

The
Adventurers' Club News

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Number 4



Wanderlust – before the Atlantis Casino in the Bahamas

The Adventurers' Club News

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Interview with Mike Harker

This interview first appeared in Latitude 38 in October, 2004, and subsequent editions. Richard Spindler, Publisher and Executive Editor of Latitude 38, conducted the interview personally. We produce it here with the kind permission of Mike Harker. This is the second installment, continued from last month.

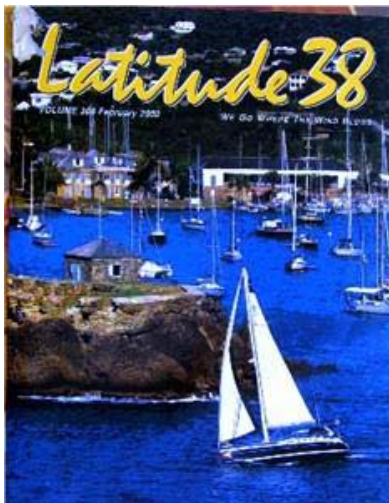
Before we began our interview with Mike Harker, we knew enough about his recent sailing history to know that he would be a good subject for an interview. Specifically, that at age 52, and with very little sailing experience, he bought a boat and did the 2000 Ha-Ha. 18 months later, he singlehanded across the Atlantic, and during the next 20 months cruised 24,000 miles between Miami and Malta, Malta and the Marquesas, and the Marquesas and his home in Manhattan Beach – much of it singlehanded. We also know that he's planning on getting another HUNTER next year in order to complete his circumnavigation. Despite having met Harker several times, what we didn't know about him until we met him at Orange Coast College in Newport Beach for the start of this interview is that in April 1977, he was nearly killed in a horrible sporting accident. Therefore all his subsequent sailing and career achievements have to be viewed against a backdrop of his not even being able to sit up in a wheelchair for several years, and repeatedly being told to accept the fact that he'd never be able to walk again. Although Harker is unable to stand without at least touching something, and is paralyzed from the knees down, he is able to walk. Furthermore, in addition to his sailing adventures, after the accident he's become a very successful photographer and film producer. As such, while this interview – which will appear in two parts – is about sailing, it's also very much about resilience and perseverance. We hope you enjoy it and are inspired by it. – Richard Spindler, Publisher and Executive Editor of Latitude 38

Latitude 38: Did your German friends continue to cruise with you?

Harker: No, they had to fly home. I was kind of stuck, as I couldn't get any crew to sail with me up to La Paz. The two problems were that I didn't have much experience and I only knew the German sailing terms. So I had to sail up to La Paz by myself.

Having to sail by myself because I couldn't get crew has become a theme of my sailing career.

38: We wonder what the people who didn't



crew with you think of all your subsequent sailing adventures?

Harker: I don't know, but I made it up to La Paz without any problem. I don't want to be critical, but I wasn't impressed with the "cruisers" of La Paz. As a group, they drank an awful lot – I don't smoke or drink – and while they talked a lot about sailing, they didn't do much of it.

Compared to the cruisers I met in other places, I found the people on boats in La Paz to be pretty uptight and

(Harker continued on page 2)

not that friendly. I only mention it because although I had a great time in La Paz, I was so put off by the other cruisers there that I planned to sell my boat when I got back to California. Needless to say, I couldn't find any crew for the 200-mile trip across to Mazatlan. So I did it solo.

38: There must be something in the water in La Paz, because ever since we've sailed there – which is since the early 80s – there's always seemed to be a small minority of people on boats who are world class whiners. Whatever. Was your trip to Mazatlan, your first significant offshore passage alone, very difficult?

Harker: It was a little scary because it was the first time I'd done something like that. But it was easy, as I had the autopilot do the steering. And with me having to do everything else, I learned very quickly.

Learning proper sail trim wasn't hard, as a sailboat is like a hang glider but vertical. So no, it wasn't hard. And since I had electronic charts for as far south as Banderas Bay, I decided to continue on down there to round out my four months in Mexico.

38: Wait, you didn't have any paper charts?

Harker: No. (Laughter.) I didn't even have a cruising guide to Mexico until I'd been down there a few months. (Laughter.)

But having sailed across the Atlantic twice, around the Med, in the South Pacific, and back to California, I still don't carry paper charts, just cruising guides and two e-charts – Nobeltec World Charts in the laptop & C-Map+ in the RayMarine plotter.

The important thing is that I loved Puerto Vallarta and Banderas Bay – which I found to be as different from La Paz as day is from night. When the racing boats came

into Marina Vallarta in the downtown area, I had to move out to Paradise Marina at Nuevo Vallarta, which wasn't even finished then. But I met so many wonderful cruisers that I absolutely loved it. It changed my entire view of cruising.

So rather than sell my boat, I came up with the idea of pitching some cruising features I would film and produce to German TV. Alas, they turned me down, saying it was too common a concept. The Europeans like more exciting and extreme things.

38: Can you be more specific about what you liked about Banderas Bay?

Harker: The people, both the locals and the cruisers. The beauty of the jungle and the sea, which is alive with sealife. That it was so inexpensive, and that you can have a wonderful time just hanging out at little taco stands talking with people.

I also had my Dahon collapsible bike that I could bring ashore in my dinghy, so I rode that all over the place. I cruise because of places like Banderas Bay, which as I said, entirely changed my mind about cruising. And having now sailed to many places in the Med, Caribbean and South Pacific, I can't say that I visited any place significantly better.



Portinaxt on the Spanish Island of Ibiza

In fact, the three places I've been to that I'll certainly return to are the Spanish Island of Ibiza, where you meet the most beautiful women from Germany, Austria, Sweden and Denmark; the Galapagos, which are a fabulous display of nature, and Banderas Bay.

38: So after cruising as far as Puerto Vallarta, you did the Baja Bash back to California. Did you have crew and how did that go?

Harker: When I got to Cabo I stayed in the marina for about three days – after which I couldn't take it anymore. Those sportfishing crews fire up their engines about 5 a.m. and begin to asphyxiate you, then they charge out of the marina at the perfect speed to create maximum wakes. I didn't like it at all!

So I anchored out in front of the pink hotel at the end of the beach in the outer harbor – just like after the Ha-Ha. It was fantastic! The air and water were clean, it was quiet, and there was a neat cruising community out there. I'd kayak to shore each morning where I kept my bike locked, have breakfast, and ride my bike around.

When people do the Ha-Ha, everybody wants a slip in the marina. Take it from me, it's way better on the hook, and the further down the beach, the better.

Like everyone else, I was waiting in Cabo to find crew and a "weather window." I interviewed a number of potential crew, but the only two who wanted to make the trip were smokers. I have a thing about smoking, particularly in confined places, so I didn't take them. After a while, I got tired of waiting for crew and a weather window, so I just took off by myself.

My advice to relatively new sailors is there is no better way to learn to cruise than by just doing it. I stopped at the same two spots as the Ha-Ha stops on the way back up. After the 100 or so boats at Bahia Santa Maria, it was strange to return and see no other boats. I particularly enjoyed my stop at Turtle Bay, as Ernesto came out with fuel and then took me to his sister's house for a meal of fish baked in aluminum. The people of Mexico are just wonderful! I also stopped at Punta Baja, which was packed with sailboarders.

38: What kind of weather did you have?

Harker: It was kind of rough. The winds were always over 20 knots and sometimes close to 30. I'm told the swells were 8 to 12 feet – I don't really know how to judge them – and in the afternoon the wind chop would break over the boat.

But it was a great learning experience, one that would serve me very well during my two later bouts of rough weather, one while singlehanding from Bermuda to the Azores, and another while dealing with a 300-mile long band of line squalls on the way from the Marquesas to Hawaii.

38: What kind of things did you learn?

Harker: I learned that when motorsailing upwind in strong conditions, tighten the main really tight and high on the traveler, as it helps with both speed and stability. It was just another case of you learn things quickly when you have to do it yourself. I also learned techniques for working around the bigger waves.

38: How did the Hunter 34 take it?

Harker: I didn't have anything to compare it with, but I didn't have any problems – at

(Harker continued on page 4)

least ones that I didn't cause myself.

When I got fuel in Turtle Bay, I had the wrong filter wrench for changing the filters, so I used some channel locks and dented the oil filter. When I got near Ensenada and wanted to stay well clear of a boat dead-ahead about two miles away, I floored it for about an hour. The oil pressure light



In the Azores

came on, and when I looked below there was oil all over the engine room from my having messed up the oil filter. I spent half a day cleaning that mess up, and had to use a duck taped filter the rest of the way. The lesson? Be patient when working on your boat. And don't be in a rush to pass boats.

All the way up Baja I'd been running the boat at an easy 2,000 rpm and was doing 5.5 or 6 knots. Then I did 3,000 rpm to pass that boat. I was doing 7.2, but the extra strain was enough to cause the filter to blow. Besides, I was burning fuel like crazy. So take your time.

I had one other screw up. When I left Punta Baja, I saw the splash of what I thought were a bunch of pelicans diving, but they turned out to be mother whales with their calves. I was totally enamored with the experience and taking photos with

my brand new, state-of-the-art Canon D-30 digital camera. At one point I was so startled by a mother whale that appeared as though she would hit my boat that I dropped the camera – and all my Mexico photos – in the water! It was terrible, because I'm a professional photographer. (Use the neck strap!)

38: Had the arduous Baja Bash taken the thrill of cruising out of you?

Harker: Not at all. When I got back I made a renewed proposal to ZDF television – which is like CBS in the States – that I would sail around Europe, but would always have some extreme sports personalities with me, and I'd film them doing their different specialties. It would be a combination of sport and cruising.

The German network liked my three-page proposal, and needed the results by September 2001. And I didn't even



In the Azores

have the right boat! My first plan was to ride my Harley to the Hunter factory in Florida.

38: That sounds like a story for next month, when we hear about your trips back and forth across the Atlantic, in the Med, in the Caribbean, in the South Pacific and back

(Harker continued on page 7)

It's a BIG Bear – Pass it on!

Robert G. Williscroft – Editor

Remember the childhood game where one person whispers a phrase into the ear of the person next to him? And that person whispers it to the next person, and he to the next, and so on until the last person hears the phrase...and speaks the phrase...and everybody is astonished at how it has changed?

Well that same principle is alive and well on the Internet today.

I'm the "last person in line," and the story I got from Paul Isley goes like this:

An unnamed Forest Service worker was out on his own time in the Alaska wilderness hunting deer. Suddenly, a large grizzly bear charged him from about 50 yards away – one moment he was enjoying his hunt, the next he was fighting for his life. The guy emptied his 7mm Magnum semi-automatic rifle into the bear, and it dropped a few feet from him. Since the big bear was still alive, he reloaded and shot it several times in the head.



The bear was just over one thousand six hundred pounds. It stood 12 ft 6 in high at the shoulder, and 14 ft to the top of his head, making it the largest grizzly bear ever

recorded anywhere in the world.

Of course, the Alaska Fish and Wildlife Commission did not let him keep the grizzly as a trophy, but they will stuff and mount it, and place it on display at the Anchorage airport to remind tourists of the risks involved when in the wild.



Based on the contents of the bear's stomach, the Fish and Wildlife Commission established the bear had killed at least two humans in the previous 72 hours including a missing hiker. The US Forest Service backtracked from where the bear was shot, and found the hiker's 38-caliber pistol emptied, not far from the hiker's remains. They haven't found the other body yet.

Although the hiker fired six shots and managed to hit the grizzly with four (the Service ultimately found four 38 caliber slugs along with twelve 7mm slugs inside the bear's carcass), he only wounded the bear and probably really pissed it off. The bear killed the hiker about two days prior to the bear's own death.

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(Big Bear continued from page 5)

If you are an average size man, you would be level with the bear's navel when he stood upright. The bear would look you in the eye when it walked on all fours! To give additional perspective, consider that when standing on its hind legs, this particular bear could walk up to an average single story house and look over the roof, or walk up to a two story house and look in the bed-

room windows.

Okay – that's the story I heard, and it's a good one! Great copy! as they say. But I'm a skeptical guy, so Paul Isley and I followed up on the story, checking with the Alaska Fish and Wildlife Commission. We found a copy of a letter written back in May 2003 that tells what really happened.

We reproduce it here for your edification.

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

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To: Whom it may concern

Date: 13 May, 2003

From: David W. Crowley
Area Wildlife Biologist, Cordova

File:
Subject: That Big Bear on the Internet

Here are some facts on the alleged "world record" brown bear, still growing on the internet.

- The bear was legally killed during October, 2001 on Hinchinbrook Island in Prince William Sound by an Air Force airman while deer hunting. Both he and his partner had brown bear tags.
- According to an interview with the airman by the Anchorage Daily News, the hunters saw the bear coming and ambushed it at close range. The young airman aimed at the head but missed (at 10 yards) and hit it in the muzzle, with the bullet then traveling into the brain. Had he hit where he aimed and broken the skull, there would be no B&C trophy. The bear went down on the first shot from the .338 Win. mag. The hunter then shot it 5 more times, which is a prudent action with brown bears.
- The bear was nowhere near a world record, although it will probably make the record book. Boone & Crockett requires a minimum score of 28 inches. This skull measured 28.5 inches before drying. The current brown bear record is 30 and 12/16 in.
- A tooth sample indicated that the bear was 20 years old.
- The hide squared squared out at about 10 ft. 6 in. Therefore, in order to stand 12.5 feet tall at the shoulder the bear had to be shaped like a dachshund. Large Kodiak bears can stand 10 feet tall from head to ground.
- Nobody weighed the bear. Based on measurements of the hide, this one probably weighed between 1,000 and 1,200 lbs.
- The bear did not charge the hunters, nor had he ever mauled or killed anybody. Brown bears do not get that old or that big by being stupid around humans. In contrast, some humans are rendered senseless by mere photos of big brown bears.

Bears of that size are quite rare in Prince William Sound, but this bear was a trophy of a lifetime by any standard. In my opinion, it is a shame that those bloody photos have degraded this fine bear into an internet legend. I encourage hunters to consider the consequences of publicly posting their hunting photos.

(Harker continued from page 4)

to California via Hawaii. One last quick question a lot of readers are interested in. During all your cruising, how much money were you living on a month?

Harker: About \$700. I have some secrets on how to do that next month.

38: We can't wait.

[Editor's note: This is where the first installment of the interview stopped in its original form.]

38: When we ended part one of the interview last month, it was the summer of 2001, and having done the Ha-Ha and cruised in Mexico for several months, you'd just singlehanded the Baja Bash back to your home in Manhattan Beach. What was next?

Harker: I'd had such a wonderful time in Banderas Bay that I fell in love with cruising, so I emailed a three-page proposal to Germany's ZDF Television for me to produce a series of television shows that would feature top athletes staying with me on my boat while demonstrating their expertise in different parts of the Med. The proposal was accepted, and since I needed to complete the shows by the end of September of '02, I needed a bigger boat for sailing across the Atlantic.

I looked at just about all the boats in the 45-foot range, and toured some of the factories. I even rode my Harley Road King across the country to Florida to check out Hunter, as I'd gone to Mexico with my

Hunter 34, and hadn't had any problems with her.

I liked what I saw, and as things turned out, I was able to trade in my Hunter 34 for a very good price – I keep all my stuff in excellent condition – I got credit for producing a DVD of Hunter's "factory tour" that they still use as a sales tool – and I got hull #1 of their then new Hunter 466.

The plan was to have her ready in time for the February 2002 Boat Show in Miami, and then I'd sail her across the Atlantic as part of ARC Europa, which started in May.

38: How did the scheduling work out?

Harker: The paint on my special blue hull only had two days to dry before the start of the show, but we got *Wanderlust* there – and she was a big success.

As part of the show's Discover Sailing program, I took 30 inner city kids out sailing. Although the boat was ready for the show, there were many additions I wanted for going across the Atlantic, and they took time, so the May start of the ARC came and went before my boat was ready.

In late May, just a week before taking off, the two experienced sailors who were to be my crew suddenly accepted offers of teaching young women how to sail in the British Virgins. Boomer, one of the guys, was 26, so how could I blame him?

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Horta in the Azores

(Harker continued from page 7)

He kept emailing me photos of all the pretty girls he was teaching.

38: Suddenly finding yourself without crew for an Atlantic crossing must have thrown you off.

Harker: I almost quit. After all, I was still a novice sailor and it's a big ocean out there. But I'm not the kind of guy to give up, so I went ahead with the project.

I was sustained by two things: First, I'd filmed my boat being built, so I knew she was strong and that Hunter had done a really good job. I figured as long as I stuck with my boat, I'd be fine. Second, I had a lot of confidence in the RayMarine charts on my GPS plotter and auto-pilot in the cockpit, and with the NobelTec charts on my computer down below.

It was those two things that gave me confidence. Since the official Atlantic hurricane season was going to start in a week, I figured I'd take it one step at a time, sailing the 1,000 miles to Bermuda, where I'd certainly be able to find crew for the trip to the Azores and then on to Europe.

38: It's pretty gutsy for an inexperienced sailor to take a complicated new boat sin-

glehanded across the Atlantic without a lengthy shakedown.

Harker: Knowing I was a novice, I stopped at the Coast Guard station at Mayport, Florida, and asked them for a courtesy inspection. I wanted to make sure that I had ev-

erything I needed – and frankly, I wanted the Coast Guard to know that I was going to be out there!

They'd never done anything like that before, but they were intrigued, and thought it was a good way to break in a couple of new guys. My boat passed their inspection. In the

process, the Coasties took a liking to me, so they said they'd keep an eye on me as I made my way to Bermuda.

38: No kidding?

Harker: Every other day for the six days it took me to get to Bermuda, they had a Coast Guard plane fly overhead. I'd get on channel 16 and say, "Hey, I'm doing fine!"

38: We've never heard of such a thing! If fact, when the Grand Poobah has told the Coast Guard in San Diego that about 120 boats are sailing to Cabo in the Ha-Ha, and they might want his number as a contact and for information in case of an emergency, they've tended to just blow him off.

Harker: Not only that, the Coast Guard con-



Horta in the Azores

tacted Bermuda Control to let them know I was coming. Bermuda picked me up from 50 miles out, and using radar, guided me through the entrance, which is narrow and tricky in places. Both the Coast Guard and Bermuda Control couldn't have been nicer.

38: That's a new one on us. How was the passage?

Harker: I had one day of bad squalls - they were really ugly - from the southwest that blew up to 40 knots. After that, it was nice.

38: How was Bermuda?

Harker: I loved it! It was all English, of course, and everybody seems interested in sailing. I loved all the sailing talk because it helped me learn more. You'll remember that I learned my sailing in the Ha-Ha from my two German friends who taught me all the sailing terms in German.

The only bad part about Bermuda was that I couldn't get crew there either, because hurricane season had started and everyone had left. So I had no choice but to singlehand to the Azores, too.

38: What did you do for weather?

Harker: I'd been listening to Canadian Herb Hilgenberg of Southbound II on the way up from Florida, so once I got to Bermuda I began checking in with him. Fortunately, Boomer, the guy who was going to go across the Atlantic with me, had preset Herb's frequency on my HAM/SSB radio, because I was still learning how to use it.

Anyway, Herb told me that it was so late in the season that there wasn't an-

other eastbound cruising boat within 500 miles of me. He advised me to go north to about 39° before heading east - you go north around the Azores High just as you go north around the Pacific High. I didn't know anything about the weather - in fact, I had to refer to the dictionary to understand some of the terms Herb was using - but I followed his advice.

About the fourth day into my passage, Herb told me he'd been surprised by some weather coming down over Canada, and that I was going to be hit by very strong gale force winds.

38: Did you get nailed?

Harker: It was the worst weather I'd been in or have been in since. It blew a consistent 40 to 48 knots for three days. Every second or third wave broke over the bow with such force that I couldn't even stand at the helm.

38: Did you ask yourself what you were doing out there?

Harker: Yes I did - and you would have, too! (Laughter.)

I kept asking myself if I'd made the wrong decision. But there was nothing to do but just keep going. It might not have been quite so bad if I'd had the other two experienced sailors along as crew, because I was still novice enough not to know it was a bad idea to sail beam-to in such conditions. Being beam-to in the very large seas caused me to take a complete knockdown.

As a big wave rolled under the boat, the keel came out of the water and the top of the mast was knocked down to horizontal. I saw the whole thing happen from the companionway - which was probably the safest place to be.

(Harker continued on page 10)

38: You'd respond to the conditions differently now?

Harker: Yes, I'd take the waves on either the forward or stern quarter – anything but on the beam. The knockdown was terrible, but the worst was down below, because everything had fallen over or spilled out. But you learn from experiences such as that.

38: Is learning by experience the best way to go?

Harker: You learn faster and the knowledge stays with you more than if you try to learn from a book or in classes.

38: How about being mentored to prevent the most dangerous of the learning experiences?

Harker: By all means I'm in favor of that – and that's what I was hoping to have with the two crew. It sure would have been nice to have them – but I don't hold it against them for taking the jobs they did.

Fortunately, I'd had some rough weather experience while alone doing the Baja Bash, and learned how to use the autopilot to work around the worst of the waves. Up and down, minus 10 degrees up – plus 10 degrees down – that's how you work around them. My Baja Bash hadn't been anywhere near as bad, but I'd learned the principles of techniques that really helped me in that storm.

38: Did you sleep at all?

Harker: For 36 hours I sat in the companionway with the autopilot remote – which also scrolls through all the instrument readings – in my hand to control things. It was like being in a cushioned prison cell. Rather than leave my post to go to the head, I peed in a bottle.

After the knockdown, I got a little smarter and started to take the waves on the forward quarter, which was much better than on the beam. After 36 hours, the wind abruptly shut down.

38: Having survived that storm must have bolstered your confidence.

Harker: It did. I felt really good about my boat and myself. After the blow, I went around and checked all the wires – I guess the proper term is “shrouds” or standing rigging – and the pins. Everything was fine.

Down below wasn't so good. One of the big lessons I learned was that you never want to put glass containers up high, as all the jars with the really good marmalade broke all over the inside of the boat. In fact, I learned to take as little glass as possible on a boat.

38: How was your trip to Horta in the Azores?

Harker: It took me about 12 days to cover the 2,000 miles, which I thought was very good for a singlehander. After the storm, the sailing conditions were very nice, 15 to 18 knots, and I could sail the rhumbline.

When I got off the boat in Horta, I sort of staggered down the dock trying to walk. “Man, these docks are really moving around,” I said out loud. Some people laughed good-naturedly and said, “It's a fixed cement dock!” (Laughter.)

I later met some guys, including an ex-marine who was nice enough to go to the top of my mast for me and have a look



(Continued next month)

What's Happening...

Mike Harker does the Canal & Equator

Mike Harker, whose interview with *Latitude 38* is featured in this issue, continues his around-the-world cruise. We receive several emails weekly through his satellite phone service, including photos and descriptions of what is happening, what equipment is breaking down, and what is going well.

Mike transited the Panama Canal with the help of an all female crew. Then across the Equator and on to the Galapagos Islands.



Blue Angel Lt. Commander Kevin J. Davis Killed

Navy Blue Angels pilot Lt. Commander Kevin J. Davis was killed during an April 21 South Carolina air show in Beaufort South Carolina. Davis died after the F/A-18 Hornet he was flying as part of an air show maneuver crashed in a residential area in the vicinity of Hilton Head Island.

The crash is under investigation and U.S. Navy officials have said the cause of the crash may not be pinpointed for several weeks, according to published media reports.

Paul Isley (#1088) and his son, PJ, got to know Kevin at a Blue Angel 2006 "dress rehearsal" flight demonstration for the Santa Barbara Navy League in El Centro. Subsequently, Kevin sponsored PJ for a scholarship to Embry-Riddle University where Kevin graduated with honors in 1996 and where PJ is starting this Fall.



Editor's Note:

Each month we will feature recent activities of members and friends on this page. We have now expanded to two pages. Let's keep it there. Please send your material along with any photos to the Editor by email or snail mail. Designate it for "What's Happening...."

(What's Happening continued on page 12)

Mammoth skeleton sold at auction



Shane Berry (#1093) reports that a skeleton of a prehistoric mammoth has sold for 260,000 euros (\$352,196) at an auction in Paris.

The 15,000-year-old Siberian mammoth skeleton, dubbed The President, along with other prehistoric curios, was put up for sale by Christie's. The buyer, whose identity was not made public, will need plenty of room – the skeleton stands some 12.5 ft high and is 15.8 ft long.

Bob Gannon takes Club flag to Antarctica



Adventurer of the Year, Bob Gannon (#1066) and Vice-Commodore Christian Coleman, Commander of Argentina's Base Marambio, Antarctica Peninsula, with the Club flag on Christmas Day, 2006

Dubai's palm island hit by blaze

A fire in Dubai has damaged buildings and injured three people at a huge man-made, palm-shaped island being developed off the coast.



The fire burned for about two hours, sending smoke billowing over the luxury Palm Jumeirah project and along the beachfront districts of Dubai.

Club member Joe Valencic (#1109) is playing a significant role in the development of Palm Jumeirah.

Robert Williscroft Interviews Continue

Robert Williscroft (1116) (Editor of *The Adventurers' Club News*) has been interviewed on North American news/talk radio stations on average three times a week for the months of April and May. He has been discussing his book, *The Chicken Little Agenda – Debunking Experts' Lies*.



Richard Lawler on the Great Adventure



Richard Lawler (#1073) was born in Oakland, California on October 9, 1949, and passed to his new life on February 7, 2007. He was very fortunate to have lived the equivalent of several lifetimes during his 57 adventurous years. He was loved by many people all over the world.

Richard was a lively and adventurous spirit from his birth and spent his earliest years growing up in the Berkeley Hills. At the age of 9 he began participating in zoological expeditions in California and Mexico to collect reptiles and amphibians on behalf of the University of California (Berkeley-Museum of Vertebrate Zoology). He continued his scientific collaboration with the MVZ and other academic institutions during his teenage years and participated in a total of 14 research expeditions to West and North Africa. In his early 20's, he became one of the first West African art dealers in the San Francisco Bay Region.

Richard went on to become an international entrepreneur. He traveled to every major continent and had close friends in many foreign countries. He was a member

of the Los Angeles Adventurer's Club and the CFO of the Children's Peace Foundation.

Rick was an avid gold miner and, with his brother David, operated the Octo mine on the Greenhorn in the 1980's. His favorite past time was working the claims. He was also an accomplished wood worker.

Rick met Laurel Harger at the age of 12. They were Berkeley neighbors and by the age of 13 began a relationship of lifelong love. In spite of both marrying other partners earlier in life, in his final years they were a happy and devoted couple, looking forward to a new lifetime of happiness together.

Richard is survived by his daughter Rachel Lawler, his life partner Laurel Kenner, and her daughter Rosemary Kenner. He is also survived by his parents Katherine and Bruce Lawler, and his brothers David and Roger of Berkeley, California.

He will be greatly missed by all his family and friends.

Obituary courtesy of Rick Lawler's family.

BOOK REVIEW – Sea Quences

by Robert G. Williscroft – Editor

Author: Capt. Al A. Adams, Xlibris, Philadelphia, PA, 2005 (172p; 6 x 9) , ISBN: 1-4134-7003-3

In *Sea Quences*, Captain Adams takes the reader on three very different voyages of adventure.

In the first, we join Capt. Adams back in 1945 as he transported the 76' ketch *Vayu* from Chesapeake Bay, down the east coast of America to the Panama Canal, and then back north to Long Beach, Calif.

This ketch was built in 1899, and had “been there and done that” for a long time before Capt. Adams took her helm. His first encounter following departure from the Chesapeake was a storm with sustained 86 knot winds that nearly ended the trip as it had barely begun.

The trip was “eventful,” as mariners are wont to say, and eventually ended with a Coast Guard tow for the last several miles into Long Beach. Capt. Adams kept things together and afloat until he turned it over to the relief crew at dockside.

The new crew partied that night aboard, but when they returned the next morning, *Vayu* had sunk to the bottom alongside the pier.

Thye second tale is also of a yacht delivery from Elizabeth City, N. Car., to San Diego, Calif., this time the 80' schooner

Tamarit.

The trip nearly commenced with a disaster as a critical pin broke in the power mechanism that prevented Capt. Adams from

porweing down as he approached a concrete quay bow on. Only quick thinking and a bit of luck allowed Adams to ride up the marine railway instead of crashing the bowsprit into the quaywall.

Later into the trip, a sudden storm took out most of the mounted sail, and nearly broke the mainmast, but – again with a bit of luck – Adams was able to save the day.

On another time during the voyage, Acpt. Adams nearly found himself as

shark food, but was rescued in the last second by a shipmate.

The final story is about a weekend charter sail from Long Beach to Catalina Island on the *Stella Maris II*, a 54' ketch. This story is filled with the antics of a party crowd ready to have fun on the island, but not waiting to get there for the fun to start.

Sea Quences is published by Xlibris, a well-known subsidy publisher, and is available from Xlibris in Philadelphia by contacting orders@xlibris.com, and from Amazon.com online, and directly from the author.



THE THRAWN RICKLE

From the Ancient Scottish: thrawn = stubborn; rickle = loose, dilapidated heap

Robert G. Williscroft #1116 - Editor



Club member Alan Smith (#1069) has come up with a great way for members who do not regularly attend meetings to get to know other members, and for distant members to

get to know all of us. He has suggested, and we will run with the suggestion, that each month we alternately profile a local and then a distant member.

Alan has volunteered to contact a selected member and then we will conduct an interview with some standard questions, and that member will be featured in the next month's issue of the *News*. If you have some feedback on whom you would like to see profiled, please email or write me with your suggestions.

We have received a few updated mem-

ber bios. We'll be going to press soon with what we have, so if you want any updated information to be included, please get it to me right away by email at aclaeditor@argee.net, or by snailmail to the Club Secretary at the address listed in the masthead or in the notices on the last page.

It's time to begin thinking about our annual Night of High Adventure – N.O.A.H. Jim has some great plans for an evening that will be different from what we have experienced in the past. He is still a bit close vested about the evening, but you may want to think about making your reservations. Stay tuned for further developments as we draw nearer to the date.

A reminder for those of you who regularly attend Club meetings. Emily needs to know you will be there. You can either put your name on her permanent attendee list, or you can call up each week to make a reservation. We would hate for you not to be served.

The online password for this edition (which is in full color) is "acla0704".

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

Greetings from the high desert and Ridgecrest California. I am sending you a copy of an article I wrote over the weekend for the local paper about the late astronaut Wally Schirra. Back in 2005 I interviewed him over the telephone and the subsequent article appeared in both local Ridgecrest papers. He was a really great guy and last year I asked him if he would be interested in being a speaker for the Adventurers Club and he politely declined by simply saying that he didn't get out much anymore. I didn't press him but just found

out about his cancer after reading his obituary in Friday's

LA Times. He was that kind of man who didn't want to complain to others about his health.

Anyway if you would like to run this article in the club paper please feel free to do so.

– Fredrick Gary Hareland

Thank you, Gary. We will run your article in the next issue of the News. – Editor

THURSDAY NIGHTS AT THE CLUB

March 15, 2007

Bob Zeman (#878)

Alan Feldstein returned from the BMW performance driving school in South Carolina where he drove SUVs on an all-terrain test track. He finished with the third fastest time of the day.

President **Robert DeMott** welcomed the members and guests. He read a letter from Samantha Larson seeking support for her attempt to summit Mt. Everest in May. This would be her seventh and final summit of the highest peak on each continent. She can be reached at www.samanthalarson.com.

Bob Oberto and Andrea Donnellan returned from a few days skiing at Big Sky in Montana. Even though both work at JPL, they met on a gondola at Big Sky a few years ago.

Rick Flores and **Steve Peterman** hiked up Zuma Canyon following the creek. They rock hopped among the poison oak. Steve came home with three ticks.

On his regular trip to his motel in Wyoming, **Steve Bein** is going via Flaming Gorge this time.

Roy Roush is going to Texas to promote his book – *Knights of the Golden Circle*. He is also stopping by his grandfather's old place in Kansas to study remnants of the settlers.

Shane Berry says that **Bill Altaffer** has scheduled trips this year to Saudi Arabia, North Korea and Siberia.

Steve Peterman noted that the bell which is rung prior to every meeting was donated by our late member Sven Wahlroos. It came off a Navy cruiser.

Steve Bein had a mini slide show of his nature photographs which he turned into a kaleidoscope.

Flying Safari of Southern Africa

Last July, Andrea Donnellan, Bob Oberto and two other couples rented three planes in South Africa for a flying safari.

They flew to Johannesburg where they stayed for three days getting checked out to obtain a pilot's license. They flew two Cessna 182s and one Cessna 170.

Their route over two weeks was in a figure eight pattern stopping in Lanseria, Chitwa Chitwa, Selinda Shinde and near Victoria Falls. They used a GPS for navigation.

At a stop on the Zambezi River, they took a boat ride along a narrow channel. Along with many birds, they saw a rock python and a crocodile.



Of course, they looked for the animals and saw the Big Five of lion, elephant, water buffalo, leopard and hippo. But there were also many wildebeest, zebra, hyena, warthog, sable, kudu, impala and baboons.

The footage of Victoria Falls at the junction of South Africa, Botswana and Zambia was excellent. There was also footage of a traditional dancing by a group.

The group did have to file a flight plan. The minimum altitude was 1,000 feet except when taking off and landing. So they were always either “taking off or landing.” In flying terms this is AGL or above ground level.



Both Andrea and Bob are licensed pilots so they each wanted the stick controls. But in the other two planes, the second person was either minimally qualified or not qualified. Clearing customs was not much of a problem because the tour arrangers had done their job.

March 22, 2007

Bob Zeman (#878)

Bob Benner presented a new five by three feet United States flag to the Club tonight to be stationed behind the president’s podium. He had recently returned from Prescott and Tucson, Arizona.

But **Chuck Jonkey** is leaving for Vera Cruz to study exotic music in the area – specifically jarocho.

Roger Haft is going to Japan and hopefully North Korea.

Steve Bein passed around a beautiful

infrared photo of two cars junked in Panamint Valley.

President **Robert DeMott** welcomed new member **Bob Oberto #1124** into the Club. His sponsors are Paul Isley and Bob Gilliland. Bob is another person who was inspired by the talks of **John Goddard** in high school. Bob was a navy pilot who left active duty for the reserves and work for JPL. He was recalled in Desert Storm and made commander. He still flies and sometimes tows glider planes near Llano.

The Chimps of Mahale

On a trip to Africa with his wife Dianne, Alan Feldstein climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro. He showed a photo from the top of Uhuru peak. The last 4,000 feet of elevation climb was really tough.

He also went on safari spending time on the Serengeti and in Ngorongoro caldera. Some Masai live full-time in the caldera. He had beautiful close-up photos of zebra, elephant, leopard, giraffe, baboon, impala, hippo, ostrich and cape buffalo.

After the safari, the two flew to Tabora and Katavi before getting on a boat on Lake Tanganyika, the longest lake in the world. The boat took them to Majale, a small remote resort along the lake’s shore. All of the wood to build the resort came from the wreckage of old boats.

The highlight of Mahale is a group of 70 chimps who live a few miles inland. The group has been studied for 30 years by a research team from Kyoto. The chimps are 96% genetically similar to humans.

After about three or four years of age,

(Minutes continued on page 18)

(Minutes continued from page 17)

each is give a name. Alofo is the alpha male. He is about four to five feet tall and weights 120 pounds. All chimps are omnivores and strong.

Tourists can only observe and not interact. No flash photography is allowed nor is touching. The younger ones have lighter faces.



Mahale Chimp Masudi

Kulundi is a former alpha male but is now about 50 years old. He still hangs with the group because he is good friends with Alofo's mother and helped make Alofo the alpha male.

Orion is sixteen and could be the next alpha male.

The chimps never raid the lodge but the baboons will. Females groom each other.

Alan was excited when he heard there was a kayak on the premises. But it had no spray skirt, no hatch cover, no life vest and a make-shift paddle. Still he took off in the opposite direction of the hippos and crocs and had a good six-mile paddle.

The water in the lake is clear and the group went for a swim every day to cool off.

The food is all shipped in by boat and was good. And Alan even ate some cyclids

which are fish found in the lake.

He did not eat the cocktail ants but the chimps did. They would use a twig as a tool to bring them out of the tree trunk



March 29, 2007

Bob Zeman (#878)

A Birthday Salute to John Booth

President **Robert DeMott** introduced first vice president **Paul Isley** who introduced member and fellow magician **Marv Garrett**.

Marv introduced **Dale Hindman**, president of the Academy of Magical Arts which runs the Magic Castle. Dale dazzled us with a number of tricks. In one, he kept bringing out one dollar bills even after he



John Booth at the Club Tribute

finished. He asked a random person in the audience for a number between 50 and 100. The number was 77. Dale then proceeded to rapidly fill in a five by five square with numbers so that each row, column and diagonal added to 77.

Milt Larsen was president of the Academy prior to Dale and Milt's brother Bill started the Magic Castle.



The John Booth dinner table

All three magicians gave tribute to **John Booth** as a class person in the field of magic. In addition to class, John could draw large paying audiences to his shows. John earned a certificated from the Magic Society of London also. And as a minister, John



officiated at the marriage of Milt and his wife. John wrote parts of the show *Truth or Consequences* for 18 years. And he has written many books on magic in addition to his famous book *Fabulous Destinations*.

Pierre Odier returned from four and a half weeks in Mali. He and Jim Dorsey flew to Mali. Disguised as Tuaregs, they went

out with a caravan intending to re-trace the old salt route. But after 200 miles they had to turn back due to time, sand and other factors. They did get to explore the Dogon country. And they saw three original pages from a manuscript from the 11th century.

Jim Dorsey wrote an article for *Sea Kayaker* magazine on **John Goddard's** descent of the Nile. Jim presented John with a copy of the magazine.

In a whirlwind trip **Dave Dolan** in one week flew from Los Angeles to Nairobi to start a health clinic near Naroc in Kenya. Then he attended the start of an orphanage at which the vice president of Kenya attended. Then he flew to London for a meeting of the Royal Geographical Society and heard Sir Gordon Conway talk on the starving people of the world.

Our peripatetic flyer **Bob Gannon** showed up after flying through Chile, Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay where his plane now rests.

Bob Walters went to the electronic warfare range near Bakersfield.

Jay Foonberg returned from the Dead Sea at 1,200 feet below sea level. Jay also told of loaning a balaclava to a woman who was injured while running a marathon in Antarctica. She got his address and mailed it back to him.

Bernie Harris is taking a cruise ship to the Canary Islands, Cadiz, Tenerife and the south of Spain.

Dave Grober returned from the Panama Canal and Colombia.

So far, **Roger Haft's** planned trip to North Korea is still on for May 2nd.

(Minutes continued on page 20)

(Minutes continued from page 19)

Sandy Coronado, daughter of the late **Smokey Storms**, is donating a sword that was used in the 1759 battle of the Plains of Abraham near Quebec by a member of the Scottish Highlanders. She is also donating a black powder rifle and a windshield and steering wheel from a race car that Smokey totaled.

Ray Williams, brother of Ted who left us on the great adventure, donated the plaque of medals awarded to Ted.

John Goddard was then called upon. Many years ago John was booked at halls and auditoriums around the world for speaking engagements. He spoke many times in the Chicago area. While there Marlin Perkins invited John to the Adventurers' Club of Chicago. Marlin showed John a scrapbook of John Booth an esteemed member of the Chicago club.

The scrapbook was full. John Booth has written 17 books, been a foreign correspondent, been a Unitarian minister and even preached at the Old North Church in Boston. He was better looking than actor Ronald Coleman and would draw crowds of 6,000 to 7,000 at his shows. Goddard introduced Booth to our Los Angeles Club where he became president in 1986.

John Booth told about his trip to the Far East where he was able to face crises with both panache and courage. He reported from China, Thailand, Burma, Japan and Java and Sumatra. He even survived a dangerous incident in Tibet.

John had great respect for Douglas MacArthur in his efforts to rebuild Japan. Mac

Arthur had to organize the streets which use to change names and he had to set up a numismatic system.

On other trips John went to Guatemala, Brazil, Peru, Bolivia and Afghanistan. He climbed Popocatepetl in Mexico and Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania. He crewed on a two-masted brigantine from Bangkok to Singapore and he went hunting with the sultan of Johore.

Over the years, John interviewed Wild Bill Donovan of the OSS, Emperor Akihito of Japan, Edmund Hillary, Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi of India. In China he made it to Nanking where he realized that the Communists were going to defeat the Nationalists eventually.

On the podium with John was a painting of Phari Dzong done by former member Brannan Ward with John's portrait super imposed. In 1969, John made a documentary film on the Colorado River.

Truly, John Booth is a gentleman adventurer.



Overflow crowd for John Booth's Tribute

Forthcoming Programs

- May 3, 2007** – LADIES' NIGHT – “Kalimantan Borneo – The Search for the Last Headhunter” Pierre Odier
- May 10, 2007** – “Xinjing: China’s Northwest Treasure” Ted Crovello
- May 17, 2007** – “Another Day at the Office – with Gray Whales” Jim Dorsey
- May 24, 2007** – “The International Police Museum of Southern California” **Michael Gwaltney**
- May 31, 2007** – “Admiral Richard E. Byrd – My Grandfather” Robert Byrd Breyer
- June 7, 2007** – “The Science of Drysuit Diving” – Robert Williscroft
- June 14, 2007** – “Firearms, Hunting, and earning a living” Richard Venola
- June 21, 2007** – “Spyware” Danny Biederman
- June 28, 2007** – “Adventure Productions” David Keane
-

NOTICES

UPDATED ADDRESSES: We need to update our member address list. The only way we can do this is to get feedback from each of you whose address is different from the address on your copy of *The Adventurers' Club News*. If there is any difference at all between your actual address and the one on this issue of the magazine, please write, email, or call us with the correct information. If you write, make sure your writing is legible. If you call, be sure the information you leave on the voice mail is understandable and complete. If you email (and we prefer you use email), send to aclaeditor@argee.net. In any case, please include your complete address, phone number, fax (if you have one), cell phone (if you have one), and email (if you have one).

BIO UPDATE: We need to update our membership roster to include our newer members and update any out-of-date bios from older members. Please send any updating information either by email to aclaeditor@argee.net, or by snailmail to The Secretary at the address listed above. We need to receive all updates before April 15, 2007.

NOTES

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FIRST CLASS MAIL

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