

EXPEDITION NEWS

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EXPEDITION NEWS, now in its 17th 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

Steger North Pole Expedition 25 Years Later: Where Are They Now?

For the first time in 25 years, the eight-person Steger North Pole Expedition team reunited in St. Paul for a two-day reunion slash love fest attended by hundreds of Minnesota fans. Held at the Minnesota History Center, the May 17 event included displays of the famed Polar Capsule, on loan from The Explorers Club; an original sled and clothing; and vintage copies of the September 1986 *National Geographic* magazine that featured what is recognized as history's first confirmed and unsupported dog sled expedition to the North Pole.

Steger credited Paul Schurke's knowledge of the sextant with navigating the route in an era before GPS. He also revealed that 1909 photos of Cmdr. Robert Peary ferrying his teams on blocks of ice over open leads provided the 1986 team with the idea of doing the same. "Now you can't make the pole by dog team because of the open water caused by global warming," Steger told a capacity audience of 330.

Added team member Richard Weber, "Today you can't use a sextant because it's too warm and there is less sun to shoot. It's unbelievable how thin the Arctic ice is now."

Later Weber said, "If someone says climate change doesn't exist they should take a trip to the Arctic because it's really, really scary up there."

As one might expect from such a dedicated, athletic group, the years have treated each kindly. While perhaps a bit heavier and grayer, some saddled with reading glasses, the Steger team has continued to follow their passions for exploration:

- **Will Steger, Ely & St. Paul, Minnesota** – In 1989-90, he led the first dogsled traverse of Antarctica with a team of seven from seven countries, another milestone in his 45-year career of leading some of the most significant polar expeditions in history. He has become a formidable voice on Arctic climate change and a global environmental leader through his "Global Warming 101" website and Will Steger Foundation. For over 22 years he's been building a five-story conference center on an isolated lake outside Ely that he hopes will someday become a center for leadership in environmental policy and industry. It is funded not with sponsorship, but the old fashion way through sweat from lecturing, writing and photography, and clothing design.

On a personal note, Steger can stretch a dollar until it's screaming for mercy. He picked us up in a 1992 Camry with 258,000 miles on it, purchased for \$1,400 over 100,000 miles ago. There was dust on the dashboard, a year's supply of expedition gear in the back, spare tires all the way around, and some sticky, food-like substance between the seats. This guy knows how to save a buck in addition to saving the planet.

(For more information: www.WillStegerFoundation.org)

- **Paul Schurke, Ely, Minnesota** – In 1989 he co-led the Bering Bridge Expedition from Siberia to Alaska, a journey that Presidents Bush and Gorbachev credited with hastening the opening of the U.S.-Soviet border following the 40-year Cold War. He and his wife Sue operate Wintergreen Dogsled Lodge and founded Wintergreen Northern Wear, an outdoor apparel business based upon designs Sue developed for the 1986 North Pole trek. They live on a beautiful lake outside Ely with 70 sled dogs, three house dogs who think they rule the place, and an endearing pet rat named "Chevy" who comes running when called. (For more information: www.dogsledding.com).
- **Ann Bancroft, Scandia, Minn.** – In 2001, Bancroft and fellow explorer Liv Arnesen skied to the South Pole, securing Ann's place in history as the first woman to trek to both ends of the earth. Her Ann Bancroft Foundation promotes the potential and achievements of women and girls. Ann is planning another expedition to Antarctica in 2012. (For more information: www.AnnBancroftFoundation.org).
- **Geoff Carroll, Pt. Barrow, Alaska** – A wildlife biologist living in the northernmost community of the U.S., Carroll is an expert on arctic ecosystems and sea ice and maintains a dog team to enjoy life on the land.
- **Richard Weber, Alcov, Quebec** – Canada's top polar explorer, he has lead over 50 arctic expeditions. In 1995, he completed the first and only trek from Canada to the North Pole and back with no outside assistance, and with his wife, Josee, operates an ecolodge on Lancaster Sound in the Canadian High Arctic. (For more information: www.weberarctic.com).
- **Brent Boddy, Cambridge Bay, Nunavut** – Granted the Order of Canada award for his polar endeavors, Boddy continues his love of arctic adventuring in his retirement from overseeing public works for a native village in Canada's western arctic.

- **Bob McKerrow, New Zealand** – A mountain climber and polar explorer who was a member of one of his country's first teams to winter in Antarctica, he works with the International Red Cross. Since the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, McKerrow has been coordinating relief efforts and public health projects in India, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Indonesia. An avid blogger, you can read about his reunion trip at <http://bobmckerrow.blogspot.com>.
- **Bob Mantell, Albuquerque** – "Ironman Bob," as he was called for his dogged perseverance and legendary stamina on the 1986 expedition, is a former employee of Outward Bound who now works installing cell towers.

To see a recap of the 25th anniversary reunion activities, log onto: <http://bit.ly/m8tBb8>

Super Sherpa Summits for the 21th Time

No one knows the top of Everest better than Apa Sherpa, climbing leader of Eco Everest Expedition 2011 who reached the summit for the 21st time in May – a new world record. Apa said he is committed to supporting the efforts of Dawa Steven Sherpa, leader of the Eco Everest Expedition to bring awareness to the world community about climate change and to help remove old garbage from the slopes of mountain.

The collected garbage was brought down to Base Camp by members of the clean-up team for proper disposal. To remain as environmentally sensitive as possible, Eco Expedition used alternative energy solutions such as parabolic solar cookers, solar lights, ultraviolet light pens for water purification, portable toilets called CMC (Clean Mountain Can) and carried down all human waste.

In addition, parts of the wreckage of an Italian Army helicopter which crashed in 1973 were recovered from the edge of the Khumbu Icefall (which demonstrates the movement of the Icefall 1.3 km over the past 38 years).

The sponsors of this year's Eco Everest Expedition 2011 "Cash for Trash" garbage collection program are Asian Trekking Pvt. Ltd and The North Face.

Weihenmayer Celebrates 10th Everest Anniversary with Soldiers Expedition

May 25th marked the 10th anniversary of blind athlete Erik Weihenmayer's success in becoming the only blind person to summit Everest; of Sherman and Brad Bull becoming the first American father-son team to stand on top, and of Sherm becoming the then-oldest person to reach the summit at age 64. Nineteen climbers from Erik's team stood on top, reportedly, the most from a single team to reach the summit in a single day. This historic feat was *Time Magazine's* cover story on June 18, 2001 titled, "Blind Faith."

Nine years later, in October 2010, his Everest team led 10 soldiers injured in Iraq and Afghanistan to a major Himalayan peak (see *EN*, October 2010). Achieving the summit

of Lobuche (20,075 feet) were two leg amputees, one woman who had been in a wheelchair for three years recovering from a bomb blast, one blind man with severe nerve damage to his left hand, and two warriors with severe brain trauma. Serac Films is producing a documentary to sensitize Americans to the struggles soldiers face returning from combat. A road tour of cities and military rehab hospitals is planned late this year or early in 2012. (For more information: www.soldierstothetsummit.org; see the trailer at <http://www.seracfilms.com/soldiers/>).

EXPEDITION NOTES

Get Well Wishes for AAC's Phil Powers

Expedition News wishes a speedy recovery to American Alpine Club Executive Director Phil Powers, 50, who was injured in a climbing accident on May 17. Powers sustained multiple injuries to his torso in the fall: including a broken arm, fractured ribs and vertebrae, a punctured diaphragm, a collapsed lung, and substantial internal bruising. When the accident occurred, Powers was climbing with a group near AAC headquarters in Clear Creek Canyon's Highwire area outside of Golden, Colo. Clear Creek Canyon is a popular and accessible sport climbing crag on public land.

Powers successfully underwent surgery to repair his broken arm, which followed an earlier surgery to repair his punctured diaphragm. At press time he had been released from St. Anthony's Hospital in Denver and was recovering at home.

Powers, who joined the American Alpine Club as executive director in May 2005, has led dozens of expeditions to South America, Alaska and Pakistan's Karakoram Range, including ascents of K2 and Gasherbrum II without supplemental oxygen.

(For more information on Powers' recovery:
<http://www.americanalpineclub.org/p/status>).

EXPEDITION NOTES

New Group Links Adventurers and Scientists

It's a wonder this hasn't been done before. Adventurers and Scientists for Conservation (ASC) works to create partnerships between adventure athletes and scientists who need them to collect scientific data. ASC is an organization that gives athletes the knowledge, tools, and skills to help expeditions have a tangible and lasting impact on conservation. Supporters include Conrad Anker, Jon Bowermaster, Celine Cousteau, Lance Craighead, Captain Joel Fogel, Trip Jennings, and Roz Savage. The group was founded by Executive Director Gregg Treinish, a Bozeman, Montana-based wildlife biologist, backcountry guide, and supervisor in wilderness therapy programs in Colorado and Montana.

In 2004, Treinish, 29, completed the 2,174-mile Appalachian Trail, and in 2008, the first ever trek of the Andes Mountain Range, which took more than 22 months and 7,800

miles to complete. He was awarded the National Geographic Adventurer of the Year award in November 2008 for this accomplishment.

ASC works with conservation organizations; adventurers who may have felt a bit sheepish for not contributing more to the world; gear companies seeking projects to support; and scientists eager to tap into citizen-scientists already exploring remote areas of the globe.

ASC has successfully recruited 22 groups of people to take part in a pika study for the Craighead Institute in Bozeman. Pika, small mammals related to rabbits, are a key food source for the hawks, eagles, coyotes, foxes and other predators that will be greatly affected if they are lost to a warming planet. Research is focused on the locations of pika and their hay piles. (For more information: www.adventureandscience.org).

Helluva Adventure, But No Explorers' Grand Slam

With a name right out of a Marvel Comic, Malibu, Calif. climber Johnny Strange, 19, a teenage athlete best known for becoming the youngest person to climb the Seven Summits by the age of 17, now has his sights set on the North and South Poles.

He skydived to the South Pole on Jan. 1, 2011, and hopes to kayak to the North Pole sometime this summer. His Everest summit in May 2009 was a guided trip.

While his publicity people initially considered this an Explorers' Grand Slam, that term is reserved for those who trek to the poles over land, not simply drop out of the sky. ExplorersWeb.com considers the Grand Slam summiting the world's fourteen 8000m (26,247-ft.) peaks and a full trip to the North and South Poles from land by human power.

In summer 2011, Strange plans on being the youngest person to swim across the English Channel. He is also planning a video/documentary project of his trip to Rwanda to meet and interview genocide survivors with hopes of bringing awareness to genocide.

He's an avid supporter of The National Parkinson Foundation and helps raise awareness whenever possible. The Seven Summits record was previously held by 18-year-old Samantha Larson of Long Beach, Calif. (see *EN*, June 2007). (For more information: www.johnnystrange.com).

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“Antarctica is an emotive place that even those who have never been there and who never intend to go, still hold very close to their soul. Its very existence seems to make people feel better, to give some kind of comfort. It's as if we think the world can't be all that bad if somewhere a place like Antarctica exists.” – Felicity Aston, author of *Call of the White: Taking the World to the South Pole* (Summersdale, 2011).

Elsewhere in book she writes, “In every direction there was nothing. There was not one track, glint of metal or smudge of habitation in the distance; not a mountain or a tree or a

single lichen splotted rock; not a fly or a bird or even the vapor trail of a plane overhead. The relentless emptiness was absolute, as if the whole of creation had been wiped clean and we were, quite literally, walking across the great white drawing board of the gods as it waited to be filled with their new handicraft.”

EXPEDITION FOCUS

Trip Report: Honduran Biodiversity Research Expedition

By Robert E. Hyman

The interior of northeastern Honduras, although not quite a blank space on the map, is one of the least-known areas in Central America in terms of biodiversity and archaeology. The 2011 Honduran Biodiversity Research Expedition, Apr. 7-22, explored several national parks and proposed protected areas. It also studied a major archaeological site, all located in a single county (municipality), called Gualaco, whose political and environmental leaders are keen to garner documentary support for the protection of their cloud forests, rain forests, tropical dry forests, tree cycads (*Dioon mejiae*) and other unique features at threat from logging, ranching, and industrial development.

Dr. Mark Bonta, a geography professor and author with 20 years experience in the region, led the expedition, along with Explorers Club members Robert E. Hyman, Lew Toulmin, Ph.D., and Dr. Christopher Begley (archaeologist). Honduran, Mexican, and U.S. botanists, herpetologists, ornithologists, and other specialists filled out the group that spent two weeks accessing the Valle de Agalta, the biologically-unknown Jacaleapa cloud forest, and the new Montana de Botaderos National Park.

Previous expeditions to the 150,000-acre Botaderos montane rain forest revealed several new species of flora and fauna. This year, for the first time, this team of scientific collectors reached the range's cloud forest zone, where they summited the highest point, an unnamed 5,656-ft. peak they named “Cerro Botaderos.” Among the cloud forest species recorded are a brand-new species of endemic Nototriton/moss salamander, confirmed by DNA testing. The team also collected 60 plant species for identification and observed over 200 bird species during this year’s April migration.

The team was hosted by the Honduran Institute of Forestry Conservation (ICF) office in Gualaco. The expedition’s lead herpetologist, Josiah Townsend, has a multi-year permit to collect and export specimens to the United States for further analysis. (For more information: robertehyman@gmail.com).

Scott’s Dedication to Science Was His Downfall

Over the 100 years since his death on his team’s return from the South Pole, Robert F. Scott's image has shifted from tragic hero to Victorian bungler. Without excusing Scott's mistakes, Edward J. Larson, professor of history at Pepperdine University and author of *An Empire of Ice: Scott, Shackleton and the Heroic Age of Antarctic Science* (Yale

University Press, 2011), restored some balance to his image by looking at the role of science in Scott's polar expeditions.

Scott may have been trying to do too much on his expeditions, at least as compared to the single-minded quest for the pole that propelled Roald Amundsen's expedition. But Scott's effort nevertheless left a lasting legacy in Antarctic research and discovery, according to Larson, a Pulitzer Prize winner who spoke on May 23 at The Explorers Club in New York.

"Scott's story is an epic tale that has become part of our common knowledge. But it has become mythologized," Larson said. While Amundsen viewed the quest for the South Pole in 1911 as a race, Scott's journey to furthest south was saddled by extreme measures made in the name of science. Three team members – Dr. Edward A. Wilson, Lt. Henry "Birdie" Bowers, and Apsley Cherry-Garrard were weakened by a 70-mi. scientific side trip aimed at studying penguin embryos. Said Cherry-Garrard, "We turned theory into fact with every observation we made." The return trip, in dead of winter, was a living hell of 16-hour days, says Larson. Cherry-Garrard's teeth chattered so much they all shattered in cold that reached minus 75 degrees F.

"The quest for science was Robert F. Scott's downfall, despite having more men and more resources," said Larson.

Scott (1868-1912), who vowed he would not race to the Pole to be first, was nonetheless bitterly disappointed when he arrived Jan. 18, 1912, only to find a tent, a Norwegian flag, and a letter to the King of Norway left more than a month earlier by the Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen (1872-1928).

On their way back from the South Pole, Scott's expedition was caught in a blizzard within 11 miles of their cache of food and fuel. The desperate struggle to cover the more than 800 miles from the Pole back to their base, as told in Scott's diary, is one of the most heroic in history. "Praise God, this is an awful place," Scott would write.

While the gale howled outside their flimsy shelter, their commander feebly added, "We shall stick it out to the end, but we are getting weaker, of course, and the end cannot be far. It seems a pity, but I do not think I can write any more... these rough notes and our dead bodies must tell the tale." The bodies and records of Scott, Dr. Edward A. Wilson, and Lt. H.R. Bowers were found the following November. They perished, disappointed about not making the pole, but proud of their science program.

"Without science, Scott believed it would have been a mere dash to the pole, a trip that would have been beneath them," Larson believes. "Scott's science transformed the way we look at the world."

CLIMBING FOR DOLLARS

Brother P-Touch Seeks Extreme Conditions to Test Labeler

Explorers and adventurers are nothing if not organized, what with all the gadgets and gizmos we take into the field. Brother, makers of P-touch labelers, wants to lend a hand with its durable, laminated TZ series label tape.

This month Brother is launching the P-touch Test Team and is looking to provide monetary and in-kind sponsorship to a select number of projects in all kinds of environments – cold, hot, windy, sunny, dry – most of the places we often find ourselves in.

If you're planning to go into the field with a newsworthy expedition or adventure that could use an efficient labeling system, explain your project in a short e-mail of no more than 200-300 words. Attach a photo if you'd like.

The labelers, powered by six AAA batteries, use laminated TZ series tapes ranging from ¼ to 1-in. wide for indoor and outdoor use. These are tougher labels than you may think – they are heat-, UV-, cold-, and water-resistant – perfect for the trail, the mountaintop, or out at sea. (For more information: www.brother-usa.com).

Tell us where you're going (or where you're already at), when you plan to leave and return, the significance of the project, and how you'd intend to use the P-touch labeler.

P-touch Test Team members selected for this program will receive a P-touch labeler, plenty of TZ laminated tape, and instructions on their use. They will be asked to submit field reports in the form of six to eight blog or Facebook posts throughout the project and a final report within 30 days of its conclusion (a template for posts and final report will be provided). Posts and final reports should include as many photos as possible to illustrate the conditions and terrain in which you are testing the product.

A small payment will be made when you leave, then upon presentation of the final report. Brother will ask for the rights to use your name in publicity (which could also help promote your project), and requests rights to two images for editorial purposes. Any advertising use will be negotiated separately.

Interested? Tell Brother what you have in mind by e-mailing Jeff Blumenfeld at jeff@blumenfeldpr.com. Deadline: June 15, 2011.

Breaking Barriers

The American Alpine Club and the Zack Martin Breaking Barriers (ZMBB) committee announced the 2011 ZMBB grant recipient, Asa Firestone.

Firestone and his team will work with CER "Centro da Escalada da Rocinha" — a community center in one of the "favelas" (slums) of Rio De Janeiro. They will build a climbing wall, develop an outdoor program, and take these impoverished children to a local climbing area presently under development by Firestone and the team. The goal of the program is to enable a few children to escape their life of poverty through the character development and self-realization brought by climbing. Lessons learned from

climbing will, hopefully, transfer to life and allow the child to grow individually and escape the favela.

For the alpine objective, the team will take the kids climbing at a local crag, Sugarloaf—the famous peak in Rio that hosts a cable car to its summit for tourists, as well as develop new routes on the Dois Irmaos formation. This unique alpine objective is critical to the success of the humanitarian objective as it allows easy and close climbing access for the personal development program. (For more information: www.americanalpineclub.org)

EXPEDITION INK

***Dolphin Diaries* by Dr. Denise L. Herzing (St. Martin's Press, 2011)**

**Reviewed by Robert F. Wells
Darien, Conn.**

We are truly a species that doesn't know what it doesn't know. Take animal behavior. We see, therefore we surmise... and reach a level of understanding. Take animal language. We fail to collect and translate... and therefore we fail to understand. Understand or not, there are certain species of highly-developed mammals with great potential for language – even though they lack physical characteristics for vocalizing. Elephants. Apes. And yes, dolphins. Dr. Denise Herzing has devoted the past 25 years studying dolphins. Her *Dolphin Diaries: My 25 Years With Spotted Dolphins in the Bahamas*, chronicle her interactions with them off the Bahama Islands. No surprise, dolphins in the wild are indeed complex creatures – with patterns of socializing, emotions and yes, language.

Granted, squeaks, clicks and screeches might not fit your idea of advanced linguistics... and the fact that most of what's being voiced by these magnificent creatures is significantly above the range of human hearing... yet, dolphins do in fact communicate. Constantly. And if we improve our ability to interact with them on their terms, we might be able some day to "crack their code."

For the past couple of decades, Dr. Herzing has tried. This book documents her findings. And along the way come surprises that make our minds go bump in the night. Like, who would suspect that dolphins masturbate? Or that they rival bonobo apes for being incorrigible sex maniacs? Okay, okay this mention is not simply made to lure you into reading the book. On the other hand, if you truly want to understand more about these aquatic animals and their highly-developed intelligence, jump in the water here, the temperature is fine. Just make sure your swim fins are on securely and your mask is watertight.

Robert Wells, a member of The Explorers Club since 1991, is a resident of Darien, Conn., and a retired executive of the Young & Rubicam ad agency. Wells is the director of a steel band (see 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 19-hr., 28-min. push.

WEB WATCH

Everest in 3D

DigitalGlobe, a provider of high-resolution earth imagery solutions, is cooperating with the German Aerospace Center (DLR) and the German company 3D Reality Maps to create high-definition 3D maps of large-scale natural landmarks and other major tourist destinations worldwide. The program was launched with detailed and accurate 3D maps of Mt. Everest and the surrounding Himalayan mountain region. It's considered a breakthrough in satellite imagery-based 3D modeling and real time 3D rendering. (To view the maps, log onto: www.everest3D.de).

EXPEDITION CLASSIFIEDS

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