

The Adventurers' Club News[®]

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Photo – Rick Flores

Canyon Walking – Mammoth Caves National Park

The Adventurers' Club News

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THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Larry Schutte #1121 - President



Another month flies by, and what a month of great presentations we had! July looks equally interesting, so stand by for more

great evenings at the Club. It's good to count on each Thursday for dinner, camaraderie, and a show! We on the Board are doing our best to keep up the quality and diversity that you guys expect from a great Club such as ours.

Donations for the NOHA silent auction are coming in, the latest from Pam Madden, offering a bunch of African artifacts from her Father-in-law. Much appreciated, Pam! You members please bring in objects that you think are appropriate for NOHA. It's a great way to generate operating capital for our organization. For those who didn't get the word, NOHA is Sunday, October 23rd at the Delfina Hotel in Santa Monica. Lot's more info in the coming weeks as to speakers, tickets, etc.

As you guys may have seen, there are new function buttons on the web site home page. Our new Facebook link in the top banner opens our new

Facebook presence in its own window. You'll be glad to know the sound of the ocean and gulls now fade out after 30 seconds so it won't be playing while you're doing "ur FB thang!" Facebook is an outstanding and easy way for all of us to keep in contact.

In 2015 Jim Cameron (#1129) will visit the ISS as part of a translunar flight in a *Soyuz* spacecraft. That info courtesy of Gary Hareland. Thanks Gar! All members are welcome to post to our FB page. Also, try our site search button in the top banner. You can search for things on our site exclusively. Very cool.

I'd like to welcome back Mike Gwaltney (#1128) from three weeks of travel. We missed you, buddy. Sometimes we don't appreciate what someone does until we go without. Such was the case with Mike, a valued and appreciated member, for sure.

On June 16th, we were happy to see Keith Chase (#664) attend the meeting. Keith was Club President in 1994, and has been an ongoing contributor to our Club for some time. Great to see you Keith. Please come back soon and often!

Well, that's it from the podium. Everyone have a safe 4th of July celebration. We'll be looking for you at the Club soon!

Wild Cave Tour: Mammoth Caves National Park

Rick Flores (#1120)

Photos by Rick Flores unless otherwise indicated

I had only been waiting a short while before the other novice spelunkers began to arrive. The National Park Service only allows fourteen persons to go on the “Wild Cave Tour” which is offered only on Saturdays. I had signed up for the tour well ahead of time, as had all the other people who were slowly mustering at the preassigned location in an outside area adjacent to the visitors’ center. I noticed that the other people arriving were very young. There didn’t seem to be anyone older than mid-twenties. I was fifty-one at the time, so all these people were half my age. I thought to myself, “What the hell have I gotten myself into this time?”

I first visited the Mammoth Caves when I was only twenty-eight years old. I was still a newlywed and was visiting Kentucky for the first time with my wife. She was born in Bowling Green; her family left there when Doris was still young and settled in Louisville. Doris wanted to show me the sights in her home state; so from Louisville we piled into a car and made the two-hour drive south to the Mammoth Caves – the only National Park in the state. Even then Doris couldn’t walk very far, so we signed up for the shortest tour with the rest

of the tourist horde. The tour was crowded and unspectacular until the ranger in charge of the tour demonstrated just how dark a cave could get. We were all seated in a large section of the cave that resembled an amphitheater. There is electricity available in the caves for the benefit of the

Photo Eric Sabin



Mammoth Caves Main Entrance

tourists. When we were all seated, the ranger announced that they would be turning off the lights. The lights went out and the cave became pitch black, not just dark – pitch black. You couldn’t see your hand in front of your face with your eyes wide open. The crowd began to murmur and get agitated; it was a disorienting experience. Then the ranger lit a single match, and it illuminated the whole room – it was magical. I was enthralled and I knew I would have to explore this unique environment more thoroughly in the future. I couldn’t know it at the time, but I would have a full head of gray hair before I stepped back into the caves.

The two rangers who would guide the tour showed up right on schedule. They were both named John; the leader was still in his twenties (John the Younger) and his assistant was closer to my age (John the Elder). They checked our footwear to make

sure we all had on the required high top hiking boots with lug soles, and suggested that if we had knee pads we put them on while they informed us about the rules and conditions of the tour. They said that it was the most dangerous guided tour offered in any of the National Parks; they told us that the tour would be long and strenuous; they warned us that anybody with lygophobia (fear of the dark), acrophobia, or claustrophobia should not go on the tour; and finally they explained that we would be taking



The Semio Groucho walk

a lunch break in the cafeteria (the snowball room of the cave) midway through the tour, and that anyone who felt unable to continue would have the opportunity to exit at that point. “The walk of shame,” I thought to myself. All of us began to size up our fellow novice spelunkers looking for the weak links. I realized uncomfortably that everybody, even the two Johns, kept looking back at me!

They issued us helmets with headlights, and showed us how to use the lights. They explained the different types of postures we would have to assume to get through the various sections of the caves. The first posture was the Groucho walk, named for the famous Marx Brothers’ manner of walking hunched over with his

hands clasped behind his back. For the long stretches where we would have low clearance, this was a very comfortable way to walk. For progressively lower clearances there was the spider walk. This involved scuttling forward on your hands and feet. Then there was crawling on your hands and knees, and finally there was sliding on your belly or rolling through small openings. This was getting interesting!

We piled into a couple of vans and headed for the cave opening. We entered the cave through a long and confusing series of

passages. It is very difficult finding your way around in a cave; it is dark and there are no geographical reference points or sun to give you an indication of what direction you are headed. We stayed in a tight group – the rangers insisted on this. We would walk, crawl, roll, or slide to some pre-assigned spot always in the same order. When the last person arrived, he announced his presence so the rangers would know that nobody was missing. John the Elder would usually trail behind, but he sometimes got ahead of the group via a series of shortcuts to provide assistance in some of the more dangerous areas. John the Younger led the group, and I was second. I’m sure he wanted to keep me close in case I had a heart

(Wild Cave continued on page 4)

Wild Cave Tour

(Wild Cave continued from page 3)

attack and needed CPR, but I didn't mind this ageist slight. It was actually better for me because I was the only one in the group that brought a camera (a cheapie point-and-shoot), and it allowed me to get great shots of the rest of the group making their way through the darkness.



The Mole Hole

The rangers do not decide beforehand where the tour will go; they do an assessment of the group during the first part of the tour and then decide where to take the group based on their capabilities. One of our first challenges was the "mole hole." We crawled through a narrow passageway up to what looked like an impossible-to-fit-through small opening in the cave wall. You slipped your arms through the hole first and then, wishing you had a more lubricated body, yanked the rest of yourself through the narrow opening. It was a very tight fit. We were told later that there was an even smaller hole called "the birth canal." We breathed a collective sigh of relief when they informed us that we would not attempt to crawl through that hole on this tour.

You use your whole body when you go spelunking; you need enough upper body strength to lower, drag, pull, or push yourself through dusty, rocky, and narrow vertical or horizontal passages. I was utilizing muscles that I didn't know I had, and these throbbing muscles were paying me back for the long neglect. There were many low passages and you got used to the sounds of helmets clanging on the cave ceiling. Gloves and knee pads were recommended, but not required. I was sure glad that I brought mine along! Most of the group also had knee pads but those who didn't paid the price constantly with torn clothing and battered knees. We performed well as a group; there were no weak links, and no one complained. The

Photo Daniel Gierczyk



The Snowball Room

exercises were grueling but fun. We helped each other and got along very well. Spirits stayed high the whole day, and I was having the time of my life.

When we finally broke for lunch, we looked a mess. We were dirty and sweaty from head to toe. We trudged into the Snowball Room and the oth-

er tourists eating lunch there wouldn't stop staring and pointing at us. We looked like bedraggled yuppie coal miners! Nobody took the "walk of shame," and we were all excited when the rangers told us that we had performed well and that they would be taking us to some of the more challenging sections of the caves. I ate my lunch with John the Elder. He was a recently retired school teacher, and was working his way up to being a tour leader. Like everybody else I met on the tour, he seemed to be having a great time.

We visited many different parts of the cave after lunch. The most spectacular was the cathedral domes that did indeed look like the inside of a very primitive rocky gothic cathedral. You could only look up the tall



The Cathedrals

shafts as far as your light could reach, but it was enough to catch glimpses of the towering domes above dripping water. It was an eerie and beautiful sight. We visited a section with some gypsum flowers. These flowers were more interesting formations and were in a more pristine state than

the gypsum formations found in the Snowball Room or any of the other



Gypsum Tiger Lily

more frequent areas of the cave. One flower in particular, the Tiger Lily, was clearly marked by a makeshift sign and was quite beautiful.

The most exciting part of the tour was the canyon walking. This involved descending a slot-canyon-like section of the cave maintaining three-point contact with the two walls while climbing to the bottom. The drop off was daunting, but wasn't far enough down to be lethal. If you did fall, however, you could injure yourself to the point where you wouldn't walk out of the cave under your own power. The Rangers were very cautious with us in this section. They provided added assistance to anybody who asked for it. Many people did, since it was such a steep drop.



John Elder aiding the canyon walkers

The dirtiest part of the tour and the most fun was the Otter Slide. This was a chute-like passage with muddy

(Wild Cave continued on page 6)

Wild Cave Tour

(Wild Cave continued from page 5)

water flowing through it. You sat down, pushed yourself forward, and



The Otter Slide

slid through the water. It was just like a Wham-O Slip-and-Slide, only muddier. I was the first to go down, and it was great. I felt like a kid again getting dirty just for the hell of it. John the Elder was at the bottom of the slide to make sure you didn't slam into a wall or group of rocks. When I finished the too-short-slide, I quickly jumped to my feet and got some great shots of everybody else finishing their slides. What a glorious muddy mess!

We went through one horizontal section that was extremely narrow. We were told beforehand to decide which direction we wanted to face, because once inside this narrow passage there was insufficient space to turn a head. I followed John the Younger. At first there was enough space to crawl, but that quickly changed. Soon I was sliding on my belly like a reptile. I had on a fanny pack (backpacks were not allowed in the caves and I needed someplace to put my camera, gloves, trail mix, and

water), but I took that off and pushed it in front of me when the passage narrowed. There are size limitations on the tour. Chest or hip measurement could not exceed forty-two inches, and I was beginning to understand the wisdom of that restriction. I regretted having a sandwich and ice



Rolling in the dark

cream for lunch! "My god," I thought to myself, "I can barely move!" I finally got to the narrowest section, and sure enough, I could feel the cave walls touching both my ears. As promised, I didn't have enough room to turn my head. It took all the energy I had to get through that final section, and what a liberating feeling it was when I finally got out and could move normally again.

That was the highlight of the tour for me.

We finally finished our adventure after six-and-a-half long hours of exploration. The tour had exceeded all of my expectations. It was very strenuous, but absolutely fantastic. I was exhausted – everybody was, but we all had beatific smiles on our faces when we got back to the sunlight. We

(Wild Cave continued on page 20)

Sonic Safari to Hollywood

Charles Jonkey (#1026)

My exotic Sonic Safari travels have taken me to very strange places to document amazing events. A few examples: Recording a Ute/Navaho Peyote Ceremony inside a primitive tee pee, eating jungle rats in the Amazon while recording deep rainforest sounds, filming natives pounding on stalactites, creating echoing cave music in eastern Java, participating in the passionate Indonesian Kecak Monkey Dance, and lots of other crazy experiences.

I've been able to earn a living doing what I love – adventure travel and music. My Sonic Safari music label is full of rare, magical audio recordings from these compelling adventures.

My audio recordings include *Islamic Women Rice Pounders* – Indonesian women singing as they pound rice, *Russian Underground* – marvelous sounds of Mother Russia, *Gnawa Abdul* – exotic Moroccan trance music, *Gender Wayang* – mysterious music of the Shadow Puppets, *Jegog* – forceful gigantic bamboo xylophone music, and *Maya Music* – haunting ritual music of Guatemalan Indians. I filmed many of these sessions, and am editing them together for a TV series: *Exotic Worlds*. Six episodes are being viewed in several countries. Allan Smith (#1069) is the producer.

My work has required sacrifices over the years to find cultural nuggets in very austere places, but it has been worth the effort, resulting in over 100 recordings. (See: www.SonicSafariMusic.com)

A perk of my global treks is learning about unique musical instruments. My collection of rare, exotic musical instruments includes one-of-a kind, primitive, instruments like gigantic bamboo xylophones, gongs, sitars, guchen, tambouras, and drums of all types. As I compose music, I find that each of these distinctive instruments contributes its own unique sound for a rainbow of colorful sonic possibilities. It's like painting wild tropical colors onto a musical canvas to create something totally new and stimulating. Its always a musical adventure!

Many of my recordings and compositions have been used in Hollywood productions: *Rambo IV*, *Beyond Borders*, *Nip & Tuck*, *Proof of Life*, *The Hoop Life*, *Mighty Joe Young*, *Super Structures of the World*, *Jade*, *Heaven & Earth*, *Fern Gully*, *The Last Rainforest*, *J.F.K.*, *The Doors*, and lots more.

So a Sonic Safari to Hollywood is really not that farfetched!

Photo Chuck Jonkey



Chuck Jonkey & Joked

What's Happening...

Henry Moore – OTGA

At the meeting on the 17th, Larry Schutte tolled the bell for Henry Moore #954 who departed on the great adventure. Reminiscences of him were few because he lived in Oregon. Also very few of us old timers remembered him. His bio says that he lived some time in Fairbanks, Alaska, on government projects of cold weather testing. He hunted moose and caribou. He explored the back roads of England by bicycle. He skied on the slopes of the Matterhorn. He served in WWII as a flight engineer.

Bob Zeman (#878) reports

Don Walsh “Never bored”

Presently in Berlin for Explorers Club board of directors meeting [6/11]. Off by train to Warsaw today and six days in Poland. Some university lectures and a little touring. Next Sunday I fly to Geneva and will be doing a dive in Lake Geneva in one of the Russian Mir submersibles. Also I will host “premiere” of a doco I did with Rolex about the Rolex-Trieste history.

Home on the 18th; then to DC for the National Geographic Society’s weeklong Explorers Symposium.

Never bored...

Don Walsh (#1042) as communicated to Joe Valencic (#1109)

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...”

Dave Banks attacked by camel

Photo Dave Banks



Parting shot

I was attacked by a camel today. I was knocked down from behind while shooting Tuareg nomads who were riding camels against a *Lawrence of Arabia* backdrop. All I remember was a loud belch, the tripod and camera falling to earth and a giant camel toe next to my head as I laid on the ground. My scalp and shirt were wet – not blood, but camel saliva that was as thick as jello. After dusting myself off and getting back to work, I detected an odd smell of coffee grounds mixed with asparagus emanating from my hair and stained shirt. Later tonight I plan to stand in the shower with my clothes on and free myself from camel drool and Sahara sand. My clothes will be dry by morning.

Last shot of the day and a welcome relief from the desert heat. If all goes well this will be the money shot – but most of the time it is just plain luck and being in the right place to capture a good image.

Dave Banks (#1156) reports

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

I spent Friday in a small village north of Battambang Cambodia, where our demining team has found nearly 100 landmines in the past two months. The villagers live within twenty-five meters of where we are clearing; and on a quiet afternoon you can hear the sounds of Thai artillery shelling Cambodian positions west of Preah Vihear Temple.

Our team dresses in camos when they work, and when we first showed up the villagers were quite concerned that we were soldiers showing up to start a new front on the Thia border.

Can't think of better work...

– Bill Morse #1130

Thanks for the update, Bill, and for what you do!

– Editor

To the Editor:

Nice write up about the Tornado, which is no longer the deadliest since 1955. Joplin, MO, now holds this record.

– Rick Jackson

Rick Jackson is our Webmaster

– Editor

To the Editor:

Last Wednesday, 23 Mar, about 0300, I awoke with a severe pain across my chest and pain in both upper arms. The most likely candidate there was a heart attack. So I got dressed and drove into Bayboro to contact the Rescue Squad only to find nobody home. My reason for driving in was that I didn't want a screaming ambulance waking up a radius of a mile of Eastern Pamlico County!

Next, I contacted the Sheriff's office and they informed me that the ambulance was out but was on its way back. Meantime, a deputy arranged for the ambulance to pick me up at the courthouse, which they did. The ambulance crew were a pair of ladies that sure know their business.

After strapping me to the gurney and plastering me with a buncha patches, to which they connected a buncha wires, we were off to the hospital in New Bern, siren in full voice. Quickest trip I ever made to NB! After going thru an ER routine, I was assigned a room that was buried deep in the maze of the hospital and spent the following 40 hours in, probably, the most uncomfortable bed in my memory. However, in its defense, I suspect that I just never found the right combination – apparently 40 hours wasn't enough.

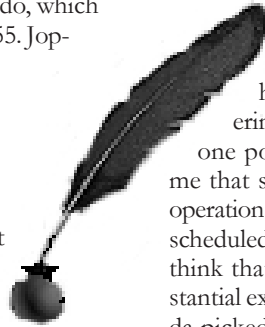
The “resident” 2nd floor doctor was a charming Swedish lady who had been born and grew up in Sweden although she received her higher degrees in the USA. Remarkably, she had learned her English (American, really) so well that I couldn't find even a trace of a Swedish accent. We had a nice long visit and she seemed to be fascinated by my big adventures.

Various doctors, nurses and technicians paid visits during my hours, taking measurements, gathering information and giving advice. At one point, an MD cardiologist informed me that some of the tests indicated that an operation (angioplasty?) was necessary and was scheduled for the following morning. I had a think that one over since it involved a substantial expenditure although Medicare woulda picked up most of it. Whatever, I won a delay (if not a cancellation) and will undergo a treadmill stress test next week for further analysis of the problem. A second cardiologist said that I had experienced a minor heart attack which was still a few steps away from the big show and that I'd done the right thing by blowing the whistle.

There, how's that for me to starting off my day with a little excitement!

– Ed Boden #659

Glad you're still with us, Ed! We wish you a speedy recovery. Keep us informed. – Editor



Robert G. Williscroft #1116 – Editor



Technology advances rapidly. For example, the time between the Wright Brothers' first flight and Neil Armstrong's

first step on the Moon was just sixty-six years. From Kitty Hawk to the Sea of Tranquility – just sixty-six years.

On May 25, we observed the fiftieth anniversary of President John Kennedy's announcement that the United States would place a man on the Moon by the end of the decade. Virtually everyone who was old enough in 1961 remembers that announcement and the thrill it produced. And we did it – twelve times, in fact.

When Columbus “discovered” the New World, things moved forward from there. The guys didn't stay for a while, and then pack up their marbles and go home. But that's exactly what we have done with the Moon and worlds beyond. By any realistic measure, we should have had a continuing presence on Mars for at least twenty years, and even into the asteroid belt. What happened to the progress that took us from Kitty Hawk to the Sea of Tranquility in sixty-six years, and then left us stranded back here for the next thirty-nine years?

In a word: Government. Initially, NASA was strongly supported and well funded. It made amazing progress. But

as national politics changed, as political priorities changed, the impetus behind NASA changed, so that we never went back, and we still are not scheduled to go back.

What do you suppose would have happened had the Wright Brothers decided to let the government take over their research and development? Do you believe we would have our present worldwide air travel system? But getting into space is expensive, you might argue. I don't disagree, but look at what is happening in the commercial space flight world: Virgin Galactic, SpaceX, XCOR Aerospace, Google Lunar X-prize. I suspect that if we had put the project into private hands right at the beginning, or turned it over to private industry after we reached the Moon, we might not have lost thirty-nine years.

Well, all that is changing now, and part of that change is coming very close to our Club. Our very own James Cameron (#1129) laid out a cool \$150 million for a seat aboard the Russian *Soyuz*. Jim's adventure will take him to the *International Space Station* for a visit, and then on to and a round the Moon on a journey lasting seventeen days. His trip is currently scheduled to launch sometime in 2015.

Bon voyage, Jim. Many of us would gladly join you, if we could.

The password for the online full-color edition is “*acla1107*”.

BOOK REVIEW — WAR

Sebastian Junger, *Twelve*, New York, NY, 2011, 296 p; 5 x 8 hardcover. ISBN: 978-0-446-55624-8. Review by Bob Zeman (#878).

Over fifteen months, Sebastian Junger followed a single platoon based at a remote Afghan outpost. His objective: to convey what soldier's experience – what war actually feels like. In this book, he describes things that few civilians will ever go through: the numbing anticipation of battle, the automatic risks soldiers take during combat to protect their brothers, the adrenaline-fueled confusion of being ambushed. Throughout, Junger draws on biology, psychology, and military history to explain the decisions they make and put their ordeals in context. The result is an acutely observed and heartfelt depiction of something young men have lived for millennia – and that remains, even today, the ultimate test of character.

The documentary *Restrepo* is based on *War*.

Junger and associate Tim Hetherington followed the US Army's Second Platoon for fifteen months in the Korengal Valley. Observation Post Restrepo, from which the platoon simulta-

neously fought and worked to build for a 24-hour period, had no running water, electricity, TV, Internet, phone, alcohol or anyone of the opposite sex – essentially everything young men love.

Every guy at Restrepo was almost killed literally. According to Junger, someone is just rolling the dice up there in the sky on the odds of survival. The enemy is shooting from 400 feet away and the bullet misses its target by inches.

He notes that in combat, soldiers are able to be self-defining through self-sacrifice for the group. When they return to society, they may feel judged for things they have no control over, like appearance – losing the respect they felt in combat.

The best civilians can do is give veterans a job and a sense of utility – something those returning must rediscover.

Junger's fellow filmmaker, Tim Hetherington, was killed by a mortar in April, while covering the civil war in Libya. In the end, Junger learned the ultimate truth about war isn't that you might die but that you will lose your brothers.



THURSDAY NIGHTS AT THE CLUB

May 19, 2011

Marc Weitz (#1144)

Returning from adventure
Chuck Jonkey #1026 – Spent a few days on a ranch in Tijuana where a friend runs an orphanage.

Steve Bein #1057 – Returned from a bird watch and photo shoot in West Texas

Jay Foonberg #1126 – Participated in the Beta Breakers race, calling it a huge party.

Leaving on Adventure

Rita Anderson – She and **Ralph White** will board a military aircraft, land on the *USS Stennis* to observe night operations, and eat dinner with the captain.

Alan Smith #1069 – Off to Bishop to see the last run of the 20-Mule Team. He will be organizing another trip to the Champion ghost town.

Alan Feldstein #1094 – Drew a winning ticket in a lottery for passes to raft down the Colorado River.

Bob Oberto #1124 – He and Rich are putting together a soaring trip for June 5th.

Gil Garcetti

Former District Attorney Gil Garcetti, an avid photographer and philanthropist, spoke about photography and his efforts to bring clean water to villages in West Africa. Gil was introduced by Martin Bloom #1147, who brought the speaker to the Club after meeting him at a Sierra Club function. Born and raised in Los

Angeles, Gil served as the Los Angeles District Attorney from 1992 to 2000, becoming the man in charge of prosecuting OJ Simpson for double homicide. His son Eric has followed his father into politics, winning a spot on the city council in 2000.

Gil started by discussing his project of photographing the construction of the Disney Concert Hall. He wanted to get on to the construction site, but citing liability concerns, the construction company turned his request down. Not taking “no” for an answer, he called up the iron workers’ union, who had supported his campaign. With their help, Gil got onto the site.

Gil showed us beautifully taken black and white photos of the Disney Concert Hall under construction. He explained that in most buildings iron fittings are standard size, but Disney Concert Halls’ wandering shapes and curves, required each iron fitting to be both different and specially placed by crane. Gill climbed, crawled, and traversed the bare structure, taking pictures of the workers, the crisscross patterns made by the structural skeleton, and the play of light between the iron works. He called it the most adventurous and stupidest thing he had ever done.

From these photos, Gill created a book. He joked that the LA Times gave the book a good review, which may have been the first positive thing they ever said about him. Next, he returned to the site with an “X-Pan”

camera to take panoramic photos. The LA Times gave him seven pages in their Sunday magazine to display these stunning photos.

Gill traveled to Cuba with his wife to take photos, where he was taken by the festive atmosphere. Dance companies would come from out of town to Havana and would advertise themselves by dancing through the streets. For carnival, the Cubans made elaborate costumes from foil and cigarette cartons. While there, he met Manita, who, at 78, still dances with the guys at carnival.

For his most recent book, *Girls Cycling in Paris*, he photographed women bicycling through the streets of Paris. Many of the photos look like flashbacks to the 1950s. He began the book by taking photos in black and white and then switching to color.



Girls Cycling in Paris

The last part of his talk, dealt with his important work in providing clean water to villagers in West Africa. After 9/11, Mr. Garcetti realized that most of these countries in West Africa are Muslim, and the U.S. had to be seen helping Muslims. He began working with a nonprofit called Well-spring to bring clean water to West

Africa.

Lack of clean water is an important issue in Africa.

Photo Gil Garcetti



West African village women carrying water

In Niger, the Tuaregs are at war with the rest of the country over clean water. Many West African countries, such as Niger and Burkina Faso, are poorer than Haiti. Some villagers

walk miles daily to get water from a well that is clean enough to drink. The wells and seasonal ponds that provide water, are often fouled by animals and dust. For six months of the year a wind blows through the desert twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

Waterborne illnesses are a huge risk in Africa. The guinea worm is found in

Photo fastinthelowlane



3 to 4 ft Guinea Worm being extracted

foul water. This parasite grows beneath the skin where, unless removed, it cre-

(Minutes continued on page 14)

ates fiery pain in the limbs causing the host to seek out water to ease the burning pain. In the water, the worm punches through the skin to lay its eggs into the water. The worm can be removed by local doctors by cutting the skin, coiling the worm around a stick, and carefully rolling it out of the host.

Some Africans try to filter water through a cloth, which is not very effective. Gil works to bring modern wells to these communities. He photographed wells built by his organizations. Women are trained to use and repair the wells. They charge a small fee, which goes for maintaining the well. Aside from improving health, the wells have allowed the villagers to grow vegetables.

Gil extolled the benefits of microloans, which are helping West Africans start money making businesses. One such business is the production of shea butter. He talked about Abu, a woman who, along with 150 other women, raises and sells goats. They have raised and sold 6,000 goats. The proceeds are providing the community with medical care and schooling.

West Africans know the consequences of not having clean water and feel blessed by the new wells. Gil

met a chief who lamented those in his generation who died from water-borne disease. He now sees a brighter future for his grandson.

Through Wellspring, individuals and groups can sponsor a well, which cost \$11,200 each. All profits from Gil's book go to creating new wells. More information on Wellspring can be found at <http://www.wellspringafrica.org>.

May 26, 2011

Marc Weitz (#1144)

Returning from Adventure

Dan Young #683 – Just returned from living in Australia for six months of the year. He says that the most exciting thing to happen in Australia during that time was the arrival of Oprah. He also went to Sri Lanka, and says that it is recovering nicely following the end of its civil war, and that it is a great place to visit.

Shane Berry #1093 – His son Scott Berry just returned from five weeks in South Africa. He's recovering from African Tick Fever.

Charles Carmona #1136 – Will do a program on Sri Lanka this summer.

Derek Borthwick #1061 – Just returned from Brazil where he experienced the consequences of inflation.

Jeff Holmes #1148 – Had an exciting adventure visiting a cabin in Iowa owned by his family since 1893. He wants to determine if the O'Hares living next door are the same O'Hares of the Chicago Airport notoriety.

Bob Walters #1047 – Returned

Photo Gil Garcetti



Gil visits natives

from South Carolina where he saw Fort Sumter.

Bob Oberto #1124 – Went scuba diving in Maui

Heaton Armstrong #1064 – Returned from Australia

Neil Mandt #1152 – Jeff Holmes reported that Neil is shooting a documentary.

Leaving on Adventure

Rick Flores #1120 and **Shane Berry #1093** will join **Ralph Perez #1150** for part of his quest to trek the Pacific Crest Trail.

Steve Bein #1057 – Up to Wyoming for business and then to Mt. Evans.

Mike Gwaltney #1128 – Traveling to Italy, Greece, and Turkey.

Bob Oberto #1124 – Camping in the Mojave for a long weekend. Then doing some tow-piloting to pull sail planes for flight testing.

Billy Burke #1157 – Reported by Jay Foonberg: He didn't make the summit of Everest. The Sherpas did not have enough oxygen to make the summit, and he had to turn back. Billy is going to confront the expedition company about this.

Fred Schilling #1031 – Sent a postcard to the club saying that he is moving to Kentucky because that state has a budget surplus.

Other Presentations

Steve Bein #1057 showed photos of perches and other birds photographed at a ranch outside Edinburg, Texas.

From Mongolia to the U.S. on foot via Siberia

Photos Pierre Odier

We were in for a treat tonight when Pierre Odier #988 gave a program he rarely presents. Calling it a difficult presentation, due to its many facets, and some run-ins with national security, Pierre took us through his 1994 trip from Mongolia, into the upper reaches of Siberia, and across the Bering Strait to Alaska. Jim Dorsey, a friend and frequent travel companion, introduced Pierre's presentation.

Pierre discussed his fascination with documenting vanishing cultures. The object of this journey was to visit a dwindling tribe in northern Siberia called the Yukaghir. Logistics were tricky, beginning with Russian maps. A friend helped him obtain secret U.S. maps. Next was obtaining requisite permissions from the post-Soviet, Russian government. To facilitate this, Pierre got a temporary professorship from the University of Moscow. Pierre, who doesn't drink often, lubricated the entire process by drinking vodka with various government officials. Although Russian officials wanted him to start from Moscow, he arranged instead to start at Lake Baikal.

Initially, Pierre radioed back his adventures to the Adventurers' Club via ham radio, but that was stopped by officials. Later, he was supposed to be picked up in a plane piloted by a couple Club members, but that fell through.

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The vast reaches of Siberia north of the Trans-Siberian Railway are very remote, and frequently operat-



Pierre with Yuri Ivanovich the Evenke Minority Leader

ed much as they were during the Soviet era with loudspeakers still blaring propaganda. At one check point Pierre was strip-searched. They wanted his gold ring, but he told them that it was stuck and couldn't be removed. Pierre managed to get a car to take him east, where they dropped him and his stuff off at a lonely corner. Even though the mosquitoes were rampant, Pierre couldn't light a fire to keep them away because it would alert the locals to his location.

At Lake Baikal, Pierre hired a boat captain to take him to the top of the river. The captain was a fan of vodka and spent most the journey drunk. This is where the famous Russian gulags are found. Here, Pierre met Anton, who would be his guide for the trip. They agreed not to discuss politics or religion, but would split the women. Anton gave him much insight into the local culture, even ex-

plaining how to kill a bear with bare hands. They stayed with a Russian family who arranged their on a boat passage up river. As civilization slipped away, pirate boats patrolled the river. Pierre was told to hide during these confrontations, for fear that the pirates would extort higher demands from a Westerner.

Pierre and Anton continued to hire boats until they reached the Yukaghir tribe. The tribe lives in primitive wooden huts and travel by foot. Pierre met a man wouldn't admit his age, but Pierre was able to guess him to be in his 80s based on his recollections of governments and gulags. This man's only possessions were a hut, some tools, food, and a stove. This man gave Pierre information on the tribe, reduced to only eight men at this point. He introduced Pierre to the shaman who took him on a two-day journey to the sacred tree. During the journey, Pierre tried to take GPS readings to document the location. The shaman was fascinated by Pierre's equipment, but he could not understand how the device worked or what its purpose was. Pierre eventually just told him that it was a calculator.

During the night, a bear entered their camp and killed a moose, which pleased the shaman who said that normally bears went after humans and their possessions. The shaman took the bones from the moose remains and set them in the fire. From how they cracked, he predicted

Pierre's future, foretelling a difficult journey home. At the tree, the shaman said a few incantations, and they returned home. Pierre lamented that this might be the last visit to the sacred tree. When it was time for Pierre to leave, there was no transportation. They eventually located a boat, but four hours out the engine failed. Apparently, the tribe suspected something might happen, and sent another boat to fix the engine.

Farther up river, Pierre arrived at an abandoned village that was once home to a famous writer. He learned that the gulags killed a staggering ten million or more people – more than those killed in the Holocaust. Throughout the region, Pierre stumbled across remnants of the gulags, such as bridges and factories. He met a soldier who took him to a gulag worksite where the prisoners had a six- to seven-month lifespan. Gulag commanders used human bones and skulls as foundations for roads; human remains were everywhere. The Magadan Society is collecting remnants from the gulags in an effort to document the story.

From here, Pierre took a boat to an abandoned city that had been fortified against American invasion with a battalion of decoy tanks. One man remained there on official duty, to move the tank turrets every-so-often so that American satellites thought they were still active. In the city, he visited an abandoned headquarters

where he found secret aviation documents and some classified plans of the base. In one of these intact buildings, Pierre and Anton spent the night in their clothes in case they needed to make a quick getaway. Nearby was one of Russia's most productive gold mines, still operating. If caught there, they would have been shot. It was there that Pierre was shown a "secret weapon." It looked like a simple crane, but he didn't know what it was. Pierre bribed a female local official with chocolate and other things to show him the archives. There he discovered a letter written by Stalin, ordering that the area be fortified.

Still not exactly knowing how he would get home, Pierre learned of a military flight that would move him



Pierre Behind the Controls Over Yakan Siberia in Panic Mode

along the path. After takeoff, the pilot asked Pierre if he knew how to fly. Not understanding the question, Pierre said yes. The pilot promptly gave Pierre the controls, instructing him to remain near the coast, and went in the back to drink vodka. When he

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(Minutes continued from page 17)

returned, the pilot became upset because Pierre had drifted away from the coast.

Pierre learned of a helicopter a day's walk away. From there he flew



Shortly before boarding chopper

to the coast where he hoped to catch a canoe across the Bering Strait. Since there were no spare canoes, he hired some Eskimos to build him one. During those two-and-a-half weeks, he made friends with a dog who had



Bonding with dog in Uelen Siberia

been exiled as unfit for a dog sled team. The natives caught a seal, and stretched out his skin to cover the whole boat. When the canoe was ready, Pierre and a couple of natives boarded and set out for Alaska accompanied by a second canoe. The

dog Pierre had befriended tried to follow, but Pierre had to leave him behind.

To Pierre, it looked like they could walk across the strait, but it turned out there were many leads that the canoes had to navigate. Both canoes had engines, and they navigated the 90-mile journey by the feel of the waves. In the end, however, only Pierre's canoe completed the crossing. The second one disappeared. Across the strait, the Siberian natives greeted their Alaskan counterparts as though no foreign borders existed. Although the canoe was supposed to belong to Pierre, he had no idea how to get it home. So, he caught a flight back to civilization, ending his wonderful adventure.

June 2, 2011

Bob Zeman (#878)

Our guests tonight were the wreck divers.

Recent CSUN graduate and guest George competed in the Mud Run near Big Bear on Saturday. The run of about 10 ½ miles consists of obstacles such as crawling through a pipe with rocks in it, dodging wires with electric charges, walking through cold water and trying to run through mud. It took four-and-a-half hours.

Jay Foonberg showed a Chinese opera robe that he bought forty years ago. Jay is going to Shanghai, where he will ride the 220-mile-per-hour train.

Ralph Perez has completed about 600 miles of the Pacific Crest Trail. He is averaging close to 25 miles per day and is now near Lake Isabella.

Deep Blue Marine and Shipwrecks

Photos Wilf Blum

Tom Oedy went on a dive trip with Deep Blue Marine in the Caribbean. He introduced our speaker Wilf Blum, CEO of Deep Blue Marine.

Wilf is engaged in underwater survey, exploration and recovery of important historical treasures and artifacts. He operates in the Dominican Republic under contract.

The Dominican Republic has little cultural history. This despite Christopher Columbus having built a castle there and his brother Bartolomeo having a home there, both of which still stand.

In 2007 Wilf worked with Tracy Bowden of Caribe Salvors to recover artifacts from *Scipion*, a ship that sank off the coast of the D. R. in 1782.

The 74-gun French vessel had fought on our side in the War of Independence. It was a copper-bottomed ship carrying 350 sailors, 350 marines and about 40 deck hands. On its return home, the *Scipion* was engaged in battle with two

English vessels in the Mona Passage off of Hispaniola.

After a battle, the *Scipion* sought refuge in Samana Bay. But the ship struck two coral reefs which opened the bottom and she went down in thirty feet of water. These reefs are still visible. Most of the crew made it to shore but the vessel was a complete loss.



Wilf Blum & Deep Blue crew

Wilf and Deep Blue recovered over a hundred lifting blocks, dead eyes, cannons, muskets, rail guns, cannon balls, musket balls, pottery, vases, and coins.

He also found numerous personal items such as buttons from shirts, jackets, breeches, shoe buckles, coats, garters, hats, knives, forks, spoons, plates, pots and pans, hair combs and brushes. He also pulled up timbers, rope fittings, anchors, and thousands of brass nails.



Divers on wreck

The artifacts are in excellent shape because fresh water from a local river flows over them depositing mud. His company received many of the artifacts, and they are housed in a museum in the town of Samana.

Wilf also dove Lake Powell on the plane that Rulon Gardner crashed. It sits on the bottom at 110 feet.

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Deep Blue is planning dives on a five-mile stretch of beach where seventeen shipwrecks are buried under sand. The D. R. gets about half, so Wilf feels reasonably secure in his search.



Recovered treasure

Wilf passed around coins that he recovered. Several are marked MP, indicating they were minted in Mexico City. He has four of a set of five. The last set of five sold for \$3.4 million.

Wilf has three boats. The *Karli Ann* is a 77-foot 88-ton recovery vessel. The *Lady Laura* is a 40-foot survey ship. The *Kerri Lynn* is the newest member of the fleet. All are based in the D. R.

In response to questions from the audience, Wilf said that Odyssey is the major player in the treasure wreck business.

Mel Fisher used to be the major player when he discovered *the Nuestra Senora de Atocha*. He had offered a \$10,000 bonus to the first person to find an artifact from the *Atocha*. His son Dirk found a cannon and he and his wife Angel bought a Peugeot with the money. Ironically, a few days later



the boat on which they were working sank, and they died.

Wilf passed around examples of artifacts that he has found.

said our good-byes, and I headed back to Louisville. I was adorned in mud and dirt from head to toe. I don't re-



Rick & the kids

member the long drive back, but when my wife and her sister caught sight of me walking up the driveway. I could hear them saying "Oh my god look at him. He's filthy!"

I headed straight for the bathroom where I stripped down and took a shower. The water felt great. I looked down and watched six-and-a-half hours of grime, sweat, mud, dust, and fun disappear down the drain. We had a large supper (you always have a large supper in the south), and I talked through the whole meal about my experience in the caves. Afterward, I announced that I was very tired and needed to go to bed.

Even though it was still early, Doris, my ever loyal wife, decided to go to bed with me. Before I fell asleep she asked me, "Honey, how do you feel?"

I responded, "Baby, even my eyelashes hurt." With that I nodded off and slept the deepest and most satisfying sleep I have ever slept.

Forthcoming Programs

June 23, 2011	- Captain Woody – Circumnavigating the World
June 30, 2011	- Marstan Smith – Lord of the Cello
July 7, 2011	- Daniel Robinson – Behind the Scenes, On a Shoestring
July 14, 2011	- Dave Gunn – Rafting the Grand Canyon
July 21, 2011	- Dr. Craig B. Smith – Stragglers: Prisoners of Conscience
July 28, 2011	- Fran Capo – Fast talking Women Adventurer
August 4, 2011	- David Banks – On Location shooting in Australia
August 11, 2011	- Mark Weitz – Art Deco Architecture in Africa
August 18, 2011	- Father Gregory Boyle – Nothing Stops A Bullet Like A Job
August 25, 2011	- Rick Flores – Backyard wilderness

My Love for Thee

*A poem by Bob Gannon about his love for his World
Flying Adventure companion, Lucky Lady Too.*

She wanted to travel the world, she did.
She wished for me to come along.
So off we traveled the world, we did.
For a decade and beyond.

I had never married, nor children had I.
And she was free to go.
So up into the sky we went,
To see the earth below.

I had a love before, I did.
I didn't treat her so well.
We left each other in Kenya, I confess
It makes me sad to tell.

And so this Lady and I did go.
Even though we were up in years. *Lucky Lady Two*
We hooked up to see the world. *Wright Memorial*
To put aside our fears.

We set off into a wind one morning.
It was over ten years ago.
Yes, just the two of us, we left.
To discover what we did not know.

We began to look out for each other.
As we went from here to there.
A fondness became a Gratefulness.
That blossomed beyond compare.

Don't say No until you Know.
It was our motto, our plan.
With enthusiasm lead by curiosity,
Out to experience all we can.

Her heart is bigger than most.
She is faithful, true and kind.
Her curiosity is immense, never wavering.
Possibly, greater than mine.

I would leave her for moments and at times.
As we traveled so far away.
Yet, she was always so glad to see me.
At the start every new day.

Together we traveled the continents.
To see what we could see.
We went east and west and up and
down.

Oh my, but, how we were free.

And now we return back
From which and where we began.
With dearness for each other,
That few souls understand.

You see the woman I speak of,
Is neither of flesh nor blood.
But this Lady, she is, to me at least,
A Lady that I love.



Photo Bob Gannon

*Lucky Lady Two
Wright Memorial*



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