

EXPEDITION NEWS



April 2008 - Volume Fifteen, Number Four

EXPEDITION NEWS, now in its 14th year, is the monthly review of significant expeditions, research projects and newsworthy adventures. It is distributed online and to media representatives, corporate sponsors, educators, research librarians, explorers, environmentalists, and outdoor enthusiasts. This forum on exploration covers projects that stimulate, motivate and educate.

BRITISH EXPEDITION IS ALL RUBBISH

After successfully completing the world's first carbon neutral expedition by driving from the U.K. to Timbuktu in a truck fueled by chocolate biodiesel late last year, the British BioTruck II team is now preparing for their next eco-adventure, flying from the U.K. to India in fall 2008 using a fuel made from landfill waste. Starting from the Eden Project in Cornwall, U.K., they'll be using the low-carbon fuel to power the BioTruck II and two small powered paramotors (motorized parachutes) to prove the viability of bio-aviation fuel made from rubbish. It's a technology that could one day have all passenger flights cutting carbon and putting rubbish to good use.

Far from hair-brained eco-nonsense, this expedition is being monitored by independent experts who will certify the carbon footprint and ecological value. The BioFuel Flying Expedition to India team is looking for a single title sponsor that can meet the £80,000 operating budget for the expedition, but will also consider smaller contributions for a share of the exposure.

The expedition organizer is former journalist Andy Pag, 34, of London, who has 15 years of experience organizing vehicle-based expeditions across Africa and other parts of the world. The last expedition is said to have generated £500,000 of media value. (For more information: Andy Pag, tel.: +44 (0)797 494 2796, www.biotruck.co.uk, andy@biotruck.co.uk). ▲

EXPEDITION UPDATE

Buettner Reveals Secrets of Longevity

During two recent expeditions to Nicoya, Costa Rica, explorer and longevity expert, Dan Buettner, 47, from Minneapolis, and his team of scientists found the healthiest, longest-lived region in world and the lifestyle factors that explain that longevity.

For the past seven years, Buettner has spearheaded the Blue Zones project, which has identified and studied four Blue Zones – pockets around the world where people live measurably longer, healthier lives (See *EN*, October 2004).

In his new book, *The Blue Zone*, published last month by *National Geographic*, he explains that a Costa Rican man at age 60 has about twice the chance of reaching age 90 as does a man living in the United States, France, or even Japan. Costa Rica spends only 15 percent of what America does on health care, yet its people appear to be living longer, seemingly healthier lives than people in any other country on Earth. All have taken advantage of Costa Rica's excellent public health system. Their diet consists largely of corn, beans, pork, garden vegetables and an abundance of fruit, much of it grown on trees in and around their yards, writes Buettner.

Who are the longest-lived Americans? Buettner says that for the past half-century, members of the Seventh Day Adventist community in Loma Linda, Calif., whose faith endorses healthy living, lead the nation in the longest life expectancy. Consider this portrait of longevity from his book:

“Marge Jettson, 103, barreled down the San Bernardino Freeway in her root beer-colored Cadillac Seville, peering

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from behind dark sunshades, her head barely clearing the steering wheel. She was late for one of several volunteer commitments she had that day, and she calmly but firmly goosed the Caddy's throttle. It was early on a Friday morning, and she'd already walked a mile, lifted weights, and eaten her oatmeal breakfast." ▲

(For more information: www.bluezones.com).

EXPEDITION NOTES

Sundance, Schmundance. Capt. Scott's Boards Are Hot – What impressed us most about a recent visit to the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah, were not fleeting glimpses of Danny Glover or Jodie Foster dashing about. No, it was the antique pair of skis from Capt. Robert F. Scott's ill-fated Terra Nova Expedition of 1910-12 on display at Southwest Indian Traders on Main Street.

The skis were originally purchased from The Antiques Shop, currently called Then and Now Antiques, on Crwys Road, Cardiff, England, in 1988. The owner of the shop at that time said that they had been recovered from a property in the Cardiff Bay area along with items of Victorian and Edwardian furniture and various bric-a-brac of the same period in a house clearance sale.

The Cardiff Bay area was formerly know as Tiger Bay and in the early part of the 20th century was notorious for its

maritime and multicultlural community. Scott's *Terra Nova* sailed from and returned to Cardiff in the months before and after his fateful Antarctic Expedition.

One owner of the skis in the late 1980s consulted Adrian Chess who worked at National Museum Wales. Chess suggested that the skis could easily be relics from the *Terra Nova*. How else would a pair of Norwegian exploration skis of a former epoch end up in a city with no snow? It made sense. Chess said that by observing the design and the shape, he could confirm that the skis were certainly Norwegian, very old and likely to have been used in an expedition sailing from Cardiff.

The maker's name on the binding plates was eroded by the rubbing action of the boots, suggesting very "aggressive use," as one might expect on an expedition. It is known that when the *Terra Nova* returned to Cardiff that much of the ship's contents were informally offloaded onto the local community, perhaps for reasons that would today seem illogical. But at that time, the general sentiment of grief and tragedy might have rendered the contents of the ship as being of little value.

In 1999, Roger Knight, another owner of the skis, took photos from various angles in clear detail and sent them to Christie's, the world famous auction house in London, where Nicholas Lambourn remarked that the skis look "to be very similar to" a set "we sold in April 1998," and which fetched £8,000. Even without absolute provenance, he indicated that the skis could achieve a price of somewhere between £1,000 to £2,000.

The skis were sold to collector Mark Miller in 2004, owner of the largest selection of antique wooden skis in the U.S. "I have over 4,000 skis that have been in or are still in my possession, yet have never seen another pair that matches the skis in pictures taken on the expedition," Miller tells *EN*.

Thinking of putting these cool boards over your fireplace? "They are not officially for sale, however I will be willing to entertain offers," he says. Miller, a resident of Park City, will consider you serious if you slide in somewhere north of \$100,000. (For more information: info@Antiqueskis.com, www.antiqueskis.com).

Escort Jack to Everest – Headed to Everest and have room for the ashes of a cherished founder of the obscure pastime called highpointing? Well, consider this tale of a merry group of outdoor list makers. They're called Highpointers, they're 3,000 strong, and each one is passionate about hiking up the tallest peak of each state and crossing it off their personal life list. Even if that peak is no higher than Delaware's

Quote of the Month

"Real winning has nothing to do with beating someone else, or crossing the finish line first, or standing on top. Winning isn't anything external at all. It is an internal satisfaction, a deep inner sense of pride and joy."

– Canadian adventurer Jamie Clarke, Everest summitter, and three-time Canadian Junior Cross Country Ski Champion. Clarke, who bills himself as an entrepreneur in the business of adventure, draws from his 20 years of mountain experience in presenting dozens of motivational seminars a year.

Ebright Azimuth (448 feet), which lies beneath a double-yellow line on a road near a suburban subdivision. It still counts. So does Florida's even lower Britton Hill which, at 345 feet, is easy to bag: just park your car and walk 50 feet. It's to the right of the restrooms about five miles south of the Alabama border.

If you don't know Jack about highpointing, here's an introduction: the founder of this quirky group was the late Jack "Guru Jakk" Longacre who had been an outdoorsman all of his life, and, in fact, had summited every state in the union by the time he started looking around for others with the same goal in mind. He put a brief announcement in *Outside* magazine in October 1986, looking for people who might be interested in this sport.

Much to his surprise, there were others who were not only interested, but in the process of doing just that. They met – eight of them – at Mount Arvon, the highest geographical point in Michigan, Jack's home state, in April 1987, and where Jack founded the Highpointers Club (www.highpointers.org). Over the next 21 years, the membership of his little club has grown from the original eight to 2,725, and the scope has broadened.

In fact today, there are members trying to reach the highpoint of every county in the U.S. (all 3,141 of them), as well as the lowest points in each state. Others are into tri-pointing – visiting the many points where three states intersect.

After a six-month struggle, Jack succumbed to Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma in 2002, just three months short of his 65th birthday. His final wish was that his ashes be divided and scattered on each of the 50 state highpoints. Highpointers volunteered by the dozens to carry Jack's ashes and to have a mini-memorial for him on America's rooftops. All of these ceremonies, some happy, some sad, most mixed, are recorded in scrapbooks, on display at Highpointers Club annual conventions.

About the time Jack's ashes rested on all 50 state highpoints, members began to write in asking to "escort Jack" to the highpoints of other countries. And so it happened. Now his ashes also lie on many international highpoints, representing 25 different countries, as well as the North and South Poles, all of the Shires of Great Britain and the Provinces of Austria. Among these are six of the Seven Summits. Only Mt. Everest remains unclimbed by a Jack-carrying Highpointer since the beginning of the "Jack Ash Project."

Now the group is looking for a Highpointer, or a climber who would like to become a Highpointer, to "escort Jack" to the summit of Mt. Everest, the only highpoint they're miss-

ing. Don't worry about the added weight. Only a half-cup of Jack's cremains remain. For a tablespoon of his ashes sent in a so-called "Jack in the Pack" (in reality, just a Ziploc bag), contact Jean Trousdale, 405 329 6189, hp.merc@highpointers.org. Tell her you know Jack.

Michael Palin Honored by Royal Geographical Society – Former Monty Python funnyman Michael Palin, 64, has been appointed Honorary Vice President of the prestigious Royal Geographical Society in London. The honor recognizes his tireless work to promote geography and the pleasure of learning about new people and places, according to an announcement by the Society. Palin, a 1998 recipient of the Society's Ness Award for "travels leading to a wider public appreciation of the world," is a frequent and popular speaker and a passionate advocate for geography at many Society-related events.

Palin is beloved by frat boys everywhere for his humor, especially in the 1979 Monty Python film, *Life of Brian* (one classic scene can be found by searching "Biggus Dickus" on YouTube.com). More recently, he starred in BBC Television documentaries, including *Full Circle* and *Pole to Pole*. (For more information: www.rgs.org).

I Want to Be Under the Sea – It was hard to miss the theme of The Explorers Club Annual Dinner (ECAD) last month in New York. From the endless video loop of crashing waves on a giant projection screen, to the on-stage fish tank with laboratory-grown artificial coral, 1,200 members of the Club and their guests jammed the four-story tall main ballroom of the Waldorf=Astoria to focus on the importance of "Exploring Planet Ocean." Some notable comments from speakers include:

"Less than point five percent of the ocean is protected ... The next 10 years will be more important than the last 10,000 years in terms of what we do or don't do. The oceans are in trouble, therefore we are in trouble.

"How did I become an explorer? I did what kids do: I ask questions and never stop.

"What's left to explore? Just about everything. Whenever we open a door, there are more questions."

– Sylvia Earle, Ph.D., ECAD dinner chair

"The ocean is very resilient. If we make the right decisions and make the right changes, it could come back quickly."

– Ellen Prager, Ph. D., author and chief scientist of the Aquarius Reef Base, Key Largo, Fla.

“We need to convince politicians that how we treat this earth is important to human welfare.”

– Jim Fowler, Explorers Club honorary president

“There are animals we know so little about. They just disappear into the oceans. We use Critter Cams to figure out how it is in their world.

“What an unbelievably different world these animals experience on a daily basis ... we needed to ride along passively, quietly and unobtrusively.”

– Greg Marshall, vice president of National Geographic for Remote Imaging, a scientist, inventor, and filmmaker, who developed the Critter Cam in the early 1990s. His dinner presentation included a video that showed how the Critter Cam is attached to fierce-looking sharks using a loop on a long pole. When asked how they later retrieve the Critter Cams, Marshall’s two-word reply brought down the house. “Graduate students,” he grinned.

“For all the time we’ve been on this planet, humans have only seen beneath the waves for 60 years. We were like conquistadors who have done everything to the oceans but try to convert fish to Catholicism.

“Visiting the Jersey shore with my parents, the ladies playing mahjong would see me walking to the water with fins, mask and snorkel. “‘David, be careful, there are ‘shawks’ in the water,’ they’d say with their thick Joisey accents. It took me years to realize there’s an ‘r’ in sharks.”

– David Doubilet, contributing photographer and author for *National Geographic* magazine. ▲

EXPEDITION FOCUS

Anatomy of a Climb –

Beth Rodden Redpoints Meltdown

In late February, La Sportiva athlete Beth Rodden, 27, stood at the base of a slightly overhanging thin finger crack near Cascade Falls in Yosemite Valley, Calif. She began working the climb in front of her over four months ago, fighting through the tough Sierra Nevada winter to rehearse the moves and prepare for a redpoint (lead climb an ascent without falls or illegal rests). She knew that it was the hardest climb she had ever attempted.

Rodden reached for the first hold in the ultra thin finger crack and began climbing. She moved up the rock quickly,

grabbing key pieces of gear duct-taped to her harness and rapidly placing them in the crack because the stances were too tenuous to hesitate for even a second. She pulled through the 45-foot overhanging crack smoothly. Above her was another 25 feet of discontinuous seams leading to the top of the route.

In the past, mist from the nearby Cascade Falls dampened the lichen-covered rock, causing her feet or hands to unexpectedly pop off the holds. However, for this attempt, the wind blew in her favor and she sent the route to the top.

“The crux for me came about 20 feet up the route. There is a section where the feet turn horrible and the handholds get really thin and you have to motor through to a good hold,” said Rodden. “There were so many factors for this route for me. The waterfall that kept swelling and creating more and more spray. The pool at the bottom was getting higher and higher, and the constant huge Sierra storms dropped feet of snow on the route. So, it was a matter of staying physically fit and keeping psyched.”

Rodden named the route Meltdown, in part because of the snowmelt that kept the route wet much of the time, and in part because of the mental anguish the route caused her.

“After one particular storm we went to the route and the waterfall was huge, drenching the bottom with spray. I had to hang on it and I thought it was out for the season, and the result was a meltdown,” she said.

Rodden has been hesitant to give Meltdown an exact grade. Others who have tried the route say it is 5.14c. Beth sent it in impeccable style, with all natural protection, and placing all of her gear on lead. Ascending Meltdown puts Rodden in an elite group of only three women to have even climbed 5.14c. Reportedly, the route is likely the hardest naturally protected rock climb ever sent (i.e. rope and gear is only used for protection in case of a fall) by a female and one of only a handful of traditional 5.14c’s in the world. (To learn more about Rodden, see <http://www.facebook.com/pages/La-Sportiva/6666752426>) ▲



MEDIA MATTERS

Storm Over Everest – In the Frontline special presentation *Storm Over Everest*, airing May 13, from 9 to 11 P.M. ET on PBS (check local listings), David Breashears returns to summit Everest and to reflect on that fateful storm that resulted in the deaths of five climbers on the south side of the mountain in 1996. Combining breathtaking original cinematography with dramatic recreations of the storm conditions 12 years ago, the two-hour, high-definition documentary

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transports viewers to the slopes of Mount Everest. Interviews with climbers who survived the ordeal recount the events that occurred – and the decisions that were made – that resulted in seasoned mountaineers losing their lives alongside less experienced climbers drawn to the mystique of Everest.

During a Mountain Hardwear-sponsored presentation at The Explorers Club on Mar. 27, Breashears said, “As I was making this film, I learned how little I knew what happened, and I was there back in ’96. I feel much more liberated now that I’ve filtered out all the other written accounts. Some of the people who were there altered their stories about what happened to suit the person they wanted to be for the rest of their life,” he said.

“Has climbing changed? Not at all. It’s only a matter of time before another big storm comes along and more people will be left there.”

The filmmaker revealed how he recreated scenes in the parking lot of Utah’s Snowbird Resort with the help of front-end loaders to build the Hillary Step, and ski patrollers to throw snow in front of giant fans. Fixed ropes brought back from the Himalayas were added for authenticity. You’d never know from watching the footage. (For more information and to watch a preview: www.pbs.org/frontline/everest).

Blind Climbers Star in *Blindsight* – Set against the backdrop of the Himalayas, *Blindsight*, the new documentary by Lucy Walker in theaters now, follows the adventure of six Tibetan teenagers who set out to climb the 23,114-ft. Lhakpa Ri on the north side of Mount Everest. A dangerous journey soon becomes a seemingly impossible challenge made all the more remarkable by the fact that the teenagers are blind.

Because of high altitude and exposure to ultraviolet rays, Tibet has high rates of blindness and eye disease. The incidence of cataract blindness in Tibet is about six times that found elsewhere in China, according to UNESCO. Despite this, Buddhist pilgrims and nomads in Tibet believe that blind people are possessed by demons or that they have done something wrong in a past life.

Rescued by Sabriye Tenberken – a blind educator and adventurer who established the first school for the blind in Lhasa – the students invite blind climber Erik Weihenmayer, 39, to visit their school after learning about his conquest of Everest. Weihenmayer arrives in Lhasa and inspires Sabriye and her students Kyila, Sonam Bhumtso, Tashi, Gyenshen, Dachung and Tenzin to let him lead them higher than they have ever been before.

In an interview last month in *Parade* magazine, Weihenmayer, a resident of Golden, Colo., says, “Mountains are tough...and unforgiving. Mistakes have huge consequences. The mountain would just as soon crush you as give you a pass. You never set out to conquer a big mountain. Its powerful forces always trump human strengths.”


Weihenmayer, the first blind climber to reach the 29,035-foot summit of Mount Everest and climb the seven summits of the world, recently completed a trek in the Blue Mountains of Australia with eight young blind people who worked with sighted partners. This mini-*Blindsight* climb was in connection with the film’s release in Sydney and Melbourne.

The documentary began touring last month and will visit Seattle, Portland, Ore., Bellingham, Wash., Pittsburgh, Carbondale, Colo., and Los Angeles in April and May. (For a complete listing and to view the trailer, log onto www.blindsightthemovie.com).

Building Better Athletes – Prosthetics designer Kevin Carroll, 49, was profiled in the Mar. 31 issue of *Time* magazine. As vice president of Hanger Prosthetics & Orthotics in Bethesda, Maryland, Carroll has become the go-to guy for disabled athletes who want to take artificial limbs to the extreme not only in competition but also in sports like ice climbing, rock climbing and skiing.

He’s credited with developing gear for Warren Macdonald, a double-leg amputee who has used Carroll’s designs to climb Mount Kilimanjaro and the face of El Capitan (www.warren-macdonald.com). This has led to the introduction of better mainstream limbs for people who don’t use them to climb. “We come up with a one-off thing, and we wind up with some phenomenal technology,” he tells *Time*’s Krista Mahr.

New Film Festival Debuts in Colorado – The 5Point Film Festival will launch this May in Carbondale, Colo. Festival founder Julie Kennedy said, “Our vision is to provide a forum where filmmakers, innovators, and members of the community at large can gather together, share their films and ideas, build relationships, and come away transformed by the experience.”

Confirmed guests include climbers Tommy Caldwell, Yvon Chouinard, Dick Dorworth, Timmy O’Neill, and Aron Ralston, as well as free skier Chris Davenport, surf legend Gerry Lopez, and extreme kayaker Rush Sturges. The 5Point Festival debuts May 8-10, 2008. (For more information: www.5pointfilm.org. )

EXPEDITION MARKETING

Save the Kimberley

V.I.O. Inc., makers of wearable video technology, and their Australian distributor, Launch Helmet Cams, are sponsoring Australian World Champion Whitewater Kayaker Tanya Faux. Since early last month, Faux has been leading a journey through the Kimberley coast and inland wilderness areas of Western Australia to increase awareness of the Save The Kimberley campaign. The Kimberley is one of the last regions of untouched beauty in the world and is under threat from industrial development due to the massive reserves of natural gas and oil in the area.

Faux and her team have been exploring the uncharted water of the Moran and Mitchell Rivers and will attempt a first descent on the massive Mitchell Falls. The team will be capturing their experiences using the waterproof V.I.O. POV.1 helmet camera. (For more information: www.savethekimberley.com, www.vio-pov.com).

Youtubers Asked to Sponsor Sophie

Sophie Denis, 28, a French New Yorker working on Wall Street as an investment banker, has resorted to using YouTube to solicit sponsorship for her planned Everest Expedition 2008. Normally, we'd applaud use of any media to generate sponsorship revenue. This one, however, is a bit too breathless for our tastes. The 1-1/2 minute video – essentially a PowerPoint set to music – slices the “first ever” claims a bit thin. If you sponsor her, she'll be: A MOTIVATING STORY ... ONE OF THE FIRST BANKERS TO CLIMB EVEREST ... YOUNGEST FRENCH WOMAN TO CLIMB EVEREST ... ONE OF THE FASTEST PROGRESSIONS IN THIS SPORT WORLDWIDE. You can see it here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ID3ILlywF>. (For more information: www.sophiedenis.com).

Guides See the Light

Petzl America has become the Official Headlamp Sponsor of the American Mountain Guides Association (AMGA). As such, the company will help keep dark nights in the mountain alight by providing headlamps to core members of the AMGA Instructor Team and to select Certified Guides. In addition to the headlamp provisions, Petzl will offer a one full-tuition scholarship to an AMGA member each year.

“As a Diamond Partner, we will actively participate in promoting the highest standards of professional guiding through education and certification,” says Mark Givens, sports division manager for Petzl America. A large percentage of the Diamond level partnership funds go directly to AMGA members in the form of subsidized exams and full tuition scholarships. ▲

EXPEDITION CLASSIFIEDS

Digital Photo Workshop in Nicaragua – Photojournalist Todd Shapera leads a workshop at Nicaragua's Morgan's Rock Eco-Lodge, June 29-July 5. Focus: developing your inner artist, and new ways of seeing and encountering the world. Excursions to fishing villages, coffee farms, colonial towns, and preserves. Attention to light, composition, and using your subject's energy. Evening critiques. For beginners to advanced amateurs. \$2,695 inclusive. Tel. 914 631 8353, todds@cloud9.net, www.toddshapera.com.

Professional Expedition Photography – An expedition is usually the culmination of many years of work and planning. Whether the photographic record is for commercial, archive, or personal reasons it is a vital part of the expedition. It is important that you employ a capable and competent photographer. Visit our web site: <http://www.expeditionphotographer.co.uk>.

Steger Moosehide Mukluks and Moccasins – You've most likely heard of us. Odds are you've seen our boots worn by expeditioners in some very remote and extremely cold places. We make the warmest, most comfortable winter boots and moccasins in the world. Steger footwear has been made entirely in Ely, Minnesota since 1986. For expeditions and any extreme conditions we recommend the double wide Arctic or Yukon styles. Order online at www.mukluks.com. For a catalog, you can download one from the website or call 800 685 5857 (800-MUKLUKS). Visit our Retail Store at 33 E. Sheridan, Ely, MN 55731

Expedition Public Relations – Alex Foley & Associates specializes in Expedition PR. The London-based firm has executed PR programs for many international expeditions, often to maximise value for the title sponsors, including the 1996 Titanic Expedition, Ice Challenger, Snickers South Pole and recently Expedition 360. Tel: +44 (0)20 7352 3144, www.alexfoleypr.com, alex@alexfoleypr.com

Costa Del Mar Sunglasses – The leader in high performance polarized sunglasses is interested in sponsoring expeditions. Help us “See what's out there™.” See Costa Del Mar's online video network dedicated to water sports and angling adventures (www.costachannelc.com). Submit film footage of “you-had-to-see-it-to-believe-it” extreme water sports and fishing expeditions. Contact Laurie Driggs at ldriggs@costadelmar.com for information. Learn more about our commitment to exploration and adventure travel at: <http://www.costadelmar.com/adventures/>

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Himalaya Climbs and Treks – Five percent discount for Explorers Club members. Climbs and Treks with Dan Mazur and SummitClimb.com - Africa, Himalaya, Aconcagua, Everest Basecamp Treks, Kilimanjaro and Mt. Kenya Treks and Climbs. Ascents and walks around Africa, Tibet, China, Nepal and around the world with our experienced friendly team. Established for 18 years. Novices, and experts are welcome. 360 570 0715, info@SummitClimb.com, www.summitclimb.com.

New LEKI Antishock System – LEKI, the leading international manufacturer of trekking poles, has introduced a Soft Antishock-Lite (SAS-L) System that provides much more comfort along the trail. The impact energy is absorbed directly into the lower shaft. The perfect combination of steel spring and elastomer provides precise synchronization between spring strength and compression – making trekking with a pole more comfortable than ever, reducing stress on the joints, muscles and ligaments. (www.leki.com)

Tights, Tops and Sport Support Bras for Athletes – CW-X Conditioning Web is specifically tuned to provide total support to the key muscle groups and joints of the lower limbs and upper body. Tights and Tops, and the company's new Sports Support Bras, are made for a wide variety of high-energy activities, including running, fitness walking, hiking, cycling, skiing, snowboarding, track and field, and other fitness activities. It has been worn to the summit of Everest on at least two occasions. (www.cw-x.com) 