

EXPEDITION NEWS

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December 2011 – Volume Eighteen, Number 12

EXPEDITION NEWS, now in its 17th 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.

WEBER SOUTH POLE EXPEDITION USES SKIS AND KITES FOR SOUTH POLE ROUNDTrip TREK

On November 16, a team of six adventurers flew to Antarctica – Canadian Richard Weber; Briton Chris de Lapuente; Americans Kathy Braegger and Ruth Storm; New Zealander Michael Archer; and South African Howard Fairbank. The entire team started skiing from the Ronne Ice Shelf at a location called the “Messner Start,” 540-mi./900 km from the South Pole. The team plans to pull all supplies in sleds for the 35-day expedition while Fairbank will ski off on his own for a solo attempt.

At the South Pole, it gets interesting: they will receive a re-supply, the skiers will change boots, skis and sleds, Ruth Storm will fly back, and Fairbank will re-join the team. Then the group will kite-ski 660-mi./1100 km back to the edge of the Antarctic continent at Hercules Inlet. The South Pole, at an altitude of almost 10,000 feet, experiences cold air flowing down toward sea level. Using this wind, the team expects to reach Hercules Inlet in about 15 days and hopes to depart for home on January 12, 2012.

According to Weber, despite numerous South Pole expeditions these days, a roundtrip to the bottom of the earth has only been completed twice in history. Once by Amundsen in 1911, and another team in 2004, but never on this route. The expedition will send text and images via satellite telephone, which can be seen at www.WeberArctic.com, Kathy Braegger’s website, www.southpoleroundtrip.com, and Chris de Lapuente’s site, www.south-pole.weebly.com/.

Expedition sponsors are Fischer skis, 7Systems endurance supplements, Brother Labels (see related story), and Recon GPS. Weber considers the Recon his coolest piece of gear. The goggles have a built-in GPS display that provides speed, temperature, latitude and longitude, considered a huge advantage while kite-skiing and navigating in bad light. “No

need to look down at the compass or to get out a handheld GPS. The battery can be recharged from one of our mini solar panels,” Weber blogs.

EXPEDITION UPDATE

Mike Horn *Pangaea* Expedition Conducts First U.S. Study

Last month, South African Mike Horn and seven selected young explorers representing five different nations lead the first and only *Pangaea* expedition to U.S. territory for dynamic study of the Gulf of Mexico’s fragile aquatic eco-system and exploration of the Everglades – the largest subtropical wilderness in the U.S.

For more than two decades, Horn has undertaken feats of adventure and environmental analysis that have extended the boundaries of human achievement, natural discovery and ecological education (see *EN*, October 2008). His latest endeavor, the *Pangaea* Project, is a four-year circumnavigation of the world on a 115-ft. aluminum ketch through a series of 12, tri-annual expeditions each to different climates and biospheres including mountain, desert, ocean, rainforest and tundra. (For more information:

www.mikehorn.com)

Stowe Away (Again)

New York City artist and sailor Reid Stowe, 59, and photographer Soanya Ahmad, 28, the couple who sailed the longest sea voyage in history, departed last month for another adventure, this time to the jungles of Guyana with a crew of six men and three women – most of whom have never been on the ocean before. (See *EN*, July 2010).

After Stowe’s schooner *Anne* returned from her record-breaking 1,152-day voyage in June 2010, she was still seaworthy but in dire need of maintenance. One and a half years later the 70-ft. yacht will finally get the attention she needs. The month-long ocean adventure will take the *Anne* and crew up a jungle river in Guyana where extensive repairs will be made. From there the crew will sail through the Caribbean and back to New York City. The entire voyage will take six months, returning them to Manhattan in May 2012.

The crew will work with the World Water Rescue Foundation (www.wwrf.org) to foster awareness about the sustainable uses of water.

Stowe is in the process of pitching two book deals with a literary agent, one about the three-year voyage, the other called, *Survival Food Stockpiling: A Proven Three Year Technique Without Resupply*. Meanwhile, Stowe is busy promoting and selling his art at www.reidstoweart.com

He tells *EN*, “Most people are quite surprised that we are not more famous and celebrated for our unprecedented accomplishments, but none of us have really figured this out. We are still busy trying to promote and share our story.” (For more information:

www.1000days.net)

A Toast to The Boss

Turns out Sir Ernest Shackleton left behind a few “necessities” following his expedition to the Magnetic South Pole and that’s the reason over 120 guests gathered at The Explorers Club on Nov. 10 – to toast in his honor, raising high a glass of his very own whisky. Well, almost. In February 2007, a team of archaeologists from the New Zealand Antarctic Heritage Trust discovered two crates of 100-year-old Scotch whisky beneath the floor of a hut built by Shackleton during his 1907-1909 Antarctic Nimrod Expedition. (See *EN*, December 2009).

In 2010, one crate, labeled Mackinlay's whisky, was brought to the Canterbury Museum in Christchurch, New Zealand, where it was thawed under precise laboratory conditions.

Whyte & Mackay, the Scottish distillery that now owns the Mackinlay's brand, launched the recovery effort to carefully analyze samples they could use to relaunch the defunct Scotch. As the original recipe for the blend no longer exists, famed Whyte & Mackay Master Blender Richard “The Nose” Paterson was enlisted to replicate the historic old brand. He calls it, quite unabashedly, “A gift from heaven for whisky lovers.”

Paterson, who is said to have a nose insured for more money than Lady Gaga’s legs, has since successfully reopened this window of history by carefully and meticulously reconstructing the whisky’s formula – a whopping 47.3 percent alcohol (94.6 proof), presumably making it necessary to employ a designated musher).

“The reformulated whisky we’re having tonight contains malts 10 to 30 years old and if I see you putting ice in it, I’ll kill you,” Paterson joked.

The tasting also commemorated Mackinlay's Rare Old Highland Malt Whisky becoming a corporate sponsor of The Explorers Club, the very same organization that bestowed upon Shackleton honorary membership.

Following the relaunch, 50,000 bottles of the long-lost malt will go on sale for \$175, with a percentage of each sale being donated to the Antarctic Heritage Trust. (For more information: www.enduringspirit.com)

EXPEDITION NOTES

SD Card Takes a Licking and Keeps on Clicking

Just how tough is your average DSLR memory card? Apparently tough enough to survive a year at the bottom of the ocean. Naturalist and aspiring photographer Markus Thompson was scuba diving in Deep Bay near Vancouver, British Columbia, when he found a Canon EOS 1000D. Curious, he brought it to the surface and took out the SD card, and was able to recover about 50 photos.

With a bounty of pictures and a desire to find the camera's owner, Thompson logged onto social networking sites for help. He posted his find to Google+, including pictures of the camera itself as well as the photos he was able to recover from the SD card. He eventually tracked it down to a firefighter in British Columbia.

Read the story here: <http://news.yahoo.com/blogs/technology-blog/camera-lost-sea-returned-help-social-networking-174129626.html>

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“We live in a society that tends to glorify risk, blithely airbrushing away the potential consequences. We laud risk when it succeeds and denigrate it as reckless when it does not. By definition, some risky ventures are going to fail. Managing risk is a balancing act between a desired outcome and the probability of achieving it. Knowing your goal is key because it is your ‘yardstick for success’ and helps determine how much you are willing to put at risk.”

– Jill A. Fredston. With 25 years experience predicting avalanches, Fredston has made a specialty of speaking about decision-making, and strategies for dealing with uncertainty and change. She is author of *Snowstruck: In the Grip of Avalanches* (Harcourt, 2005)

EXPEDITION FOCUS

The Last *Tango* in Norwalk

Pedaling past the Wilson Cove Marina in Norwalk, Conn., this past summer we noticed a forlorn and strange-looking white and orange boat in dry-dock. The 850-lb. self-righting carbon fiber and cedar craft today bears little testimony to its history setting the fastest west to east human-powered crossing of the Atlantic.

After capturing the imaginations of young and old alike at the Norwalk Maritime Aquarium where she was prominently displayed for almost two decades, the 24-ft. pedal-powered boat is now ready to capture the imaginations of adventurous souls in a new yet to be determined location.

Back in 1991, we were approached by its owner, Dwight T. Collins, then age 34, for help in promoting his planned Atlantic crossing. Collins, who logged some 4,000 hours on a recumbent stationary bicycle in his living room to train, received \$35,000 in seed money from beverage importer Schieffelin & Somerset to support the trial run on behalf of Moët & Chandon champagne. Breitling Watches stepped up later and Virgin Atlantic contributed at the end when Collins was 200 miles from completion.

Why does champagne make sense as a sponsor? Champagne is quaffed by the gallons during ocean crossings (think Noel Coward sloshing across the Atlantic on the *Queen Mary*). And to celebrate a sailboat race, as much champagne is spilled as it is consumed. So there was indeed logic in securing a bubbly sponsor. The boat was christened *Tango* after Collins’ first wedding dance with wife Corrine. Collins crammed the whole forward compartment with mostly freeze-dried food, along with what turned out to be his favorite snack – Fig Newtons.

Once outfitted, he departed St. John's, Newfoundland at 2:30 p.m. on June 14, 1992. A small crowd was there to watch the former SEAL, fully enclosed and seemingly safe from the ocean seas with the winds at his back, attempt to pedal at a faster speed than anyone expected – The Little Engine That Could. Or maybe not. Nevertheless, a childhood dream realized.

With the setting sun of the first day, the insidious effects of the frigid southerly Labrador Current hampered his eastward progress to the Gulf Stream and its prevailing easterly winds. After discouraging progress the first week, a mixed blessing arrived in the form of a major gale which brought with it 20-plus foot waves and winds over 70 knots. The good news: the Labrador Current was left in the dust and he achieved greater speed than anticipated. The bad news was that this was the first of three storms that kept Collins wide awake to prevent *Tango* from turning parallel to the waves and rolling.

Collins pedaled an average of 19.5 hours per day during the trip, sitting there in his hydrophobic, sweat-wicking sports apparel, energy bars and sports drinks at the ready.

At times waves were up to 30 feet and winds reached gale force. Despite the rough ride, heavy weather helped slingshot him eastward. "By the end of the trip, I had gone through so many gales I could hardly keep track," he told Amy Nutt of *Sports Illustrated*.

He dodged trawlers, suffered major bouts of boredom when his Sony Walkman died due to moisture, and had a 12-foot shark trail him for a few terrifying minutes. At times he donned a waterproof survival suit for protection. His only serious mishap occurred when a violent roll threw him out of his bunk across a beam, tearing a gash in his forehead.

Collins arrived July 24 at 3:30 p.m. in Plymouth, England, 40 days and about 2,300 miles later – the fastest human-powered west-to-east crossing of the Atlantic ever recorded. He blew away the previous record crossing, a 55-day solo row set in 1987 by British oarsman Tom McLean.

One British tabloid considered Collins a madcap mariner obsessed with the call of the wild, someone who "... can't face life without proving his manhood." Harsh words indeed for someone followed by thousands of armchair adventurers each day of the journey.

Collins' personal credo was written on a note and cast adrift in an empty Moet champagne bottle. It read, "To whoever finds this bottle – may you have the courage to pursue that which means the most to you." The bottle was found five months later off the Brittany coast by an old fisherman who received his weight in Moet & Chandon Brut Imperial Champagne No. 1, courtesy of the expedition's main sponsor.

So there it sits in the Collins backyard in Noroton Heights, Conn. High and dry. For now. Collins, a Stamford, Conn., real estate developer and father of three, says, "I'm looking to place it in a good home, where it can continue capturing the imagination of young and old."

The last *Tango*? Not if Dwight Collins can help it. (Reach him at: dcollins@collins-llc.com, 203 541 1305).

MEDIA MATTERS

Science and Exploration are Intertwined

Robert W. Duffy, associate editor of the *St. Louis Beacon*, believes science and exploration are closely linked in today's world. He writes in the Oct. 11 issue, "... science, that broad and brilliant field of human endeavor that ennobles us all, widens our world, cures our illnesses, feeds us and quenches our thirsts, designs various transportations to take us places near and far, heats and cools our buildings and allows buildings to reach the skies."

He continues, "Everywhere we look, exploration and science affect us and ultimately extract order from chaos. Too often nowadays, all too often, both dimwits and demagogues anathematize science as some sort of elitist plot. Doors of the mind left wide open to science and exploration are passages to the light of truth. Slammed shut: oblivion."

Read his entire column here:

<http://www.stlbeacon.org/voices/blogs/beacon-blog/113492-exploring-the-world-exploring-the-mind>

Old Man of the Mountains

Fred Beckey, 88, is the most prolific first ascensionist in the history of climbing, according to Michael J. Ybarra of the *Wall Street Journal* (Nov. 10). *Climbing* magazine bestowed upon him a lifetime achievement award, impressed by his "enduring climbing-bum lifestyle."

"Fred's the ultimate dirtbag," says Patagonia Inc. founder Yvon Chouinard, who during the first ascent of the Beckey-Chouinard route on South Howser in Canada watched Beckey settle in for a cold night on a ledge by stuffing the pockets of his jacket with pages torn from a Louis L'Amour novel – an old hobo trick.

Beckey laments, "Most people just seem to lose their keenness for outdoors adventure when they get older. People my age aren't doing much any more. It just works out that way. It doesn't have to."

CLIMBING FOR DOLLARS

"Mountains for Water" Plans Kili Climb in January

In January 2012, a group of dedicated climbers will ascend Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, the highest peak on the continent of Africa, while fundraising to construct a water reservoir for a community in need in Northern Kenya.

In 1998-2000, Kenya experienced a two-year drought. Ongoing issues have prevented communities, livestock and wild animals from having enough water to drink. Daily, Samburu women have to walk for an hour or more to collect water. The shortage of water means ill health and dehydration within the whole community – often leading to the prevalence of Trachoma, a bacterial infection of the eye and the leading cause of painful blindness. Reservoirs are of huge benefit to alleviate damage in times of drought, says expedition spokesperson Peter Kojalo.

The climb hopes to raise funds to construct a rainwater reservoir, which will benefit a local community for decades to come. A few open places remain for interested climbers. (For more information: <http://www.elevatedestinations.com>, info@elevatedestinations.com, 617 661 0203).

Deadline Nears for Polartec Challenge Grant

Dec. 31 is the deadline to apply for the 2012 Polartec Challenge Grant which since 1991 assists low-impact teams who set an example for responsible outdoor recreation through respect for local cultures and the environment. Grant recipients are chosen for the vision, commitment and educational and cultural value of their expeditions.

Legendary Polartec Challenge Grant recipients over the past two decades include Conrad Anker, Jimmy Chin, Steve House, Marko Prezelj, Andrew McLean, Greg Hill and John Shipton. Recent recipients include Kate Harris and Melissa Yule, who are exploring environmental conservation while cycling from Europe to Asia, and Jon Turk and Erik Boomer, who recently completed the first circumnavigation of Ellesmere Island. (To apply: www.polartec.com/polartec-challenge).

EXPEDITION MARKETING

Explorers Demonstrate Durability of Brother P-touch Labels

When Brother came to *EN* for help locating explorers to test its new labeler in extreme conditions (see *EN*, June 2011), we had a suspicion that more than a few explorers would respond with interest. In fact, we referred over 18 projects, from which Brother selected at least four. The company is now promoting its label durability message with the help of British explorer Jeremy Curl, solar educator Stephen Ramsden, shark researcher Greg Skomal, polar explorer Richard Weber, and others. See the P-touch “Extreme Offices” story at www.ptouchtough.com.

WEB WATCH

Warning: Geezers Ahead

Andrew Burmon of *The Huffington Post* writes an amusing plea to his parents to take it easy out there. "The travel industry is increasingly oriented toward older people who want to get off the beaten path. The problem is that no one is on the path anymore and the wilderness around it is full of people with bad knees. It turns out the no limits approach to travel is not actually feasible. We all bring our limits with us and, yes, aging people have more limitations than whippersnappers," he posts on Nov. 4.

"Here is my plea to my parents and to the generation of aging travelers who opened up the world to people my age: Please be careful.

"I'm not telling anyone to sit out their retirement. I'm just saying: maybe go boogie boarding instead of surfing; maybe go bouldering instead of rock climbing; maybe take it easy with the heli-skiing.

"As boomers begin to enjoy their retirement, there will be a glut of global travelers. It would be a pity and a lost opportunity if these travelers were too busy getting bandaged after cliff diving to enjoy some whitewater rafting. Wrinkles make you look wise. Stitches don't," Burmon writes.

See the entire posting here: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/andrew-burmon/an-open-letter-to-older-adventurers_b_1074677.html?view=print&comm_ref=false

ON THE HORIZON

Ken Burns Keynotes Explorers Club Annual Dinner, Mar. 17, 2012

The 108th annual gathering of the world's foremost explorers and adventurers, The Explorers Club Annual Dinner (ECAD), is scheduled for Saturday, Mar. 17, 2012, at New York's Waldorf=Astoria Hotel. This year's dinner, which is expected to attract 1,000 explorers and guests, is themed "How Far Is Far: Remote Exploration" and will focus on the use of technology to understand the world in which we live.

"Recent scientific and technological capabilities have upped the stakes on what we consider remote in exploration today," said Lorie Karnath, president of The Explorers Club.

Keynote speaker is Ken Burns (*The Civil War*, *Lewis & Clark*, *The National Parks*), who has been named one of the most influential documentary filmmakers of all time by *Realscreen* magazine. He will be joined at the dais by master of ceremonies Robin Esrock, creator, writer and co-host of *Word Travels*, a 40-part adventure series seen in over 100 countries and 18 languages.

Tickets are available for members, guests and friends of the Club. For more information, call 212 628 8383 or log onto: www.explorers.org

EN HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

Again this year our team of shopping experts scoured the world looking for holiday gifts to recommend this season. Well, maybe not. But there are a few drool-worthy items we're jonesing for this year and they're not what you might think. Here are a few adventurous gifts that appeal to our twisted, somewhat irreverent view of the exploration field.

“Oh, the Humanity”

Deepsea submersibles are so 1990s. There are personal shoppers, personal digital assistants, and now the personal blimp. Skyacht Aircraft's personal aircraft is filled with hot air rather than helium, or god-forbid hydrogen. Hot air allows it to easily deflate between flights. The *Alberto* is 102 feet long and 70 feet in diameter. Price is in the low six figures. (www.personalblimp.com)

Hang up on Ralph

When crossing the Drake, is your friend or loved one tired of calling Ralph on the porcelain phone? Charles Darwin was famously stricken by seasickness during his voyage, but your gift recipient needn't suffer the same fate with QueaseEase, an aromatic inhaler containing natural oils said to reduce motion sickness. When inhaled through the nose, molecules in the essential oil vapor travel to the olfactory bulb. Chemical messengers are then formed, which communicate with the limbic system of the brain and signal the central nervous system to take it easy. Really? Better play it safe and send it gift wrapped inside a plastic bucket. (www.soothing-scents.com)

Become a Card-Carrying Explorer

If your friend or loved one doesn't have the chops to join the RGS or American Alpine Club, no matter. Get them an official MileagePlus Explorer Business Card from United Airlines. Perfect for wannabes and armchair explorers, especially any of them 1 percenters we've been hearing so much about – the Explorer card comes with 10,000 bonus miles after the recipient spends \$25,000 within a calendar year. (www.explorerbusinesscard.com)

Sittin' Pretty

That explorer in your life is undoubtedly a hearty soul. He or she treks through jungles defying dengue fever, consume untold billions of pathogens eating fish tacos at roadside stands, and even face the insidious candiru which can enter a man's, er, manhood. For the holidays this year, PlaneSheets is ample ammunition for germ warfare we fight in flight (especially where we sit, back with the chickens and goats). These cotton sheets solve the cootie problem by completely encasing an airline seat. Just slide it over the headrest, tuck and sit. Friend or loved one may look like they suffer from OCD, but they'll be napping better than anyone else. (www.planesheets.com)

Belay Glasses

We first caught glimpse of these specs in *Climbing* magazine and knew we had to have them. Triangular prisms in these German-made specs bend sight lines 90 degrees to the vertical so the climber in your life can belay without craning their neck. They also make it easier to hit the call button when sitting on a set of PlaneSheets. (www.powernplay.com)

EXPEDITION CLASSIFIEDS

Ballard's War – A WW-II spy thriller with all the intellectual pyrotechnics (plus an aching love story) for which author Tom Holzel (*The Mystery of Mallory & Irvine, The Air Rifle Hunter's Guide*) is well known. A mysterious American approaches the Abwehr – the German Secret Service – bearing gifts: advance intelligence that helps turn the tide of war. But there's a catch. And Oskar Faulheim (the Darth Vader of the Gestapo) wants to know how he does it. With Ballard protected by the Abwehr, Faulheim sets his sights on his new girlfriend – the Italian widow Sabina Pergolesi. E-book or paperback from Amazon.com.

Women Needed for Peaks Foundation Trek – Peaks Foundation has launched 10 new climbs for 2012 and are looking for women who want to travel to unique regions, bag a peak and create positive change for women and girls in mountain communities across the globe. Trek the Peruvian Andes, the high Himalayas or even the mountains of Morocco. For more information on how to join a climb, visit www.peaksfoundation.org or contact info@peaksfoundation.org.

DreamQuest Productions - An award-winning full service film production company with over 20 years of experience in adventure & expedition film production. Contact us to see how we can help your expedition! Tel. 661 492 3188, www.dreamquest.tv, info@dreamquest.tv

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).

EXPEDITION NEWS is published by Blumenfeld and Associates, Inc., 28 Center Street, Darien, CT 06820 USA. Tel. 203 655 1600, fax 203 655 1622, editor@expeditionnews.com. Editor/publisher: Jeff Blumenfeld. Assistant editor: Jamie Gribbon. ©2011 Blumenfeld and Associates, Inc. All rights reserved. ISSN: 1526-8977. Subscriptions: US\$36/yr. available by e-mail only. Credit card payments accepted through www.paypal.com. Read EXPEDITION NEWS at www.expeditionnews.com. Enjoy the *EN* blog at www.expeditionnews.blogspot.com.