

The Adventurers' Club News

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First orbital rendezvous – Gemini 7 photographed by Wally Schirra from Gemini 6A

The Adventurers' Club News

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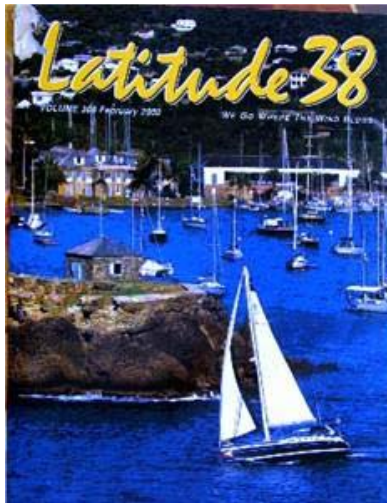
Interview with Mike Harker

This interview first appeared in Latitude 38 in October, 2004, and subsequent editions. Richard Spindler, Publisher and Executive Editor of Latitude 38, conducted the interview personally. We produce it here with the kind permission of Mike Harker. This is the third installment, continued from last month. I managed to truncate the final sentence last month, so I have included the entire paragraph again at the beginning of this month's installment.

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

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

When I got off the boat in Horta, I sort of staggered down the dock trying to walk. “Man, these docks are really moving around,”



I said out loud. Some people laughed good-naturedly and said, “It’s a fixed cement dock!” (Laughter.)

I later met some guys, including an ex-marine who was nice enough to go to the top of my mast for me and have a look around. Everything was fine, and there was no excessive chafe on the halyards.

38: Any luck finding crew?
Harker: One guy wanted to go with me, but he’d

(Harker continued on page 2)

signed a contract with another boat and couldn't get out of it.

38: What are your terms when you have crew?

Harker: I don't pay anybody to sail with me, but it doesn't cost guests anything to be on my boat. When we eat ashore, however, everyone is responsible for their own meals. I don't drink, so I don't buy any alcohol.

38: Do you let people drink while underway?

Harker: If they want. But it's always just beer or wine, there's never been any hard liquor on the boat. Oh wait, I see a bottle of rum from Hawaii up there on the shelf. But it hasn't been opened yet. But having sailed three-quarters of the way across the Atlantic, I figured what the hell, I could singlehand the rest of the way to Portugal. Besides, Herb assured me that I would have great weather for the next 10 days. I would have loved to stay in the Azores longer, as they are very lovely, but Herb encouraged me not to miss the window.

38: Herb is held in extremely high regard by sailors in the Atlantic and Caribbean. Were you happy with his forecasts?

Harker: He was very accurate except for not seeing that one gale. He was apologetic, but explained that there are lots of weather variables over northern Canada that make forecasting very difficult. And he knew enough to tell me to head east to avoid the worst of the storm. Had I been another 100 miles north, I would have been in 60-knot winds. Anyway, five pleasant sailing days later, I was in Lagos, Portugal, and a few days later in Gibraltar. So it took me less

than thirty days, including the stops, to singlehand from Florida to Gibraltar. Six sailing days to Bermuda, twelve sailing days to the Azores, and five sailing days to Lagos.

38: You must have felt proud of yourself.

Harker: I felt pretty good. But you have to understand that I hadn't been a sailor long, so I had no way of putting such a trip into context. For all I knew, everybody sailed across the Atlantic. I only learned different when people asked me where I came from and with how many crew I'd had. When I told them, they made a big deal out of it. Then, being sailors, they started talking and talking about sailing. But they lost me pretty quickly because of my lack of knowing the English sailing terms.

Anyway, my two German friends from the Ha-Ha – both newly divorced – flew down to Gibraltar, and we did the Spanish coast, then sailed out to the Balearic island of Ibiza. I don't know if you know about that island, but it's where women come from all over Western and Eastern Europe, as well as Scandinavia, for wild parties – and to hopefully meet some rich guy. Even the younger girls are looking for a free ride.

Some of the women I met wrongly as-



The Spanish Island of Ibiza

sumed that I had a lot of money because I had a new boat. I've got some fun things – a triplex on Manhattan Beach, a cabin up at Lake Arrowhead, a ski boat, two Harleys and a '48 Indian – but I don't have much money. And I'm only able to have these things because I don't have children and therefore don't have to pay for things like college tuition.

38: What did it cost to moor in the Med?

Harker: I only took a mooring or a berth a few times, and only in the first part of July when it cost about the same as a mooring at Catalina or in the Caribbean. When July 14 rolled around, however, the prices of slips and moorings doubled. On August 1 the prices tripled – but even so, they would have been hard to come by. It would have cost me \$120/night to berth my boat. That's terrible, I'd never pay that much.

38: So what did you do?

Harker: I just anchored out. Sometimes I needed to just be at a dock for a few minutes, so I'd come in and top off my diesel tanks, and quickly take care of my other business.

38: Were there plenty of places to anchor for free?

Harker: Everywhere I went in the Med you could anchor for free. But having a good dinghy and outboard were the key, as sometimes you had to dinghy a mile or more from your boat to a place to come ashore.

I have an 11ft Merc Valiant rigid inflatable and a 15-hp four-stroke Mercury outboard – what a great combo! I can really cover some ground with that set-up. I hadn't realized how important a good dinghy and outboard were until I got to the

Med, as they are even more important over there than in California or Mexico.

In a recent *Latitude*, you asked why some boats have their dinghies hanging from davits way high in the air. There are three reasons. First, the dinghy is out of the way when you stern-tie to the dock. Second, you can see aft without having to look around the dinghy. And third, it's so high up that you won't drag in the water when the boat heels over. My 466 has an arch over the cockpit for the mainsheet Traveler and I designed a second



Windsurfing in Tarifa

arch for Hunter to build to hold my dinghy way up high. They did a nice job on it, and since then they've done about a dozen similar ones for other owners. I can launch or retrieve my dinghy with ease in just a minute or two, so it's really great. I do, however, remove my outboard from the inflatable during open water passages. I don't want the outboard weight up so high.

38: Where are the places you went to film the television shows?

Harker: I did six of them. We did high wind kite-sailing and sailboarding at Tarifa, Spain, which is west of Gibraltar. We

(Harker continued on page 4)

did deep divers at Malta, and mountain bikers on Sardinia. We also did hang-gliders and paragliders on Ibiza, wakeboard & hydrofoil skiers at Sete, France, and extreme freeclimbing on Corsica.

38: Did you have one favorite place and anchorage?

Harker: My favorite place was Ibiza, and my favorite anchorage was Portinatx, which is on the Northeast corner of Ibiza. They have all kinds of fjord-like indentations on



Ibiza girls – they put their tops on for this photo

that coast, and if you go way inside you can anchor off the beaches in about 12 feet of water. There was plenty of room until August, when it got a little crowded.

38: What was the social scene like?

Harker: Ibiza is world-famous for nonstop wild partying until dawn. People from everywhere in Europe – except maybe France – come to Ibiza with one purpose, and that’s to party as hard as they can.

Of course, I was 56 and don’t drink, so I’m not the biggest party animal. By American standards, it can get pretty raunchy in Ibiza. I don’t mind a little raunch. I don’t have a daughter in her 20s, so I can enjoy watching the girls wearing clothes that are see-through, have big holes, or are designed to keep falling off. But I usually went home before it got too raunchy. Plus, all the beaches are topless!

Girls would sometimes swim out to the boat and I would invite them up the swim ladder for a cola or just talk. I never was jaded about the toplessness, I enjoyed it everytime!

The thing about Spain is that nothing gets going until late. Some people don’t start dinner until midnight, and they don’t start partying until 2 a.m. – by which time I’m heading back to my boat. But all the young people go strong until the sun comes up. It’s just how they do it over there.

I have a strategy for enjoying the Spanish way of life. I eat my main meal of the day onboard about 6 p.m. – which would be a late lunch in Spain – then I nap for several hours. I go ashore about 11 p.m. and socialize for a few hours before calling



it a night. I’ll say this for the Spanish, by the next morning they have everything all cleaned up again. They don’t do that as well in France or Italy.

38: Mallorca is the biggest of the Balaerics. Did you go there?

Harker: Yes, I went to Palma de Mallor-

(Harker continued on page 7)

Astronaut Wally M. Schirra and The Right Stuff

Fredrick Gary Hareland

I was saddened to hear that Wally M. Schirra had passed away on May 3, 2007, from a heart attack brought on by complications from cancer.

I had the privilege of interviewing him over the telephone back in 2005 for a subsequent article that appeared in the *China Lake News Review*, April 20, 2005, and in the *China Lake Daily Independent*, April 24, 2005.

After we spoke about his years at China Lake during 1952 through 1954, I asked him about having “The Right Stuff.” His answer was typical Wally Schirra, as he didn’t deny that he possessed such an attribute and even admitted that he may have it. Then

he made a joke about having the straight stuff instead, because during his early fighter pilot career he had flown so many straight winged jets. The truth is that no astronaut, or test pilot for that matter, ever manifested the true essence of “The Right Stuff” more than Astronaut Wally M. Schirra did during a launch pad abort of Gemini 6A on Sunday morning, December 12, 1965.

Command Pilot Wally Schirra and his Pilot, Thomas Stafford, were sitting ten stories above the ground on top of over 150

tons of two part hypergolic propellants that fueled their Titan II launch vehicle. Fuel and oxidizer could be stored at normal temperatures and reacted much less violently with each other than did the cryogenic propellants of Atlas or Titan I. Another advantage of using hypergolics is that they burn spontaneously on contact with each

other and thus need no ignition system. Titan II ran on a blend of hydrazine and unsymmetrical dimethyl hydrazine (UDMH) as fuel with nitrogen tetroxide as oxidizer. Perfectly safe if metered into a combustion chamber at the right time, but a real bomb if combined together all at once by some type of

launch pad mishap, such as an engine shutdown occurring after liftoff. If this happened after the vehicle lifted off the pad even a few inches and then fell back it would result in a real conflagration destroying the vehicle, launch pad, and astronauts, if they could not escape fast enough from the ever expanding fireball. Escape system engineers had designed and installed two of the most advanced and powerful ejection seats ever devised for just such an eventuality.



Mercury Astronaut Wally Schirra – the only Astronaut to fly on Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo missions

(Schirra continued on page 6)

Weber Aircraft of Burbank, California, had developed a very special ejection seat that could propel the astronauts away from the fireball of an exploding Titan II during an off-the-pad abort. This capability was way beyond any existing flight-qualified ejection seat system, and the seat could also be used during the initial phase of powered flight up to about 60,000 feet, or in case of a parachute failure after reentry.

So not only were Wally and Thomas sitting atop one huge potential bomb, but they were also strapped into the most powerful ejection seats in the world.

At exactly 9:54 am the mighty Titan II's twin Aerojet LR-87 rocket engines came to life piercing the launch pad silence and shaking and vibrating the Gemini spacecraft. Just as suddenly as the LR-87's had ignited with a bang, they instantly fell silent at exactly 1.2 seconds after start. The launch vehicle had suffered a premature shutdown at the worst possible time, because the cockpit clock was started which meant the mighty Titan had lifted off its launch pad. If the escape system had been like the earlier Mercury one which was automatic with manual initiation capabilities,



Schirra did not abort the Gemini 6 launch

Schirra and Stafford would have taken the ride of the century as their ejection seats catapulted them from the capsule and rocketed them into a slightly upward, horizontal trajectory away from the exploding fireball and to safety.

But this didn't happen and seconds after it should have the two astronauts were still sitting inside their Gemini capsule; BUT WHY?

The answer is that NASA decided early on to make the Gemini escape system completely manual, to be initiated only by the astronauts themselves.

Wally Schirra failed to do so, because he didn't feel any upward movement of the vehicle before the shutdown. Wally was relying on cues he received from the seat of his pants, not unlike what high performance jet pilots do on a daily basis.

It so happened that an electrical tail plug had dropped from the base of the booster earlier than it should have, thus starting the airborne clock in the cockpit. This clock was not supposed to start until the vehicle had lifted off, and this discrepancy was detected by the malfunction detection system which commanded the engines to stop. If that cockpit clock was right and Schirra and

(Schirra continued on page 10)

(Harker continued from page 4)

ca. It's a major boating center, so I bought a spinnaker pole and some other stuff there, and I also filmed a television segment. But I didn't like the feel of Mallorca as much because it caters to families and older people on super discount package tours. I couldn't wait to get back to Ibiza, where people are young and single.

38: The exchange rate between the dollar and the euro is poor right now, and tourist areas in the Med can be outrageously expensive. What did it cost you to cruise?

Harker: When I was by myself, I got along on US\$200 a week for everything.

38: Get outa here!

Harker: I'd go to the ATM each week and get US\$200 in the local currency, and that would do me. When alone, I live very simply. I have oatmeal in the morning, and during the day I eat lots of fresh fruit. Toward the early evening, I have my main meal, which is usually some kind of noodles with sauce and clams or tuna or something. And since I speak several European languages, when I went to the fish or other markets, I could barter pretty well. The bartering and other social interaction make the experience a lot more fulfilling.

Of course, I was in a lucky situation, because we did TV stuff about six weeks of the summer. When that was going on, they'd pick up the tab for everything – including meals at some nice restaurants. So I'd live sim-

ply for one week, then work and live on expense account money for the next week.

But there are also tricks to living inexpensively in Spain and the rest of the Europe. For one thing, people treat you based on how you look. I've always gotten along well because I like to smile, which is good to do everywhere, and although I normally just wear a T-shirt and shorts, they are always

clean. If you dress like a slob or if you dress like a millionaire, you'll be treated accordingly.

When I did eat out in restaurants, I'd eat at ones the locals ate at – and in the part of the restaurants where the locals dined.

For example, if

you go to the back of a locals' restaurant near the kitchen and sit at a table without a tablecloth and without wine and water glasses, you'll often pay half the price for the same meal if you'd sat at a fully set table out front. If you sit at a table that is fully set, they won't clear it, and you'll pay tourist prices. This was true in Spain, Italy, and Malta.

I can't say about France, because I didn't really want to go there. I don't want to be disparaging, but French people are very rude to non-French people. I speak the language and know what they say about foreigners, and it's not nice.

38: So it's not a problem if you dress simply?

Harker: If you're wearing clean clothes



Palma de Mallorca – small boat harbor

(Harker continued on page 8)

and smile – I love to smile – you’ll be treated well. It’s good to wear nice shoes, too. Not necessarily expensive shoes, but nice and clean ones.

38: When we went to the Med, we hardly ever had wind. What was it like for you?

Harker: I had good and consistent wind just about everywhere I went. It might have come from the south and been full of sand, or from the northeast and Russia and been cool, but I usually had wind. I was in the Med from July 4 through the end of October, and I never had more than 30 knots, mostly out of the Northwest.

38: Give us a quick review of your major stops.

Harker: I loved Sardinia, which I was familiar with, and which I visited in the third week of August – the very height of the season. People there really put on the ritz. They wouldn’t let us anchor in one harbor, so we went around the corner and anchored in the next cove. No problem. It helped that I speak some Italian.

Malta was a disappointment for me. They were filming the movie *Gladiator* while I was trying to shoot my television segment. Well, the movie was a huge thing, and there

was just too much going on for my liking.

Corsica itself was all right, but it’s French and the French just make it difficult for foreigners. I later visited Sete and Montpellier in France, and it wasn’t so bad because I had French friends in those places. I also went to Valencia, Spain, for the introduction of Volkswagen’s new Transporter. I’d done some photography for

VW, so they invited me.

After that, we stopped at about ten coves along the coast of Spain. And then I spent the last half of September and most of October at my favorite place, Ibiza.

38: With the season almost over, had it calmed down?

Harker: Yes. As soon as the factories start up again and the schools return to session in Europe, the high season is over on Ibiza. There are only half the tourists and the prices drop by

about 50%. It’s actually very nice, as it’s not all dance and party like crazy. It makes it easier to get to know people.

38: Sum up your months in Europe.



Sardinia



Corsica

Harker: About half the time I did some really good work, and about half the time I just enjoyed myself. Then I took six weeks off at the end. The last six weeks in Ibiza were the best six weeks I've had in many years.

When I returned for that second time, the locals remembered my boat because it's dark blue with a big red arrow, and stands out among all the white boats. So when I returned, the Ibiza locals would greet me by name. I loved it.

It didn't hurt my summer that several of the women involved with the TV programs stayed with me for a week or so after their work week.



Mike Harker

38: Speaking of women, as we'll see later, for a guy in his 50s you seem to have quite a bit of success with younger women. What's your secret?

Harker: I smile a lot, I'm never grumpy, and I'm not pushy or threatening. There are a lot of grumpy people out there, and women don't find that attractive. I've had a great life, so why should I be grumpy or whine?

38: Did you sail straight to the Canaries to stage your trip across the Atlantic?

Harker: Not quite. On the way to the Canaries I stopped in at Gibraltar and Casablanca, Morocco. There was no place set

aside to tie up or anchor there, but then I learned that one of the container cranes had toppled over into the channel, blocking it. This allowed about eight to ten yachts to anchor in the part of the channel that had become inaccessible to big ships.

Most of them were Brit boats about to sail for the Canaries.

Casablanca was a dirty hole, but they did have really inexpensive food. I actually would have liked to stay longer than the two nights that I did.

Casablanca was a little strange, because there was nobody to guide you in, and the officials just looked at my passport. They didn't charge me a fee, nor did they bother to

have me fill out any forms.

38: As we'll soon see, you subsequently continued on to the Caribbean, Florida, the Caribbean again, Aruba, Colombia, Panama, Costa Rica, Ecuador, the South Pacific and Hawaii. As a singlehander, did you ever feel threatened?

Harker: I never felt threatened by pirates or anything like that, and I never had anything stolen. Wait, I take that back. My securely locked bike was stolen – in Marina del Rey the day after I got home! Venice Beach, which is right next to Marina del Rey, is more dangerous than any place I visited on my trip.

(Continued next month)

Stafford failed to eject in time they would have been killed in the ensuing explosion. Schirra's "Right Stuff" kicked in at the moment of crisis, and the veteran fighter and test pilot remained calm and refused to pull the "D"-ring for ejection despite the ticking clock. He knew nothing about that faulty plug starting the cockpit clock which, if correct and valid, would dictate only one response, but relied on his own icy nerves and on his own senses and reacted within a fraction of a second.

Because Wally made the proper decision and stayed with the vehicle, NASA was able to turn around the launch within 72 hours and Gemini 6A was finally successfully launched on December 15, 1965. Wally had saved the mission, and he may have saved the lives of himself and Stafford, as well as the US position in the space race.

I had known about his save of the Gemini 6A mission, and during our interview I had one last question for Wally. Most of the testing for the Webber seat had been done at China Lake, and I had read that during one of these tests several NASA astronauts were present to observe the test, and thus inspire confidence in the escape system.

What they observed that day instead of a successful test was a catastrophic failure that took the head off one of the anthropomorphic dummies. This demonstration would have had the opposite effect of in-

spiring confidence in the system and would have perhaps explained Wally's reluctance to punch out and instead stay with the spacecraft.

"Wally," I asked, "were you one of those astronauts to witness the dummy get his head taken off during that China Lake test gone afoul?"

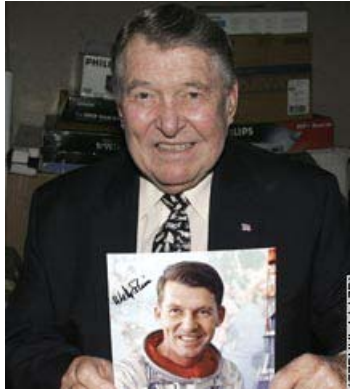
"Nope," he replied. "I don't think I would have wanted to see that; I'm glad I didn't see that!"

Well...that settled it. Wally Schirra not only had a dose of that elusive quality known as "The Right Stuff," but he manifested it in large quantities.

This thing that jet pilots and astronauts have that none of them talk about is simply a mind set that is programmed into their psyche through constant training and ongoing experience. Wally refers to it in his book, *Schirra's Space*, as training out fear to the point that there are no surprises. When this point is reached by pilots they become cool under pressure and able to think and react properly during emergencies.

They have reached a state of pilot nirvana, a state of the right stuff. They understand the dangers of what they do but are able to control their fear, squelch panic, and work emergencies to their benefit, to an acceptable outcome.

Wally could sure do all of that and we will sorely miss him...GOD'S SPEED WALLY "ON THE GREAT ADVENTURE."



Wally Schirra at a Science Fiction Convention in 2006

What's Happening...

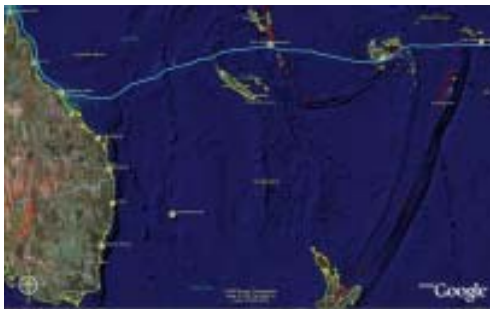
Mike Harker – on to Australia

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



Bay of Don Bernardo in the Las Perlas Island group

Mike has crossed the Pacific and spent some “quality time” in French Polynesia, and then on to Australia.



American Samoa to Australia



Mike and his crew – Ben & Jamie

Claude Hulet hosts 30th annual symposium on Portuguese traditions

The UCLA Department of Spanish and Portuguese, in cooperation with the Latin American Center, the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, and the Institute for Linguistics and Language Programs, is pleased to announce the Thirtieth Symposium on Portuguese Traditions.



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Photo: WPA, and Wikimedia.

Claude Hulet (#1114) is a professor of Portuguese studies, and for thirty years has hosted an annual symposium celebrating Portuguese contributions to global society.

This year was special, because Claud received special recognition by his international colleagues for his dedication and hard work over so many years. We join them in offering Claud our highest admiration and heartiest congratulations for a long-time job well done!

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....”

Robert E. Oberto #1124



Bob Oberto was born in Inglewood, California, on September 28, 1956.

Bob joined the U.S. Navy as an aviator following his graduation from the University of Southern California in Aerospace Engineering. He served seven years on active duty and thirteen more in the Reserves, retiring as a full Commander. Bob has 3,050 logged flight hours, 203 carrier landings, is qualified to fly eight different military aircraft, including both the A-3 fighter-bomber and the A-4 fighter, and various civilian light aircraft and sailplanes.

Bob skippered a 27 ft sailboat around the leeward islands of Tahiti, and skippered several trips in the Virgin Islands.

Bob made a month long Himalayn trek in the Anapurna and Kumbu regions, and climbed Mts. Kalaptar and Chucung. He has also backpacked in the U.S. and abroad.

Bob has been a certified SCUBA diver for over thirty-five years, diving the Great Barrier Reef, Caribbean, Philippines, California, Tahiti, Fiji, Mexico, Vancouver, and more.

Bob attended the Naval Postgraduate School and received his M.S. in Aerospace Engineering from the University of Colorado.

Kim McCoy #1126



Kim McCoy was born in the United States on November 15, 1951.

Kim is an adventurer's adventurer, having covered the globe from the Arctic to the Antarctic. He has visited sixty-nine countries, sixteen of them more than once, and lived in eight of them. By age five, Kim had already lived in five countries, and by age eight had visited four continents.

By trade, Kim is an Oceanographer. He has practiced his trade in the Arctic, Antarctic, and in the waters around New Zealand and Australia. In 1985 Kim founded Ocean Sensors, Inc., which designs microprocessor based oceanographic data acquisition systems, software, instruments, and sensors. He presently chairs the Oceanographic Instrumentation section of the Marine Technology Society.

Kim has been involved with free-diving since childhood, and has certified many world records in the sport. He designed and built the sensors used by, and wrote the investigative report on the tragic death of, French free-diver Audrey Mestre on October 12, 2002.

Editor's note: New member Sid Hallburn (#1125) will be featured in next month's News.

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

Robert G. Willisroft #1116 - Editor



Summer is here – “Those lazy, hazy, crazy days of Summer...”

For some reason, Summer days mean lower attendance at Club meetings. I want to encourage all of you to visit

with us every Thursday evening. After all, you joined for the fellowship of like-minded adventurers, and just reading this magazine will not hack it. You need a regular infusion of eyeball-to-eyeball, my-joke-is-funnier-than-yours to fulfill that need that

drove you to join this organization in the first place.

So, if you are able, get off your duff and join us on Thursdays. If you need a ride, use the Zip Code list we published several months ago, and call a member in your area to hitch a ride. If that won't work for you, call President Robert DeMott at (310)927-7271. I'm sure he'll arrange something.

Speaking of getting off your duff, I am receiving virtually no letters to the editor. I am convinced that at least one or two of you have something to say about what you read here. And it doesn't have to be about the magazine. Write about anything at all. I have heard a couple of you complain about

(Thrawn Rickle continued on page 15)

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Robert DeMott #1080 - President



Greetings upon this halfway point of our adventurous year! To date, we have seen many members embarked to and returned from all corners of the Earth, often sending colorful

dispatches back which rarely precede their senders! What a truly amazing lot of intrepid Adventurers we have.

As I look out at the members and guests in the hall every Thursday, I am constantly in awe of the shared passion for adventure which draws this group together and the forces that drive a man to expand the realm of his experience. Then, I reflect on the

men who have gone before us, the ones who have given of their time and energies, contributing their charisma and bonds of tradition so that to this day, we are still warmed by the flame they lit and nurtured.

Of everything I value and enjoy about the Club, I think that this flame of continuity is the strongest. The fact that in 1921, a group of hearty Adventurers thought enough of each other to band together to initiate this Club through a set of bylaws that has withstood the test of time, wars, social change and demographics is mute testimony to the truly amazing spirit which still brings us together to this day. Over the years, there have been a fascinatingly diverse host of personalities passing through our doors, all enriching our history and tra-

(President's Corner continued on page 15)

BOOK REVIEW –

SOME LAST PEOPLE – Vanishing tribes of Bhutan, China, Mexico, Mongolia and Siberia

by Robert G. Williscroft – Editor

Author: Pierre Odier, L'image Odier, Eagle Rock, CA, 2004 (200p; 9 x 11 1/4) , ISBN: 0-96116325-9

Pierre Odier is a man on a mission that has consumed a significant part of his life. In his own words:

It is man's inner self that remains both the central enigma and the greatest challenge of existence. As long as we consciously suppress differences and systematically eliminate civilizations and cultures because of those differences, we diminish our own understanding of ourselves. Every view of the world that becomes extinct, every culture that disappears, takes us further away from knowing who, and what we are.

Whether or not you agree with Pierre's underlying premise, *Some Last People* is a *tour de force* that must be read by anyone who wants to understand the vast range of culture and civilization coexisting on our fragile planet.

Pierre has the distinction of having been there and done that in a way that few have equalled. This gives him an authoritative voice that carries the conviction of experience.

When Pierre says that "I have found in these 'other worlds' a connection with the earth and with elements of my humanity that are missing from the larger portion of

my existence..." he is speaking from a factual basis that few on earth share.

This gives his opinions an authority that causes even an old skeptic such as this reviewer to sit up and take notice. Pierre is a man with a point of view worthy of consideration.

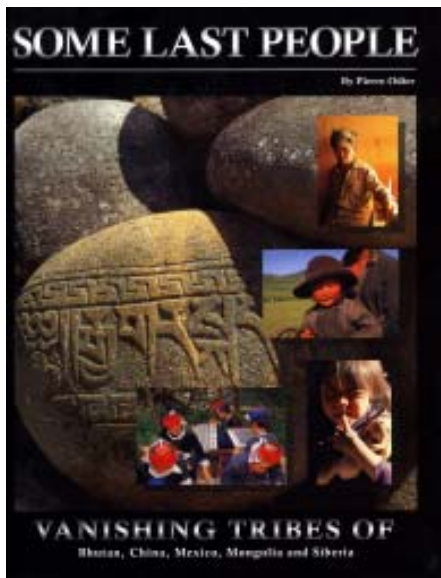
Pierre's readers meet the Brogpas of Bhutan, the Ge minority of China, the Tarahumara/Raramuri of Mexico, the Nomads of Mongolia, and the Yukaghir of Siberia.

The book is meticulously designed and beautifully laid out with dozens of striking color photographs, and includes a full index and bibliography

for each section.

Put *Some Last People* on your coffee table, but look out – for when a guest picks up this magnificent book, he or she will be lost to you for the duration, steeped in five vanishing cultures, carried away by the vision of its remarkable author, Pierre Odier.

Some Last People is published by L'image Odier, Pierre's production company in Eagle Rock, California, and is available in both hard and soft cover from the publisher at www.limageodier.com, and from Amazon.com online.



this or that Club event, rule, or member. Vent about it here. Please take time to email or snail mail me with your comments.

It's time to begin thinking about our annual Night of High Adventure – N.O.H.A., taking place on October 21 this year. Reservations are \$100 a seat, and the tables are filling fast. We have an enhanced program this year, that is more than worth the cost. Stay tuned for further developments as we draw nearer to the date.

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

The password for the online edition (which is in full color) is "acla0706".

dition, these modern times being no exception.

So, I ask myself these questions: How can I do my part to show my gratitude and contribute to the Club so that future generations of members will appreciate our efforts and enjoy the continued camaraderie of like minded gentlemen? How will I be remembered when I am long gone?

Hopefully, I will be remembered by at least a few future members as the interesting, fun-loving guy who befriended and invited them to join us for an evening of good fellowship at our Club quarters, the one who introduced them to the life enhancing, rich and rewarding experience that is our Adventurers' Club.

Yup, that's how I want to be remembered. How about you?

See you and your guests Thursday!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

Many thanks for the heads up on the REAL story [about the bear in the April/May issue of the *Club News*]. But, sure was a big fellow anyway, wasn't it?
– Ed Boden #659

Thanks for writing, Ed. Now I know that I have at least one reader! – Editor

To the Editor:

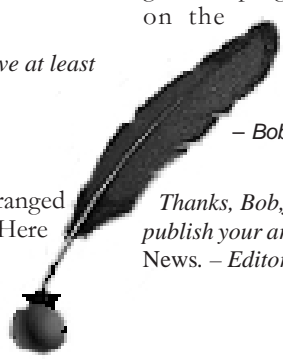
Last May, club member Bob Oberto arranged for a group of us to go soaring in Mojave. Here is my account of that day.
– Jim Dorsey #1081

It's a great write-up, Jim. We will publish it in the next edition of the Club News. – Editor

To the Editor:

I've briefly written a piece on Samantha Larson's conquest of Everest this month. You may recall she gave us a program May 11, 2006. This article reports on the culmination of her objective to have climbed the seven tallest peaks on each continent by her 18th year.
Quite a kid, all right!
– Bob Aronoff #837

Thanks, Bob, for reminding us about Sam. We will publish your article in the next edition of the Club News. – Editor



THURSDAY NIGHTS AT THE CLUB

April 5, 2007

Bob Zeman (#878)

President **Robert DeMott** announced that **Bill Carr** had gone on the great adventure. **Frank Haigler** attended the funeral. Bill was a pilot for 62 years and flew 56 different types of aircraft. He was stationed at Schofield Barracks in the Army and saw the Japanese planes attack Pearl Harbor.

Roy Roush returned from a treasure hunters' convention in Coleen, Texas. He gave a talk on ghost towns and mining camps of the southwest.

He then visited his grandparents' old farm 60 miles east of Wichita, Kansas on the Santa Fe Trail where he spent summers growing up. He found rocks shaped like the Masonic emblem. He showed a gun used for metal detecting and told a story of a former Confederate treasure buried on the property but later dug up.

Bob Oberto returned from a manta ray dive on Kona.

Steve Bein brought some knives for display.

Separated at Birth: How North Korea Became the Evil Twin

Gordon Cucullu has impressive credentials. He was a lieutenant colonel and Green Beret in the Army and has spent 13 years in the Far East including eight in Korea.

Gordon noted that South Korea started with less land, less people and less resources and now has made the North look like a basket case.



The U. S. has often over-managed and over-organized its operations causing animosity. Therefore, North Korea, Iran, Venezuela and other countries have become allies because

the enemy of my enemy is my friend. But if the U. S. and Israel went away, these dictators would be at each others' throats. Currently, Hezbollah activists are being trained on Magritte Island off Venezuela.

The U. S. has three problems with these countries – immigration, military strength and energy. In addition, right now we buy oil from Saudi Arabia which gives it to Iraq.

Gordon has been to Guantanamo and referred to studies that all of the high profile activists were in the U. S. on September 11th and had the skills for four or five highjack teams.

There have been 3,000 casualties in Iraq, 3,000 at Normandy, 7,500 at Iwo Jima and 56,000 in three years in Korea.

The Islamic Fascism which started when Mohammed came out of the desert believes that every square foot once occupied is now deserted. We will succeed if we know ourselves and know our enemy.

In 1994 there was evidence of plutonium in North Korea. Jimmy Carter struck a deal with Kim Il Sung called food for peace. It did not work. The North Koreans sold the food on the black market and changed to enriched uranium at another site. Recent missiles on parade in Teheran were built in North Korea.

Last July 4th, the North conducted seven

missile tests. Six short-range tests all succeeded but the seventh long-range failed. These were paid for by Iran. There is concern that missiles will be placed in Venezuela. Japan is also concerned and it is one of the largest users of nuclear energy in the world.

There are 1.5 to 3.0 million starving people in North Korea but the country is the largest importer of French cognac which goes to the leaders.

Gordon said we need to undermine the Iranian government and not allow sanctuaries there or in Syria.

China is a big question. It is fearful of running out of energy and wants more control over southeast Asia.

Other problems are camps set up by North Korea to hold refugees who tried to escape the country; counterfeiting of U. S. dollars, Japanese notes and pharmaceuticals.



But things did go right in the terrorist problem in Mindanao.

Paul Isley quoted Tommy Franks. To succeed in Iraq we need governance, security and an economic future.

April 19, 2007

Bob Zeman (#878)

President **Robert DeMott** welcomed all. He read a letter from **Eva Wahlroos** who remarked that her late husband **Sven** enjoyed the Club. He rarely missed a meeting in his first fifteen years of membership. She thanked those members who attended Sven's funeral and thanked the Club for the

joy given to the two of them.

Gary Mortimer #1086 returned from northern Arizona. He photographed Indian ruins and looked for interesting rocks.

Gary and **Shane Barry** are leaving for Malaysia and Borneo. Seven plane flights will take them from diving in the ocean to deep sea fishing, paddling up and down rivers, exploring caves and possibly climbing Mt. Kinabalu.

Roger Haft says that his planned North Korea trip for May 2 is still on.

Larry Schutte is going to Kona for a photo shoot. He will then hook up with **Ralph White** and Rosaly Lopes for a tour of Volcanoes National Park.

And **Bob Obero** just returned from a night dive off Kona looking for manta rays. He is looking to take up some Club members on a soaring flight on May 11 near Llano on the Pearblossom Highway.

Clearing Land Mines in Cambodia

Bill Morse and his wife have returned from a tour of Cambodia and Angkor Wat. Cambodia had been in an almost constant state of warfare since the war in Viet Nam spilled over its borders. After that the Khmer Rouge ruled for more than three years. The Vietnamese joined the battle in 1979 and did not leave until 1989. But the warfare continued until 1998.

The after effects included about 5 million land mines in Cambodia.

(Minutes continued on page 18)



Bill Morse and his wife were disturbed by the effects of the mines – many missing limbs. Bill met Aki Ra who with a metal detector is discovering and disabling mines.

Aki Ra estimates it costs him about one dollar for each mine he clears. But the foundation set up by Princess Di spends about \$1,000 per cleared mine. The average income of a Cambodian is \$300 per year. Three persons per day are killed by mines.

Bill has raised \$10,000 to buy a Mitsubishi truck to enable Aki Ra to get to the minefields. Bill went out on a ride to a field. He stayed overnight and the locals shot regional versions of pheasant, mule deer and polecat for a meal.

The mines were built in many countries but most came from China. Aki Ra wears a face mask to avoid poisoning from the nitrate when he disables a mine. Personal metal detectors are not allowed in Cambodia because people will use them to dig up native artifacts.

Aki Ra has built a few schools to help the children. It costs him \$1,500 to \$3,500 per school. He has also opened a land mine museum to teach people the horrors of these devices.

Studying an Undersea Volcano Eruption



Dave Ziskin was a radio officer on the Sea Shepherd. He is also a radio electronics officer.

In January, 2006 an undersea volcano erupted. The location was 500 miles south of Manzanillo and 200 miles west of Costa Rica. Dave hired on

the Norwegian research vessel Atlantis to study the after effects of the eruption.

The ship was a support for the deep submergence vehicles Jason and Alvin. There was a seismograph to measure motion on the ocean floor and data recorders. The pilots on the two vehicles are dolphin-qualified by the U. S. Navy.

While aboard the ship Dave who is a ham radio operator set up a DX station.

The volcano was found at a depth of 8,500 feet and Alvin and Jason brought up good specimens of the eruption – one of which Dave donated to the Club.

Dave is convinced of global warming because of his findings off the coast of Greenland. The salt density of the water has dropped 14% in just a few years.

Dividing in Roatan by Steve Bein

Steve Bein flew to Roatan in the Bay Islands off Honduras. Prior to diving, he rode zip lines and crossed gullies on one cable while holding on to another.

But his photos were of the beautiful fish, sponges and corals. He showed squirrelfish, blue tang, scorpion, frog fish, green moray eel, many lobster, puffer fish, sea horse and grouper.

He had good shots of a wreck with a school of six to eight-foot sharks.



Steve crossed gullies walking on one cable while holding a second

May 3, 2007

Bob Aronoff (#837)

Kalimantan Borneo – The Search for the Last Headhunter

Pierre Odier is in a class by himself when he goes off the unbeaten path to no paths. With maps as an introduction to show us his trekking path, Pierre charted his tracks through some tough terrain, through hill and dale, on rivers on what passes for “river ferries,” and wherever his “free spirit” takes him journeying around Borneo.



“Old” Borneo has metamorphosed into four distinct and separate entities, Sarawak and Sabah (both now part of Malaysia), Kalimantan (now part of Indonesia), and Brunei (an independent Sultanate state overflowing with oil riches).

Having recently risked life and limb to get into the “Golden Triangle” area where Thailand, Burma and Laos meet – and without the proper authorization from these governments to do so, Pierre was out to find the last head hunter peoples, the Dayaks and Punan people, using the Mahakam River as his vehicle.

The Golden Triangle is known as one of the richest growing fields for drugs. Drug dealers – pardon me, unlicensed pharmacists – are known for being suspicious of those who might wish to destroy their business, and at times discretion was advised. Pierre explained he got a signal from those around him not to show his face but find reason to tie his shoes to “prove” he wasn’t looking at anyone to later recognize them.

It wasn’t enough to find headhunters in the Golden Triangle, Pierre found his quarry in all sorts of non-descript and decrepit villages in the back country of Kalimantan.

With good sensing when to become a complete zero in the scene, Pierre managed to show some very primitive scenes that still exist in the world, very much untouched by civilization as we know it, but very much being squeezed and pressured by the coming outside world as it inexorably intrudes into the daily life of these remote regions.

Already T-shirts with pictures on them are evident as well as some modern conveniences.

All in all, Pierre was Pierre and this Ladies Night crowd was delighted to get to see what few others will ever see – the inner workings of the remote regions of Kalimantan.



(Minutes continued on page 20)

May 10, 2007

Bob Aronoff (#837)

China's Northwest Jewel – Xinjiang Province

This evening's guest presenter was widely-traveled all over the world. Ted Crovello, PhD, recently retired from an absorbing academic career which took him from the faculty of the University of Notre Dame to the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research and also professor in biological science at California State University (LA). It was while at CSU that Ted spent a number of months in China on different occasions at universities working with the faculty and their students in his areas of expertise, environmental biology and establishing inter-university agreements.



Ted as the Great Wall Warrior

Last fall Ted was invited to be a guest lecturer at Xinjiang University in Urumqi, capital of Xinjiang Province. Urumqi is the provincial capital city of two million of Xinjiang. The province makes up the northwest corner of China. A surprising aspect of Xinjiang is some of its cities, like Urumqi and Kashgar, are geographically much closer to Baghdad and Tehran than to Beijing.

The size of Xinjiang Province is equal to

that of Alaska and represents 1/6 of China's land mass. We saw land that was mainly dry and barren, lots of desert landscape very dependent on water melting from the mountains surrounding Xinjiang and from the west-east Tian Shan Range that



Ted and the grapes of Kashgar

separates most of the province into two basins. Of course, global warming means less snow from these mountains (with peaks of 20,000+ feet) that will threaten the existing ecology of the region, not to mention the ability of the land to support its present population.

In Ted's presentation, we started out in Kashgar, and then went east Korla and Turpan along the Old Silk Road route that traversed the northern edge of the Taklimakan Desert, then north to the Lake Kanas area close to Russia and finally to the cities of Yining and Urumqi seeing other local spots enroute in this little seen corner of the world. Life pretty much is a daily struggle for the majority of the locals. In the middle of nowhere in the vast province, Ted reflected how had any untoward events occurred, no one would be the wiser for what had happened to him (or anyone else in such circumstances).

The region is 47% Uighur, a Moslem group comprising the major minority of the province's citizens. Han Chinese are a fast-

(Minutes continued on page 21)

Forthcoming Programs

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| June 28, 2007 | – “Adventure Productions” David Keane |
| July 5, 2007 | – “1001 Nights in the Iraqi Army” Shant Kenderian |
| July 12, 2007 | – LADIES’ NIGHT – “Around the world flight – non-stop, unsupported”
Dick Rutan |
| July 19, 2007 | – LADIES’ NIGHT – “Band of Brothers” Don Malarkey & Buck Compton |
| July 26, 2007 | – “Gem mines around the world” Charles Carmona |

NOTICES

N.O.H.A.: Our annual Night of High Adventure is fast approaching – the day is Sunday, October 21. You need to purchase your seat as soon as possible, before they are all gone. Pierre, Jim, and the rest of the committee are putting together something very special this year, a significant change from past events. You won’t want to miss it!

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

(Minutes continued from page 20)

growing portion of the province – 43% at latest count. Beijing, as it is doing in Tibet, is encouraging Han Chinese to move to Xinjiang to help develop and stabilize the region. Some Uighurs seem restless to have their own independent state and agitate to the extent possible to do so. But as the area fills with more and more Han Chinese, it acts to put a break on the aspirations of the Uighur, who primarily speak a language other than Mandarin. Beginning about 10 years ago, Mandarin became the mandated language of instruction in the province.

While Ted speaks a basic Mandarin (besides a strong proficiency in Russian and some self-taught Spanish), his classroom work was conducted in English. He was asked how the students were able to follow him. He reiterated in China that En-

glish is a required academic course throughout a student’s time in school. However, if a student didn’t understand what was spoken, a moment or two could be taken while those students whose English was strong enough explained to those whose English wasn’t up to the level of instruction.

A lively Q and A session followed and Ted was gracious with his time talking with many fellow adventurers interested in that area of the world. We were privileged to see into a region of this planet few members of the Club ever see. Since Pierre Odier has covered stretches of this region of China, the two of them exchanged lots of memories of familiar ground and thoughts on Xinjiang Province as did Jerry Robinson, who makes frequent trips to China. Jerry is Paul Isley’s partner in their business.

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Los Angeles CA 90031

FIRST CLASS MAIL

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