

# 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.**

## **EXPEDITION UPDATE**

### **Arctic Jubilee Team Summits Barbeau Peak**

The Arctic Jubilee Expedition successfully summited Barbeau Peak (8,583-ft./2616 m) in honor of the Diamond Jubilee of HM Queen Elizabeth II. It is the highest point on the Queen Elizabeth Islands, part of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago which was renamed by Canada upon the coronation of HM the Queen in 1952. (See *EN*, March 2012).

Central to the legacy of the Arctic Jubilee Expedition was an education and outreach program linking Canadian Inuit and UK schools via an interactive IT learning platform. Discussion boards enabled students from both cultures to interact and discuss questions relating to cultural identity, the Arctic environment and issues of climate change and sustainability. This education and outreach campaign was an extension of the work of Education Through Expeditions ([www.etehome.org](http://www.etehome.org)). The effort was sponsored, in part, by the team's official baselayer sponsor, CW-X. (For more information: [www.facebook.com/TheArcticJubilee](http://www.facebook.com/TheArcticJubilee) or [www.etalive.org/arcticjubilee](http://www.etalive.org/arcticjubilee)).

### **Pangaea Plans Adventurous Finish in Africa**

One sailboat, four years, five oceans – and a single mission. Explorer Mike Horn and his crew have been sailing around the globe on the *Pangaea* between October 2008 and November 2012 in support of environmental protections (see *EN*, December 2011).

In early May 2012, seven youths from among 16 applicants successfully made it through the last selection camp in Château-d'Oex in Switzerland. This month, the South African adventurer and his team departed for Africa for the 12th and last expedition.

Since 2008, Horn has been traveling the world on a 115-ft. (35 m) 30-berth ship with Mercedes-Benz BlueTec engines, solar panels, a recyclable aluminum hull and trawling nets for bottles. Horn says the construction of *Pangaea* supplied work and income for

over 200 Brazilian families for an entire year at a workshop in a Sao Paolo suburb. Main sponsors are Mercedes-Benz, Officine Panerai, and Geberit, makers of sanitary and piping systems. (For more information: [www.mikehorn.com](http://www.mikehorn.com))

### **Eddie Bauer Climbs Aboard Arctic Row 2012 Expedition**

This month, four Americans embark on a rowing voyage team members are calling one of the world's last great firsts: a non-stop, unsupported row across the Arctic Ocean. Sponsored through Eddie Bauer's Be First program, Paul Ridley, Collin West, Neal Mueller and Scott Mortensen will travel 1,300 miles from Inuvik, Canada, to Provideniya, Russia, arriving around Aug. 15.

The project hopes to raise awareness of the changes in the Arctic climate – the team will navigate through Arctic waters which have only recently become passable as a result of climate change and melting sea ice. To power the 29-foot-long, six-foot wide rowboat, the four will rotate between the two rowing positions, each rowing two hours on and two hours off for 24 hours a day. The voyage is expected to take approximately 30 days to complete. (See *EN*, January 2012).

The Arctic Row Expedition presents an opportunity for the team to conduct scientific research with no impact on the Arctic ecosystem. Throughout the expedition, the team will record whale sightings, collect plankton samples, and monitor the salinity and temperature of the water. The recorded data will aid scientists at The University of Alaska Fairbanks and Adventurers and Scientists for Conservation ([www.adventureandscience.org](http://www.adventureandscience.org)) to gain a better understanding of a whale's sense of smell and feeding habits in the Arctic Ocean.

The Arctic Row team will use a desalinator to convert 400 lbs. of salt water into the 24 liters of drinking water that they will need every day. Solar panels are mounted above the cabin to power a VHF radio, GPS, a navigation system, and laptop for the team to stay in contact with followers throughout their journey. They will be fully outfitted in First Ascent, Eddie Bauer's expedition-class gear and apparel that was launched in 2009. (For more information: <http://www.arcticrow.com/blog/>, or [www.eddiebauer.com/befirst](http://www.eddiebauer.com/befirst))

### **EXPEDITION NOTES**

#### **Would the Real Explorers Club Please Stand Up?**

If you troll the Internet like we do far too much you'll get the impression that everyone wants to be The Explorers Club these days. There's a namesake restaurant in Columbus, Ohio, a band in Charleston, S.C., an Explorers Club for fans of Albarino wine from Spain, and the Ladies Explorer Club (no "s"), also in the Columbus area. But wait, there's more.

In 2011, producers from the non-profit Wing-It Productions, a comedy club in Seattle, staged an improvisational comedy called *The Explorers Club* which followed the adventures of turn-of-the-century British explorers as they comically muddle their way through exotic lands, not-so-deadly foes and foreign diplomacy. The show featured

puppets and actively solicited audience participation. Rosemary Jones, a theater reviewer at Examiner.com wrote, “Drawing on local costuming talent, a vast stock of mustaches, and a borrowed gorilla suit, the explorer, the villain, and a variety of colorful sidekicks tackle the hinterlands of adventure.”

Oh goodie. To make matters worse, some actors even wore that most stereotypical of exploration headwear: pith helmets.

Somehow, the real Explorers Club based in New York survived these West Coast theatrics. But now comes news of another, unrelated theatrical production at the Manhattan Theatre Club in New York next year, a production that’s again called, to the chagrin of many, *The Explorers Club*. This one is billed as a new madcap comedy from Tony-nominated writer Nell Benjamin (*Legally Blonde*).

Here’s the story line: “London, 1879. The prestigious Explorers Club faces the worst crisis in their history: their acting president wants to admit a woman, and their bartender is terrible.

“True, the female candidate is brilliant, beautiful, and has discovered a legendary Lost City, but the decision to let in a woman could shake the very foundation of the British Empire, and how do you make such a decision without a decent drink?”

Previews begin in May 2013.

Club officials are well aware of these infringements on the trademarked Explorers Club name and often send cease and desist letters. But artistic free expression is another matter. One Club attorney who asked to remain anonymous, tells us that objecting “only serves to promote that which we question.”

### **Frozen in Time**

The frozen bodies and climbing equipment of three brothers and their guide who disappeared 86 years ago have been discovered by two British climbers in the Swiss Alps, according to authorities in the Valais region of Switzerland.

A melting glacier revealed the siblings’ skulls, boots, binoculars, walking sticks and a leather purse holding nine Swiss francs.

Fidelis, Cletus and Johann Ebener, who were between 22 and 31 years old, and their guide Max Reider began their expedition toward the Aletsch Glacier in March 1926, and never returned. Swiss Police spokesman Jean Marie Bornet explained that since 1926 there have been 280 persons who have disappeared in the mountains in the Valais region and that melting ice could reveal more bodies in months and years ahead.

### **Climbing Campers Wanted**

When we went to summer camp, climbing wasn't even on the radar so we spent more time than necessary pounding our names into leather and weaving lariats. Obviously, we were born too soon. Word comes of a residential summer camp with a specialization in rock climbing and mountaineering exclusively for teens ages 14 to 17. A new resident camp located in the Columbia Gorge east of Portland, Ore., will offer 7- and a 14-day sessions this month devoted to the fine art of climbing.

The Teen Climbing Camp will be based at Lyle High School, in Lyle, Washington, on the Columbia River. The camp is the inspiration of Dr. Robert Hanson, Professor-emeritus of San Diego State University. Motivated teens in good standing with their parents, schools and communities may qualify for a 50% scholarship. (For more information: [www.ColumbiaGorgeTeenCamps.com](http://www.ColumbiaGorgeTeenCamps.com) or call Jan Mayer, camp director, 801 679 9099).

### **QUOTE OF THE MONTH**

“How I long for the freedom of a bivouac in the desert, in that unfathomable expanse where, savoring my freedom from the thousands of little things that torture people here, I would roll out my bed at the end of a long day's march with my possessions, my camels, and my horse around me.

– Heinrich Barth, excerpted from *A Labyrinth of Kingdoms: 10,000 Miles Through Islamic Africa* by Steve Kemper (W.W. Norton, 2012)

In 1849 Heinrich Barth joined a small British expedition to Islamic north and central Africa. His five-and-a-half year, 10,000-mile adventure ranks among the greatest journeys in the annals of exploration. His feats rival, if not surpass, those of the most famous names in 19th century African travel: Park, Burton, Speke, Livingstone, Stanley, Baker, and Cameron. (See related review in this issue's Expedition Ink).

### **EXPEDITION FOCUS**

#### **Former Explorers Club President and Husband Open Schools in China and Myanmar**

Former Explorers Club president, Lorie Karnath, and her husband and fellow Club member Robert Roethenmund, have worked to build and foster a number of schools in remote regions of China and Myanmar, in several cases where no schools have existed at all. This effort combines the couple's exploration experience with their desire to foster education.

In 2011, they opened the Tiber School in southern China's Yunnan province. This school project represented a completely new facility located close to China's Vietnam border and includes a dormitory, kitchen and washrooms providing room and board for around 300 students.

Last March, following a three-year stint as Explorers Club president, Karnath opened the Peace School near the city of Mangshi, formerly Lu Xi Shi, located along the southwestern frontier of China. The region contiguous with Burma is represented by

approximately 50% minorities. Beyond Mangshi, Yunnan's capital, the state is sparsely populated and the region remains diverse throughout. The area is remote, rural and quite poor, Karnath reports. The annual per capita disposable income per rural resident is estimated at approximately 3,100 yuan (\$443). The education level for the region is well below China's national average for schooling.

Near term future school projects are slated for other areas within China's Yunnan Province, although sites outside of Yunnan are also being evaluated.

In Myanmar, Karnath and Roethenmund have also supported a school and orphanage for years. Last November they were among a group representing the first private western boat to travel along the relatively untouched and volatile Rakhine coast of Myanmar delivering supplies to roadless inland schools.

Karnath, a resident of Berlin and New York, believes that it is "by investing in and teaching others that we have the best chance ultimately of preserving our planet, its peoples and other species."

Karnath was recently injured in a parasailing accident in southern Spain and expects to be back on her feet later this summer. We wish her a speedy recovery. (For more information: Lorie Karnath, lkarnath@yahoo.com)

## **MEDIA MATTERS**

Lots of climbing profiles in the news these past few months, pointing to the increased popularity of the sport as well as a public that breathlessly awaits the latest grim news from Everest each spring climbing season.

### **Honnold Reveals Paycheck**

Glad to see that climbers are starting to make some real money these days. In a profile of Alex Honnold in the *New York Times* (June 16), Tim Neville reports the famed 26-year-old professional climber now earns six figures a year from speaking engagements and sponsors like The North Face, La Sportiva and Black Diamond. Neville writes, "Honnold has become the closest thing to a celebrity that American rock climbing offers, with fawning fans who rush in to take pictures and get autographs."

Neville tagged along with Sender Films to record Honnold's successful ascent of the three biggest rock faces in Yosemite, alone and in less than 24 hours – the sheer walls of Mount Watkins, El Capitan and Half Dome. Toughest challenge was on Watkins when hordes of wingless insects called silverfish poured down the rock in biblical proportions.

Neville writes, "There Honnold was, dangling by his fingertips, with inch-long arthropods wiggling into his ears, tickling his neck and probing his mouth with wispy antennae."

In classic Honnold understatement, the climber is quoted, "It was heinous. At any given point I had dozens of them on me. But what are you going to do?"

Honnold completed the spectacular enchainment – what climbers call a “link-up” – in about 19 hours.

### **Tiny Hands**

Ashima Shiraishi is an 11-year-old climber from New York City who made a name for herself by conquering some of the sport’s most difficult climbs. According to a story by Julie Bosman in the *New York Times* (May 13), three days after she arrived at Hueco Tanks last spring, a mecca for bouldering enthusiasts 30 miles northeast of El Paso, she stunned the bouldering world by climbing Crown of Aragorn, an exceedingly difficult route that requires climbers to contort their bodies and hang practically upside down by their fingers as they navigate a rock that juts out from the ground at a 45-degree angle.

On a scale of V0 to V16 that governs bouldering, it was a V13, a level that only a few female climbers had reached before. Her accomplishments place the pre-teen among the elites in the sport. Physically, children and teenagers are thought to have advantages over adults: their small hands and feet allow them to use holds that adults cannot, according to Bosman.

Said Kynan Waggoner, director of operations for USA Climbing, “The best young climbers climb like shrunken adults – they don’t move like children.”

Waggoner continues, “Their coordination is like a fully formed adult. Their balance is better; their agility is better. They just look like little men or little women. Everything is precise; everything is calculated. That’s how Ashima climbs.”

After completing Crown of Aragorn, Shiraishi tells the *Times*, “It felt so good. I didn’t think I could do it. Next year, I want to do something even harder.”

### **Everest Makes a Fashion Statement**

“We were looking at Everest covered in snow. It was so pristine and majestic,” said Proenza Schouler designer Lazaro Hernandez in the *Wall Street Journal* (May 19-20). The snowy image was the inspiration for the flurry of white looks that kicked off the designer’s fall 2012 runway show. “We wanted to literally have a white canvas with no texture or color, and focus on shape,” Hernandez tells writer Alexa Brazilian. The *Journal* predicts more designers this fall will be stripping their collections down to monochromatic looks in muted tones.

### **Everest Warning: “The Mountain is Dangerously Alive”**

Guide, author and climber Freddie Wilkinson of Madison, N.H., tried to insert some sanity in an otherwise insane, overcrowded Everest climbing season. He writes in the *New York Times* (May 18), that the risks this year have never been greater. “Two intersecting trends are to blame: the rising number of people attempting the mountain,

and the cumulative effects of global warming which is slowly, yet steadily drying out the Himalayas, resulting in rockfalls, avalanches and serac collapses.” This season, he says, “the mountain has been dangerously alive.”

### **Sea Mail**

Harvey Bennett, 61, has spent the last five decades, since childhood, putting messages into bottles and tossing them adrift from the eastern end of Long Island. Of the hundreds he’s sent into the waves over the past half-century, roughly 50 have been found, according to Corey Kilgannon’s story in the *New York Times* (June 24). The furthest were found in Bermuda and England; recipients are sent a reward: a fly-fishing lure from his tackle shop called, naturally enough, The Tackle Shop.

“It’s a primitive way of communicating, but it works,” he said. In case you want to get into the act, Bennett advises that glass bottles like Coronas or Cokes are the slowest, while plastic ones travel much faster. “You can see them literally skipping across the surface with the wind.”

Bennett, who along with other East Enders are known locally as Bonackers, says, “It’s a tremendous thrill to throw a bottle in the ocean and get a phone call from some guy in Bermuda ... then you talk to him and find you have things in common and you strike up a friendship.”

### **Ravenous Appetite for Shark Shows**

“If there is one thing voracious viewers of science TV can’t get enough of, it is shark video,” writes Gwen Shrift in PhillyBurbs.com (June 24).

“This has caused inflation in marine pseudo-research, a genre defined by a guy with a lot of expensive photographic equipment fearlessly declaring he is determined to find out what happens when he drags a haunch of raw beef behind his boat.

“As anyone with the brains of a sardine could tell him, a shark brandishing enormous, razor-sharp teeth will fling him or herself onto the beef, or ham as the case may be, then rip it to shreds and gulp it down.

“This happens every single time a piece of raw or even cooked meat goes over the side of a boat. Nevertheless, the resulting pictures are always touted as a great zoological discovery.”

Shrift continues, “I say we should all move beyond our amazement at the shark’s nutritional choices, and admit what we really like: pictures of omnipotent, remorseless predators showing their teeth. Especially when we are reclining on a sofa, miles from the ocean.”

(Read the entire post here: [http://www.phillyburbs.com/blogs/news\\_columnists/gwen-shrift/a-ravenous-appetite-for-shark-shows/article\\_39abb674-5ad8-5796-9696-b9126c8aa884.html](http://www.phillyburbs.com/blogs/news_columnists/gwen-shrift/a-ravenous-appetite-for-shark-shows/article_39abb674-5ad8-5796-9696-b9126c8aa884.html))

## **NatGeo Seeks A New “Q”**

National Geographic is seeking to hire a multi-disciplinary team leader with multiple extreme and expert outdoor skills to guide challenging field expeditions around the world. The candidate must be experienced navigating through remote areas, able to handle rapidly changing situations, passionate about exploration and adventure and as comfortable on camera as in the field. The job involves full-time employment with a minimum one-year contract.

Also needed is a tech wiz to develop, customize, deploy and modify equipment for field scientists exploring new frontiers. In effect the candidate would become National Geographic's version of James Bond's "Q" - an imagineer who will not just be a lab-based visionary, but also a field engineer, called on to create and operate equipment on site across multiple expeditions. (For more information: [NGTeamLeader@gmail.com](mailto:NGTeamLeader@gmail.com)).

## **WEB WATCH**

### **Expedition 1000 Completes Another 1,000-mile Mission**

Dave Cornthwaite recently succeeded in piloting a pedal-powered four-wheeler 1,000 miles over 27 days. The cheerful Brit averaged 40 miles a day and was nearly killed midway through his mission when he was run off the road by a car, but he came away unscathed. In late May, he safely made it to Miami from Memphis in one piece, according to The Adventure Blog.

For some, this sort of adventure would be the trip of a lifetime, but arrival in Miami marked the completion of Cornthwaite's sixth such 1,000-mile expedition.

His goal is to complete 25 non-motorized journeys—all part of an ambitious compilation of 1,000-mile missions called Expedition1000. His previous exploits include skateboarding the width of Australia, standup paddling the length of the Mississippi and riding a tandem bicycle from Vancouver to Vegas.

The project, once completed, will take Cornthwaite across three oceans and to every continent.

Cornthwaite has broken several records along the way, but says his larger goal through Expedition1000 is to raise one million Euros (US \$1.2 million) for charity. Cornthwaite has parlayed his experiences into a book (with two more on the way) and helps support his nomadic lifestyle with motivational speaking gigs.

His next mission – swimming down 1,000 miles of the Missouri River – is scheduled to start in August. (For more information: [www.davecornthwaite.com](http://www.davecornthwaite.com))

## **EXPEDITION INK**

*A Labyrinth of Kingdoms – 10,000 Miles Through Islamic Africa*  
By Steve Kemper (W.W. Norton & Co., 2012)



Reviewed by Robert F. Wells

In the middle of the 19th century, central Africa was but a blank page to the Western World. Europeans knew it was there. But they had no clue what lay within the Dark Continent. An itch for empire was in full bloom. So off they went into the night. Soon, everyone would hear of Livingston, Stanley and a small collection of other explorers. But another would remain a relatively invisible enigma – Heinrich Barth.

And so, in 1850 here's where a five-year tale of exploratory exasperation begins. Barth, a German, is hired by the British Government to poke into areas around Islamic north and central Africa and discover opportunities for "development." Little did England's Foreign Office know what it was getting into. Barth, to be charitable, was an odd duck. A loner. A palpably persnickety scientist devoted to advancing knowledge, not his own personal gain. He gobbled up alien cultures and tongues ... and recorded his discoveries in excruciating detail — eventually penning five volumes titled "Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa" ... and other writings on obscure African dialects.

Barth's tale is one of marauding mosquitoes, camels collapsing from thirst, thieves thriving on anything that moved and foibles of failed communications. (This is the 1850's, after all.) At the time, Barth entered villages as a weird oddity. On one hand, he was a source of intellectual entertainment for local sheiks. On another, he was but a dirty infidel to prevalent local Muslim populations.

For five years – and over 10,000 miles – he unraveled the mysteries of Bornu, Gwandu, Bagirmi, Wadai, Sokoto ... and the list goes on. For historians who think the currently defined nation states of the Middle East and Africa make sense, please take note. Everything over there is tribal. Borders are and always have been fluid, depending upon whose blood is spilt. How naive of us to think we could fluff up the leaders of countries like Libya, Yemen, Somalia and Mali to make them march in a national direction. Silly us.

But back to Steve Kemper's *Labyrinth*. If you have an ounce of historical exploratory curiosity in your veins, course through this forgotten tale. Timbuktu awaits. And you will steep yourself in context as you absorb origins of colonial thought driving European powers deeper into the unknowns of Africa.

*Robert Wells, a member of The Explorers Club since 1991, is a resident of South Londonderry, Vt., and a retired executive of the Young & Rubicam ad agency. Wells is the director of a steel band (see [www.blueflamessteelband.com](http://www.blueflamessteelband.com)) and in 1989, at the age of 45, traveled south by road bike from Canada to Long Island Sound in a single 350-mile, 19-hr., 28-min. push.*

## **BUZZ WORDS**

### **Voluntourism**

Tourism in which travelers do voluntary work to help communities or the environment in the places they are visiting. The Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA) reports that 55% of their members currently run volunteer trips. Of the remaining 45%, 41% of them are considering running volunteer trips in the future.

Reasons cited for this included “growing awareness and demand for ‘giving back’” as well as consumer trends towards local and sustainable initiatives. ATTA members reported their volunteer travelers to be 53.21 percent female and 46.79 male. Just over 12 percent of these consumers were younger than 20 years old, with 20-40 year-olds and 41-60 year olds coming in at almost 33 percent and 34 percent respectively.

The most popular types of volunteer projects offered, respectively, were: working with children and education (tied at 15.27 percent each), environmental protection or recovery (13.99 percent), wildlife recovery or habitats and local job creation or economic projects (tied at 10.18 percent each), and clean water projects (at 7.89 percent).

(See the survey results here: <http://www.adventuretravelnews.com/results-are-in-atta-survey-on-voluntourism>. One good source of information on voluntouring is [www.journeys4good.com](http://www.journeys4good.com)).

## ON THE HORIZON

### Mountain Films at Rubin Museum

The American Alpine Club NY Section is co-sponsoring a series of dramatic, classic mountain films with the Rubin Museum of Art ( 7th Avenue and 17th Street). Each of these feature-length films will be introduced by a knowledgeable AAC member. Schedule this month: *The Mountain* (July 13), *K2* (July 20), and *Seven Years in Tibet* (July 27).

Admission is free with a \$7 bar minimum. Each film begins at 9:30 p.m. Reservations at 212 620 5000.

## EXPEDITION CLASSIFIEDS

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**Ripped From the Pages of *EN*** – Read the book that was spawned by *Expedition News*. Autographed copies of *You Want to Go Where? – How to Get Someone to Pay for the Trip of Your Dreams* (Skyhorse Publishing) – are available to readers for the discounted price of \$14.99 plus \$2.89 s & h (international orders add \$9.95 s & h). If you have a project that is bigger than yourself – a trip with a purpose – learn how it’s possible to generate cash or in-kind (gear) support. Written by *EN* editor Jeff Blumenfeld, it is based upon three decades helping sponsors select the right exploration projects to support. Payable by PayPal to [blumassoc@aol.com](mailto:blumassoc@aol.com), or by check to *Expedition News*, 1281 East Main Street – Box 10, Stamford, CT 06902

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