



# The Explorers Club Northern California Chapter JANUARY 2022

Also available at our web site: <http://www.explorersnorca.org>

**MONTHLY MEETING  
FRIDAY 28 JANUARY 2022  
GATHER BY ZOOM INVITATION**

## **WHO WAS THE WOMAN IN THE IRON COFFIN NEW YORK'S OLDEST COLD CASE by forensic investigator Mr. Scott Warnasch**



As seen on the PBS series, *Secrets of the Dead*, you will experience a holistic glimpse into the investigation surrounding the identity of a woman found inside a mid-19th century Fisk iron coffin that was disturbed by construction crews in New York City. Through forensic investigation with archaeology, biology and history, Mr. Warnasch identified the woman as an African American domestic servant who had died of smallpox in the early 1850s. Mr. Warnasch's presentation will also include background on the coffins and what they teach us about this critical period of American history.

From 2005 through 2015, Mr. Warnasch was a member of the New York City Office of Chief Medical Examiner's (OCME) Forensic Anthropology Unit and was Senior Anthropologist of the OCME's World Trade

Center Operations. During his tenure, his primary duties involved directing the extensive victims' remains recovery excavations conducted at the World Trade Center site between 2006 and 2014. Additionally, he also conducted and supervised several crime scene recoveries and mass fatality incidents within the five boroughs.

Since leaving the OCME in 2015, Mr. Warnasch has become a consultant and is dedicating most of his time to writing his first book, *American Mummies: The Industrial Birth of the Eternal Dead*, about his research into the lives of three mid-19th century mummies preserved in iron coffins he discovered in New York and New Jersey. One of the mummies is the subject of the PBS series *Secrets of the Dead* episode, "The Woman in the Iron Coffin."

Mr. Warnasch will join us by Zoom from New Jersey.

A Zoom link will be provided.



**UP-TO-DATE EXPLORATION OF MEXICO'S BURIED HISTORY**  
**Archaeology with the latests in Exploration Techniques**  
**For Ancient as well as more Modern Objectives**  
**by Dr. Robert Junco presented by ZOOM on 19 November 2021.**  
**Review by Lesley Ewing, Ph.D. FN'93**

On November 19th Dr. Roberto Junco took us on a tour of Mexican archeology, starting in 1892 through to the present day and including much of his own work. Mexico has a rich history of marine and underwater archeology, some for shipwrecks and some cultural artifacts. The first marine expedition was organized by a team of European archeologists searching for Caravel and the other lost ships of Hernan Cortez. Over the years, archeologists have recovered a bronze cannon dated to 1552, a 16th century anchor possibly from one of Cortez's ships, gold coins, a 500-year-old Manila galleon with thou-



A second aspect of underwater archeology has been the exploration of pre-Hispanic cultures. For many peoples, rivers and lakes, especially rivers and lakes in mountains, were sacred places. People in the area would make offerings to these water bodies and many have been recovered over the years.



sands of pieces of Chinese porcelain, and more recent ships from World War I. One ship that was of significant in the Mexican revolution was the Tampico. It is the first ship to have been sunk by an aerial assault; over two research seasons Dr. Junco has found the ship and taken photos for a 3-D representation of the ship.

A final aspect of underwater archeology in Mexico has been the exploration of human settlements. During the last ice age, cenotes (natural deep-water sink holes) would have been dry caves; they only filled with water as sea levels rose. Many prehistoric sites were located along the ice age water lines. Cave divers have found a 13-thousand-year-old skeleton while exploring cenotes on the Yucatan peninsula. Another amazing find was an ochre mine. The remains of the mine had both charcoal and ochre that dated at 10,000 to 7,000 years before present.

Roberto Junco is an archaeologist graduated from the National School of Anthropology and History (ENAH) where he studied for a master's degree and PhD in Archeology. He received a diploma in Historical Archeology from the University of Leicester, United Kingdom. He is currently an Affiliated Scholar of the Institute of Nautical Archeology, member of the Society for Historical Archeology, ICOMOS and Board Member of ACUA. He has been in charge of the Underwater Archeology office of INAH since 2017, where he has been working since 2004. Among the projects he has directed are: Underwater Archeology in the Volcano Nevado de Toluca; Manila Galleon, Baja California; Maritime Archeology of the Port of Acapulco and Underwater Archeology in Villa Rica.

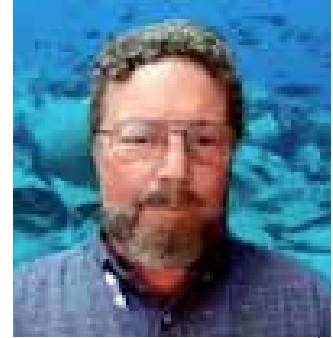


**Words From the Vice Chair:**

As Tom Dolan MN'14 proceeds with recuperation the club continues to move forward with plans for the year ahead. Speakers are being lined up for our regular meetings, and we continue to add new members. At this time no decision has been made regarding meeting in-person. That will have to wait until circumstances surrounding Covid improve. Until then it is prudent to continue meeting on-line.

The Chapter is healthy and growing with new members and a few transferring in from other chapters who have recently moved to the Bay Area. Our chair is little-by-little gathering his strength and we hope he will be able to guide us once again soon. The National organization continues to sponsor outstanding programs on-line from the headquarters and this remains a great way to feel connected.

**Marco Meniketti FN'10**

**EDITOR'S NOTE:**

I was able to speak with our Chair, Tom Dolan MN'14 recently. He reported that he was on a recovery program and was looking forward to being back with us at a monthly meeting soon. He asked me to extend his greetings to all of the Chapter members.

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**ADVANCES IN OBSERVING THE WILDFIRE ENVIRONMENT**  
**Understanding the role of fire-atmosphere interactions on the fire spread**  
**Chapter Zoom by Professor Craig Clements on October 15, 2021**

Dr. Craig Clements provided us with an interesting presentation of his RaDFIRE research program and study of how fires can create their own weather. His research sprang from a combination of his enthusiasm with mountain trekking and his interest in fire. Fire researchers like Craig use both unplanned and prescribed burns to measure a range of fire details and they have helped add forecasting efforts to assist fire fighters.

For example, his group now launches weather balloons for hyper-local weather and use their models to forecast fire movement such as the recent South Lake Tahoe and Alisal Fires. Despite the values of these models, it can sometimes be difficult to get all the data they would like. Collecting data during a large fire presents many constraints and some even exist for planned burns. One planned burn, for about 2,000 hectares in the Spanish Pyrenes raised international concerns since the fire would be close to the French border.

Dr. Clements explained some of the different types of fires and the various fire conditions. Flat terrain fires in grasslands tend to burn at 800 to 1,000 C, with convective currents carrying the hottest portion of the fire above the surface and they tend to reach a steady travel speed. Canyon fires, on the other hand, can have 'blow-up' conditions and accelerate upslope, induced by a pressure difference.

Dr. Clements is a Professor in the Department of Meteorology and Climate Science at San José State University and Director of the Fire Weather Research Laboratory. He received his Ph.D. in Geophysics at the University of Houston, M.S. in Meteorology at the University of Utah, and B.S. in Geography at the University of Nevada, Reno. His research group focusses on observations and measurements of extreme fire behavior and fire-atmosphere interactions near active wildfires.

**Lesley Ewing FN'93**

**JANUARY 2022 Issue**  
**Northern California Chapter**  
*Established 1973*



**CHAPTER OFFICERS & TEAM**

Chair: Tom Dolan MN'14  
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 Secretary: Joyce Chang MN'17  
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**2022**

January 28 . . . . . Scott Warnasch.  
 Iron coffins  
 February 25 . . . . . Satya Gontcho a Gontcho  
 Astro physics and Cosmology  
 March 25 . . . . . TBD  
 April 23 . . . . . ECAD  
 April 29 . . . . . TBD

**2020**

January 24 . . . . . Dr. Jo Anne Van Tilburg  
 Easter Island . . . . . Dolan  
 February 28 . . . . . Dr. Robert Griffith  
 Endangered Rhinos . . . . . Dolan  
 March 27 . . . . . Cheryl Leonard  
 Found Objects and Music . . . . . RESCHEDULED  
 April 24 . . . . . Dr. Paul Auerbach  
 Enviromedics . . . . . RESCHEDULED  
 May 24 . . . . . Dr. Sandra Cook  
 Foreign Devils on Silk Rd . . . . . RESCHEDULED  
 May 22, 9:30 AM: . . . . . Roz Savage  
 The Gift of Solitude . . . . . ZOOM Presentation  
 May 29, 7:30 PM . . . . . ZOOM ANNUAL MEETING  
 June 5, 8 PM. . . . . Eliot Jessup  
 24 hr Grand Canyon Rim-to-Rim. . . . . Zoom  
 September 20 . . . . . Explorers Club Chapter VP  
 Intro to Northern California Chapter . . . . . Zoom  
 September 25 . . . . . Liz Taylor and Sylvia Earle  
 Mission Blue- Hope Spots. . . . . Zoom  
 October 30 . . . . . Mimi George  
 Vaka Taumako Project . . . . . Zoom  
 November 20 . . . . . Cheryl Leonard  
 Found Objects and Music. . . . . Zoom  
 December 13. . . . . Holiday Party

**2021**

. . . . . Zoom  
 January 22 . . . . . Diana Pickworth & John Wilken  
 Explorations (2) . . . . . Zoom  
 February 26 . . . . . Kent Lightfoot  
 Fires & indigenous land use practices . . . . . Zoom  
 March 26 . . . . . Deana Weibel  
 Motivations for robotic space exploration . . . . . Zoom  
 April 23 . . . . . Brandi DiCarli & Scott Thompson  
 Farms from a box . . . . . Zoom  
 May 21 . . . . . ANNUAL MEETING  
 May 21 . . . . . Alison Fundis  
 Deep Sea Exploration. . . . . Zoom  
 September 24. . . . . Ashley Lemke  
 Archaeology Below the Surface . . . . . Zoom  
 October 15 . . . . . Dr. Craig Clements  
 Wildfire in the West . . . . . Zoom  
 November 19 . . . . . Dr Roberto Junco  
 Caribbean Archaeology . . . . . Zoom

**CHAPTER DIRECTORS**

**Directors (Past Chairs)**

Joan Boothe MN'07  
 Lesley Ewing FN'93  
 Lee Langan FN'99  
 Anders Jepsen FN'03

Alan Nichols FN'84  
 Bob Schmieder FE'86  
 Rick Saber MN'01  
 Stephen Smith FN'96

**Elected Directors**

Paul Freitas MN'10  
 Jimmy Friedman MN'19  
 Kimberly Chambers MN'16

**Chapter Email Addresses and Chapter Phone Number**

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**MEETING VIDEOS**

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

**DO YOU 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 for more information.

**NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER DUES**

The Northern California Chapter dues are paid for the calendar year. A new year started January 1st. About 20 people have already made their 2022 dues payment either by check or paypal. Member dues are \$25 annually. Sirdar dues are \$50 annually.

In the March newsletter we will start publishing the Honor Roll listing of individuals who have paid their dues. This is an easy place to check whether or not you have paid your dues. Dues can be paid on-line by clicking on the paypal link on the website. If you prefer to pay by check, please make the check payable to Northern California Chapter of the Explorers Club. Mail the check to Anna Freitas, 161 Camino Posada, Walnut Creek, CA 94595.

Please note that Northern California Chapter dues can be tax-deductible

**POSSIBLE CHAPTER FIELD TRIPS**

\* **Pinnacles National Park:** Early 2022, possible 2-day expedition.

**For more information or suggestions, contact:**

Jimmy Friedman MN'19 - sfaikido@gmail.com.