GUEST SPEAKER - JOHN GRAHAM

Bio John Graham
John Graham shipped out on a freighter when he was 16, hitchhiked through the Algerian Revolution at 19 and was on the team that made the first ascent of Denali’s North Wall at 20, a climb so dangerous it’s never been repeated. He hitchhiked around the world at 22, working as a correspondent in every war he came across. A US Foreign Service Officer for 15 years, he was in the middle of the 1969 revolution in Libya and the war in Vietnam. To the young Graham, adventure was everything, and each brush with death only pushed him to up the ante—and to bury ever deeper the emotional life needed to make him whole.

Then it changed, sometimes slowly, sometimes dramatically, including during one night at the height of a battle in Vietnam. At the United Nations he risked his career, crossing his own government to support peace initiatives in South Africa and Cuba. Then came the all-or-nothing bet he was forced to make, fighting for his life in a lifeboat in the middle of a typhoon when his ship caught fire and sank in the Gulf of Alaska.

For the last 35 years Graham has been a leader of the Giraffe Heroes Project, a global movement inspiring people to stick their necks out to solve public problems and giving them tools to succeed. He’s helped end apartheid in South Africa, avert a major strike in Canada, save what’s left of the Everglades, settle a war in the Sudan, find long-term environmental solutions in the Pacific Northwest and build bridges between the Muslim world and the West.

His books include Outdoor Leadership, Stick Your Neck Out—A Street-smart Guide to Creating Change in Your Community and Beyond, and a memoir, Sit Down Young Stranger. His articles and interviews appear in major media and on the Internet. He has degrees from Harvard and Stanford, neither of which he ever expects to use. www.johngraham.org.