

The
Adventurers' Club News®

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Photo – Bill Altaffer

Ascension Cathedral in Almaty, Kazakhstan

The Adventurers' Club News

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THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Larry Schutte #1121 - President



Hey gang! Fearless leader here. The word for this month is membership. I'm going to talk about it because I'm convinced

that's the way to grow the club, not by selling key chains and coffee mugs.

As old members die, move away, cannot make it to meetings, etc., we must replenish our "tribe" with new, compatible, qualified members chosen by our existing membership. We have the solid twenty-five guys who show up every week for dinner and the meeting and several more who just come for the presentation. Our goal is to grow that number to between forty and fifty guys who come on a regular basis. If each of us sponsored a worthy candidate, we will hit our mark within this year, which I would like to see. So, existing members, the challenge is on. Please think through your list of friends, associates, colleagues, and recommend someone worthy of membership. The dues and dinner revenue are what keeps our great Club solvent. With your help,

we're going to keep things going in a big way. Also, some of you members might want to leave something to the club in your will. So if you're updating your affairs, please don't forget to leave a "little taste" to the club that has provided good things for you.

BTW – NOHA is October 23, 2011, at the Delfina in Santa Monica. We need quality objects for the silent auction. Please see me or Steve Bein to donate your things.

The Masons have fixed the roof yet again. Let's hope it works this time. We'll know after the next big rain!

Attendance was up nicely for our distinguished VIP on April 21st. Over fifty showed up. It was nice to see. Keep it up guys. I love it!

Ralph Perez (#1150) left the same night with an Expedition flag to take on the amazing walk he has planned for the next few months. Also, check in often to Bill Burke's blog for updates on his Everest double summit attempt: www.EightSummits.com

This month of May coming up looks to be an amazing line up of talent with Chris Welch from Virgin Oceanic to Cheetah Lady Laurie Marker, Gil Garcetti, and our own Pierre Odier. Strap in, it's going to be a real adventure!

The Five Stans

Bill Altaffer (#1095)

Editor's note: This article was condensed from a much longer article that contained many more details of this remarkable trip.

I met with my fellow travelers, a small group of Americans, in Almaty, Kazakhstan, to begin my third trip to the Stans. From the rooftop of the world to the vanished Aral Sea, we experienced the five Stans as few tourists have. I count this as one of my very best trips ever.

Photo: Bill Altaffer



Ascension Cathedral in Almaty, Kazakhstan – the only Christian church in the Stans

Almaty, nestled in the foothills of the Tien Shan mountain range, is the largest city in Central Asia and the stepping-off point to the other Stans. “Almaty” means the place with apples. It is believed to be where apples were first domesticated. It had grown up as a major site on the Silk Road but was destroyed by the Mongols in 1211. Today it is a modern city made prosperous by oil and gas. I was amazed that the streets were washed down nightly and, as we noticed all through the rest of our trip throughout Central Asia,

trash and litter were nonexistent.

Before leaving Almaty, we drove into the Small Almaty Gorge where the Medeo Sports Complex is located. Set among the craggy peaks and alpine slopes created by an ancient glacier, this Olympic-size skating rink will be the site of the next Asian Games. We had lunch in a traditional Kazakh yurt restaurant before setting off to Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgystan.

Upon arrival, we were impressed by the abundance of trees. At dinner that evening, we were treated to a performance of part of Manas, a dramatic song that celebrates the history of Kyrgystan. We spent the following day sightseeing. That evening, we had dinner in the home of the mother-in-law of our tour manager, Paul Schwartz, a huge feast including many exotic items and featuring veg-

Photo: neiljs' photostream



Bazaar in Bishkek, Kyrgystan

etables from her garden.

The following day, we flew to Osh, in south Kyrgystan, the country's oldest and second-largest city. It was a center of silk production along the

old Silk Road and celebrated its 3,000th anniversary in 2000. There we visited the sacred Suleiman's

Photo: Bill Altaffer



Suleiman's Throne overlooking Osh, Kyrgystan

Throne, a huge limestone and quartz mound with a view of the city. It is full of caves, and has recently been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. After lunch, we headed overland to Sary Tash.

Sary Tash is a collection of small houses and yurts close to the Tajikistan border. Its only accommodations

Photo: Bill Altaffer



Sary Tash, Kyrgystan

are a few yurts with pads on the floor for sleeping, lighting from bare bulbs powered by a generator, and an out-house a small distance away. Temper-

atures were cold and food was very basic, emphasizing that we had left the comforts of the beaten path behind, entering a world with rough conditions that few Americans can imagine.

After our somewhat uncomfortable night in Sary Tash, we drove on the mostly unpaved road to the border post. We disembarked from our van to stretch our legs while Paul went inside. We waited, and we waited. Finally, Paul came out to inform us of the situation. It had been impossible to obtain the paperwork allowing our Kyrgyz driver (an ethnic Uzbek) and van to carry us across the ten-mile no-man's-land. The commander offered to transport us in an army vehicle for the outrageous fee of \$50 per person. Paul had bartered this down to \$200 for all seven of us. Then the commander placed a tiny stool between the two front seats, where Paul perched with his legs scrunched against the gear stick. The remaining six of us crammed ourselves sardine-like into the back seat without a cubic inch of spare space. The commander and the driver occupied the two front seats, with plenty of room and richer by \$200.

The drive was very slow, over rough, rocky road, across a riverbed, up and down steep rises, bouncing and jostling and seeming to last forever. At long last, we reached the Tajik border post. We were met by two 4-wheel drive vans and their astounded driv-

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The Five Stans

(Five Stans continued from page 3)

ers. We loaded up, and set out on the Pamir Highway, a narrow, often one-lane road, mostly unpaved, that winds its way through incredible scenery. For many miles, it paralleled the

Photo: Bill Altaffer



Pamir Highway

Chinese border, marked by a continuous “electric” fence that had been built by the Soviets. We wound between mountains, eventually climbing over several high passes, including the highest at 14,000 feet, the Kyzyl Art Pass. For most of the day-long drive, we were alone on the road, only occasionally meeting or passing huge Chinese trucks carrying goods to other parts of Central Asia. This area is very sparsely populated, with only a few small villages scattered throughout. We reached one of these near the beautiful, pristine Karakul Lake around lunch time. After an afternoon bouncing through more amazing scenery, we eventually reached Murgab, the “city of birds,” a town of about 4,000 people and second largest town in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region, a piece of disputed territory in the

mountainous northeast corner of Tajikistan. Murgab is the highest town in Tajikistan, sits at the junction of three major roads and has long been a melting pot for the many ethnic

Photo: Traveladventures.org



Typical street in Murgab, Tajikistan

groups in Central Asia.

We stayed in a Murgab guest house for two nights. It was a collection of a home and several outbuildings clustered around a small dirt courtyard, all enclosed by a fence with a heavy gate. The house had a few rooms, each with multiple beds for travelers, and the family’s living quarters and kitchen. There was no running water. Electricity was available for brief intervals in the evening. The outbuildings included an outhouse and a sauna where we were able to take hot bucket baths. In the courtyard was an oven where woman of the house baked bread every few days. Food was basic and not particularly good.

We spent most of a day driving out of the town up into a valley between two of the many mountains. We experienced incredible

scenery that left us filled with awe at the sheer majesty and immensity of the landscape.

After returning to Murgab by mid-afternoon, we visited the local market and a cooperative that sells hand-made items to the few tourists that reach this remote spot. By chance, this was the first day of school. We were struck by the children, all dressed in black and white finery. Some of the young girls looked almost like they were dressed as French maids, with black dresses and white, frilly aprons. This black-and-white attire turned out to be common with schoolchildren throughout the five Stans. Most of the girls also wore frilly white pompom-like hair accessories. They were beyond cute.

The following day, we traversed 15,270 foot high Ak-Baital Pass, eventually arriving in the city of Khorog, where we spent two nights.

Photo: Parviz.Tj



Khorog, Tajikistan

Khorog is the home of the Central Asia University, underwritten by the Aga Khan Foundation. Our very nice hotel, the Serena Inn, was built by the

Aga Khan on the bank of the Pyanj River with a view of Afghanistan on the opposite bank. We spent the day seeing the sites, including the world's second-highest botanical garden and the first motorized vehicle to traverse the Pamir Highway in 1932, a small pickup truck displayed at the edge of town on a large concrete block.

We spent the next two days climbing over more mountains on some of the roughest, dustiest roads in the world. Close to nightfall on the day we left Khorog, we arrived at the little village of Kalaikhumb where we were fortunate to stay in a guest house supported by the Aga Khan Foundation. It was basic, but had electricity; its courtyard was cement rather

Photo: Hyatt Hotels & Resorts



Hyatt Regency in Dushanbe, Tajikistan

er than dirt, and it boasted a central bathroom with a flushing toilet and a tub with hot, running water.

By the end of the next day, we found ourselves out of the mountains and on real roads as we approached Dushanbe. While still outside the city limits, we stopped to pay local boys to wash our vans with buckets using

(Moving Days continued on page 6)

The Five Stans

(Five Stans continued from page 5)

water from a small stream. Dirty vehicles are ticketed in Dushanbe so several groups of boys perform this service for a small charge. We stayed at the 5-star Hyatt Regency in Dushanbe. After our rough accommodations on the road, this was one of the nicest hotels I have ever stayed in. We were bemused by the contrast between sleeping on the floor of a yurt with no running water at one end of the Pamir Highway and ending up at the other end in a true 5-star hotel with all the amenities, even a lap pool. We spent two decadent nights there while we explored the sites of Dushanbe.

Leaving Dushanbe, we spent all day first flying to Khujand and then driving across the border to Samar-

Photo: Bill Altaffer



Bibi Khanum Mosque in Samarkand, Uzbekistan

kand, Uzbekistan. Crossing the border was the usual ordeal in this part of the world, with us hauling our luggage across wide expanses of no-man's-land, multiple copies of Customs declarations to complete and the repeated examination of all our documents on both sides of the bor-

der. We spent two nights in Samarkand, a bustling city with much history and many sites to see. We visited the Bibi Khanum Mosque, built by Tamerlane to be the largest mosque in the Islamic world. Architects from India and Persia, with the help of almost 100 elephants, constructed the mosque using Indian marble.

On the 16th day of our trip, we traveled by bus west to Bukhara, an ancient Silk Road oasis for camel caravans. Bukhara was built by Tajiks/

Photo: Emiraty



Kalon Mosque, Bukhara, Uzbekistan

Persians. The ancient architecture and design in Bukhara have been preserved better than in other places, despite being heavily bombed by the Bolsheviks, resulting in a charmingly lovely and exotic city. We visited the Zindan Prison with its infamous “bug pit” where two British spies were brutally imprisoned in the 19th century. We saw the Kalon Mosque and Minaret, the second largest mosque in Central Asia. Its minaret is ringed by fourteen unique bands of brickwork and was the

only structure to survive when Genghis Khan razed the city. We stayed in a “boutique hotel” in the old Jewish Quarter that had been fashioned from several old Jewish merchant houses and decorated in the national style.

After Bukhara, we drove to Turkmenabat, Turkmenistan (our fifth Stan) with the usual border crossing ordeal, then flew to Ashkhabad. Ash-

Photo: Bill Altaffer



*Large Mosque in Ashkhabad,
Turkmenistan*

khabad had been destroyed by Mongols in the 13th century. In 1948, a massive earthquake ravished the city, killing over two-thirds of its population. Lately, it has seen a major building revival. It has changed dramatically since my previous visit over a decade ago, reminiscent of the building explosion in Dubai. Ashkhabad feels like a mix of Pyongyang, Brasilia, Dubai and Canberra. The look of the city is ultra-modern and spare-no-expense, though most of the luxury apartments and fancy hotels seem to be unoccupied. Huge parks and statues complete the picture of a country suddenly

dripping with natural gas revenues. Fortunately, we were able to visit Tolkuchka Bazaar outside of the city for a taste of reality. The is one of the most exciting open markets of Central Asia.

The trip officially ended in Ashkhabad. Some of us stayed on for an extension starting with a return to Uzbekistan for a one-night stay in Khiva. Legend says that Khiva was founded by Shem, Noah’s son, at the spot where he found water in the desert. Khiva is a living museum including the Dzhuma Mosque with its 115 carved wood columns that create a forest-like effect. Four of these columns, older than the rest, show fire damage, supposedly from Genghis Khan’s torching of the city.

The next day we drove to Nukus, the capital of the autonomous region of Karakalpakia in western Uzbekistan. The Karakalpak people are more closely related to the Kazakhs than to the Uzbeks, with a mix of Mongol bloodlines. Nukus sits at the center of an area crisscrossed by old caravan routes and dotted with ancient ruins. Its claim to fame is the Savitsky Art Museum, the “Louvre of the desert,” famous for its huge collection of avant-garde Russian art. Our main purpose in coming to Nukus was to take an all-day bouncy trip to Muynak, once a thriving fishing port on the Aral Sea, formerly the fourth largest inland sea in the world.

(Five Stans continued on page 20)

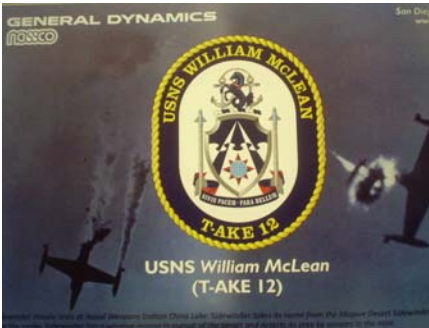
What's Happening...

Gary Hareland attends christening

Photos Gary Hareland

Gary Hareland (#1138) attended the Christening/Launch Ceremony for the *USNS William McLean*. McLean was the most successful Technical Director at China Lake ever! *USNS William McLean* was launched in Long Beach on April 16, 2011, at 8:30 pm.

On an unrelated matter, Gary was the guest speaker at the Bakersfield Navy League on April 20.



Ralph Perez challenges the Pacific Crest Trail

Rick Flores (#1120)

Ralph Perez (#1150) is in the final stages of planning his 2,655 mile hiking trip on the Pacific Crest Trail from the Mexican to the Canadian Border.

He will be leaving on May 1 going from Campo to Lake Morena, the first twenty miles of a long journey. You can follow his progress by logging onto his blog at: <http://www.trailjournals.com/entry.cfm?id=343341>. If that doesn't work just Google: Pacific Crest Trail, Trawler Cat.

His blog contains past stories about how he prepared for this monumental trip. He uses the trail name of Trawler Cat and refers to other club members by their trail names; he calls me Corn Nut (in reference to my favorite trail food) and Shane Berry is Globe Trekker. Ralph can also be reached at his email address: Trawlercat@gmail.com.

Shane and I both plan to join Ralph on the trail as he passes through the Los Angeles segment of his hike. If club members were to contact him beforehand and make arrangements they could also join Ralph on a segment of his journey and sign his expedition flag; I am sure he would appreciate the company.



Roz challenges the Indian Ocean

Photos Roz Savage

Roz Savage has cast off from a pier in Fremantle, Australia, and pointed her ocean rower, *Sedna*, toward the coast of Africa.

You can follow her trip at <http://roz.savage.com>. Unfortunately, because of pirate activity, she will not be posting her daily position.

Roz appeared at the Club back in September, 2006.



Roz with her freshly stickered Sedna



Roz takes a "baker's holiday" in Sydney Harbor

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 G. Williscroft #1116 – Editor



Well...we do have a new roster, but it has several errors. We'll be fixing that with an errata sheet shortly. Should you find

an error we missed, please let me know by email. We will publish changes in the *News* as we receive them.

As I mentioned last month, our next project is to publish a new loose-leaf bio-roster. Many of you have sent me your updated bio information and photos, but I am certain that many more are sitting on updated material that will not be included in the new bio-roster, unless you get the material to me.

Remember to write out your bio in full, even if you have only a couple of changes; and include the best digital photo you have. I've received several letters asking me to write the bio from a resume or from some other piece of material on the member. Hey guys, it doesn't work that way! You write out your bio and Email it to aclaeditor@argee.net. If you don't have email, then put it in the U.S. mail. Please don't put it off!

Remember to purchase a copy of Pierre's *Cambodia Angkor* at the Club or online at www.limageodier.com. This is a project that really matters, and your purchase will affect the lives of countless children.

I made an editorial comment on page 16 regarding the Coriolis Effect. Here is a bit more information. The Coriolis Effect is a twisting motion caused by the Earth's rotation. It affects air and water in large systems over significant lengths of time. A typical cyclonic or anti-cyclonic weather system is about 1,000 miles across, and lasts for at least several days to a couple of weeks. The same thing is true for ocean currents, except that they tend to last very much longer. Because the surface of the Earth moves faster at the equator and slower as you move toward the poles, this causes a twisting effect for the movement of both air and water – counter-clockwise north of the equator, and clockwise, south of the equator. We call this cyclonic in the south and anti-cyclonic in the north. The effect is much too small to affect water in sinks and basins, especially since these involve very short duration motions. In a marine physics college exam back in the day, I was asked to calculate this effect for a wash basin, in order to demonstrate why it does not work at that level. (Sorry Bob!)

Please continue to send letters-to-the-editor about what you see in these pages, or experience at the Club. Your regular input is what makes this magazine a monthly value for both yourself and all the other members.

The password for the online full-color edition is “*acla1105*”.

BOOK REVIEW —**PLANET MOJAVE — VISIONS FROM A WORLD APART**

Authors & publisher: Ridge Writers, East Sierra Branch, California Writer's Club, Ridgecrest CA, 2011, 300 p; 8.50 X 5.50 soft cover. ISBN: 978-0-6154664-4-6. Review by Fredrick G. Hareland (#1138).

Planet Mojave is an eclectic collection of stories, poems, and adventures written by thirty members of Ridge Writers.

The contents of this excellent little book virtually mirror the Mojave Desert extremes and eccentricities. Its beauty, blue skies, sunshine, strange lenticular clouds, grotesque Joshua trees, ghost towns, movie, TV, and commercial filming locations, are all here. So is Mojave history, whether it be pioneer, mining, aviation, or rockets and space travel.

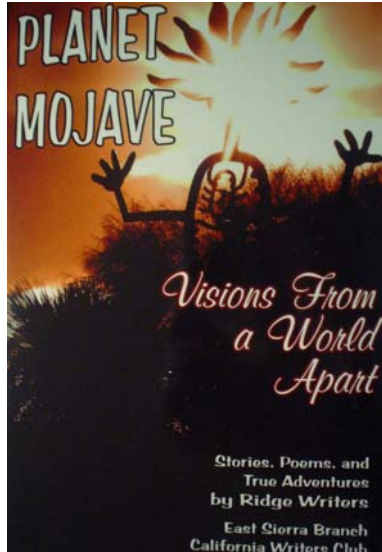
This book contains chapters dealing with the great outdoors, movie locations and filming, people, living and loving, cowboys, fictional stories, poems, and even some fifty-five-word stories, all about some small part of our precious Mojave Desert. We could think of no better way to share our fantastic desert with the world than through the words and stories of *Planet Mojave*.

Some of you fellow adventurers may remember your recent visit to China Lakes, Little Petroglyph Can-

yon, to view the Western Hemisphere's largest collection of rock art in one location. Now you can read more about that and many other interesting and historic Mojave desert places such as ghost towns, geological formations, rocket launching areas, mines, military bases, filming locations, places where old west bandits such as Tiburcio Vasquez used to hang out, hiding and waiting to rob the next stage.

As interesting as the many magical places in the desert can be, it is still the people who populate it that are the most interesting, and *Planet Mojave* talks about a whole plethora of them. From 1849er William Lewis Manly, to Dr. William McLean, and Mojave's Elbert Leander "Bert" Rutan, this book tells their stories and those of many more.

This well-illustrated book contains over 100 photographs and fourteen drawings, maps, and charts. It is available from planetmojave.com or member Gary Hareland (#1138), who will be honored to autograph it for any fellow Club member.



THURSDAY NIGHTS AT THE CLUB

March 24, 2011

Marc Weitz (#1144)

The meeting began with a tribute to **Marv Garrett #1083** who recently went on the great adventure.

Those returning from adventure:

Paul Isley #1088 – Lectured in New Orleans and then flew to Chicago where he is the newly elected president of the Chicago Adventurers' Club.

Steve Bein #1057 – Returned from a week in Homer, AK, photographing eagles.

Jim Dorsey #1081 – Returned from Ethiopia where he visited a volcano with other scientists. On the trip, he was shot at by bandits, suffered from sun stroke, and his wife broke her leg.

Frank Haigler #825 – Vince Weatherby spoke for Frank, saying that he was interviewed on Japanese TV about Japanese war atrocities in WWII.

Danee Hazama #1014 - Working on the relations between the Taiwanese and the indigenous people.

Dave Dolan #1087 – Returned from the Explorers' Club annual dinner.

Those leaving on Adventure:

Paul Isley #1088 – Flying to Singapore, Shanghai, and Manila for 2 ½ weeks to do a show.

Other Happenings:

Paul Isley #1088 – announced that the Chicago Adventurers' Club will be celebrating their 100th anniversary

ry October 12th to October 15th. Adventurers' clubs from all over the world will be attending. Paul expressed interest in putting together a contingent from our club to attend.

Bob Silver #728 – brought in rations and supplies given to U.S. Marines in Vietnam. It included tin cans, matches, coffee, dried cream, gum, cigarettes, and toilet paper.

Sid Hallburn #1125 – is putting together a musical review of club members. Members with musical talent are encouraged to contact Sid to be in the show.

Steve Bein #1057 – showed slides of eagles taken in his recent trip to Alaska

Joseph Brown #928 – combined all the rosters and member info into a 3.2GB file. Members who would like to obtain a copy can contact Joe.

Adventures with a Purpose

Photo: Richard Bangs



Richard Bangs at Sognefjord, Norway

World-renowned traveler, Richard Bangs, came to the Club tonight armed with books, travel DVDs, and a Power Point presentation about his travels. Richard Bangs is a founder of the adventure travel industry. He started his company, Sobek Exhibitions, in the 1970s. Sobek was one of the first outfitters to cater to ac-

tive travelers. He led first descents of thirty-five rivers around the world, including the Zambezi and Yangtze

Photo: Richard Bangs



Richard Bangs in Africa

Rivers. Since then he has published numerous articles and books, given lectures all over the world, and produced travel TV shows and documentaries. His philosophy is travel with a purpose. That purpose is to experience foreign cultures and history with minimal impact. This theme is popular with the modern traveler. Richard gave us some background on adventure travel and showed us videos of his expeditions.

Richard Bangs discovered in his research that adventure travel began around the 16th century. Prior to this, people viewed nature as a threat: something to be avoided and conquered. Up until this point, humankind had spent most of its history trying to eat and stay warm. We did this by building shelters, hunting, farming, and otherwise overcoming nature. The thought of returning to and enjoying nature was appalling. It was not until romantic poets such as Lord Byron and Percy Shelley began to

write about the concept of the sublime that enjoying nature became *en vogue*. The idea of the sublime was an appreciation for the beauty of flowers, trees, mountains, etc. This appreciation sprang from the increasing filth and crowding of cities. Getting out into the mountains allowed one to stretch, breath, and clear one's thoughts. Shelley and Byron were the rock stars of their age; this caused their new idea of the sublime to grow quickly in popularity. To cater to this new philosophy, the first adventure travel companies began to organize trips into the Swiss Alps.

Richard's modern view of the sublime stems from the Maori concept of *Kaitiakitanga*. This is the belief that all things in nature are living things that are connected. The Maori told stories with mountains, trees, rivers, and other natural features as the main characters. The Maori viewed these features as members of their family who needed to be taken care of and protected. Richard incorporates this concept into his travels. Richard notes, however, that adventure travel has lost its edge. It has become too much about conservation and less about risk and exploration. Richard seeks balance: to preserve the risk and adventure, while preserving the travel destination.

Having established the background of his philosophy, Richard regaled us with tales of his travels. He began by

(Minutes continued on page 14)

telling us about the first full descent of the Blue Nile from Lake Tana all the way to Alexandria. He showed a video of rafts and kayaks being lowered down the Blue Nile falls from Lake Tana to navigate every inch of the river. Richard's expedition had to pay the Ethiopian government \$10,000 to increase the flow to the falls for cinematic effect. A hydroelectric dam ordinarily cuts off the flow to the river, leaving the falls almost completely dry.

Photo: Richard Bangs



Richard Bangs from Adventurers with a Purpose – Egypt

The expedition ran into some troubles. A kayaker, feeling adventurous, took off on his own to explore a small tributary and was shot at by a bandit, called a “shifta.” In another section, a raft overturned into some rough water. All the time the threat of crocodiles and hippopotami were present. When the raft turned over, someone shouted “crocodile!” The members of the expedition scrambled as fast as they could from the river to the safety of shore.

Unfortunately, a video malfunction prevented us from seeing all the videos. It turned out to be for the best since Richard filled in that part by talking about his philosophy, some travel stories, and a little history. The videos were typical stuff that could be found on any travel channel nowadays, but to hear Richard actually speak of his travels was fascinating.

March 31, 2011

Marc Weitz (#1144)

Those Returning from Adventure

Jay Foonberg #1126 – Participated in the first Jerusalem Marathon by running the half marathon with his grandson.

Shane Berry #1093 – hiked up to Lewis Falls in Azusa.

Steve Bein #1057 – Attended the Adventurers' Club outside activity to the Cold Steel factory with some other members. Founded in 1980 by Lynn Thompson, Cold Steel makes knives and other weapons. Mr. Thompson is trained in a number of martial arts and has shot all of the Africa Dangerous Seven with a .454 Casull pistol.

Roger Haft #1098 – His daughter ran the ½ marathon in NYC and finished in the top 10%.

Chuck Jonkey #1026 – Returned from the Sea of Cortez where he was doing some filming.

General Announcements:

NOHA will be Sunday, October 23, 2011 at the Delfina Hotel. Tickets will run between \$75 and \$80. More information to come.

Bob Silver #728 will begin planning the 100-year anniversary of the Adventurers' Club, which will occur in ten years. Those interested in helping please contact him.

Prior to the main presentation, Steve Bein #1057 showed the remainder of his photos and videos from his recent trip to Alaska that he couldn't show last week due to a technical glitch. There were spectacular close-ups of eagles and a video of an eagle devouring its prey.

Uganda and Its Birds

Bob Zeman #878 visited Uganda last year in November, and took us on a slide tour of its people and birds. Churchill called Uganda "the Pearl of Africa." Bob Zeman began his talk with this quote and then went through his vacation slides. Bob traveled there with Father Richard, a priest and friend of Bob's who was born in Uganda. There he stayed in a girls' school run by the Catholic Church. He was given a comfortable room and served good meals. The weather was temperate and the grass and vegetation were fertile and green. Bob gave us the background of Uganda starting with their commerce and then telling us that Buganda is their largest region, and Luganda is the

main local language. The average income is between \$300 and \$400.

The girls' school exists because the parents are constantly working menial jobs to survive and have no time to raise their children. The school's fresh water comes from cisterns that collect rain water off the roofs. The girls attend class in a main school and live in dorms surrounded by lush grounds. All the girls have short hair to prevent disease. It is the girls' job to keep the campus clean.

Photo: TrickleDownBS.com



Fisherman on Lake Victoria

Not far from the school is Lake Victoria, the largest lake in Africa and the source of the Nile. John Hanning Speke was the first white man to arrive in Uganda in 1862. In 1879, the first missionaries followed. With them, they brought Christianity, despite the many hardships suffered in Africa. The locals gave the white men the mocking name "mzungu," meaning "those who walk in circles."

Bob toured a botanical garden and learned of the medicinal uses of the plants, trees, and flowers that are known to the locals. Here, Bob got a picture of himself with a human-sized

(Minutes continued on page 16)

termite mound and got lucky enough to see a Shoe Bill. The Shoe Bill is the main bird to see in Uganda. It looks like a Dodo Bird with a large bill big enough to break a turtle shell.

Bob visited the equator and saw a demonstration of the Coriolis Effect. The Coriolis Effect is a scientific term describing how the earth's rotation influences the paths of gases and fluids. For example, draining water will flow clockwise in the northern hemisphere and counterclockwise in the southern hemisphere. At the equator, it goes straight down.

[Editor's note: The Coriolis Effect can ONLY be seen in large systems like storms and ocean currents. It is too slight to influence how water drains from sinks, which is always a function of how the sink is built.]

Bob visited the shrine built to the former kings who used to rule Uganda. Sadly, the site was burnt down in 2009. Some suspect that Museveni, the current president, was responsible. Many think he hoped to eliminate the country's royal past to establish his own divine right to rule.

Father Richard gave mass on Sundays, allowing Bob to see Uganda's religious side. He visited many religious sites in the capital, Kampala.

From Kampala, Bob made a short trip northwest to see Murchison Falls. The falls were discovered by Samuel Baker in 1869 and named after Roderick Murchison, the president of the Royal Geographic Society. The falls were created by a narrowing of the Nile River. A spectacular site, it was

the location of many famous happenings. Parts of the movie "African Queen" were filmed nearby. Churchill visited this spot and suggested that a footbridge be built across the falls. This was done in the 1960s but destroyed just 18 months later by natural forces. Hemingway experienced a plane crash there: While flying over the falls for a closer view, the plane struck telegraph lines and crashed. Hemingway and his wife needed to be medevaced out, but that plane, too, crashed on takeoff, exacerbating their injuries: that Hemingway never fully

Photo: Bob Zeman



Murchison Falls

recovered from, and may have led to his suicide a few years later.

Bob stayed at the Paraa Lodge and took a boat out to experience the falls where he saw warthogs and baboons. Much of the game was destroyed under the brutal regime of Idi Amin but is slowly recovering.

Among other sites visited by Bob, were the rundown Uganda Museum, Father Richard's house, Nelson Mandela Stadium, and a spot in which two popes have given mass.

Bob's last stop was Jinja, just a few

hours east of Kampala. Jinja is the actual source of the Nile. The Bujagali Falls are located here and attract rafters and sightseers. Locals offer to go down the falls holding onto jerry cans for entertainment. Here, John Goddard chimed in with some interesting facts about this part of the Nile. Apparently, there are some very dangerous crocodiles here, even with the rough water. These crocodiles are more dangerous because they have become accustomed to human flesh. During the Idi Amin regime, political enemies were dropped into the water here, alive or dead, as food for the crocodiles. Even now, the crocodiles taste for human flesh has led them to pull kayakers out of their kayaks.

In Jinja, Bob visited the exact spot where Lake Victoria becomes the Nile. On the hill nearby, is the spot where John Hanning Speke first witnessed this fact. Bob left some of Ralph White's ashes at this spot. Later, Bob found out that some of Gandhi's ashes were also left at this spot. Both Ralph White and Gandhi made the long trip from the source of the Nile to the Mediterranean.

Bob finished the presentation with some stock photos of birds that live in Uganda. With each photo, Bob gave a brief explanation of the bird.



April 7, 2011

Marc Weitz (#1144)

Those Leaving on Adventure:
Shane Berry #1093 – Off to Utah for a hiking trip to Buckskin Gulch. That is if the federal budget passes and the park remains open.

Steve Bein #1057 – Making plans for a wild bird and landscape photo shoot in Newfoundland this August.

Steve Lawson #1032 – Off to Toronto on a work trip to train the Chinese on a new engine system.

Vimal Gairola #1075 – Leaving for Tunis and Constantinople.

Announcements

Roy Roush #864 – is in intensive care with a foot infection. Our thoughts and prayers are with him.

Henry Gerald Young #641 – sent a letter to the Club telling of his new book about his adventures entitled *Scimitar*, soon to be published.

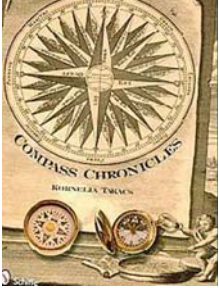
Compass Chronicles

Bob Walters was walking through the Glendale Gun and Knife show a few months back looking for some interesting trinkets. He wasn't there specifically for the guns and knives, as they tended to be more expensive at shows than elsewhere. Instead, Bob came for other interesting items that are often sold at these shows. He stumbled across a charming young lady sitting at a table with a number of old compasses spread out in front of her. Assuming she was just keeping the seat warm for her

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Dad, he was surprised that she owned the compasses and possessed the knowledge. It was at Bob's invitation

Photo: Cornelia Takacs



Compass Chronicles

that tonight's speaker came to the Adventurers' Club. Kornelia Takacs is the author of the *Compass Chronicles*, an illustrated history of the compass. Born in Budapest, Hungary, Ms. Takacs has lived in the United States since 1995 and has been collecting compasses since 1998. She is also a champion "gamer" of video games.

After collecting her first vintage compass, she fell passionately in love with accumulating and collecting these instruments. Surprised at the lack of research on the history of the compass, she had the idea of writing a book on the subject. The result was *Compass Chronicles*.

Ms. Takacs began her lecture with a history of the compass. The first compasses were built by the Chinese nearly 2,000 years ago. Some say, however, that the Olmecs, in Mesoamerica, used compasses as far back as 1400 to 1000 BC. The Chinese did not use compasses for navigation but instead for construction of buildings along the principles of *feng shui*. It is possible that the compass was brought to Western Europe by Marco Polo. Flavio Gioja, a pilot on

the Amalfi Coast, is credited with developing the sailor's compass for navigation in the 1300s. Before the compass, sailors needed a clear sky to navigate. It wasn't until the 1600s that maps began to include compass roses. Large compasses, called binnacle compasses, were gamboled and designed to remain stable in rough seas.

Photo: Cornelia Takacs



Dennison compass

In the United States, the most famous compass is the one used by Lewis and Clark on their expedition. It currently resides at the Smithsonian Museum, whose staff was very helpful in Ms. Takacs' research.

In the 19th century, most compasses were produced in the United Kingdom. At this time, pocket compasses became fashionable but were only affordable to the wealthy up until the 1910s. Negetti & Zembra were makers of scientific instruments who

made some of the most popular models. Pocket compasses reflected the style of pocket watches of the time, making vintage models easy to date for collectors. Ms. Takacs displayed a number of photos and pointed out distinguishing characteristics between different models and eras.

Ms. Takacs has a special fascination with the compass designs of Samuel Singer. Mr. Singer developed a half-black, half-white dial, which made it easier to read in low light. The dials were stunning, but information was scarce on Mr. Singer. It took Ms. Takacs seven years just to determine his first name, and required that she request his file from the U.S.

Photo: Cornelia Takacs



Antique compass

Patent Office. The story goes that Mr. Singer was swindled out of his patent. After that event, he ran a store in Scotland with his wife and died a pauper.

Ms. Takacs displayed photos of special compasses, beginning with some from the *HMS Britannia*. These were given to recruits when they began their training at age fifteen. There were two compasses from the Boer

War with engravings on the back. From one engraving, Ms. Takacs was able to trace the names to an actual photo of the men. Another compass came from the U.S. Civil War in 1861. Neither side had an official compass, but this one was an example of one used. Sadly, a Mr. Hunter stole Mr. Singer's patent and sold a bunch of half-black, half-white compasses to the Union Army.

In the 1910s, a company called Taylor began making official compasses for the American Boy Scouts. These compasses are very rare. Other examples shown were a German World War II compass, some Japanese compasses, wrist compasses, and some compasses side-by-side with their advertisements.

Lastly, Ms. Takacs displayed photos of escape compasses. These compasses are issued to military personnel and hidden in various parts of their uniform. Most clever, were compasses hidden in the soldiers' service buttons.

Ms. Takacs concluded by fielding questions from the audience and inviting members to the table to view parts of her collection. Ms. Takacs was a charming and knowledgeable speaker on a subject that is very much related to adventure and exploration.



The Five Stans

(Five Stans continued from page 7)

It barely exists today after the Soviet diversion of its two feeder rivers, the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya, for agricultural irrigation. Muynak is now hundreds of miles from any remaining

UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe



Former Aral Sea shoreline at Muynak, Uzbekistan.

water, which is too salty to support life. We spent time walking on the sands that used to sit under some 40 or 50 feet of water, among the rusting hulks of old fishing boats and freighters.

Finally, we flew to Tashkent, capital of Uzbekistan, a lovely, modern city located at the foot of the Tien Shan Mountains. It dates back to the first century BC. Unfortunately, most of its historical architecture was destroyed in a massive earthquake in 1966. Now, wide, tree-lined boulevards flanked with name-brand western stores are interspersed with beautiful parks, fountains, monuments and statues. It is truly an international city.

In retrospect, this amazing overland trip across the five Stans was not only one of extreme contrasts, but of learning. The experiences we

had, the cultures we met and the vast scenery we traversed gave us a perspective on man's origin and his adaptations for survival. We got a taste of how little people need to live simply and how difficult it is to live directly from the earth. We were reminded that most of the world does not live in our fast-paced, convenience-filled style. It was humbling. This is not a trip for inexperienced wimps. If you can handle roughing it at times, have become jaded by easier travels, and want to see some of this earth's most awe-inspiring, dramatic and pristine scenery, it might be for you. Be sure to bring toilet paper, antibiotics, chew-

Photo: Russian Kaydarov



Tashkent, capital of Uzbekistan

able peptoids and, if you like shopping for exotic, beautifully made hand-crafts available nowhere else, much more cash than you think you will need. If you have not seen Central Asia, you are missing a huge chunk of the history, culture, and natural beauty of this planet. For true, unparalleled majesty and beauty, you can't beat the Pamir Highway.

Forthcoming Programs

- April, 2011 – Bill Burke – Record Setting Expedition on Mt. Everest
(Happening right now)
- April 7, 2011 – Kornelia Takacs – Compass Chronicles
- April 14, 2011 – Jim Dorsey – The Voodoo Trail of West Africa
- April 21, 2011 – Distinguished VIP – (Details withheld for security reasons.)
- April 28, 2011 – Sgt. Frank Orzio USMC Retired – Vietnam War 1968
- May 5, 2011 – Chris Welsh – Dive Into The Deep
- May 12, 2011 – **LADIES NIGHT** – Dr. Laurie Marker – Cheetahs
- May 19, 2011 – **LADIES NIGHT** – Gil Garcetti – Water is Key
- May 26, 2011 – Pierre Odier – Mongolia on Foot to U.S. via Siberia
- June 2, 2011 – Mike Simmons – Astronomers Without Borders

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

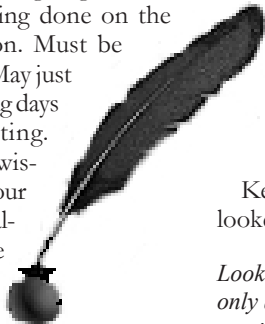
To the Editor:

Enjoying every issue of the *News* – the only communication common to all the members! This is especially so if we miss a program or two.

Meant to write earlier about March 2011. A little gremlin worked its way into that issue. On page 16 there is a photo of the program presenter for Jan 27, 2011, showing him holding his presentation plague. Lo and behold, the same fellow showing himself as the presenter of the Feb 3, 2011, program! He did not present the Feb 3 program. I write maybe because maybe the Internet version can be corrected for the correct photo to keep the record straight and so we'll have a photo of the presenter of the Feb 3 program. I know photos were taken of Jim Barry, the presenter of that Feb 3 program.

Regardless, one photo isn't going to take away from the fine job being done on the Snake River from Clarkston. Must be looking pretty inviting with May just around the corner and the long days postponing the sun's setting. Great country up in the Lewis-ton-Clarkston area. I guess your area wouldn't be called the Palouse, that would be a little further north of you where the wheat country prevails.

– Bob Aronoff #837



Roster Update

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Thanks for the kind words. Re the error: Oops! Not worth the effort correcting the online version, however. Re the Palouse, you're correct. The Palouse is the northern and northwestern plateau. – Editor

To the Editor:

Sorry that I haven't submitted anything lately for the *News*. I am almost done with a story about my experience hiking the "Wild Cave Tour" in Mammoth Caves National Park. I don't know if I can finish it by the weekend, time is the one commodity that is always in short supply.

Keep up the great work, the *News* has never looked or read better. – Rick Flores #1120

Looking forward to your story. The News is only as good as the stories and photos I receive. I just put them together. – Editor



The
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