

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.

A WALK ACROSS AFRICA

In late April, renowned African Explorer Julian Monroe Fisher, 56, will launch his most ambitious expedition to date. Equatoria – A Walk Across Africa, is a four- to five-month expedition that will have Fisher walking solo west from the Indian Ocean coastal town of Pemba, Mozambique, towards the coastal town Lobito, Angola, at the Atlantic Ocean. The more than 4,000 mile walk will take him across the landscape comprising parts of the territories of the African countries of Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique. Some gear will be pre-shipped to drop zones along the way; he will also purchase supplies from local villages as he travels, loaded onto an estimated 30 lbs. backpack. Most of the journey will be on footpaths and unpaved roads, with some grassy savannah.

If successful, Fisher will become the first recorded American to walk coast to coast across the African continent from Mozambique to Angola, and is believed to be the first recorded solo expedition by any explorer ever attempted along this specific route, according to Fisher, who currently resides in Gars Am Kamp, Austria.

The primary objective of the project is to bring global awareness to the efforts of the Mines Advisory Group – MAG International – and their work in current and former conflict zones to reduce the threat of death and injury from remnants of conflict. He hopes to draw attention to the members of the United Nations Security Council that have yet to sign the Ottawa Treaty, namely the U.S., Russia and China.

Fisher will walk across many areas that remain impacted by landmines and other lethal remnants of wars both old and new. His journey will raise awareness of how these weapons continue to plague people's lives long after ceasefires.

Additionally, the expedition will raise funds for The Bunkeya Cultural Village (BCV) in the Katanga Province of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Julian Monroe Fisher is a noted African explorer from Greenwood S.C., who currently lives with his family in Austria. An anthropologist, his team in 2008 was recognized by the Ugandan Wildlife Authority for establishing a new route down from the Rwenzori Mountain glaciers along the Lamia River to the Semliki River confirming conclusively that the mountains are a true source of the River Nile. His sponsors include: Eton, Goal Zero, GoPro, Jetboil, Nitewatches, and Spot.

(For additional information: www.WalkAcrossAfrica.org, www.JulianMonroeFisher.com). For additional information about MAG and its global work visit: www.maginternational.org).

BRIT PLANS NORTH-SOUTH DESERT CROSSING OF ETHIOPIA

In 2008, Jeremy Curl, an explorer born in Japan and educated in Surrey, England, became the youngest westerner to have crossed the Sahara without motorized transport, an accolade that earned him a nomination for a Rolex Award for Exploration and Discovery.

As a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, summer 2011 will see Curl attempt to become the first person to complete a true crossing of the Danakil Desert, 500-miles from North to South Ethiopia, unsupported, on foot and with the use of camels.

On his journey Curl, 29, will be dealing with a region considered the hottest place on earth, strewn with volcanoes, many of which are active. A land where lava flows and sulphurous pools are commonplace. Furthermore, the Afar tribe that inhabits the area has a well-documented fearsome reputation as warriors. They compete and sometimes clash with other tribes over territory and water, and are heavily armed; even boys in their early teens can be seen carrying Kalashnikov rifles.

An established photographer, Curl's photographs can periodically be found on display at London galleries. His book, *Amongst the Touareg* (Brendan, 2009) is an account of his record-breaking expedition in the Sahara.

Curl's subsequent expedition in 2010 saw him walk the isolated Lower Omo River Valley, in Southern Ethiopia, a land that is embroiled in inter-tribal warfare and where inhabitants have reportedly never before seen a white man. His success in desert exploration has also taken him to the Koroli Desert and the Kaisut Plain in Northern Kenya.

Reportedly, not since 1928 has an expedition of this level been attempted due to the nature of the region which has been described by National Geographic Magazine as “the cruelest place on earth.” For this latest expedition, he is seeking sponsorship funding of £17,000, about US\$27,750. (For more information: Lynne Edwards, Sponsorship Manager, +44 (0)7738166229, lynne@beposkepr.org.uk, www.jeremycurl.com).

EXPEDITION UPDATE

Dupre Weathered Off McKinley

Polar explorer Lonnie Dupre, 49, of Grand Marais, Minn., was turned back by severe weather and crevasses during his recent solo winter climb of Denali (see *EN*, December 2010). After setting a record pace to 17,200 feet, Dupre was set for a summit attempt, but mother nature decided that it would "test" him for seven days, with winds up to 100 mph, temperatures reaching minus 50 degrees F., and a 5.4 magnitude earthquake. Due to dwindling supplies and inactivity, he lost considerable strength and conditioning. He returned to Talkeetna on Jan. 28 – day 22 – safe and sound. You can learn more at www.lonniedupre.com, or watch the Feb 15 coverage of the expedition by famed Minneapolis TV reporter Jason Davis at www.kstp.com/otr.

Pipe Dream

Anthony Smith, 84, an adventurer and author of 30 books who resides in London, departed Jan. 30 on his An-Tiki Project, an Atlantic crossing on a raft made of polyethylene pipes (see *EN*, August 2005).

Smith and his three-man crew of “mature and intrepid gentlemen,” ages 56 to 84 years, are using only the ocean currents and a sail to complete the 2,800-mile voyage from the Canary Islands to the Bahamas. At press time, according to their Yellowbrick global tracking system, they were well over halfway to the Caribbean.

The former BBC *Tomorrow's World* presenter and science correspondent found his crew by placing an advertisement in *The Daily Telegraph*. It read: "Fancy rafting across the Atlantic? Famous traveller requires 3 crew. Must be OAP (ed. note: Old Age Pensioner). Serious adventurers only."

Why pipes? Smith tells *EN*, “The gas and water industries use them everywhere, and know they must be strong because a pipe layer has no idea what will happen to them in the future, whether 40-ton trucks will roll over them, or the sub-soil will be washed away. And of course, sealed pipes containing air give far better buoyancy than any kind of wood.”

The project hopes to raise £50,000 (US\$81,365) for WaterAid, the U.K.-based non-profit whose mission is to improve access to safe water, hygiene and sanitation in the world's poorest communities. Sponsors include – no surprise here – a pipe company called GPS PE Pipe Systems. (For more information: <http://gasballoon.com/antiki/>).

Hip, Hip Hooray

New York entrepreneur Don Healy, at 65, became one of the oldest Americans to scale Mt. Everest and is believed to be the first to do so after a total hip replacement (see *EN*, January 2010). He reports that through his Everest Hip Hop Expedition, he raised \$37,500 for the Hospital and Rehabilitation Center for Disabled Children (HRDC) in Nepal. In a land where an orthopedic operation costs a mere \$150, the donations will potentially touch the lives of some 250 children. Healy plans next to attempt the Seven Summits. (For more information, see his blog titled “Aconcagua Conga” at www.Aconga.Wordpress.com).

EXPEDITION NOTES

Audience Lives Vicariously Through Explorers Club’s Mountain Stories

It was exhausting – sitting on East 70th Street in New York for a full day listening to stories of frigid cold, high winds, and death in the Himalayas. But that goes with the territory when you attend one of The Explorers Club’s Mountain Stories seminars. Here are some highlights of the event:

First up was **Robert Anderson**, who provided insight into a guide’s life on Everest. “When I take perfect strangers on an expedition my first goal among the team is to remove the sense that ‘it’s all about me.’ We are all strangers who will soon be making life or death decisions on the mountain,” said Anderson who led a group of 20 climbers and trekkers for two months in spring 2010. Of that group, 12 were trekkers going no further than base camp. “They were actually a lot more fun than the climbers who took the expedition too seriously. ... I generally like my clients to be happy and able to ‘chillax.’”

Later in his presentation, Anderson, veteran of 15 Himalayan expeditions, commented, “People who have a hard time on Everest are those who are wound too tight.

“If you don’t believe in God, you’re going to believe in something afterwards,” he says of the experience of climbing Everest, an experience that costs a team of seven \$70,000 in permit fees.

Next up was **Phil Powers**, executive director of the American Alpine Club, who dealt with what could go wrong on a Himalayan climb. “Big problems have very small beginnings,” he said, pointing to a dangerous bear that bit into a propane stove canister and, more critically, at least for Power’s own mental health, ate his Snicker bars.

Powers has led dozens of expeditions to South America, Alaska and Pakistan’s Karakoram Range, including ascents of K2 and Gasherbrum II without supplemental oxygen. He believes, “one attempts a mountain on its own terms without ladders, without supplemental oxygen.” During the K2 climb they relied on bamboo poles because, “in a whiteout it’s hard to distinguish heaven from earth.”

Powers, owner of Jackson Hole Mountain Guides, says that for every climber than summits on K2, one dies. "I fear the situation will get worse as climbers, accustomed to Everest's well-managed infrastructure – Sherpas, ladders, fixed ropes – are showing up on K2 where they aren't particularly prepared to be. Mountaineering infrastructure is being exported to mountains like K2, but it's not yet as effective there as it is on Everest."

Powers adds, "For a climber, fear is an important ingredient in evaluating whether you're safe or not. I use fear to decide whether I need another anchor. The climbers I worry about are those who are not afraid."

Two-time Everest veteran **Larry Huntington**, 75, interviewed by adventure journalist Jim Clash, said, "One advantage of age is that you can monitor the body better. You can pace yourself and not worry about keeping up with 25 year-olds. On climbs I say to myself, 'You watch, those young guys will burn themselves out, and that's just what happens.'" Huntington, an avid ocean racer and former chairman and CEO of Fiduciary Trust, later said, "You don't belong on Everest if you can't get down by yourself."

Mountain guide and motivational speaker **Chris Klinke**, accompanied in his talk by *New York Times* reporter **Graham Bowley**, author of *No Way Down*, said what he likes about high altitude climbing is that one can actually see the curvature of the earth. Klinke, a vice president for American Express Financial Advisors until he decided six years ago that he didn't want his bosses' jobs, shared his personal motto: "Climb hard. Climb high. Come home."

Salt Lake author and filmmaker **Jennifer Jordan**, author of *Last Man on the Mountain*, credits her interest in climbing journalism to *Into Thin Air*. In 2002, she came across the skeleton remains of Boston's Dudley Francis Wolfe, the first man to die on K2 (1939). She set out to dispel common misunderstandings that Wolfe was overconfident, fat, clumsy and slow. "That describes an anecdote, not a man," she writes in her account of how the millionaire made it to K2 in the first place.

"Dudley understood that on that mountain, there's no one you can rely upon except yourself," writes Jordan who believes Wolfe got high on the mountain and was abandoned by his teammates.

Jordan is trekking to Everest base camp this spring for the 15th anniversary of the 1996 tragedy and writing an article: "Voices from the Storm: 15 Years After the Everest Tragedy." Apparently, several of the survivors of 1996 will also be heading to the mountain. She is seeking a sponsor to credit in her publicity, website, and social-networking. The brand will also receive photos and updates to use in their own social media outlets. Sponsorships start at \$1,000. (For more information: www.jenniferjordan.net).

Finally, author **Broughton Coburn** revealed that *National Geographic* is planning a Legacy Expedition to Everest in 2012, the 49th anniversary of the 1963 American Everest Expedition. By climbing a year before the 50th anniversary, the story will be ready for publication in spring 2013. Reportedly, Eddie Bauer will be one of the sponsors.

Youngest to Dive Antarctica?

When we were 11 years of age, a big adventure was going to the New York World's Fair to eat Belgium waffles. Now comes word that the father of an 11-year-old who went scuba diving off the Antarctic peninsula near Detaille Island on Mar. 13, 2009, is seeking help to confirm whether this could be the youngest dive ever recorded in Antarctica.

Oceanwide Expeditions, the tour operator, certified that young Evan Bozanic was by far the youngest person to dive there. Quark Expeditions, another tour operator, had no record of anyone younger. Evan's father, Jeff Bozanic, of Fountain Valley, Calif., applied to Guinness World Record and waited a year. They finally came back and said they are no longer validating any records for claims being made by individuals less than 16 years old. Maybe for good reason. Evan writes on his blog about the experience: "My hands were frozen. I couldn't move them but I could feel them, and all I felt was pain. As soon as I got on to the ship, I stuck them into hot water. BIG mistake. I never felt so much pain in my hands in my life."

Finally, the elder Bozanic succeeded in getting the feat posted as a record in *Diving Almanac & Yearbook*. He writes *EN*, "We have had no other claims of anyone younger in the time we have publicized it. If you have other suggestions for validation, I would love to hear them." Any takers? (Learn more about Evan here:

<http://www.jeffbozanic.com/Kids/Evan/Travel/002.html>, see the record listed at: http://www.divingalmanac.com/article.php?article_id=3032).

Whaling Shipwreck Discovered Linked to *Moby-Dick*

Marine archeologists off Hawaii have found the sunken remains of a 19th-century whaling vessel skippered by a captain whose ordeal from an earlier shipwreck inspired the Herman Melville classic *Moby-Dick*. Iron and ceramic scraps from the Nantucket whaling ship *Two Brothers* were located in shallow waters nearly 600 miles from Honolulu in the remote chain of islands and atolls that make up the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

The ship, which struck a reef and foundered in 1823, was skippered by Captain George Pollard Jr. Two years earlier, Pollard commanded another ship that was rammed by a whale and sank in the South Pacific in a saga immortalized in Melville's 1851 novel *Moby-Dick*. (For more information: www.noaanews.noaa.gov)

Calling Major Tom

Now anyone with serious coin can own their own spacecraft. Sotheby's in New York will auction the spherical Vostok 3KA-2 Space Capsule on April 12, the 50th anniversary of the first manned space flight by Soviet pilot Yuri Gagarin (1934-1968).

The pre-sale estimate is for \$2 million to \$10 million. The battered craft has some good bones – it was the model used for the final dummy run before Gagarin left on his mission. Ahead of the auction the craft, which resembles a very large boulder, can be viewed in the Manhattan lobby of Sotheby's. It was sent into space on March 25, 1961, carrying a life-sized human mannequin and a small dog named Zvezdochka, meaning "Little Star." The capsule completed one orbit, then reentered the atmosphere and landed safely under parachute.

Everest Menu is Far Cry From Freeze Dry

Explorer David Hempleman-Adams, 54, will lead a 12-person Iceland Everest Expedition 2011 later this month in a bid to raise £1 million (\$US1.6 million) for a dementia charity. The group will experience fine dining on the slopes, enjoying fine wine and quality food such as beef bourguignon, and using linen tablecloths and napkins. Their somewhat underwhelming secondary goal is to “plant the Iceland Foods flag on the summit of Everest, taking the symbol of Britain’s number one frozen food specialist to the highest point on Earth.”

Joining the challenge is 65-year-old Malcolm Walker, chief executive of supermarket Iceland Foods, which has teamed up with Alzheimer’s Research U.K. to raise funds. Hempleman-Adams said, “This is a much bigger expedition than I’ve done before. Ten of the team will go to the summit. We anticipate we will arrive toward the end of May.

“On the previous expeditions the food was awful. I lost 30 lbs. last time after eating porridge mixed with creatine (supplements). This time Iceland has created boil-in-the-bag meals so it will be very different. We are even going to have a party at base camp for William and Kate’s wedding.” (For more information:

EXPEDITION FOCUS

Tuckerman Ravine’s Greatest Friend

Al Risch doesn’t wear a hat when he skis. It could be 20 degrees F. outside, as it was recently at Sugarbush Resort in Vermont, and there’s Al. No hat, no helmet, ears bright red. “Hats make my head itch,” he tells us as we set off on one of the resort’s signature intermediate trails.

When Risch worked at Cranmore Mountain Resort in New Hampshire, they say you could tell it was a really cold day, way too cold to ski, if you saw Risch in a hat, although truth be told, it was usually just a hood. “My ears just freeze up and peel, they don’t care.”

When Al tells us he's climbed to Tuckerman Ravine, the southeastern flank of 6,288-ft. Mt. Washington in New Hampshire, over 630 times, somehow we're not surprised. As executive director of Friends of Tuckerman Ravine, he knows that steep, 50+ degree glacial cirque – a backcountry ski destination since the early 20th century – perhaps better than anyone else alive.

Risch, who tells us that at the age of 78 he's "half-way to middle age because I'm going to live to be 156," learned to ski on a rope tow at age five. He first climbed Tuckerman in 1959 and has had a few close calls since. Like the time he decided to glissade down the east snowfields on his boots, without skis, then hit boilerplate ice and had to grab at rocks, twigs, anything to arrest a death slide. He said that before he could slow his descent, "I could visualize a plaque on the mountain, 'Here Lies Al Risch.'"

He continues, "There were people in the bowl, but no one saw me. Next time I'll look before I leap."

Then there was the time he lost most of his index finger to a lawn mower accident. Kids love it when he pretends to pick his nose, seemingly right up to his base knuckle.

Today Risch is perhaps Tuckerman Ravine's greatest friend, head of an organization of 1,000 outdoor enthusiasts passionate about protecting this fragile environment for future generations of people, plants and animals.

Says Eric Friedman, advisory council member of Friends of Tuckerman Ravine and marketing director of Mad River Glen in Vermont, "Al Risch is without question the biggest advocate for arguably the most important piece of backcountry ski real estate in New England. We and our progeny owe a tremendous debt of gratitude for his commitment and perseverance for Tuckerman Ravine."

The Tuckerman mystique is threatened by overuse and shrinking federal support for the Forest Service which has managed and protected the ravine since the early 1930's. Friends of Tuckerman Ravine has built a foot bridge to an overflow parking lot, purchased new emergency radios, replenished first aid caches, and plans to install new avalanche warning boards.

"Tuckerman Ravine has a mythic quality," Risch says. "You have to hike up, there's no mechanization. It's a mecca for backcountry skiers who can make a pilgrimage back to the source."

A tip of the hat from Expedition News for keeping the legend of Tuckerman alive.

(For more information: www.friendsoftuckerman.org).

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Do not follow where the path may lead. Go, instead, where there is no path and leave a trail.

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

MEDIA MATTERS

Is Polar Survival Like a Box of Chocolates?

Barbara Hillary, who reached the South Pole in January at age 79, making her reportedly the first African-American woman on record to stand on both poles, tells Henry Alford of the *New York Times* (Feb. 28) that she ate too much milk chocolate during the trip. “If I had frozen to death down there, wouldn’t it be sad if I’d gone to hell without getting what I want?” she said.

Here’s *The Thing*

Apparently Antarctica isn’t dangerous enough without a menacing alien or two. Premiering this fall is the prequel to the 1982 John Carpenter horror flick *The Thing*, a film that theater critic Roger Ebert called “a great barf-bag movie” for its groundbreaking make-up special effects. The 2011 version takes place at an isolated Antarctic outpost where a discovery full of scientific possibility becomes a mission of survival when an alien is unearthed by a crew of international scientists. The shape-shifting creature, accidentally unleashed at this marooned colony, has the ability to turn itself into a perfect replica of any living being. Paranoia spreads like an epidemic among a group of researchers as they’re infected, one by one, by this mystery from another planet. Director is Matthijs van Heijningen Jr.

(See the trailer here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XCHuSKnFYzY>)

EXPEDITION MARKETING

Walking with the Wounded

Geographic information systems (GIS) provider Esri UK, has launched an online, interactive map to track four wounded soldiers, including two amputees, taking part in a charity expedition. The Walking with the Wounded Expedition aims to raise over £2 million (US\$3.2 million) by trekking, unaided, to the Geographical North Pole later this month. Esri UK’s interactive map will track their progress and feature the team’s regular blog and photo updates. The expedition is expected to take around four weeks, covering over 200 miles. Monies raised will help servicemen and women who have been injured while serving their country.

The GPS coordinates of the team will be collected daily and added to the interactive, digital map to help track the team’s progress across the ice. By exploring the website, visitors can also visualize historic map data supplied by the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG). These interactive maps, available online for the first time, allow users to compare the team’s route to those taken by other earlier Arctic explorers. (For more information: <http://walkingwiththewounded.org.uk/>)

Good Reason to Become Delayed at ATL

One consolation for becoming delayed at the Atlanta airport is the new Antarctica gallery exhibit. Atlanta Photographer Santiago Vanegas sailed below the Antarctic Circle in 2009 aboard a Quark Expeditions vessel. From the 11,000 pictures he took during the 15-day voyage, he has chosen 50 to include in an exhibit titled, *Antarctica: Photographs by Santiago Vanegas*. Look for the year-long exhibit in the airport's Transportation Hall. (See 10 of the images here: <http://www.quarkexpeditions.com/Santiago-Vanegas>)

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