

EXPEDITION NEWS



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EXPEDITION NEWS, now in its 15th 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.

BLOOD BROTHERS FIGHT MALARIA

Texas brothers Brannndon, 33, and Greg Bargo, 26, are setting out on a multi-sport self-supported One Blood Expedition to Africa to raise money and awareness for malaria. The brothers will climb the three highest mountains in Africa: Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, Mt. Kenya in Kenya, and Mt. Stanley in Uganda.

They will first start out by climbing the Umbwe route up Kilimanjaro, then will bike to the base of Mt. Kenya to climb the technical and seldom reached North Standard route to the summit of Mt. Batian. They will then bike with all their gear to the second largest lake in the world, and largest in Africa, Lake Victoria, where they will unpack their foldable canoe, and begin crossing the crocodile infested waters. Upon reaching the opposite shores of Lake Victoria in Uganda they will unpack their bikes from their canoe and head to the Ugandan/Congolese border to climb Mt. Stanley, Africa's largest mountain range, and third tallest mountain.

"When I first found out about the issue of malaria, and that the U.S. was once infected by the disease I wanted everyone to know about it, and that something needed to be done," Brannndon Bargo said. He started a non-profit called the One Blood Initiative whose goal is to meet and establish relationships with community leaders, and other organizations such as Food for the Hungry, World Vision, Soft Power Health, and Africa Fighting Malaria, with the big vision to one day eradicate malaria from Africa and eventually the world. The brothers have many planned stops to meet and speak with community leaders during their six-week expedition which begins July 19.

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EXPEDITION UPDATE

Iceland's Westman Islanders Dig It

From time to time we like to check in with the hardy Westman Islanders off the southern coast of Iceland – hardy because the only way to reach the island is to fly in small planes that are often cancelled due to weather, or journey on a three-hour ferry with large stacks of innocent looking Chinese take-out boxes in their passenger lounges – only they're not for Chinese food. Spend some time on board during a rough day and you'll know what we mean. As the saying goes, once afflicted by seasickness you become afraid you're going to die; then as the feeling gets worse, you worry that you won't. Hardy is right.

Within sight of the sheer, towering walls that millions of puffins call home, volunteers and researchers are beginning to uncover the remains of some of the 417 properties destroyed when Heimaey (current pop. 4,100) experienced a volcanic eruption in 1973 that covered one-third of the town in up to 20 meters of lava and ash (See *EN*, January 2006). In fact, as you drive around, the streetlights are marked 12 to 15 feet high to show the depth of the ash over three decades ago.

This summer, Kristin Johannsdottir (see her photo at www.expeditionnews.blogspot.com) is leading a modern-day archaeological dig to uncover a section of town – now protected by black netting – where the homes were merely boiled in steam from hot ash; other homes, totally engulfed in molten lava, are beyond rescue. Johannsdottir's team is targeting about 10 homes which, although their top floors are crushed, are thought to have well-preserved basements. Clothes probably still hang in closets, pictures still on the walls.

While backhoes do the heavy work, volunteers are needed to shovel close to the buildings as homeowners, long-ago com-

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BLOOD BROTHERS *from page 1*

This is the second multi-sport expedition the brothers have taken. The first was the Summit to Sea Expedition in which the brothers climbed Mt. McKinley, then biked to California to scuba dive with great white sharks, and then completing the trip by biking to Baja Mexico. One Blood Expedition is being sponsored by Pak Boats, Ex Officio, Clif Bar, and many private and non-profit donors. (For more information: www.onebloodinitiative.org). ▲

EXPEDITION UPDATE *from page 1*

pensated by the government for their property, hope to seek return of their family heirlooms and keepsakes. Like the Pompeii of old, it promises to be a trip back in time, or at least back to the Seventies. (For more information: www.pompeinordursins.is).

Rescued Antarctica Doctor Dies

Nearly a decade after she was rescued from a remote Antarctic research station after diagnosing herself with breast cancer, Dr. Jerri Nielsen died last month. She was 57.

Nielsen had been fighting the latest round of cancer for the past five years. Nielsen caught the nation's attention in 1999, when she found a lump in her breast as a 47-year-old physician stationed at the Amundsen-Scott South Pole Research Station. After finding the lump in June, she diagnosed herself with breast cancer and began treating herself using chemotherapy agents that the U.S. Air Force parachuted to the station the next month. (See *EN*, December 1999).

Quote of the Month

“The real enemy, whether you’re in Pakistan or Africa or the United States, is ignorance, because it is ignorance that breeds hatred.”

– Greg Mortenson, 51, of Bozeman, Montana, speaking to Costco's *The Connection* magazine (July 2009). To date, Central Asia Institute (www.ikat.org), the foundation Mortenson established, has built more than 78 permanent schools and 48 temporary schools in remote and often volatile areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan. The foundation has trained hundreds of teachers who have changed the lives of more than 30,000 children.

It was later revealed, according to a March 2009 article in the *Detroit Free Press*, that Nielsen – an emergency room doctor from Cleveland – performed a biopsy on herself with the help of non-medical crew, who practiced using needles on a raw chicken.

While treating herself, Nielsen carried on her duties as the sole doctor for the 41-person research group. She consulted with her doctors in the U.S. by e-mail and teleconference. They recommended that she return as soon as possible for treatment.

Although flights in support of the South Pole program don't usually begin until late October or early November, the start of Antarctic spring, it was Oct. 6 when two planes set out on what was dubbed Operation Deep Freeze.

Ten days and a handful of stops later – California, Hawaii, Pago Pago, New Zealand and then Antarctica – rescuers braved temperatures of nearly minus 60 degrees F. to land a ski-equipped plane at the pole, drop off a replacement doctor and pick up Nielsen. It was the earliest such flight attempted.

Once she returned home and was treated, Nielsen's cancer went into remission, and she wrote about her experience in a best-selling book, “Icebound.” ▲

EXPEDITION NOTES

We're Not Pulling Your Finger – An Ogden, Utah, company called Klymit has introduced a cold weather insulation system that uses flexible, gas-tight yet breathable chambers filled with Argon gas instead of down or fabric. Klymit NobleTek allows outdoor enthusiasts to adjust their level of warmth with the turn of a dial, providing insulation that is not only adjustable, but warmer, thinner and lighter-weight than other insulators.

Klymit's noble-gas-based system allows users to increase or decrease warmth on demand, unlike fiber and other types of insulation which cannot change when temperatures vary. The Klymit system can be used in a variety of outdoor products and sporting goods, such as camping pads, gloves, ski boots, jackets, vests, ski pants and sleeping bags.

Klymit NobleTek Insulation is said to be less bulky than other insulators. It is paper-thin, only 15mm (less than half an inch) when fully inflated, and collapses to less than 1mm when deflated. This makes clothing easy to move around in when inflated, and easy to pack into small spaces for camping, hiking and storage when the gas is removed. (For more information: www.klymit.com).

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AAC and Boulder Community Reels From Chinese Climbing Tragedy – Rescue workers last month discovered the bodies of AAC members Jonny Copp and Wade Johnson in avalanche debris on Mt. Edgar (aka E-Gongga) in the Minya Konka massif of China. Despite a search effort, Copp’s climbing partner, AAC member Micah Dash, remains missing and is presumed to have perished. The bodies were discovered between base camp and advanced base camp on the 6618m peak, according to the American Alpine Club, of which all three Boulder, Colo., residents were members.

In a published statement on June 12, the American Film Festival said, “Though future efforts to locate the third climber might be possible, the uniquely hazardous location, continual avalanches, and deteriorating weather guaranteed by the approaching monsoon season have for now, eliminated any safe, successful search for Dash.”

The bodies of Copp and Johnson were discovered after partial emergence from fresh avalanche debris. After days of effort, the searchers agreed that frequent rock fall and near-daily avalanches made further efforts extremely dangerous. The vast search area and deposition of new avalanche debris further diminished the probability of locating Dash’s body.


Copp, 35, and Dash, 32, had hoped to climb a new route on the mountain’s south side and left base camp on May 20, along with Johnson, 24, who was working as a videographer for Boulder-based Sender Films. The expedition was sponsored in part by a Lyman Spitzer Cutting Edge Award from the AAC, along with a Mugs Stump Award, and the climbers researched their destination in the AAC Library.

A blog at the Web site of the Adventure Film Festival (www.adventurefilm.org), which Copp founded, is posting frequent updates on the search and soliciting donations to a search fund. According to a Facebook Memorial Page, a public memorial is planned on July 11 in Boulder.

Washburn Prints Come to Mountaineering Museum – Part of the Bradford Washburn American Mountaineering Museum in Golden, Colo., has been transformed into an art gallery, or so it would seem, with the introduction of an exhibit showcasing aerial photographs of Alaska mountains and glaciers by its adventurous namesake, according to John Meyer in the Denver Post (June 23).

One of the great mountaineering figures of the 20th century, Washburn (1910-2007) made more than 70 trips to Alaska, many of them motivated principally by route-finding and mapmaking. But like the work of his better-known contemporary, Ansel Adams, many of Washburn’s large format, black and white photographs have an artistic aesthetic – especially those photos taken high above swirling glaciers, captured with long shadows and blessed with almost unfathomable detail, Meyer writes.

Washburn is probably best known for the work he did while hanging out of the open doors of airplanes over Alaska, pioneering a mode of exploration that became an art form.


“His love of the mountains in Alaska influenced his desire to photograph it, and his photographs influenced his desire and his ability to figure out how to get to the top of some of these things,” said Cody Smith, the American Alpine Club member who acquired the photographs from Washburn’s estate and has given them to the museum on “permanent loan.” “A lot of his work really opened up the exploration of some of these regions (and) gave people some ideas – a different perspective on which to find routes – including many he and his wife pursued on their own.” 

CLIMBING FOR DOLLARS

Sunglasses for the Blind – Julbo, the protective eyewear maker based in Williston, Vt., provided mountaineering sunglasses for blind climbers from Foundation for Blind Children (FBC) for their Mt. Kilimanjaro expedition which departed last month.

The FBC has assembled a team of blind climbers to ascend one of the Seven Summits to generate awareness and raise funds to directly support FBC programs and offerings. The team of blind and visually impaired climbers has been training for over a year. The expedition group is composed of eight blind climbers and two sighted guides to navigate technical terrain and avoid hazards.

“I know these climbers will get to the top. They overcome much larger obstacles every day. Kilimanjaro is nothing,” says Marc Ashton, chief executive officer of FBC and father of Max Ashton, who is attempting to become the youngest blind climber ever to summit Kilimanjaro.

The FBC’s personal optometrist is requiring that all climbers wear category four mountaineering eyewear during the expedition. All Julbo lenses guarantee 100-percent UV protection. (For more information: www.seeitourway.org, www.julbousa.com) 



MEDIA MATTERS

Internet Opens Sponsorship Doors – “For someone crisscrossing oceans in a 70-foot sailboat to stay at sea for 1,000 days without stops or resupplies, Reid Stowe is one of the planet’s most accessible people – online,” writes Michael Hiestand in *USA Today* (July 1).

Reid’s 1000days.net – for a voyage which started from New Jersey on April 21, 2007 – offers far more than daily entries

such as a June post noting “the breaking wavetops spoke to me” or his explaining a few days later that “for me, speaking to you is speaking to God.” The site also has satellite tracking, video, audio, an online store, a handy way to use Paypal to pay \$20-\$49 to become an official “seaman” and listings of at least 33 corporate sponsors backing the venture. The story explains that constant online exposure helps attract sponsors who ordinarily wouldn’t be involved.

Got Darwin? – Charles Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* is considered one of the most famous books ever written, says Peter Dizikes in *The New York Times Book Review* (May 17). Today, a first-edition of the treatise that so brilliantly laid out the principles of evolution last year sold at auction for \$194,500. As 150th anniversary celebrations of the book’s publication continue this year, no one knows how many of the 1,250 first-edition copies of the *Origin* still exist. How to tell if you’ve got a first-edition? Angus Carroll, director of a census of all known *Origins* for Darwin Online provides this advice, “... on the 11th line of Page 20, the word ‘species’ is incorrectly rendered as ‘speceies.’”

Got a Spare \$10 Million? – MacGillivray Freeman Films, Laguna Beach, Calif., is looking to raise money to complete a \$10 million sequel to their smash hit, *Everest*. Billed as the best science story the giant screen industry will ever see, *Everest: Conquering Thin Air* will tell the story of a group of medical researchers at the University of College London who wanted to conduct the most thorough study of hypoxia – low oxygen in the blood – in history.

Their problem was this: to hire 200 healthy subjects, build an oxygen chamber to hold them, and then study the test subjects for three weeks at low oxygen levels would cost upwards of \$5 million. Then one researcher had a brilliant revelation, according to a MacGillivray Freeman Films newsletter: “what if we could get 200 ordinary people to pay their own way to Nepal, let us test them for three hours a day for two and a half weeks as they climbed to Everest Base Camp, and pay \$6,000 for the experience? Would anyone sign up?”

Within two weeks, after running an article on several Web sites, they had enough trekkers. In 2007, a series of daring medical experiments turned the mountain into the world’s largest laboratory. Blood samples were taken just below the summit of Everest at 27,700 feet, then rushed to a laboratory set up at the expedition’s camp at 21,200 feet for analysis.

Through this effort, doctors measured the lowest blood oxygen levels ever recorded in humans and confirmed what was already suspected – that high-altitude climbers have incredibly low blood oxygen levels which at sea level would only be seen in people close to death. The study, which will last for the next decade, could help doctors re-evaluate treatment for patients suffering from respiratory distress syndromes,

cystic fibrosis, emphysema and other serious illnesses, many of which force their hosts to adapt to low oxygen levels in the blood. (For more information: www.macfreefilms.com)

The Science Prize: Innovation or Stealth Advertising? – Google offers \$30 million for a better lunar lander. In 2004, SpaceShipOne won the \$10 million Ansari X Prize for the first private, crewed reusable spacecraft.

“We see a renaissance in the use of prizes to solve problems,” Tony Goland, a partner at McKinsey & Co., tells Robert Lee Hotz of *The Wall Street Journal* (May 8). Critics, though, dismiss the newest trend in prize giving as a form of advertising that masquerades as public service – and a clever ploy to attract top research talent at a discount.

Says University of Pennsylvania prize scholar James F. English, “It’s a cover for what they are really about, which is getting attention. I don’t think that kind of small-scale frantic prize-chasing investment is the best way for us to solve big problems.”

Take a Hike – Maybe he should have been on a hike after all. When Mark Sanford, 49, the conservative Republican South Carolina governor, ditched his security detail last month, turned off his cell phone, and told his staff he was going to hike the legendary Appalachian Trail, he said he wanted to clear his head. Maybe do some writing after a stressful three months.

Blogs and comics had a field day even before he admitted to the real reason for his absence. Rather than commune with nature, he flew south for an extramarital affair with a “friend” in Argentina. But cry not. Outdoor industry executives – the people who make packs, boots, and trekking poles – rejoiced. The big winner in the Sanford affair is the trail itself, which received enormous publicity nationwide, including route maps published in major media and stories mentioning the trail on the evening news. In fact, at one point late last month, there were 1.1 million Google hits for “Appalachian Trail Sanford.”

“Just the mere suggestion that highly stressed politicians can seek solace by hiking the Appalachian Trail plants a positive image in the minds of outdoor enthusiasts everywhere,” said Greg Wozer, vice president of LEKI USA, makers of trekking poles. “While we haven’t noticed a run on our trail equipment, this kind of exposure in newspapers, magazines and on radio and television reaching by millions certainly doesn’t hurt.”

Wozer continues, “I am sorry for the pain caused to his family and the good folks of South Carolina, but am certainly glad he didn’t decide to go lie on a beach somewhere.”

Reality TV Expedition is Unreal – On May 31, the *History Channel* premiered a new eight episode TV series entitled


Expedition Africa: Stanley and Livingstone. Explorer Pasquale (PV) Scaturro was invited to participate in an expedition to cross 970 miles of Tanzania from Zanzibar to Ujiji on Lake Tanganyika in an effort to retrace the steps of Henry Morton Stanley to find Dr. David Livingstone in 1871. The expedition was part real expedition and part reality TV produced by Mark Burnett.

In addition to Scaturro, the navigator, are Mireya Mayor, the wildlife expert, Benedict Arnold, a survivalist, and Kevin Sites, a journalist and war correspondent.

Scaturro tells *EN*, “*Expedition Africa: Stanley and Livingstone* was unlike any other expedition that I’ve ever led or been a member of. First of all, the 24-hour a day camera coverage was at first a pretty big distraction, forcing us at times to monitor what we said. As the expedition progressed the cameras became less of a factor to me and somewhat ‘invisible.’ This allowed the ‘reality part’ of the series to come out. Mark Burnett is the master at reality TV and, along with Executive Producer Maria Baltazzi, he was instrumental in designing the make-up of the expedition to be as authentic and difficult as possible and at the same time to create as much interpersonal conflict as possible.

“The actual expedition was by no means the most difficult I’ve done, but when you add in the conflict stemming from the fact that no ‘Expedition Leader’ had been chosen in advance, it was mentally one of the tougher things I have ever done. I loved the physical challenges; the swamps, mountains, rivers and deserts, but I loathed the almost constant bickering, especially when I was trying to navigate across very difficult terrain using only a compass. I think people will watch the series because they will learn a lot about what it took Stanley to find Livingstone and they will be amazed at the grandeur of Tanzania and central Africa through world class HD cinematography.” (For more information: www.history.com/expedition).

Risking the Taliban to Climb K2 – K2, which towers 28,251 feet above the border between Pakistan and China like an almost perfect white pyramid, is considered one of the most beautiful but also one of the most dangerous mountains in the world. By the opening of this climbing season, only 296 people had ever conquered its summit and 77 had died trying, according to Graham Bowley, writing in the *New York Times* (June 28). Making an ascent even more treacherous was the fact that the Pakistan Army and Taliban were fighting for control within the region.


“Even the death-defiers of the mountains had felt daunted by the need to pass through the human violence below. The mountain’s perils were something they felt they knew. War was something else,” reports Bowley who is writing a book about the 2008 accident on K2 that left 11 climbers dead. 

EXPEDITION MARKETING

Traventure Man Hopes to Blog His Way to Antarctica

Here come the adventure contests. First there was Australia’s “Best Job in the World” competition which garnered millions in free publicity for Tourism Queensland. Now comes “Blog Your Way to Antarctica,” sponsored by Quark Expeditions.

To enter, a competitor must post one entry of no more than 300 words that captures the imagination and excitement of blog readers around the world.

The winner will be determined by popular vote, although voters can change their vote throughout the competition. The Official Onboard Quark Blogger and a companion will receive a \$20,000 expedition to Antarctica, Feb. 20 to March 3, 2010. The blogger will be required to post a minimum of 24 blog entries between February 15 and March 5, 2010 – which shouldn’t be too taxing, especially not for one entrant who calls himself Traventure Man (www.traventureman.com). (For more information: www.blog-yourwaytoantarctica.com). 

EXPEDITION INK

Getting Buzzed – When Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin took those famous steps that were watched by hundreds of millions, they instantly became two of the most famous people on the planet. *In Magnificent Desolation: The Long Journey Home From the Moon*, Aldrin recounts that experience – from takeoff to splashdown – in breathtaking detail, and his harrowing return to normal life after the mission, when the astronaut battled depression and alcoholism.

Aldrin writes, “More and more, I turned to alcohol to ease my mind and see me through the rough times. Because I could handle my drinking – or so I thought – and could consume a lot of alcohol without becoming uncontrollably inebriated, I refused to see it as a problem. I had been relatively open about my battle with depression, but I was not so forthcoming about my drinking problems. As far as I could see, there was nothing wrong. It was a time when almost everyone I knew was drinking heavily, so why not me?”

Later he writes, “Some people get mean, violent, loud, or rude when they drink. I did not respond to alcohol in that manner. I wasn’t pugnacious, but I was less inhibited and felt more upbeat when I drank. I was charming in a sloppy sort of way; in my estimation, I was enlightened. To other people, I was smashed. But rather than admit I was running out of options as my drinking habits intensified, I chose to

find new friends in different bars.” (For more information: *Magnificent Desolation* by Buzz Aldrin and Ken Abraham, Harmony Books). ▲

EXPEDITION CLASSIFIEDS

Everest Base Camp (EBC) Fundraising Challenge – Trek organized by Himalayan HealthCare Nepal (HHC). Join HHC in an EBC trek challenge to enjoy the world’s highest mountains and to raise funds to help thousands of Nepalese in health care, education and income generation. 100% of the funds raised by you directly benefit Nepali villagers. Nov. 12-30 starting and ending in Kathmandu. Minimum \$2,600 for each participant (covers all expenses except airfare to Nepal, hotel accommodations in Kathmandu, and personal expenses). Contact: Anil Parajuli, info@himalayan-healthcare.org, Dr. David Johnson, dnjsailor@hotmail.com, www.himalayan-healthcare.org.

Wanted: A few good men and women to join Dave Hahn and Peter Hillary’s expedition to retrace Shackleton’s route across South Georgia Island. Honour and recognition in case of success. Inquiries should be directed to Urs Hofmann at Geographic Expeditions: 800 777 8183 or urs@geoex.com

Death Valley and Mt. Shasta Cycling Trips – Join AdventureCORPS for five days of road cycling, yoga, and hiking at magical, mystical Mt. Shasta on July 29 - August 2 and one-of-a-kind Death Valley in February, 2010. <http://www.adventurecorps.com>.

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).

Compression Socks Give Your Feet a Boost – Competitors from runners to triathletes to skiers are increasingly turning to compression socks for an edge that helps them recover faster. CW-X Compression Support Socks, from Wacoal Sports Science Corporation, makers of CW-X® Conditioning Wear, use seamless, variable compression Torex four-way stretch fabric to provide targeted support

to increase circulation in the feet and lower legs. A built-in Support Web™ supports the calf muscles and arch of the foot, and stabilizes the ankle joint. This results in reduced fatigue and quicker recovery from strenuous athletic activity. (www.cw-x.com)

You Want to Go Where? – Stories and anecdotes ripped from the pages of *Expedition News* are retold in this new book from Skyhorse Publishing. Written by Jeff Blumenfeld, editor and publisher of *EN*, the book provides advice on how individuals can fund and arrange their own trips. It celebrates the feats of explorers familiar to *EN* readers, including Anker, Schurke, Shackleton, Steger, Vaughan, and many others. Included are tips on communications technology, photography, writing contracts, and developing a proposal that will impress potential sponsors. Available now through Amazon.com, BarnesandNoble.com and Borders.com ▲