

# EXPEDITION NEWS



**February 2008 - Volume Fifteen, Number Two**

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

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## THE SEARCH FOR ULTIMA THULE

For centuries man has searched for Ultima Thule - the northernmost point of land in the world. In 325 B.C., the Greek explorer Pytheas thought an island he had discovered near 62 degrees N. latitude off northern Britain was Ultima Thule. In 1900, Robert Peary thought he had reached Ultima Thule as he built his cairn on Cape Morris Jesup above 83 degrees N. at the northernmost tip of Greenland. In 1978, a Danish survey team discovered Oodaaq Island (the northernmost point of land marked on today's maps) along a shallow water shelf to the northeast of Cape Morris Jesup.

Then in 1996 and 2001, American Top of the World Expeditions caught the attention of the world with their discovery of new uncharted islands to the north of Oodaaq Island. Denver resident Kenneth L. Zerst, 51, who co-led these recent expeditions, is returning to the region July 24 - Aug. 4 with co-leaders Frank Langsberger, 64, from New York, and Ole Jorgen Hammemken, 51, from Uummannaq, Greenland, who have also lead significant geographic expeditions to the region.

With the recent island discoveries, along with the possibility of more discoveries to be made on the outer rim of the shelf, the team hopes to redefine this prized and historic geographic landpoint as it will appear on tomorrow's maps.

The nine-person team will use a Twin Otter to fly into a landing site at the northernmost tip of mainland Greenland. From there they will set up a tent camp and use a chartered helicopter to carry out a northernmost island survey.

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## EXPEDITION UPDATE

### Project Mercury

With cold weather well upon us, thoughts naturally turn to ... thermometers. It was ten years ago that we paid a visit to Richard T. Porter, the Thermometer Man of Cape Cod and curator of the world's only Thermometer Museum. We checked back in with him this month and are pleased to know Porter, 80, is still at it, only more so. His collection, recognized by the Guinness Book of World Records, has grown to 5,135 thermometers and were packed into his Onset, Mass., basement museum five deep. That was until all but 500 were donated to Penn State University. His favorites - among them a French wood cut thermometer from 1840, and a NASA back-up thermometer for the Apollo IX moon flight that never went on the trip - are part of his lecture tour on thermometer history to area schools, civic groups and nursing homes.

From cheesy key rings and zipper-pull thermometers, to a \$2,000 Taylor brass thermometer made in 1887, Porter is hot to collect them all. (For more information: Richard T. Porter, [thermometerman@aol.com](mailto:thermometerman@aol.com), 508 295 5504, [www.members.aol.com/thermometerman](http://www.members.aol.com/thermometerman)). ▲

## EXPEDITION NOTES

**A**AC Climbers Complete Noteworthy Patagonia Climbs - American Alpine Club grant recipients have scored two of the biggest successes in memory in Patagonia. Mountaineering Fellowship recipient Colin Haley, 23, of Washington, completed the coveted Torre Traverse - an alpine-style link-up of Cerro Standhardt, Punta

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## ULTIMA THULE *from page 1*

In addition to searching for Ultima Thule, the expedition also plans to climb the northernmost mountain in the world, as yet unnamed, which at 3,200 feet lies just inland from the coast and is considered a moderate day hike. Team co-leader Ole Jorgen Hammenken was a member of the first team to climb this mountain in 1998.

As an added bonus on Aug. 1, they expect to view a rare full solar eclipse that will track right over their base camp.

An additional four team members are being sought for the expedition. (For more information, meet the team at The Explorers Club in New York during a seminar on Feb. 29, or contact the organizing committee via Kenneth L. Zerbst, 303 506 5272, [topofworld@earthlink.net](mailto:topofworld@earthlink.net)). ▲▲

## EXPEDITION NOTES *from page 1*

Herron, Torre Egger, and Cerro Standhardt in Argentina – with Argentine Rolando Garibotti, 36. The two men climbed for four days in less than ideal conditions to make the traverse, which has been a goal of climbers in Patagonia for nearly two decades. Haley had made two previous trips to Patagonia, one of which was also funded by a Mountain Fellowship.

In Chilean Patagonia, meanwhile, Californian Dave Turner, 26, is reported to have finished a 34-day solo first ascent on the 4,000-foot east face of Cerro Escudo. Turner continued

to the summit of the peak, thus making the first complete ascent of the east face. Turner won an AAC Lyman Spitzer Cutting-Edge Award to support his climb in the Paine region of Patagonia. He also is a past recipient of an AAC Mountain Fellowship.

AAC Mountain Fellowships support climbers ages 25 and younger in adventures they might not otherwise be able to pursue. Spitzer Cutting-Edge Awards support attempts at groundbreaking alpine and big-wall climbs by some of America's best climbers. The application deadline for many AAC grant programs, including the Spitzer awards, is March 1. (For more information: [www.americanalpineclub.org](http://www.americanalpineclub.org)).

**Mugs Stump Award Winners Announced** – The recipients of the 2008 Mugs Stump Award were announced at the Ouray (Colo.) Ice Festival in mid-January. The awards, sponsored by Black Diamond Equipment, *Climbing Magazine*, Mountain Gear, Patagonia, PrimaLoft, and W.L. Gore, were created in 1992 in memory of Mugs Stump, one of North America's most visionary climbers. The award annually grants \$30,000 to small teams pursuing climbing objectives that exemplify light, fast, and clean alpinism. This year, seven teams of climbers received awards ranging from \$1,000 to \$9,000:

- Ryan Johnson, Mendenhall Towers, Alaska; with Sam Magro, Kyler Pallister, Erik Pallister, and Mike Thompson. The climbers seek 800- to 1,000-meter ice and mixed lines on the north walls of these seldom-visited peaks, in the Coastal Range of southeast Alaska.
- Craig McGee and Brad White. The 3,000-meter unclimbed Southeast Rib of Mount Logan, Canada's highest peak.
- Eric Decaria and Zack Smith. Bid for a complete alpine-style first ascent of the Central Spur of Kedar Dome, India, then up an unclimbed snow ridge to the summit (6,831 meters), for 6,000 to 7,000 feet of rock, mixed, and snow climbing.
- Jonny Copp and Micah Dash. First ascent of the 5,800-meter Tibetan rock peak Dojitsenga via the continuously steep East Ridge (1,500 meters). The mountain lies between Rawu and Lhagu in the Kangri Garpo range of southeastern Tibet.
- Kevin Mahoney and Ben Gilmore and Freddie Wilkinson. Direct route on the North Face of Kantega, a 6,799-meter peak in the Khumbu Valley, Nepal.

## *Quote of the Month*

*“Comes over one an absolute necessity to move. And what is more, to move in some particular direction. A double necessity then: to get on the move, and to know whither.”*

– D.H. Lawrence, *Sea and Sardinia*.

## EXPEDITION NOTES *from page 2*

- Vince Anderson, Steve House, and Marko Prezelj. The climbers propose an alpine-style bid on the West Face of Makalu, the world's fifth-highest peak, an objective unclimbed in its entirety and described by Reinhold Messner as one of the greatest high-mountain walls in the world.
- Dave Turner, South Tower of Paine, Chilean Patagonia, solo. The virgin south face of the South Tower of Paine: an 800-meter Grade VI+ alpine wall capped by 350 meters of steep, difficult mixed climbing.

(For more information: [www.mugsstumpaward.com](http://www.mugsstumpaward.com)). ▲▲

## BUZZ WORDS

**R**ivering – A hybrid sport that involves skis or snowshoes, ropes, climbing equipment, and some canyoneering. The goal is to weasel your way upstream on frozen rivers, preferably through narrow canyons and up and over icefalls, where climbs up to 100 feet high might guard the upper reaches of a particular river in Ontario, Minnesota, or other places in the Lake Superior basin. (Source: [www.thegearjunkie.com](http://www.thegearjunkie.com)). ▲▲

## EXPEDITION MAILBAG

### AdventureStats.com Explains Their Rules

*(The following is in response to EN's December "Department of Corrections" feature on conflicting claims regarding the first American to ski to the South Pole).*

"I would like to say that I have a great respect for both Jim Williams and Doug Stoup's polar/mountaineering history. Both Jim and Doug have been part of pioneering polar travel.

"The 'rules' we set up at Adventurestats.com first has the purpose of getting rid of b.s. claims of those who might ski the last degree to either pole for one week and then claim to international media that they 'skied to the Pole,' 'forgetting' about the explorer that skied all the way, often for months. I think that this is already starting to change.

"The second reason was that in the beginning of the new millennium no proper statistics were kept of our polar history. In Nepal, Liz Hawley was keeping track of mountaineering history since the last 100 years, but polar statistics were in danger of getting lost. We actually have the same problem in Pakistan at the moment.

"Adventurestats.com Polar statistics are keeping the records so historic achievement won't be forgotten and we explorers also can get hints of what is still left undone.

"The categories of the statistics have to be as simple as possible, but of course there are also 'grades' within the stats that only a more elaborate description will show."

Tom Sjogren  
Adventurestats.com  
ExplorersWeb.com

### Bicycling on Snow Has Been Around

"Bicycling on snow has been around since the gold rush in Alaska and became a serious wintertime racing and exploration phenomenon by the late 1980s. I competed in four ultra mountain bike races in Alaska (and three on snowshoe), the last one featured on *National Geographic Adventure TV*, as you can see here: <http://www.adventurecorps.com/when/identsport/index.html>

"There's a whole slew of races of 100 to 1,200 miles in length held in Alaska, Yukon, Minnesota, and elsewhere each winter for mountain bikes (and skis, snowshoes, and foot, too), so I'm not sure why Andy Politz (See *EN*, January 2008) sounds like he's trying something new."

Yours in sport,

Chris Kostman  
Chief Adventure Officer  
AdventureCORPS, Inc.  
Oak Park, Calif.  
[www.adventurecorps.com](http://www.adventurecorps.com) ▲▲

## IN PASSING

### The Expedition World Mourns Loss of Sir Edmund (1919-2008)

One of the most beloved explorers in history, Sir Edmund Percival Hillary, KG, ONZ, KBE, passed away on Jan. 11 at the age of 88 at Auckland City Hospital. He had been ill for several weeks and was in the hospital being treated for pneumonia when he died of a heart attack. Writing for the Auckland *Sunday Star-Times* (Jan. 13), New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark said Sir Ed endeared himself to New Zealanders as a modest, unassuming, and unpretentious man. She said he was a "very special human being, a man of great courage and determination, an explorer and achiever, and a humanitarian."

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Hillary's life was marked by grand achievements, high adventure, discovery, excitement – and by his personal humility. Humble to the point that he only admitted being the first man atop Everest long after the death of climbing companion Tenzing Norgay. Sir Edmund is survived by his widow, Lady June, 76, and two of his children, Peter and Sarah.

News of his death quickly spread worldwide. A state funeral was held on Jan. 22 in New Zealand, where his image can be seen on \$5 New Zealand notes (which a number of sellers were offering on EBay at press time). There's talk, as well, of making his birthday, July 20, a national holiday, and naming a mountain in his honor. Here's a look at some of the tributes and accolade that poured in as the immensity of his passing began to sink in.

- **An Extreme Climb** – “For Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay, the Sherpa guide, it was an extreme climb, and not merely because theirs was an age of canvas, wool and leather. The mountain seemed to project defeat and death, and though it makes no sense to talk of ‘taming’ a peak, the fact that Hillary and Norgay reached the summit and descended, none the worse for wear, made Everest suddenly seem possible.” – *New York Times* editorial, Jan. 12.
- **Time-Honored Tribute** – The Explorers Club in New York held a time-honored Tribute Ceremony remembering Sir Ed, the Club's honorary chairman, on Jan. 22. Members stood before a roaring fire in the Great Hall, presented a toast, then tossed their glass into the flames. An empty Tribute Chair stood nearby, next to the traditional Tribute Cup filled with Hillary's favorite drink, a Scotch and ginger ale. Club president Daniel A. Bennett said, “Sir Edmund Hillary exemplified the very spirit that keeps the world exploring. The Explorers Club will honor his legacy and keep that spirit alive. ... He will never be replaced.” Proceeds for the evening went to the Hillary Himalayan Trust.
- **Greatness Was Thrust Upon Him** – “Sir Ed should be remembered for his adventures, and for what those adventures did for him – how he remained an ordinary person,” said Mike Mortimer, president of the UIAA – International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation, based in Bern, Switzerland. “Greatness was thrust upon him and he used that greatness to achieve major accomplishments for the people of Nepal.”
- **Lighting a Candle** – “I knew about Sir Edmund since I was a very young child,” said Apa Sherpa, 48, a 17-time Everest summiteer. “We were together last in 2007 at a cocktail party for the Super Sherpas project (see *EN*, February 2007). All the Sherpa felt very sad when they heard the news. Without Sir Edmund we'd have no

schools, no hospitals. Many Sherpa went to monasteries to light a candle in his honor,” he told *EN* at the Outdoor Retailer trade show last month.

- **He Was Everybody's Friend** – “Ed was a neighbor of mine and everybody's friend in Remuera, a suburb of Auckland,” said sports apparel distributor John McMath, 68, managing director of Beattie Matheson. “I'd see him fitness walking often – we'd nod to each other as he passed my home. His death was inevitable and we all knew he was failing. Local media seemed to have their coverage pre-planned, it seemed to just roll out upon his death. So it wasn't a shock, but his death is a great loss.”
- **A Stepping Stone** – “The mountain was a stepping stone for a way he could help the people of Nepal,” says New Zealand explorer Helen Thayer, 70, of Snohomish, Wash. “New Zealand without Ed is like we have a big hole in our history. I don't know if it will ever be filled. His shoes were huge, he was humble and down to earth. His feet were firmly planted on the ground and he always told it as it was,” Thayer tells *EN*.
- **LIFE Looks Back** – In 1953, Mount Everest was summited, and the names of an Auckland bee farmer, Edmund Hillary, and his Sherpa climbing partner, Tenzing Norgay, joined those of Peary, Amundsen and Lindbergh atop the hill of 20th Century adventuring giants. With the death of Hillary, all five are gone.

LIFE Books editorial director Robert Sullivan first spoke with Sir Edmund – his friends call him Ed – in the living room of Hillary's home in Auckland in 1992. Sullivan enjoyed three subsequent conversations with Hillary, the most recent in February 2003. In the interview, Sir Edmund recounts summit day in 1953, “Up above us the snow rounded off into a dome, and we realized that that must be the top. It's not a really sharp summit – the sort you hold your hands around. It's a summit that you can stand on reasonably comfortably. Six or eight people could probably all stand together. A nice summit.”

Sir Edmund continues, “When we got to the top I didn't really have a tremendous feeling of ecstasy or joy. I didn't leap around, or throw my hands in the air or something. We were tired of course, and I was very much aware of the fact that we had to get safely down the mountain again. I think my major feeling was one of satisfaction, I really did have a feeling of ‘Well, we've finally made it.’ I know I had a little feeling almost of surprise too, because there had been a lot of other very good expedition attempts at Everest and they had not been able to get to the top, and here finally Tenzing and I were there. I certainly didn't have an arrogant feeling.

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“Before we came down off the mountain, (George) Lowe met us on the South Col. He said ‘How did it go?’ And I said ‘Well, George, we knocked the bastard off.’” (Read Robert Sullivan’s complete interview at: <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1703098,00.html>) ▲

## EXPEDITION INK

### *High Crimes*

by Michael Kodas

Hyperion Books (February 2008)

Reviewed by Bob Wells

When one thinks about climbing Mt. Everest, one thinks of whiteouts of extreme cold, keen athletic stamina required in an oxygen-deprived environment, not to mention an average \$65,000 price tag for the glory of attempting a summit try. Or, you might remember Jon Krakauer’s riveting account of eight climbers who perished in 1996. But there is an even darker side to this mountain.

Korda initiated his own climb only to find a frightening combination of perils scarring paths to the top of the world. Rampant robberies of vital equipment and cash at base camps. Extortion from vulnerable visitors faced with prospects of life or death. Guides without scruples. Drugs. Violence. Prostitution in tents. Destitute Sherpas who hold their rich “clients” with disdain.

Conquering Everest for many has turned into an adventurer’s nightmare. Unwritten “ethics” for explorers to help others in need have been replaced by self-centered seekers of advantage. Greed. Tolerance for evil. More than 50 years after Sir Edmund Hillary’s amazing feat, Korda sheds new light on a fabled quest. As a member of The Explorer’s Club, all this makes me very sad. Often the truth does so. So read. And afterwards, maybe you’ll want to spend your \$65,000 scaling another peak.

### *Unknown Waters*

by Alfred S. McLaren, Captain USN (Ret.)

The University of Alabama Press (March 2008)

The unpredictability of floating sea ice, shallow waters, and possible Soviet discovery, all play a dramatic role in the voyage of the USS *Queenfish* (SSN-651) in 1970. *Unknown Waters: A Firsthand Account of the Historic Under-Ice Survey of the Siberian Continental Shelf by USS Queenfish (SSN-651)* by Alfred S. McLaren, Captain USN (Ret.), former president of The Explorers Club, and recently published by The University of Alabama Press, tells the story of the officers and men of the

nuclear attack submarine who made the first survey of an important and remote region of the Arctic Ocean. Covering 3,100 miles over a period of some 20 days at a laborious average speed of 6.5 knots or less, the attack submarine carefully threaded its way through innumerable underwater canyons of ice and over irregular seafloors.

McLaren skillfully weaves into the book an interesting description of the seas and islands north of Siberia including early explorations of this Northern Sea Route so important to Russia. ▲

## CLIMBING FOR DOLLARS

**New Fund Honors Ski Mountaineer** – A new fund has been established to honor the life and achievements of ski mountaineer Hans Saari. The Hans Saari Memorial Fund encourages the development of skills and pursuit of objectives consistent with Hans Saari’s approach to skiing and travel in the mountains. The grant supports innovative ski expeditions and progressive exploratory projects in alpine environments while also encouraging the creative documentation of the experience through film, photography, writing and other media.

In 2001, Hans Saari died in a fall while attempting to descend the Tardivel entrance to the Gervasutti Couloir near Mont Blanc. Saari had gained an international reputation as a writer and ski mountaineer. He was highly regarded for his ski expeditions, many of which yielded first descents from some of the world’s most challenging peaks.

The Fund seeks to foster an appreciation for alpine skiing, environments, and cultures by promoting ski exploration and education. Applications for Ski Exploration Grants are due March 1. (For more information: [www.hansfund.org](http://www.hansfund.org)). ▲

## WEB WATCH

**Web Site Looks for News About Field Work** – Discovery.com’s *Earth Live* is looking for scientists who’d like to tell the public about their planet Earth-related field work. Scientists can participate by sending in pictures, field blogs or be willing to get on the phone now and then for taped interviews. Homemade videos are also welcome. For more info see <http://dsc.discovery.com/guides/discovery-earth-live/discovery-earth-live.html>. “Adventurers not doing genuine science need not apply,” says Discovery Channel News’ Larry O’Hanlon. (For more information: Larry O’Hanlon, [larryo@nasw.org](mailto:larryo@nasw.org)). ▲

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## ON THE HORIZON

### Wingding

The 2008 WINGS WorldQuest Women of Discovery Awards will be held at New York's Cipriani, 23rd Street, on Mar. 5. These annual awards recognize exploration and scientific excellence by women in the fields of Earth, Sea, Air & Space, and Humanities. This year's seven honorees, whose work and pioneering discoveries in the Arctic have led to global and scientific advancement, will join over 30 previous awardees from the past five years. The winners are:

- **Courage Award: Ann Bancroft and Liv Arnesen** – Two of the world's preeminent polar explorers. They are both authors, teachers and expedition leaders whose shared mission is to inspire people, particularly girls and women, to follow their dreams.
- **Earth Award: Jill Fredston** – She has logged more than 20,000 miles exploring the rivers and coastlines in Alaska, Canada, Greenland, and Norway in a 20-foot rowing shell. She is also considered one of the world's foremost avalanche experts, author of *Snowstruck: In the Grip of Avalanches*.
- **Air & Space Award: Birgit Sattler** – An Austrian explorer whose research focuses on atmospheric studies, as well as ice in the Arctic and elsewhere, Sattler made the pioneering discovery that clouds are filled with living organisms.
- **Sea Award: Vera Kingeekuk Metcalf** – In collaboration with hunters and elders, Metcalf studies walrus population distribution, behavior, monitoring, and hunting, as well as issues related to climate change and subsistence economy.
- **Humanity Award: Irina Nikolaeva** – Russian linguist Irina Nikolaeva has spent years documenting endangered languages including syntax, morphology, typology, and information structure and the traditional knowledge they embody.
- **Field Research Award: Lene Kielsen Holm** – A native of Greenland and member of the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), Lene Holm is working with indigenous communities to study traditional knowledge about sea ice and its movement patterns.

(For more information on next month's gala wingding contact: Hadley Jensen, 212 759 1128, [Hadley@wingsworldquest.org](mailto:Hadley@wingsworldquest.org)).


### Exploring Planet Ocean

That's the theme for the 104th Explorers Club Annual Dinner, Mar. 15, at the Waldorf=Astoria Hotel in New York. Master of Ceremonies will be Miles O'Brien of CNN. Awardees are:

The Explorers Club Medal: Eugenie Clark, Ph.D., HON'85  
The Sweeney Medal: Catherine Nixon Cooke, FN'84  
The William Beebe Award: Anatoly Sagalevitch, D.Sci., FI'98  
Citation of Merit: Timothy Taylor, FN'04  
The President's Award for Heroism and Altruism: Capt. Meagan McGrath, FI'87

### Special Guest speakers will be:

David Doubilet FN'01, Ocean Explorer and Photographer  
Ellen Prager, Ph.D., FN'95, Oceanographer and Author  
Greg Marshall, Biologist, Inventor and Filmmaker  
Julia Whitty, Author and Filmmaker

(For more information: [www.explorers.org](http://www.explorers.org)) 

## EXPEDITION CLASSIFIEDS

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

**Costa Del Mar Sunglasses** – The leader in high performance polarized sunglasses is interested in sponsoring expeditions. Help us "See what's out there™." See Costa Del Mar's online video network dedicated to water sports and angling adventures ([www.costachannelc.com](http://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](mailto:ldriggs@costadelmar.com) for information. Learn more about our commitment to exploration and adventure travel at: <http://www.costadelmar.com/adventures/>

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

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

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

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