

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.

MIKE HORN PLANS TOP TO BOTTOM CIRCUMNAVIGATION

Explorer and adventurer Mike Horn is planning a three-year circumnavigation of the world starting in March 2008. This will be accomplished without any motor-powered transport, over the North Pole and South Pole, crossing the seven continents, passing numerous islands and sailing across several oceans. The 2008-2011 Global Expedition will be divided into seven stages. Each stage will represent one of the seven continents (Africa, Europe, North America, South America, Australasia, Asia and Antarctica). Means of transport will include sailing, walking, canoeing, kayaking, kite surfing, walking under water, skiing and any locomotion using animals where available and where necessary.

Mike Horn was born in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 1966. After studying Human Movement Science at the University of Stellenbosch, he left South Africa in 1990 to travel to Europe, where he started work as a ski instructor, river and canyoning guide.

In 1991, he left for a paragliding and rafting expedition in the Peruvian Andes. On his return he was asked to become a member of the "Sector No Limits" sports team, and shortly afterwards descended the Mont Blanc Glacier on a body board, ending at the French Riviera.

In 1995, Mike opened the "No Limits" Outdoor Activity Sports Centre in Switzerland. It was during this time that Mike broke the world record for the highest descent (72 feet) of a waterfall with a hydrospeed, on the Pacuare River in Costa Rica. A hydrospeed is sort of a kick board on steroids; you hold onto this river float for dear life while wearing a wetsuit, helmet, PFD and fins.

In 1997, Mike launched his first big expedition: the six-month solo traverse of the South American continent. He left

EVEREST ROUND UP

Everest has become way too popular, and the expeditions too numerous, for us to ever cover it completely. If you need a blow-by-blow of every footstep, see everestnews.com or munteverest.net. Still, the mountain and its appeal continue to fascinate us. Here's a round up of some of the more interesting people and projects this year:

Apa's Achievement – A veteran Sherpa guide scaled Mount Everest for a record 17th time last month, beating his own previous record, mountaineering officials said. Mountaineering legend Apa, who goes by one name, reached the 29,035-foot summit with seven other Sherpas and a Western climber, said Ang Tshering, president of the Nepal Mountaineering Association. Apa, 46, is one of the most respected climbers in the mountaineering community. His closest competitor – fellow Sherpa guide Chewang Nima, 41 – scaled the peak a 14th time last year.

Apa was leading the SuperSherpas Expedition (see related story) on a charity climb to raise education funds for children of the Nepalese mountain guides. He and his teammates had set out to make a documentary about the climb and all money raised will go toward providing better education and health care for children in their community at the foothills of the mountain.

SuperSherpas – "We are on the summit. We are all on the summit." Two simple sentences signaled a notable feat last month when Apa Sherpa and Lhakpa Gelu Sherpa, along with four other Sherpas, reached the top of the world. Their successful summit on Everest realized a goal the SuperSherpas Expedition set to increase awareness of the Sherpa people native to Nepal who have played a role in every summit of Everest since the first in 1953, according to a story in *The Salt Lake Tribune* (May 16).

on foot from the Pacific Ocean and climbed to the source of the Amazon River high in the Peruvian Andes. From here he descended the 7,000 km of the Amazon river on a hydro-speed, until he reached the Atlantic Ocean.

In 1999, Mike launched another big adventure: the circumnavigation of the world along the equator. He baptized the expedition "Latitude Zero," traveling alone around the world in the 17 months from June 1999 to October 2000, and without any form of motorized transport.

The next expedition was in 2002, when Horn attempted a solo and unassisted crossing of the North Pole. Much to his disappointment, this trip was aborted 45 days later because of bad frostbite to his fingers.

One month after having the tips of his fingers amputated, Horn set off again, and this time on his biggest adventure: the circumnavigation of the Arctic Circle, solo and without the aid of any motorized transport or dogs. This expedition was called "Arktos" and took Horn a little over two years to complete, once again setting another record by being the first ever person to complete, non-stop, the 20,000 km route around the Arctic Circle, enduring two harsh Arctic winters with temperatures reaching as low as minus 76 degrees F.

With still a strong desire to reach the North Pole itself, Horn - along with Norwegian explorer Borge Ousland - decided to reach the North Pole on foot. On March 23, 2006, after 60 days and 5 hours of walking, Horn and Ousland finally accomplished what they set out to achieve. They are reportedly the first people ever to walk to the North Pole in the sunless Arctic winter, walking 10-12 hours a day pulling their sledges laden with 353 lbs. of equipment in the extreme Arctic temperatures and in 24 hours of complete darkness for the majority of the expedition.

Horn lives in Switzerland with his wife, Cathy, and two daughters, Annika and Jessica (14 and 12 years old). (For more information: www.mikehorn.com). ▲▲

Quote of the Month

"Success in life depends on how well you handle Plan B. Anyone can handle Plan A."

- Edie Widder, Ph.D., research scientist in deep-sea biology and conservation. Winner of the WINGS 2006 Sea Award, she has been on more than 50 research cruises and over 250 dives in research submersibles. Her best discoveries were bioluminescent suckers on a deep-sea octopus, and a 6-ft. squid never before discovered.

"If there is anything good that comes from our summit ... our goal would be to create a more peaceful world," Apa and Lhakpa said from top. "Our second goal would be to continue in Sir Edmund Hillary's footsteps and contribute to education and improving health care in the Khumbu region and for all Nepal people in the remote regions."

A documentary film is being made about the expedition, which *The Salt Lake Tribune* also has chronicled for the past month at <http://sherpas.sltrib.com> with stories, a blog, photo galleries and video clips, according to reporter Brett Prettyman.

Free of constraints and obligations to get clients to the top, the Sherpas basically raced from Camp 2 to the summit, passing other climbers in tents who must acclimate to the high altitude, something the Sherpas did not have to do.

Youngest Seven Summiteer – With her successful summit of Everest last month, an American teenager has reset the bar for the Seven Summits challenge. According to 7summits.com, a Web site that tracks those who have accomplished the feat, 18-year-old Samantha Larson has become the youngest person to complete the circuit. Larson replaced British climber Rhys Miles Jones, who was the former youngest, completing the challenge at age 20. Jones's record only stood since 2006.

Larson phoned her mother halfway down the mountain to deliver the good news. The Long Beach, Calif., teen took a year off before college to climb some of the world's tallest peaks with her father, David Larson. Samantha has been climbing since childhood. She ascended South America's Aconcagua at age 13 and Africa's Mount Kilimanjaro at 14.

Sherpa-Like Endurance – When he reached the top of Everest in May, International Mountain Guides' (IMG) Dave Hahn became the only western climber to have summited Everest nine times. He has a long history of leading some of the most difficult rescues in mountaineering history. Among them is the highest known rescue of five climbers on the North Ridge of Everest just below the summit in 2001 for which he and three other IMG guides received the American Alpine Club's David A. Sowles Memorial Award (established in 1981), according to a dispatch from Eric Simonson, IMG Director.

Everest 5.5 Climbers Participate in Rescue – Denver schoolteacher Mike Haugen, 30, successfully summited Mount Everest in the early morning (Nepal time) on May 21 as an estimated 7,000 schoolchildren followed along as part of The Coleman Company Inc.'s Web-based Everest 5.5 Challenge (www.colemaneverest.com). On his descent,

Haugen and his teammates assisted an unidentified climber from another team, who had been abandoned at the Balcony (27,500-ft.) and was in critical condition.

In his dispatch posted just after midnight (Nepal time) on May 22, Haugen says he and climbing partner Casey Grom, had the most grueling day of their lives. "Summitting Mount Everest was the easy part," he wrote. After spending a half-hour on top in pleasant weather, they became involved in a life-or-death rescue. "Our nine-hour Mount Everest climb day turned into 24 hours of climbing with the rescue being a grueling descent with a patient to Camp 3, where we dropped her off with some very able doctors," Haugen reported.

The sick climber was left in the hands of the Caudwell Xtreme Everest Expedition (www.xtreme-everest.co.uk) whose goal at press time was to place a research team on the summit of Everest and make the first-ever measurement of the level of oxygen in human blood at this altitude. ▲

EXPEDITION FOCUS

An Evening with the Great Explainer

Neil deGrasse Tyson, 47, director of the Hayden Planetarium in New York, is like the college professor we all wished we had. A talk by this esteemed award-winning author and astrophysicist is more like a performance than a lecture. One part scientist, the other space evangelist, he works the room like a star struck Sheeky Greene. One minute he's doing a little dance to show how Mars, the moon and Venus tug on the earth. Then with broad hand gestures, he snaps his fingers, gazes up and motions heavenwards with his wireless mike.

During a May 16 dinner at The Explorers Club, Tyson was introduced as a "shining star ... full of the flash and dash of a comet streaking across the sky." In fact, Tyson not only has an asteroid named after him (13123 Tyson), but was honored as the "sexiest astrophysicist alive" by *People* magazine in 2000. ("I don't know who I could have possibly beaten out," he mused. "Maybe Stephen Hawking").

Just last month, *Time* named him to the *Time 100* – the list of men and women whose power, talent or moral example is transforming the world. The magazine said in part, "You can think of Neil deGrasse Tyson as the Carl Sagan of the 21st century—as long as you envision a Sagan who's muscular, African American and as cool as his predecessor was geeky. While Sagan used to appear on the Tonight Show to chat professorially with Johnny Carson, Tyson trades quips with Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert."

Time goes on to call Tyson, "... the undisputed inheritor of his late predecessor's (Sagan) mantle as the great explainer of all things cosmic."

At The Explorers Club, Tyson explained that the "tools of science allow us to go beyond our senses ... telescopes are like bigger eyeballs." He calls the Hubble Space Telescope, "the greatest scientific instrument there ever was. It worked its way into the hearts and minds of the public."

Tyson bragged that astrophysicists are stingy with words, using the fewest words to explain the most complex ideas. He cites as examples, "Big Bang," "Black Hole," "Sunspots," and "Red Giant." "The universe is hard enough to understand. Let's not allow our lexicon to be a barrier to that knowledge."

A stickler for detail, Tyson explained how the sky scene in the blockbuster film *Titanic* was wrong at one point in the movie. After the dogged pursuit of accuracy, he finally convinced director James Cameron to correct the scene in time for the 10th anniversary *Titanic* DVD.

Tyson defended the demotion of Pluto from planetary status. "I received a pile of letters from angry schoolchildren about it," he confided. "But only Americans care because this is Mickey's dog we're talking about. Europeans don't care and Pluto will get over it, even if the public won't."

Tyson tells *Time* magazine, "If we ever needed a scientifically literate population, it's now. I get enormous satisfaction from knowing I'm doing something for society." ▲

CLIMBING FOR DOLLARS

Shipman-Tilman Picks Six – While they venture off into opposite directions on the compass and have vastly different objectives, there is a common thread running through the six expeditions that have been selected for Shipton-Tilman grants for 2007. All of them are made up of small teams of explorers, men and women who believe that reaching a better understanding of our planet is not a spectator sport with guides, pilots, and large support crews in tow.

Four two-person teams, one with three members and another with four, make up the roster of grant recipients. To help these small teams reach beyond the limits of their personal resources, W.L. Gore and Associates, inventors of GORE-TEX® fabric, is once again awarding grants totaling \$30,000 to help finance the expeditions.

The annual Shipton-Tilman Grant program was established by Gore as a tribute to the spirit of adventure embodied by legendary explorers Eric Shipton (b. 1907) and Bill Tilman (b. 1897). The annual program provides funds to be divided among three to six expeditions that are most in harmony with Shipton and Tilman's philosophies. The recipients are:

- **First Ascent of Beka Brakai Chhok**

A two-woman team of New Zealand's most respected mountaineers sets its sights on the unexplored peak of Beka Brakai Chhok (BBC) in the northern territory of Pakistan. In preparation for the climb, Patricia Deavoll and Lydia Bradley have been unable to find any record of previous attempts on the mountain by climbing groups of any size or gender. In addition to making the first ascent of BBC, the team's goals include promoting other small expeditions to challenging locations and providing independent role models for other women looking to create more gender balance in adventure sports.

- **Fortress of the Shafaat**

High in the Shafaat Valley of Kashmir, India, stands a massive, unclimbed and unnamed mountain more than 7000 meters (22,966 feet) high. This fortress of granite is the objective of climbers Jonathan Copp and Mike Pennings. The peak sits in the disputed territory of Kashmir, a frequent sight of clashes between India and Pakistan. With hostilities currently calm, the team looks to make the ascent this summer with just two people, two ropes and a light alpine approach to minimize the impact of the mountain. By exploring this newer region, the team hopes to open additional climbing opportunities for future alpinists.

- **Journey on the Wild Coast**

This journey is an unprecedented 4,000-mile expedition along the northern edge of the Pacific Ocean from Puget Sound to the Bering Sea. The husband and wife team of Bretwood Highman and Erin McKittrick will step out of their Seattle home and undertake the entire nine-month trek under their own power, whether by foot, packraft (a packable raft) or skis. The vast majority of the route will snake through remote wilderness and some of the most rugged terrain in the world. The planned terminus is Unimak Island, the western most in the Aleutian chain. The team will literally walk as far west as possible on the North American continent relying on outposts and villages for supplies. Along the way they will raise awareness of environmental issues.

- **K7 West Expedition**

The Charakusa Valley of Pakistan is a magnet to alpinists. Within a few miles of each other, giant granite peaks lurch

to the sky, many unclimbed and known simply by a number. One of these, K7 West, is the objective of the two-person climbing team of Kelly Cordes and Scott DeCapio. K7 West has been attempted twice, including a team of Japanese climbers in 1982 and more recently a team in 2004 that was spurned by bad weather 984 feet from the summit. Cordes and DeCapio hope to not only reach the peak, but also do so in a lightweight alpine style. With so few unclimbed peaks remaining, the team feels it's more important than ever to minimize their impact on the mountain.

- **British 2007 Manamcho Expedition**

Historically, Tibet has been challenging both physically and bureaucratically. The hurdles have prevented wider exploration of the country for most western teams. The region contains 160 peaks over 6000 meters (19,685 feet) high, yet only three have been climbed. Mick Fowler and his team of climbers has maneuvered through the process of gaining permits and visas and will attempt the first ascent of Manamcho 6264 meters (20,551 feet). Working as two, two-man teams, the climbers will use pure alpine style, meaning no fixed ropes and all team members will climb every pitch. Fowler believes the ascent of Manamcho will provide information critical to unlocking other peaks immediately to the south and west of their objective.

- **Paddle to the Peaks Greenland Expedition**

The idea for this expedition began four years ago as Kelly Ryan and Brad Cabot sailed near the west coast of Greenland. Joined now by Althea Rogers, the three-person team will explore the western edge of Greenland by kayak. They will stop and climb as many as 18 peaks during the adventure. The entire trip will be self-propelled, requiring the team to carry the bare minimum of gear. By reaching each destination by kayak, the team will bring new meaning to "climbing from the ground up," beginning each ascent from sea level. While being the first people to ascend many of the western peaks, the team also looks to witness the fragility of the polar region firsthand to help carry the message home.

(For more information: www.gore-tex.com). ▲

EXPEDITION INK

Brothers on the Bashkaus – Speaking of the Gore Shipton-Tilman award, former winner Eugene Buchanan has written a book about his trek, *Brothers on the Bashkaus* (Fulcrum Press). After receiving the first Gore grant offered to paddlers, this editor in chief of *Paddling Life* magazine, along with three colleagues embark on a 26-day whitewater trip down Siberia's treacherous Bashkaus River.

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According to the May 4 review by Laurence Washington in the *Rocky Mountain News*, while the team was outfitted with some of the best commercial outdoor gear, Buchanan and company soon found themselves stripped down to the bare necessities to survive. At first, the Americans feel as though they've been kidnapped by strangers who barely speak English, but they all become brothers as the Latvians protect them from outraged train conductors, bus drivers who would overcharge them, and marauding horsemen. The adventure down the Bashkaus solidifies their bond. "River not know or care if you are Russian, Latvian, or American," their guide tells the group. "All she knows is you must be strong to run her."

Washington's favorite excerpt: "Soup, of course, is a misnomer," Buchanan writes. "Especially when, like today's, it involves fish. Like a scene from *The Flintstones*, each day's catch is simply dropped into a pot of boiling water, head bones, tail, eyeballs, and all. This makes hot fish water - not to be confused with hot fish soup. But it's calories, and that's what matters."

Washington writes about the book, "Buchanan introduces American paddlers to the resourceful former Soviet Union way of rafting: living off the land, everything from paddles to pontoons handmade from scratch." ▲▲

BUZZ WORDS

Ethnosphere – Coinage by the anthropologist Wade Davis to describe the "cultural web" of unique attributes and customs around the world, from language to music to food to handicrafts. Increasingly, it's a key focus in travel. (Source: *The New York Times*, May 20, 2007).

Elmering – What others call mentoring, amateur ham operators call "Elmering." Icom, the radio manufacturer, even has an Elmer Q & A Web site. (Source: The Explorers Club Radio Committee which helps potential new amateur radio licensees find study materials and provides incentives, guidance and practical experience).

Schoening's Belay – In 1953, seven Americans led by Charles Houston and Robert Bates, attempted K2's first ascent. At 25,000 feet, altitude sickness immobilized climber Art Gilkey who would die, it was determined, unless he were immediately evacuated. K2's vicious terrain and weather made such an attempt virtual suicide, but Gilkey's comrades never hesitated. At 24,700 feet, five of them, joined by ropes, fell while trying to lower Gilkey down a 45-degree slope of ice in a howling storm. The last man standing, Pete

Schoening, jammed his ax behind a rock, held on for dear life, and saved everyone from certain death. To this day, "Schoening's Belay" resides in the pantheon of mountaineering feats. (Source: *K2: The Savage Mountain* by Charles S. Houston and Robert H. Bates (McGraw-Hill, 1954). ▲▲

MEDIA MATTERS

Good Shopping – Skip Horner of Victor, Mont., who runs Skip Horner Worldwide (www.skiphorn-er.com), was featured in the May 2007 *Costco Connection*, the big box wholesaler's membership publication. "I like finding my way in wild country, but I love taking others with me. I was born to guide," says Horner, a certified alpine guide. His trips include forays into the world's most remote mountain ranges, hikes across camel crossings of the Sahara, treks across the high Himalayas, walking safaris in Africa and unusual cultural and wildlife expeditions. "For all my expeditions, I buy my food at Costco," Horner says. "Most of my menu is available there, and planning trips wouldn't be the same without Costco." We just wonder how he fits a box of 48 paper towels and quart-size Tabasco sauce into his packs. ▲▲

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Editor's note: The following letter is in response to Fritz Selby's letter in the May issue of EN in which he believes many research expeditions are "... jaunts meant for personal enjoyment."

"I have just returned from Everest volunteering as a subject for the Xtreme Everest study. In all 204 persons were probed, bled and tested. It is by far the most extensive high altitude test ever conducted and in my opinion (and I have seen hundreds of expedition proposals), this is one of the most scientific studies I have ever seen.

"People would be mistaken to think that this was just an excuse to go to Everest. The study was conducted by intensive care doctors from the UK to understand the effects of hypoxic conditions on their patients. When all the data is analyzed it may very well save the life of some of your readers."

Richard C. Wiese
Former president
The Explorers Club
New York, N.Y.

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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, 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.

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).

Papua New Guinea Trek – On September 6, 2007, an expedition made up of 10 men and women will meet in Papua New Guinea for a two-week trek through rainforests and highlands. The group will visit with native villagers including two villages not previously visited by Westerners. They will attend a native festival where tribes perform dances and mock war games. There are major opportunities for photography. Porters will carry all gear and cost is expected to be about \$2,800 excluding flights to Port Moresby, PNG. Space is limited. Frederick Selby, 212 988 9539, fselby@nyc.rr.com. ▲

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