



2005-06

The first meeting of the season will be held in the Massachusetts Room of the Harvard Club on **Tuesday, October 11, 2005**. Cocktails will be served at 6:15 p.m., dinner is at 7:00 p.m., and the meeting will begin at 8:15 p.m. The price is \$30 each per member and \$40 for all guests. Please respond as soon as possible using the enclosed card, email, or by telephone only if you are coming to the dinner. Reservations received after midnight of the Saturday preceding the meeting will incur a \$5 late fee. Members who, after making a reservation, fail to attend without canceling may be liable for the dinner charge.

### THE HO CHI MINH TRAIL TODAY: EXPLORING THE LEGACY OF A WAR

The Ho Chi Minh Trail may be the most recognizable name to come out of the Vietnam War. Many Americans know that this secret North Vietnamese supply line hidden in the jungle was a key to Hanoi's victory. But where exactly was the Ho Chi Minh Trail? What did it consist of and what remains today? Nat Stone and Marcus Rhinelandt will take us there with a vivid presentation of images from their in-progress documentary film.

During the war, most of the trail ran across the Annamite Mountains in neighboring Laos. The actual "trail" was a complex network of cobblestone roads carved from mountain ridges, complete with camouflaged bridges, supply depots and repair stations. A million North Vietnamese troops walked the thousands of miles of roads, bypasses, bicycle trails, and footpaths. Far from being a secret, Washington knew about the trail almost from the beginning, and eventually the U.S. dropped over 1.7 million tons of bombs on southern Laos, more than in all of World War II, and the Air Force sprayed half a million gallons of Agent Orange attempting to defoliate the area.

Today, 30 years after the destruction of war, these mountains still harbor dozens of obscure ethnic groups. The forests that blanketed the area are largely re-grown, but the ecosystems and cultures that survived the war are now threatened by logging, damming, and forced assimilation, and the people who lived through those seminal events are now dying. The life expectancy in these villages is just 44. Every year there is less to record.

For two months in 2005, Nat Stone and Marcus Rhinelandt walked almost 500 miles along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, following overgrown roads between countless bomb craters to villages where many had never seen westerners before. From bamboo huts in the mountains of Laos to officers' villas in Hanoi, from Cambodian rubber plantations to Florida golf courses, they collected oral histories of the trail from people who experienced the war firsthand, offering an in-depth look at a little-known piece of history, and a rare glimpse of how remote societies are dealing with war's legacy and the transition to a global economy.

Nat Stone writes with a special interest in rivers and coastlines, their environments, and the people who live along them. His book *On the Water* chronicled a ten-month rowing circumnavigation of the eastern United States, from the Brooklyn Bridge and back. Marcus Rhinelandt is a biologist and freelance photographer specializing in cultural and environmental photography in remote parts of Asia, with long experience in Laos and the Mekong basin.

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The second meeting of the season will be held in the Massachusetts Room of the Harvard Club on **Tuesday, November 8, 2005**. Cocktails will be served at 6:15 p.m., dinner is at 7:00 p.m., and the meeting will begin at 8:15 p.m. The price is \$30 each per member and \$40 for all guests. Please respond as soon as possible using the enclosed card, email, or by telephone only if you are coming to the dinner. Reservations received after midnight of the Saturday preceding the meeting will incur a \$5 late fee. Members who, after making a reservation, fail to attend without canceling may be liable for the dinner charge.

### LOST ON EVEREST: THE ENDURING MYSTERY OF MALLORY AND IRVINE

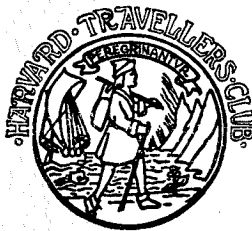
Sometime during the spring of 1924, British climber George Leigh Mallory wrote a letter to his friend Geoffrey Keynes saying, "This is going to be more like war than mountaineering. I don't expect to come back." He was speaking of his upcoming expedition to Mount Everest, and as it turned out he was very accurate in his surmise. Late in the day on June 8, 1924, Mallory and his climbing companion, 22-year old Andrew Irvine, were last seen climbing high on Everest's Northeast Ridge by teammate Noel Odell, a few thousand feet below. The two soon vanished into the mists and blowing clouds of a pre-monsoon squall, never to be seen again.

Questions inevitably arose: Did they make the summit? Is it possible they climbed the formidable Northeast Ridge to the summit of Everest a full 29 years before Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay Sherpa made their historic first ascent from the south side in May 1953? What happened to them in their final days and hours? These and other questions lingered unanswered for 75 years.

In 1999, a team of American climbers, including our speaker Jake Norton, and a German historian embarked on an expedition specifically to attempt to solve the mystery of Mallory and Irvine. On May 1st, 1999, the team discovered George Mallory's remains at 27,000 feet on Everest's North Face. But still the mystery remained. The team returned again in 2001, unearthing many more clues about Mallory and Irvine and the pioneering attempts by the British from 1921 to 1924 to climb Mount Everest from the north side in Tibet. In 2004 Jake Norton went again to Mount Everest searching for more answers, finding yet more clues – but no resolution – to the greatest exploration mystery of all time.

Jake Norton is a climber, mountain guide, and videographer, and was the expedition photographer for the 1999, 2001 and 2004 Mallory and Irvine Research Expeditions. He will share with us the findings of the expeditions and recount the conclusions his team has drawn from the most thorough high-altitude archeology ever attempted. Based in Golden, Colorado, Jake Norton is one of only a handful of people to reach the summit of Everest twice in successive years, from both the Northeast and Southeast ridges. He has spent more than a year on both sides of the mountain, on a total of five Everest expeditions, and he brings a wide range of experience from many of the world's most inhospitable places.

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The third meeting of the season will be held in the Massachusetts Room of the Harvard Club on **Tuesday, December 13, 2005**. Cocktails will be served at 6:15 p.m., dinner is at 7:00 p.m., and the meeting will begin at 8:15 p.m. The price is \$30 each per member and \$40 for all guests. Please respond as soon as possible using the enclosed card, email, or by telephone only if you are coming to the dinner. Reservations received after midnight of the Saturday preceding the meeting will incur a \$5 late fee. Members who, after making a reservation, fail to attend without canceling may be liable for the dinner charge.

### LIGHTER-THAN-AIR TRAVEL: BLIMPS, DIRIGIBLES AND AIRSHIPS

Members of this Club over the years have no doubt traveled by almost every conceivable mode of transport, over land, water, and air, but how many have traveled by lighter-than-air craft? Hot air balloons, no doubt, but travel by airship? And how many can say they know about how these enormous craft came to be, how they work and what they can do?

Mickey Wittman will enlighten, inform and entertain us about all aspects of the world of airships. He is Director of The Lightship Group in Florida, which operates 18 blimps worldwide, including the Hood blimp we have all seen in the skies of New England. This fascinating program will include the history of airships from before our Civil War, the first military use of airships in World War I by the Germans, and a series of firsts by airships: the first airmail, the first aerial bombing, the first use of radar, and more. During World War II, the U.S. Navy operated 167 blimps for anti-submarine patrol, and not a single convoy lost a ship to submarines while being protected by Navy airship surveillance.

We will learn about the most influential names in the development of lighter-than-air craft, including Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin, Brazilian Alberto Santos-Dumont, German Hugo Eckner, Italian General Umberto Nobile, and yes, even Howard Hughes. We will hear about the greatest airship ever flown, the Graf Zeppelin, and the truth, myths and rumors about the Hindenburg disaster in 1937. The program will discuss how airships are built, military and non-traditional uses for dirigibles, the role of blimps in TV sports coverage world-wide, and future possibilities for airship travel.

Mickey Wittman is known in the field as "The Father of Airship Sports Coverage". During his 35-year career with Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company he was the creative force behind the Goodyear blimps becoming a major sports icon, and developed the aerial gyro-stabilized camera, which revolutionized sports coverage. He has supervised airship operations in at least 28 countries on six continents, and he has personally directed live coverage of over 2,500 sporting and news events world wide.

**Club Notes:** We welcome Egil D. Croff of Natick as a new Member. On January 10 Kevin Downey, world-class spelunker and professional photographer, will speak to us on Exploring the World's Great Caves.

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2005-06

The fourth meeting of the season will be held in the Massachusetts Room of the Harvard Club on **Tuesday, January 10, 2006**. Cocktails will be served at 6:15 p.m., dinner is at 7:00 p.m., and the meeting will begin at 8:15 p.m. The price is \$30 each per member and \$40 for all guests. Please respond as soon as possible using the enclosed card, email, or by telephone only if you are coming to the dinner. Reservations received after midnight of the Saturday preceding the meeting will incur a \$5 late fee. Members who, after making a reservation, fail to attend without canceling may be liable for the dinner charge.

#### CAVE EXPLORATIONS: NEW FRONTIERS IN THE UNDERGROUND WORLD

Caves have been called the world's last great wilderness, our nearest yet unnoticed frontier. This wild and delicate hidden environment can be both incredibly challenging and very beautiful. This program is an intimate look at the amazing explosion of discoveries that have resulted from new caving techniques carried out with great dedication. Cave exploration as a sport is not really new, but the current methods, attitudes, tools and scientific understandings have revolutionized the field. Our speaker Kevin Downey is a professional photographer and cave explorer whose worldwide underground exploits advance our knowledge beneath deserts, rain forests and mountains. His long involvement in original explorations has given him experiences far beyond the ordinary. Several of the caves presented in these images are places that have never before or since been seen by humans. A portion of the program will look at some exotic life forms and bizarre minerals that are both new to science and unlike anything else known before. The program includes compelling images conveying a mix of fascinating beauty and an appreciation for a last great unspoiled frontier.

Kevin Downey is internationally recognized for his cave images, which have been published worldwide. Highlights of his cave explorations include the discovery and survey of the world's longest underground river, working in the deepest caves on earth and many of the most extensive. This hidden world has become an artistic palate for Downey's photographic techniques, many of which he developed or refined specifically to work in these often challenging places. Using a hybrid mix of mountaineering, caving and diving skills in a wide variety of environments has resulted in a host of discoveries. Bringing a deep sense of responsibility to the study of caves, great care is used to ensure that nothing is damaged or disturbed. While the sheer excitement of exploration is fundamental to Downey's work, these projects are pushing scientific frontiers as well. Each new discovery seems to raise still more questions and more challenges and often yields an understanding that the real limits of human exploration are within us.

**Club Notes:** Our annual Members' Night meeting is on February 14 (Valentine's Day), when you'll be able to hear from five of our Members about their recent travel adventures. Other meetings for the new year are on March 14, April 11, and May 23.

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The fifth meeting of the season will be held in the Massachusetts Room of the Harvard Club on **Valentine's Day, Tuesday, February 14, 2006**. Cocktails will be served at 6:15 p.m., dinner is at 7:00 p.m., and the meeting will begin at 8:15 p.m. The price is \$30 each per member and \$40 for all guests. Please respond as soon as possible using the enclosed card, email, or by telephone only if you are coming to the dinner. Reservations received after midnight of the Sunday preceding the meeting will incur a \$5 late fee. Members who, after making a reservation, fail to attend without canceling may be liable for the dinner charge.

### ANNUAL MEMBERS' NIGHT PRESENTATIONS

The following presentations will be made, each lasting about twelve minutes.

- |                 |   |   |
|-----------------|---|---|
| Lauren Bruck    | - | Pitcairn Island: The Living Legacy of the Mutiny on the <i>Bounty</i>                               |
| Maggy Bruzelius | - | Exploration of Wardaman Aboriginal Dreaming Sites: The Land of the Lightning Brothers               |
| Ruthanne Cowan  | - | Libya, The Land of Archaeological Wonders   |
| Peter Lou       | - | Shangri-La: Pristine Beauty in Eastern Tibet, and Ancient Irrigation Engineering in Central Sichuan |
| Blue Magruder   | - | Into Amazonia: Up the Rio Negro on the <i>Tucano</i>  |

The Council of the Harvard Travellers Club has voted the following Club awards, to be presented at the Members' Night meeting.

For his distinguished past service as Club President, in building the Club Membership, promoting the Permanent Fund, and leading the Club through its Centennial, and for his continuing role as active *ex officio* Council Member, the Club confers the award of Honorary Member to Louis A. Sgarzi.

For his 14 years of dedicated and indefatigable service as Secretary-Treasurer, from 1989 to 2004, the Club confers the award of Honorary Member to Robert O. Boardman.

**Club Notes:** We welcome Preston H. (Sandy) Saunders of Dedham as a new Member.

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772<sup>nd</sup> Meeting



Number 6

2005-06

The sixth meeting of the season will be held in the Massachusetts Room of the Harvard Club on **Tuesday, March 14, 2006**. Cocktails will be served at 6:15 p.m., dinner is at 7:00 p.m., and the meeting will begin at 8:15 p.m. The price is \$30 each per member and \$40 for all guests. Please respond as soon as possible using the enclosed card, email, or by telephone only if you are coming to the dinner. Reservations received after midnight of the Sunday preceding the meeting will incur a \$5 late fee. Members who, after making a reservation, fail to attend without canceling may be liable for the dinner charge.

#### ADVENTURES IN ARCTIC FILM MAKING: THE 1881 GREELY EXPEDITION

In June 1881 a U.S. government expedition led by Lieutenant Adolphus W. Greely set out with 24 men for the high arctic as part of the first multi-national cooperative scientific project, The International Polar Year. The expedition established a research station on the barren northern edge of Ellesmere Island a mere 450 miles from the North Pole and for two years succeeded in collecting unprecedented scientific and climate data and exploring the far north. However, the expedition's successes would be forever overshadowed by its tragic end. In 1882 and again in 1883, through sheer incompetence, resupply ships failed to reach the station, forcing Greely to abandon the outpost and retreat south in a harrowing journey through drifting sea ice down the east coast of Ellesmere to a prearranged fallback rendezvous point. When they finally arrived they found neither rescue party nor the promised supplies to enable them to survive the impending winter. Stranded without food or shelter throughout the arctic winter, starvation, insanity, suicide, thievery, brewing mutiny, and even cannibalism ensued. The worst disaster in American arctic exploration only became known when rescuers finally arrived in June 1884, finding only six starving survivors, among them Lt. Greely, himself near death.

Club member Geoffrey E. Clark, M.D. has been fascinated, if not obsessed, with this virtually unknown story ever since he visited Ellesmere Island twenty years ago. In the interim he has researched the subject and for the past four years worked on a documentary film, including going north for six weeks in 2004 to record the journey of six kayakers retracing Greely's retreat down the ice-choked Kennedy Channel. Among the kayakers was the great-great-grandson of Greely himself. Jeff will recount the historical story and present his own adventures, always fascinating, often amusing and occasionally harrowing, as an amateur documentary film producer. He will show the film trailer and photos to illustrate the making of *Abandoned in the Arctic*.

**Club Notes:** Our April meeting features Jill Fredston, renowned Arctic traveler, glaciologist, and award-winning author, who will speak about her adventures in the Alaska wilderness studying avalanches. That meeting will NOT be on the usual second Tuesday of the month. Instead, it will be on **Thursday, April 20**.

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The seventh meeting of the season will be held in the Massachusetts Room of the Harvard Club on **Thursday, April 20, 2006**. Cocktails will be served at 6:15 p.m., dinner is at 7:00 p.m., and the meeting will begin at 8:15 p.m. The price is \$30 each per member and \$40 for all guests. Please respond as soon as possible using the enclosed card, email, or by telephone only if you are coming to the dinner. Reservations received after the morning of the day preceding the meeting will incur a \$5 late fee. Members who fail to attend without canceling their reservations (prior to the morning of the day preceding the meeting) may be liable for the dinner charge.

### AVALANCHE HAZARD – LIFE AND DEATH IN MOUNTAIN TRAVEL

Increasingly, avalanches claim lives around the world, averaging 30 victims each year in the United States alone. The increasing popularity of winter sports in the mountain backcountry lure more and more outdoor enthusiasts into ever more unforgiving terrain, where potential snow instability presents hazards that too often are not recognized, not understood, or simply ignored. Of avalanches that catch people at play in the mountains, 95 percent are initiated by the victims themselves, or one of their party. The science of snow stability evaluation is inexact at best, but unfortunately far too many mountain travelers ignore many basic and redundant clues indicating potential trouble. And even people trained to evaluate snow conditions underfoot and above them in the mountains too often allow themselves to become so distracted by their own agendas that they don't listen to the message in the snow. It is human nature to want to complete that climb, or to carve first ski tracks in powder, or to drive a snow machine higher than others on a tempting slope, but that desire can cloud one's judgment, with deadly repercussions.

Jill Fredston, one of North America's leading avalanche experts, lives in the Chugach Mountains above Anchorage, where she co-directs the Alaska Mountain Safety Center. Jill knows avalanches – working in prevention, education, rescue, and search and recovery, she has spent the last twenty-five years trying to keep people and avalanches apart. Now, with her unique perspective she will bring them together for us with vivid stories of the awesome forces of nature that can turn the mountains deadly, and the equally inexorable forces of human nature that lure us time and again into treacherous terrain. Jill is the author of *Rowing to Latitude*, winner of the National Outdoor Book Award, and with her husband Doug Fesler wrote the authoritative *Snow Sense: A Guide to Evaluating Snow Avalanche Hazard*. Her compelling new book, *Snowstruck: In the Grip of Avalanches*, will be the basis of her presentation. Copies will be available for purchase.

**Club Notes:** We welcome Ronald D. Gatzke of Lexington as a new Member. Our May meeting will be on Tuesday, May 23. Jennifer Jordan, noted journalist, television news anchor, author of the book *Savage Summit*, and producer of the film *Women of K2* will show the film and speak about the extraordinary first five women to climb K2, three of whom died on the descent.

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## REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Pursuant to Article Seven of the Constitution, the Nominating Committee presents the following nominations for the year 2006-2007.

President: Edmund K. Summersby

Vice-Presidents: Jo-Del Gaeth  
Lansing Fair

Secretary-Treasurer: Kenneth J. Bures

Councillors: Lauren M. Bruck  
David S. Roberts  
Martin S. Klein  
Loren M. Wood  
Nils Bonde-Henriksen

Respectfully submitted,

LOUIS A. SGARZI, *Chair*  
JANET SWANSON  
MARY BLUE MAGRUDER

*Nominating Committee*



774<sup>th</sup> Meeting



Number 8

2005-06

The eighth meeting of the season will be held in the Massachusetts Room of the Harvard Club on **Tuesday, May 23, 2006**. Cocktails will be served at 6:15 p.m., dinner is at 7:00 p.m., and the meeting will begin at 8:15 p.m. The price is \$30 each per member and \$40 for all guests. Please respond as soon as possible using the enclosed card, email, or by telephone only if you are coming to the dinner. Reservations received after the morning of the day preceding the meeting will incur a \$5 late fee. Members who fail to attend without canceling their reservations (prior to the morning of the day preceding the meeting) may be liable for the dinner charge.

#### SAVAGE SUMMIT: THE STORIES OF THE FIRST FIVE WOMEN TO CLIMB K2

K2 has been called the "Savage Mountain", and with good reason. In fact, that very phrase is the title of the 1954 book by our own Club members Bob Bates and Charlie Houston, who led both the 1938 and 1953 American K2 expeditions. For many climbers, K2 – even more than Everest – is the ultimate mountain, second to Everest by only 800 feet, but far more dangerous. The odds of reaching the summit and surviving are daunting, with a death rate close to 1 in 4. As bad as those odds are, they are even worse for women. At the start of the 2004 climbing season, 90 women had successfully summited Everest, but only five had reached the summit of K2, and of those, three perished on the descent. Of the two who made it down alive, both later died climbing other peaks. The first successful ascent was by Polish climber Wanda Rutkiewicz in 1986, followed that same year by Liliane Barrard of France, and British climber Julie Tullis, both of whom died descending. In 1992, the year Rutkiewicz died on Kangchenjunga, French alpinist Chantal Mauduit reached the top of K2, only to die six years later attempting Dhaulagiri in Nepal. In 1995 British climber and mother Alison Hargreaves reached the top of K2 in horrific winds that literally blew her off the mountain on the descent.

Jennifer Jordan will show her film *Women of K2*, which she created, wrote, and produced for National Geographic Channel, and she will speak about the lives of these remarkable and determined women who made history on K2. Jennifer is a journalist, radio and television anchor, and author of the book *Savage Summit: The Life and Death of the First Women of K2*. She spent most of the 1990s at WGBH-FM in Boston, where she anchored NPR's *All Things Considered*. Jordan co-owns and operates Skyline Ventures Productions with her partner, cinematographer/mountaineer Jeff Rhoads in Salt Lake City. Copies of her book will be available for purchase.

**Club Notes:** The following dates have been reserved for the 2006-2007 season: October 17, November 14, December 12, January 9, February 13, March 13, April 10, and May 22. Please mark your calendars.

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