiday Party photo contests. Chapter members who have a favorite picture from a past adventure are invited to email them to me for consideration. Include date, identities and circumstances with the submission. Email Anders Jepsen FN’03: ajviking@aol.com

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**EDITOR’S NOTE:**

The Chapter newsletter serves its members not only by keeping them up-to-date on events of the Chapter but also by providing a forum in which members can express their thoughts and ideas. Notes submitted by members will be printed as time and space permit.
CHAPTER DIRECTORS

Directors (Past Chairs)  Elected Directors
Joan Booth MN’07  Alan Nichols FN’84  Sandra Cook MN’16
Lesley Ewing FN’93  Bob Schmieder FE’86  Paul Freitas MN’10
Lee Langan FN’99  Rick Saber MN’01  Jimmy Friedman MN’19
Anders Jepsen FN’03  Stephen Smith FN’96  Kimberly Chambers MN’16

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vicechair@explorersnorca.org  secretary@explorersnorca.org  fieldtrips@explorersnorca.org

MEETING VIDEOS

Our Chapter tries to record all of our dinner meetings. Videos of recent speakers’ presentations are available on the Chapter Website.

WANT TO GET INVOLVED IN THE INNER WORKINGS OF THE CHAPTER?

There are lots of tasks that come up during the course of a year: speakers, meetings, field trips, membership, newsletter, etc. A good place to get started is by volunteering to serve on a committee. Talk to any of the Chapter Officers or Directors.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER 2020 DUES

The Northern California Chapter dues are paid for the calendar year. Dues are now due for 2020. New members who sign up in the 4th quarter are covered for next year.

Sirdars have annual dues of $50.00. In addition to their national dues, Explorer Club Members have optional dues of $25.00. Dues can be paid by check payable to The Northern California Chapter of The Explorer’s Club or by paypal. If you use paypal, there will be a $2.00 fee for the service. If you pay by check, please mail your check to Anna Freitas, 161 Camino Posada, Walnut Creek, CA 94595.

Please note that Northern California Chapter dues can be tax-deductible depending on your individual tax situation.

ECAD 2020

In view of the Covid 19 pandemic, the Northern California Chapter is working to arrange for Zoom presentations to continue the monthly schedule until regular in-person meetings can be resumed.

ECAD 2021 is being planned now, with one option to be an outdoor event somewhat later in the Spring. Check the main website for more details closer to Spring 2021.