

The
Adventurers' Club News

Volume 53

February / March 2009

Number 1



Illustration courtesy of Deep Submergence Group, San Diego, CA

MYSTIC – DSRV-1
(Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle)

The Adventurers' Club News

The Official Publication of the Adventurers' Club of Los Angeles, California

February / March 2009

Volume 53 Number 1
Publisher Allan Smith #1069
Editor Robert G. Willisroft #1116
PO Box 1087, Los Angeles, CA 91614
(818) 760-9632, (818) 613-9445 Cell; aclaeditor@argee.net
Club Phone (323) 223-3948 (24 Hrs) www.adventurersclub.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DIRECTORY	INSIDE FRONT COVER
ARTICLES	
MYSTIC RETIRES – END OF AN ERA	1
PRESIDENT'S PAGE	8
THRAWN RICKLE	10
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR	10
THURSDAY NIGHTS AT THE CLUB	11
BOOK REVIEW: WE DIE ALONE	20
FORTHCOMING PROGRAMS	21
NOTES	21

PRESIDENT

Allan Smith
Cell (661)492-3188
allan@dreamquest.tv

2ND VICE PRES

Jim Heaton III
Cell (323) 868-0630
jb3arch@yahoo.com

SECRETARY

Gene Arias
Home (818) 606-8532
higene47@aol.com

ADDRESS

2433 N Broadway
Los Angeles, CA 90086

1ST VICE PRES

Dr. Steven Bein
Home (310) 838-2346
drbein@aol.com

TREASURER

Rick Flores
Cell (310) 428-4832
rmflores@comcast.net

DINNER RESERVATIONS

(323)-223-3948 (VoiceMail)
Deadline: Tuesday Noon

MAILING ADDRESS

PO Box 31226
Los Angeles, CA 90031

PHONE & WEBSITE

(323) 223-3948
www.adventurersclub.org

MYSTIC Retires – End of an Era

The Editor, Robert G. Willisroft (#1116)

MYSTIC and its sister minisub AVALON were part of the U.S. Navy's Deep Submergence Systems Project (DSSP) commencing around 1971. Both these Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicles (DSRVs), their mother submarine rescue ships USS PIGEON & USS ORTOLAN, the fly-away cargo aircraft, and the mother submarines comprised a vast, completely functional cover for the highly classified Project Ivy Bells described in Sherry Sontag's & Christopher Drew's bestselling book, *Blind Man's Bluff*. The end of the Cold War ended any ongoing need for Project Ivy Bells and its successors, but the function cover – now called the Deep Submergence Group – continues playing a vital role in the U.S. Submarine Service. The following article is compiled from Navy sources and the author's personal experience.

At the beginning of the 20th century, all major world navies turned their attention toward developing a weapon of immense potential – the military submarine.

The highly effective use of submarines by Germany in World War I heightened this interest, and an emphasis was placed on the submarine that continues today.

The U.S. Navy had operated submarines on a limited basis for several years prior to 1900. As American technology expanded, the U.S. submarine fleet grew rapidly. Throughout the period

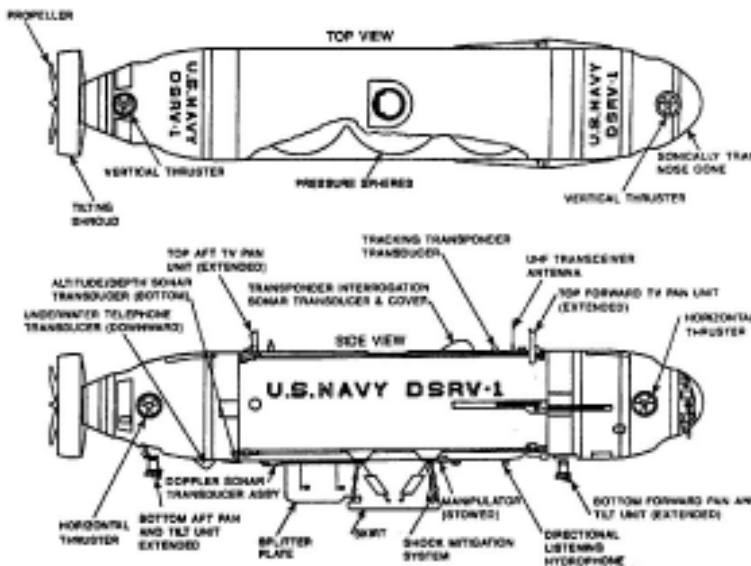
of 1912 to 1939, however, the development of the Navy's F, H, and S class boats (the traditional name for a submarine) was marred by a series of accidents, collisions,

and sinkings. Several of these submarine disasters resulted in a correspondingly rapid growth in Navy diving capability.

Until 1912, U.S. Navy divers rarely went below 60 fsw (feet of

sea water). In that year, Chief Gunner George D. Stillson set up a program to test Haldane's diving tables and methods of stage decompression. A companion goal of the program

(Mystic continued on page 2)



was to improve Navy diving equipment. Throughout a three-year period, first diving in tanks ashore and then in open water in Long Island Sound from the *USS Walkie*, Navy divers went progressively deeper, eventually reaching 274 fsw.

USS F-4. When the submarine *USS F-4* sank near Honolulu, Hawaii, in 1915, the experience gained in Stillson's program was put to dramatic use. Twenty-one men lost their lives in

the accident, and the Navy lost its first boat in 15

The physiological problems encountered in the salvage of the F-4 clearly demonstrated the limitations of breathing air during deep dives

years of submarine operations. Navy divers salvaged the submarine and recovered the bodies of the crew. The salvage effort incorporated many new techniques, such as using lifting pontoons. What was most remarkable, however, was that the divers completed a major salvage effort working at the extreme depth of 304 fsw, using air as a breathing mixture. Decompression requirements limited bottom time for each dive to about ten minutes. Even for such a limited time, nitrogen narcosis made it difficult for the divers to concentrate on their work.

The publication of the first *U.S. Navy Diving Manual* and the establishment of a Navy Diving School at Newport, Rhode Island, were the direct outgrowth of experience gained in the test program and the *F-4* salvage. When America entered World War I, the staff and graduates of the school were sent to Europe, where they conducted various salvage operations along the coast of France.

The physiological problems encountered in the salvage of the *F-4* clearly demonstrated

the limitations of breathing air during deep dives. This concern that submarine rescue and salvage would be required at great depth focused Navy attention on the need for a new diver breathing medium.

USS S-51. In September of 1925, the *USS S-51* submarine was rammed by a passenger liner and sunk in 132 fsw off Block Island, Rhode Island. Public pressure to raise the submarine and recover the bodies of the crew

was intense.

Navy diving was put in sharp focus, realizing it had only twenty divers who were qualified to go deeper than 90 fsw. Diver training programs had been cut at the end of World War I, and the school had not been reinstated.

Salvage of the *S-51* covered a ten-month span of difficult and hazardous diving, and a special diver training course was made part of the operation. The submarine was finally raised and towed to the Brooklyn Navy Yard in New York.

Interest in diving was high once again and the Naval School, Diving and Salvage, was reestablished at the Washington Navy Yard in 1927. At the same time, the Navy brought together its existing diving technology and experimental work by shifting the Experimental Diving Unit (EDU), which had been working with the Bureau of Mines in Pennsylvania, to the Navy Yard as well. In the following years, EDU developed the U.S. Navy Air Decompression Tables, which have become the accepted world standard and continued developmental work in helium-oxygen breathing mixtures for deeper diving.

Losing the *F-4* and *S-51* provided the impetus for expanding the Navy's diving ability. It took another major submarine disaster, however, for the Navy to confront its inability to rescue men trapped in a disabled submarine.

USS S-4. In 1927, the Navy lost the submarine *USS S-4* in 102 fsw after a collision with the Coast Guard cutter *USS Paulding*. The first divers to reach the submarine 22 hours after the sinking exchanged signals with the men trapped inside. The submarine had a hull fitting designed to take an air hose from the surface, but what had looked feasible in theory proved too difficult in reality. With stormy seas causing repeated delays, the divers could not make the hose connection until it was too late, and all of the men aboard the *S-4* died. Even had the hose connection been made in time, rescuing the crew would still have posed a significant problem.

The *S-4* was salvaged after a major effort, and the fate of the crew spurred several efforts toward preventing a similar disaster. Submarine Officer LT C.B. Momsen developed the escape lung that still bears his name – the Momsen Escape Lung. It was given its first operational test in 1929 when 26 officers and men successfully surfaced from an intentionally bottomed submarine.

USS Squalus. The Navy pushed for development of a rescue chamber that was essentially a diving bell with special fittings for connection to a submarine deck hatch. The apparatus, called the McCann-Erickson Rescue Chamber, was proven in 1939 when the *USS Squalus*, carrying a crew of 50, sank in 243 fsw. Divers attached a



The author in front of the Navy's only remaining McCann-Erickson Rescue Chamber at DSU on Coronado

down-haul cable to the submarine hatch, and the rescue chamber made four trips and safely brought 33 men to the surface. (The rest of the crew, trapped in the flooded after-section of the submarine, had perished in the sinking.) The *Squalus* was raised by salvage divers. This salvage and rescue operation marked the first operational use of HeO₂ in salvage diving.

USS Thresher. Just as the loss of the *F-4*, *S-51*, *S-4*, and the *Squalus* caused an increased concern in Navy diving in the 1920s and 1930s, a submarine disaster of major proportions had a profound effect on the development of new diving equipment and techniques in the postwar period. This was the loss of the nuclear attack submarine *USS Thresher* and all her crew in April 1963. The submarine sank in 8,400 fsw, a depth beyond the survival limit of the hull and far beyond the capability of any existing rescue apparatus.

An extensive search was initiated to locate the submarine and determine the cause of the sinking. A month after the disaster they located and photographed the first signs of the *Thresher*. Collection of debris and photographic coverage of the wreck continued for about a year.

As a result of the sinking, the Navy formed two special study groups. The first

(Mystic continued on page 4)

Mystic Retires – End of an Era

(Mystic continued from page 3)

was a Court of Inquiry, which attributed probable cause to a piping system failure. The second, the Deep Submergence Review Group (DSRG), was formed to assess the Navy's undersea capabilities. The DSRG examined four general areas – search, rescue, recovery of small and large objects, and the Man-in-the-Sea concept. The DSRG called for a vast effort to improve the Navy's capabilities in these four areas.

Deep Submergence Systems Project

In 1964, with a fleet-wide expanded interest in diving and undersea activity, the

Navy commenced direct action on the recommendations of the DSRG by forming the Deep Submergence Systems Project (DSSP). DSSP laid ambitious plans for twelve Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicles



DSRV without fiberglass fairing consisted of three presurized spheres – the front is the cockpit, the back is for passengers, and the middle is for ingress and egress. Spheres can withstand the pressure of 5,000 fsw.



DSRV cockpit – just room for Pilot and Co-Pilot (state-of-the-art 1972 electronics)



DSRV piggy-back on SSN

(DSRVs), a fleet of multipurpose catamaran submarine rescue ships (ASRs) each capable of carrying and servicing two DSRVs, and outfitted with redundant on-board saturation diving systems, several Nuclear Fast Attack Submarines (SSNs) modified to piggy-back a DSRV, and large cargo aircraft modified to transport a DSRV, along with its support equipment, and crew.



DSRV in fly-away loadout on a specially modified cargo aircraft

Ultimately, the Navy built only two DSRVs, the *Mystic* and the *Avalon*, two cat-

amaran ASRs, a handful of modified SSNs, and one DSRV capable aircraft. The DSSP achieved significant progress in three additional areas: Saturation Diving, the development of Deep Diving Systems, and significant progress in advanced diving equipment design.

USS Pigeon & USS Ortolan



In 1968 keels were laid on two new ASRs, and in 1973 the fleet welcomed *USS Pigeon* (ASR-21) and *USS Ortolan* (ASR-22). These multipurpose catamaran ASRs were 251 ft long with an 84 ft beam. Each hull carried a Mark 2 Mod 1 DDS (deep diving system) – at the time, the Navy’s most advanced



DSRV being launched between Ortolan’s hulls

DSRV launch monitored by divers beneath Pigeon



saturation diving system. Each was designed to carry and service two DSRVs. *Ortolan* was berthed on the East Coast, and *Pigeon* on the West Coast.

Ivy Bells. In 1970, Navy Captain James Bradley sat in his Washington office thinking about Petropavlovsk Kamchatskiy, the Cold War Soviet nuclear submarine base on the Kamchatka Peninsula. Bradley was struck by Petropavlovsk’s isolation on the charts he examined, and surmised that the Soviets had to have laid a communications cable over the peninsula, across the bottom of the Sea of Okhotsk, and then along the mainland to their Vladivostok Naval Command Headquarters. It occurred to him that this cable would likely carry a great



Kamchatka Peninsula and the Sea of Okhotsk

deal of unencrypted official information – information that could be accessed by a submarine carrying the right men and equipment. Bradley remembered from his boyhood along the Mississippi seeing signs that read: *Cable Crossing – Do not anchor!* He surmised that the Soviets would likely protect their cable in the same manner.

Bradley promoted this idea discretely, and
(Mystic continued on page 6)

Mystic Retires – End of an Era

(*Mystic continued from page 5*)

when he briefed President Nixon's Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, the idea became a plan. In a highly classified operation, the existing nearly functional DSRV submarine rescue project would be used as a cover for Project Ivy Bells, detailed in *Blind Man's Bluff*, by Sherry Sontag and Christopher Drew.



USS Halibut departing San Francisco for the Sea of Okhotsk with a saturation diving complex disguised as a DSRV mounted on her stern.

Money was funneled through the new ASRs to outfit three old SSNs, *USS Halibut*, *USS Sea Wolf*, and *USS Parche*, with topside mounted saturation diving complexes that appeared exactly like a DSRV, so the SSNs could operate with impunity almost anywhere, without raising suspicions. The best saturation qualified divers



USS Halibut returning to Mare Island following a successful operation in the Sea of Okhotsk

from *Pigeon* and *Ortolan* were recruited into the program, sworn to secrecy, and ultimately embarked on these specially modified submarines to tap into the Sea of Okhotsk cable, and later into a similar cable in the Barents Sea. (By the way, they found the cables using Bradley's idea of looking for a painted sign.)

Falcon. The Cold War is over. There is no more need for projects like Ivy Bells, ships like *Pigeon* and *Ortolan*, and SSNs carrying mock DSRVs. The SSNs are mostly forgotten, having long since been cut up for scrap. The ASRs were decommissioned in 1992, having each been home to perhaps 400 to 500 sailors during their lifetimes. *Mystic* and *Avalon* have served their purpose and become aging relics of a bygone era, difficult and expensive to maintain, with only marginal use. *Avalon* was taken out of service in 2000. *Mystic* remained operational while the Navy devel-



The author in front of the Pressurized Rescue Module – the Falcon

oped the next generation of submarine rescue vehicle: the Pressurized Rescue Module *Falcon*, a tethered remotely piloted pres-

(*Mystic continued on page 20*)

surized vessel capable of more than *Mystic*, but lacking an onboard pilot, with an operational depth of only 2,000 fsw, unlike



*The DSRV inactivation
Pressurized Rescue Module
Naming Ceremony at DSU*

Mystic which could dive to 5,000 fsw.

On March 6, 2009, under an azure blue sky at the Deep Submergence Unit (DSU) on Coronado Island in San Diego, *Mystic*



*The DSU pennant is lowered for the last time
on Mystic (DSRV-1).*

stepped down as the Navy's only operational DSRV, and *Falcon* assumed the watch. The ceremony was attended by about 200

men ranging in age from the late twenties to the late seventies, men who have been part of an adventure like nothing the world has ever seen. A very small number of these were participants in Project Ivy Bells – ar-



*The DSU pennant is raised for the first time
on Falcon (PRM-1)*

guably the *raison d'être* for the entire thing.

At the reception following the ceremony, a DSU spokesman had people from various elements of DSSP stand to be recognized. Ivy Bells was not mentioned at all, of course, because of its still official classification, but when he asked for crew members from *Pigeon* and *Ortolan* to rise, of a possible total of nearly 1,000 men, this writer was the only one to stand.

The world had moved on, and the aloneness was overwhelming.



USS Halibut configured for Project Ivy Bells

THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE – Past, Present & Future

Allan R. Smith #1069 - President



As I start to write this, I find that I am distracted with four other thoughts. And, while I will admit I am easily distracted, these thoughts are taking me in a new writing direction. I keep

thinking of the four important areas that we must collectively focus on in 2009.

- Increase our efforts to bring in new members.
- Increase our outside activities to promote camaraderie.
- Volunteer to serve on the board.
- Help by recommending speakers.

With the first quarter of the year about to be behind us, the club is facing some major challenges. First, we are working on the extension to our existing lease and as the landlord has put the building up for sale, we are cautiously optimistic that things will work out in our favor. As we will inevitably be seeing an increase in rent, we will need to generate more revenue than our previous year. With this said, we are adventurers and we know others that are adventurous. I challenge you to look across the street, to your coworker, and to the man on the trail. Gentleman, together we can bring in good members and younger members that will take our club forward for generations. This is paramount

to our existence!

We are currently working on a photo seminar to be held at the club. This will be an outside activity and a club fundraiser for members and guests. Also, we are speaking with fellow member Fred Harland to explore the petroglyphs and museum at China Lake. These dates will be posted on line at www.adventurersclub.org just as soon as we know. A very special club event is coming up on April 25th when we will have a private tour of the Peterson Auto Museum and space is limited. Please contact 1st Vice President Steve Bein if you would be interested in attending.

We have two important positions on the board that need to be filled. For over a year our esteemed editor Robert Williscroft has been asking for a replacement. This has fallen on deaf ears and if someone does not step up soon, we might be without this wonderful newsletter. Please consider this important position and know that Robert, others and myself will be there to assist you.

Next, our 1st VP & program chairman Steve Bein has also done a remarkable job and has booked speakers into September. He has asked for a replacement so that he can finish other work that needs his attention. This is a position where most of the work has been accomplished and Steve has offered to assist the incoming chairman with the rest of the year if needed. Again, please consider this rewarding position and contact either Steve or myself.

NOHA, Night of High Adventure – the time is here to find a new chairman and as the clubs treasurer, Rick Flores does not have the time to chair this prestigious event again this year. We currently have a NOHA board with three members, but lack a chairman that can oversee the planning. We are actively looking for a new, more cost effective, location. So, please consider volunteering for this position. Last year the club made a profit of over \$3,000, and it was vitally important to the club. This year making a profit is even more urgent due to our rising costs of operation!

I have been asked how members can recommend ideas for the club or things they feel the club could improve on. You are welcome to contact any member of the

Volunteer to serve on the board.

Help by recommending speakers.

board or if you prefer, please direct them to myself either in writing, via e-mail at allan@dreamquest.tv, phone at 661.492.3188 or feel free to approach me at the club. Also, members have asked if it would be possible to get an e-mail address from the club, ie: Allan@adventurersclub.org. This is something we will look into and if possible, it will be posted in the newsletter. Next, per member's requests, we are setting up our Paypal account so that you may have the option to pay your dues on-line and this will be ready shortly.

Remember, the club is only as successful as you make it, so please take a moment to help find a speaker, a new member or serve on the board and lets make this the best Adventurers' Club ever.

(Letters continued from page 10)

To the Editor:

Just a note that we did not get anything in the last *Club News* about the *Stories from the Adventurers' Club* book project. Please ask members to update their e-mail address with the Club. After sending out David Dolan's e-mail, several have come back with no longer valid e-mails. – Allan Smith (#1069)

You got it on both counts!

1. Everybody, please review the note on page 21. We really want to get your inputs as soon as possible for this historic project.

2. Regarding updated emails, if you guys want to receive immediate notification of things important to our Club, then PLEASE supply us with your latest email. In today's world, this should not be that difficult a task! – Editor

To the Editor:

On page 13 of the Dec-Jan *News*, I read "By the oldest member of the Club, John Booth." The last time I saw John was in 1974, when I taught some film courses at California State University in Long Beach. Please say "Hello!" to him, and pass on my warmest good wishes!

Since I will turn 91 on May 7, 2009, it occurred to me that my *Epilogue* – inclosed herewith – might be of interest to some of the members who remember me. – Norman G. Dyhrenfurth (#670A)

You can be sure that John Booth has gotten your greeting. As for your Epilogue, I will find a place for it in a forthcoming issue. Thanks for sending it. – Editor

THE THRAWN RICKLE

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

Robert G. Williscroft #1116 - Editor



With the passing of *Mystic*, featured in this edition, we are reminded that the world we live in and have explored so intently, is a dynamic organism that never stops.

A short hundred years ago, while the Wright brothers were in France demonstrating their new flying machine, and recording their demonstration on another new invention, the moving picture camera, Robert Perry reached the North Pole.

Four years earlier, Albert Einstein had startled the world of physics by publishing his Special Theory of Relativity. I imagine that to the average person back then the pace of progress was breathtaking. This is all the more true when you pause to realize that just two years later, Rauld Amundsen stood at the South Pole. Just fifty years after that Jacques Picard and fellow Club member Don Walsh touched the ocean

floor seven miles down in the Challenger Deep, and a scant ten years later Neil Armstrong became the first human to step on another world.

On one hand we combat international terrorism, while on the other we continue to explore the far reaches of Space, the vast unexplored ocean world at our feet, and the brand new horizons presented to us by the virtual world of Cyberspace.

Our Club is beginning to tap into this cyberworld. As we move into the future, expect to see more and more on our website. Anticipate being able to log on with your personal password, and review any past program right there in your home on your PC screen. If you wish, you will be able to have a personalized email address linked to our club domain – adventurersclub.org. You will be able to pay your dues online, purchase tickets to special Club events, and even help a friend apply for membership – all online.

Meanwhile, with feet firmly planted back on *Terra Firma*, see you next Thursday!

The password for the full color online edition is “acla0903”.

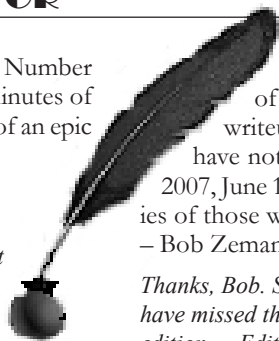
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

Re The Adventures' Club News, Volume 52, Number 7 – Dec 08/Jan 09. What happen to the minutes of October 30th meeting? Heard it was a hell of an epic adventure related that night!

– Peter Jensen (#1101)

Unfortunately, Peter, no one took notes. End result, I have nothing to publish. If anyone out there can remember this presentation, and is willing to write something up, I'll be happy to publish it – better late than never. – Editor



To the Editor:

Good job on the most recent issue of the *News*. I was concerned that some writeups of meetings that I have submitted have not been printed. These include Nov. 1, 2007, June 19, 2008 and July 31, 2008. I attach copies of those write-ups.

– Bob Zeman (#878)

Thanks, Bob. See the previous letter. Obviously, I must have missed these submissions. They appear in this edition. – Editor

(Letters continued on page 9)

THURSDAY NIGHTS AT THE CLUB

November 1, 2007 (really – we missed this one)

Bob Zeman (#878)

Because of the length of the business meeting, President **Robert DeMott** dispensed with those returning and leaving on an adventure. But **Charles Rozaire #744** showed up. Come by more often Charles.

Steve Peterman joined the Club as a guest of **Bob Silver** and has appreciated being a member and friend of Bob.

Bob welcomed all to broken film night. He posed the question: “What constitutes adventure?” He said that doing something for the first time probably would qualify.

He took off in a double ended, gaff-rigged, 34-foot wooden sailboat for a sail from California to Hawaii. He also brought along his 16 millimeter camera and film.

While film is a definite addition to a program, too many persons can have distorted memories of trips, because we only remember our film, slides, postcards and others. There are few night scenes and no prints of ships foundering.

He sailed to Hawaii, the Marquesas, Tonga, Cook Island, Tuamotus and Australia. There his trip was delayed due to a demasting. But he traveled on to Indonesia, Penang, Sumatra and Hong Kong. His final sail across the Atlantic was on a 46-foot catamaran. He was the navigator with no compass, no sextant and little experience. But they made it.

His film was of the first leg from California to Hawaii. There were about 12 on board, most of whom were refugees from Hollywood. The sail was a good one, and the footage excellent considering it was 50 years old.

Bob landed in Maui where the feature film “The Hawaiians” was being filmed. The stars Charlton Heston and Geraldine Chaplin were there along with the false-front buildings and actors dressed as Chinese immigrants.

Those who missed this program missed a large dose of Bob’s dry humor and tidbits.

June 19, 2008 (really – we missed this one, too)

Bob Zeman (#878)

President **Robert DeMott** welcomed a ladies’ night crowd to our quarters. He also announced the first session of our book sale. The Club is disposing of fiction books and duplicates of our other books. The price is right.

First Vice President **Paul Isley** flew out of Torrance with his son P. J. He said that it is neat sitting next to your son while he pilots the plane and talks to the tower.

Roger Haft returned from Boston. He stopped by the Crow’s Nest which was featured in the movie *The Perfect Storm*.

Bob Ianello and guest **Eric Simmel** participated in the 10K mountain running event in his area. He also went diving for scallops off Laguna Beach.

Vince Weatherby got a part in a movie as a British Officer on the *HMS Queen Mary* which runs into an anti-aircraft ship.

Paul Isley is flying to Mojave for a birthday dinner for Burt and Dick Rutan and then turning around for the Explorers’ Club dinner with **Don Walsh** and Stephanie Powers.

David Glackin is chasing eclipses from Spitsbergen to Novosibirsk. The longest one will be in July, 2009, of six minutes

south of the south island of Japan. The last will be from Tahiti to Easter Island in July, 2010. Dave let us know in advance because he is moving to Washington, D. C. for a job transfer.

Bob Walters will be attending the American fighter aces association meeting in Austin, Texas.

Dick DeMarco came down from China Lake. He showed footage of the moray program.



Don Walsh & Dick DeMarco

This two-man submarine has an operating depth of 1,500 feet and can go in reverse and submerge. At a speed of six to eight knots its time limit underwater is four hours. This program was cancelled by the Navy in the early 1960s.

Don Walsh, oceanographer, adventurer and explorer

Captain Don Walsh, USN (Ret) PhD flew down from Oregon to tell of his trip to the deepest point in the ocean.

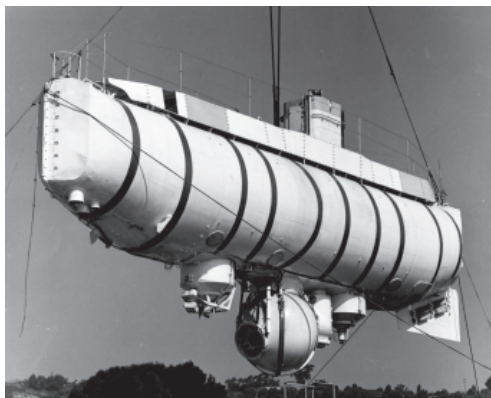
David Dolan introduced Don as the first recipient of the Explorers' Club trophy for undersea exploration named for our deceased member Ralph White.

Don spent 16 years at sea on surface ships and submarines including two commands. He has dives in more than 21 different manned submersibles. He has worked on remotely operated vehicles (ROV.)

He founded and directed the Institute for Marine and Coastal Studies at USC. He has written more than 200 published articles and edited five books. He has given

over 1,500 lectures in 50 nations on ocean-related subjects.

Tonight Don gave a short history on undersea exploration starting over 2,000 years ago. Assyrians sucked on sheep bladders and Greek sponge divers dove to 60 feet, but little progress was made.



The bathyscaph Trieste I

In the 1920s, Dr. William Beebe designed a bathysphere that went down to a half mile below the surface off the coast of Bermuda in 1930. A bathysphere is connected by a cable as opposed to a bathyscaph which is not connected. At that depth even a small leak produces a knife-sharp cutting stream.

Auguste Piccard designed a balloon that could ascend to 70,000 feet. Experts said that it could not be done. He did it and then used what he learned to design a bathyscaph, the *Trieste*, to sink to the bottom of the ocean.

But during the 1950s, funding ran low and the U. S. Navy bought the *Trieste*.

The Navy took it to the Marianas trench about 200 miles west of Guam and the Challenger Deep, 35,800 feet below the surface. The *Trieste* arrived on site on Janu-

ary 23, 1960.

Don and Jacques Piccard were the crew on this nine hour, 14 mile round trip to the bottom. Near the time for the dive, the Navy nearly stopped the project because of safety concerns. The pressure at the bottom was eight tons per square inch or over 200,000 tons of total pressure.

They saw fish all of the way down but mostly worms, jellies and plankton on the bottom, where they spent 20 minutes.

After surfacing, a ship was vectored to pick them up. They were soon flown on a long propeller-driven plane trip to Washington D. C. where they were commended by President Eisenhower.

Since then, no person has been down that deep. The *Trieste* was used in 1963 to find the *USS Thresher*. In 1983 it was taken out of use.

The ocean floor is such that 97% is at 20,000 feet or less. Therefore, many countries are building submersibles that descend to 20,000 feet. These include the *Sea Cliff*, *Nautilus*, the Russian *Mirs* and the Japanese *Sinkai*. The *Alvin* goes down to 14,000 feet and is an acrylic bowl which provides greater visibility than the small port holes on the others.

In the late 1960s, the Navy developed autonomous unmanned vehicles and remotely operated vehicles. These are now being used extensively.

A plan was hatched in the late 1990s to go to the bottom at the North Pole. Americans did virtually all of the planning, but in the end it was the Russians under Anatoly Sagalevich and their *Mirs*. Funding was a concern and the two *Mirs* accommodat-



JIM-1 Atmosphere suit exploration. At one time, tests were run off of west Africa. The French assigned a ship commanded by Jacques Cousteau to track the tests. Don had photos of both Sylvia and Jacques.

ed a wealthy Swiss named Paulson and a wealthy Australian named McDowell to pay for a trip. A member of the Russian Duma pushed for it also.

Sylvia Earle was the first woman to don the inner-space Jim suit for open sea



July 31, 2008 (really – we missed this one, too)
Bob Zeman (#878)

Henry Von Seyfried showed up. He has been in the Philippines for three months.

Treasurer **Roger Haft** has a trip planned to the Gaspé Peninsula and the maritime provinces of Canada.

Bob Walters told of David Lawler who is a geologist and paleontologist. He was working for the Bureau of Land management to investigate toxicity in abandoned mines. Unfortunately, he found more than expected which ruffled some feathers in the west, but the Inspector General in Washington D. C. was pleased with his work.

(Minutes continued on page 14)

David Yamada brought in a copy of the obituary on **Bill Wheeler** that appeared in San Diego. Bill began traveling to Africa in 1978 and documented 50,000 miles by Land Rover, 2,000 miles on foot with horses, donkeys and in the Sahara. In 2000 his book was published on the Efe Pygmies.

London Steverson returned from a car trip to Memphis with his wife and three young children.

Steve Bein donated a Cold Steel blowgun, stun darts and hunting darts for NOHA. He also donated three books, some duck and quail calls and a watch with an altimeter, barometer, thermometer and altitude gain recording.

Rick Flores said that ticket sales for Night of High Adventure are ahead of last year and urged all to buy now. Our speakers are set.

Knights of the Golden Circle

After the Civil War, there were many in the South who believed it could rise again. The Confederacy only lost because it ran out of money. So the Knights of the Golden Circle was formed to gather gold, jewelry and other valuables and store them.

The Knights are believed to have buried this treasure in virtually all of the states. But they also practiced sedition and spying, and so they kept their activities secret.

Roy had been interested in this since he was a teenager spending time on his grandfather's ranch in eastern Kansas. The ranch was almost a perfect rectangle but a portion was cut out. This portion was watched over by a sentinel who refused to let Roy and his relatives on it. In later years, the

Roushes changed the boundaries, but they noticed there had been some digging in the intervening time.

As a confirmed treasure hunter, Roy met Frank Howk who claimed to be the grandson of Jesse James, and who supposedly knew of where one of the treasure sites was. This was in Glorieta Pass in New Mexico, the site of the biggest Civil War battle west of the Mississippi.

The clues to look for were an abnormally bent tree called a hoot owl tree and four sided stones. Roy, Frank and friend found these clues and followed them. Eventually, they reached a place but someone had already dug there.

They also found another site where they could see the outlines of a big box, but the others were nervous and left.

Roy discussed the reported shooting of Jesse James by Bob Ford, and noted several inconsistencies. He was buried upside down. Ford says he used a 44 or 45 slug but an exhumation many years later showed a body with a 38 slug. And Jesse's mother originally said the body was not Jesse's. Also in about 1950, a person showed up claiming he was Jesse.



December 4, 2008 (really – we missed this one)
Bob Zeman (#878)

A stellar ladies' night turnout was welcomed by President **Robert DeMott**.

Paul Isley gave a brief recap of his and **Bill Morse's** trek from Lukla to Mt. Ever-

est base camp. It was 35 miles each way and took a week to get there and a week to return. The trek was up and down virtually all of the way. The temperatures were warm when the sun was up, but declined to below freezing at night.

Bernie Harris drove to Bruin Woods, a UCLA retreat near Lake Arrowhead. On the map he saw an airstrip nearby. So he decided to check it out, but the access road had grooves only driveable by a vehicle with a high clearance.

Steve Bein went to the Bosque del Apache south of Albuquerque for the fly-in. He viewed 32,000 snow geese and 5,000 sandhill cranes. The takeoffs were spectacular.

Ken Freund #1046 returned from a motorcycle expedition to India, Nepal and Bhutan. His group reached heights of 13,000 feet and crossed rivers by boat. He has another motorcycle trip planned to Panama, stopping along the way at Mayan excavations.

Linda Abrams attended a memorial dedication for the 38 WASP (Women Air Service Pilots) who died in World War II. A search continues for one who crashed just off LAX in the Pacific Ocean. It has narrowed to one square mile.

Dave Grober stopped by the Chicago Club. He drank at the whale bar and saw the collection of shrunken heads.

Roger Haft's trip to Africa is still on. He is going to Rwanda for trekking with the gorillas and then to Ethiopia.

Patty Balian is going to Kona for ten days of diving. She will be doing night diving for the jellyfish and phosphorescent fish.

Past president of the Society of Women Adventurers **Patricia Sullivan** is moving to Del Ray, Florida.

Upon his passing, **Ralph White** requested that his ashes be scattered in faraway places. **Reda Anderson** has met with Caelus pilot Charles Schafer who will take Ralph's ashes into space.

Linda Abrams is flying her 1946 ercoupe to Los Angeles airport.

Steve Lawson went down to the Sherman Library and Gardens in Corona del Mar. He found out that it holds the largest collection of memorabilia of **Dana and Ginger Lamb**. Ginger designed our Club flag and there is a Club flag there along with the bowsprit of the kayak and paddles. There are also 200 photo albums.

Bob Oberto, dressed in a jumpsuit-type outfit, told of the Undersea Voyager Project. The Project will utilize a submersible to circumnavigate the Earth on a five-year mission, traveling 27,000 miles underwater. The submersible will cruise between 100 and 1,000 feet below the surface.

Its first efforts will be to cross to Catalina and then go down the coast of Baja California. A showing and presentation will be held December 15th at the Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach.

Eric Simmell told of a remembrance of Jay Fiondello who ran Chez J's restaurant on the Santa Monica pier. It will take place on December 6th from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Tony was also an underwater explorer.

Eva Wahlroos is going to London for a dedication of a plaque to Peter Heywood. He was a 17-year old midshipman on the Bounty. He was tried and convicted for

(Minutes continued on page 16)

mutiny, but pardoned. Eva attended the unveiling of a memorial plaque at St. Michael Highgate School in London. The commemorative address was given by Bounty scholar Donald Maxton. Sven Wahlroos had reviewed a manuscript prepared by Don.

Robert DeMott and sponsor **Paul Isley** then welcomed and inducted **Dave Barr** as a new member. Paul read a letter from Dave's commander in South Africa who noted that Dave is one of only two persons to be awarded the South African equivalent of the medal of honor. Dave's armored carrier hit a land mine and though badly wounded he aided his friend's escape from the burning vehicle.

Dave lost both legs but resolved to be an achiever. He acquired a Harley Davidson and drove north through Africa. He later drove his motorcycle around Australia, down from northern Alaska to southern South America and then across Europe through Russia and Siberia.

Underwater Exploration of Lake Baikal

Club member Anatoly Sagalevitch was brought in to develop the Soviet underwater exploration project in 1987. These *Mir* submersibles were successful and Ralph White contacted Anatoly to use



Lake Baikal

them for explorations of the *Titanic*, *Bismarck* and other wrecks.

Vladimir Putin supported Anatoly in his effort to put a Russian flag on the bottom of the North Pole. A book was written with a rough English translation. Anatoly called on Paul to improve the translation which he did. The book is being printed now in Japan.

Metropol, a large Russian conglomerate, then offered to finance an extended exploration of Lake Baikal. Anatoly invited Paul to the lake for a dive. He said yes.

The flight from Los Angeles to Chicago to Moscow to Ulan-Ude took 36 hours including layovers.

The lake is 395 miles long and 35 to 50 miles wide. It is also 4,000 to 5,000 feet deep. It is the oldest and deepest lake in the world.



There is four to five kilo- meters of silt on the bottom and then bedrock. There are about 330 feeders into the lake and only one outlet.

The lake is out in the middle of nowhere. There are no trees and the elevation is 1,250 feet. The Trans-Siberian Railroad circles around it. During the winter, it freezes up to 27 feet thick, and cars and trucks can cross it. Paul went for a swim.

Ulan-Ude means red river in Russian. Its population is about 300,000 and the bust of Lenin's head displayed there is the largest of its kind in the world. There are many colorful structures in the city.

A local boat was completely modified to hold the two submersibles *Mir-1* and *Mir-2*. A heavy duty, 200-ton crane was trucked in from Vladivostok to be put on the boat to load and unload the *Mirs*.

The *Mirs* are made of nickel alloy. Twelve halves were made and the best four were used. Two are bolted together. They use syntactic foam for buoyancy.

The lake's water is clean and drinkable. The temperature is three degrees centigrade and there are no thermoclines.

There are three viewports on the *Mir*. Paul saw a rare blue sponge, small crabs and shrimp. There is lots of rock and mud on the bottom. Core samples were also brought up.

Metropol will be using the *Mirs* for a number of months for exploration and then the *Mirs* will be brought back to their home port in Kaliningrad.

The *Mir* program is a follow-on to the Pisces project which had previously done



Bottom of Lake Baikal

limited exploration of Lake Baikal. The *Mir* idea was conceived in the United States, designed in Canada, built in Finland, and then sold to the Soviets.

January 8, 2009

Bob Zeman (#878)

Our new president **Allan Smith** welcomed the new Board of Directors and the members to the first meeting of the year.

Sadly, the passing of **Al Adams** #688, former president of the Club, on January

1st on the great adventure was announced. Al was a marine surveyor who cruised more than 300,000 miles under sail. On the 50th anniversary of the Club in 1972, Al gave each member a wooden plaque commemorating the event.

Bob Aronoff noted that the Club's burgees on display were a gift from Al. Al had sailed with many notables including Walter Cronkite. He even made friends with the king of Tonga.

Bob Silver said that Al had the ability to raise money and morale, and referred to the large plaque of donors to the building fund.

A memorial to Al will be held on March 26th at the Thursday night meeting.

Allan Smith shared some Christmas oddities including what to give and what not to give as presents to in-laws.

We received a postcard from **Roger Haft** who is now in Addis Ababa. He said that he was close to a dominant male silverback gorilla.

Bob Zeman participated in the annual Christmas bird count in Santa Barbara. There were five bird watchers in his small area. One of the five was Jon Dunn who was the chief consultant on National Geographic's book *Birds of North America*. The species count in Santa Barbara was 208 which was first in the state. Orange County and San Diego followed with 205 each.

Charles Carmona spent a few days in the Mojave Desert. The Kelso railroad station has been redone and turned into a museum. He explored the dunes and other areas showing former human habitation.

Jay Foonberg entered the Santa Barbara half-marathon and finished. Unfortunately, he tripped over a mound at the finish

(Minutes continued on page 18)

line and fell cutting his head. He had to have 11 stitches. Jay has completed 35 full and 25 half marathons.

Jay also planned a Caribbean cruise out of New Orleans. He flew a day early to Houston. But because his L. A. flight was delayed by five hours, he missed his connecting flight to New Orleans. Not to be denied, he rented a car and drove all night to New Orleans and boarded his cruise ship.

Jim Dorsey took a multi-week trip to the Yucatan and Guatemala viewing Mayan ruins. He saw some Maya ceremonies that were not publicized and he rode a 27 length zip line in Tikal. He scattered some of Ralph's ashes at Tikal and Chichen Itza.

Alan Feldstein has tickets to the inauguration.

Rosalie Lopes will appear on a television show on space on January 16th in the evening.

Don Waters celebrated the 67th anniversary of his first date with Jean.

Bob Silver said there is a television show on India on January 12th on PBS. Bob spent a year in the India-Pakistan area long ago.

Steve Bein and **Bob Aronoff** have compiled a list of the Club's programs going back to 1998.

On January 15th **Bernie Harris** has invited Bob Gilliland to speak to the Air Venturers at the Valley Inn.

Your Board of Directors in 6 Minutes

Our new first vice president Steve Bein asked members of the 2009 Board of Directors to give a six-minute summary of their lives and adventures as tonight's program.

Allan Smith grew up in Hollywood as a child actor. He rode and raced motorcycles at an early age. He spent six years in the Marine Corps and later became a firefighter and paramedic.

He got into adventure film work and did a lot of filming in Alaska. He met the legendary Norman Vaughn and stayed in his cabin. Allan has just returned from 23 days in Indonesia with Chuck Jonkey.

Some years ago Allan and Jerry Freeman decided to retrace the route of the 49er expedition which turned south from Cedar City, Utah, and passed through area 51 and crossed Death Valley. Allan and Jerry's trek took 33 days going 300 plus miles on foot. They found an old trunk holding clothes, coins, dolls, letters, a plate and other items. They photographed it, but had to give it back because it was found on National Park land. The original expedition gave the Valley its name.

Jim Heaton our new second vice president rafted the Snake River. The dory capsized near Grand Falls. Jim almost drowned and needed 12 stitches. He saw where Chief Joseph crossed the Snake.

Jim also flew in an Aero Commander in Baja to Malaremo Beach. He later flew in a Cessna to Guerrero Negro with a tire that had a leak. On a hop to a salt mine, the plane crashed on landing. The three passengers fled from the plane with minor injuries. They acquired a new plane and flew over Scammon's Lagoon and also buzzed a house of prostitution.

Rick Flores was born in Los Angeles and traveled to China with his wife before the Tianamen square incident.

Rick learned scuba diving, and dove the areas off the coast of southern California. He went by himself to Truk Lagoon and Palau. He met a Brit who aided Rick in getting down to the 120-foot depths of the wrecks at Truk. He got good views of the wreckage of the Japanese auxiliary fleet including an intact light bulb.

Three years ago, he started his Saturday day hikes. He has made 130 of them in the many forests and mountains in the area. He has not seen any big animals, but the flora and fauna are spectacular. He has visited many old campsites. His hike to Mt. Pinos is next on his schedule.

Gene Arias, our new secretary, was born in Colorado and raised in California. He joined the Naval Reserve at 17 and was not sent to Vietnam but to Barbers Point

on Oahu. He jumped out of a plane, but at the wrong time, and landed in a pineapple plantation. He worked for NBC in the publicity department, and took up running. He has completed the Western States 100. He was also the Clinton family photographer.

Later encouraged by Steve Bein and Alan Feldstein, Gene took up kayaking. He was a strong kayaker but could not swim. He also took up horseback riding and participates in ride and tie events.

Robert Williscroft was born in Montana and grew up in Germany. He came back to the states and became a submariner in the Navy. He went on eight patrols. He entered the University of Washington and earned degrees in oceanography and meteorology. He also trained in Poseidon-class submarines and learned Vietnamese.

Robert took a one-year advanced Navy diving school, and dove the Sea of Okhotsk near the Kamchatka Peninsula. He joined NOAA and spent three years in the Arctic. He taught diving to about 3,000 persons. He was later sent on a 13-month tour to the South Pole for atmospheric research. He met Roger Haft, who was his ACLA sponsor.

Stuart Bird-Wilson's father was a pilot at the Battle of Britain for the RAF. He flew 265 different types of planes in his career. He completed four tours in World War II. Stuart grew up in Britain, but he lived in Egypt in 1947-48. He witnessed a man die working on a construction project. He traveled from England to South Africa overland by hitching rides.

He made a sailing trip in the Channel Islands and survived a 30-foot wave. He later traveled in Western Europe and went on to North Africa and Tunis. He ran out of his six-minute limit before he could tell of his career with the British SAS. To be continued.

Steve Peterman was born in Los Angeles and joined the Navy at 17. He spent 14 years in the service. He took up sailing, and is on his fourth boat. In the late 80s, he sailed from Moorea to Huahine which has a huge lagoon. He then hitchhiked to Fare, the largest village on the island and saw the homes which had gravestones in the yards marking burials.

Steve became a friend of Randy Resnick, who was the son of Albert Resnick, photographer of Amelia Earhart.

Larry Schutte grew up on Indian reservations in Arizona. His parents worked at the trading posts and traded with the Indians. He and his family were the only non-Indians at a smoke dance on third mesa.

Larry moved to Phoenix in his late teens and formed a band that played in clubs. He hooked up with Sonny and Cher and played with them for seven years. During this time he traveled around the world four times.

He left that and went to the Art Center School of Design and graduated. He now produces videos, slides and power point productions for big sales meetings. He scuba dives the Bay Islands looking for whale sharks.

Bob Oberto was born in Los Angeles and backpacked in the Sierras in his teens. He joined the Air Force at 17 and later entered USC, graduating with a degree in aerospace engineering. He then joined the Navy and went through flight training at Pensacola, FL. He flew A-4 jets on Oahu with VC-1. This was ten years after Gene Arias was in VC-1. Later he flew S3As as part of a carrier squadron and made two westpac cruises, traveling around the world. He has made 200 carrier takeoffs and landings.

Bob got a Master's degree and worked for JPL as a systems engineer and led Team X. He now works with Scott Cassell on the Undersea Voyager Project. Rosaly Lopes will make the first official dive on the remodeled submarine in February.

Steve Bein was born at Melrose and La Brea, and grew up in Alhambra and west L. A. He was student body president at LACC. He was also president of the California Assn. for Preventive Dentistry. He went to see the movie Exodus and was inspired to ship out to Israel. He traversed the Panama Canal and Mediterranean ports before landing in Haifa. He lived in a kibbutz and hiked the Negev desert. He also climbed Masada and brought back some potsherds which he donated to the Club.

Steve later went into dentistry and taught at USC in three departments. He has been a paraglider pilot, hang glider pilot, single engine airline pilot, scuba diver since 1960, training under the head diver in the WWII OSS frogman team, 4-wheeler, hiker, back-packer and sailboat cruiser. He holds a Coast Guard master's 100-ton cert with sail endorsement, and is a ham radio operator among other things.

BOOK REVIEW —

WE DIE ALONE: A WWII Epic of Escape and Endurance

Author: David Howarth, Ace Mass Market Paperback, New York, NY, 1955, reissued by The Lyons Press, Guilford, CT, 1999 (272p; paperback), ISBN: 1558219730. Review by Bob Zeman (#878)

Editor's Note: If this story of espionage and survival were a novel, readers might dismiss the Shackleton-like exploits of its hero as too fantastic to be taken seriously. But respected historian David Howarth confirmed the details of Jan Baalsrud's riveting tale. In Bob Zemans own words:

I have always thought that the book *Manson's Will* by Lennard Bickel showed the greatest efforts of man's struggle to survive under severe weather conditions. But *We Die Alone*, although lesser known, is another epic struggle to make it to safe haven.

On March 29, 1943, a fishing-boat with 12 men set out from the Shetland Islands. Its objective was to land four saboteurs in German-occupied northern Norway, to blow up the German airfield Bardufoss.

The plan was to land at Toftefjord and meet up with an Allied sympathizer who would give them connections to the base and then to neutral Sweden. But they were betrayed by their contact and attacked by the Germans in a warship.

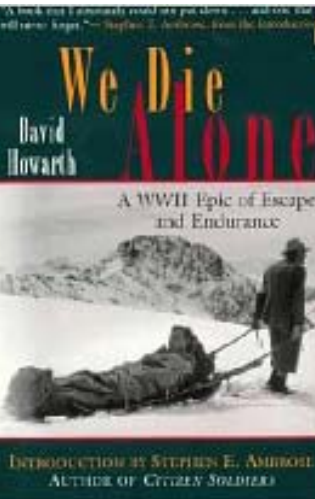
One of the party, Jan Baalsrud, escaped despite being wounded. He swam between

islands and then headed toward Sweden with few clothes, no money, and no identification.

For two and a half months, Jan was chased by the German occupiers. He had to sleep outside or in an abandoned cabin

for fear of jeopardizing those who aided him. He suffered from lack of food, lack of sleep, frostbite, gangrene, snow blindness, and other problems.

For four days, Jan was lost in the Lyngen Alps. He spent thirteen days in



a straw bunk in a ten by seven foot hut alone except for a visitor every few days. Later he was buried in a snow grave at the base of a rock for two periods of a week at a time. At one point, rescuers walked on top of his hideout but could not find him.

Even though the Swedish border was less than 100 miles away he had to cross numerous mountain passes in the snow to avoid his German pursuers.

This is a story of a man who absolutely refused to die.

Available online from Amazon.com, and

Forthcoming Programs

- March 19, 2009** – “Adventures in Mongolia” Andrea Donnallan
- March 19-25, 2009** – **NONSPONSORED ACTIVITY** – “Alaska Aurora Borealis Trip”
Dr. Rosaly Lopes
- March 26, 2009** – Al Adams (#688) Memorial
- April 2, 2009** – “The Rolex Sydney Hobart Ocean Race” Bill Star
- April 9, 2009** – “Update on Phoenix Project (Mars exploration)” Leslie Tamppari
- April 16, 2009** – “Wilderness Survival and Wild Foods” Chris Nyerges
- April 23, 2009** – “Petersen Automotive Museum” Dick Messer
- April 25, 2009** – **NONSPONSORED ACTIVITY** – “Private tour of the Petersen
Automobile Museum”
- April 30, 2009** – **LADIES’ NIGHT** – “Exploring the Nile” Pasquale Scaturro
- May 7, 2009** – “Surfing Rabbi” Nachum Shifren
- May 14, 2009** – “Mapping the World” Will Tefft
- May 21, 2009** – “The original Sky Chick” Ramona Cox
- May 28, 2009** – “Members Show Case”
-

NOTES

The Club is preparing a book project: *Stories from the Adventurers’ Club*. This book will contain stories of adventure from several of our members. We are looking for input, especially from our older members. Please send us your story, keeping the text to between 1,500 and 2,000 words, or less – if you are a person who is able to say much with few words. If you have a quality illustration or photo to accompany the story, send it as well. We will use it if we can.

If possible, send your material in electronic form, including your illustrations, BUT don’t let that stop you. If you must, write your story on the back of an envelope and mail it to us. If this was good enough for President Lincoln, I think we can deal with it as well. So get your material in to President Allan, Rick Flores, or myself as soon as you can. The deadline is fast approaching.

One more short matter. A large percentage of you have email addresses, but the email address we have on file for some of you is outdated. We really need to have your working email address so we can contact you in a hurry. It’s not a big deal – please send us your current email, and should you change it in the future, please put the Club on your mailing update list. Thanks!



The
Adventurers' Club News
PO Box 31226
Los Angeles CA 90031

FIRST CLASS MAIL

February / March 2009