

EXPEDITION NEWS



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EXPEDITION NEWS, now in its 13th 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.

1909-2009 PEARY CENTENNIAL EXPEDITION

On February 17, 2009, polar explorer Lonnie Dupre and a team of Inuit companions and explorers will begin an epic dog sled journey through the polar reaches of the High Arctic, traveling in the footsteps of Robert E. Peary and other explorers of his time.

On April 6, 1909, explorers Robert E. Peary and Matthew A. Henson, along with a team of Inuit, became the first men to reach the North Pole. The claim, disputed by skeptics, was upheld in 1989 by the Navigation Foundation (www.navigationfoundation.org).

Says Dupre, 46, a resident of Grand Marais, Minn., "Robert E. Peary's successful discovery of the North Pole in 1909 above all other polar explorers was due to his wisdom to take polar Inuit dog drivers – they can handle huskies and maneuver sleds better than anyone ever hoped too."

Dupre's \$400,000 expedition will be dedicated to the Inuit people. "These are the unsung heroes of multiple arctic expeditions. Their culture and lives are hanging on the edge of existence due to the ravages of global warming and pollution."

The planned five-month project will begin in January 2009 with a month and a half of training dogs, preparing equipment and living with the polar Inuit of the Qaanaaq district of northwest Greenland. Then on February 17th, the day the sun comes back at the end of four months of polar night, a team of six individuals, three sleds and 36 dogs will depart on an almost four-month, 1,500 mile journey transecting, rounding and exploring the northern latitudes of Ellesmere and Axel Heiberg Islands and Greenland.

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EXPEDITION UPDATE

Jordan Romero, 10, Knocks Off Mt. Elbrus

The day before his 11th birthday, Jordan Romero of Big Bear, Calif., moved another step closer to his goal of becoming the youngest person to climb the highest peak on each of the seven continents. On July 11, Romero and his family successfully reached the top of Europe's highest peak, 18,498-foot Mt. Elbrus. (See *EN*, May 2007).

Last July, Romero began his quest for the Seven Summits when he climbed 19,340-foot Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, Africa. He reportedly made the climb in record time and became the youngest person to climb the Umbwe Route in just three and half days. Last April, Romero summited Mt. Kosciuszko in Australia. Next on his list is Mt. Aconcagua in Argentina, which he plans to attempt on his winter break from school this year. Romero hopes to finish his Seven Summits quest by climbing Mt. Everest before his 16th birthday. (For more information: www.jordanromero.com). ▲

EXPEDITION NOTES

Ancient Expedition Becalmed – The Abora 3 Expedition that aims to replicate ancient seafaring techniques has experienced a delay of almost three weeks due to a long period of calm over the Atlantic, a representative told Deutsche Presse-Agentur late last month.

At press time, the boat piloted by German biologist Dominique Goerlitz was some 62 miles (100 km) off the Gulf Stream. Once it reaches the current, it will be automatically pushed forward. First stop will be the Azores islands, where Goerlitz hoped to put in for fresh provisions by Aug. 10 before moving on to Cadiz on Spain's southern tip and

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Why not add the North Pole to the itinerary? Dupre tells *EN*, “We are not going to the North Pole – it is not our objective. The Pole has been reached by dog team at least eight other times. One of the last times by dogs was done in 2005 by Matty McNair in record time using Peary/Inuit travel techniques to help prove that Peary most likely made it to the Pole.”

The team plans to document all of Peary’s historic old huts, camps, depots and cairns in Canada and Greenland. Dupre will also develop a “Not Cool” campaign to explain how global warming is affecting Inuit culture and airborne pollution is threatening wildlife.

During the last 20 years, Lonnie Dupre has traveled over 14,000 miles throughout the polar regions by dog team, ski and kayak. In 2004 he received the coveted Rolex Awards for Enterprise for his One World Expedition to bring attention to global warming’s influence on the Arctic. (For more information: Lonnie Dupre, 218 370 2015, lonnie@boreal.org, www.lonniedupre.com). ▲

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the Canary Islands. With the current delay, the boat will get to the Azores in late August.

Goerlitz, a former schoolteacher, set out to prove that ancient civilizations could have made the trip from the Americas back to the Old World. He embarked on July 11 on a more than three-month journey from the U.S. coast back to Spain. Goerlitz departed New York in a prehis-

Quote of the Month

“Man has always gone where he has been able to go, it is a basic satisfaction of his inquisitive nature, and I think we all lose a little bit if we choose to turn our backs on further exploration.”

– Astronaut Michael Collins, *Carrying the Fire* (Adventure Library, first published 1974). (Quote courtesy of Chris Kostman, AdventureCORPS, Inc.).

toric-style reed boat called the *Abora 3*, constructed out of 17 tons of reed papyrus and fashioned with 16 leeboards – retractable foils – that he says aided seafarers with steering some 6,000 years ago.

Taking his cue from Norwegian adventurer Thor Heyerdahl, the 41-year-old Goerlitz hopes to prove that people traversed between the old and new worlds as early as 14,000 years ago, and even conducted transatlantic trade. “We want to rewrite the history of sea travel,” Goerlitz said.

The boat is equipped with modern navigation and communications equipment. Goerlitz, who is working on his doctorate in invasion biology at the University of Bonn, has cited evidence of plants known to have originated exclusively in the New World, like coca and tobacco, that were found in the tomb of ancient Egyptian ruler Ramses II. Vintage 6,000-year-old rock drawings in Egypt’s Wadi Hammamat depict reed boats with keels on the side, which Goerlitz says demonstrate how the ancients could have undertaken their travels across the Atlantic. (For more information: www.abora3.com).

How North is North? – Last month, the Euro-American North Greenland Expedition 2007 flew to the far northernmost coast of Greenland, then headed out on the sea ice to establish whether there is a more northerly point of permanent land than the currently established northern point, Kaffeklubben Island. Oodaaq Island was discovered almost a mile (1360 meters to be exact) north of Kaffeklubben in 1978, but it has since vanished into the ocean.

Team member, photographer and filmmaker Jeff Shea of Point Richmond, Calif., tells *EN*, “We stood on an ‘island’ north of Kaffeklubben. I put it in quotes because it appeared to be sitting on top of the sea ice, but we’re not sure if it was connected to land. This is representative of these impermanent features off the north coast of Greenland near Kaffeklubben. This feature was shown in a 2005 satellite image appearing in much the same shape that it’s in now.

“It looks like an island, but time will tell if it’s determined to be the northernmost,” Shea says. “For now, we dubbed it Stray Dog West.”

How Low is Low? – For years, Badwater Basin in Death Valley National Park in California has been considered the lowest point in the Western Hemisphere. At minus 282 feet below sea level, it may not be the Dead Sea (minus 1,360 feet), but only California’s Salton Sea, at minus 227 feet, comes close in the U.S. Enamel signs erected by the Park Service proclaim Badwater as the lowest in the Western Hemisphere and for years, the Badwater Ultramarathon, a

135-mi. footrace through Death Valley in the heat of summer, has also bragged about it starting at the lowest point in this half of the earth.

Not so fast. A few years ago scientists in Argentina came along and determined Patagonia's Laguna del Carbon (minus 344 feet), beat the U.S. for lowest Western Hemisphere honors by 62 feet. But there's still plenty of references to Badwater as the Western Hemisphere's lowest in brochures and signs. Change (to "lowest in North America") comes slowly to the cash-strapped National Park Service. "Those enamel signs you see out there are not cheap," Ranger Alan Van Valkenburg tells *EN* during a recent visit. "We just learned about losing the Western Hemisphere title from the Internet. Of course, you can't believe everything you read on the Net, but this seemed to be a very believable government site in Argentina.

"Still, we're not going to start pulling everything down."

Last month, the visitor center in Furnace Creek registered 129 degrees F., just five degrees below the highest air temperature ever recorded in Death Valley (134 degrees F. in 1913), although ground temperature on the valley floor can often be 40 percent higher than air temperature.

There's one sign we hope they never take down. It's on a visitor center exhibit about the Barley Geological Party. In a camp in nearby Sarasota Springs, explorers erected a sign on Christmas Day 1900 that simply read: "20 Miles From Wood. 20 Miles From Water. 40 Feet From Hell."

Body of Christine Boskoff Located – The body of accomplished U.S. climber Christine Boskoff was found in the mountains of southern China on July 3. The search and recovery team supported by Mountain Madness, the Seattle-based adventure guide company owned by Boskoff, resumed their search for Boskoff last May on the remote mountain peak of Genyan Massif in Sichuan Province.

Last November, Boskoff and her climbing partner Charlie Fowler, also a renowned high-altitude climber, were on a personal climbing expedition in Sichuan Province when the pair failed to return to the U.S. Fowler's body was recovered on Dec. 27, and search crews ceased their efforts to search and recover Boskoff until the spring due to winter weather. Both are believed to have died in an avalanche.

"Chris established a legacy as one of the most successful female high altitude mountaineers in history, having climbed six 8,000 meter peaks including two successful ascents of Everest," said Mark Gunlogson, president of Mountain Madness.

A memorial fund to benefit Room to Read has been established in Boskoff's name to benefit schoolchildren in Nepal. Boskoff was a former board member of the non-profit organization that helps establish schools, libraries and other educational infrastructures in developing countries.

Polar Bear Club – Extreme Edition – Only a few seconds in the icy depths would be enough to kill most mere mortals. But in mid-July, protected by nothing more than a pair of Speedo trunks and his extraordinary central heating, Lewis Gordon Pugh took the plunge on July 15 and was erroneously credited by media as the first man to swim at the North Pole. At press time, there were many "first ever" accounts on Google News. Pugh himself claimed instead that it was the most northern long distance swim in history.

The 36-year-old Londoner spent almost 19 minutes at 28 degrees F. (minus 1.8 C.) as he front crawled for a full kilometer - more than half a mile in the coldest water a human has ever swum. "It was like jumping into a dark black hole," he said. "The pain was immediate and felt like my body was on fire.

"I was in excruciating pain from beginning to end and I nearly quit on a few occasions. It was without doubt the hardest swim of my life."

Pugh, who gave up his career as a maritime lawyer to become a full-time endurance swimmer, carried out his latest expedition to highlight how global warming has melted the Arctic icecaps.

He traveled to the Geographic North Pole on a Russian icebreaker with a 29-person back-up team including a mind coach. Although the North Pole water temperature is below zero, the salt is enough to prevent the water freezing at that temperature. Pugh carries out his swims to Channel Swimming Club rules - which outlaw wetsuits, flippers or snorkels.

The media's "first ever" reports raised some ire. According to this anonymous posting on CBS News.com: "He is not the first person to swim at the North Pole. I was attached to the USCGC *Polar Sea* and we were the first U.S. surface ship to make it all the way to the North Pole in 1994. The CCGS *Louis S. St-Laurent*, a Canadian Coast Guard Cutter and a Russian icebreaker, the USSR's *Yamal* were there also. A group of people from the three ships took a swim behind the prop wash area of the *Yamal*. I do not know who was the first in, but I do know that there are many witnesses."

Also disputing the erroneous "first swim" claim is Captain Alfred S. McLaren, U.S. Navy (Ret.), Ph.D., and president

emeritus and director of The Explorers Club, who was commanding officer of the Sturgeon class nuclear attack submarine, *USS Queenfish*, from 1969 to 1973. He tells *EN*, “I swam at the North Pole on the 12th of July, 1996 (in my long underwear pants – I was the first American to do it that year; Edmund Ball, 92, followed me for a brief dip. My wife, Avery, swam at the North Pole in 1999, and on 25 July, 2003, in just a bikini. Her 2003 swim was quite lengthy!”

The final word on the matter comes from Pugh spokesperson Margaret Brady who e-mailed *EN*, “Tourists on the *Yamal* (the Russian ice breaker which sails to the North Pole at least twice per year) frequently jump into the sea at the Geographic North Pole. A rope is tied around their waist; they jump in, swim a few strokes, and quickly climb out using a ladder. Experiences like these are not considered ‘swims’ by swimming organizations.”

On the Good Ship Lollypop – Ice cream sticks, actually. Five million of them. A 49 ft. replica of a Viking ship made from millions of ice cream sticks has set sail on a lake in The Netherlands in preparation for crossing the Atlantic Ocean. The ship, named *Thor*, was glued together by Robert McDonald, 48, his son, and more than 5,000 children from 18 schools in the Netherlands. McDonald says he initiated the project, which took four years to complete, to show children they could do anything they set their minds to. He’s also throwing in a message about climate change.

“It’s not only a ship of ice cream sticks, it’s also the world’s largest recycled object,” he said. McDonald is now looking for a crew to man the vessel and hopes to attempt a crossing of the Atlantic as early as this September, setting sail from the port city of Lelystad, *ITV.com* reports. ▲▲

EXPEDITION FOCUS

Panel Decides What Constitutes a True Circumnavigation

Definitive rules for circumnavigations of the world completed by human power have been published by AdventureStats of Explorers Web, Inc., an independent panel of international historians, geographers and explorers, whose conclusions will ratify existing guidelines held by the *Guinness Book of Records*. The rulings will also clarify the recent dispute between teams from three nations - Britain, Canada and Turkey - regarding the long sought after title to achieve the circumnavigation of the planet by human power.

Last April a major row erupted in the international press between Briton Jason Lewis, Canadian Colin Angus and Turk/long time U.S. resident Erden Eruc over the definition of a legitimate Human Powered Circumnavigation (HPC). Angus, who claims to have completed an HPC in May 2006, traveled exclusively in the Northern Hemisphere, which according to Lewis and Eruc does not entitle him to claim a circumnavigation of the entire world. Guinness also refuted the claim by Angus as their criteria for human powered circumnavigation feats require the traveler to cross both the equator and at least one pair of antipodal points (locations on the surface of the planet that are diametrically opposite to each other). (See *EN*, July 2007).

In turn, Angus accused Guinness of setting the rules on what constitutes a human-powered circumnavigation to suit a Briton – Lewis.

The new rules come down heavily in favor of the existing guidelines set by Guinness, and for the circumnavigation attempts currently underway by Lewis and Eruc. The panel of experts recognize Lewis as being first in line to complete a human powered circumnavigation, a long sought after ‘grail’ of circumnavigation aspirants since Ferdinand Magellan’s expedition completed the first circumnavigation of the world in 1522.

The rules set by Explorers Web require the circumnavigator to:

- Start and finish at the same point, traveling in one general direction
- Reach two antipodes
- Cross the equator
- Cross all longitudes
- Cover a minimum of 40,000 km or 21,600 NM (a great circle)

British yachtsman Adrian Flanagan, who is sailing the first-ever single-handed “vertical” circumnavigation of the globe – considered the last great sailing prize in long distance, single-handed sailing – tells *EN*, “I agree with all points in the defining criteria, but would expand on one. This is a bit obvious, but in crossing the equator, it needs to be crossed twice in opposite directions (I think rules should be very specific and clear).”

Flanagan continues, “The one really important point which the panel does make is for the necessity of at least one pair of antipodal points on the track. Many sailors ignore this – all the Vendee Globe racers and the Volvo competitors are thus probably not completing a ‘true’ circumnavigation.”

A complete set of rules and regulations for Human Powered Circumnavigation are posted at <http://www.adventurestats.com/rules.shtml#around>. A background story can be read at <http://www.theoceans.net/news.php?id=16231>. ▲▲

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CLIMBING FOR DOLLARS

The New England 4,000 Footers – When it comes to climbing for a cause, one doesn't necessarily have to target the Seven Summits or the Colorado 14ers. There are a whole lot of opportunities climbing New England's 4,000-plus summits if you package it right.

John Page, 41, a restaurant manager from Corinth, Vt., has put together a series of climbs of the highest 67 summits in New England, starting in spring 2008. While an elevation of 4,000 feet hardly reaches Denver, it doesn't much matter when you realize this fundraiser is designed to benefit Spina Bifida research, which afflicts Page's daughter, Erin, who requires constant care. Over 20 sponsors are already on board including: Adventure Medical Kits, AlpineAire, Asolo, Lowe Alpine, Mountain House, Princeton Tec, SIGG water bottles, S.M.C., TekTite, and 40 Below. Funds raised will benefit the Spina Bifida Association of America/Massachusetts chapter. (For more information: John Page, 802 439 3494, Odessa@tops-tele.com, www.myspace.com/climbingforspinabifida). ▲



MEDIA MATTERS

A Real Sport – Sir Ranulph Fiennes, 63, dubbed the “world's greatest explorer” by the Guinness Book of Records, tells HBO's *Real Sports with Bryant Gumbel* on July 27, “Dying has lost the edge of fear now that my wife died.” His remarriage and first-time fatherhood at the age of 62, is credited with helping him carry on living. Although a climber and veteran of over 30 expeditions around the globe, he suffers from vertigo and had a massive heart attack in 2003. Yet, less than five months later, he was running seven marathons in seven days on seven continents with his friend Mike Stroud. On June 3 he appeared in a *New York Times* advertisement for Kobold watches, explaining that during his recent Everest climb, “sitting around for weeks, waiting for good weather” was the worst part. He is currently planning a return trip to Everest to attempt the mountain from the south side.

Forever on the Mountain – Of the dozen of climbers who began a descent on Denali in June 1967 – the youngest was 22, the eldest 31 – only five returned alive. James M. Tabor, a former contributing editor at *Outside* magazine, spent several years researching this episode, and in *Forever on the Mountain* (W.W. Norton & Company, 2007), he has produced what *Wall Street Journal* book reviewer Gary Krist calls, “... the fairest, most comprehensive account of it we're likely to see.” Krist goes on to say, “Could this disaster have

been averted by closer monitoring and a quicker response from the authorities in charge? Perhaps, but given the extremity of the storm, it's doubtful whether anyone could have saved those men in time.

“After all, even with today's much-improved communication and rescue technologies, climbing fatalities still occur with disheartening frequency. Survivors and outside observers will argue endlessly over how things went horribly wrong. But the truth is that on mountains as formidable as Denali, the line between adventure and disaster will always be terrifyingly easy to cross,” Krist writes in the July 17 *Journal*.

Dr. Ballyhoo, I Presume? – Stand-up comedian Jeff Wozer takes a shot at the proliferation of dubious expeditions in a July posting of *New England Sports Online*. “The word expedition is the Frank's RedHot Sauce of the English language,” he writes. “Add it to any outdoor endeavor – kayaking, camping, snowshoeing – and it immediately enhances it to sound like a world-class adventure.

“The word expedition comes wired with its own *National Geographic* theme song soundtrack. Mention it and that uplifting song trumpets through the brain, igniting images of granite-chipped adventurers straddling spines of rock above mysterious valleys populated with indigenous humans.”

Wozer continues, “It's as if an *American Idol* mindset stains the minds of some of today's explorers. For just as contestants mistakenly believe chirping into a microphone automatically classifies them as talented artists, there are some marginal adventurers who assume any activity involving hobby-like transportation distinguishes them as legitimate expeditionary pioneers.” ▲

EXPEDITION MARKETING

PrimaLoft Sponsors Mugs Stump Award

One of the most prestigious outdoor awards has added a new sponsor. PrimaLoft insulation is joining the current roster of sponsors, which include Black Diamond, Climbing Magazine, Mountain Gear, Patagonia and W.L. Gore. The award was established in 1993 in memory of Mugs Stump, one of the country's most visionary climbers, who died in a crevasse fall in Alaska in May 1992. The Mugs Stump Award offers financial grants to help support small teams tackling difficult climbs in the great mountains of the world.

Mugs Stump was best known for his first ascent of the Emperor Face on Mount Robson in the Canadian Rockies

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and his triptych of brilliant Alaskan climbs – the East Face of the Moose’s Tooth, the Moonflower Buttress on Mount Hunter, and a one-day solo of Denali’s Cassin Ridge. He saw climbing as a celebration of boldness, purity and simplicity. Over the past 15 years, the Mugs Stump Award has provided \$180,000 in grants to individuals or small teams attempting climbs that present an outstanding challenge, either a first ascent, significant repeat, or first alpine-style ascent.

Awards are also made to teams whose plans best exemplify the philosophy of “fast, light, and clean,” with special emphasis placed on climbers leaving no trace of their passage. (For more information: www.mugsstumpaward.com, www.primaloft.com). ▲▲

IN PASSING

Michael Reardon Dies at 42

Most rock climbers get enough adrenaline from the challenge of ascending a cliff with just a harness and rope in case of a fall. Michael Reardon, a global star in the extreme sport of free solo climbing, donned only sticky-soled shoes and a bag of chalk to keep his hands dry, saying gear interfered with the “purity of the experience.” (“Climbing is all about going until you get too scared to go any farther, like when you were a kid climbing trees,” he explained.) According to *Time* magazine (Aug. 6), the Californian’s most famous feat came in 2005, with his first-ever solo ascent of Romantic Warrior, a storied 1,000-ft. (about 304 m) route in the U.S. Sierras. He finished the perilous trek, which took fully outfitted climbers a day, in two hours. Reardon was killed after completing a climb off the coast of Ireland. A wave swept him into the ocean as he stood on a ledge 15 ft. above the water waiting for the ocean to calm. He was 42. ▲▲

WEB WATCH

YouTube Adventures – There’s not much you can’t find on YouTube.com, including adventure. Recently Forbes.com Video Network’s Jim Clash uploaded 35 shows to <http://youtube.com/jimclash>, including interviews with climbers Lynn Hill and Mike Haugen, and astronaut Buzz Aldrin. It’s a great series to watch when you grow tired of looking at Charlie the Unicorn. ▲▲

EXPEDITION CLASSIFIEDS

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/>

Advertise in Expedition News – For just 50 cents a word, you can reach an estimated 10,000 readers of America’s only monthly newsletter celebrating the world of expeditions on land, in space, and beneath the sea. Join us as we take a sometimes irreverent look at the people and projects making Expedition News. Frequency discounts are available. (For more information: blumassoc@aol.com).

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 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.

Four Legs Good, Two Legs Bad – LEKI, the world’s largest ski, trekking and Nordic Walking pole company, Buffalo, N.Y., introduces three new P2 Grip/Strap Trekking Poles for 2007. Lengthen and shorten the pole strap with the one touch locking tab on top. Grips are vented to reduce weight. See more at 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). ▲▲

