



The Explorers Club Northern California Chapter NOVEMBER 2022

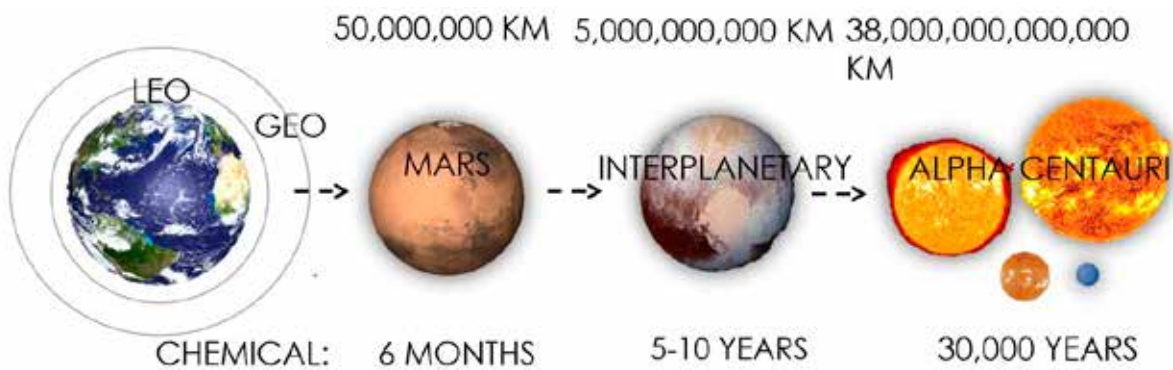
Also available at our web site: <http://www.explorersnorca.org>

**MONTHLY MEETING
FRIDAY 18 NOVEMBER 6:30 PM
BY ZOOM INVITATION**

INTERSTELLAR TRAVEL

Will humans Ever Make it to Other Stars?

Major Ryan Weed PhD



Interstellar Travel – Will humans ever make it to other Stars? Distances in space can be hard to comprehend. The fact that we measure these distances in light-years (the distance that light can travel in year going 186,000 miles per second) demonstrates the vastness of the interstellar medium. Using NASA's fastest rockets, it would take more than 10,000 years to travel to our closest star system, only 4 light years away (Alpha Centauri).

In this talk, we will examine the feasibility of human travel to our nearest stellar neighbors, what technologies we need to get us there, and some unexpected consequences to exploring the galaxy at extremely fast speeds.

Propulsion and Nuclear Scientist, Defense Innovation Unit - Maj Ryan Weed is a physicist and USAF Experimental Test Pilot, logging over 2000 hours in more than 30 different aircraft. Ryan is a NASA Innovative Advanced

Concepts (NIAC) Fellow, studying radioisotope positron propulsion systems. He has worked at Blue Origin, where he designed and implemented an Instrumentation laboratory for cryogenic rocket fuels, and founded Positron Dynamics, where he designed and built a positron beamline facility and developed high specific impulse propulsion concepts. Ryan earned a B.A in Physics from Wesleyan University, B.S. in Applied Physics from Columbia University, M.Sc. in Flight Test Engineering from Air University, and PhD in Physics from Australian National University. In his current role at DIU, Ryan manages the Nuclear Propulsion and Power program within the Space Portfolio.





PARTY

PARTY

PARTY

PARTY!

HOLIDAY PARTY 11 December

After several years of celebrating on zoom, the Board is planning an **IN-PERSON party**. YIPPEE!

Here are the basic details:

- o When—December 11th 4–8PM
- o Where – The Sabers' house in Novato (address provided once you RSVP)
- o What We'll Provide - lots of yummy appetizers, finger food, and desserts
- o What You Provide - Your favorite party beverage, good cheer, and good stories

We're having the party catered so we **MUST** know how many people are coming. There will be no charge for Members, Sirdars and a guest. All you need to do to enjoy this end of year holiday celebration is RSVP to Anna Freitas (treasurer@explorersnorca.org or 925-457-6424) by the Monday, December 5. The RSVP is very important and it's really a small request for a holiday celebration. To repeat, PLEASE RSVP to Anna Freitas by Monday December 5.

Catering is a change from past holiday parties. It will allow our hosts to fully enjoy the evening and no one needs to stay behind to do dishes. If you want to provide a dessert donation or cash, we'll not turn them down, but nothing is required except the RSVP.

We will not know about the Covid situation till closer to the party. We hope all attendees will be fully vaccinated but we also know that this is no guarantee that you will not get or transmit Covid. If you are feeling symptomatic before the event, we will miss you, but we ask that you please stay home. Even with that expectation, some people may want to wear masks. This is a personal choice and no one should make anyone else uncomfortable because of their mask choices.

For now, think about the stories you want to share, the beverage you want to bring, and the party clothes you'll wear; but do this only after you provide your RSVP by Monday December 5th – it's the only thing that's really required.

SACRED MOUNTAINS OF THE WORLD EDWIN BERNBAUM PHD

At the 28 October meeting of the Chapter, we heard a fascinating presentation by Dr. Ed Bernbaum, author of *Sacred Mountains of the World* (1990, 2022). He received his B.A. from Harvard University and his PhD from the University of California, Berkeley and is a noted scholar of comparative religion and mythology as well as being an accomplished mountaineer. During this talk, he described his background and how he became interested in the beauty and majesty of mountains as a youngster who grew up in Ecuador the child of U.S. Foreign Service Officers. He believes mountains have always had and continue to have mystical and transcendent meaning to humans. He described how some of the earliest peoples of the world worshipped mountains, sought them out for solace and consulted them for help in making decisions. An exceptional photographer, he included marvelous pictures of some of the world's famous and most sacred mountains in his talk. These included pictures of Mt. St. Elias in Alaska, which he climbed as a college student during exam break one year, pictures of Annapurna South, Mt. Everest, Mt. Kailash in Tibet, Mt. Jebel Musa (Mt Sinai) in the Sinai Desert of Egypt, stunning views of Yosemite National Park, the Great Smoky Mountains, Kilauea in Hawaii, and



Mount Musa (Sinai) in the Sinai Desert in Egypt

During his presentation, Dr. Bernbaum underscored how many indigenous peoples see a direct correlation between climate change and mountain glaciers. He pointed out how, on several glaciated mountains, the melting now is viewed by some as a sign that mother earth is unhappy with how we humans have allowed climate change to impact the connection between humans and nature.

Bernbaum highlighted another interesting point about how people view mountains differently. For example, Mr. Kailash is a sacred mountain straddling the borders India, China and Nepal. Buddhists, Jains and Hindus view it as the most sacred mountain in the world and visit the mountain and pray to it, walking around the base of the mountain to acquire personal merit or blessings in their religious traditions. They



Mount Kailash in Tibet

Mt. Nanda Devi in India. Ed is very taken by the symbolism mountains have for us as places of revelation, reflection, natural beauty and worship...”their mystical qualities are ever present.”

Dr. Bernbaum explained and highlighted how many indigenous people saw certain mountains as religious symbols for some of their most sacred beliefs. For example, Ed pointed out that the Cherokee Nation views the Great Smoky Mountains as a place of perfect “unity between nature and humans”. He reminded us of how Jebel Musa was a religious site believed by many to be the place where one of the ancient leaders of the Abrahamic religious traditions, Moses, received the “law” for his people. He also noted, for example, how native Hawaiian people revere Kilauea as a personification of the Hawaiian goddess Pele.



Mount Nanda Devi in India

do not climb to the top of it. In the West, people tend to put an importance on being ‘number one’, or climbing the highest thing. Thus, for example, the desire by many people to ‘climb’ atop Mt. Everest, the tallest mountain on earth. Ed noted the differences in how people accept mountains and or honor them.

Edwin Bernbaum Ph.D., has designed and co-led the Wharton leadership seminar treks to Mt. Everest in Nepal for mid-career business executives for over ten years and has conducted leadership programs for the Wharton Executive Education Program in New York and California.

Review by Bill Phillips MN '21

EXPLORER STORIES FROM THE PAST

EDITOR'S NOTE: There are lots of stories about explorers in the history of California, including *Two Years Before the Mast*, by Richard Henry Dana, a Harvard student who's health required that he take a couple of years off, so he dropped out of Harvard and shipped out for California. I

read that book in the summer before I left Canada for the University of California at Berkeley. There are many other explorer stories that have never been told except within the families that make up the later generations. This story of the Gok family is one such story.

THE GOK FAMILY OF MONTEREY

Recently, I interviewed Roger Gok*, a third generation descendant of late 19th century settlers and explorers of the Monterey coast and the Salinas Valley. Roger's great, great grandfather left China in the 1850's arriving off the coast of Monterey, California after a three month ocean voyage in his family's boat. They landed on Point Alones, a spit of land about 500 yards from the current Monterey Aquarium. There is actually a three foot plaque on a local walking trail in Monterey commemorating Roger's ancestors, whose name has other spellings - Quock, Kwok.

After landing at Point Alones, the Gok family built a fishing village there. The family had been commercial fishermen back in China and used those skills in California. Roger states that the establishment of a commercial fishing village and business near Monterey put his ancestors in direct competition with Italian fisher families in the area. Roger's ancestors collected, dried and salted fish then sold their fish to San Francisco and shipped some back to China. They developed a lucrative business despite the tension with the Italian fisherman until their business experienced a fire that completely destroyed their fishing village. Roger opines that the fire may have been deliberately set to force his ancestors to leave. This fire occurred in 1910. Roger noted the destruction of his ancestor's village did not drive the

Gok family away from California, but rather they showed incredible courage, resiliency and strength and moved to the Salinas Valley becoming successful California farmers. They still own property there. Roger's grandfather diversified and eventually ran a thriving cannery on Cannery Row.

Roger Gok is himself a bit of an explorer. At 73 years of age, he has visited Alaska over 18 times since he was in his forties and is an expert outdoorsman and fisherman, having caught several world class sport fish in his life. Roger is also an accomplished sled dog handler - a skill he learned in the wilderness of Alaska.

Roger, the first Eagle Scout in San Francisco's Boy Scout Troop 126, a majority Chinese American Troop, still loves the outdoors. He and his wife remain avid campers and hikers.

For more information on the Gok family and the Chinese of Monterey, please see the book "Chinese Gold: The Chinese in the Monterey Bay Region", by Sandy Lydon. Also see: <https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/how-chinese-fishermen-helped-build-california.amp>

*Roger Gok read and approved this article.

Bill Phillips - MN'21

HONOR ROLL
Paid up Dues for 2022

MEMBER
Allan, James
Ballou, Philip
Berg, Barbara
Bolt, Kendra
Boothe, Joan
Bruffet, Leonard
Bunch, Nick
Chambers, Kimberley
Chang, Joyce
Chase, H. Keith
Chirurg, J. Thom
Cohn, Francesca
Cook, Sandra
Cooper, Alan
Cromwell, Thomas
Dana, Don
Dietz, Thomas
Diggles, Michael
Durbin, Thomas
Dvorak, Don
Dvorak, Elaine
Ellis, Scott
Estey, Sue
Eustace, (Robert) Alan
Ewing, Lesley
Fadiman, Maria
Fox, Susan
Freitas, Anna
Freitas, Paul
Friedman, James
Friedman, Lincoln
Gontcho A Gontcho, Satya
Grubbs, Melodie
Hemming, Peter
Heyneman, Donald
Higgins, Robert J.
Horne, William (Clif)
Hurson, Jim
Hurson, Von
Hutchison, Alan
Jake, Krist
Jepsen, Anders
Kelley, James
Kuhns, Matthew
Kvenvolden, Keith
Langan, Lee
Lapham, Ellen
Lee (Akey), Katherine
Leonard, Cheryl
Mangus, Rodney
Meniketti, Marco
Mercer, Meaghan
Pedtke, Andrew
Phillips, William McKinley III
Ross, Sandra Miller
Ruxton, Meg
Saber, Rick
Schmieder, Bob
Schwemmer, Robert
Smith, Ronald
Smith, Steve
Tarter, Jill
Thompson, Scott
Weed, Ryan
Weil, James
Whiteside, Dede
Winter, Mordechai
Wren, Sherry

SIRDARS
Abileah, Ron
Adams, Ralph Wyatt Jr.
Arroz, Linda
Boothe, Barry
Brandt, James
Clever, Karoli
Cohn, Lawrence
Crowder, Wendy
Davis, Shane
Durighello, Joy
Friedman, Christen
Heyneman, Louise
Hutchison, Ann
Isaac, Nancy
Jepsen, Kathy
Johnson, Fred
Koehler, John
Langan, Karine
Longo-Cohn, Mary
Mani, Cassandra (Cassie)
Messerly, Ed
Miskiv, Rick
Nikas, A. James III
Novotny, Margaret
O'Keefe, Bonny
Patterson, Tom
Pennathur, Sudha
Reddy, Shridhar
Rolandson, Matthew
Saber, Aldeana
Sabharwal, Akun
Schmieder, Kay (Kathleen)
Stewart, Zach
Van Austen, Bob
Van Austen, Judy
Walker, Nigel
Weiman, Mark
Yoder, Karl

A FEW WORDS FROM THE CHAIR



Salutations and happy return to Standard Time. Despite several interesting astronomical events this month, the sky was not cooperative. Due to forecasts for rain and overcast skies, we canceled/ postponed the field trip to the Ferguson Observatory till 2023. Then, viewing the last lunar eclipse till 2025, a blood moon eclipse, was thwarted by a thick cloud layer and rain; at least that was the case at my house at 2 AM. On the positive side, we are getting some much-needed rain.

This month's meeting will be by zoom with Major Ryan Weed. It will be earlier in the month to let people enjoy time with family and friends for Thanksgiving weekend, or to snag some Black Friday deals if that is part of your post-Thanksgiving tradition.

In December we will have a free-for-all storytelling extravaganza at our IN-PERSON holiday party. Information about the event is in this newsletter. In case the flier does not make it clear, you need to RSVP to attend.

Our speaker program will start again in 2023. February 2023 will be our 50th anniversary as a Chapter. Please send me any ideas you have for ways to celebrate this event (lesleycoastal@gmail.com).

Take care, explore safely, and bring back good stories,

Lesley Ewing, FN'93

On behalf of the Board of Directors and Officers

Editor's Note: an email from a Chapter friend, Cyril Derreumaux whose expedition "Solo Kayak California to Hawaii" was successfully completed October 19, 2022. The kayaker will be speaking on a zoom call for the Surfrider Foundation on Dec. 1. Chapter members are invited to join in the zoom using the link shown below.

Topics he will address include:

How to deal with negative thoughts:

"In the 91 days, there were always new reasons to want to complain, to be negative, to despair, to fear, to think it wasn't fair, to think it was too much, too far, too wet, ...

Fitness loss after the 91-day expedition:

"Before going on this ocean crossing expedition, I always knew that I would pay a toll physically, in one way or another: lose weight (estimating between 15 to 25 lbs), lose flexibility and mobility, maybe..."

Here is the link. <https://x.gldn.io/e/btE0HAAkhub>

November 2022 Issue
Northern California Chapter
Established 1973



CHAPTER OFFICERS & TEAM

Chair: Lesley Ewing FN'93
 Vice Chair: Jimmy Friedman MN'19
 Secretary: Joyce Chang MN'17
 Treasurer: Anna Freitas MN'17
 Treasurer@explorersnorca.org
 Webmaster: Leonard Bruffett MN'21
 Field Trips: Tom Dietz FN'20
 Newsletter Editor: Anders Jepsen FN'03
 ajviking@aol.com

2022

November 18 Ryan Weed
 Interstellar Human Exploration Zoom
 December 11 Holiday Party
Saber Residence

2023

(face to face if possible)

January 27 Speaker
 February 2450th Anniversary meeting
 March 31 Speaker
 April 22 ECAD (NY)
 April 28Speaker meeting (post-ECAD)
 May 19 Speaker
 June Summer Picnic or Celebration

2021

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 15Dr. Craig Clements
 Wildfire in the West Zoom
 November 19 Dr Roberto Junco
 Caribbean Archaeology Zoom

2022

January 28Scott Warnasch.
 Iron coffins
 February 25Satya Gontcho a Gontcho
Astro physics and Cosmology
 March 25Randall Reeves
Sailing round the Americas and Antarctica
 April 22 ECAD
 April 29 Bryan Heisinger
 The Hester Lake B-24 Wreck
 May 20 Annual Meeting
 Urban Mobility and UAVs Aaron Singer
 June 12Chapter Picnic
 September.23. Sonia Meyer
 Speleology & Expedition Caving Zoom
 October 28 Ed Bernbaum
 Sacred Mountains of the world Zoom

CHAPTER DIRECTORS
(Past Chairs and Elected Directors)

Joan Boothe MN'07	Bob Schmieder FE'86	Kimberly Chambers MN'16
Lesley Ewing FN'93	Rick Saber MN'01	Bill Phillips MN'21
Lee Langan FN'99	Stephen Smith FN'96	Satya Gontcho A Gontcho MI'21
Anders Jepsen FN'03		Tom Dietz FN'20
Alan Nichols FN'84	Paul Freitas MD MN'10	

Chapter Email Addresses

chair@explorersnorca.org	treasurer@explorersnorca.org	webmaster@explorersnorca.org
vicechair@explorersnorca.org	secretary@explorersnorca.org	fieldtrips@explorersnorca.org

MEETING VIDEOS

“Our Chapter has been recording our zoom meetings and the previous in-person meetings. Please go to our Chapter website explorersnorca.org and click on “Videos of Past Presentations”. Presentation videos on the website go back to 3/22/2019.”

SPEAKER OPPORTUNITY

St. Francis Yacht Club Wednesday Yachting Luncheons

Founded in 1966 and with 50 programs per year, the Wednesday Yachting Luncheon is the longest running and largest speaker series in the yachting world. Each week, the yacht club welcomes speakers to share insights and expertise with their growing audience. A new show is added to the club archive every Wednesday at 12:00 noon.

The Wednesday Yachting Luncheons continue a 56-year tradition of showcasing relevant topics from knowledgeable speakers. The programs air on YouTube every Wednesday at 12:00 noon. If you would like to be a guest speaker, please contact Meg Ruxton, EC NorCal Chapter member, megruxton@comcast.net, and provide her with a short bio, summary of the topic and contact info (email address and phone number).

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER DUES

The Northern California Chapter dues are paid for the calendar year. A new chapter club year started on January 1st. Member dues are \$25 annually; sirdar dues are \$50 annually.

The Honor Roll is a listing of individuals who have paid their dues. To verify whether you have paid your dues, just check the Honor Roll list on the prior page.

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.

Anna Freitas MN'17, Treasurer