

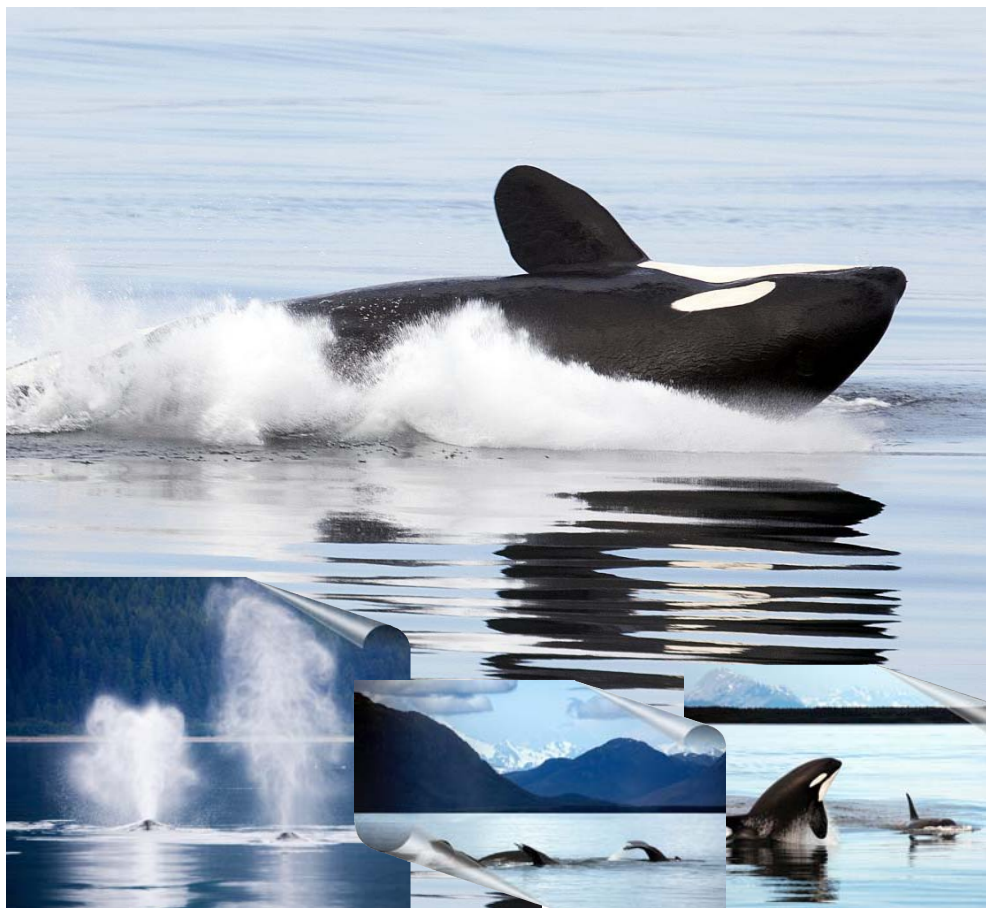
# The Adventurers' Club News<sup>®</sup>

Volume 54

August 2010

Number 7

## *On the ORCA Trail – James Dorsey*



*Photos by \*christopher\* via Flickr (Creative Commons)*

# The Adventurers' Club News

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August 2010

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## THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Allan R. Smith #1069 - President



I must start with the sad news that the wife of long-time member Bob Benner (#707), has passed away. We send

Bob and his family our condolences. Please know you are in our thoughts, and we are here for you.

This month many members went off the beaten path. I led fellow members on an outing to the Champion Mine, and I trust they found much adventure in the journey. The day started in the high 90s, and after a steep hike we arrived into the camp in the early afternoon. There was much to explore, and it was great to bond with brother adventurers outside of the Club. To add to the excitement this month, I had the opportunity to run the Kern River with a group out of Phoenix, AZ. This is a great river with good white water and close to LA. It is a trip not to be missed.

During this past board meeting, it was voted on and approved once again to create a "Speakers Bureau"

in the Adventurers' Club. What this means is that if an organization is looking for an event speaker and they contact the Club, if you are on the list, we will be able to forward your information to them for consideration. If you would like to be added to the "Adventurers' Club Speakers Bureau," please contact me by phone or email on your subject matter and area of expertise.

Finally, as you know, we now have a presence on FaceBook. This is a new venture for the Club, and if this is to succeed it will take your help in moving this forward. We are still looking for a member to be the administrator of the FaceBook group. You do not have to live in the LA area, and this is a great way to assist the Club while living in another part of the World. Please contact me for more information and I hope this is something that you would be interested in.

Please keep an eye out for two more outside adventures coming up for the Club: One in September as we visit one of the World's greatest collections of antique mechanical music machines; and then in October, I am working on a full weekend of outdoor survival training with Chris Nyerges and myself.

## On the Orca Trail

James Dorsey (#1081)

Photos by \*christopher\* via Flickr (Creative Commons) (except as noted)

On the flat icy surface of Alaska's Inside Passage, sound skips across the water like a stone, distorting distance and betraying those who would move silently through the morning fog.

The blow of several orcas filters through the mist and I sense they are near.



*Orca blows*

It is cold this morning and calm. The sun has tried to break through twice without success. The silence is broken only by the cry of a lone eagle taking fish from the littoral. Minnows begin to jump, a sure sign larger hunters are about. My breath hangs visibly white on the air and I zip my fleece up under my nose.

The calm is broken when a young harbor seal shatters the surface, lunging for my boat and startling me into action.

In another time and place I might let him rest there, but I sense what is coming and he cannot stay. I slap the

water hard, and he veers off, only for a second, but this animal is panic-driven and will not be easily deterred.

He approaches a second time and I fend him off with the flat of my blade, watching his pleading eyes as he arches for a final dive. He disappears behind a trail of bubbles. A brief silver flash passes under my boat and a second later I am hit square in my flotation vest by a young salmon. It flops onto my spray skirt, fighting to get back into the water. Then one fish after another begins to strike the side of my boat.

Suddenly a black dorsal cuts the water like a periscope, bearing down on me. A quick look around tells me I am surrounded.

The first orca crosses my bow, lunging as it takes a fish in midair, and before I can react, I am encircled by hungry hunters.



*Pod of Orcas*

The pod is herding a school of salmon, driving them against a rock wall 20 yards to my port. The pod is arrayed in a semicircle from 12 to 6

o'clock around my boat and it has the salmon cornered. The fish are running in total panic as shiny black fins



*Porpoising Orca*

cut the water like knives, churning it a crimson red as the orcas take their prey. The salmon are slamming head first into the wall, knocking themselves senseless. Of all the places I could be paddling right now, I have found the eye of the storm.

These carnivores have been around my boat on numerous occasions and have always shown themselves to be curious and friendly. To the best of my knowledge there has never been a recorded attack on a human or boat. They are ruthless when it comes to taking prey, yet gentle when in contact with man. Still, I fight the urge to panic and sit quietly in awe as a deadly ballet plays out around me.

A white saddle patch zips under the boat, rolling at the last second to clear my keel while another whale passes parallel, showering me with blow as it moves in for a kill. Glistening dorsals cross left and right, parting the water like torpedoes. I can feel their clicks and squeals echoing through

the fiberglass hull of my boat. They are executing a perfectly coordinated hunt, calling to each other, giving orders, and all of it in spite of my presence.

The whales pass within inches, some lightly grazing my boat, but they know where I am and avoid any solid collisions. I sit still, not wishing to press my luck, when it suddenly occurs to me that the whales are actually using my boat, driving some fish against it as a barrier, stopping them just long enough to be taken.

I am soaking wet from blow and covered with bloody scales. Twice, I must brace against the churning, and carefully push a meaty hunk of salmon off my deck with my paddle blade, not wishing it to tempt a hungry whale.

For most of an hour the whales take fish, then gradually, the action slows. They have eaten their fill and I see Dall's porpoises moving about, taking the few stragglers. Orcas often allow their smaller cousins to join



*Two Dall's Porpoises* Photo Bob Butcher

them near the end of a hunt to clean up leftovers.

The final touch is something I have never seen.

*(Orca continued on page 6)*

## Cruising the Kimberley

Bill Altaffer (#1095)

*This is the first of a fascinating two-part travelogue that will leave you wanting to take the cruise yourself. Part two will appear next month.*

In June 2010, a group of eighty-one Australians and two Americans arrived in Broome, Western Australia, eager to embark on a ten-day expedition cruise on the *MV Orion* along



*MV Orion*

the Kimberley Coast to Darwin. The *Orion* is a purpose-built ship, capable of exploring the bays and inlets of this dramatically beautiful, unspoiled coastline, home of saltwater crocodiles, pearl farms, and Aboriginal rock art.



*Aerial view of Broome, Western Australia,*

Included in the cruise package was one night in Broome's only five-star resort hotel, the Pinctada at Cable Beach. This luxurious, very comfortable hotel is located near Broome's historical China Town with its many cafes, pearl stores, and colorful gift

shops. Broome, with a population of about 15,000, is the largest town in The Kimberley – the 164,000 square mile area that comprises the upper part of Western Australia. The entire population of The Kimberley, about the size of California, is estimated to be 38,000. There are only two paved roads that traverse this very sparsely populated, largely undeveloped area.

After a restful night at the Pinctada, our luggage was whisked off to be loaded onto the *Orion* while we spent time exploring China Town before being bused to the dock to board the ship. We all know people who seem to travel to complain. If a per-



*China Town in Broome*

son had complaints about the *Orion*, he would surely be someone impossible to please, and his complaints would fall on deaf ears. Perhaps there are less than a dozen expedition cruise lines worldwide, providing all levels of service. *Orion* is at the top of the spectrum in every way. As a veteran of approximately twenty expedition cruises with most of the different cruise lines, I feel qualified to say that no one does a better job than *Orion*

did for us. The entire ship is exquisite, opulent, and beautifully designed with class and function to provide a five-star experience. All staterooms, even the lower-priced ones, are large and roomy, with queen size beds, elegant furnishings, flat screen TVs, and



*MV Orion stateroom*

DVD players. We were able to keep up with world news (BBC and CNN), and could borrow DVDs from the well-stocked library. The bathrooms, elegantly appointed, have home-sized glass-enclosed showers. They are stocked with all the amenities, including superior quality three-ply toilet paper. The dining room, lounge and library are just as beautiful as the staterooms. All public areas are decorated with very good quality art, including paintings, sculptures and carvings. Another classy feature is the glass elevator, surrounded by a circular staircase. Every detail and furnishing of the ship speaks of quality, reminiscent of a luxurious, five-star hotel. I tried to find a fingerprint on the glass, bronze, chrome and mirrored surfaces, but the *Orion* staff kept these immaculately free of

smudges.

The ship has a spa with masseuse, a gym, a sauna, a beauty salon, an outdoor café, and two lounges. Its library, besides multitudes of books and DVDs, is stocked with a large assortment of board games. The boutique carries all the necessities as well as a very nice assortment of clothing items and jewelry, including Paspaley pearls. Its upper sundeck has a large jacuzzi. Its lecture hall is the nicest, most comfortable and most efficient I have seen on any ship. All decks have handicapped access. The ship also boasts an embarkation platform for Zodiac operations. In short, the ship itself was lacking in nothing.

Food on board was exceptional in quality and variety. The menu, always exquisitely prepared, was created by the



*MV Orion desert*

chef of one of Australia's finest restaurants (Serge Dansereau of Bathers Pavillion, Balmoral Beach, Sydney). Any and all diets were taken into account. For the passengers with food allergies or issues, substitutions and special foods were provided without any

*(Kimberly continued on page 8)*

(Orca continued from page 3)

Half of the pod forms a single line, parallel to the wall, and then turn their



*Lethargic Orca*

flukes toward it. They begin to slowly lob tail, causing waves to break against the rock. They are dislodging the few scared salmon that have taken refuge in the cracks and crevices while the rest of the whales and the porpoises take down what is left. It is the final act.

In a few moments they go from a feeding frenzy to total lethargy, logging on the surface, gorged and happy like large black sausages floating around my boat.

The sudden calm allows me to take a headcount and I realize they are all females or juvenile males; not one mature bull among them.

While orcas are a matriarchal society, it is the alpha bull who stands as protector, and this hunt was sanctioned on his watch. I know he is nearby.

I try to imagine where I would place myself as the bodyguard of a dozen feeding whales, and paddle farther into the channel to sit and wait him out.

Within a minute the tip of his tall black dorsal rises slowly; there is a soft blow that the wind carries toward me

in a mist, and I am sitting by the great whale no more than 30 feet away.

He has surfaced gently, and his black dorsal towers over me by five feet. Sunlight twinkles on his ebony back and his saddle patch reflects like an alpine glacier. His dorsal has a slight bend to it and a missing chunk tells me he has met at least one large shark. He is half again as long as my boat and outweighs me by nine tons. He is a flesh eater whose teeth can shred a great white. I am sitting alone next to the greatest predator ever to rule the ocean.

He has not surfaced by chance as he is too wise for this to be a random happening. He chose the time and place to show himself and is now making a statement.



*Female and juvenile Orca*

I am not alive by accident, for if he thought me a threat to his pod, I would have been the first victim. He knew of my presence long before the hunt began and not only tolerated me but allowed me to bear witness. I feel this as strongly as if he were talking to me.

My boat sits between him and his pod; a position he would never allow an enemy to reach.

Perhaps I have been demoted to a curiosity, but I choose to think of it as communication. His black eye, no larger than the tip of my thumb, is fixed on me as I try to fathom the thoughts behind it.

For a moment I feel quite dumb, lacking the ability to understand what this animal would tell me.

Fearing an overstay of my visit, I dip my paddle slowly and begin to push away. As I do, the bull moves forward, inching ahead at minimum speed.

I paddle a little harder and he is with me, so I dig in and begin to push shovelfuls of water behind me as my bow starts to cut a wake. The bull starts to pull away, then senses my frailty and checks



*The pod departs*

his speed, matching mine, even and steady.

His head rises and falls, eye just under the waterline, watching me, urging me on. In my head I hear him saying, "stay with me." He is allowing me to paddle with him and I take up the challenge. My heart is racing and tears begin to cloud my vision.

Even in his lowest gear it is hard for me to keep pace, but I am now part of his pod, and he is my leader, and this will never happen again. I pull my paddle now, abandoning tech-

nique, trying to maintain speed. My arms scream with pain but time has slowed. All that matters now is that I stay with this great beast.

For a brief time there is nothing but the two of us, moving as one, and if ever an animal gave a gift to man, this is mine.

I have no idea how far we have come, and soon I can go no farther. I lay my paddle across the cowling and glide to a halt. I am cold, wet, exhausted, and have never felt more alive.

The great whale sees I have stopped and logs a moment, his black eye fixed on me, and then he dives. For a few seconds I am totally alone in deafening silence.

I look around and feel very small.

The bull surfaces in the distance where the pod is reforming. He is probably reporting to the matriarch, telling her of the strange creature who entered their space. They turn their flukes toward me and begin to swim.

The fog closes slowly and I watch dorsals fade into it like a movie ending, while I sit, sucking air, taking in what has just happened.

I hear the cry of an eagle in the distance and turn my bow toward land to paddle home.

fuss. The staff was always aware of who needed a special item, such as gluten-free toast, and that item would appear without the passenger even asking for it. That was very impressive, considering the number of passengers and the logistics involved. Details are *Orion*. Nothing was overlooked or forgotten.

Perhaps the best way to illustrate the individual attention to detail in the culinary area is in *Orion's* coffee. Even for breakfast, there were no coffee pots full of mass-produced coffee waiting to be poured. When requested, each cup of coffee was brewed individually using high-end Italian espresso machines. Each cup was always perfectly delicious.

All expedition cruises include lecturers. *Orion* is no different. We had great lectures on history, Aboriginal culture/rock art, and geology. In my experience, no expedition cruises include entertainment. In this, *Orion* is different. We had a singing piano player who performed during Happy Hour and after dinner. He was excellent.

Other amenities: towels placed on the sides of Zodiacs for us to sit on, sun block and insect repellent on the embarkation platform, and even sanitizing hand cleaner in all the rooms and strategic spots around the ship, including the dining room. The Filipino crew could not do enough for us. Since Australians do not customarily tip, a gratuity was not expected on the *Orion*. The crew's friendliness

and attention to our comfort, therefore, was genuine and not based on the expectation of monetary reward. Our cruise of eighty-three people was served by seventy-six staff and crew – a ratio that insured excellent care.

Mike Taylor, the ship's Scottish captain now living in Miami, was a very colorful and friendly addition to the experience. He would join us frequently, in particular at the buffet



*Captain Mike Taylor*

breakfasts and lunches on the back deck. He commented that most cruise ships in today's world are focused inwardly.

The ship itself has become the experience, providing ice skating, rock climbing, surfing on board, Broadway shows, and shopping, just for starters. The cruise destination hardly matters. But *Orion* is different. *Orion* passengers are pampered and couldn't be more comfortable on board, but the focus of the cruise is on outward experiences. The Kimberley coast is a perfect itinerary for such a ship.

Every day along the coast, we had disembarkations or Zodiac cruises that were included in the itinerary. In addition, at most of the locations, there were optional excursions that could be

enjoyed for costs ranging from \$60 to \$475 (Australian). In most of these cases, every effort was made to insure that a person could participate in the included activity as well as the optional one. This was possible with very few exceptions, despite logistical difficulties. One of the interesting optional activities was fishing. A professional fishing guide, along with his fishing boat, was on board.

Each day, his boat was unloaded from the *Orion* for a morning and an afternoon fishing excursion for two to four participants each time. Another feature unique to *Orion*, in my experience, was a tender in addition to the multitude of Zodiacs for the daily excursions. A tender was available for those individuals who were physically challenged getting in and out of a Zodiac, who preferred to be under shade rather than in the tropical sun, or for whatever reason. It could not go everywhere the Zodiacs went, but allowed people to experience nearly as much instead of remaining on board as they would have done otherwise.

The Zodiacs were outfitted with seats for long excursions. Yes! Seats! Three very comfortable bench seats with backrests, securely tied to the Zodiac. Something unique, in my experience.

These were securely tied into the Zodiacs, three to a Zodiac. While each seat could have held three people, *Orion's* policy is to load no more than six people in a seated Zodiac for maximum enjoyment of the experience. This en-

hanced the cruising more than I can express, providing comfort that was very easy to get used to.

After departing Broome in the afternoon of June 10, we sailed toward Cape Leveque for our first Zodiac landing the next day. This would be



*Cape Leveque*

our only chance to enjoy a beach during the cruise due to the presence of saltwater crocodiles (salties) everywhere else. Cape Leveque is a stunningly pristine, miles-long expanse of sparkling white sand with a backdrop of dunes and the red-orange sandstone features of the Cape. It is Aboriginal land, so we were not allowed to wander back into the dunes. There was plenty of beachfront to explore, for a very pleasant and relaxing experience. The water was crystal clear and refreshing, perfect for swimming. It was an idyllic afternoon in a true tropical paradise. Of course, the *Orion* staff was on hand under a big blue umbrella with water, juice and sunblock for the duration.

*The final installment of this excellent travelogue will appear in the September edition of the News.*

## What's Happening...

### Marc Weitz spends ten days in Nicaragua



*Photo Marc Weitz*

Marc Weitz (#1144) recently returned from a ten-day trip to Nicaragua. Although still trying to get back on their feet twenty-five years after the end of civil war and conflict, Nicaragua is one of the safest places in Central America.

Marc visited the towns of Granada and Leon, which feature Spanish Colonial architecture, cathedrals, and cemeteries. In the 19th Century, Cornelius Vanderbilt used Nicaragua as his overland transfer point from his Atlantic steamers to his Pacific steamers before the Panama Canal was built. The U.S. military made frequent incursions into Nicaragua in the 19th and 20th centuries.

The country is loaded with active volcanoes ripe for hiking or sacrificing virgins. Marc visited the lush jungles and stayed in spartan accommodations where a vampire bat flew into his room.

Managua was worth a day's visit despite the bad press; even though, after three devastating earthquakes in

the last eighty years, there are few remnants of the past.

Nicaragua is a rugged trip with not a lot of comfortable tourist accommodations. It's worth a few days look, but not an overwhelming draw as a destination.

### Champion Mine Ghost Town

Eight members made the grueling 8,000-ft climb to the Champion Mine Ghost Town on White Mountain, California. The locals have erected a museum with many artifacts on display.



*Photo Shane Berry*



*White Mountain*

*Photo Shane Berry*



*Champion Ghost Town* Photo Allan Smith



*Mono Lake* Photo Shane Berry



*Champion museum* Photo Allan Smith

### **Mariachi for dinner**

Vince Weatherby brought a surprise to the Club on July 22 – a genuine Mariachi Band. These guys entertained the group for most of the dinner hour to the great delight of the members.

Thank you, Vince!

### **Shane, Ric & Ralph trio visits Yosemite and Mono Lake**

Prior to the Champion Mine excursion, Shane Berry (#1093), Ric Flores (#1120), and Ralph Perez (#958), hiked through Yosemite and visited Mono Lake.



*Mono Lake* Photo Shane Berry



*Photo Steve Bein*

*Editor's Note:*

*Each month we will feature recent activities of members and friends on this page. Please send your material along with any photos to the Editor by email or snail mail. Designate it for "What's Happening...."*

## Shades of “Beau Geste”

Bob Zeman (#878)

The French Foreign Legion was created in 1831 by Louis Philippe, King of France. After the July 1830 revolution, foreigners were forbidden to serve in the French army, so the Legion was created to allow the government a way around this restriction.

Algeria was the Legion’s home until Algeria’s revolution in the 1950s. In 1962, the Legion’s home was moved to Aubagne, France, about halfway between Toulon and Marseilles. I had the opportunity to visit the Legion’s museum and learn the history and traditions of this small, elite group of warriors.

Of 7,700 active members, about 330 are officers. Slightly more than 600,000 persons have served in the Legion’s 140-year existence. The museum consists of four large rooms with enclosures highlighting some of the larger campaigns. During the 19th century, the Legion was primarily used to protect and expand the French colonial empire.

This included campaigns in Algeria, Crimea, Italy, Mexico (Cameroon), Tonkin, Sudan, Dahomey, Madagascar, and Morocco. The Le-

gion fought in the Franco-Prussian War, World War I, and World War II.

Later Legionnaires were sent to Indo-China from 1945 to 1954 and the fall of Dien Bien Phu. After that came fighting in Chad, Kollweizi, Zaire, Gulf War, Kampuchea, Somalia, Rwanda, Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, and the Central African Republic.

Currently, the Legion is fighting in Afghanistan, Kosovo, Chad, and the Ivory Coast.

The displays included photographs of the actions, ribbons awarded, and weapons and other military gear used.

The Legion currently has five regiments in France, one in French Guiana, one in Djibouti, and one in Mayotte.

Israel emulated the Legion with the creation of the Mahal. This is a term designating non-Israelis serving in the Israeli military. The term originates with the 4,000 Jewish and non-Jewish volunteers who went to Israel to fight in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, including Aliyah Bet.

The marble floor and the red tile roof were all picked up from Sidi bel Abbes in Algeria and brought to Aubagne. The chairs and other furni-



*French Foreign Legion flag*





*Museum of the French Foreign Legion*

ture were made by Legionnaires. Outside is the parade ground, at one end



*White kepi*

stone plinth, a memorial to the Legion dead.



*Green beret*

On the two floors is a mélange of religion, romance and proud military tradition: bloodied battle flags, ord-



*Monument commemorating the soldiers of the Foreign Legion killed on duty during the South-oranais campaign (1897-1902)*

nance and weapons, the accoutrements of cavalry, the medals of Legion heroes, and the kepis of its famous fallen – a grand parade of Legion uniforms that steps off with the first fusilier.

Above all are heroic paintings, watercolors, photographs and portraits



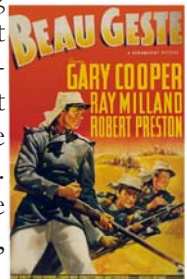
*French Foreign Legion troops*

of the men of many nations – crusaders as they used to be called.



*French Foreign Legion Memorial in Aubagne. In gold, on the globe, the regions of the world where the Legion fought since its creation.*

As I left I bought a kepi blanc (white hat) and the memories came crowding in – the burning African sun, the shift and drift of the Sahara, the furnace blast pounding against the parapets at Ft. Zinderneuf, and the exploits of Beau, John and Dirk Geste.



Robert G. Willisroft #1116 – Editor

Well, I have settled in Clarkston, Washington, just across the Snake River from Lewiston, Idaho, at the confluence of the Snake and Clearwater. This is an incredible country for an adventurer.

Here deer cross the road at all times of the day and night, coyotes and elk roam the wilds, sharing the territory with cougar and bear, and newly imported Canadian wolves – to the consternation of many locals.

Birds are everywhere, including several seagoing species, because of deep-water access to the ocean down the Snake and Columbia. The list includes many game birds as well as song birds in huge variety.

Steelhead and salmon fishing is as good as it gets anywhere. Jess Baugh, the son of my partner up here, owns Mountain River Outfitters, which he has built into the largest such operation in Idaho. When Jess takes you fishing, you will reach your legal limit every time – the only guide who seems able to do this consistently.

The Clearwater River runs entirely inside Idaho, is the longest wild river in America, and with the Snake River, offers some of the most exciting white water rafting in the World. And just to make things more interesting, after a wild down-river run in a raft (or in a kayak accompanying the raft if you're game enough), you can go back up the rapids on a high-powered jet boat.

If climbing is where your adventure

lies, Hell's Canyon is America's deepest gorge at 7,993 ft. The Snake River rushes more than a vertical mile below the



Oregon rim, and more than 8,000 feet below the summits of the Seven Devils Mountains just to the east in Idaho. The Snake is damned in three places offering the scuba diver a very different kind of diving experience.

What I am trying to tell you guys is that there are things to do up here that rival virtually anything anywhere. With sufficient advance notice, I can help you arrange for virtually any kind of adventure that tickles your fancy, from white water rafting and jet boating the rapids, to hunting, fishing, horseback photography or backpacking tours, climbing, skiing, diving – think of it, and you probably can find it here, under some of the wildest conditions available anywhere in America.

I won't necessarily be able to accompany you, but I can help you define and set up your adventure, and perhaps get you a price break. And I can offer you a free overnight stay in my spare room.

For further information, Google Hells Canyon, Snake River, Clearwater River, Steelhead, Salmon, etc.

The password for the online full-color edition is "acla1008".

**BOOK REVIEW —**

**MAGNIFICENT MAVERICKS: History of the Navy at China Lake, California**

*Author: Elizabeth Babcock, China Lake Museum Foundation, Ridgecrest, CA, 2008 (648p; Ill; 8.5 x 11 trade paperback), ISBN: 978-0967697710. Review adapted by Robert G. Williscroft (#1116 – Editor) from the publisher’s website and other sources.*

Now available from the China Lake Museum Foundation, *Magnificent Mavericks* tells the story of the creative military and civilian team at the Naval Ordnance Test Station, China Lake and Pasadena, California, for the decade between 1948 and 1958.

Babcock describes the vibrant life of the community, the colorful characters, the ranges and facilities, as well as the fascinating stories of some of our nation’s most effective weapons.

The Sidewinder Missile story reads like a detective tale. From today’s perspective, it is hard to believe that the Navy designed, built, and shipped a new rocket to U.S. forces in Korea in just twenty-eight days – start to finish!

In delightful detail, Babcock tells the personal stories of China Lake’s colorful characters, dedicated military men,

and brilliant scientists who worked hard, played hard, while dedicating their lives to keeping America free.

This is the third in a historical series of volumes detailing the history of the China Lake facility.

LaV McLean (wife of Sidewinder inventor and China Lake Technical Director Dr. William B. McLean) said, “This book tells the story of an exciting time, a fun time....I know people will enjoy reading about those days almost as much as I enjoyed living through them.”

For this seminal work, Babcock, who spoke recently at the Club, was awarded first place for Distinguished Technical Communication from the Society for Technical Communication.

The book is available from the China Lake Museum Foundation, PO Box 217, Ridgecrest CA 93556-0217.



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## THURSDAY NIGHTS AT THE CLUB

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July 15, 2010

Bob Zeman (#878)

President **Allen Smith** opened the meeting and talked about the backpacking trip he led to the Champion Mine north of Bishop, CA. It is only accessible by foot over the old mule trails.

Seven Club members and one guest made the trek. They were Allen, **Ric Flores, Shane Berry, Ralph Perez, Ken Freund, Jeff Holmes, Bob Zeman** and his guest **Scotty Allen**. The climb gained about 2,500 vertical feet and was about three miles long.

When World War I started, andalusite became an important article used in the manufacturing of spark plug insulators. The size and purity of the deposits led to the building of a camp.

At the end of the trek, there were cabins with beds, running water, out-houses, a kitchen and a shower. The view from the bench on the veranda was spectacular as shown by the photos of Shane and Ric.

**Pierre Odier** returned from another of his amazing expeditions. He accomplished all of his objectives but took a number of risky chances. Pierre flew to India and then made it to Jammu/Kashmir, Ladakh and Dharamsala where the Dalai Lama resides. At the India/Pakistan border he was greeted warmly by forty guards because he was the only tourist that day.

He arrived in Srinagar where heavy

fighting was going on. He hid in a houseboat for two days. He saw two Imams at a shrine in Pakistan. The next day they and 100 others were killed by a Taliban blast. In the Kalash Valley in Pakistan, he was escorted by two guards for his safety.

Pierre returned with an Afghan police hat, secret service badge, and small official flag that is sewn on uniforms.

Pierre was also trailed by two bodyguards in Afghanistan. A village that he was intending to visit was destroyed by a landslide creating a twenty-five-kilometer-long lake. For Pierre a risk a day keeps the doctor away.

Jim Dorsey flew into Addis Ababa, Ethiopia the night of the elections. Three Ethiopian night clubs were blown up while he was there so he left for the Omo River and Rift Valley. There, he encountered a number of tribes and took pictures of the members in their colorful costumes.

He had to pay the equivalent of seven cents for each photo. This is a major source of revenue for these peoples who spend it on drugs and weapons. He took one whiff on a pipe and got high.

In one village single men participate in bull jumping to qualify for marriage. In another, women insert discs into their lower lips. He also saw a headdress made out of bottle caps.

Allen Smith is leaving for a raft trip on the north and south forks of the Kern River

## Flight Home

**B**ern Heimos is an instrument-rated pilot and has 3,700 hours flying. He owns a vintage 1939 Piper Cub.

A few years ago he flew from Corona, CA, to Lock Haven, PA, home of the original Piper Aircraft manufacturing plant. He flew 2,500 miles in seven days making twenty-four landings.

Then Bern returned on a slow and low flight. The small twelve-gallon fuel tank meant fifty-four fuel stops



*Bern Heimos and his 1939 Piper*

to cover 5,200 miles. He used 358 gallons in a total flight time of seventy-two hours on the thirty-seven-day adventure.

He flew over Ohio and Indiana to Oshkosh, WI, for the EAA AirVenture. He stopped in Dyersville, IA, home of the field of dreams. He showed the assembled members the farmlands of the mid-west at low level. He flew over Nebraska, crossed the Rockies, and showed shots of Raton, New Mexico, Sedona and Prescott, AZ, from the air.

Bern returned with some beautiful low-level photographs. His equipment included GPS as well as a handheld radio. All along the trip Bern met hospitable fellow pilots.

Ignoring concrete runways, Bern preferred landing on old-school grass airstrips. The Piper Cub is capable of landing on just the length of a football field at an incredibly slow air-speed of thirty-eight miles per hour.



**July 22, 2010**

*Bob Zeman (#878)*

**F**irst Vice President and Program Chairman **Vince Weatherby** stepped up tonight to welcome a good crowd to a changed program. Vince was even able to corral a mariachi band from the street to come up and play a few songs.

**Chuck Jonkey** returned from six weeks in Indonesia. He went to the Gily Islands, Bali and eastern Java. In a little town called Banyuwangu he listened to patrol music played mostly by bamboo instruments. He also witnessed teeth filing ceremonies

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on youths between seventeen and nineteen years old, and observed two cremations, one where the body was placed inside of a paper mache bull and lit on fire.

At dinner, in a local restaurant, Chuck approached ten people. He wanted to test how well the Club is known in remote parts of the world. So Chuck asked: “Do you know Pierre Odier?” The answer was a resounding yes.

David Dolan and his son Daniel are leaving for Kenya and Tanzania for three weeks. In addition to raising money for malaria nets, the two will climb Mt. Kilimanjaro again and go on a safari.

David Finnern is going to the Owens Valley to look for remnants of two boats – Molly Stevens and Bessie Brady. A 300-pound propeller has been found, but both of the boats were sternwheelers.

Alan Feldstein is going to Tanzania on August 4th for some kayaking.

Steve Bein is well into the spirit of Night of High Adventure. He donated a satellite personal tracker, a carved walrus tusk (scrimshaw), a pair of binoculars, a book on Churchill, a book on the Sea of Cortez, and two knives.

David Finnern said that tickets for October 30 NOHA will go on sale in two weeks.

Bob Oberto sent us a card from Cebu, Philippines, where he is ferrying a jet aircraft.

Vince said that Johanna Doolittle is looking to interview World War II veterans.

## The Nine Lives of Pierre Odier

Pierre recently returned from a trip to India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and China and came back alive with his expedition flag. On short notice, he and Larry Schuttte put together a program from his many slides.

He showed slides of Dharmsala where the Dalai Lama resides.

He rode up to the line of control which separates India from Pakistan in Kashmir. He turned back to go to a border crossing but that was closed so he returned to another and was



*Photo by Claudio of Sacred Radiance  
Gyuto Monastery in Dharmsala*

whisked through as the only tourist of the day. He saw the logo of the 64th Gurkha Regiment.

The area is extremely dangerous. He photographed two Imams at a temple in Pakistan. The next day it was bombed, and they and 100 others were killed by a Taliban blast.

In Srinagar the military had moved in and taken all of the hotel rooms due to terrorism, so Pierre hid in a houseboat for two days.

After viewing the Golden Temple in Lahore, Pierre headed north to the Karakoram. Three cars in front of him there was an accident with fatal-

ities as a truck overturned. Pierre had a private driver and a guide but they were stopped frequently by officials.



*The Karakoram Photo E. Wesker*

He was able to meet and communicate with the natives. He distributed some of Ralph White's ashes in a local cemetery. He showed a beautiful slide of camels and tents near the mountains. He crossed the pass at 4,700 meters, endeavoring to get to a village.

A massive landslide had created a twenty-five-kilometer lake. Access to the other side of the landslide was blocked, except by two boats. So Pierre got his bags on a boat and made it around.

Pierre condensed a multi-hour program for tonight and promised a more extensive talk in the future.

He brought back a men's shaman headgear decorated with old coins and lapis lazuli. He also brought a decorated woman's shawl and a silver necklace.

### **Lost Ports and Ships of the Colorado**

In the early 1850s, the U. S. Government wanted to supply its forts, and prepare for possible war against the Mormons. One method was to

use river boats to take supplies and people up the Colorado River from the Sea of Cortez.

David Finnern decided that he wanted to find the remains of that river journey.

James Turnbull built the first river boat, the sixty-five-foot *Uncle Sam*, in 1852. It wrecked the next year, in 1853. Stern wheelers were best adapted for Colorado River travel. Soon boats were going upriver almost to



*Photo Brynn Bender, NPS - WACC  
NPS conservator cleaning and preserving the Edith, (1911), one of Grand Canyon National Park's historic Colorado River boats.*

Black Canyon, the current site of Hoover Dam. River boats could go thirty miles on a load of wood, but then had to stop at a landing for more wood. At Picacho, there was a stamp mill that crushed ore that was mined.

Puerto Isabel was the port in Mexico where ocean-going vessels would unload their cargos onto riverboats. Built by the Colorado Steam Navigation Company in 1865, the port actually consisted of two distinct areas: the landing, and a shipyard that maintained

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and even built some of the river steamers. This Colorado River traffic was



Colorado dry-docked in Puerto Isabel, Sonora, Mexico

abandoned in 1877 when the railroad made its final connection to Yuma.



Colorado River boat Gila

David and Steve Lawson have made three trips to the area over the



Colorado River boat Cocopah

years. The big problem is 1,500 square miles of slime and mud. They

had maps, but there is no shade, and they sunk up to their knees in the mud. Tom Oedy and Pete Mathews joined them on one of the trips.

The shipyard was functional be-



Lee's Ferry Post Office Photo Al HikesAZ

cause of the twenty-five-foot tides enabling the boats to float in and out. The post office at Lee's Ferry was in use until 1923 and is still standing.

Dave and Steve were fortunate to find petroglyphs, cabins near Cibola used by Indians supplying wood for the boats, beams, timbers, and remnants of steel and brass from the *Cocopah* river steamer, an old boiler, and the wreck of the *Charles H. Spencer*, the last boat used on the river.



Dave Lawson & Pierre Odier with Vince Weatherby

## Forthcoming Programs

- July 15, 2010 – Bern Heimos – Vintage Flying
- July 22, 2010 – Rabbi Shifren – Surfing Rabbi
- July 29, 2010 – Ted Fey – Weird Adventures in Death Valley
- August 5, 2010 – Bob Meyer – Captain Robert Meyer was one of 6,500 WWII glider pilots and one of only twelve that made all of the airborne landings
- August 12, 2010 – Monika Petrillo – Screening of *Flyabout*, a documentary about one girl's Australian flying adventure
- August 19, 2010 – [open]
- August 26, 2010 – **LADIES NIGHT** - Jim Dorsey, Pierre Odier, Alan Feldstein, and Michael Gwaltney - The Voodoo Trail
- September 2, 2010 – [open]
- September 9, 2010 – [open]

## October 30, 2010

### Location

*Hacienda Hotel  
525 N Sepulveda Blvd  
El Segundo CA 90245*

### Auction

*Many exotic items*

### Raffle

*Many winners  
Several valuable &  
desirable items*



### Cost

*\$65 per member  
advance purchase  
Other details pending*

### Dress

*Black Tie  
Military Dinner Dress  
Ethnic*

### Speakers

**Brian Binnie:** *Pilot of Spacecraft One, who won the X-Prize for piloting a commercial craft into space. Set a winged aircraft altitude record.*

**Zac Sunderland:** *First person, under the age of 18, to solo circumnavigate the world on his sailboat Intrepid. Completed voyage on July 16, 2009.*

**Don Walsh:** *Don Walsh piloted the bathyscaphe Trieste to the Challenger Deep, the deepest part of the Mariana Trench off Guam, the deepest part of the ocean, on January 23, 1960. We will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of this event, which has not been accomplished since.*

# Night of High Adventure is coming



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**FIRST CLASS MAIL**

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