

The Explorers Club Northern California Chapter

February 2001

Website: <http://caldera.wr.usgs.gov/mdiggles/EC.html>



San Francisco February 23 Jean-Pierre Hallet A Big Man In a Small World "Congo and the Pygmies"

Noted sociologist, naturalist and explorer Jean-Pierre Hallet will speak on the subject most close to his life-long humanitarian contributions. He will discuss the Pygmy tribes of the Congo at our February meeting at the Fort Mason Officers Club.

A Belgium native and longtime resident of Southern California, Mr. Hallet has devoted his energies to the study and help of these people. He has

spent years living among them and has written extensively about them. In addition, film documentary and television shows have shown his work.

The efforts have gone well beyond an academic involvement. He founded "The Pygmy Fund" in 1974, which is credited for saving the tribes in the Congo's Ituri Forest from extinction. From the time he was raised as a child with the *Efé Pygmies*, their population wasted from an estimated 35,000 individuals to 3,000. The Fund has helped the tribe turn around. Specific efforts directed by this dedicated botanist have included the introduction of new plants to the region, transplanted from New Guinea to Zaire. The difficulties he faced were not just the inaccessible location, but endemic diseases and the not-so-simple task of convincing an ancient people to try a new diet!

Our lecturer is a successful author and speaker. Come hear what he has to say about his friends who represent a group of the most interesting peoples on earth. They comprise an ancient ethnic culture for whom he has been the principle connection to the world outside of the forest.

San Francisco The Explorers Club President's Visit

Dr. Faanya Rose Spoke Briefly
at January Event

The Northern California Chapter welcomed The Explorers Club President to San Francisco at our January 26 Meeting. She discussed the goals and aspirations of the Club as it grows into the future. She also invited all those who are able to do so to attend the ECAD in March.

Dr. Rose discussed the current drive of the Club to raise sufficient monies to rehabilitate the Club Headquarters at 46 70th Street in New York City. She explained that it is just a necessity that her immediate focus is on this task. The Jacobean-style mansion was sold to the Club in 1964, by the Clark family. They had built their five-story home among the brownstones of New York's East Side in 1912. After nearly nine decades the dear lady needs attention. The roof leaks, often doing damage to the upper floors. The spectacular leaded windows are loose. The Club has let a contract for \$1,000,000 to do these repairs. This is a prorated amount of about \$350 per member and, while several have been very generous, the total has yet to be reached. Thus, the request that each of us respond to the Lowell Thomas Capital Fund!

The headquarters building is a splendid center—visit it if you have not done so! It is surely worth our efforts to maintain it. It not only houses the Club offices, but it is filled with a wide selection of souvenirs from members' expeditions. In it, our heritage is preserved. Makes any explorer feel

Date: Friday, 23 Feb 2001

Place: Fort Mason
Officers Club,
San Francisco

Time: 6:30 pm cocktails
7:30 pm dinner
8:30 pm lecture

Cost: \$40

(\$45 if postmarked after Feb 15;
call Steve @ 925-934-1051 if you
mail the check after February 15)

downright cozy. And, coffee is served when you visit!

Faanya (we Americans are so familiar!) spoke to the desire and need to encourage participation in our Club by young explorers. After all, the greying membership gained their accolades when much younger; they were members then too! So there is the need to move off our laurels and to seek out active, in-the-field explorers to participate now.

She commented further that the Club's 100th year is soon approaching, in 2004. She has asked Mort Beebe to join in the planning for this celebration. She encouraged all members to reflect on how we might best recognize the fellowship and contributions to humankind that have been made over this exciting time of change.

In closing, Dr. Rose noted that woman have had full recognition in the affairs of the Club since 1981. This is clear acknowledged by her leadership and the newly elected Chair of our Chapter, Lesley Ewing. The concerns of certain luddite elders have been fully met!

(The Explorers Club is in the process of establishing direct email communications @explorers.org. Details next month!)

Dr. Gary Richtner
Sandia Laboratory Physicist
at Sinbad's Restaurant Meeting



The Explorers Club President Dr. Faanya Rose (right) with our Northern California Chair Lesley Ewing.

San Francisco Gary Richter Russian Life and Dismantling Their Threat

It was difficult to select between the subject of arms control and the success of United States and Russia in accomplishing this and Dr. Richter's rich discussion of today's life of the Russian people. Nuclear workers were formerly secreted in the hinterlands of this vast country. Fortunately we did not have to do so! His visuals and descriptions showed a clear enthusiasm for both subjects.

He has directed the dismantling of Russia's nuclear arsenal under the terms of an agreement signed by Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin in 1993. The U.S. is purchasing 500 metric tons of Highly Enriched Uranium for \$20 billion, the market-set price, for use in nuclear power generation. He discussed and illustrated some of the details required to reduce the 90% U235 down to 5% U235 or less: the many chemical and mechanical steps, the inherent dangers, the meticulous accounting, the constant overview by his American team, in Russia. The incredible scale of the facilities in these secret places is amazing. In the end, utility grade fuel is shipped to the U. S. and nuclear weapons disappear! In

this winning agreement, the Russians received money and the Americans receive fuel and solace.

To do this work Gary has spent months at a time in cities previously completely secret, behind the Urals. He shared many insights into the friends he made and the culture of these closeted scientists and engineers and their families. Until recently people who worked in the Soviet atomic community spent their entire life in these communities, sheltered from the rest of the world. Americans were portrayed as the enemy in harsh terms; their work was heroic. The development of a small American community in their midst has created numerous opportunities for understanding and misunderstanding. Gary has come away with a deep respect for their skills, their adherence to traditions in science and culture and their joy of life. The weather in Siberia is harsh: cold, colder and a few weeks of mosquitos (summer!) The people are robust. They socialize almost every night in local bars, with the whole family involved. Alcoholism remains a very major problem. TV and the Internet are not part of their life. Even today they do not know the United States. He touched on other aspects of today's Russia with the reality of the Mafia and the poor economy. He will go back to continue the work. The Russian people will survive.

Go & Tell

January's Table Talk

Bob Schmieder (FN-86) has had a long interest in the Cordell Bank, and he has published several books and articles on this wonderful area just to the west of the Bay Area. He provided a tribute to Edward Cordell who was one of the first people to research the area now known as Cordell Bank and for whom this area is now named. Edward had finished his manuscript on the Banks on January 26, 1871, in his office not too far from where Sinbad's Restaurant is located today. Leaving his office, he fell near the Jackson Square area, hit his head and died. Our January dinner meeting was exactly 130 years after this fateful night.

Pat Scannon (FN-96) reports on his recent visits to Palau. He brought with him his wife Susan and three other guests: Dr Greg Kraus, Pam Lambert, and Chip Lambert, all of whom are working on their Explorers Club applications and hope soon to become members. They have all worked extensively with Pat on the P-Man project, in addition to their own interests and studies in the astronaut program, scuba diving and microbiology.

Tom Hall (FN-97) brought several guests. But Tom's regular guest, Liz McLoughlin, had a ski accident the weekend before and she was in the hospital with a dislocated shoulder. Tom's guests: Bob Gould (President of the Bay Area Physicians for Social Responsibility), Pat Sutton (friends of Tom's from their days as nuclear testing grounds demonstrators) and Steve and Linda Holly (UCSF epidemiologists)

Gary Richter (MN-98) our evening speaker, shared a tale of meeting his fiancé, Terry Kochanski, in North Africa and discovering love at first sight.

Mike Diggles (FN-92) introduced his guests Dave & Susan Rader, Ron & Marlene Abileah (SRI) and Mary Jane Coombs. Dave and Ron are both also involved with the Peninsula Geological Society. Mary Jane is a co-author on the first USGS Professional Paper ever to be published without paper; it will be on CD-ROM and on the

Web but there will be no "treekiller" version. The title is to be "The effect of selected cleaning techniques on Berkshire Lee marble: a scientific study at Philadelphia City Hall." Faanya Rose said she would be glad to be Mary Jane's sponsor for Student Member (SM) in The Explorers Club. Also out on CD-ROM from the National Park Service is the Yosemite Valley Plan Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement. This is about 2,500 pages in the printed version; however, if you want a free copy that also includes a search engine, and works on Macs as well as PC's, contact Mike for his enhanced version.

Dr. Dan Liebowitz (MN-66) reported on his sixth visit to Tanzania. He felt that little had changed in the urban areas since the days of socialism, but they are doing a good job on national parks and the protection of animals. He and Rusty took a plane to the north and from the air, they could see the rows of mango trees that the slave runners planted to feed their captors. The high point of the trip for Dan was to meet a man near Lake Victoria whose father had known Emin Pasha, the subject of Dan's most recent book and topic of his May 1999 Explorers Club talk.

Mort Beebe (FN-78) announced that he had been asked by Faanya Rose, EC President, to help with the Explorers Club Centennial that will be celebrated in 2004. He has ideas for a possible book or video and would appreciate other ideas and input from everyone. On a separate note, he is hoping to be on the 2001 ballot for new directors and would be happy to discuss this with others in the club.

Don Bessey (MN-82) noted that it was about 19 years ago that Joe Rychetnik (E-67) encouraged him to join the Explorers Club and that he has greatly enjoyed his longterm membership in the club and participation in chapter activities.

Lee Langan (FN-99) introduced his guest, Ted Carlstrom, a Palo Alto native long involved in meetings related to arms control and the conflict resolution requirements between East and West.

Ron Reuther (FN-74) thanked Faanya Rose for taking the time to visit our chapter, for speaking this evening

and for meeting with the officers the prior evening to discuss how 'our' Club, as she feels so strongly, can serve its membership. He complimented her on her initiatives to improve communication among the chapters and the New York office and her welcome for any member to send her suggestions they feel are important.

When in New York

THE EXPLORERS CLUB FEBRUARY EVENTS

Call Marisa Collazo at (212) 628-8383

Public Lecture

Monday, February 12, 7 pm
The Land Without and Within
Eric Kjellgren

Contemporary Aboriginal Art and Life in the East Kimberley Region of Western Australia

Members' Event & Dinner
Tuesday, February 13, 6:30 pm
Probing the Darkness
Scott Hamilton (FR-82)
Dr. Clyde Roper (FN-80)

At depths of 2,000 feet virtually no light from the sun is visible. Yet this deep dark world teems with marine life. Dr. Clyde Roper, of The Smithsonian Institution, and Scott Hamilton plan to explore this unique underwater world: to see it, feel it and sense it in ways that have never been done before.

Public Lecture & Dinner
Monday, February 26, 6:30 pm
Sunrises and Sunsets
Dr. Thomas H. Hornbein

This presentation will illuminate Hornbein's 1963 Everest West Ridge ascent and the high points of his mountaineering career. He will also promote the work of the Central Asia Institute, a nonprofit organization assisting with community education and conservation projects in remote climbing areas of Pakistan's Karakoram Range.

When in London

THE EXPLORERS CLUB (BRITISH CHAPTER) FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Barry Moss, the Chapter Chair, welcomes members of the Club to their lecture meetings, held at the Basil Street Hotel, Basil Street, Knightsbridge, London. The meetings are free of charge to Members and their guests. A cash bar is available from 6.30 pm and attendees are welcome to join the Chairman and lecturers for dinner (at cost) at the hotel following the meetings:

Wednesday, 21 March at 7.00 pm
The RV Heraclitus
Christine Handte

The Planetary Coral Reef Foundation (PCRF) was founded in 1991 to address the worldwide demise of coral reefs through scientific research and education. The presentation will trace the 25 year history of the research vessel Heraclitus with tales from its adventurous expeditions and voyages.

Christine Handte has sailed on the Heraclitus for 14 years first as a crewmember, then Captain and ultimately as Expedition Chief of the most recent 5 year expedition from Belize, Central America to Bali.

Wednesday, 1 June at 7.00 pm -
Ice Challenger
Steve Brooks

The "Ice Challenger" expedition bids to be the first team to drive all the way from New York to London (approximately 18,000 miles). To achieve their goal, the team must first traverse the temporary ice-bridge that forms for just three months each year across the Bering Sea.

Saturday, 27 October
British Chapter Tribute Dinner to
Sir Wally Herbert
Harthill Castle, Aberdeenshire

(details to follow)

You missed this! On Wednesday, 31 January, the British Chapter enjoyed:

Frigid Women: **Expedition to the North Pole** **By Sue and Victoria Riches**

In 1997, the first women's expedition to the North Pole entered the Guinness Book of Records. Team members Sue and Victoria recounted their amazing journey.

Evolution @ The Explorers Club

The Explorers Club was begun in the early 20th Century at a time when exploration was based upon the investigation of our earth's far-flung regions. The poles and the peaks, the deep jungle and arid deserts. Into the unknown; often alone. Expeditions were treks of great length, and the logistics of maintaining sustenance were daunting.

The destinations remain, but we know a great deal more about them now, and our ability to meet the elements and challenges has improved enormously. New challenges in the deep oceans and in space are reality. Technology offers new ways to explore. Not the least is that we can always tell where we are, and we can almost always communicate!

There are so many new places and ideas to explore. More than ever before. There are so many more enthusiasts involved; exploring has become, in many instances, a profession for many! For some a business! It is no longer solely the realm of the privileged, those who can afford the time and cost to explore. Exploration has become, in many instances, ever more

When in Reno

Early February Meeting at John Asquaga's Nugget

The scheduled mailing of our monthly newsletter and reporting on our Nevada meeting coincided. Look for details about Gene Savoy's talk next month! Thirty-five members have responded.

the realm of institutions and bureaucracies. Individuals are part of teams of explorers.

To what extent does this impact on our noted Club? The question posed is should The Explorers Club change in some way, and, if so, how? Members are urged to reflect upon this question and its impact. Is there a need to reinvent The Explorers Club? What is the reason for membership? What contribution can the collective Club perform? Is increased visibility desirable? Should the Club act as a sponsor to exploration? Should qualifications for membership change? Is exploration basically a geographic challenge for knowledge? Should it remain the realm of the field alone? Are those who never leave their laboratory explorers? These are just a few of the questions that are being asked as the centenary approaches.

Some of these questions are prompted by financial constraints; some because of changing times; some while seeking to expand by encouraging explorers beyond our 2,800-member Club. Your newsletter and the officers at chapter and national levels welcome your thoughts and considered opinions.

-Lee Langan

Message from the Chair

I am very honored to have been elected to follow in the august footsteps of Bill Isherwood, Bob Schmieder, Ron Reuther, Carlton Skinner, Richard Finnie and Charles Elkus as the seventh chair of the Northern California Explorers Club Chapter. I have met many of the chapter members, and I am looking forward to continuing the friendships I have already developed and in meeting and hearing from others. I would like to continue our dinner program and the traditional events that bring us together. But, we have over 200 members and probably only 40 or 50 attend these events on a regular basis. I'd enjoy trying to develop other programs or activities that might engage some of the 150 members who are not taking advantage of the chapter. Please feel free to contact me, or any of the other officers and share your thoughts with us.

We have a new group of officers; most of whom you already know, but I hope you and they will take the time to get even better acquainted through the year.

Tom Hall has stayed on as treasurer, providing us some continuity and, I hope, fiscal restraint.

Mike Diggles will continue to maintain our web site and keep us firmly planted in the 21st century.

Lee Langan has volunteered to put out the Newsletter every month. Lee may be new to some of you; he became an Explorers Club member in 1999; he is excited about the Newsletter; and has some good ideas for articles. Like all Newsletter editors, Lee wants to get news, letters, articles, and other material so please contact him regularly.

Steve Smith has stepped forward to take on the duties of Vice-Chair. This is a demanding position, but it can be a very rewarding and Steve is enthusiastic about it. He has some great ideas for the chapter, and, with his help and yours, we'll continue to host a variety of interesting programs and events.

Finally, Jerry Hughes will continue to maintain our roster and electronic data, the nuts and bolts structure of our communication.

One thing we have tried to do over the past few years is to invite other groups to join us for dinner meetings. We have had joint meetings with the American Alpine Club, Society of Women Geographers and the American Society of Media Photographers. I would like to see us have more of these. If you have any suggestions for joint efforts, please contact Steve or me. And if you are involved in any meetings that the Explorers Club members might be able attend, please contact Lee Langan and Mike Diggles so they can announce them in the Newsletter and on the web site.

Headquarters has recently noted a concern about communication. This is not a new topic, and it is not unique to New York. As I said, there are probably 150 chapter members that I have not heard from or met. If you want to remain anonymous, please do. If you want to comment, vent, or get involved, please contact me.

-Lesley Ewing

Please make your checks out to The Explorers Club and mail with this form to:

Steven E. Smith
The Explorers Club
402 Via Royal
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

Please reserve ____ spaces for February 23, 2001 at the Fort Mason Officers Club.

Cost: \$40 by February 15; \$45 if postmarked thereafter.

Name: _____

Address (if changed): _____

Guests: _____

Chapter Officers

Chair: Lesley Ewing
510-527-7899
lewing@coastal.ca.gov

Vice-Chair: Steven E. Smith
925-934-1051
nauticos@oceanearth.org

Treasurer: Thomas Hall
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Webmaster: Mike Diggles
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Database: Jerry Hughes
707-887-2523
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Continuing Chapter Calendar for 2000-2001 Season

February 23	San Francisco	Jean-Pierre Hallet, "Congo and the Pygmies," Fort Mason Officers Club,
March 24	New York City	97th Explorers Club Annual Dinner (ECAD), Grand Ballroom, Waldorf-Astoria, "Great Explorations of the 20th Century." Speakers include Sir Edmond Hillary, Sir Wally Herbert, and Caroline Alexander. Sir Arthur C. Clarke (2001 Space Odyssey) will "attend" via satellite from Sri Lanka. Caroline Alexander will speak and present a film on Ernest Shackleton. Two additional speakers are expected to be booked.
March 30	Berkeley	Tim White, "Early Man", Berkeley City Club (tentative location)
April 27	San Francisco	TO BE ANNOUNCED, Fort Mason Officers Club (Bldg 1) (Jim Moore has learned he will be at sea in April and has to reschedule)
May 18 or 19	Peninsula TBD	Marc Shargell, "Galapagos Diving"
Mid-June	TBD	Summer Party
July, August, and September		Break for the Field Season—Go Explore!

Lesley Ewing
The Explorers Club
Northern California Chapter
1679 Tacoma Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94707-1826

