

EXPEDITION NEWS

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EXPEDITION NEWS, now in its 16th 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.

SOLAR-POWERED YACHT FOLLOWS THE SUN

Intensive trials are under way as the world's largest solar-powered yacht prepares to circumnavigate the globe. As heavy as a whale and 98-ft. long, the vessel is adorned with photovoltaic panels large enough to cover over two tennis courts – which its crew hopes will enable it to complete the 31,100-mile journey fueled by nothing but energy from the sun. The trip is planned for spring 2011.

"This is not just an adventure story," skipper Raphael Domjan told CNN. "We want to show the world that we have the technology right now to change how we do things."

Energy captured from the sun and stored in the world's largest lithium ion battery will power a noise-free, pollution-free electric motor during the estimated 160-day voyage.

The boat, christened *Turanor* after a word meaning "power of the sun" in JRR Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, is Domjan's brainchild.

The Swiss-born former-mountain guide, 37, will be joined at the helm of *Turanor* by Gerard d'Aboville, the first man to row across the Atlantic and the Pacific. They will be assisted by two engineers. The \$16 million vessel is a catamaran that will save energy by slicing rather than riding the waves. The boat will travel at an average speed of 7.5 knots – about the same as an oil-tanker.

The crew will follow a meticulously planned east to west route across the equator to capture as much valuable sunshine as possible. Departing from the Mediterranean Sea, *Turanor* will travel next spring across the Atlantic and through the Panama Canal, before traversing the Pacific and Indian oceans and sailing down the Suez Canal. (For more information: www.planetsolar.org).

ARCTIC PLANKTON PROVIDES CLUES TO EFFECTS OF GLOBAL WARMING

In October, Perrin Roosevelt Ireland, a 25-year-old biology graduate of Brown University, is conducting a plankton net collection in the Arctic Ocean around Svalbard. Plankton can provide a microcosmic understanding of the ecosystem-wide effects of a change in ice cover in the Arctic.

Plankton provides a critical link in the polar marine ecosystem's food chain, yet thus far has not been effectively documented. If successful, Ireland, who resides in Nashville, will provide a baseline understanding of plankton by which to assess the impact of global warming. His findings will be contributed to the Census of Marine Life's Arctic Ocean Diversity Project, and will form the basis of a public outreach effort.

Samples will be collected along the western coast of the archipelago of Svalbard via net drag over a month-long expedition aboard a research schooner that's part of the non-profit The Arctic Circle annual residency program (www.thearcticcircle.org). Funding of \$12,647 is being sought. (For more information: Perrin.Ireland@gmail.com, <http://smalltender.blogspot.com>, 203 273 2823).

EXPEDITION UPDATE

Extreme Skier Heads to K2 – Swedish ski mountaineer Fredrik Ericsson embarked last month on his dream of becoming the first person to ski the world's three highest mountains: Mount Everest, K2 and Kangchenjunga (see *EN*, June 2009). Fredrik Ericsson is one of the world's leading high altitude skiers with ski descents of some of the highest mountains on earth, including Peak Somoni, Shisha Pangma, Gasherbrum 2, Laila Peak and Dhaulagiri. After K2, he's focused on skiing Mount Everest in autumn 2010, and Kangchenjunga in autumn 2011.

He will be joined on the K2 attempt by American alpine journalist Trey Cook. The remarkably steep pyramid has no easy route to the top. Climbing the mountain is further complicated by unusually severe and unpredictable weather systems.

K2 was first climbed in 1954 by the Italians Achille Compagnoni and Lino Lacedelli. Since then, The Savage Mountain – as it has come to be called due to the extraordinarily high number of deaths on the mountain – has been climbed on 10 different routes and only around 200 people have summited. Although several of the world's best ski mountaineers have tried no one has ever made a complete ski descent from the summit of K2. Sponsors include: Dynastar, Tierra, Osprey, Hestra, Scarpa, Grivel and Adidas Eyewear. (For more information: www.fredrikericsson.com).

EVEREST ROUND-UP

Want to impress a climber? An attempt on K2 gains enormous respect in the climbing community, much more than an Everest climb. While Everest was once the zenith of

climbing achievement, the mountain continues to capture world attention because, well, because it's there. This climbing season drew a mountain of media exposure thanks, in part to a young teenager's successful summit, the continued search for Mallory and Irvine's camera, and the usual wackiness on the conga line to the top. Here's a totally subjective look at some recent highlights in and around the peak:

Whew! – The climbing world drew a collective sigh of relief when word came that 13-year-old climbing prodigy Jordan Romero of Big Bear, Calif., successfully summited on May 21. The eighth grade teenager, who climbed with his father, Paul, 41, his father's companion Karen Lundgren, 45, and three Sherpa guides, is three years younger than previous record holder Temba Tshering of Nepal. Romero's success means he remains just one summit away from his overall quest of reaching the highest peaks on all seven continents. The final mountain in his Seven Summits quest is 16,050-ft./ (4892 m) Vinson Massif in Antarctica, which he hopes to tackle at the end of the year.

Had the outcome not been as successful, you can be sure there would have been fierce collective hand wringing around the world. Jordan's supporters and fans posted congratulations on his Web site (www.jordanromero.com), but the expedition has attracted criticism from some mountaineers, who ask, "how young is too young?"

"At 13, one lacks the mental and physical maturity that comes with age to tackle climbs in such altitude," Ang Tshering Sherpa, president of the Nepal Mountaineering Association, told AFP.

While some in the scientific and climbing communities worry about the effects of severe altitude on children, there is no conclusive evidence that an adolescent is at greater risk of getting acute mountain sickness, a potentially fatal condition that mountaineers can face at high altitude, according to an article by Stefani Jackenthal in *The New York Times* (May 19).

The teen's father, Paul Romero, who is a critical care flight paramedic specializing in altitude physiology and care, tells AP, "It's important to remember, this is all Jordan's idea and Jordan brought us here. It's definitely not about a dad dragging his kid to do these quests and do these mountains. That's a hard thing for people to get their heads around," he said. "People that know us ... understand it very well. They can see into his eyes and understand how driven he is."

He later tells *ABC 20/20* (June 4), "Want to talk irresponsible? Giving a kid a Big Mac for dinner is worse than taking Jordan to Everest."

SuperSuit Not So Super – Expedition Hanesbrands' Mount Everest climbing team, led by international mountaineer Jamie Clarke, reached the summit on May 17, celebrating a 30-month endeavor to design and test innovative apparel and inspire others to achieve their own self-defined summits.

After an 11-hour climb from Camp 4 on Everest's South Col route, Clarke, 42, of

Calgary, Alberta, Scott Simper, the Expedition Hanesbrands videographer/photographer from Salt Lake City, and their Sherpa teammates reached the summit. It was Clarke's second summit of Everest.

Clarke and Simper, who wore specially designed Champion and Duofold gear, were joined on the summit by Sherpa teammates Kami Sherpa (11 summits), Pemba Dorje Sherpa (seven summits) and Ang Namgyel Sherpa (five summits).

Clarke tested a high-tech prototype jacket known as the *Champion SuperSuit*, an ultrathin high-altitude extreme weather coat, which uses Aerogel nanotechnology insulation instead of goose down and has a radiant foil layer to retain body heat. Clarke wore the much-heralded outerwear at Everest Camp 3's in subzero temperatures and high winds. But it was apparently not warm enough for the summit; it was left behind on the final push. Earlier this year Champion was touting its SuperSuit as having, "the potential to change the entire outdoor apparel industry," according to GearJunkie.com. (For more information: www.climbwithus.com).

New Non-Sherpa Record – Rainier Mountaineering, Inc. (RMI), Ashford, Wash., announced that when their team of Everest climbers reached the summit on May 25, expedition leader Dave Hahn notched a 12th summit, the record for the most ascents by any non-Sherpa climber. His resume also includes over 250 climbs to the summit of Mt. Rainier, 26 expeditions to Denali with 19 summits, and the record for the most ascents of Vinson Massif in Antarctica – he has reached the summit an impressive 26 times. During the winter months, Hahn works as a ski patroller in Taos, New Mexico. (For more information: www.rmiguide.com).

Mallory to Irvine: "Say Cheese" – Australian mountaineer Duncan Chessell blogged last month, "Did George Mallory summit Mt. Everest in 1924 with Sandy Irvine, 29 years ahead of Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay? The answer could lie with Sandy Irvine's remains: perhaps a scribbled note jammed into his pocket or one of two cameras the pair had with them. Is there a summit shot recorded on film?"

At press time it was still unclear whether Irvine's body was found, especially with reports of a foot of new snow. Earlier Chessell believed that this year, extended high winds of up to 90 mph scouring the face was offering the best chance in decades to carry out the search. There's speculation that even if the camera was found, the team would keep their lips sealed until they were safely out of the country.

Everest Becomes More Dangerous – Mount Everest has become a treacherous climb due to glaciers melting along its slopes, according to a Nepalese Sherpa nicknamed the "Super Sherpa." He ought to know – Apa, a 49-year-old Sherpa (age is approximate, he's not sure of his birth date), has summited 20 times, a record. He said that rising temperatures have melted much of the ice on the steep trail to the summit and climbers are struggling to get traction on the exposed rock surface.

The melting ice has also given way to deep crevasses, and experts have warned that

climbers risk being swept away by "outburst floods" from rising volumes of glacial waters.

"The rising temperature on the mountains has melted much ice and snow on the trail to the summit. It is difficult for climbers to use their crampons on the rocky surfaces," Apa said. A report by scientists at University College London said the Himalayan glaciers are retreating faster than many others around the world, at rates ranging from 10 to 60 meters per year.

Everest After Total Hip Replacement – New York entrepreneur Don Healy, 65, became one of the oldest Americans to scale the mountain last month and is believed to be the first to do so after a total hip replacement (see *EN*, January 2010). To celebrate his achievement, he's giving \$29,035 (one dollar for every foot he climbed) with the help of friends and family to the American Himalayan Foundation, an organization that provides education, health care and preservation services in the Himalayan region. That's on top of roughly \$65,000 he spent to cover the costs of the trip, according to a story in the *Wall Street Journal* by Shelly Banjo.

"It put things in perspective. If my hip surgery in New York was \$50,000, the average surgery at the center is \$150. A little goes a long way in Nepal," the Long Island native says. (For more information: www.everesthiphop.com).

EXPEDITION NOTES

Desert Explorer Decries Destruction of Camel Habitat – The Wild Camel Protection Foundation indicates illegal mining pressures in the Great Gobi Specially Protected Area 'A' in Mongolia, the natural habitat of the critically endangered wild Bactrian camel, are extremely serious and out of control.

The wild Bactrian camel, which acts as an "umbrella" species in this remote and pristine desert, protecting other critically endangered species such as the wild ass, the Gobi bear and the black-tailed gazelle, is under threat in a Protected Area, a National Nature Reserve, according to John Hare, founder of the Wild Camel Protection Foundation based in Kent, England, and noted desert explorer, conservationist and lecturer. Hare's Web site, www.wildcamels.com, provides the opportunity to sponsor a camel for one year for \$5,000.

Over 200 illegal miners, nicknamed "ninjas" have entered the reserve and are using primitive and intensely destructive methods to mine gold. The Park Authorities do not have the financial and/or manpower resources to deal with the problem, which is occurring in a vast area covering over 55,000 square kilometers. The area is littered with rubbish, plastic bags and tins and the desert torn up by vehicle tracks.

There are only 450 wild Bactrian camels in Mongolia and fewer than 600 in northwest China and in both areas they are threatened with illegal gold and iron-ore mining, according to Hare, a 2010 nominee of the prestigious Explorers Club Lowell Thomas

Awards.

“The situation cannot be controlled with the resources currently available and awareness needs to be raised worldwide to the threats to this and other Parks and Reserves in Mongolia, and pressure put on both illegal miners and legal mining companies to respect the laws and the National Nature Reserves,” says Hare. (For more information: harecamel@aol.com, www.wildcamels.com).

It Can Happen to Anyone – It may seem like a waste of money, but emergency rescue insurance has become as important to a successful expedition as a camp stove and a sat phone. Besides which, a serious situation can happen to anyone, even someone like Chris Warner, a certified Alpine guide and has led over 150 international mountaineering expeditions.

Global Rescue, based in Boston, received a call on May 5 from base camp in Makalu, Nepal, alerting operations teams that Warner, owner of Earth Treks, Inc, which operates three of the largest and best-known climbing gyms in the U.S., was suffering from increased shortness of breath, chest tightness and lethargy at 5,500 meters. Global Rescue medical teams advised Warner to descend as soon as possible for in-depth medical assessment and possible treatment for HAPE (High Altitude Pulmonary Edema), though heavy snow and avalanche risk prevented an immediate descent, according to the company’s RescueWire blog.

A window in the weather allowed Global Rescue to launch a helicopter equipped with a hoist that can evacuate climbers from locations with no landing zone. Unfortunately, the weather deteriorated and the helicopter was forced to turn back.

Warner and his team were able to descend to base camp on foot over the next 24 hours, where Global Rescue was able to evacuate him via helicopter to a medical center in Kathmandu. After a battery of tests, HAPE was ruled out, although Warner, a resident of Annapolis, Md., was diagnosed with left-sided bronchial pneumonia. He has since been released and is expecting a full recovery. The company claims it’s the only emergency response service that will rescue you anywhere in the world and bring you home to safety and your choice of hospital. For \$329, one person can be covered for a year. (Read the entire story here: <http://blog.globalrescue.com>).

Mountainfilm Launches Commitment Grant – A new grant program has been established to help filmmakers, photographers, artists, adventurers and explorers use a variety of media sources to tell stories that would move audiences to action on issues that matter. The Mountainfilm Commitment Grant in 2010 will be five individual cash grants of up to \$5,000 each. Aside from the cash, they will also work with grantees to ensure that their stories are heard as widely as possible. Letter of intents (400 words max.) are due at the end of this month; applications must be submitted by August 31. Grants will be awarded in October. (For more information: www.mountainfilm.org)

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Often we take our oceans for granted until disaster strikes. The recent oil spill comes at a time when marine issues are just beginning to gain traction as a major focus of the environmental community. My hope is that the disaster will remind Americans of the importance of protecting our oceans each and every day by living sustainably and responsibly." – David Rockefeller, Jr., on the recent BP oil spill. (As told to Explorers Journal Contributing Editor Jim Clash)

EXPEDITION FOCUS

Solve World Hunger: Eat Bugs; Overcoming the “Yuk” Factor

Editor's Note: One of the advantages of writing a book on expeditions and adventures is that you meet fascinating people on the road during book tours. Such is the case with Dave Gracer, 45, founder of SmallStock Food Strategies LLC, Providence, R.I. Taking us aside in Cambridge, Mass., after a talk to the New England Chapter of The Explorers Club, he pitched us the idea that insects are the best food for an overcrowded planet. While we'd prefer a porterhouse ourselves, we see some merit in the concept, despite the very real “yuk” factor. Gracer explains:

“As a boy I was a picky eater, but I eventually outgrew that: now I eat insects frequently (the practice is known as *entomophagy*). What’s more, I encourage my fellow Americans to do so. There are very good reasons to do this: insects are extremely nutritious – not only are they high in protein, but their little jointed bodies also contain a lot of vitamins and minerals, making them an almost perfect food source.

“Their resource requirements are much smaller than those of the mammals and birds we usually eat, and insects are much better at capturing the energy from their food – 10 lbs. of feed will yield one pound of beef, but almost 9 lbs. of cricket. That’s a huge difference, especially since you can eat every part of the cricket.

“Beyond this, insects produce far less waste, and cannot host diseases or pathogens that can ‘jump’ to humans. Taken together, that’s a very impressive roster of advantages. Insect-based foods can be developed for both high-end cuisine AND for those at risk of starvation.

“We all know that many cultures enjoy insects in their cuisine, even when many other foods are available. In some marketplaces, insects fetch higher prices than our standard food animals. Given our global overpopulation and possible fresh water shortages, insects are very likely to play an increasing role in our future. As indicated, they’re far more sustainable than cows and pigs.

“I’ve been advocating for entomophagy for many years; in 2008 I spoke at a UN-organized international conference on edible insects in Chiang Mai, Thailand. After the conference I took a driving tour north, and watched tens of thousands of cave swifts streak the evening sky near the Burmese border. The birds were seeking insects for their

dinners. Insects do a great deal of work: when we observe the results of their work, we say, 'isn't Nature amazing?'

“There will likely be obstacles to introducing insects into human diets, but we must press on nonetheless.”

In order to further his passions, Gracer is a part-time college adjunct instructor. His goal is to create five facilities in five different countries, each of which will produce the quantity and quality of processed, insect-based food that will meet the nutritional needs of 50,000 people for two days straight.

But before that, his next project is to complete a guidebook on entomophagy.

You can reach Dave Gracer directly at 401 286 9065, david_gracer@hotmail.com, or log onto www.smallstockfoods.com (best link: Gracer appears on The Tyra Banks Show, along with a Dumpster diver who spends just \$15 per week on food).

MEDIA MATTERS

Amundsen Lost the Race for Public Opinion – “What chance did the Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen ever have? Yes, he won the race to the South Pole in 1911, as an engrossing exhibition opening last month at the American Museum of Natural History reminds us, leaving his British rival, Robert Falcon Scott, far behind,” writes Edward Rothstein in the May 28 *New York Times*. “Yes, he made his way over uncharted Antarctic territory to the pole, taking 57 days to do what Scott, beginning from previously mapped terrain, could only do in 81. And yes, Amundsen attained the glory offered every pioneer in that waning era of exploration, without having lost a single man and with 39 of his sled dogs still alive, while Scott and his party, well ...”

Rothstein asks, “But what chance did Amundsen have, after nearly a year of living in triumph and delivering lectures on his great feat, when the bodies of Scott and two other members of his expedition were finally discovered in 1913 by a search party, frozen dead in their sleeping bags in a tent?”

The illuminating catalog to the exhibition, *Race to the End of the Earth*, written by its curator, Ross D. E. MacPhee, notes that after the discovery of Scott's body, Amundsen “began to experience a seismic shift in public opinion.” It was as if he had lost the race that he had once won.

The exhibit reveals the little-known fact that of the more than 6,000 men who volunteered, Scott chose 64. They left on a ship packed with 33 Siberian sled dogs, 19 Manchurian ponies and 35,000 cigars. The exhibition includes displays of both parties' outfits, along with a statement from Scott that he had a “sneaking feeling” that the Eskimos' fur clothing may “outclass our more civilized garb.” No sneaking feeling was needed: Scott's men froze. Amundsen said (with only a little bluster), “We did not suffer at all.”

Rothstein continues, "... as a personality, Amundsen is boring. He is a technocrat, whose goal was no greater than glory. Scott was a mythmaker: he was the visionary, the savior of the English character, risking his life for the sake of knowledge. So Scott's image was triumphant, while Amundsen's languished." (For more information: www.amnh.org)

The Wildest Dream – This August, watch for the new IMAX film, *The Wildest Dream: Conquest of Everest*, focusing on the mystery behind the death of British explorer George Mallory as he attempted to climb Mount Everest in 1924. The 93-min. documentary explores Mallory's obsession with becoming the first person to reach the highest place on Earth. The film is told through the explorer's poignant and evocative letters to his wife, Ruth, previously unseen photos and film archive from 1924 (restored from the original nitrate especially for the film), dramatization and a modern-day expedition retracing the original route taken in 1924.

Using replica 1920s-era clothing and equipment, American mountaineer Conrad Anker sets out to solve the great mystery of whether Mallory succeeded in summiting Everest before he died – he was last seen just 800 feet from the summit before the clouds closed in and he disappeared into legend. Anker and his partner, young British climbing prodigy Leo Houlding, attempt parts of the climb in the same type of gabardine outerwear and hobnail boots that Mallory and his partner Andrew Sandy Irvine wore when Mt. Everest claimed their lives many decades before.

In the film's climax, Anker and Houlding must climb the notorious "Second Step," the sheer cliff that stands between climbers and the summit, without the help of the ladders that were installed by Chinese mountaineers long after Mallory and Irvine's attempt.

The most heartbreaking clue: All of Mallory's belongings were found intact on his body, except the photograph of his beloved Ruth, which he promised to leave at the top of the world if he succeeded. The film features the voices of Liam Neeson, Ralph Fiennes, Hugh Dancy, Alan Rickman and Natasha Richardson, in one of her poignant last roles, reading letters written by Ruth.

Searching for the Next Indiana Jones – The production company behind hit television shows on TLC, The Food Network, HGTV, VH-1, and many more is searching nationwide for males ages 25 to 45. Producers are seeking experts in the field of anthropology and archaeology and who have dynamic personalities and an appetite for adventure to host a new show for a major cable network. To apply, mention Infolist.com and e-mail relevant credentials and a photo to: Castingforrealitytv@gmail.com. One request: when you become famous, please don't forget the little people.

ON THE HORIZON

Stowe's "Waterworld" Returns – New York City artist, adventurer and sailor Reid Stowe and his 70-ft. gaff-rigged schooner *Anne*, will return to New York Harbor on Thursday, June 17, 2010, after logging 1,152 days non-stop and non-resupplied at sea, a world record. Stowe will be accompanied by a flotilla of boats up the Hudson River to

Pier 81 (World Yacht pier) where he will debark at 1 p.m. and step foot on land for the first time in over three years. He will reunite with his companion, Soanya Ahmad, who sailed with Stowe for the first 306 days of the voyage, but had to leave due to seasickness which turned out to be morning sickness.

Ahmad now holds the women's record for the longest non-stop sea voyage. Stowe will also meet for the first time his son, Darshen, who was conceived at sea and is now almost two years old. Readers of *EN* are invited to attend the ceremony. Free admittance by advance reservation only is available at www.1000days.net.

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