

# The Adventurers' Club News

Volume 52

July/August 2008

Number 4



WhiteKnight Two – “Eve” – with SpaceShip Two



# The Adventurers' Club News

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

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## Where no man has gone before

Virgin Galactic & Robert G. Williscroft, #1116

On July 28, 2008, Virgin Founder, Sir Richard Branson and *SpaceShip One* designer, Burt Rutan, pulled back the hangar doors on the new *WhiteKnightTwo (WK2)*. *WK2* will ferry *SpaceShipTwo* and thousands of private astronauts, science packages, and payloads on the first stage of the Virgin Galactic suborbital space experience.

The rollout represents another major milestone in Virgin Galactic's quest to launch the world's first private, environmentally benign, space access system for people, payload, and science.

Christened "EVE" in honor of Sir Richard's mother, who performed the official naming ceremony, *WK2* is both visually remarkable and represents ground-breaking aerospace technology. It is the world's largest all carbon composite aircraft and many of its component parts have been built using composite materials for the very

first time. At 140 ft, the wing spar is the longest single carbon composite aviation component ever manufactured.

Driven by a demanding performance specification set by Virgin Galactic, *WK2* has a unique heavy lift, high altitude capability. Its open architecture design provides maximum versatility in payload weight, mass and volume. It has the power, strength and maneuverability to provide positive G force and zero G astronaut training. *WK2* has a 30 percent



WhiteKnightTwo-SpaceShipOne launch sequence

greater lift capability than that represented by a fully crewed *SpaceShipTwo*. The vehicle has a maximum altitude over 50,000 ft, and its U.S. coast-to-coast range will allow the spaceship to be ferried on long duration flights.

An all carbon composite vehicle of this size represents a giant leap for material technology. This technology is playing a

*(Virgin Galactic continued on page 2)*

key role in commercial aviation's push for more fuel efficient aircraft. Powered by four Pratt and Whitney PW308A engines, among the most powerful, economic, and efficient available, *WK2* is a carbon efficiency mold breaker. It is the epitome of 21<sup>st</sup> century aerospace design and technology.

The twin fuselage and central payload allow for easy access, and the design also aids operational efficiencies and turnaround times. *WK2* will be able to support up to four daily space flights, is able to carry out both day and night time operations, and is

than 100 fully signed-up future Virgin Galactic astronauts flew into Mojave for the rollout onboard a new Airbus A320 aircraft

specially chartered from Virgin America, the youngest US domestic airline.

Rutan's Scaled Composites facility has been strictly out of bounds during design and construction, but guests for the rollout were given a tantalizing preview of *SpaceShipTwo*, clearly visible but heavily shrouded and well on its way to completion, in the smaller of Scaled's two hangars awaiting its own rollout in 2009. This will be scheduled once *WK2* is at the appropri-



Artist's conception of WhiteKnightTwo & SpaceShipOne in flight

ate stage in its extensive test program – already underway. The first test flight is scheduled for the fall of 2008, and *Space-*



*WK2* under construction



*SpaceShipTwo* under construction

equipped with a package of highly advanced avionics.

Large numbers of VIPs, media, and more

*ShipTwo* will be carried as a payload for the first time in 2009.



*WK2 & SpaceShipTwo under construction*

Commenting on the rollout, Burt Rutan, Founder of Scaled Composites said:

“*WhiteKnightTwo* represents the apogee of the application of carbon composites to aerospace and all of us at Scaled are tremendously excited at the capabilities of the Mother-ship for *SpaceShip Two*. I believe the vehicle will be developed and sold for a variety of launch applications beyond the initial requirements of our launch customer, Virgin Galactic. We have set up a new business jointly with Virgin, The Spaceship Company (TSC), to develop these vehicles and we very much hope that its efficiency will herald a wake up call to the aerospace industry and the necessity of using new



*Cutout view of SpaceShipTwo at apogee*



*Branson with model of WK2-SpaceShipTwo*

materials and technologies in the future.”  
Sir Richard Branson, Founder of Virgin



*Burt Rutan inside unfinished SpaceShipTwo*

Galactic added:

“As usual, Burt and the Scaled team have created a beauty, and this is a very proud day for us all. The rollout of *WhiteKnight Two* takes the Virgin Galactic vision to the next level and continues to provide tangible evidence that this most ambitious of projects is not only for real but is making tremendous progress towards our goal of safe commercial operation.

Virgin Galactic is central to our ambition at Virgin to become the world’s leading group in the operation of energy and environmentally efficient transportation, in the air, on the ground, and in space. We arrived here this morning on an aircraft oper-  
*(Virgin Galactic continued on page 21)*

## The Long, Lonely Leap

Judy Rumerman – U.S. Centennial of Flight Commission

The U.S. Military has often been involved in setting aviation records. In the 1920s and 1930s, the Golden Age of Air Racing, members of the military competed in the National Air Races and set several records, helping to improve aviation technology in the process.

Jimmy Doolittle set several records in the 1920s and 1930s, both as a member of the military and as a civilian. In the late 1950s and into the 1960s, another person who set records as a member of the military and in the mid-1980s as a civilian was Joseph Kittinger, Jr.

While a member of the U.S. Air Force, Kittinger's work using high-altitude balloons helped the nation in the earliest days of the space program. He reached into the highest

layers of the atmosphere and provided information on how humans would react to the rigors they might encounter. Through

his high-altitude parachute jumps, he helped increase their chances of survival, while setting several records, some of which have never yet been broken.

Joseph Kittinger was born on July 27, 1928, and grew up near Orlando, Florida. He became fascinated with planes at a very young age when he saw a Ford Trimotor at a nearby airport. As a youth, he persuaded local pilots to give him free rides, and he soloed in a Piper Cub by the time he was 17. Kittinger attended the University of Florida for two years, then left to join the U.S. Air Force in 1949 as an aviation cadet and earn his wings. He served



*Joe Kittinger in freefall at 102,800 feet*



*Kittinger readies himself for a high-altitude jump beside the Excelsior gondola.. The sign at the lower edge of the gondola says: "This is the highest step in the world."*

as a NATO test pilot in Germany until 1953, when he was assigned to the Air



*Kittinger ascending in the Project Excelsior balloon gondola.*

Force Missile Development Center at Holloman Air Force Base in New Mexico. At Holloman, Capt. Kittinger flew experimental jet fighters and participated in aerospace medical research. In 1955, he flew the T-33 observation plane that monitored the “rocket-sled” experiment of aircraft medicine pioneer Col. John Paul Stapp in which Stapp took his aircraft to 632 miles per hour (1,017 kilometers per hour) to test how gravitational stress affected the human body.

Stapp recruited Kittinger for Project Man High, a project begun in 1955 that would use balloons capable of high-altitude flight and a pressurized gondola (the basket or capsule suspended from the balloon) to study cosmic rays and to determine if humans were physically and psychologically capable of extended travel at space-like altitude (above 99 percent of the Earth’s atmosphere). The Air Force had determined that a high-altitude balloon flight was the best way to conduct these studies since aircraft could remain at these altitudes for periods of time that were too short to provide useful data. Using a two-

million-cubic-foot (56,634-cubic-meter), 172.6-foot (52.6-meter) diameter balloon and a cramped aluminum alloy capsule manufactured by Winzen Research of Minneapolis, Kittinger made the first Man High ascent on June 2, 1957, remaining aloft for almost seven hours and climbing to 96,000 feet (29,261 meters). The lessons learned from his flight and two other Man High flights later in 1957 and in 1958 by Major David Simons and Lt. Clifton McClure that went even higher and set new records were used later in NASA’s Project Mercury.

In 1958, Kittinger moved to the Escape Section of the Aeromedical Laboratory at Wright Air Development Center’s Aero Medical Laboratory. There, he joined Project Excelsior, which investigated the use of a parachute for escape from a space capsule or high-altitude aircraft. At the time no one knew whether humans could survive a jump from the edge of space.

Kittinger photographed by an automatic camera as he prepared to jump from 102,800 feet.



*Kittinger photographed by an automatic camera as he prepared to jump from 102,800 feet.*

*(Leap continued on page 6)*

## Long, Lonely Leap

*(Leap continued from page 5)*

On November 16, 1959, Kittinger piloted Excelsior I to 76,000 feet (23,165 meters) and returned to Earth by jumping, free falling, and parachuting to the desert floor in New Mexico. The jump almost cost him his life. His small parachute, which served to stabilize him and prevent him from going into a fatal “flat spin,” opened after only two seconds of free fall instead of 16, catching Kittinger around the neck and causing him to spiral uncontrollably. Soon he lost consciousness, as he tumbled toward Earth at 120 revolutions per minute. Only his emergency parachute, which opened automatically at 10,000 feet (3,048 meters), slowed his descent and saved his life.

In spite of his close call, he continued with the project and the flight of Excelsior II, which took place on December 11, 1959. This balloon climbed to 74,700 feet (22,769 meters) before Kittinger jumped from his gondola, setting a free-fall record of 55,000 feet (16,764 meters) before pulling his parachute ripcord.

The next year, Kittinger set two more records, which he still holds. On August 16, 1960, Kittinger surpassed the altitude record set by Major David Simons, who had climbed to 101,516 feet (30,942 meters)

in 1957 in his Man-High II balloon. Kittinger floated to 102,800 feet (31,333 meters) in Excelsior III, an open gondola adorned with a paper license plate that his



*Kittinger moments after exiting the gondola*

five-year-old son had cut out of a cereal box. Protected against the subzero temperatures by layers of clothes and a pressure suit – he experienced air temperatures as low as minus 94 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 70 degrees Celsius) – and loaded down with gear that almost doubled his weight, he climbed to his maximum altitude in one hour and 31 minutes even though at 43,000 feet (13,106 meters) he began experiencing severe pain in his right

hand caused by a failure in his pressure glove and could have scrubbed the mission. He remained at peak altitude for about 12 minutes; then he stepped out of his gondola into the darkness of space.

After falling for 13 seconds, his six-foot (1.8-meter) canopy parachute opened and stabilized his fall, preventing the flat spin that could have killed him. Only four minutes and 36 seconds more were needed to bring him down to about 17,500 feet (5,334 meters) where his regular 28-foot (8.5-meter) parachute opened, allowing him to float the rest of the way to Earth. His descent set another record for the longest



*Quarters are cramped inside the Stargazer gondola.*

parachute free-fall.

During his descent, he reached speeds up to 614 miles per hour, approaching the speed of sound without the protection of an aircraft or space vehicle. But, he said, he “had absolutely no sense of the speed.” His flight and parachute jump demonstrated that, properly protected, it was possible to put a person into near-space and that airmen could exit their aircraft at extremely high altitudes and free fall back into the Earth’s atmosphere without dangerous consequences.

After *Excelsior*, Kittinger moved on to Project Stargazer, which began in January 1959. This balloon astronomy experiment studied high-altitude astronomical phenomena from above 95 percent of the Earth’s atmosphere. This vantage point allowed undistorted visual and photographic observations of the stars and planets.

On December 13-14, 1962, Kittinger, along with astronomer William C. White, rose to an altitude of 82,200 feet (25,055 meters) and hovered over Holloman Air Force Base in the Stargazer gondola. The two checked variations in the brightness of star images caused by the atmosphere and made observations by telescope. The flight also provided useful information about the

development of pressure and associated life support systems during an extended period on the edge of space. This was Kittinger’s final high-altitude balloon flight.

But he did not rest on his achievements. Kittinger volunteered for three combat tours in Vietnam, flying 483 missions. On May 11, 1972, he was shot down and spent 11 months in captivity as a prisoner of war. It was during this time, he said, that he dreamt of an around-the-world balloon flight.

He retired from the Air Force in 1978, and began ballooning around the country and entering balloon competitions. Kittinger won the Gordon Bennett Gas Balloon Race four times during the 1980s and retired the trophy after three consecutive victories. In November 1983, he established a new world record by flying a 1,000 cubic-meter (1,308-cubic-yard) helium balloon from Las Vegas, Nevada, to New York, covering 2,001 miles (3,220 kilometers) in 72 hours. The next year, Kittinger became the first person to fly alone by balloon across the Atlantic Ocean.



*The Stargazer gondola was supported by a 280-foot-diameter sphere of mylar film.*

Setting out on September 14, 1984, from Caribou, Maine, in the 3,000-cubic-meter-Rosie O’Grady, he floated 3,543 miles (5,702

*(Leap continued on page 8)*

(Leap continued from page 7)

kilometers), touching down in Cairo Montenotte, Italy, on September 18, by Kittinger's account, 83 hours and 40 minutes after launch. His flight set a record for both the longest solo balloon flight and a distance record for this class of balloon.

Although after this flight, his record-setting days ended, Joe Kittinger has never stopped flying. He has piloted 78 different types of aircraft over the years and received numerous military and civilian awards and decorations. He is an aviation consultant and a barnstormer, touring around the country with his open-cockpit biplane and taking children on their first airplane rides. A person who helped open the portal to space, in the year 2008 he is still a vital part of the aviation community.



(Letters continued from page 11)

Hardy then asked to speak to the principal stew and was eventually allowed to speak to the Captain. After explaining who he was, the Captain let Fighter Ace Hardy and a couple of others with him deplane. Other captive passengers asked why, but everyone remained mum. Hardy found a ride to Austin and made it to the meeting only a few minutes late.

Sadly, of the original fewer than 1,500 American Fighter Aces, only about 250 remain, 41 having made their final flight this past year.

After the reunion, I boarded a flight for Washington State and, just for insurance, introduced the Captain to an Ace who was boarding the same flight. Never know when one might need to get off a grounded aircraft.

– Bob Walters #1047

*We all grieve for the loss of our Aces on the final flight. Thanks for sharing your experience, Bob. – The Editor*

To the Editor:

I'm working through a couple of stacks of mail, and am getting caught up with club newsletter. In your April issue you solicited extra items for a basic field kit. If not too late, I'd like to add a couple of items that really made a difference in the field for me on my recent adventure, embedded in an American combat unit in Iraq:

1) Nylon poncho liner. Weighs ounces, dries quickly, holds warmth, costs pennies. Should be in everyone's kit.

2) Small whistle. Signaling.

3) Mirror. Signaling, checking for face wounds.

4) Zip lock bags. How did I ever go to war in the past without them?

5) Cigars. Might as well put #8 - the fire starter - to good use.

– Gordon Cucullu #1131

*Thanks, Gordon. Cigars? Now that's a first! We look forward to hearing about your experiences embedded in that combat unit in Iraq. It's good to hear that you made it back safely. Be sure to give us a copy of the book when it comes out.*

– Editor

## What's Happening...

### Peter Jensen completes X-country ride



*Peter at the start of his trek*

On May 1, Peter Jensen (#1101) mounted his custom bicycle at the Santa Monica Pier to begin his trek across America.

Two months later, Peter dismounted on Coney Island Pier in New York, after successfully riding 3,997 miles.

Congratulations, Peter! Better you than I..

### Bob Gannon on Helsinki TV



*Gannon on YouTube (screen shot)*

On August 5, 2008, Bob Gannon (#1066) was interviewed in Helsinki, on Finnish MTV3 Evening News. He took a reporter for a flight, and during the pre-flight brief, explained the plastic pee-bottle to him.

See the entire interview on YouTube at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=otMgSuifp-0>

### Ann Baumgartner Carl is a Club guest on Ladies' Night



Ann Baumgartner Carl was the first woman test pilot as a WASP during World War II, and the first female to fly a jet aircraft. Although small of stature, she is an aviation giant who ranks right up there with Earhart and Cochran.

Ms Carl attended the Club Ladies' Night on July 10, and regaled her table companions with tales of valor among the women who joined the Army Air Corps in 1942, under the command of Jacqueline Cochran.

You will want to read *A WASP Among Eagles: A Woman Military Test Pilot in World War II*, Ann Carl's biography which we will feature in a future edition of the *News*.



*Ann Carl in her test pilot days*

*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..."*

## BOOK REVIEW —

# Four Against the Arctic: Shipwrecked for Six Years at the Top of the World

Author: David Roberts, Simon & Schuster, New York, NY, 2003 (320p; 6 x 9), ISBN: 978-0743224314  
Reviewed extracted from the Globe Corner Bookstore, with comments by the Editor

When David Roberts came across a reference to four Russian sailors who had survived for six years on a barren Arctic island, he was incredulous. An expert on the literature of adventure, Roberts had never heard the story and doubted its veracity. His quest to find the true story turned into a near-obsession that culminated with his own journey to the same desolate island. In *Four Against the Arctic* Roberts shares the remarkable story that he discovered, perhaps the most amazing survival tale ever recorded.

In 1743 a Russian ship bound for Arctic walrus-hunting grounds was blown off course and trapped in ice off the coast of Svalbard (Spitzbergen). Four sailors went ashore with only two days' supplies to look for an abandoned hut they knew about on the island. They found it and returned to tell their shipmates the good news, only to find that their ship had vanished, apparently crushed and sunk by the ice.

The men survived more than six years until another ship blown off course rescued them. During that time they made a bow and arrows from driftwood (Svalbard has

no trees) and killed nine polar bears in self-defense. They survived largely on reindeer meat, killing 250 of the animals during their ordeal.



Fascinated as he was by this remarkable story, Roberts wondered how it had dwindled into obscurity. For two years he researched the tale in libraries and archives in the United States, France, and Russia. In Russia he traveled to the sailors' hometown, where he met the last survivors of their families, who knew the story from an oral tradition passed down for more than 250 years. Finally, with three companions he organized an expedition

to the barren island of Edgeøya in southeast Svalbard, where he spent three weeks looking for remnants of the sailors' lost hut and walking the shores while pondering the men's astonishing survival.

*Four Against the Arctic* is a riveting book about man versus nature and a delightfully engaging journey deep into an obsession with historical rediscovery. But it is more even than that: It is a meditation on the genius of survival against impossible odds that makes a story so inspirational that it still fires the imagination centuries later.

**THE THRAWN RICKLE***From the Ancient Scottish: thrawn = stubborn; rickle = loose, dilapidated heap*

Robert G. Willisroft #1116 - Editor



I am disappointed that no one submitted the next episode of the “Ultimate Adventurer.” I will give it another month before retiring our intrepid hero. Somebody, please step up to the plate. We need a continuing thousand word episode. One of you out there surely can keep our hero alive!

Have you written a will or created a revocable trust? If not, the obvious question is “Why not?” If you have – and every true adventurer, of course, always takes cares of these matters – have you made a bequest to your Club?

Some of you are well-heeled, and we congratulate you and take pride in your success as a fellow club member. Most of us, however, are of more modest means. You may never have considered your estate to be interesting to anyone beyond your immediate family. Nevertheless, all of

us, monied or not, have something we can bequeath our club that will make it an even more congenial place to meet.

Take a few moments to review your life and how the Adventurers’ Club of Los Angeles has enriched it. If you believe, as many of us do, that continuing your membership through a bequest once you leave on the Great Adventure is a good idea, then do something about it. Please contact Pierre Odier for further information.

Lots of letters this month. That makes it fun. We received two entries for “The Ultimate Adventurer” series. Please, someone, write another 1,000 words for the next edition. Let’s keep the story going. Unfortunately, we only received a couple of responses to the Backpack question. I guess it’s just more of eat and listen.

Once again, however, this edition of the *News* is brought to you in full color through the generosity of several members, and the Board. Be sure to thank a Board Member the next time you see him.

The password for the full color online edition is “acla0808”.

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

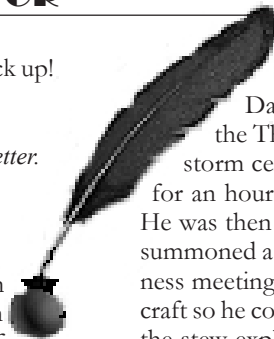
To the Editor:

I love the fact that the old web site is back up!  
–Larry Schutte #1121

*So do we, Lar. We’re working on making it better. Stay tuned. –Editor*

To the Editor:

I just returned from the annual reunion of the American Fighter Aces Association in Austin, TX, at which I am an officer of



the board. The current president, Cmdr. Bill Hardy, F6F Hellcat Ace-In-Day, had called for a business meeting on the Thursday preceding the festivities. But a storm cell over Houston had his flight circling for an hour before setting down in San Antonio. He was then being held aboard the aircraft. Hardy summoned a stew and explained that he had a business meeting to lead and needed to get off the aircraft so he could then drive on to Austin. Of course, the stew explained that no one was allowed off so

*(Letters continued on page 8)*

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## THURSDAY NIGHTS AT THE CLUB

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**January 10, 2008**

*Bob Zeman (#878)*

*Editor's note: We missed publishing the January minutes.*

*We will catch them up in this and the next issue.*

President **Robert DeMott** welcomed all to our first meeting of the new year.

Unfortunately, we just received notice that **Sir Edmund Hillary** had gone on the great adventure. **Bob Silver** remembered him as a gentleman and being a humble person. **Joe Brown** said that he made the history books while still alive. **Bob Zeman** told of how Sir Edmund gained his interest in mountain climbing.

**Larry Schutte** rewired our video presentation stand and put it on a lower pedestal.

**Claude Hulet** introduced his stepson Michael Boniface and grandson from Portugal. Michael drove out to Death Valley and saw the Devil's golf course where the salt rocks move. There was much wind but the sand dunes retained their position.

**London Steverson** is the proud father of a baby boy born December 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Pierre Odier** leaves soon for Nagaland. It is east of Bhutan. Its northern border is the northern border of India and its southern border is the southern border of China. He did receive a permit from India but was advised that he needed 13 more permits from local agencies. Pierre is entering the area from Bhutan.

Nagaland is mountainous with 52 tribes speaking 100 languages.

It was good to see **Dave Dahl** back. He has been backpacking in Yosemite hunting for mule deer. He saw no elk.

### **The Guianas, Paraguay and other stops**

**R**oger Haft had an eventful trip to South America in which many of the things that could go wrong did go wrong. He made 27 stops in 15 countries and made two unauthorized border crossings. He traveled by small plane, commercial plane, many boats and numerous vehicles.

He showed us first the Itaipu hydro-electric plant at Iguazu Falls. He then spent time in Ascuncion, Paraguay. He then wanted to get to the Guianas but he had to fly to La Paz, then Lima, then another capital and Trinidad to reach Paramaribo.

He rode in a small bus along a mud puddle road but finally had to change buses to get to the Corantijn River which separates Surinam from Guyana.

In Georgetown, he photographed the worlds tallest wooden church and a freshwater seal. He even floated the Essequibo River to Bartica.

Back to Paramaribo, a tenant in the hotel caused a fire which forced Roger to change hotels. He had booked passage on a native boat across the Marowijne River to French Guiana. Fortunately, he met some expatriates who warned his boat captain to take care of Roger.

Roger's objective was to get to Devil's Island. It is one of three used by the French to detain prisoners. The others are Isle Royale and St. Joseph. All are close to each other but a few miles off the mainland. The cells could be viewed from above by guards.

Roger showed photos of the hotel used

by foreign dignitaries on St. Joseph. They are there because their satellites are launched by French vehicles from the mainland. He also showed remains of the old hospital.

Unfortunately, trees are being cut at a rapid rate on the mainland for their valuable wood.

Pierre Odier remembered member Rene Belbenoit #239 who escaped from the French prison. He later gathered information on the infamous place, and his daughter sold 42 boxes of data for \$42,000 to a Frenchman.



## January 17, 2008

Bob Zeman (#878)

**R**obert DeMott gave the usual silent moment for all members on the great adventure and welcomed **Charles Rozaire**. **Rick Flores** rang the bell.

Two guests told of their business of digitizing film and slides. One of them had spent a year in Uganda.

**Jerry Robinson** took his family to Puer to Vallarta.

**Steve Bein** went to the race track in Death Valley. On the way out he drove on a washboard road over Lippincot Pass to Big Pine. Unfortunately, he lost his brakes for the last 50 miles and his guest was not pleased about it.

**David Dolan** visited Washington, DC. He saw the Air and Space Museum and the

Museum of the American Indian which is excellent. The situation in Kenya is tense involving the Luo and Kikuyu tribes. His friend Moses Pelee, a Masai, is in Ambose-li now.

**Mike Gwaltney** returned from 14 days in Tahiti.

**Bob Walters** said that **Pierre** was excited by the detail he saw when Larry Schutte googled his trip area of Nagaland east of Bhutan.

## Barranca del Cobre

**L**ast November, Ken and friends in two SUVs toured the Copper Canyon area for 14 days. He flew to Texas and rendezvoused in Chihuahua City, Mexico.



*Freund overlooking the Cooper Canyon*

The Chihuahua Pacifico railroad runs through the area crossing 39 bridges and going through 87 tunnels. The area is sparsely populated by Indians and resembles the Frazier Park area near Gorman. There is little water. But some pigs, goats and cows survive. But some residents have nice SUVs leading to the supposition that drugs may be the crop of choice.

The friends stayed in Creel for a few days

*(Minutes continued on page 14)*

and saw some nice waterfalls with little water. There was some rock art there. There was also a brick making facility.

The Baciache Falls are 750 feet high and there is an overlook with a great photo opportunity. The area is known for the Tarahumara Indians who do walk miles to get around.



Bridge to Batopilas

Ken and friends then drove down 1,500 feet into the bottom of the canyon to Batopilas. The small town had nice buildings, church, and the old Hacienda Mine. The river Rio Urique flows through the canyon here.

Leaving Batopilas, one fork goes to the lost mission at Satevo which was known about for a few hundred years but not re-discovered until the early 1960s. The other fork goes to San Ignacio and took them 10 hours to go 90 miles. They visited the ruins of Mission San Bernardo.

After this, they drove to Los Mochis and then took an expensive ferry to La Paz.

Ken's presentation went very smooth because he had a short description for every slide. Many thanks go to Larry Schutte for setting up the DVD presentation.

## June 26, 2008

Bob Zeman (#878)

**Robert DeMott** finally took a break and **Vince Weatherby** filled in ably.

**Allan Smith** and his wife celebrated their 26<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary with a trip to the wineries of Calaveras County.

**Bob Oberto** flew up to Mojave for a birthday celebration for Burt and Dick Rutan. He flew over Mt. Baden Powell where it happened that **Rick Flores** and **Steve Peterman** were hiking. They counted 46 switchbacks.

**Vince Weatherby** stepped in as an actor. He portrayed a helmsman on the *Queen Mary* in 1942 that hit and sunk the Curacua. He gave us an example of his poor imitation of a British accent.

**Roger Haft** is going to San Luis Obispo for a tour of a 97-year old house that is solar powered.

**Bob Oberto** is organizing a soaring trip with Crystal Gliders. Bob is also going to the North Rim of the Grand Canyon and Telluride.

**Bob Zeman** bought one of the many books the Club has for sale. It is *Angels of Light* by Jeff Long. The story is a fictionalized account of a true incident in which a Lockheed Electra piloted by Colombians and loaded with drugs crashed in Lake Merced in Yosemite in the winter in the late 1970s. I don't know how much is true but I do know that the climbers at Camp 4 who were eating hot dogs in their tents prior to the crash soon moved to the Ahwanee.

**Steve Bein** in another act of generosity donated a knife blade, some Scotch whiskey, two books on magic and a Klingon bat-

the sword for the NOHA auction.

Rick and Steve were joined by **Shane Berry** on a hike up Cooper Canyon near Mt. Waterman. Shane showed slides of a white-headed woodpecker and a snow plant.

**Larry Schutte** interviewed and video our esteemed **John Booth**. Needless to say, any words of mine cannot describe the accomplishments and gentlemanliness of John. But Larry did a great job over a few days.

John served as a Unitarian minister at the Old North Church in Boston. John has been to Tibet, Timbuktu and the Far East as described in his book *Fabulous Destinations*. He has performed magic throughout the world including the canary cage trick with Crown Prince of Japan, Akihito. He has climbed *Ixtacibuatl* in Mexico. He was named one of the top seven magicians in the world and helped in founding the Magic Castle.

## Extreme Environment Robotics and Technologies

**A**lberto Behar is an investigative scientist for JPL. He has his pilot's license, is a scuba diver and EMT. He has degrees in electrical and mechanical engineering.

He works on robotics for airborne, surface and subsurface projects such as rovers, drillers and those for grasping.

The asteroid rover was designed to operate in very little gravity. The reconfigurable robots act like a snake. He showed a small gondola with three cameras and a communications system attached to a balloon.

Another device was to understand and



*A rover approaches the target on a rock using visual target tracking during autonomous navigation with hazard avoidance.*

measure wind streams over Antarctica. The tumbleweed polar rover has a satellite modem.

The cryobot is a tube taken to Mars and use to heat water to drill below the surface. It was tested down to 50 meters in Svalbard, Norway. Cameras aboard show diagrams of the ice.

The sub glacial lake micro sub is the size of a coke bottle but needs funding. The hydro-thermal vent bio-sampler studies the limits of life. A spider boot mesh crawler can walk on mesh in zero gravity.



*Spiderbot was developed and tested for low gravity mobility in structured environments*

*(Minutes continued on page 16)*

The Moulin explorer studies how water enters a glacier crevasse. Another takes surface lakes depth measurements.



*Artist's concept of the 2009 MSL rover, which will sample rocks and soil on Mars, and process them through an on-board science laboratory.*

A volcano monitor and volcano sensor web measures sulfur dioxide and was tested on the big island of Hawaii.

Based on Alberto's talk the ideas and uses of robotics are an excellent way of studying and understanding our planet and the universe.



Steve also showed a wrecked LST that was one of eight that blew up on May 21, 1944 in Pearl Harbor. **Roy Roush** noted that this loss almost delayed the Saipan invasion.

**Bill Morse** returned on July 4<sup>th</sup> from Cambodia. He has spent most of the last six months getting Akira and his group on May 23<sup>rd</sup> and licensed in June to locate and render ineffective the land mines. Bill showed a photo of about 10 workers and one volunteer. Interestingly, the volunteer located an unexploded 105 mm artillery shell. Bill is going back in August to help with the de-mining operations in the villages of northern Cambodia.

**Dave Dolan** said that the Explorers' Club banquet at the Bowers Museum was a success. There was another party for Don Walsh and his mother at the home of Sylvia Earle in Albany, California.

**Alan Feldstein** taught kayaking to youths at a Sea Lab gathering.

Roy Roush was filmed by Channel 35 for his take on the Lost Dutchman mine in the Superstition Mountains.

**Paul Isley** and **Jerry Robinson** took their families on the train from Cairns to Kuranda in Australia. They also went scuba diving on the Great Barrier Reef. They spent five days on the Gold Coast and swam at Bondi Beach.

Alan Feldstein has accepted the position of master of ceremonies for Night of High Adventure on October 19<sup>th</sup>. We have three speakers: Randy Wesson from JPL on extra-terrestrial life; Mike Manases commanding officer of the USS Nimitz and our own Jim Dorsey on the blue men of the Sahara.

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## July 10, 2008

*Bob Zeman (#878)*

**Robert DeMott** welcomed another nice crowd on a pleasant evening at the Club.

**Steve Lawson** returned from Hawaii with his family. He went out on a boat with his daughter to see a pelagic shark. In a cage, they saw Galapagos sharks swimming close by and his video was excellent.

Bill Morse donated a hand-carved bracelet made out of unexploded ordnance as an auction item for NOHA.

President Robert inducted new member **Don Malarkey**, down from Salem, Oregon. Don was with the 501<sup>st</sup> regiment of the 101<sup>st</sup> airborne and has just published his autobiography.



*New member Don Malarkey*

Eight days after Pearl Harbor, Don tried to join the Marine Corps. He was turned down. He then tried and could not pass the exam for a fighter pilot. But fates provided him with recognition in the most famous company in World War II.

**Pierre Odier** and **Jim Dorsey** are leaving for the Taklimakan Desert. They will head west from Urumqui despite the hassles of getting into China and tribes fighting in northern China.

### **Aquarium of the Pacific**

The Aquarium of the Pacific consists of about 21 exhibits featuring sea life and its relation to our world.

Dr. Jerry Schubel has his Ph. D. in oceanography and has been president of the Aquarium since June 2002. He has received numerous honors including serving on a

number of National Research Council commissions and past chair of the National Sea Grant Review Panel.



*Nurse shark in Shark Lagoon*

Dr. Schubel quoted the Durants saying that history doesn't happen; it is created. We cannot restore to the past but we can live more lightly on the earth. The Aquarium has 10 goals in this regard.

It wants to increase ocean literacy by explaining the exhibits, having a partnership with a third grade program in Long Beach and by having a day for the homeless every year.

There is global climate change occurring and every year since 1998 there has been an increase in temperature.

*(Editor's note: This controversial comment is NOT supported by current research.)*

There is overfishing and bycatch in which many unwanted fishes, seabirds, marine mammals and turtles are netted.



*Otter exhibit*

We need sustainable seafood and the loss of the delta in the northern part of the Sea of Cortez has threatened the totoaba and taquita.

Through development and other human activities, we are reducing the range and number of plant and animal species found in their traditional habitats. Examples he

*(Minutes continued on page 18)*

showed were the loss of mangrove forests and the development of shrimp farms.

The ocean is greatly affected by what we do on land. His chart showed that 50% of the world's population lives within 50 miles of the ocean.



*Blue Cave*

In global trade, having the products we want made at a price we can afford has created a global trade system and the port of Long Beach has seen a huge growth.

Ocean health and human health are related and because of this there have been many beach closures over the years.

We need to practice ocean governance by making people better stewards.

We can do a lot in watershed management. Is it really necessary to grow all the rice and cotton in the central valley. About 75% of the water in the state goes to agriculture.

Dr. Schubel said that the Aquarium is the only large aquarium in southern California. It stages nine festivals per year and engag-

es in joint promotions with the L. A. Zoo. He did note that the country spends 23 times as much on space as on the ocean.

He had to leave right at 10 but he had a good excuse. He had been called to testify before Congress on Monday on the St. Lawrence Seaway.



## July 24, 2008

*Bob Zeman (#878)*

President **Robert DeMott** welcomed all after a good swiss steak dinner from Emily and John.

**Bob Zeman** said that he attended the Badwater run, a race from Badwater in Death Valley to Mt. Whitney portal. The run goes from minus 297 feet below sea level to 8,800 feet above with a 6,000 foot climb over the Panamints in between.

Bob said the race is tough but not as tough as it sounds because a runner/walker is allowed a pacer for 118 of the 135 miles; a support wagon is right there the entire length of the course and one has 60 hours to finish. He believes that both **Gene Arias** and **Jay Foonberg** could complete this course.

**Gary Mortimer** returned from Chevelon Canyon in Arizona and a buffalo ranch. He took photos of the petroglyphs of which there were many anthropomorphic type. The oldest were close to 10,000 years old. **Larry Schutte** remembered growing up in Leupp which is nearby and commuting by bus with the Indians who lived in the area.

**Rick Flores** was in the Laguna Moun-

tains hiking the Sunrise Trail with great views of the Anza Borrego.

**Bernie Harris** is flying his plane to Bellingham, Washington for an AirVentures get together. He and Devera will visit the Boeing assembly plant in Everett and the Museum of Flight in Seattle. They will then go to the fireworks competition in Vancouver.

**Bob Oberto** said that all 24 slots are filled for soaring on Sunday but that he has available slots open on Saturday.

**Mort Loveman** plugged two movies – *The Visitor* with the drums of Senegal and *Mongol* about the life of Genghis Khan. Mort also showed nice photos of his and Bill Burchette's safari in Namibia.

**Shane Berry** donated a tripod and **Bob Zeman** donated a book, *War is Only Half the Story*, for the NOHA auction.

Buy your tickets for NOHA on October 19<sup>th</sup> to hear Randy Wesson talk on the search for extra-terrestrial life, the Captain of the *USS Nimitz* and **Jim Dorsey** on the Blue Men of West Africa.

**David Yamada** announced that **Bill Wheeler** has passed away. Also, Buck Compton who has been offered membership is going in for cancer surgery on Monday.

Robert DeMott welcomed new member **Charles Carmona** #1136 into the Club. Charles is a gemologist and is helping set up the tour to the tourmaline tailings in Pala. He is leaving for Madagascar for three weeks at the end of August.



*New member Charles Carmona*

## Asteroids and Comets

**P**aul Weissman is a senior research scientist at JPL and studies comets and asteroids. One job is to predict the chances of an asteroid landing on the earth.

The dinosaurs were wiped out by a 10 kilometer asteroid that hit 200 miles off Yucatan, spreading world-wide havoc, and leaving a crater 100 to 200 kilometers wide with thick dust and acid rain.



*Arizona meteor crater*

There have been many cases of asteroids hitting the Earth our most famous one being the 30-meter iron asteroid near Winslow that is 180 meters deep. Two others are at Clearwater Lakes in northern Canada that are 22 and 30 kilometers across.

There are about 160 craters around the world and the biggest was at Tunguska, Siberia on June 30, 2008 which wiped out a forest with a 40 kilometer radius. This one exploded in the air.

Asteroids are small objects that revolve around the sun and nearly all orbits lie between Mars and Jupiter.

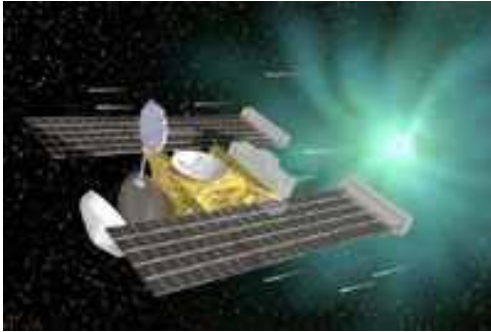
Paul showed a computer program with the orbit of Earth imposed on many orbits of asteroids. Right now about 415, 000 orbits of asteroids are known and of these,

*(Minutes continued on page 20)*

(Minutes continued from page 19)

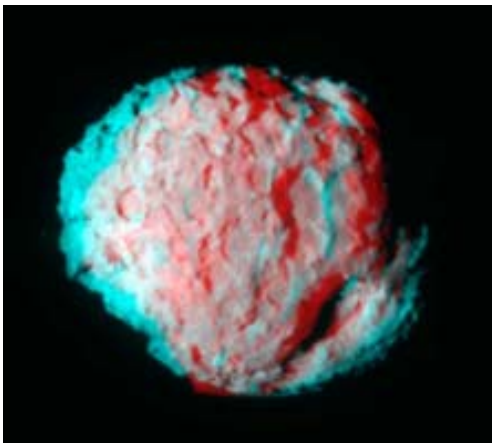
5, 486 are approaching Earth.

Comets from the Kuiper Belt have a period of less than 20 years. Those with long



*Stardust was the first U.S. space mission dedicated solely to the exploration of a comet, and the first robotic mission designed to return extraterrestrial material from outside the orbit of the Moon.*

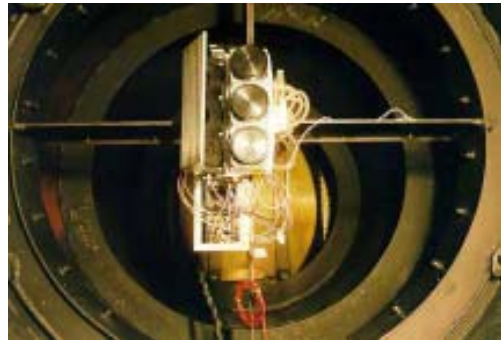
periods of more than 200 years come from the Oort Cloud and in between are those with periods of 20 to 200 years.



*Red-green stereo anaglyph of Comet Wild 2 – with a pair of “red-green” glasses, this photo will appear in 3-dimensions.*

Since 92% of the United States is non-urban then the chance of dying from impact is about one in 50,000.

Telescopes have been developed that can automatically search the sky for moving objects. Two of these are on Haleakala and Mauna Kea. Pan-STARRS will search the entire visible sky every two weeks.



*The NEAT-Palomar instrument on the Oschin telescope is a CCD camera, consisting of three separate 4Kx4K front-side illuminated arrays in separate dewars arranged in a linear array oriented north-south.*

If an asteroid were approaching Earth, blowing it up will not work. (Sorry, Bruce Willis.) It will explode into many pieces and then either gravitate to its original shape or land in many places. The best solution is to divert it. About 500 tons of meteorite material hit the Earth’s atmosphere every day but most dissolve.

There is a good article on this subject in the August, 2008 issue of National Geographic.



## Forthcoming Programs

- August 7, 2008** – “Reality Based Combat” Jim Wagner
- August 14, 2008** – “SEAMagine Hydrocopter Technology – Manned Submersibles for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” Bill Kohnen
- August 21, 2008** – “Hollywood stunt life: From top to bottom” Loren Janes
- August 28, 2008** – **LADIES NIGHT** – “Remote tribes in northeast India’s Arunachal Pradesh region Assam and Nagaland” Pierre Odier
- September 4, 2008** – “Motorcycling Across Siberia in Winter” Dave Barr
- September 11, 2008** – “Ballooning JPL Style” Julian Nott
- September 18, 2008** – “Trekking in Patagonia” Claude Vautier
- September 25, 2008**– [OPEN]
- October 2, 2008** – “Across Viet Nam” Alan Feldstein
- October 9, 2008** – [OPEN]
- October 16, 2008** – “Marooned With Very Little Beer” Graham MacIntosh

*(Virgin Galactic continued from page 3)*

ated by Virgin America, who run the most fuel efficient commercial fleet in the US,

ists to see our world in a completely new light. I for one can’t wait!”



*Branson & Brian Binny – SpaceShipOne Pilot*



*Artist's depiction of SpaceShipTwo in space*

to roll out what by most definitions, is the most energy efficient aircraft in history. We are naming it *EVE* after my Mother, Eve Branson, but also because it represents a first and a new beginning, the chance for our ever growing group of future astronauts and other scientists and payload special-



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