

EXPEDITION NEWS

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EXPEDITION NEWS, now in its 18th 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.

FOUR PLAN TO ROW TO ARCTIC ICE CAP

An adventurer who rowed solo and unsupported 3,500 miles across the Atlantic, raising \$150,000 for cancer research at Yale Cancer Center, has his sights set on a decidedly colder clime – the Arctic Ocean. His mission for July 2012 is rather straightforward: to assemble the best ocean rowing crew in history to row across the toughest ocean in the world for the first time ever.

The route of the 29-ft. craft *Limited Intelligence* is planned from Olafsfjordur in northeast Iceland to Longyearbyen, Svalbard, at the edge of the polar ice cap, a distance of 1,100 miles expected to take 20 to 30 days. If successful, it will reportedly be the first time the Arctic has been crossed by rowers.

The team will consist of Paul Ridley of Chicago, fellow Chicagoan adventurer racer Collin West, Seven Summiteer Neal Mueller of San Francisco, and a fourth rower to be announced soon. All four will row two hours on/two hours off throughout a 24-hour day.

According to Ridley, the team will use a hand-held and electric desalinator which will convert 400-pounds of salt water into the 24 liters of drinking water the crew will need every day. Also, the team will eat at least 5,000 calories of dehydrated food, energy bars, and trail mix each day. The boat's instruments are powered by solar panels mounted above the cabins to charge batteries connected to a VHF radio, GPS, and navigation system. The team will use an iPod for music and a laptop to track the weather, update a blog, and Tweet.

The craft will be stocked with Stugeron tablets, a seasickness medication that Ridley swears by. “I get seasick,” he admits. “But I don’t let it stop me. I even get seasick on whale watches, deep sea fishing, and cruise ships.”

When victimized by mal de mar, he’s closely studied the three stages of seasickness: (1) you think you’re going to die, (2) you want to die, and (3) you worry you won’t die soon enough.

Ridley adds, “I can chew Stugeron, mix it with rum, take it for three weeks straight if I have to. I know seasickness will pass – you just have to outlast it.”

(Editor’s note: this reminds us what Geoff Green of Students on Ice (www.studentsonice.com) once said about seasickness among his students transiting the Drake passage: “If you’re not seasick, you’re kinda getting ripped off.”)

In case of emergency, a life raft, grab bag, and survival suit are on board to use at any point. In such a situation, the Arctic Row team would activate an EPIRB (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon) to provide the boat’s coordinates to rescue coordination centers. Also on board is a computer-based, voluntary global ship reporting system called AMVER which is used worldwide by search and rescue authorities to arrange for assistance to persons in distress at sea. With AMVER, rescue coordinators can identify participating ships in the area of distress and divert the best-suited ship or ships to respond.

Ridley reports, “According to the Ocean Rowing Society (as of September, 2011), the number of ocean rowers to successfully cross an ocean is just 495. And no one has ever completed an Arctic Ocean crossing. As a comparison, over 1,500 individuals have successfully climbed Mount Everest, including our team member Neal.”

The team will collect samples of plankton for the University of Fairbanks, working closely with Adventurers and Scientists for Conservation (www.adventureandscience.org).

Sponsorship funding of \$60,000 is being sought. (For more information: Paul Ridley, 607 222 8939, paul@arcticrow.com, www.arcticrow.com/home).

ANN BANCROFT AND LIV ARNESEN PLAN GLOBAL ACCESS WATER 2012 EXPEDITION TO SOUTH POLE

Polar explorers and educators, Minnesota-native Ann Bancroft and Liv Arnesen from Norway, plan an international Access Water 2012 Expedition, part of a global awareness campaign that will reach 50 million youth to call attention to the impending fresh water crisis.

Together, they will lead a team of six women from six continents on an 800-mile, 80-day journey to the South Pole beginning in November 2012. The other team members hail from India, Russia, South Africa, New Zealand, Chile and China and will be representing

the key water challenges on their respective continent, in an effort to bring water access issues on the forefront of the global agenda.

As with the other Bancroft-Arnesen expeditions, this campaign will seek to educate young people and engage them by means of technology and a tailored educational methodology and curriculum, with a goal to reach 2 million classrooms and 50 million youth.

Within 15 years nearly two billion people will live in areas of severe water scarcity. Access Water 2012 is an effort and to promote resource efficiency and global cooperation on the problems of pollution and climate change. (For more information: www.yourexpedition.com)

EXPEDITION UPDATE

Romero Nails Numero Seven

After more than eight days in Antarctica, Jordan Romero of Big Bear Lake, Calif., summited Mt. Vinson Massif before noon eastern time on Christmas Eve, making him, at age 15, the youngest person to climb the highest point on each continent (see *EN*, November 2010). This milestone marks the end of an adventure that began more than 5 years ago when Romero reached the summit of Kilimanjaro (Africa), followed by Kosciuszko (Australia), Elbrus (Europe), Aconcagua (South America), Denali (North America), Carstensz Pyramid (Oceania), and Everest (Asia).

In addition to Jordan, the team is comprised of his father, Paul Romero, and his stepmother, Karen Lundgren. Accomplished endurance athletes, Romero and Lundgren have accompanied Jordan step-by-step along the way.

Lundgren states, “Jordan has become a role model for people of all ages. Finishing this quest is a demonstration of strength, determination, and skill beyond his years giving him an enormous spring board to the rest of his life.”

For his part, Jordan hopes to inspire healthy lifestyles among kids with a Healthy Eating Challenge. “I want to teach them about the benefits of eating healthy and including exercise. I’ve been able to push my body and my mind to the summit of all of these mountains because I put good fuel in my body.”

His sponsors are: Agility Guard, Boresha, FRS Healthy Energy, ESRI, Network Innovations, SOLE, and the City of Big Bear Lake. Clever fundraising tactic: for a \$200 donation he offered to Skype classrooms for live 20 minute Q & A’s. It includes a signed personal copy of his book, *The Boy Who Conquered Everest* (2010, Hay House), and a signed personalized poster.

One enviable “home run” for his efforts was a phone-in interview with the *NBC Today Show* from Vinson base camp. You can see the live feed here:

<http://video.today.msnbc.msn.com/today/45790078#45790078>

(For more information: www.jordanromero.com)

The Energizer Bunny of Alaskan Climbing Tries Again

Only nine expeditions, totaling 16 people, have ever reached the summit of Denali in winter. Never has a solo climber stood on top of the 20,320-foot peak in January. We can think of two good reasons for this: it's really dark and it's really cold. Nonetheless, adventurer Lonnie Dupre, 50, obviously a glutton for punishment, this month will attempt to become the first to summit Denali solo in January. With winds that regularly exceed 100 miles per hour, temperatures that drop below minus 50 degrees F., and just six hours of sunlight each day, this is a formidable month on the mountain.

Dupre, from Grand Marais, Minn., doesn't take the challenge lightly – he has 25 years of polar expedition experience including the first circumnavigation of Greenland and two North Pole endeavors.

"It's a personal challenge," he says, "and also a way to bring attention to the world's receding glaciers and climate change." During the expedition, Dupre will be conducting research and gathering microbe samples for the Biosphere 2 project run by Adventurers and Scientists for Conservation (www.adventureandscience.org). The data will provide a better understanding of how climate change will affect the production of living matter in extreme environments.

Dupre attempted Denali in January 2011, but was thwarted by bad weather only a day away from the summit. After spending six days in snow cave he was forced to descend (see *EN*, December 2010).

To light his way Dupre is using an Energizer Ultimate Lithium LED headlamp, and powering his equipment during the extreme cold with lightweight Energizer Ultimate Lithium batteries. That's what you call a perfect match between sponsor and sponsoree.

Says Dupre of his current challenge, "The trick is to know how to dress, how to eat, and how to pick out the absolute best equipment for what you're going to do. Then it's not that uncomfortable. It's like grabbing your briefcase and going to work."

The expedition coincides with the release of Dupre's first book *Life on Ice – 25 years of Arctic Exploration*. The 300-page book sells for \$22 and is available at www.lonniedupre.com and www.facebook.com/lonniedupre

EXPEDITION NOTES

Changing the World One Stove at a Time

An organization based in Taos, N.M., is dedicated to distributing free, clean-burning, highly efficient cook stoves to families living in the Trans-Himalayan Region. The new stoves are said to change lives by lowering levels of damaging indoor air pollution and reducing the hours of daily labor necessary to collect fuel. But help is on the way this winter.

Many families in the Himalayas cook with rudimentary stoves or open fire pits inside

their home, polluting the indoor air to dangerously unhealthy levels, as well as contributing to increasing rates of deforestation and carbon emissions.

The Himalayan Stove Project, which began as a test in 2009 with the placement of 48 stoves in Nepal and Bhutan, now hopes to deliver 10,000 stoves within five years, according to George Basch, self-professed “Chief Cook.” Basch founded the group, driven both by a commitment to give back to the people of the Himalayas, an area he has grown to love through his mountain expeditions, and by a desire to honor his son, Paul Basch, who also loved the mountains but died tragically at age 28.

“Anyone who has had a meal, let alone spent a night, in a home where food is cooked over a wood or yak-dung fire immediately relates to the life-changing benefits our stoves provide,” Basch posts on the group’s website.

As of June 2011, they have requests from their Himalayan associates for 4,000 stoves. The first container load (1,680 stoves) will arrive in Kathmandu in January 2012. (For donation information: <http://www.himalayanstoveproject.org/>)

Explorer Joins World’s Top Competitive Sailors to Fight Ocean Pollution

Dr. Sylvia Earle, the America’s Cup Healthy Ocean Project Global Ambassador, is interviewed in the program distributed at the America’s Cup World Series in San Diego last fall. The Healthy Ocean Project aims to develop the world’s largest communication outreach program focused on improving the health of the ocean.

According to Earle, who is leading a scientific advisory panel, “When the Norwegian explorer Thor Heyerdahl sailed the Pacific in 1947, he said the ocean was pristine. By 1970, he was amazed at how much trash there was. The ocean is vulnerable to our actions and we’re changing its very nature. We need to heed Heyerdahl’s warning.” (For more information: <http://www.americascup.com/en/Sustainability/AC-Healthy-Ocean-Project/>)

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“He who never made a mistake never made a discovery.”

– Samuel Smiles (1812 - 1904), Scottish author and reformer.

MEDIA MATTERS

***60 Minutes* Covers Half Dome Free Solo Climb**

CBS *60 Minutes* reveled in the repeat broadcast (Jan. 1) of the story of Alex Honnold who was first to free solo (no ropes/no protection) the northwest face of Half Dome in Yosemite National Park, a feat featured in the National Geographic documentary, *Alone on the Wall*. Correspondent Lara Logan said, “There’s nothing but him, the wall, and the wind.” For his part, Honnold says he’s pretty mellow on big wall climbs: “There is no

adrenaline rush otherwise something is wrong.” He credits his big hands, and 5-ft. 11-in., 160 lbs. frame for part of his rock star status within the climbing world. He admits to being slow to cash in on his success and lives on less than \$1,000 per month, often sleeping in his van. Friends call him “Alex No Big Deal.” (See the broadcast here:

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2011/10/02/60minutes/main20114487.shtml>

Nepal Cracks Down on Tibetan Refugees

A disturbing blog post in *The New Yorker* from author Jon Krakauer (Dec. 28) reveals that Nepalese police have been apprehending Tibetans far inside Nepal, robbing them, and then returning them to Tibet at gunpoint, where they are typically imprisoned and not uncommonly tortured by the Chinese. For those readers who find solace in the Himalaya, it’s upsetting that the future doesn’t look bright for Tibetan youth now coming of age in Nepal.

Krakauer reports, “An estimated 20,000 Tibetan refugees now live in Nepal, mostly in settlements established after the 1959 invasion of Lhasa by the People’s Liberation Army (that) prompted many Tibetans to flee. For the next 30 years, Nepal welcomed Tibetans, and every Tibetan in the country was issued a ‘refugee identity certificate,’ known as an ‘R.C.’ But Kathmandu stopped accepting additional Tibetan refugees in 1989, ceding to pressure from Beijing, and that pressure has been intensifying.”

Read more at: <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/newsdesk/2011/12/why-is-nepal-cracking-down-on-tibetan-refugees.html#ixzz1i3xx81ed>

Mets Pitcher Plots Kili Ascent

Mets pitcher R.A. Dickey, 37, has been running in his Nashville neighborhood with a black mask covering his eyes, nose and mouth to limit his oxygen intake. It’s all in preparation for an attempt on Kilimanjaro this month. According to the *Wall Street Journal* (Dec. 27), it’s part of a lifelong ambition and an effort to raise money for Bombay Teen Challenge, which helps victims of sex trafficking in India. Mets team management is not too pleased and has sent a letter to Dickey’s agent warning him that they reserve the right to void the remaining year on his contract if he is injured on the mountain. They can’t stop him from going, but clearly prefer that he did not, writes Brian Costa.

“I don’t think there’s really any lethal risk to doing it,” Dickey said. “It’s not like it’s Everest.” He will be guided by the African Walking Company which says 25,000 people per year attempt to climb Kilimanjaro, with about two-thirds summiting. Dickey’s sponsors include Inmarsat, Panasonic, Reebok, and The North Face.

Shackleton Leadership Skills Are Still Relevant Today

The Shackleton Expedition from 1914 to 1916 is a compelling story of leadership when disaster strikes again and again, writes Nancy F. Koehn in the *New York Times* (Dec.

25). She praises his ability to respond to constantly changing circumstances. “When his expedition encountered serious trouble, he had to reinvent the team’s goals. He had begun the voyage with a mission of exploration, but it quickly became a mission of survival,” she writes.

“This capacity is vital in our own time, when leaders must often change course midstream – jettisoning earlier standards of success and redefining their purposes and plans.”

Koehn, a historian and professor of business administration at the Harvard Business School, continues, “Shackleton kept his men’s focus on the future. The ship was gone; previous plans were irrelevant. Now his goal was to bring the team home safely, and he improvised, adapted and used every resource at hand to achieve it.”

She believes “... credible commitment to a larger purpose and flexible, imaginative methods to achieve a goal – is increasingly important in our tumultuous times.”

EXPEDITION MARKETING

150 Years/150 Peaks

Alpine, climbing and outdoor equipment maker Mammüt will celebrate its 150th anniversary in 2012 by sponsoring 150 teams on 150 peaks around-the-world by August 2012. Team members will receive company gear and will be joined by an alpine guide from the Mammüt Alpine School. Climbers can apply online to accompany one of the ascents. (For more information: <http://peakproject.mammüt.ch/en/peaks3/home>)

CLIMBING FOR DOLLARS

RGS Offers Geographical Fieldwork Grants

New grants from the Royal Geographical Society based in London represent an opportunity of a lifetime for young, passionate geographers who want to get out into the field for their first scientific expedition. The geographical fieldwork grants help between 40 to 50 teams of students and researchers get into the field each year. Applications are now open for projects being undertaken in summer 2012. Deadline: January 20, 2012. Similar grants are offered for the winter/southern summer. The deadline for those applications are June 14, 2012.

In 2011, grant recipients conducted fieldwork on such diverse subjects as field measurements of active volcanoes in the Southern Chilean Andes, the use of electrified fences in Kenya, Panama’s endangered pygmy sloths, and the ecological resilience of beetle diversity in the face of human activities in Indonesia. (For more information: www.rgs.org/gfg)

BUZZ WORDS

Kodak Courage

The idea that people tend to push harder when being filmed or photographed. “Climbing mountains is a dangerous pursuit,” said Zack Smith, world-class Alpinist. “When you mix in the potential desire to impress people, that’s a very dangerous thing.” Source: “On Ledge and Online: Solitary Sport Turns Social,” by Alex Lowther, *New York Times*, (Dec. 9).

ON THE HORIZON

American Alpine Club Benefit Dinner, Mar. 2-3, Boston

The AAC 2012 Annual Benefit Dinner will take place Mar. 3, 2012 on the waterfront at the Seaport Hotel in Boston. The theme is *Partnership: Climbing through the Generations*, and features keynoters Boston native Mark Richey and climbing partners Freddie Wilkinson and Steve Swenson, who will report on their August 2011 Saser Kangri II expedition. The goal was to reach the 24,665-ft./7,518 m summit of the second-highest unclimbed mountain in the world—one of the last frontiers of Himalayan climbing. (For more information: americanalpineclub.org/2012dinner)

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