

# EXPEDITION NEWS

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**EXPEDITION NEWS**, now in its 19th year, is the monthly review of significant expeditions, research projects and newsworthy adventures. It is distributed online to media representatives, corporate sponsors, educators, research librarians, explorers, environmentalists, and outdoor enthusiasts. This forum on exploration covers projects that stimulate, motivate and educate.

## **WOUNDED VETERAN GROUP PLANS THREE RESEARCH EXPEDITIONS**

In summer 2013, the Combat Wounded Veteran Challenge will conduct three research expeditions involving amputee servicemen. Their goal is to improve and further orthotics and prosthetic limb development. The projects are: Alaska Mountaineering Training Challenge (with glacier traverse); Grand Canyon Challenge; and SCUBA Coral Reef Transplant Challenge in Key West, Fla..

The research includes monitoring the rate of core temperature and skin surface temperature changes in amputees vs. able-bodied participants.

In February 2013, the Combat Wounded Veteran Challenge team returned from an expedition to Mt. Kilimanjaro where the team exceeded expectations related to data capture and research studies. It was the first-ever concentrated study at altitude concerning the effects of elevation, decreased atmospheric pressure and O2 Saturation on Traumatic Brain Injury. (For more information: David Olson, director, 727 743 7192, [www.combatwounded.org](http://www.combatwounded.org))

## **EXPEDITION UPDATE**

### ***No Place on Earth* Tells Story of Jews Who Became Record-Breaking Cavers**

It's one of the least known survival stories of World War II. In 1942, 38 Jews ages two to 76 sought refuge from Nazi persecution in a vast unexplored cave in the western Ukraine. As the women and children remained underground continuously for 511 days, the men would sneak out at night to steal food. A small underground pond provided a reliable source of fresh water. Now the story we wrote about in *EN* in August 2008 has become a documentary called, *No Place on Earth*.

In 1993, an American climber named Christos Nicola, now 61, of New York, was one of

the first Americans to explore a large cave system named Priest's Grotto about five miles from Korolowka. During his descent he stumbled across names written on the walls and medicine bottles, shoes, mugs, buttons, burnt wood, and railroad spikes, all seemingly abandoned years ago. At 77-plus miles, Priest's Grotto is one of the longest caves in the world.

Jump ahead to April 4, 2013, and there was Nicola in a New York theater receiving star treatment during a screening and discussion with Professor Richard Brown of NYU's Cinema Studies Department (<http://www.movies101.org/>).

We learn through the film that the women and children never left their two caves. Only the men went out to steal food. A glass of water, collected by cave drippings, was for a single family for a day.

In an engaging, often funny conversation, Nicola shared his amazement at the fortitude of the 38 survivors who remained underground for 511 days: "They turned themselves into world-class cavers," he said.

Said one survivor who returned to the cave with Nicola almost 70 years later, "We beat the odds. They didn't get us."

Nicola also shared the caver's credo: "Take nothing but photos, leave nothing but footprints, kill nothing but time."

Prof. Brown called the film, "A significant contribution to history. ... This film ends up haunting you, which is what every great film does."

For more information: [www.noplaceonearthfilm.com](http://www.noplaceonearthfilm.com); [www.priestsgrotto.com](http://www.priestsgrotto.com)

Incidentally, in case you were wondering, when a movie ends it's rude to walk out when the credits roll. Says Prof. Brown, "You must sit through a movie's credits. To do otherwise – leaving too soon – is disrespectful to filmmakers." Oops.

Nicola made us laugh when he privately advised the budding cavers on our staff, "Always make sure the fat guy is in front of you, not behind."

### **The Coldest Journey Lives Up to Its Name**

Sir Ranulph Fiennes returned to the U.K. last month after having to pull out of his latest Antarctic expedition. The decision was not taken lightly and was a huge disappointment to Fiennes and his colleagues, according to a statement by the Seeing Is Believing – Trans-Antarctic Winter Expedition.

Sir Fiennes was severely frostbitten when he briefly removed a glove to adjust a ski binding during his training.

In a video interview shown on *Sky News*, he was quoted as saying, "There's no point crying over spilt milk or split fingers but it's extremely frustrating." (See *EN*, November 2012).

He continues, "I've been working on this expedition and nothing else for five years." The veteran explorer may require additional surgery on his hands which were already frostbitten from a previous trip. The Coldest Journey will continue without Fiennes in hopes of achieving the first winter vehicle traverse of the continent. (For more information: [www.thecoldestjourney.org](http://www.thecoldestjourney.org))

## EXPEDITION NOTES

### Exploring Legends at the Waldorf

The 109<sup>th</sup> Explorers Club Annual Dinner (ECAD) on Mar. 16 was a heady evening for any fan of exploration. The Waldorf dinner, the Exotics – hors d'oeuvres of sustainable, non-endangered, but otherwise gag-inducing foods – combined with a series of "Exploring Legends" interviews during that weekend, made this one of the best ECAD weekends in recent memory. Certainly, for those of us who grew up during the Mercury space program, it was a thrill to hear from the two remaining members of the original seven Mercury astronauts, called "the best of the best" by dinner presenter Col. Joe Kittinger.

In a taped broadcast from the International Space Station, Canadian astronaut Chris Hatfield, said of Sen. John Glenn and Scott Carpenter, "we absolutely stand on your shoulders."

The weekend received unprecedented media coverage, too numerous to list here when a simple Google search will yield over a dozen stories ranging from the *Wall Street Journal* and *New York Times*, to StarTalk Radio.

Some notable moments follow below:

- **Lowest Bidders** – When asked by interviewer James Clash what it felt like when he lifted off for America's orbital flight, Sen. John Glenn joked, "How would you feel if you're about to blast off sitting atop two million parts all built by the lowest bidder?"

What did he think about the 1983 Tom Wolfe film, *The Right Stuff*? Glenn said he didn't think Ed Harris, the actor who portrayed him, was handsome enough.

Glenn believes America needs to maximize its investment in the International Space Station. "We're not just blowing money into space to keep it up there," he said. "The space station's research has a lot of benefit here on earth."

His most notable comments dealt with exploration: "To explore is curiosity in action. Any advancement ever made in human history happened because someone was curious.

"Keep curiosity at a high level by reaching out to kids."

Glenn added, "Most exploration is adventure, but not every adventure is exploration."

Glenn told of receiving a letter from a nine-year-old schoolboy in Illinois who was assigned to write a biography of his choice. He wrote the 91-year-old Senator, "I'm glad you're still alive because a lot of my classmates biographical choices are already dead. I hope you write back."

Glenn joked, "That kid got the fastest reply ever."

- **An Ordinary Man** – Before Glenn spoke, Scott Carpenter, 87, slowly walked to the podium, assisted by a cane. "We were serving in our belief that pre-eminence in space was a condition of America's freedom," he said.

Later he said graciously of his second to orbit status in 1962, "The real reason for my flight was to prove to everyone that what John Glenn proved in his flight was possible for an ordinary man to do."

Carpenter, known for saying "God speed John Glenn" – a combination prayer and bon voyage – said his most memorable flight experience was, "the view of our home planet, a view very few of us had experienced at that time."

- **The Academy Awards of Exploration** – In returning a Club flag, James Cameron, 58, who set a solo dive record in 2012, called ECAD, "the Academy Awards of Exploration."

"I think about what Glenn and Carpenter did and it brings a lump to my throat," he told an audience of 1,200 members and guests. "These were the guys who really were my idols."

Of the submersible he rode to the bottom of the Mariana Trench, Cameron said, "The deeper you go, the tighter the hatch seals. You're not going to leak. You may implode," he joked, "but it won't leak."

"I think of that as 'cut to black,'" said the famed director.

When asked about so-called "lunartics" who believe the 1969 moon landing was a hoax," Cameron said, "That belief is insulting to this country, insulting to the thousands of people who worked in the lunar program. I know about the state-of-the-art of visual effects at the time. We couldn't have faked the lunar landing then. But we could now," he said to laughter.

He said, "Explorers are not content to be observers. We come here to play. We seek that place that nobody has ever experienced to get away from the comfort of our own human presence and stare at the universe in the face."

"Cousteau said it best, 'If we knew what was there we wouldn't have to go.'"

Cameron said he'd like to return to deepsea exploration, "we're only just getting the technology to study what's down there. But first I have to direct two sequels to *Avatar*, otherwise I'll be shot by 20th Century Fox."

**Young Explorers Beg eBay: Save the Nautilus**

University of Washington researchers and two 12-year-olds recently returned from an expedition that may give new insight into the genetics and population of the chambered nautilus, a cephalopod mollusk found in the Pacific and Eastern Indian oceans.

The nautilus has remained nearly unchanged for almost 500 million years, but little research has been done on the creature, often referred to as a “living fossil.” Peter Ward, a UW paleontologist, spent five weeks in Fiji and Samoa researching the nautilus population.

Ward’s team is currently conducting genetic research on samples taken from the expedition. If the Samoan nautilus is determined to be of a different species, Ward said it would mean that every region has a distinct species of nautilus.

Ricky Dooley, one of three graduate students that joined Ward on the expedition, said preserving the nautilus is important for understanding the history of evolution because the creature was around nearly 260 million years before dinosaurs.

Two young boys from Maine joined Ward on the expedition because they also believe that the nautilus should be preserved. Josiah Utsch and Ridgely Kelly read about Ward’s work in the *New York Times* and learned that more than 500,000 nautilus shells were imported to the U.S. between 2005 and 2008, according to a story by Amy Busch in the UW newspaper *The Daily* (Mar. 31, 2013).

Utsch emailed Ward about fund-raising for protection of the nautilus, and after Ward confirmed there were no websites focused on the plight of the nautilus, Utsch and Kelly started a site of their own, raising \$9,000 to buy a camera and light that would document the nautilus population in Fiji and Samoa.

Read the entire story here: <http://dailyuw.com/archive/2013/03/31/news/uw-expedition-gives-insight-plight-“living-fossil”#.UVoRmq6vef4>

Read the pre-teens’ petition to encourage eBay to stop selling the nautilus here: [www.savethenautilus.com](http://www.savethenautilus.com)

### **Bezos Team Retrieves Rocket Engines**

A recovery team funded by Amazon founder Jeff Bezos has retrieved two rocket engines from the floor of the Atlantic Ocean that were used to send astronauts to the moon more than 40 years ago.

Bezos Expeditions found and retrieved two Saturn 5 first-stage engines from a depth of three miles.

"We've seen an underwater wonderland – an incredible sculpture garden of twisted F-1 engines that tells the story of a fiery and violent end, one that serves testament to the Apollo program," Bezos wrote on his website.

"Each piece we bring on deck conjures for me the thousands of engineers who worked together back then to do what for all time had been thought surely impossible," he added.

NASA sent seven missions to the moon, six of which successfully carried astronauts to the lunar surface. Bezos said because the serial numbers on the retrieved engines are missing or partially missing, identifying which mission they were used for will be difficult.

"We might see more during restoration. The objects themselves are gorgeous," he added.

The engines, which were retrieved with the help of ROV's, remain the property of the U.S. government, and will be restored and put on public display.

Bezos also is founder and chief executive of a small privately owned startup space company called Blue Origin, based in Kent, Wash., which is working on developing low-cost, reusable suborbital and orbital spaceships to carry people and experiments. (For more information: [www.bezosexpeditions.com](http://www.bezosexpeditions.com))

### **Team Explores Western Hemisphere's Deepest Cave**

Emily Zuber began expeditionary caving in 2007. Since then, she has walked, crawled and climbed in places that no human has ever been. This month, the caver is joining an international caving expedition in southern Mexico. While participating on the Huautla Cave Diving Expedition 2013, a British-led expedition in Oaxaca, Mexico, she will be conducting interviews and documenting experiences, anecdotes and stories.

The team of cavers and cave divers began work in February 2013 – almost 20 years after the last push on Sistema Huautla – to explore remaining leads in a cave that is considered one of the most remote points yet reached inside the Earth. At a depth of minus 5,107-ft./1,555 m, Sistema Huautla is the deepest cave in the Western Hemisphere and eighth deepest cave in the world.

Bill Steele, a world-renowned caver and one of the fathers of Huautla caving, will be on the expedition. Steele, author of *Huautla: 30 Years in One of the World's Deepest Caves*, (Cave Books, 2009) has witnessed the progression of exploration over the last thirty years.

To learn more about the current Sistema Huautla project: <http://www.cdg-exped.org/>

Find them on Facebook here: <https://www.facebook.com/CaveDive>

### **Facebook for Wildlife**

Word comes of a milestone in tropical forest ecosystem conservation – the one-millionth camera trap photo taken by the TEAM (Tropical Ecology Assessment and Monitoring) Network. This partnership, between Conservation International, Missouri Botanical Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Wildlife Conservation Society and over 80 local partner institutions, works in 16 sites throughout the Americas, Africa and Asia. It acts like an early warning system for nature, monitoring changes in tropical ecosystems and report shifts in biomass, rainfall, and biodiversity density.

The data these camera traps collect not only gives an important perspective of tropical forest ecosystem health; they have produced a stunning scrapbook of wild animals in

their natural habitats. It's a sort of Facebook for wildlife. The question to resolve remains: what are these images and animals telling us about the health of Earth's dwindling tropical forests.

See video from Bwindi Impenetrable Forest: <http://vimeo.com/55346388>

View an album of new images:

<https://ci.tandemvault.com/lightboxes/4563?tc=SUvT4XNN8#/>

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

*"There is then, no water that is wholly of the Pacific, or wholly of the Atlantic, or of the Indian or the Antarctic... It is by the deep, hidden currents that the oceans are made one."*

– Rachel Carson (1907-1964), founder of contemporary environmental movement and author of *Silent Spring* (1962)

## MEDIA MATTERS

### Skyrunner

Endurance athlete Kilian Jornet Burgada, 25, has begun what he calls the Summits of My Life project, a four-year effort to set speed records climbing and descending some of the world's most well known peaks, from the Matterhorn this summer to Mount Everest in 2015, according to a profile by Christopher Solomon in the Mar. 24 *New York Times Magazine*.

Jornet has won dozens of mountain footraces up to 100 miles in length and six world titles in Skyrunning, a series of races of varying distances held on billy-goat terrain. He is the most visible figure in the growing "fastest known times" movement, in which runners measure how long it takes to complete geographic challenges. Among his records: a 7-hour 14-min. ascent of 19,341-ft. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania.

Read the story here: <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/24/magazine/creating-the-all-terrain-human.html?pagewanted=all&r=0>

### Freebie

Legendary moonwalker Buzz Aldrin was given a number of new products to review in the *New York Times Magazine* (Mar. 24). Of the Alexander Wang leather eye mask (\$95), he said quite frankly, "The very handsome leather mask that I received was too tight. I'm not sure why one would buy a personal item like this rather than take one of the free ones that you're given on an airplane."

## CLIMBING FOR DOLLARS

### The 2013 Outside Adventure Grant

Outside magazine is once again offering \$10,000 to fund a bold expedition. Editors will pick finalists and then readers will select the winner. Deadline for submissions is June 1. (For more information: <http://www.outsideonline.com/adventuregrant>)

### **Metolius Sponsors Youth Climbing League**

Rock climbing gear maker Metolius has announced sponsorship of the Northern California Youth Climbing League (YCL). Bringing young climbers together throughout Northern California, the YCL's goal is to get youth excited about climbing. Metolius will provide the YCL with support and equipment to foster growth in the next generation of climbers.

With five participating gyms and multiple competitions in Northern California, the YCL offers youth a unique opportunity to compete against peers in a fun and relaxed format. With a successful 2013 youth league season just wrapping up, the YCL looks forward to growing the program for next season.

The league is presented by Metolius and Evolv, and receives support from a list of other sponsors including Clif Bar, Sanuk, Climbing Magazine and Yo! Basecamp Rock Climbing Camp. YCL participants are given support and gear from these sponsors, making participation in the season and competitions possible.

For more information:

[www.metoliusclimbing.com](http://www.metoliusclimbing.com), [www.norcalyouthclimbingleague.com](http://www.norcalyouthclimbingleague.com)

### **McNeill-Nott 2013 Award Winners Announced**

The American Alpine Club (AAC) announced this year's McNeill-Nott Award recipients. Out of 16 applicants, three grant-recipient teams will focus their talents on objectives in Canada, Nepal, and Pakistan:

- **Pete Dronkers with Jonathan Crabtree** – South Pillar of Lowell Peak, St. Elias Range, Canada. The team hopes to “break new ground in an obscure area and bring new information and multimedia resources to the greater climbing community.”
- **Jewell Lund with Kyle Dempster** – Bublomotin, or Ladyfinger Peak, which lies on the southwest ridge of the Ultar Sar Massif above the Hunza Valley, Pakistan. Their emphasis is on free climbing and leaving as little impact as possible.
- **Chris Wright with Geoff Unger** – Ripimo Shar (21,804-ft./6646 m), Northeast Pillar or East Ridge (Unclimbed), Rolwaling Himal, Nepal. They hope to reach the summit and establish a new route going as fast and as light as possible.

The McNeill-Nott Award seeks to preserve the memory and spirit of the late climbers Sue Nott and her partner Karen McNeill by giving grants to amateur climbers exploring new routes or unclimbed peaks with small and lightweight teams.

The annual application deadline for the McNeill-Nott Award is January 1. For more information: [www.americanalpineclub.org](http://www.americanalpineclub.org).



## **Helly Hansen Supports Walking with the Wounded Expedition**

Helly Hansen announced it will be the official clothing partner for Walking With The Wounded's (WWTW) Allied South Pole 2013 Challenge in November 2013.

Walking With The Wounded, a U.K.-based charity that funds the re-training and re-education of wounded servicemen and women, stages extreme expeditions to illustrate the determination and courage of injured soldiers. The 2013 expedition will see three teams of wounded servicemen from the U.K., U.S. and Commonwealth (Australia and Canada), head to Antarctica to race against each other in an attempt to reach the Geographic South Pole.

The wounded servicemen and women are expected to cover 208-mi./335 km over 16 days, encountering temperatures as low as minus 40 degrees F.

For more information: [www.hellyhansen.com](http://www.hellyhansen.com), [www.walkingwiththewounded.org.uk](http://www.walkingwiththewounded.org.uk)

## **The Explorers Club – Eddie Bauer Grants Awarded**

Working in conjunction with The Explorers Club, Eddie Bauer is funding two significant grants for research and exploration. The Explorers Club-Eddie Bauer Grants seek to support cutting edge discovery and field research programs. This year's recipients are:

- **Darren Larsen, The Explorers Club - Eddie Bauer Youth Awards Winner**

Larsen is a doctoral student at the University of Colorado, Boulder in the Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research and the University of Iceland. His winning project is titled, "Climate Change in the Teton Range: Reconstructing Glacier Activity and Environmental Conditions at Grand Teton National Park Using Lake Sediments." Larsen's research is focused on paleo-climate to evaluate the timing and magnitude of Arctic and alpine glacier and environmental responses to past climate variability.

- **James Herrera, The Explorers Club - Eddie Bauer Youth Awards Winner**

Herrera is a doctoral student at Stony Brook University NY, International Doctoral Program in Anthropological Sciences. His winning project is titled, "Long-term Monitoring of Endangered Primates to Understand the Effects of Climate Change and Deforestation in Madagascar."

His research focuses on the evolutionary processes that drive biodiversity, especially in primates, as well as the impact of climate change on biodiversity. He spends months at a time deep in the jungle of Madagascar researching threatened lemurs, and how deforestation threatens biodiversity.

- **Rachel Ikemeh, The Explorers Club - Eddie Bauer Grant for Expeditions**

Ikemeh's project is called, "Conservation Research to assess the Population Status, Distribution and Prevalent Threats to the Critically Endangered Niger Delta Red Colobus Monkey."

Her proposed field research in the central Niger Delta of Nigeria will attempt to explore an area of 1500km<sup>2</sup> using a very practical and scientifically sound approach to collect critical data required for the conservation of a rare monkey on the verge of extinction. This research study is expected to increase scientific knowledge of this biologically important and unique ecosystem.

For more information:

[http://www.explorers.org/index.php/expeditions/funding/eddie\\_bauer\\_grants](http://www.explorers.org/index.php/expeditions/funding/eddie_bauer_grants)

## **ON THE HORIZON**

### **Guests Invited to Explorers Club Members Dinner, May 22**

The Club's New York headquarters will host Gregg Treinish, founder and executive director of Adventurers and Scientists for Conservation, at their Members Dinner on May 22. Treinish will discuss the goals and recent projects of his organization as well as share his 7,800-mi., 22-month trek of the entire Andes Mountain Range. He was recognized the National Geographic Adventurer of the Year in 2008 for this accomplishment. Non-members of the Explorers Club can attend as the guest of Members Dinners Chairman Daryl Hawk. (For more information: [www.explorers.org](http://www.explorers.org))

### **Peaks Foundation Women's Leadership and Adventure Summit, Golden, Colo., July 26-28, 2013**

Michelle Theall will open the Summit with a motivational talk about her experiences living with MS, taking risks and founding *Women's Adventure Magazine* while balancing work, life and play. This intimate three-day Summit will provide opportunities for attendees to interact with outstanding speakers, corporate professionals and world-class athletes. Attendees will push themselves to their highest potential through alpine adventures including rock climbing, stand-up paddle boarding and trekking with professional guides.

For more information: [www.peaksfoundation.org](http://www.peaksfoundation.org), [www.wlas2013.com](http://www.wlas2013.com)

## **BUZZ WORDS**

### **Expeditionary Caving**

The highly organized and sustained effort to discover, explore and document caves and cave systems. Expeditionary caving is all encompassing and includes all the hard sciences: geology, biology, hydrology, the list goes on. But expeditionary caving is also a passion, an extreme sport, a religious experience, a disease, and an obsession. It is an art and a science.

– Emily Zuber (see related story)

### **Yats Esool**

Don't try to Google this one. Early references are hard to find. The term is "stay loose" spelled backwards – another way Mercury 7 astronauts reminded their colleagues to remain calm. (Source: Astronaut Scott Carpenter speaking at The Explorers Club Annual Dinner).

### **EXPEDITION CLASSIFIEDS**

**Project Himalaya** – Real treks and expeditions in Nepal and Northern India. We still go exploring, are opening up the Nepal Great Himalaya Trail and alternative trekking peaks in Ladakh, as well as offering a unique range of treks. We are a small operation and really care about every detail, and offer best in class treks – <http://project-himalaya.com>

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