

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.

SEARCH FOR MALLORY'S CAMERA SEEKS \$200K

In 1999, Bozeman, Mont., climber Conrad Anker, then 36, located George Mallory's body on Mount Everest, just 2,030 feet from the summit. Mallory, who died either climbing up or descending from the summit in 1924, was known to have a collapsible Vestpocket Kodak camera on his expedition.

After a careful, respectful search of the body on a steep slope that could have sent any of them sliding off the edge, the team found a number of artifacts – Mallory's meat lozenges, a handkerchief monogrammed "G.L.M.," goggles, his wristwatch, a pocket knife with antler handle, but no camera. Could the Kodak be with Mallory's climbing partner, Andrew "Sandy" Irvine? But where are Irvine's remains?

Mallory, 37, the premier climber of his day, and Irvine, a strapping 22-year-old Oxford University rowing captain, were last seen "going strong for the top" by another member of the 1924 British Everest Expedition. Whether or not they made it before perishing is one of the most enduring mysteries in mountaineering history.

Now Everest researcher Tom Holzel, 69, from Boston believes he's seen what could be Irvine's body at 8425 m (27,641-ft.) in detailed high resolution images from the mountain's Yellow Band region. The body appears as a 1.8 m oblong blob below the First Step. Holzel is seeking \$200,000 to launch a "boots on the ground" effort this spring to locate Irvine's body and the Kodak camera he is believed to have carried when they began their ascent on the morning of June 8, 1924. But with an estimated 120 corpses on Everest, it may not be Irvine's body at all. The window for launching a spring 2010

expedition is closing and money needs to be raised soon, otherwise Holzel's attempt will be postponed one year, assuming a discovery isn't made beforehand.

Eastman Kodak scientists have researched the subject extensively and believe if the camera is found and the black and white film is intact, "printable images could result." The vintage film is said to be less susceptible to cosmic rays than modern-era film. But even if a camera is not found, it is possible that Irvine might have written about the view from the summit in a journal still in his possession. Holzel has even prepared an extensive list of procedures regarding how to properly handle the camera and develop the film if they are found intact, according to a story in *Scientific American* (Jan. 26).

Holzel has two well-known and respected professional Everest climbers and filmmakers, Thom Pollard and Jake Norton, ready to launch a mini-expedition this spring.

Holzel tells ExplorersWeb.com, "This may be an opportunity for an ambitious, sporty young man (or woman) who wants to make a name for himself/herself." What Holzel offers is not just to sponsor the expedition – but to actually become a team member and get instantly famous on Everest's upper slopes.

Does it even matter whether Mallory and Irvine made it or not? Perhaps not. According to *Ghosts of Everest: The Search for Mallory & Irvine* (The Mountaineers Books, 1999), "Surely what matters, what warrants our attention and our awe, is the scale of their achievement, given the resources available to them, their astonishing strength and grit, the indomitability of their desire." (For more information: Tom Holzel, 617 293 1958, THolzel@velocityassociates.net)

THE LAST GREAT CHALLENGE

First Unsupported Roundtrip South Pole Expedition

The explorer H.W. "Bill" Tilman (1898-1977) is famously credited with saying, "Any worthwhile expedition can be planned on the back of an envelope."

If any expedition fits that advice, this one certainly does: trek to the South Pole and back totally unsupported.

Last January, American Ryan Waters, 36, and Norwegian Cecilie Skog, 35, became the first team to make an unsupported/unassisted traverse of the Antarctic continent, covering more than 840 miles beginning at Berkner Island and ending at the Ross Ice Shelf, with a stop at the South Pole along the way.

In October, a British team (naturally) wants to do it one better by traveling there and back without help. They call it The Last Great Challenge.

Said expedition leader John Wilton-Davies, 47, from Exeter, U.K., "We chose this option over a traverse for a number of reasons, but predominantly one of cost - a return (a.k.a. roundtrip) journey avoids the need for a very expensive pick up flight at one end. Of

course in the U.K. there is always a comparison made to (Robert F.) Scott, and with the centenary of Scott and Amundsen approaching, we are making comparisons with Scott's return attempt.”

The route is from Hercules Inlet to the Pole and back, several hundred kilometers further than Waters and Skog's effort.

Wilton-Davies runs a small financial services business consultancy. Accompanying him for the Last Great Challenge will be fitness trainer and motivational speaker Justin Miles, 38.

Says Wilton-Davies, “We will be taking all the food, gear, fuel, etc. that we need from the start, and will leave depots (caches) along the route for our use on the return. No one else will be involved in the supplies, and hopefully no one else will find it and eat it before we return to the depot.”

He continues, “We will be careful to ensure the expedition is entirely unsupported. In no way do I wish to reduce Cecile's and Ryan's achievement, but resting at the Amundsen-Scott research station, having tours, etc., as they did, risks the suggestion that support, albeit perhaps insignificant, was accepted.”

The project is seeking about \$400,000 in sponsorship and currently counts among its sponsors Hi 5 (sports nutrition), Rokk Media (web development), and Bloc Eyewear (sunglasses). The Last Great Challenge will benefit the British Heart Foundation. (For more information: John Wilton-Davies, john@lastgreatechallenge.com, www.lastgreatechallenge.com).

EXPEDITION UPDATE

Nothing to Pooh-Pooh About – Felicity Aston checked in with us to report on the status of the Commonwealth Women's Antarctic Expedition which we covered in the August 2008 edition of *EN*. The project involved a team of eight women from different commonwealth countries including Ghana, India, Singapore and New Zealand.

Having found a title sponsor, the project was renamed the Kaspersky Lab Commonwealth Antarctic Expedition. “Before setting out we lost our Ghanaian team member to malaria and while training in Patriot Hills, Antarctica, our Jamaican member got frostbite and had to retire,” she writes *EN*.

“An inauspicious start but on 29th December after 38 days and 900 km (560 miles) we made it to the South Pole – the largest and most international women's team to make it ever. We also had the first Bruneian and first Cypriot to ski to the pole, as well as the first women from New Zealand, from Singapore and from India to ski to the pole.”

The Kaspersky Lab team was reportedly the first “all the way” expedition to carry its human waste out of Antarctica – over 175 lbs. of it. “We hope this might set a precedent for other expeditions in the future,” says Aston.

Representing the Commonwealth of 52 nations and 2 billion people around the globe, the expedition team was a diverse group of women selected from over 800 candidates.

The Kaspersky Lab Commonwealth Antarctic Expedition has begun a dedicated education program visiting schools, colleges and youth groups around the world. Team members will spend the next 12 months visiting schools and bringing expedition food, clothing and equipment with them for students to try, as well as images and film footage from the expedition to describe their experiences in Antarctica. (For more information: www.kasperskycommonwealthexpedition.com).

EXPEDITION NOTES

Polartec Challenge Grants Announced – The 19th annual Polartec Challenge Grant recipients have been announced. A total of \$20,000 will be awarded to four separate expeditions in 2010: a climbing attempt in Pakistan, a 10,000-kilometer bike ride along the Silk Route, a quest for endless skiing and the continuation of 13-year-old Jordan Romero’s effort to climb the Seven Summits.

The first grant recipient is climber and writer Kelly Cordes. Cordes, who is a member of Polartec’s Athlete Advisory Board, and his climbing partner Kyle Dempster will travel to Pakistan’s Charakusa Valley, home to massive technical peaks including K6 and K7, along with scores of unclimbed rock and ice objectives, to attempt the first ascent of an unnamed rock spire. The 6,200-meter spire, near K7, has been attempted several times and its virgin summit remains an objective that requires the rare combination of high-end rock skills, tenacity and high altitude mixed climbing.

Kate Harris and Mel Yule will receive funding for a bike expedition along the ancient Silk Road. During their yearlong ride from Nepal to Turkey, Harris (a Rhodes scholar with a Master’s from Oxford and M.I.T.) and Yule (an environmental scientist with a Master’s in international development) will use their scientific, environmental and sustainable development training to investigate the natural and social impacts of six unique transboundary protected areas. The goal is to raise awareness about environmental conservation across borders as a peace-building endeavor in transboundary wildernesses along the Silk Road and beyond.

Funds were granted to renowned ski mountaineer Greg Hill, who will attempt to climb and ski over two million vertical feet in 2010. Hill, who set a world record by climbing and skiing 50,000 feet in 24 hours, plans to seek out and explore new ski descents on mountains in Canada, the U.S. and South America over the course of the year. Throughout his quest, Hill will film and document each climb and descent, offering viewers an unparalleled glimpse into the world of backcountry skiing.

The final grant recipient is Jordan Romero from Big Bear, Calif., who, at the age of 13, has climbed the highest peaks on six different continents. This spring, Romero intends to climb Mt. Everest and later this year, Mt. Vinson in Antarctica as part of his attempt to become the youngest person to climb the Seven Summits. (For more information: www.polartec.com).

Youth Grant Leads to New Route – Ryan Huetter, who received a 2009 Mountain Fellowship Award for young climbers from the American Alpine Club, has climbed a 1,000-foot new route in El Cajón de Arenales in Argentina, with Brazilian partner Wagner Machado. Huetter climbed the North Tower of Paine earlier this season and then traveled to Arenales, where he and Machado completed the all-free new route.

Huetter writes that the tough part wasn't so much the climb, "Hiring a regular taxi to take us and all of our gear from Tunuyan in the Argentinean province of Mendoza to the Gendarmeria Portinari (an Army outpost on the border with Chile) was the biggest mistake we could have made. The taxi ran only on propane and so had the horsepower of a lawnmower. Unable to make it up the smallest of hills, we had to get out and walk with our gear to the tops, until finally the 'Little Engine That Could' stopped dead, leaving us and our mountain of climbing gear miles from where we needed to be. After five hours of load ferrying, we finally could crash after getting all of our equipment to the Refugio El Cajon."

Read his trip report here:

<https://eseries.americanalpineclub.org/tr/splittercracksandstellarweather>

AAC Mountain Fellowships are awarded twice each year to climbers 25 and under to help them complete climbs or expeditions they might not otherwise be able to attempt.

Carrying the Torch – Tired of watching curling? Ice dancing? Join the club. But there's hope on the horizon. Last month, at the 122nd Session of the International Olympic Committee in Vancouver, the IOC formally recognized the International Federation of Sport Climbing as the sport's governing body. That move, which followed provisional recognition in December 2007, makes it much more likely that climbers will compete in sport climbing, speed climbing, or bouldering at a future Summer Olympics, according to the American Alpine Club. Sports for the 2020 games, the next possible opening for climbing, will be selected in 2013. (Learn more at Steve Casimiro's Web site, www.theAdventurelife.org)

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"I choose to listen to the river for a while, thinking river thoughts, before joining the night and the stars." – Edward Abbey

MEDIA MATTERS

A Trek to Danger's Doorstep – Graham Bowley, a business writer for the *New York*

Times and author of the upcoming book on K2 titled, *No Way Down*, writes about his trek to the world's second tallest peak in the Jan. 17 Travel section. The purpose of his visit was to research a book about the climbers who challenge these slopes, and in particular, an accident on K2 (28,251-ft.) in 2008 when 11 people died, one of the worst disasters in Himalayan mountaineering history.

According to Bowley, during the 2009 climbing season, some 450 climbers reached the top of Everest while no one summited K2. By the end of the 2009 climbing season, only 296 people had ever conquered K2, and at least 77 had died trying, a much higher casualty rate than for Everest.

He later writes, "I had expected a collegial, communal, even romantic atmosphere on the trail. But climbers lead a mechanistic existence. They live by blisters and the grace of their stomachs, applying sun cream and drinking water like metronomes to stave off dehydration and to protect against the altitude."

Death of the Puffy Coat – Hanesbrands is outfitting mountaineer Jamie Clarke, 41, for his Everest expedition in April with a Super Suit that exceeds down's warmth and is just 3 mm thick (versus 40 mm for an Everest-grade down coat). According to a story by Stephanie Schomer in *Fast Company* (February 2010), the jacket is insulated with Aerogel, puffed glass that resembles smoke and is the lightest solid on earth. It's wind resistant, waterproof and protects against extreme temperatures. A thin layer of radiant foil is placed inside the insulation to capture the body's heat and reflect it back to the wearer. During the Outdoor Retailer Winter Market last January in Salt Lake, Clarke told *EN*, "I want to tap into the power of Everest in a healthy and constructive way. I'll use the climb to inspire people to pursue their own Everests."

Can't Get Enough of Those Early Explorers – Shackleton and Nansen biographer Roland Huntford, one of the world's foremost authorities on polar expeditions and their protagonists, believes there are several reasons why people continue to be interested in early explorers. He tells Lou Dzierzak of *Cross Country Skier* magazine (December 2009), "Because life is becoming more artificial and more controlled, and in a sense so far removed from (the) nature of good or evil, that there is a reaction. People want to read about how one had to deal with the forces of nature before we had all the scientific tools to tame them.

"The other is a historical and philosophical explanation," Huntford continues. "The curiosity about what lies on the other side of the hill is a Western phenomenon. We're interested in the exploration of space and this is connected with polar exploration because both of them are dealing with extreme conditions. In both of them the explorer has control over his own destiny. You don't have any living enemies, you only have the impersonal power of nature. When you are in space or the polar regions you are not faced with hostile bacteria or hostile men," Huntford says.

Solar Cycle Diary – From swims in dirty, polluted water to the famous Plastiki bottle boat, there are plenty of willing adventurers on a mission to save the world. But two campaigning cyclists are now resting having returned from a 13,500 mile, nine-month

circumnavigation of the globe to promote solar power, according to Treehugger.com.

When Susie Wheeldon and Jamie Vining of Solar Cycle Diary set off on their pro-solar cycling expedition, they issued a call to the U.K. Government to announce a decent price to be paid to homeowners generating solar electricity through a feed-in tariff. The pair were delighted when the U.K. feed-in tariff was launched just weeks ago, giving owners of residential solar rooftop systems the equivalent of £1,000 (US \$1600) a year in guaranteed, tax-free income for the next 25 years.

The team's tour took them through 14 countries, across deserts and mountains, visiting cutting edge solar installations along the way—from the Kuraymat concentrated solar installation in Egypt to the small-scale solar development work of SolarAid. In addition to raising money for SolarAid (www.solar-aid.org), the trip was also intended to raise awareness of Desertec's plans to supply Europe with solar energy from the Sahara. (For more information: www.solarcentury.co.uk).

At Sea A Thousand Days – *The New Yorker* provided an update on Reid Stowe's Mars Ocean Odyssey, which, at over 1,000 days at sea, has shattered the record (657 days) for an ocean voyage. In the Feb. 15 and 22 issue, the magazine's Mark Singer provides a run-down of Stowe's sponsors, "... manufacturers of sailcloth, solar-power technology, batteries, and foodstuffs (dried fruits and nuts and legumes, Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, chili-flavored peanut butter)." Singer reports about Stowe's satellite call during a 1,000-day anniversary event at the South Street Seaport Museum last January. Said Stowe, "I've just done my yoga, I'm eating fish every day, I haven't seen another ship for two weeks. It's just very beautiful and peaceful – the timeless and eternal sea, a very primal, connected-to-the-universe feeling out there."

Fun Hogs – The Fun Hog Expedition to Patagonia in the late 1960s, and a recent voyage inspired by it are the subject of a photo-crammed book and a movie, both called *180° South: Conquerors of the Useless*. In the Feb. 19 *Wall Street Journal*, extreme sports correspondent Michael J. Ybarra, writes about original expedition members Yvon Chouinard and Doug Tompkins. Chouinard, a self-taught blacksmith who fashioned hardware that was much coveted by climbers, would go on to found the outdoor clothing company Patagonia—with Patagonia's Fitz Roy in its logo. His partner, Doug Tompkins, who sold a mountaineering shop called The North Face long before it became an outdoor-gear powerhouse, would collaborate with his wife in building the Esprit clothing company into a billion-dollar enterprise.

Ybarra explains how Chouinard and Tompkins were just a couple of climbing bums on a South American lark in 1968. The group surfed and skied its way to Patagonia and Fitz Roy, where the men spent two months waiting for decent weather, much of it in a dripping snow cave. Then they climbed the mountain by a new route.

By the end of the 1980's, Tompkins cashed out of his apparel company, Esprit, not long after leaving his marriage, and bought a farm in his beloved Patagonia. It was a run-down place but came with a few amenities: 17,000 acres, including a fjord and a volcano. He kept buying land, eventually amassing more than two million acres across

Chile and Argentina, making him one of the largest private-property owners on the planet. The land, he promised, would all be preserved as national parks, according to the *Journal* story.

Chouinard took a different path to the same end. He built closely held Patagonia into a paragon of an environmentally conscious business long before that became a corporate mantra. He, too, then poured his wealth into buying land in Patagonia to preserve and restore, according to Ybarra.

180° South tells the tale of the 1968 road trip, plus a more recent re-creation by Jeff Johnson and Chris Malloy, who had made a surfing documentary in the late 1990s.

Ybarra writes, "... the second outing (expedition) does afford us an entertaining view of the colorful Mr. Chouinard 40 years after his first visit to Patagonia. He is a profane curmudgeon these days, a would-be savior of the planet, though it sounds as if he doesn't care whether humanity is saved in the process. The man who made a fortune by selling expensive outdoor wear—climbers sometimes refer to Patagonia as 'Patagucci'—wears 30-year-old boots until they fall off his feet.

EXPEDITION INK

The Long Haul

Alex Hibbert, the 23-year old polar explorer and professional photographer from Old Portsmouth, U.K., announced that his book *The Long Haul* will be published by Tricorn this month. The book is a candid account of his and 21-year-old teammate George Bullard's record-breaking British Tiso Trans Greenland Expedition in 2008, thus far the longest fully unsupported polar journey in history. The two young men took 113 days to haul specially designed sledges 1,374 miles in challenging arctic conditions without support of any kind. They successfully chartered a new route from the Nagtivit glacier on the east coast to Baffin Bay on the west coast.

The expedition had severe budget restraints despite the generous input from sponsors Tiso, Doxa Watches, AST-UK and Be-Well. Contact to the outside world was limited to SMS style updates to a blog and private voice calls to the logistics team and family members. Hibbert calls the expedition, "...a very literal manifestation of endeavour, teamwork and stamina."

Alex Hibbert said in his announcement, "The polar regions are an ever-relevant topic in modern times as their fate is intertwined with how mankind handles the looming ogre of climate change." (For more information: www.alexhibbert.com)

ON THE HORIZON

Blues Brother to Emcee Explorers Club Annual Dinner, Mar. 20 – The EC has an interesting "get" for this year's annual dinner at The Waldorf=Astoria in New York. Funnyman Dan Aykroyd will serve as emcee thanks to his friendship with Club president

Lorie Karnath. Two of Aykroyd's daughters are Club members and he is said to have a strong knowledge of space exploration which is appropriate since this year's theme is "On the Cusp of Infinity: Exploring the Universes Out There." Guest Speakers are Dr. S. Pete Worden, Brig. Gen., USAF, ret., and Steven W. Squyres, Ph.D., FN'87, with a message from Steven Hawking. Also planned: moon rocks will be displayed at the dinner under tight security courtesy of The Discovery Museum, Bridgeport, Conn.

Set a Course for San Juan Island – The Pacific Northwest Chapter of the Explorers Club presents its 3rd Annual "Compass" Symposium, Apr. 22-24 at Lakedale Lodge, San Juan Island, Wash. It features up to 10 speakers and outdoor activities. Cost is \$225 including meals, but not lodging. Space is limited. Need not be a member of the Explorers Club. (For more information: Lynn Danaher, Symposium Chair: islandlynx@aol.com, http://www.explorers.org/calendar/view_entry.php?id=10921&date=20100422).

EXPEDITION CLASSIFIEDS

Science Museum of Long Island Expeditions – (1) **Peruvian Highlands**, June 17-30, 2010 with anthropologists and archaeologist. Study Chachapoya culture pre-dating Inca civilization. For the first time, survey Lamas site. Explore Karajia, with rows of sarcophagi with mummies still inside. Participate in native crafts including medicinal plants. \$4,500 all-inclusive from JFK. (2) **Paleontology Expedition**, August 21-28, 2010. A full week of hands-on experience at the Wyoming Dinosaur Center, Thermopolis, Wyo. Field, quarry work and laboratory study. Inter-disciplinary topics include: geochronology, paleobotany, taphonomy, dinosaur anatomy, paleoclimates. Fee: \$2,300 includes airfare, Dinosaur Academy Program, lodging, meals, tools for fieldwork. Contact: Dr. John Loret, smlj@optonline.net.

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Targeted Support for Colder Weather – Wacoal Sports Science Corporation continues to expand its collection of performance-enhancing Conditioning Wear for cold weather. Shop specialty outdoor retailers or running stores for the new Insulator Zip Vest, 3/4-length tights, long-sleeve crew neck top, and Cold Weather bra. The CW-X Insulator collection features Auto-Sensor, a quick-dry, breathable fabric with tuned temperature regulation that maintains a constant comfortable surface temperature under a variety of weather conditions. Antibacterial fabric freshness is provided through titanium and silver fiber technology, and U.V. protection is rated at UPF 50+. (www.cw-x.com)

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