

The Explorers Club

Northern California Chapter

November 2002

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San Francisco
December 6
Chris McKay

"From Antarctica to Mars:
The Search for Life"

Christopher McKay, Ph.D., is a Planetary Scientist. He received his degree in AstroGeophysics from the University of Colorado in 1982 and has been a research scientist with the NASA Ames Research Center since.

His current research focuses on the evolution of the solar system and the origin of life. He is also actively involved in planning for future Mars missions including human settlements.



PHOTOS: NASA



early 2001. Nor about the evolution of the species— spoken to in early 2002. McKay wants to learn how it *all* started. He seeks to find the primal organisms and to deduce how they began. Where to look for answers? He also asks, "Are we alone?"

To conduct this research he looks into hostile environments: where it is cold and dark, where there is little light to support any life. His thesis is that it was a tough environment at the beginning, very much so. If he can find microorganisms in these places there is a story to be learned.

So far he has found living creatures in the toughest of places he can find on earth: the dry deserts of Antarctica, beneath deep ice in 'almost' completely dark ooze. But, maybe the answers are not on this planet. The closest reasonable neighbor is Mars, because of its known chemistry. He has put a lot of thought toward how we might explore there and what might be found. If similar organic material is on Mars, was the origin from Earth? From another star? Where and how? Come and listen to his findings and thoughts.



NEW LOCATION

Date Friday, 6 December 2002

Place: Laurel Heights Campus
UCSF — President's Room
3333 California Street
San Francisco

Time: 6:30 pm, no-host cocktails
7:30 pm, catered buffet

Cost: \$55 (by Nov 30)
\$60 (if posted afterwards)

Reach Lesley at 510 527-7899
or, preferably,
<lewing@coastal.ca.gov>

Reservation Form on page 5
Please reserve promptly!
NO MEAL WITHOUT RESERVATION

Around-the-World-Record Pilot Reid Dennis

San Francisco



Reid Dennis is an ‘adventure capitalist’! His success as founder of an early Silicon Valley venture-capital firm has allowed him to explore the world in exciting ways. He shared his 1997 around-the-world tandem flight on the Amelia Earheart 60th Anniversary journey: a Lockheed Model 10E had been rebuilt with the help of Pratt Whitney and was being piloted by Linda Finch over an equatorial route similar to the 1937 ill-fated Earheart attempt. Only three of these craft were produced; this was one of the two remaining. Reid flew his HU16B Albatross as a companion aircraft and, most importantly, as an airborne photographic platform. The slides he showed were stunning.

In thirty-one legs, N44RD rounded the world to the east; the log total was 26347 nautical miles. The longest stretch was its last, from Honolulu to Oakland, a distance Amelia Earheart had flown as the first person to do so. Alas, not on her last trip.

Reid showed a photo of Howland Island, her destination never made. On a brilliant clear day it appeared as a narrow stiletto in the endless sea. In the more harsh weather reported in 1937, it would have been nearly invisible until upon it. Fred Noonan, rated as among the best navigators in the world, was using celestial tools on a stormy day to reach this one-mile-long bit of sand more than a 2500 miles from take off. Reflecting as a very careful pilot, Reid believes the nose-heavy Lockheed’s design details would have been fatal in a crash landing at sea. He feels that, after 20 hours of exhaustive flying, this was the fate of the 1937 flight. It is the most direct explanation.

Dennis’ Albatross is a wonderfully outfitted aircraft. He showed details of adapting the wing to optimize two designs of the Navy versions. Pictures of the interior showed a comfortable working space for the long flights; they were in the air for 193 hours circumnavigating the world. N44RD was the first amphibian to do so!

For taking photos, the aircraft was superb. Several slides took your breath away. Good reasons: the plane flies low and slow, and the midway hatches open wide in flight. There is little air turbulence, so the photographer or movie maker has a spectacular open view and stable platform. There is also ample room for the nominal nine-passenger load. The rear sky dome allowed use of a satellite phone from the air— photos were sent to Hartford, CT (Pratt & Whitney’s home base) for immediate publication and web site use.

The evening’s presentation was peppered with details and humor and stories of the logistics of such a trip. Most enjoyed by intrigued explorers.



LANGAN

Our speaker,
Reid Dennis;
his Albatross,
N44RD,
in flight..



Where We Going?

Northern California Chapter Meeting

October 19, 2002
9:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Attendance

Ron Reuther, Gerry Elkus, Steve Smith, Tom Hall, Sue Estey, Mike Digles, Diana Pickworth, Lesley Ewing

Item 1: Scholarship Programs and Fund Raising

We have an inactive education scholarship program that was started in memory of Dan Reid. We gave two small (\$750 or \$1000) scholarships in 1997. In 1998 we gave \$1,000 to an expedition that was recreating the voyage of the Kon Tiki (not an education scholarship, but a donation from the chapter.) Since then, we have recovered from our financial difficulties somewhat and for the past two years have supported a Tibetan girl so she can go through middle school (see page 4 for a recent report)

We proposed to develop a Fund Raising and Scholarship Committee. To date, the members are:

Diana Pickworth, Chair
Tom Hall,
(Ex-Officio Member)
Ron Reuther
Kelly Noonan

Other members are welcome to join, and those who knew Dan Reid will be encouraged to get involved and reinvigorate this effort.

The main Committee efforts will be to:

- Review available information on the Dan Reid Memorial Education Scholarship Program and evaluate its relevance in light of the time lapse. Propose changes to the purpose and/or name to make it relevant to the current interests of the chapter.

- Determine the tax considerations of fund raising and the granting of scholarships.

- Set up an application process to find deserving scholarship candidates.

- Develop fund raising efforts, including, but not limited to, raffles at

the dinner meetings, an annual silent auction, mailing solicitations, etc.

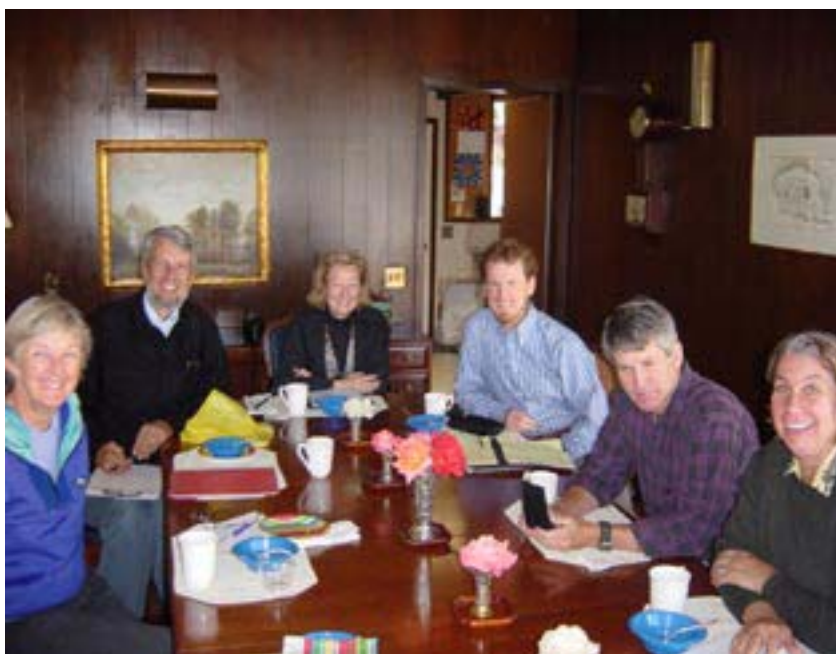
Committee members will have occasional meetings prior to the main dinner meetings and will announce these in the newsletter and/or to an e-mail list.

Item 2: Tax Exempt Status of Chapter Activities

The discussion on fund raising opened up a discussion about our tax-exempt status and whether the New York status would cover our efforts. Tom Hall volunteered to draft a letter to the new treasurer, with copies to the Philadelphia and Washington Chapters asking about this.

Item 3: New Members and Roster

Sue Estey is putting together a roster of all members. This led to a discussion of how we can get information on new members from New York. The headquarters' staff had been



sending copies of all applications of accepted members, but that stopped after September 2001 when they were busy with WTO assistance and, then, with ECAD. We will again request information on new members.

A second issue is that we should be receiving some dues reimbursement for new members. We only received a refund for one new member since late 1999.

It was suggested that all members from the chapter who recommend new members ask the applicant to send a copy of the application to the chair.

The chair would make sure it gets to the Membership Committee who would check with New York on the status. We could help potential members put together a good application that focuses on their exploration (rather than professional accomplishments) and have applicant information for the roster, etc. when these people are accepted.

Item 4: Meeting costs; other options

Meetings are expensive, but the chapter is not making money on these. Some events are small gains, but the meetings that are small losses balance them. The wine is a benefit for overall meeting enjoyment, but it is a sizable expense. We might try a wine-free dinner for reactions.

Tom Hall suggested that we add to our meeting program by asking members to open their homes for smaller, less-formal talks. The participants would all pay \$5 or so, the host would

get buffet food, and the program would be 45 minutes or so, with Q & A. No service, everyone pitches in, but the costs are minimal.

Item 5: Bigger than a dinner smaller than a GateAway

Several members have asked for a special evening or event. A small committee will get together to see if this will be possible. A potential time for 'something' would be October 2003 – a silent auction for the scholarship program, combined with a hoopla dinner with one or two major speakers, a daylong event with some field trips followed a series of workshops, films and speakers— or something else entirely.

Right now, this is a committee of two: Lesley Ewing and Kelly Noonan. Several people (Joan Bekins, Mort Beebe, several southern California and San Diego members) have offered ideas for a big event, and they will be asked to participate in exploring big picture ideas for the event as well as doing the planning and execution of the preferred option.

The Isherwoods in China

The Isherwoods send their best to all their friends at the Club:

"Dana and I are in China now for at least a year. I'm in Beijing consulting for the China Sustainable Energy Program and studying Mandarin.

Dana is currently in Kham, distributing wheelchairs and working on the education program." On her return:

Dana spent the early Fall working for the Kham Aid Foundation in the Tibetan Region of Kham in western Sichuan Province, China. She is the Project Director of the Tibetan Girl's Scholarship Program. With the help of donors like the N. California Chapter of the Explorers Club, the Foundation sponsors teenage girls in Junior Middle Schools (similar to a U.S high school) in Kham. The girls come from poor families in farming and nomad regions. They are chosen for sponsorship based on their potential and willingness to study in a school that is often far from home.

For the past two years, the Chapter has sponsored Jiangyang Quxi in Litang, a city two-three days journey--depending on the road conditions--from Chengdu, the Capital of Sichuan Province. Jiangyang is in the second year of the three-year program. Her teachers report that she is doing well. Gille, the Headmaster of the School is a strong supporter of the Scholarship Program. He says "although the policies of the Chinese Government say that boys and girls are equal, in practice, at the local level, girls are given fewer chances." In the following letter, Jiangyang speaks of her gratitude to you, her sponsor. The Chapter's generosity will ensure that Jiangyang has the opportunity she deserves for a bright future.

E C Kiosk – American Geophysical Union

The Explorers Club kiosk will be returning to San Francisco. The Explorers Club will have a booth at the upcoming American Geophysical Union Conference in San Francisco, December 6 - 10, at the Moscone Center. We will use the kiosk to encourage potential members to think about joining the Club.

Rosemarie Twinam (South Florida Chair) has personed the kiosk before



Jiangyang Quxi's October letter

Dear N. Calif. Explorers Club,

Hello! Have you been well lately? I received the money you sent. Thank you again. Without your sponsorship I might have had to drop out of school by now. Thanks to your help and concern, I no longer have any problems. I want to call out to you "Father, Mother!"

Next I will tell you all about my family. There are seven of us and we are all farmers. My father, Tseren Zhen is 52 years old now. My mother, Tsewang Dolma, is 44. And my grandmother, who has gone blind in both eyes, is 77. My brother, Jiangyang Dingzhen, is 20. The whole family depends on my brother's earnings, so we have some financial difficulties.

Your kind support has solved all my problems. Thank you again. Finally, I wish your whole family happiness and success in all things. Tashi Delek!

and has offered to come to San Francisco for a few days to help out. We have passes for two exhibitors to be at the conference at any one time. We can use help with setting-up the kiosk, personing it and taking it down. The exhibit area is open all 5 days from 8:30 AM to 5:30 PM, so if you want to help, let me know when you may be available and what you would want to do. (We can tag-team with the passes

Posters for ECAD

A Call to Forms

"Our Explorers Club Annual Dinner (ECAD) for 2003 will be upon us before we know it. The ECAD 2003 Committee would like to use ECAD week to showcase the diversity of our Regional Chapters. You are invited to prepare a poster showing the uniqueness of your own particular Chapter. These posters (40" X 30") would be displayed throughout ECAD week at both the Club Headquarters and at the Waldorf. We feel that these posters will be viewed with great interest not only by non-members of The Club, but also by our Club members, who might not know about the facts and history relating to chapters other than their own.

"It might be nice to have a member from your chapter standing by your chapter poster to offer additional information and to answer questions. But we think that these posters will be interesting and informative enough that they can certainly stand on their own. We feel that these posters will go a long way in communicating the rich diversity of our Regional Chapters. You might consider canvassing your chapter and find a small group of willing volunteers for a chapter poster committee. We feel that these individuals, with a little research and brainstorming, can come up with the information needed for your poster in fairly short order.

"The information and pictures that go on your particular poster are entirely up to your chapter poster committee.

"Posters will be assembled in New York. All information (data, photos and whatever else) must be at The Explorers Club by February 1, 2003. We look forward to hearing from you." –Suzi Zetkus, Chair, ECAD 2003, Brian Hanson, Vice President for Chapters

Please contact Steve Smith if you wish to be part of this endeavor; your participation and materials will be welcome and appreciated.

and let more than two people have the fun of talking about the club with potential members.)

Call or e-mail Lesley Ewing [(510) 527-7899 <lewing@coastal.ca.gov>] if you are interested.

Musings from the Chair

Dear Northern California Explorers:

I have greatly enjoyed my time as chapter chair, and think it is now time for someone else to work with New York, keep the chapter on an even keel and provide you with a new face and voice for the dinner meetings in 2003. We will elect new officers at the December meeting and I am recommending that you consider Steve Smith to be the new Chapter Chair, Lee Langan to be the new Vice Chair, Tom Hall to remain as Treasurer, Mike Diggles to remain as Web Master, Alan Nichols to be the Membership Coordinator and Diana Pickworth to be the Scholarship Committee Chair. Other recommendations for the 2003 Chapter officers can be submitted to me in writing prior to the meeting on December 6th, or can be put on the floor at the time of the meeting. We will need a new Newsletter Editor (Secretary) so if anyone will volunteer for this position, I will include them in the 2003 slate that will be presented in December.

The December dinner will be at a new venue that Tom Hall has helped us locate. It can hold 60 people maximum, and the dinner will be catered. We hope it will be convenient. This new location does mean that you will have to RSVP for the dinner, and not call my home the day of the event and hope I'll get it. Very last minute phone RSVP's will have to come to my office, and we will try to accommodate you. But, think about it; where else would you rather be on December 6th? Once you answer that question, it should be easy for you to get your reservation in early.

Finally, thank you very much for having given me the opportunity to serve the chapter, first as vice-chair and more recently as chair. It has truly been a memorable and rewarding experience.
—Lesley Ewing, FN'93

Laurel Heights Campus, UCSF
3333 California Street
San Francisco



Evolution

@ The Explorers Club

The New York office of our club has reached out for Chapter support. This is something that we have frequently sought—the interaction between NYC and the chapters. Let us help to gather material for a poster to be shown at the next ECAD, for there is so much this active group can share.

Someone step forth to coordinate this effort, now! Submissions need to be in New York by February and, while it can be a labor of love, it is still a labor. The request from headquarters was accompanied with several good suggestions of what kind of information to include plus a sample poster.

We can do what we wish—but let's do it!
—Lee Langan, FN'99

Please make your checks out to The Explorers Club, Northern California Chapter, and mail with this form to:

Lesley Ewing
1679 Tacoma Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94707-1826

Please reserve _____ spaces for Dec. 6, 2002, at USCF, Laurel Heights.
Cost: \$55 each by Nov 30; \$60 if postmarked thereafter (contact Lesley at <lewing@coastal.ca.gov> or 510 527-7899 to assure a reservation).

Name: _____

Address (if changed): _____

Guests: _____

the meal will be served
buffet style

NOTE: THIS IS A NEW LOCATION FOR OUR MEETING

Northern California 2002-2003 Event Calendar

(Mark the dates! Future venues to be determined)

September 27, 2002 St Francis Yacht Club	Ugo Conti	"Outer Adventure, Inner Journey"
October 25, 2002 St Francis Yacht Club	Reid Dennis	"Chasing the Ghost of Amelia Earhart"
December 6, 2002 UCSF, Laurel Heights	Chris McKay	"From Antarctica to Mars: The Search for Life"
January 31, 2003	Tom Joyce	"Hajj - The Journey of a Lifetime"
February 28, 2003	Anne Keiser	"Sir Edmund Hillary and the People of Everest"
March 28, 2003	Jim Allan	"In the Deep and In the Dirt: A Look at California's Maritime Archaeology"
April 25, 2003	Martin A. Pomerantz	"Astrophysics in Antarctica: Observing the Universe from the South Pole"
May 30, 2003	Terry O'Brien	"Fair God and Feathered Serpents".
June, 2002	Chapter Picnic	

Please note venues with care. The December 6 meeting is at
Laurel Heights, UCSF, San Francisco. **THIS IS A NEW MEETING SITE!**

(When copying the URL addresses be sure to keep them all on one line; most are also available as links on our Chapter web site.)

November 2002

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

