

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.

NEW LAND 2013 EXPEDITION WILL DOCUMENT ELLESMERE ISLAND

In March 2013, American John Huston and Norwegian Toby Thorleifsson will take part in the New Land 2013 Ellesmere Island Expedition, a 72-day journey across 630 miles of one of the last untouched wildernesses on Earth, the Canadian Arctic. With sled dogs and on skis, the four-man party will retrace historic expedition routes of Norwegian Otto Sverdrup (1854-1930), who led a team of 17 men between 1898 and 1902 in discovering and mapping more than 150,000 square kilometers of Ellesmere Island, the northernmost landmass of North America. Few people have ventured there since, according to a presentation at the Norwalk (Conn.) Maritime Aquarium on Nov. 29.

“It’s a land that some people call ‘Arctic Eden,’” Huston said. “It’s largely untouched.”

Fewer than 150 people live on the island, which is the size of Great Britain. But animal life includes Arctic wolves and foxes, musk oxen, caribou, lemmings and polar bears.

Goals of the 2013 expedition are to film a documentary about Ellesmere Island and celebrate Sverdrup’s accomplishments.

“It’s one of the least-known of the Norwegian expeditions of that time period, but it was one of the most successful,” Huston said.

Huston, 36, from Evanston, Ill., is a polar explorer, cross-country ski racer and photographer whose major expeditions have taken him to Greenland and both of the earth’s poles. From 2000 to 2006 he estimates he’s slept outdoors for 200 days a year. He’s passionate about relatively unknown historic winter expeditions. “These are lesser-known because they were successful.”

Huston explains, “The humble explorers are the ones who live, the ones who are successful. We call it being ‘smart tough.’”

Huston continues, “I am a huge fan of the early polar explorers and the lessons they can teach us. They were the astronauts of their time.”

In 2005, Huston was the only American to join a Norwegian team’s restaging of Roald Amundsen’s 1911 expedition to the South Pole for *The History Channel* using only 1911-period clothing, equipment and food. “I like to dive into the pages of my favorite history books by exploring in 100-year-old gear – no Gore-Tex, no plastics.”

A training video shown during the aquarium presentation was rather amusing – team members were shown dragging five truck tires at a time through a Chicago park.

“We kept hearing the same sarcastic remarks,” Huston said.

“Hey, dude! Where’s your car?”

“Is your wife punishing you?”

Huston’s recent book co-authored with Tyler Fish, *Forward* (Octane Press, 2011), recounts a two-month adventure in 2009 where he and adventurer Tyler Fish became the first Americans to walk to the North Pole without help from support crews. They hauled 300-pound sleds holding everything they needed.

His New Land Expedition partner, Tobias Thorleifsson, 33, from Oslo, is a polar explorer, historian, photographer, and consultant to the Norwegian Ministry of the Environment. After completing his naval service in the Norwegian Arctic, he joined several major Arctic expeditions, including a sailing voyage to Franz Josef Land in the Russian Arctic and a 65-day dogsled expedition on Ellesmere Island.

On the coming trip he’s keen to employ kite skis. “Won’t that subject the team to the potential of catastrophic injury?” *EN* asked.

Thorleifsson replies, “During the coming expedition we’ll be on flat terrain, not over the frozen ocean. Besides we will be supported in case of emergency.”

Additional sponsorship funding is being sought. (For more information: www.forwardendeavors.com)

Scheduled to speak next at the aquarium is oceanographer, aquanaut and author Dr. Sylvia Earle on Jan. 24 (www.maritimeaquarium.org).

EXPEDITION NOTES

Taking Lung Transplant Physiology, Prosthetics, and PTSD Research to Kilimanjaro

In January 2013, lung transplant physiology research goes to the top of Africa for the first time as a group of U.S. combat wounded veterans take on the summit of Tanzania’s Mount Kilimanjaro. The 14-man team, including amputees, will partner with Alaska Mountaineering School and St. Petersburg College to demonstrate to other combat

wounded veterans facing seemingly insurmountable challenges and obstacles, that anything can be overcome.

The wounded vets will collect valuable information and medical data to contribute to the science of human performance, rehabilitation and recreation under extreme conditions. The unique information gathered is being prepared for dissemination to relevant groups including cardiopulmonary and rehabilitation professionals who will find it useful to advance the state of science and inform the rehabilitative care of others with similar needs, according to an announcement from the group.

Among the climbers will be U.S. Navy SEAL Platoon Commander LT Justin Legg who, in July 2010, underwent a double lung transplant for complications related to treatment of leukemia. He has been rehabilitating to take on new challenges as he prepares for the rarified air of Kilimanjaro. Dr. David Zaas, Chief Medical Officer for the Private Diagnostic Clinic at Duke University, will conduct medical research involving pulmonary vascular response to high altitudes encountered by LT Legg. Additional sponsorship is being sought.

(For more information: www.combatwounded.org, 727 942 8415).

Life Discovered in Bitter Antarctic Brine

Where there's water there's life – even in brine beneath 60 feet of Antarctic ice, in permanent darkness and subzero temperatures.

While Lake Vida, located in the northernmost of the McMurdo Dry Valleys of East Antarctica, will never be a vacation destination, it is home to some newly discovered hearty microbes. In the current issue of the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*, Nathaniel Ostrom, Michigan State University zoologist, has co-authored "Microbial Life at -13° C in the Brine of an Ice-Sealed Antarctic Lake."

Ostrom was part of a team that discovered an ancient thriving colony, which is estimated to have been isolated for more than 2,800 years. They live in a brine of more than 20 percent salinity that has high concentrations of ammonia, nitrogen, sulfur and supersaturated nitrous oxide -- the highest ever measured in a natural aquatic environment.

"It's an extreme environment – the thickest lake ice on the planet, and the coldest, most stable cryo-environment on Earth," Ostrom said. "The discovery of this ecosystem gives us insight into other isolated, frozen environments on Earth, but it also gives us a potential model for life on other icy planets that harbor saline deposits and subsurface oceans, such as Jupiter's moon Europa."

The research team comprised scientists from the Desert Research Institute, the University of Illinois-Chicago, NASA, the University of Colorado, the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Montana State University, the University of Georgia, the University of Tasmania and Indiana University.

Gold Rush Steamboats Catalogued

John Pollack, a research associate with the Institute of Nautical Archaeology at Texas A&M University, has posted a comprehensive update for the Yukon River Steamboat Survey. Pollack and his colleague, Dr. Robyn Woodward of Vancouver, have been working in the north since 2005, and in that time they have catalogued the remains of 24 historic stern wheel steamboats dating back to the Klondike Gold Rush. A well-illustrated website with the chronology of their work, findings and publications is located at:

http://inadiscover.com/projects/all/north_america/yukon_gold_rush_steamboat_survey_canada/introduction/

Pollack's next project is now located at Halong Bay and Bach Dang, Vietnam. He is the sidescanning and mapping leader for a multinational team. Participants will include archaeologists from Vietnam, Australia, Japan and Canada. One of the team's goals is to locate remains of a Mongol invasion fleet destroyed by Vietnamese forces on the Bach Dang River in 1288 AD.

AAC Speaker Warns of Toxic Chemicals

The 33rd annual dinner of the New York section of the American Alpine Club on Nov. 10 almost didn't happen this year, coming so soon on the heels of superstorm Sandy. But New York chairman Philip Erard reasoned that if any group could weather a storm like Sandy, it would be a group of risk-taking climbers. Keynote speaker was American mountaineer and environmental health scientist Arlene Blum, Berkeley, Calif., who explained that when she started climbing in the early 1970s, women were not considered strong enough or mentally stable enough to climb.

Her group of so-called "Denali Damsels" was the first all-women team to summit Denali (1970). Perhaps her greatest achievement was the successful American Women's Expedition to Annapurna in 1978. Until then, only eight climbers had summited that most dangerous of Himalayan peaks, none American. She showed her resourcefulness in helping to finance this expedition, in the face of heavy male skepticism, through the sale of cheeky t-shirts reading, "A Woman's Place is on Top."

Later in her career, as a biophysical chemist, she launched a crusade against the use of Tris fire retardant in infant pajamas. In the 1970s, the CPSC banned brominated Tris and removed chlorinated Tris from use on children's pajamas after they were found to mutate DNA and were identified as probable human carcinogens.

Blum, the subject of a *New York Times Magazine* profile (Sept. 9), warns, "most chemicals are not effectively regulated in the U.S. and we are not protected against toxic chemicals." She explained that while Tris is now banned from sleepwear, furniture still contains one to two pounds of the chemical, which is known to migrate to household dust. (For more information: www.greensciencepolicy.org, www.arleneblum.com)

Sea Stories Reveal Deep Mysteries

On Nov. 10, The Explorers Club hosted a full-day slate of presentations focused on the sea, with representatives from the Nautilus Exploration Program, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, the Women Divers Hall of Fame, and elsewhere.

- Explorers Club member and attorney David Concannon, an advisor to eight *Titanic* expeditions and participant on three, explained that visiting the 12,500-ft. deep wreck site in a submersible is something relatively few people have experienced. He reports only 130 people have made dives to the fabled ship versus 534 who have flown in space, and over 5,000 who have visited Everest's summit.

“In 1912, the *Titanic* was the largest manmade moveable object in the world. It took 14,000 people four years to build and one man (the captain) just five hours to sink it.”

He continues, “Today, the *Titanic* is a magnet for exploration, dollars and technological development.” Concannon said over 30 new species of new marine life have been found in the vicinity of the wreck. Bacteria is eating away over a half-ton of steel every day. “It’s melting like a candle from the top down.”

Traveling to the site involves a 12-15 hour dive in a submersible the size of an SUV with no heat and no bathroom. “It’s 32 degrees inside, you’re dehydrated, you haven’t gone to the bathroom in 12 hours, and there’s nothing to drink or eat.”

There is a one liter pee bottle available just in case, but the first one to use it loses a \$50 bet, he told the group.

- Underwater photographer Stephen Frink, publisher of *Alert Diver*, bemoaned the fact that the oceans are changing due to acidification and overfishing. “The water I jumped into 30 years ago is not what new photographers are seeing today.”

He also warned that the population of invasive lionfish is exploding on the eastern seaboard. “We can’t eat our way out of this problem. You don’t get much meat off them. The only chance the ocean has is to figure out how to kill them in the embryonic stage.”

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“In wilderness is the preservation of the world.”

– Henry David Thoreau, American writer (1817-1862)

CLIMBING FOR DOLLARS

Light My Fire Competition

Light My Fire, Swedish maker of outdoor accessories, is seeking seven different adventurers in 2013 with one finalist to be named “The Light My Fire Adventurer of the Year.”

Seven finalists will be chosen to blog about their outdoor adventure on the Light My Fire Adventure blog and will receive a gift package of Light My Fire products. One winner will be awarded the title, “The Light My Fire Adventurer of the Year” and win approximately \$3,890. The adventure does not have to be extreme in nature to be selected as a finalist, but must take place outdoors in 2013.

The prize money will be a scholarship for the winner to plan their next great adventure for 2014. Deadline is Dec. 31, 2012.

(For more information: http://www.lightmyfire.com/sponsorship-2013.aspx#how_to_apply)

MEDIA MATTERS

Trees Offer a Natural High

Tree climbing is no longer kids’ stuff according to William L. Hamilton’s story in the *Wall Street Journal* (Nov. 5-6, 2012). Recreational tree climbing is now largely “technical tree climbing,” or climbing with ropes. “Free climbing” – what you did as a kid – is discouraged as a sport, because of the danger it represents to the tree. “A good climbing tree has fairly simple access and lots of relatively evenly spaced branches,” says Zev Reuter of the New York Botanical Garden in the Bronx (www.nybg.org). Tree Climbers International is an Atlanta-based organization that offers a variety of classes for beginners and advanced climbers (www.treeclimbing.org).

On The Rocks

Several rocks taken from humankind’s first lunar landing have been unearthed once again, with the moon rocks this time turning up on the dark side of a Minnesota storage area.

The Minneapolis *Star Tribune* (Nov. 26) reports that the pebble-sized samples collected by the Apollo 11 voyage in 1969 somehow ended up in a government storage area in St. Paul.

"The Apollo 11 moon rocks were found amongst military artifacts in a storage area at the Veterans Service Building in St. Paul," Army Maj. Blane Iffert, the former state historian for the Minnesota National Guard, told the newspaper. "When I searched the Internet to find additional information about the moon rocks, I knew we had to find a better means to display this artifact."

Each state was given a sample of the moon rocks after Apollo 11’s successful voyage.

Even if Iffert had wanted to sell the rocks, rather than donate them, he wouldn’t have had much of a choice. Moon rocks are considered a national treasure and selling them is illegal.

Reportedly, 180 of the 270 Goodwill Moon Rock samples former President Nixon gave to the 50 states after the Apollo 11 and 17 missions are currently unaccounted for.

Read the complete story here:

<http://www.startribune.com/local/stpaul/180864731.html?refer=y>

Carl Sagan's Plea

Carl Sagan's impassionate 1981 plea to the The Explorers Club to (finally) admit women was praised in Emily Lakdawalla's blog for The Planetary Society (Nov. 13). Sagan writes in part, "If membership is restricted to men, the loss will be ours."

Sagan wrote in 1981, "women had played a significant but unheralded role in the history of exploration.... There are several women astronauts. The earliest footprints – 3.6 million years old – made by a member of the human family, have been found in a volcanic ash flow in Tanzania by Mary Leakey. Trailblazing studies of the behavior of primates in the wild have been performed by dozens of young women, each spending years with a different primate species. Jane Goodall's studies of the chimpanzee are the best known of the investigations which illuminate human origins."

Sagan continues, "The undersea depth record is held by Sylvia Earle. The solar wind was first measured in situ by Marcia Neugebauer, using the Mariner 2 spacecraft. The first active volcanoes beyond the Earth were discovered on the Jovian moon Io by Linda Morabito, using the Voyager 1 spacecraft. These examples of modern exploration and discovery could be multiplied a hundredfold."

Later that year, The Explorers Club started admitting women. Today, women make up approximately 22 percent of its 2,900-person international membership.

(Read it here: <http://www.planetary.org/blogs/emily-lakdawalla/2012/11122301-sagan-explorers-club-letter.html>)

WEB WATCH

You Want to Go Where on a Balsa Wood Raft?

The 2012 trailer from the true story about legendary explorer Thor Heyerdahl and his epic crossing of the Pacific in 1947 is fascinating, making us want to see the actual movie. Starring Paal Sverre Hagen and directed by Joachim Roenning and Espen Sandberg, it highlights the skepticism Heyerdahl first encountered when he proposed to sail from Peru to Polynesia on a balsa wood raft, "further than from Chicago to Moscow, 5,000 miles." The \$16 million film, which premiered in August, is the most expensive ever made in Norway.

See the trailer here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e4DZ7svBw7I>

EN HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

We can imagine Christmas morning last year. There you were sitting in flannel pajamas with your nuclear family around the tree, feigning excitement for soap on a rope, a preppy tie decorated with spouting whales, or a food basket full of figs and artichokes. Make this holiday season different. Drop a few gift-giving hints about receiving these outdoor products for explorers that are worth jonesing for.

Torment Your Teen with Paul Bunyan Approved Headwear

The legendary and extremely hirsute lumberjack knew a thing or two about staying warm in cold weather, especially with that bird's nest on his chin. BeardHead.com offers knit beard caps that combine the comfort and warmth of a traditional knit cap with the styling of having a simulated beard and moustache on your face. Yeah, it looks ridiculous, but it's warm. Be sure to wear it around your teenager, especially when his or her friends are around. (\$24.99, beardhead.com)

Da Brim is Da Bomb for Brain Buckets

The sun at high altitudes is a formidable foe. We get that. But it still takes an especially secure outdoor enthusiast to wear this flexible fabric brim that fits around outdoor sports helmets. The interchangeable hubcap-sized fabric "donut" pulls down over your brain bucket while still allowing air to flow through the vents. It looks weird, but not so weird as your sorry melanomic face without a nose. (\$36.95 to \$39.95, dabrim.com)

Shower Yourself With This Gift

As we all know, explorers have a certain scent about them, especially after being away so long that their chest hairs grow through their long underwear tops (it's been known to happen). The late Col. Norman D. Vaughan used to brag about how many days he and his teammates, including Admiral Richard E. Byrd, wore their long johns in Antarctica in 1928-30. They wore the same underwear for 10 days, switched to new pairs, wore those for 20 days, then went back to the old pairs. "Boy, they felt good," Vaughan told us shortly before he died in 2005.

Too bad they didn't have the Klenz XXL Shower in a Towel. Use it to remove dirt, perspiration, odors, suntan oil, insect repellent, even sled dog slobber. Each 2-ft. by 4-ft. pre-moistened disposable towel is 20 times larger than baby wipes, but whoever gives this to you may be crying about the cost – about 5.49 each. (klenztowel.com).

O's to Go

Truth be told, we get splitting headaches in Denver, the Mile High City. That's why we like to travel with a personal can of oxygen-enriched air. But we're wimps; we're sure you'll appreciate a gift of TruO2 Personal Oxygen the morning after a wild night celebrating at Everest base camp. A starter size containing 95% O2 by volume, provides 50 inhalations of oxygen per can. (29.85, www.truo2.com)

Humdinger

Explorers are nothing if not nature lovers. Now for the holidays, convince someone to gift you the Wearable Hummingbird Feeder. This nifty item, proudly Made in USA, uses

a full-face face shield with a miniaturized hummingbird feeding tube built into it on the inside. Hummingbirds feed right in front of your eyes, right between your eyes, about an inch above your nose. Online videos at www.heatstick.com actually prove it works. Yet another way to embarrass your teenager.

ON THE HORIZON

Moonwalker Charles Duke Interview at The Explorers Club, Jan. 11, 2012

General Charles Duke, one of only 12 humans to have walked on the moon, will be interviewed at The Explorers Club on Jan. 11, 2013. Duke became the youngest man to step onto the lunar surface on April 20, 1972, as part of Apollo 16. The live interview session, led by Jim Clash, is part of the Club's new Exploring Legends series. The interview begins at 7 p.m. and is open to Club members and guests. Location: 46 E. 70th Street, New York. (For more information: 212 628 8383, www.explorers.org)

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Drone On

We ran an incorrect web link for last month's story about the peaceful use of drones by Dedicam at the Trango Towers in Pakistan. You can see the correct link here:

http://www.mammut.ch/basecamp/en/basecamp-news/dedicam_trangotower?iframe=1

EXPEDITION CLASSIFIEDS

Yosemite Housing – Stay at Hans Florine's home in Yosemite:

<http://www.hansbasecamp.com>. Mention you saw the listing in the *Expedition News* and receive 10% off.

New York-area Housesitter Available – New Yorker Maura Kinney is looking for an explorer's apartment or home to house sit or sublet while the owner is away on an expedition. She's available in New York and southern Connecticut. A travel marketing expert working in Manhattan, Kinney is also an avid equestrian. Reach her at maurakinney@hotmail.com, 917 488 4755.

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).

Ripped From the Pages of EN – Read the book that was spawned by *Expedition News*. Autographed copies of *You Want to Go Where? – How to Get Someone to Pay for the Trip of Your Dreams* (Skyhorse Publishing) – are available to readers for the discounted price of \$14.99 plus \$2.89 s & h (international orders add \$9.95 s & h). If you have a

project that is bigger than yourself – a trip with a purpose – learn how it’s possible to generate cash or in-kind (gear) support. Written by *EN* editor Jeff Blumenfeld, it is based upon three decades helping sponsors select the right exploration projects to support.

Payable by PayPal to blumassoc@aol.com, or by check to *Expedition News*, 1281 East Main Street – Box 10, Stamford, CT 06902

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