

# EXPEDITION NEWS



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**EXPEDITION NEWS**, now in its 13th year, is the monthly review of significant expeditions, research projects and newsworthy adventures. It is distributed online and to media representatives, corporate sponsors, educators, research librarians, explorers, environmentalists, and outdoor enthusiasts. This forum on exploration covers projects that stimulate, motivate and educate.

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## TOSHIBA TRANSATLANTIC CHALLENGE SET FOR JULY

David Hempleman-Adams, the first man to fly to the North Pole in a balloon, this month will be piloting a small gas balloon, no bigger than most people's front rooms, from St. John's, Newfoundland to Europe. This will be a new FAI (Fédération Aéronautique Internationale) world record in distance. He will be flying in an open wicker basket, no bigger than a coffee table, open to the elements. He will endure extreme low temperatures down to minus 20 degrees F. with the danger of landing in the North Atlantic. The 2,128-mi. journey could take four days, depending on weather conditions, which will cause sleep deprivation and extreme fatigue.

This flight has a zero carbon footprint and represents the most basic form of flight. The helium is an inert natural gas and the ballast, or fuel, is sand which will be thrown out to fly the balloon.

Hempleman-Adams, 50, will remain in contact with the world using a satellite phone and his flight will be tracked and made far safer by Toshiba's new Portege R500 laptop, hence the name of the project.

"I'm extremely nervous about this challenge. It is on the edge of technology and possibility. People have asked me, 'Why are you doing it?' and I say, 'I want to push myself as a pilot and push the equipment and technology to the extreme.' There is no such thing as an easy world record. I don't mind the cold temperatures but I'm wary of having to land in the water. All three of my daughters can swim further than me. In the event of ditching, I will have a life raft, and lots of sea sickness tablets," said Hempleman-Adams.

## CONNECTING THE DROPS ATHABASCA EXPEDITION

Connecting the Drops is a two-month canoeing, hiking, and mountaineering expedition that departed in mid-June. The team includes Don van Hout and David Lavallee who will be exploring the entire 956-mi. Athabasca River from the Columbia Icefields, the hydrological apex of North America, to the internationally protected Peace-Athabasca Delta, the largest inland freshwater delta in the world. They will ski to summit of Mount Snowdome and then hike and paddle the headwaters of the Athabasca River in remote Jasper National Park, across Alberta to Lake Athabasca.

The expedition celebrates the western waterway, a symbol of Canadian identity and wilderness. While the river remains mostly wild, its health is severely threatened from massive industrial development leaving Albertans and Canadians questioning the conventional wisdom that the oil sands are a benefit to all. Traveling by canoe, the team seeks to connect people with the river and inspire them to tell their stories of concern about Alberta's oil sands.

Van Hout, a local from the Town of Athabasca, is part of a growing number of citizens concerned about the environmental short sightedness and feverish oil sands development threatening the health of waterways and Canadian heritage. In 2004, van Hout canoed the Athabasca River for 808 miles. "The Athabasca River Basin is absolutely beautiful at the top and at the bottom, but canoeing through the oil sands is a truly agonizing endeavor that will fill you with sadness," says van Hout. Kokatat Watersports Wear is a sponsor. (For more information: [www.ConnectingTheDrops.ca](http://www.ConnectingTheDrops.ca)). ▲▲

This is believed to be the smallest balloon to ever attempt an Atlantic crossing. (For more information: [www.toshibachallenge.com](http://www.toshibachallenge.com)). ▲

## EXPEDITION UPDATE

### Stancer Turns Back

After 84 extremely grueling days and 326 miles on the ice, British explorer Rosie Stancer was forced to end her attempt to reach the North Pole solo. Rosie was picked up from the ice in late May only 89 miles from the North Pole. (See *EN*, April 2007).

Pilots who had flown in from Eureka Weather Station in Northern Canada on a planned re-supply made the decision that a future pick-up would be too dangerous due to the deteriorating ice conditions between her current position and the North Pole. Not willing to compromise the safety of the pilots, Stancer agreed to be picked up, abandoning a lifelong dream. (For more information: [www.rosiestancermarsnorthpolesolo.com](http://www.rosiestancermarsnorthpolesolo.com)).

### Quote of the Month

*“There’s a whiteout, it’s zero degrees, and the wind is blowing at 30 mph. That doesn’t sound like good weather to us. You can’t go to the summit in this kind of weather and expect to get home. Those two goals are mutually exclusive this week. ...*

*“At this altitude, you’re burning more calories than you’re taking in. You’re wasting away. We’re three men in a tent the size of your dining room table, and it’s at a slant. We’ve been a week without a shower, without a change of underwear, clothes and socks. It’s like the worst scene from Blazing Saddles. There’s no value in sticking around.”*

– Chris Warner, 42, of Annapolis, Md., speaking to the *Baltimore Sun* (June 27) after his K2 summit bid was postponed by an unexpected blizzard.

### Reid Gets Underway on 1,000 Days at Sea Quest

Reid Stowe, 55, has been planning a 1,000 non-stop sea voyage for 15 years now. On Apr. 21, he finally departed from a New York marina with his 23-year-old girlfriend, Soanya Ahmad. At press time, day 70, they were off the coast of western Africa.

The two plan to spend nearly three years on the 70-ft. schooner *Anne*, surviving mostly on the thousands of pounds of provisions they have packed on board. They hope to break the record set by Australian Jon Sanders who spent 657 days at sea sailing around the world three times from 1986 to 1988. In early May they had a minor collision with a freighter that damaged *Anne*’s bowsprit. (For more information: [www.1000days.net](http://www.1000days.net)).

### Ground Zero for Global Warming

Minnesotan Will Steger called Baffin Island “ground zero for global warming” during a recent interview with *EN*. His Global Warming 101 Expedition returned May 11 after 78 days trekking 1,000 miles across sub-Arctic Baffin Island, Nunavut (See *EN*, April 2007). The expedition was funded in part by National Geographic Society Mission Programs. Among the celebrities meeting the team in Iglulik were Richard Branson, singer Jewel, and former supermodel Cheryl Tiegs who Steger had met earlier at her home in Los Angeles.

“The sea ice was more dangerous this past season. We were hearing from villagers in many communities that hunters were falling through,” Steger tells *EN*. “The rules of the game have changed. Their traditional knowledge is faulty. They can’t accurately predict the weather or where it’s safe to go to hunt anymore.

“Global warming is real and is happening faster than we originally thought.” ▲

## EXPEDITION NOTES

**Journey on the Wild Coast** – Four thousand miles on the edge of the Pacific, by foot, packraft, and skis. In early June, Erin McKittrick, 27, and Bretwood (Hig) Higman, 30, began a 4,000-mile human-powered expedition through some of North America’s most rugged and wild terrain on the edge of the Pacific Ocean. From the Puget Sound to the Bering Sea, the journey will take nine months. No road or trail follows this steep and fragmented coastline.

The goal of this expedition is to explore and communicate the broad environmental issues facing this region.

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Throughout this journey, Erin and Hig will be focusing on the key environmental issues that touch this coast: forests, salmon, resource extraction, and global warming.

Erin and Hig are veterans of over 3,000 miles of wilderness travel in Alaska. They consider themselves pioneers in the use of packrafts for extensive ocean travel, making possible an entirely new style of amphibious travel through fjordlands and convoluted coastal terrain.

Equipment sponsors include Alpacka Raft, Backpacking Light, Laurel Designs, Montrail Mountain and Teko Socks. Environmental sponsors and other grants have been received by Alaska Conservation Foundation, Gore-Tex Shipton-Tilman Grant, Renewable Resources Coalition, and Timmissartok. (For more information: Erin McKittrick and Bretwood Higman, Ground Truth Trekking, [mckittre@gmail.com](mailto:mckittre@gmail.com), [www.groundtruthtrekking.org](http://www.groundtruthtrekking.org))

**Women Teaching Women in Pakistan** – The American Alpine Club is helping an all-star cast of American women travel to Pakistan in July to teach Pakistani women how to climb. The Pakistani Women's Climbing Camp will instruct up to 100 women in the basics of climbing and glacier travel, culminating in an attempt on 19,619-ft. Kusheikh Peak.

The camp is a joint initiative of the AAC and the Alpine Club of Pakistan, which sought the Americans' help because cultural concerns prevented Pakistan's male climbers from introducing women to mountaineering. The U.S. women include guides Janet Bergman, Danika Gilbert, Heidi Kloos, Kirsten Kremer, Molly Loomis, Sonja Nelson, and Lisa Rust, along with photographer Sallie Dean Shatz and filmmaker Cherie Silvera. Donations are being sought. (For more information: <http://behno.blogspot.com>). ▲

## EXPEDITION FOCUS

### **What is a Vertical Circumnavigation? Brit Yachtsman Educates Followers**

It pays to know your geography when you're following an expedition these days. In late June, British yachtsman Adrian Flanagan resumed his quest to sail the first-ever single-handed 'vertical' circumnavigation of the globe – considered the last great sailing prize in long distance, single-handed sailing.

Following the precedents set by earlier pioneering yachtsmen and women who have completed west-to-east and east-to-west circumnavigations, the vertical route has remained elusive because of dangers of ice in the High Arctic Region. Recent changes in global weather and temperature patterns

have caused Arctic ice floes to break up earlier. The ice edge is receding further clearing the route for a short period during summer.

Flanagan, 46, set sail on the Alpha Global Expedition on October 28, 2005, and covered 26,000 miles going west around Cape Horn to Nome, Alaska, where his 40-ft. stainless steel sloop, *Barrabas*, has spent the Arctic winter. Flanagan's route will take him along Russia's Northern Sea Route. Success will see *Barrabas* become the first British flagged yacht to sail Russia's Arctic coast and Flanagan, the first sailor to achieve this feat single-handed.

The distance from Nome to the UK is 4,800 miles, the first 2,000 miles of which will be through ice-strewn waters. The Russian government has granted Flanagan special permission to make the attempt. Sir Robin Knox-Johnston, who achieved the first single-handed, non-stop circumnavigation in 1969, has described Flanagan's Alpha Global Expedition as, "a serious challenge."

Indeed. But before you can impress people with this feat, you have to educate them as to the nature of a "vertical" circumnavigation. That's exactly what Flanagan tries to accomplish with his Web site and promotion material that dredges up some middle school geography many of us have long forgotten. Here's where it pays to at least be as smart as a fifth grader.

To pull this project off, Flanagan's track needs to pass over two points on the earth's surface which are diametrically opposite each other – or antipodal. History's first passing through antipodal points was completed in 1522 by 18 members of Ferdinand Magellan's expedition to find a route to the Spice Islands by sailing west. Magellan himself was killed en route on the island of Mactan in present day Philippines.

Flanagan believes any other attempt at quantifying a circumnavigation inevitably involves a complicated concoction of criteria such as minimum distances, minimum number of oceans/landmasses crossed, and minimum meridians crossed, and as such is inherently open to persistent manipulation and dispute. His expedition criteria ensures that the equator is crossed at least twice and the distance traveled is about 22,600 nautical miles or more, or about the circumference of the globe.

From his selected antipodal point which he reached on June 20 southeast of Japan, *Barrabas* turned northeast passing between the Aleutian Island chain and arriving in Nome on August 8th 2006, logging a total distance sailed of 26,045 nautical miles after 280 days at sea. *Barrabas* was then lifted

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out of the water, the mast unstepped and the boat prepared for the long, dark Arctic winter.

In the summer of 2007, the Alpha Global Expedition continues with the final phase through the Arctic Ocean and back to the UK. The planned route is along Russia's Northern Sea Route (NSR). This route has reportedly never been sailed single-handed and no British boat has made the transit. With one pair of antipodal points already logged, the Alpha Global Expedition also has the choice of making the Arctic transit via Canada's Northwest Passage.

Whichever Arctic route is chosen will be determined by prevailing ice conditions. A successful return to the UK will complete the Alpha Global Expedition and achieve the first single-handed "vertical" circumnavigation of the earth.

Flanagan will be assisted by Canadian firm MDA which operates two communications satellites, Radarsat I & II, which will be repositioned to accommodate Flanagan's itinerary. Images of the ice edge will be taken relative to Flanagan's position and the data fed to the expedition base. Routing directions will then be communicated to the *Barrabas* by Louise Flanagan, expedition manager and Flanagan's ex-wife.

The navigable window in the High Arctic is very short and if Flanagan clears the ice fields he should be mooring up at The Royal Southern Yacht Club in the Hamble River in early September. (For more information: [www.alphaglobalex.com](http://www.alphaglobalex.com)). ▲▲



## **MEDIA MATTERS**

**T**he Get Game – It's called a "get." When television talk show bookers compete fiercely for guests, stand back. At one point, an exclusive sit-down with Monica Lewinsky was the "get" of all "gets." One recent "get" was Larry King's first interview with Paris Hilton after her brief stint at the Crossbar Hilton. The adventure world recently had its own encounter with "gets" when morning talk shows competed for Samantha Larson, 18, the youngest foreign woman to summit Everest. (A 15-year-old Sherpa girl from Nepal was the youngest female to ever climb the mountain).

After she summited Everest on May 16, news crews camped out at her home in Long Beach, Calif. She conducted interviews with the *Los Angeles Times* and *Good Morning America* from Lobuche. There were more TV crews and reporters waiting when she arrived in Katmandu. "I was greeted by a mob of journalists and cameramen. I was so

surprised! I thought maybe my story would be in the L.A. paper, but I didn't expect this," she writes in her blog.

"*Good Morning America* was really persistent," Larson later told *EN* in New York during an appearance at the Rubin Museum of Art. "They called my mother, my grandmother, even my stepmom trying to find me. *GMA* flew me to New York in business class, but I returned in coach afterwards. It was crazy. I never expected to come back to that," said Larson who will enter Stanford University in the fall as a freshman. Larson was one of 254 climbers from 23 nations who scaled Everest from the Nepalese side this spring.

**If Adventure is the Topic, the Talk Isn't Cheap** – "Though Columbus and Vasco da Gama were too early to cash in, adventurers in more recent times have found that the risks they take on far-flung exploits can pay off — if they live to tell the tale. For Henry Morton Stanley, Ernest Shackleton and contemporary risk takers like the climber Ed Viesturs, having a tangle with the back of beyond can be a gateway to the adventure lecture circuit, a tradition that has become especially lucrative in recent years," writes Joe Robinson in the June 1 *New York Times*.

"... demand for vicarious thrills from the outer edge of adventure has grown — along with the production values. Shackleton regaled thousands at the Royal Albert Hall with primitive black-and-white lantern slides to chronicle his remarkable escape from Antarctica in the early years of the 20th century, but today's adventurers can punch up the presentation with video clips, animated PowerPoint displays and digital mapping."

According to Robinson, the top names in the field can make \$10,000 to \$40,000 a talk — a long way from the token honorariums of musty explorers' clubs.

"There may be more bells and whistles, but today's adventure lecture still comes down to story, pictures, inspiration and escape. The recipe for a thrilling presentation remains a dramatic narrative with scrapes barely survived, setbacks overcome and a presentation that inspires armchair travelers to reach for the extraordinary and overcome obstacles," Robinson writes.

"Start with a bang, end with a bang and bring them up and down throughout," said polar explorer Ann Bancroft.

**Swimming for Peace and a Bunch of Other Stuff Too** – In the course of a 67-day, 3,278-mile swim down the Amazon River, completed Apr. 8, Martin Strel, a 53-year-old Slovene, wore a wet suit to protect himself against, "snakes, spiders,

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mosquitoes, poisonous insects, microbes and the candiru, a small parasitic fish known to swim up the opening of the penis and then lodge itself in the urethra with a spike.” According to a profile by Ed Zuckerman in the June 2007 *New York Times Play* magazine, Strel was swimming for peace, friendship, clean waters, the Dalai Lama, and the hope that “Palestinians and the Israelis can find a way to live together in peace.” He is said to be the most famous man in Slovenia and can park anywhere he wants.

**Hidden Expedition Everest** – Well it’s no *Grand Theft Auto*, but Ed Viesturs had a small part providing input, design ideas and exclusive photos for a new computer game called *Hidden Expedition Everest*. It’s a race to the summit with Ed himself assisting along the way. You can download a free trial version at [www.edviesturs.com](http://www.edviesturs.com). And while you’re there, check out Steady Eddie’s appearance on the Comedy Central *Colbert Report* to promote his new book, *No Shortcuts to the Top*. Colbert’s every other comment was a snide dig, but Ed held his own. Colbert asks, “What’s left? Do you touch the sun? swim to the bottom of the ocean?” Ed calmly suggests he may return to Everest again. ▲

## EXPEDITION MARKETING

### Sierra Designs Sponsors Explorers

Outdoor equipment manufacturer Sierra Designs, based in Louisville, Colo., announced its 2007-2008 alliance partnership programs to maximize product awareness and support sustainable practices. Receiving support are:

- **Eric Larsen, Explorer – Save-the-Poles**  
In 2009, polar explorer Eric Larsen hopes to accomplish a first by reaching both poles and the summit of Mount Everest (often considered the third pole) in a single year. His Save the Poles project will support efforts to address climate change and protect polar bears from extinction due to loss of habitat. Sierra Designs will be following him through two years of training while he tests the equipment and apparel and provides the company feedback through his journey.
- **Shared Summits K2 Expedition**  
This summer, Chris Warner and his Shared Summits team will be climbing the east face of K2, arguably the world’s toughest mountain with over 10,000 feet of extremely technical climbing. Sierra Designs has provided the team with tons of equipment and apparel for their journey that will begin in Islamabad, traveling via the Karakorum Highway into Pakistan’s remote Northern Provinces.

The Shared Summits team has partnered with the Maryland Department of Education, Johns Hopkins University and Educators Connecting Research to the K-16 Classroom to promote outdoor education and enthusiasm. Team leader Chris Warner, a veteran of dozens of international expeditions, as well as a TV personality and lecturer, will speak to thousands of kids about the expedition upon its completion in fall 2007. (For more information: <http://www.sharedsummits.com>)

- **Glenn Dunmire, The Real Continental Divide**

Glenn Dunmire, an avid climber and naturalist, will hike the length of the Continental Divide, from the Chihuahuan desert in New Mexico to Canada. Though there is a Continental Divide Trail, it deviates largely from the true crest of the divide for most of its length. Glenn hopes to cover as much of the journey in 2007, before winter snows close the highest passes in the Rockies. Sierra Designs will be outfitting Dunmire with gear and apparel and will be following him along his journey, documenting his experiences and reactions to the products and technologies. (For more information: [www.sierradesigns.com](http://www.sierradesigns.com)).

- **Skye “The PE Guy”**

While Skye Dunn’s project isn’t a true expedition in the usual sense, we give him credit for a catchy name. Skye calls himself “The PE Guy,” and will be walking, biking, skating, snowshoeing, dancing, dribbling, and skiing, from the Pacific to the Atlantic to promote quality physical education as the solution to childhood obesity. He started the trek on June 4 from San Francisco, and will visit schools along the American Discovery Trail. It’s expected the trip will last nine to eleven months. The name was catchy enough to attract The Coleman Company which is providing some of his gear. (For more information: [www.skyethepeguy.org](http://www.skyethepeguy.org)). ▲

## ON THE HORIZON

**Expedition Medicine Conference, Aug. 22-25** – Renowned expedition medicine experts will convene in Washington this summer to reveal tips and tactics needed to practice expedition medicine. Speakers include members of The Explorers Club who are all well-known Expedition Medicine leaders, the medical director of the United States Secret Service, the chief medical officer of NASA, the co-director of the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, the medical director of the Mt. Everest Base Camp Clinic, and the former Surgeon General of the U.S. Coast Guard, among others.

Topics include setting up remote clinics, immunizations, animal attacks, environmental extremes, wound care, and eye and dental emergencies. All conference participants will receive a free copy of *Expedition Medicine* edited by Drs. Gregory H. Bledsoe, Michael J. Manyak, and David Townes to be published by Cambridge University Press during the summer of 2007. (For more information: [www.expedmed.org](http://www.expedmed.org)).

**Fowler and Wiese Team Up, Mar. 28 - Apr. 7, 2008** – Jim Fowler is best known for his years on *Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom*, but his career as a zoologist began in Africa 50 years ago. Now he's hosting a \$25,000, two-week trip back to Africa with former Explorers Club president Richard Wiese, host of a nationally syndicated television show titled, *Exploration with Richard Wiese*. The Mar. 23 – Apr. 7, 2008, trip is under the auspices of American Museum of Natural History Expeditions which provides behind-the-scenes tours and special entrée not often found on larger tours. (For more information: [www.amnhexpeditions.org](http://www.amnhexpeditions.org)). ▲▲

## WEB WATCH

**Expedition News Archives Enter the 21st Century** – It took a while, but the archives of ExpeditionNews.com are now searchable back to May 1995. Have a fact you need checked? Be our guest. Just don't expect us to be announcing a new fax number. We've had one for a while. ▲▲

## IN PASSING

### **Sir Wally Herbert 1934 - 2007**

A "phenomenon" to Lord Shackleton, a "hero" to Prince Charles – Sir Wally Herbert was widely hailed as one of the greatest polar explorers in history. The first to cross the Arctic Ocean on foot, Herbert trekked from Alaska to a remote Norwegian island on a 16-month trip. By the time he reached Norway, in April 1969, he had covered 3,720 miles, camped through temperatures of minus 50 degrees F., and wandered for three months in total darkness. Along the way Herbert, who likened the journey to "conquering a horizontal Everest," oversaw the drilling of more than 250 ice-core samples, now the benchmark against which scientists measure the impact of climate change in the Arctic. He was 72 and had diabetes. ▲▲

## EXPEDITION CLASSIFIEDS

**Costa Del Mar Sunglasses** – The leader in high performance polarized sunglasses is interested in sponsoring expeditions. Help us "See what's out there™." Please 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/>

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

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

