

Sea Stories 2018 – Our Journey to Marine Discovery, Learning and Adventure!

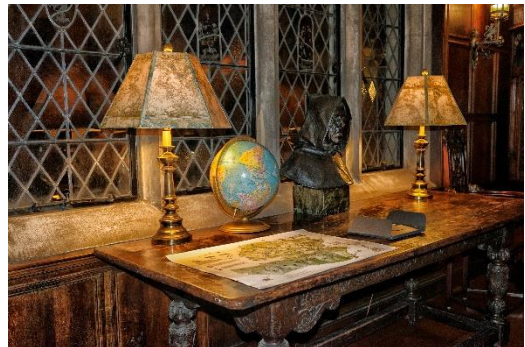
Gary Lehman

Sea Stories is an annual convocation of those who share a bond with the world's oceans, convened at The Explorers Club (TEC) in Manhattan NYC. Sea Stories features presentations on marine exploration, biology, history and archaeology, adventure, culture, lifestyle - and all manner of marine-related endeavor. This year Sea Stories set sail on November 10 and was a sellout and inspiring success, with the Clark Room on the second-floor bursting to capacity.



TEC fires the imagination of all who attend events at the venerable club, and everyone is enriched by the experience. The Explorers Club was founded by adventurers, scientists, staffers at the American Museum of Natural History in NY, an author, a war correspondent, and an ethnologist in 1904. The timing was just right – 1904 was a point in human history where exploration of the world and oceans was accelerating and intensifying due to the combination of advancing technology, increased awareness via instantaneous communications of radio and photography, and the burning

spirit of scientific inquiry ignited by Darwin and many others. Over the years, The Explorers Club's hallways, offices, nooks, crannies, and the intrepid explorers and sponsored expeditions have yielded a universe of human 'firsts' - "First to the North Pole, first to the South Pole, first to the summit of Mount Everest, first to the deepest point in the ocean, first to the surface of the moon—all accomplished by TEC members." Evidence abounds in artifacts of exploration cluttering the TEC HQ . Including reportedly the very same globe used by Thor Heyerdahl to conceive his journey west from Peru 5,000 miles across the open Pacific to French Polynesia in a balsawood raft, undertaken to prove the feasibility of such long ocean voyages in support of a 'diffusionist' theory of human cultural interaction. Today the Club's membership includes science, exploration and military leaders, and pathfinders alike, including astronauts Buzz Aldrin and Neil Armstrong, President Theodore Roosevelt, James Cameron, Jeff Bezos (Amazon) and Elon Musk (Tesla and PayPal, among others). And so many luminaries and leaders in the sport of scuba diving, too!

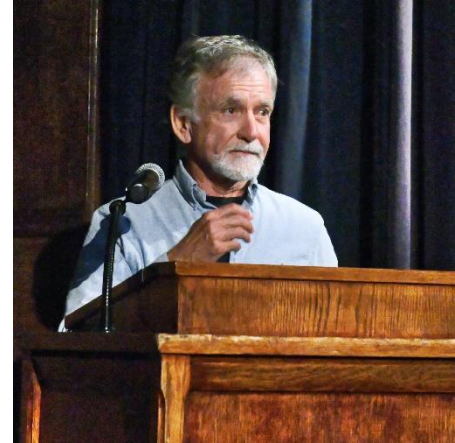


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The 2018 lineup included the following four presenters: Andrew Stevenson on North Atlantic Humpbacks; Jeff Goodreau and Ryan King on the discovery and exploration of the sunken freighter Willian H. Machen; Dr. Mauricio Hoyos Padilla on the white sharks of Mexico; Mehgan Heaney-Grier relating her experiences in A Freediving Evolution; and finally Richard Lundgren on Exploring Mars The Magnificent (a Swedish man-o-war sunk in the 1500's).

Summary of the 2018 Sea Stories Presentations

Humpback sightings on whale watches are usually right off the coast; we get only a fleeting glimpse of their behavior. But what happens when humpbacks are in open ocean areas? What are their secrets and undiscovered behaviors? These are the answers sought by Andrew Stevenson, who devotes himself to this quest from his Bermuda home, perfectly situated because humpbacks migrate through Bermuda on the way to northern feeding areas. The story of his bonding interaction with a particular whale called “Magic Whale” was spellbinding. This is one of 1,500 individuals which Anderson has ID’d and whose behavior (and clearly advanced emotional capacity) he has extensively documented, occasionally using drones for unobtrusive observation. We could practically hear and feel the humpback’s song reverberating through our seats, just as Stevenson through the hull of his small boat. Spending TIME observing humpbacks and other animals is the only way to understand their spirit and connections to the world around them, and to us. For the time and diligent observation and logging of this time with humpbacks, heartfelt congratulations and thanks to Andrew for his pioneering efforts on behalf of humpbacks and ultimately humans, everywhere!



In 1942 the US Navy leadership was loath to incorporate defensive shipping techniques developed by the British in their war against German submarines in WWII. Consequently, over 600 American merchant ships were sunk by U-boats in the first eight months of 1942, some sunk in broad daylight in view of horrified beach goers. Many ship captains took their own measures, such as shutting off their running lights at night. This was effective, since coastal towns were also dimming their lights, preventing the ships from becoming silhouetted targets. Unfortunately for coal carrier W.H Machen, this resulted in a collision with another ship near the Isles of Shoals off Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Fortunately, there were no fatalities on either vessel. A three-year search by a dedicated team of New Englanders, including the use of a secret weapon – local fishermen! - finally found Machen in 2017. The identity was suspected to be Machen, and finally confirmed by flatware bearing the name of the shipping company which operated Machen. Scuba divers Goodreau and King and team had a tremendous challenge diving Machen, with water a soupy frigid blackness, and at the extreme scuba diving limits of close to 300'. But with fanatical and sustained dedication to find the wreck, and the team’s superb diving skills and meticulous preparation under these challenging conditions, this intrepid team achieved their mission! An interesting aspect was that the team members signed on from many different professions; each team member brought unique expertise together in the completion of their shared mission. No matter what their individual jobs were back home, once on (and in) the water they merged into a seamless team. Hearty congratulations on the mission’s success! The team is holding their future plans close to the vest as to whether they will continue to dive Machen, or move on to new subsurface objectives. We’ll be watching - safe diving, gentlemen!



Dr. Hoyos' scholarly presentation on white sharks brought new anatomical and physiological details about this species to light for Sea Stories. No one for example knew that white sharks have blue eyes, and not black eyes! And that their bite can measure 2 tons/square inch! New details were offered regarding the lateral line, sense of smell and the excellent vision of this species. The migratory behavior ranging from Mexico to Guadeloupe Island to the 'shark café' and on to Hawaii is new information based on data collected on white shark movement. Most remarkable, innovative and

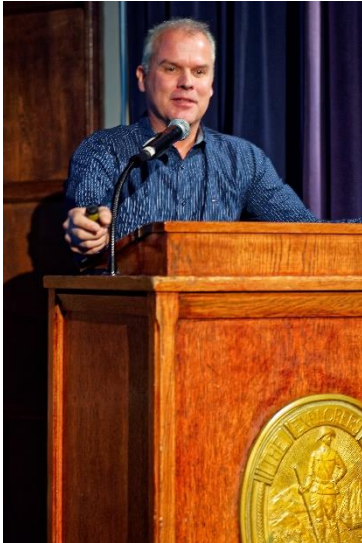
welcome was Dr. Hoyos' outreach to the children in Mexico. Through the use of cartoons to convey an understanding of the white shark's necessary and welcome place in marine biology, Dr. Hoyos is achieving sustained cultural change among children who will in the future be tasked to shoulder the burden of protecting and advocating for this critical apex predator, and for all marine life. Dr. Hoyos is what Dr. Sylvia Earle would term a "hope spot". "If you want to save the ocean and its fish, start by saving the white shark". Many of us (ie 9 million Facebook views) have also seen Dr. Hoyos' underwater footage of the 20'+ white shark off Guadeloupe Island known as Deep Blue (largest white shark ever witnessed), in which a diver famously gives a 'high five' to Blue's left pectoral fin! Hats off to Dr. Hoyos, and may his message ring loud and clear for the children of Mexico, and for all the oceans, and for us!

Have you ever been freediving? To just 20', much less 80'? No BCD, no tank? Crazy? Well, guess what – you have. Anytime you are in the water holding your breath, you are freediving! Freediving is a rapidly growing segment of the dive industry. And who better to introduce us to this fantastic sport than freediving expert, model, TV personality, conservationist, Women Divers Hall of Famer, mom, and world record-holder (165' on a single breath of air!) --- Meghan Heaney-Grier. Meghan led off her presentation taking all of us through a virtual freedive, complete with pre-dive mental checklist/previsualization, priming breaths and body positioning.



Our virtual dive together right there in the Clark Room of TEC was 'immersive' in every respect - we could practically/virtually feel the water pressure building and reflexively needed to equalize! Freediving is not for everyone, but anyone who has been underwater dragging around scuba gear can relate to Meghan's description of being underwater without the hissing, bubbling regulator and cumbersome tanks. When Meghan described the feeling of being 'at one' with the water and herself, hearing life in the clicks, pops, crackles and rumbles of the ocean, seeing the little reef fish coming out to investigate -- we could connect with her experience in a visceral way. Freediving is returning to the very origins of life, both individually and collectively - recalling life's early ventures out of the primordial ocean. To Meghan, freediving is like observing the night sky in Montana on a cloudless night with zillions of stars, and "...seeing the Southern Cross for the first time. You understand just why you came this way, Cause the truth you might be running from is so small - But it's as big as the promise, the promise of a coming day." (Crosby, Stills and Nash, 1982). (I've been privileged three times: once on the way to summit Kilimanjaro, once near Lake Hovskol in Mongolia, and once in the Galapagos when the

boat generator bit the dust temporarily and we saw the Southern Cross and zillions of stars....). Meghan concluded her presentation with three foundational imperatives for all of us... 1) reduce single-use plastics 2) download the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch application and use it and 3) share/connect our love of the ocean in order to preserve it for our kids and their futures. Heartfelt Thanks Meghan for all you do for us, and for the marine world!



One of the trademarks of all explorers is dedication to the mission and hacking through disappointments and adversity. Richard Lundgren described just this exactly during the 20-year search for Mars The Magnificent, the flagship of the Swedish navy which was sunk in battle with Danish/Luebeck forces in 1564 in the Nordic Wars pitting Sweden against Danish/Luebeck and Polish forces in alliance against Sweden; at issue was hegemony of the Baltic Sea. Naval battles in wooden ships were horrific for the crews: a maelstrom of scorching fire, gunpowder explosions, snipers from enemy ships picking off the officers (that is how Admiral Nelson was killed), hand grenades spewing burning shards of metal through flesh flung to and from ship to ship, choking smoke inside the gun decks from the cannon broadsides, deadly wood splinters, and torn apart sailors, blood and gore. Mars had dozens of cannons of various sizes aboard, including the largest, four monstrous 48lb cannon; with solid shot, a hit on the side of a wooden ship from any of these could cave in the enemy ship's hull at close range. Lundgren and team

discovered the wreck lying in 230' of frigid water off the southeastern coast of Sweden; exploration of the well-preserved wreck is challenging due to depth and position. By comparison, Mars is about twice the displacement as the Mary Rose, which was sunk in battle twenty years earlier in 1545 near Portsmouth, England. Mars is longer, and with a bigger crew than the USS Constitution (Old Ironsides), which was built over two hundred years after Mars was built. Exploration of Mars's crew's personal effects will yield astounding new insights into the life and times aboard ships and about life for officers, gentlemen and bluejacket seamen both aboard ship and life ashore during the 1500's. And - it is impossible to even begin to imagine the surging waves of excitement which must have swept through Lundgren and team as they dove into the Admiral's quarters aboard Mars 230' down; humans laying eyes on that place for the very first time in almost 500 years! The mind staggers at the prospect. Lundgren and team knew instinctively



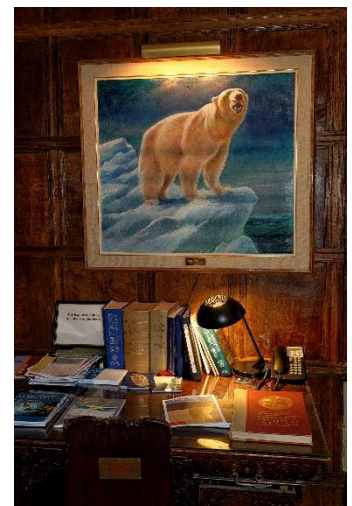
and immediately that they hit the archeological jackpot with this discovery, one of the most important ever made. He and variously engaged scientific and archaeological teams are employing for the first-time tens of thousands of 40+ megapixel photogrammetry images to recreate in virtual reality the interior of the ship. Imagine being able to tour the interior of Mars! No quite as exciting as personally diving the Admiral's quarters aboard Mars, but certainly warmer! Bravo Zulu – job

well done – to Richard Lundgren and all teammates for this stunning discovery and exploration.

About Sea Stories and TEC HQ



Sea Stories gets an early start on the day with a breakfast mixer with the explorer/presenters. The day proceeds with their presentations, coffee breaks, lunch, more presentations, an opportunity to tour the Club, and ends with concluding remarks and the presentation of certificates of appreciation by TEC leadership to the presenters. The TEC tour includes a trek to the 'summit' (77' above sea level) of the building (formerly the home of the world's first paparazzi photographer, Lowell Thomas who reported on and popularized



Lawrence of Arabia). Braving the not-too-perilous ascent of the staircases to the 'summit' is highly recommended because of ...the Trophy Room! Brimming with Club history, the collection there includes taxidermy specimens (some perhaps by the American Museum of Natural History's member Roy Chapman Andrews, the prototype for Hollywood's Indiana Jones). Chapman was a taxidermist at the AMNH and led the Central Asiatic Expeditions to Mongolia, which is where many of the AMNH's dinosaur bones were found. History like that is why you have to attend Sea Stories and other Explorer Club events, and take the tour!.

With 2018 Sea Stories now successfully completed, it is time for the TEC staff to start planning for 2019 Sea Stories. And you should too! Reserve November 9, 2019 and grab your imagination, turn off the smartphone, cancel everything - and set your exploratory GPS for East 70th street for TEC's 2019 Sea Stories – see you there!

