



A golden anniversary means commitment. Of course, so does insanity. This year Sobek celebrates 50 years of insanely great exploration. I am co-launching a new community of Extraordinary Travelers. More benefits will be added as we go!

So just hit reply and tell me what you want! I hope you enjoy! *Richard*



## Welcome to the Extraordinary Travelers Club!

Sir Joseph Banks, the 18<sup>th</sup> century “godfather of exploration,” founded the Saturday Club. The 19<sup>th</sup> century explorer and polymath Sir Richard Burton founded the Cannibal Club. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Arctic explorer Henry Collins Walsh founded the NY-based Explorers Club.

Now, we have the [Extraordinary Travelers Club](#), founded by Dr. Jack Wheeler, the legendary modern-day explorer; Rebel Holiday, who lives up to her name; Richard Bangs, co-founder of [MT Sobek](#) along with other travel pioneering properties, and Edward Windsor, Lord Downpatrick, adventurer and co-founder of [Wheeler-Windsor Expeditions](#).

**The Club is, as it sounds, a celebration of extraordinary travels and those who pioneer and partake.** Each month we will offer opportunities to explore our world, to experience the wild and unusual, to turn unturned corners and breathe the rarefied air. This is a club for the bold, the curious, and those who seek the extraordinary. There is no membership fee; just the currency of curiosity. I invite you to be a part of this Club.

Each issue we profile an Extraordinary Traveler. Today it is Dr. Jack Wheeler, a true modern-day adventurer and explorer. You'll see his interview below...



**Richard Bangs**  
Founder



**Jack Wheeler**  
Founder



**Eddy Downpatrick**  
Founder



**Rebel Holiday**  
Founder

## The 50th Anniversary of Sobek

The 50th anniversary of Sobek brings you a series of special rafting adventures in honor of the many first descents the Sobek team made. Richard Bangs loves the rivers as always! *(on the right, holding the oar)*



## Join an Epic River Adventure!



Join an epic anniversary adventure down the Middle Fork of the Salmon in Idaho; Cataract Canyon in Utah, the Zanskar in Ladkakh, India; the Zambezi in Zambia, and others. Details below:

## **Himalaya Helicopter Expeditions Fall 2023**



### **Soar in the Himalayas & Land at Basecamps**

Jack Wheeler invented Himalaya Helicopter Expedition in 2016 - with rave reviews since.

**Mission:** Fly to the peaks and land at base camps of all 8 Nepal Himalayas mountains over 8,000m/26,000ft helicopter, piloted by world-class mountain rescue pilots. In one week.

When the Himalayan giants remain snow-clad and the sky is sparkling clear with conditions for fabulous photography are pristine, you see and experience: **Everest, Lhotse, Cho Oyo, Makalu, Kanchenjunga, Manaslu, Annapurna, and Dhaulagiri.**

*NOTE: No trekking, no special skills or physical abilities are needed, just normal good health. Yet, you'll experience what no trekker on the ground can.)* **Richard Bangs** and **Eddy Downpatrick co-lead in October-November.**

**Himalaya Helicopter Details  
and Special Club Offer**



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## Fall 2023! Discover Iraqi Kurdistan

October / November 2020

# IRAQI KURDISTAN ADVENTURE WITH RICHARD BANGS

A photograph of a stone archway leading to a valley. The archway is made of large, weathered stones and has a small opening. The valley below is lush and green, with rolling hills and a winding road. A few people are visible near the archway.

In October 2023, **Richard is leading an exclusive exploration of Iraqi Kurdistan.** We'll visit some of the earliest citadels, sacred monasteries, and holy villages including Erbil, capital of Kurdistan Region; the Yazidi village of Lalish; and the 4th-century St Matthew's Monastery.

We'll journey through untouristed regions and scratch the inscrutabilities - and bathe in the warmth - of the local people. While hiking, kayaking, and caving, we'll immerse in Kurdistan's implausible landscapes and unspoiled beauty.

[Iraqi Kurdistan Details](#)

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***Extraordinary Traveler - Dr. Jack Wheeler***



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### **Extraordinary Traveler Profile**

**Dr. Jack Wheeler**

*April 19, 2023 – Sintra, Portugal*

**Q: *How old were you when you began to dream of and imagine extraordinary adventures?***

**JW:** Fourteen. I was a kid in Glendale, California who had never been much of anywhere and knew little of the world. I happened to start reading a book, *The Complete Book of Marvels*, by Richard Halliburton, who wrote about his adventures all over the world in the 1920s and 30s. It was an epiphany for me. I realized the world was filled with endless wonders and opportunities for fabulous adventures. People collect things, like stamps or coins. I decided to collect incredible experiences for my life – which I’ve been doing ever since.

**Q: *What is one of the more extraordinary travel experiences that you have had?***

**JW:** Just one? My whole life has been filled with them. Climbing the Matterhorn at 14, being adopted into a clan of Jivaro headhunters in the Amazon at 16. Three “first contacts” with tribes not reached by the outside world before (an uncontacted group of Aushiri Aucas in the Amazon, the Wali-ali-fo people in Papua New Guinea, a band of San Bushmen in the Kalahari). Setting a Guinness World Record for the first sky-dive onto the sea-ice at the North Pole (“Northernmost Parachute Jump”).

There are so many more – but one that stands out among them would be retracing Hannibal’s route over the Alps with elephants. It’s one of history’s epic events, done on 218 BC and had never been duplicated. And there was a centuries-long controversy what was the actual pass Hannibal used. It turned out there was only one pass that matched both the descriptions of contemporary chroniclers, Polybius and Livy: the *Col du Clapier* on the French-Italian border, a foot path with remnants of an ancient Roman road.

After a lot of reconnaissance with my fiancée Jacqueline who was born and raised in the French Alps, in September 1979 we succeeded in taking two elephants (from an Italian circus with their handlers) from the French village of Bramans over the Col du Clapier to the Italian village of Susa – first time it had been done in 2,197 years and hasn’t been since.

Today, the pass is recognized as Hannibal’s and many trekkers hike over it now (but not with elephants!). What makes it so intriguing is the way we did this made the epic history of Hannibal a part of our lives in a uniquely powerful way.

**Q: *What is one of the more intriguing experiences you’ve had among your adventures?***

**JW:** That would be the intellectual adventure of getting my Ph.D. in Philosophy and teaching Aristotelian logic and ethics at the University of Southern California. I didn’t want a doctorate to be a Philosophy Professor as I wanted to be a professional adventurer. It was to be professionally skilled at thinking clearly while on adventures and expeditions. As legendary polar explorer Roald Amundsen, the first to reach the South Pole, said, “There are those who say I have had good luck. But what others

call good luck, I call good planning.”

**Q: *Who are extraordinary travelers whom you admire? If you could sit down and speak with any extraordinary traveler, living or dead, who would it be?***

**JW:** Reinhold Messner and Richard Bangs quickly come to mind. If I could meet any explorer of history, it would be a toss-up between Ernest Shackleton and Marco Polo.

**Q: *What mindset do you adopt, or have naturally, when you venture out into the world?***

**JW:** Nothing to adopt, it comes naturally – that I’m embarking on an experience that’s awesomely and life-memorably cool.

**Q: *What characteristics do you like to find in your travel companions?***

**JW:** Something I call an *adventurous attitude towards life*. These travelers have a passion for making their whole life an extraordinary experience. They have a special kind of joy in simply being alive, so are a joy to be with. They remain cheerful and focused on solutions whenever the unplanned arises due to the vagaries of any real adventure. They are extraordinary travelers because they are *extraordinary* within themselves.

**Q: *What is something you dream of doing – or a place that you dream of exploring?***

**JW:** Oh, that’s way too long a list! I’ve had a memorable adventure in every single country in the world (all 193 UN Member States, 2 UN Observer States, and three sovereign nations whose membership is blocked: Taiwan by China, Kosovo by Serbia, and Somaliland by Somalia), plus scores of separate jurisdictions, territories, and remote islands.

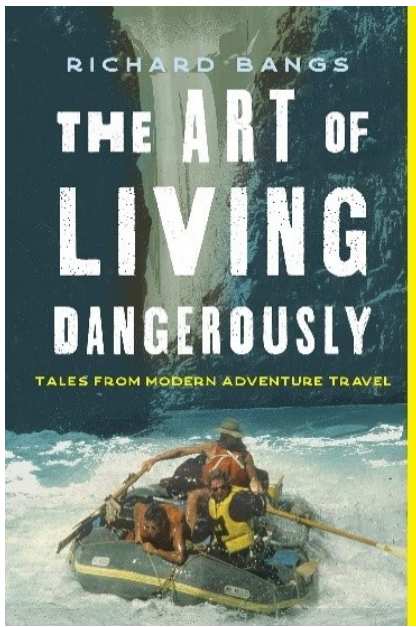
It’s been a long life of exploration. Yet I haven’t come remotely close to all there is to see and learn and do in our world. A scientist once said, “The more I know, the less I know,” because there’s always more. Same with exploration, “The more you explore, the more you discover there is to see and do” because your knowledge and experience of the world is continually expanding, getting bigger, never contracting. Our world really is an endlessly magical wonderland. That’s why your life can *always* be a thrilling adventure.

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## **The Art of Living Dangerously by Richard Bangs**

You can order the book at Amazon and read these exciting tales from Richard's personal experience. Get behind the scenes insights during 50 years of insanely great exploration and adventure.

[The Art of Living Dangerously](#)



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**Connect with Richard Bangs**



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**Special Thanks To Our Fellow Travel Pioneers...**



**Extraordinary Travelers Club**

2598 E Sunrise Blvd, 33304, Fort Lauderdale

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