

EXPEDITION NEWS

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EXPEDITION NEWS, now in its 18th 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.

ARCTIC JUBILEE EXPEDITION HONORS THE QUEEN'S 60TH ANNIVERSARY

The historic Arctic Jubilee Expedition aims to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of HM Queen Elizabeth II by summiting the highest point on the Queen Elizabeth Islands, renamed by Canada on the coronation of HM the Queen in 1952. The 30-day expedition, lead by polar explorer Antony Jinman of Plymouth is planned for May 2012.

Barbeau Peak (8,583-ft./2616 m) has only been summited eight times throughout history and is the highest point within the British Empire Range as well as the Arctic Cordillera. More people have summited Everest than Barbeau Peak, outlining the remoteness and the impact of the project (and leading one to conclude Everest must have a better publicist). In addition to summiting the peak, the six-person team, including two university undergraduate students, will explore the surrounding area and attempt multiple first ascents of unclimbed, unnamed peaks on the North Ellesmere Icecap.

Team members hope that the linking of Inuit and UK schools via an interactive IT learning platform will encourage a sense of global citizenship. "Our interactive discussion boards will enable students from both cultures to interact and discuss questions relating to cultural identity, the Arctic environment and issues of climate change and sustainability," said Oli Milroy, teenage expedition member and PR manager of Education Through Expeditions.

Sponsorship of £25,000 (approx. \$39,595) is still being sought.

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EXPEDITION UPDATE

Fisher Launches Five-Year, Seven Expedition African Project

Anthropologist and modern day African explorer Julian Monroe Fisher apparently can't get Africa out of his system (See *EN*, July 2011). Recently he announced a five-year, seven expedition ethnographical research project to deep in the heart of Africa. Titled, "The Great African Expedition – A 21st Century Ethnographical Field Research of Africa," Fisher plans to conduct an ethnographical documentation of specific regions of Africa by retracing the African expeditionary routes of famed Victorian explorers including Speke, Grant, Burton, Baker, Wissman, Cameron, De Brazza, Livingstone and Stanley.

Fisher, 57, is an American from South Carolina who resides near Vienna, Austria.

The objectives of the project will be to compare the 19th century ethnographic documentation of the African tribal kingdoms gathered during the expeditions of the Victorian age, with the realities of 21st century Africa.

Phase one of the project begins in March 2012, with Fisher traveling on an overland journey up the Nile River from Cairo, Egypt, to Khartoum, Sudan.

For the expeditionary journeys, Fisher will use dugout canoes, feluccas, ferry boats, camels, donkeys, horses and his own two feet.

In 2011, the explorer walked large portions of the African continent between the Indian Ocean coast of Mozambique and the Atlantic Coast of Angola during an expedition dubbed, "Equatoria – A Walk Across Africa." (For more information: www.JulianMonroeFisher.com/greatafrica)

EXPEDITION NOTES

The Old Breed

Mountain Hardwear Athlete Freddie Wilkinson was featured as guest speaker at the American Alpine Club Benefit Dinner in Boston on Mar. 3. Wilkinson, Mark Richey and Steve Swenson shared their story of the first ascent of Saser Kangri II in Eastern Karakoram. At 24,665-ft./7,518 meters high, this was the second-highest unclimbed mountain in the world.

The Saser Kangri II ascent received a nomination for the prestigious Piolet d'Or (French for "The Golden Ice Axe"), an international award honoring the year's most notable alpine style ascents. Wilkinson's team's first ascent of Saser Kangri II via the steep 1,700-meter southwest face in August 2011 is one of six ascents nominated for the award and one of only two nominations for American climbers

this year. The award ceremony will be held March 21-24 in Chamonix, France.

During their expedition, the team created a short documentary film, *The Old Breed*, that combines action footage at home and on the climb with revealing interviews, compelling imagery, and an original score to tell the story of the team's success and subsequent fight for survival.

"*The Old Breed* is really about partnership and the 'explorer gene,' that human trait that makes us all want to go out into the wilderness and test our limits," said Wilkinson.

(View the trailer at <http://www.theoldbreedmovie.com>).

Studies of Melting Glaciers and Reef Biodiversity are Focus of Second Annual Explorers Club – Eddie Bauer Awards

The study of melting glaciers in Alaska, ice sheets in Antarctica, and the biodiversity of the deep reefs of Curacao are the focus of the second annual The Explorers Club – Eddie Bauer Grant for Expeditions, a joint effort of the 108-year-old exploration organization and the 92-year-old adventure outfitter.

The grants will be presented at The Explorers Club annual dinner held at the Waldorf=Astoria on Mar. 17, 2012.

The first award recipient is Christopher J. Roussi, 56, for his project titled: "Bering Glacier Ablation (melting) Measurements and Modeling," based on the southeast coast of Alaska. Roussi, a resident of Ann Arbor, Mich., hopes to construct an accurate model in which to predict the ablation of any glacier.

Another grant goes to Australian Pim Bongaerts, Ph.D., for a project titled, "Exploring the Deep Reefs of Curacao: a Genetic Survey of Biodiversity in the Mesophotic Realm." Bongaerts, 29, a resident of Heron Island, Queensland, will use a manned submersible named "Curasub," supplemented by deep technical diving, to monitor the impacts of climate change on these deep water communities over time. (For more information: www.coralreefecosystems.org/people/pim).

Both will split a total grant award of \$25,000.

A separate award called The Explorers Club – Eddie Bauer Youth Grant, for the sum of \$25,000, is awarded to Benjamin P. Oliver, 24, for his project, "Did Antarctica Host Ice Sheets During the Cretaceous Greenhouse? Evidence From a Sedimentary Basin." Oliver, based in Columbia, S.C., will study whether ephemeral ice sheets may have existed on Antarctica during parts of the Cretaceous and early Paleogene period (125-55 million years ago) thought to be too warm for widespread glaciation. His research will use evidence from the Larsen basin, a sedimentary basin at the northern tip of the Antarctic Peninsula, to investigate the Cretaceous glaciation hypothesis.

(For more information: www.explorers.org, www.eddiebauer.com)

Sled Dog Team to Climb to “Woof” of Northeast

A team of sled dogs and mushers from the Muddy Paw Sled Dog Kennel in Jefferson, N.H., will attempt to tackle the Mount Washington, the Northeast’s highest peak. The feat will be attempted Mar. 7-9, 2012, depending on weather conditions. This will be only the fourth-ever dog sled attempt and the first-ever in winter, according to www.crosscountryskiresorts.com.

Previous attempts were in 1926, 1932, and 1992. The Muddy Paw mushers and dogs will be following the historic Mt. Washington Auto Road adjacent to Great Glen Trails, the X-C ski resort, which also hosts rides on a motorized snowcoach up the auto road in the winter.

Organizers hope to raise awareness and funds to help support the more than 130 sled dogs that the Muddy Paws Kennel has rescued. A board of local mushers is creating the nonprofit N.H. Sled Dog Rescue, History & Education Center to focus on rescuing northern breed dogs in need, preserving New Hampshire sled dog artifacts, and educating the public on the history of dogsledding and the care of northern breeds. (For more information: 603 545 4533, www.dogslednh.com)

Top Cat: Height Doesn’t Faze Lowell the Cat

A constant presence at The Explorers Club HQ is a female cat brought into the building in fall 2009 to hold down the mice population. Lowell, named for the famed broadcaster, Lowell Thomas, has the run of the place, and can often be seen basking under the light in the Member’s Lounge, or by a lobby heating vent. Originally from a shelter in Philadelphia, Lowell is a favorite of members and visitors alike, performing daring feats of agility, including perching on a banister overlooking the six-story stairwell, like some feline Messner or Hillary (see her photo at www.expeditionnews.blogspot.com).

A few years ago Lowell was accidentally knocked from her high altitude vantage point, and not being on belay, fell a few stories. Lowell was quickly brought to a vet and soon resumed her mouse-hunting duties. “It was just one of her nine lives, I guess,” says Club receptionist Emerald Nash, who often has to chase Lowell away from her desktop mouse.

Says Matt Williams, executive director, “We haven’t seen a mouse since she’s arrived. She’s clearly pulling her weight.”

Lowell is particularly well trained, using a cat box consistently on the fourth floor. Otherwise, there would be hell to pay for sure, and likely a new feline appetizer on the Club’s annual dinner menu.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“Life is full of scary crevasses. Illness, accidents and financial disasters can appear without warning. Seemingly secure institutions like banks, businesses, and marriages collapse, just like snow bridges weakened by the sun. At some time, everyone will fall into one of life's crevasses; mine just happened to be a crack in the ice. Crawling out of these crevasses, overcoming life's challenges, is something each of us must face. Finding resilience for surviving and thriving through adversity is part of everyone's climb.”

Jim Davidson & Kevin Vaughan, *The Ledge: An Adventure Story of Friendship and Survival on Mount Rainier* (2011, Ballantine Books/Random House)

EXPEDITION FOCUS

As Filmmaker James Cameron Focuses on Deepest Ocean, Don Walsh Asks, “What Took You So Long?”

The phones have been ringing over at Don Walsh’s office with the revelation that Oscar winning director James Cameron, known for breaking box office records, is now focusing upon reaching the Challenger Deep, the deepest known point in the world's oceans. It's part of the Mariana Trench near Guam in the western Pacific.

According to a story on CNN.com’s Lightyears blog (Feb. 29), the filmmaker, who's better known for his blockbuster hits such as *Titanic* and *Avatar*, is taking the dive of his life into the deepest waters in the world. Also involved in their own deep dives are billionaire businessman and adventurer Richard Branson and his American partner Chris Welsh, and an experienced submarine pilot in Florida.

At more than 35,800 feet (10,900 m), the Mariana Trench is deeper than Mount Everest is tall, and has had only two previous human visitors. In 1960, U.S. Navy Lt. Don Walsh and the late Swiss explorer Jacques Piccard descended into the deep in the U.S. Navy's bathyscaphe *Trieste*.

Scientists hope that Challenger Deep will provide insight into unfamiliar life in the depths of the ocean. It is estimated that more than 750,000 marine species have not been formally described in scientific literature over the centuries, triple the number of those that have been. The figures exclude microbes, of which a 2010 census estimates there are up to 1 billion kinds.

We asked Walsh to put this effort into some perspective:

"It has been characterized as ‘The Race to the Bottom.’ A nice 'hook' for the media but it's not correct,” he tells *EN*. “There are four groups that have said they want to develop a manned submersible that can dive into the deepest place in the ocean. All are operating on different time lines and they are also talking to each other.”

Walsh continues, “Movie maker James Cameron has been quiet about his one-man submersible design and his proposed operating schedule. However it appears that he may

be attempting his deepest dive within the next two months. After that, he is planning dives into other deep trenches.

“Next in the 'ready line' is Branson's *Virgin Oceanic*, the one-person manned submersible that was initially being built for adventurer the late Steve Fossett. The basic design concept follows Graham Hawkes' underwater flying vehicle designs which are generically known as 'Deep Flight' subs. Hawkes has been retained by *Virgin Oceanic* to complete the sub.

“First pilot testing will be done in Newport, Calif., in early April,” Walsh reports. “Much more testing remains to be completed and deeper ocean dives will probably not happen until later in 2012. Once tested and proved, the *Virgin Oceanic* submersible will be used in a program to dive into the deepest places in all five oceans.”

Walsh reports that Triton Submarines in Vero Beach, Fla., has announced their *Triton 36,000* three-person submersible. While the design is being completed, the company is trying to raise the \$15 million needed to construct it. Triton has proposed using a spherical pressure hull that is all glass.

“This is an underwater technology 'first'. Outside visibility will be spectacular,” Walsh tells us.

He adds, “A fourth group is DOER Marine in Alameda, Calif. Founded by Dr. Sylvia Earle and run by her daughter, DOER has a long history in the development and improvement of underwater systems including manned submersibles. They have a much longer-term program to develop a three-person maximum depth vehicle, *Deepsearch*. It will be employed primarily for oceanographic research. At present, the company is developing the fundamental technologies, testing of components and refining the vehicle design. DOER has had funding support from Google's Eric Schmidt through his personal foundation,” Walsh says.

“My feeling about someone breaking 'my' record is simply, ‘What took you so long?’ After Jacques and I had surfaced from our dive 52 years ago we sat on top of *Trieste* and thought about how long it would be before other explorers would return. Our best guess was 2-3 years... I take no pride in the fact that no one has ever gone back.”

Trip Report: Bat Hibernacula Monitoring and Habitat Characterization Project

Jut Wynne, Ph.D. candidate in Biological Sciences and research ecologist with the Colorado Plateau Research Station, Northern Arizona University, and Eathan McIntyre with the National Park Service, along with other researchers, recently conducted a several day study to census hibernating bats and collect 3D mapping data. The effort was part of a bat hibernacula (the location chosen by an animal for hibernation) monitoring and habitat characterization project in Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument in Arizona, according to Wynne.

The team surveyed two caves containing hibernating bats and collected 3D cartography data. Fifty bats in one roost and five in another roost were counted. All but two individuals were Townsend's big-eared bats, a medium-sized bat with extremely long, flexible ears (hence the name).

Wynne explains that to date, nearly 100 temperature and relative humidity data loggers have been deployed and are currently collecting hourly data from these sites. In addition, 3D locational data has been collected for both instrument and hibernating bat locations, and the two hibernacula roosts have been censused for the past two winter seasons. These data will be used to develop 3D interpolative cave climate models, quantify habitat characteristics of the two hibernacula, and develop a better understanding as to how bats select microsites within caves for hibernation.

The team's preliminary results gave rise to some interesting questions regarding hibernacula use, especially during mild winters. For example, numbers from one cave slightly increased while there was a dramatic decrease in the number of individuals in another cave when compared to last year's data.

Wynne asks, "Does the cave containing a lower number of bats this year less effectively trap cold air and thus is a less optimal roost during mild winters? Or, does this merely reflect interannual variation in use? The two years of data underscore the need to collect census data in subsequent years so that the researchers may better illuminate patterns and better understand how hibernating bats are using caves in northern Arizona."

This work was prompted by the ongoing white nose syndrome threat which has resulted in the mortality of over five million bats in the eastern U.S. and Canada. This pathogen is moving westward and may ultimately threaten bat populations in the western U.S., Wynne says.

Through this work, researchers and land managers are working collaboratively to better understand hibernacula habitat and movements of hibernating bats within their winter roosts. This project is funded through a cooperative agreement between the National Park Service and Northern Arizona University. (For more information: Jut Wynne, jut.wynne@nau.edu).

EXPEDITION MARKETING

"Somebody Left the Gate Open"

It's nice to see the marketing team for Citibank decided to strive for authenticity with its on-going TV campaign for the Citibank ThankYou card. The 30-sec. spot shows professional climber Katie Brown on Fisher Towers in Utah, but only after she equipped her climb with climbing gear described as "... a new belt, some nylons, and what girl wouldn't need new shoes?" – all thanks to her ThankYou Premier card.

Accompanying her is climber Alex Honnold who correspondent Lara Logan interviewed on CBS *60 Minutes* last October. Climbers Colin Haley and Beth Rodden also auditioned for the spot but didn't make the cut.

The ad team responsible for the spot also scored big hiring the group LP whose song, "Into the Wild," contains the infectious refrain, "Somebody Left the Gate Open."

You can hear the song here: <http://www.iamp.com/home.html>

See the Citibank commercial here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VE4bcq8Plzk>

We Get a Kick Out of This

That bastion of preppydom, L.L. Bean, has outfitted an expedition or two over the past 100 years, thus we got a kick out of their new Bootmobile, right out of the Oscar Meyer Weiner School of Marketing. The Bootmobile is a mobile replica of one of the first products L.L. Bean ever offered – the Maine Hunting Shoe. The boot covers a pick-up truck, and the boot itself was sculpted out of foam and fiberglass and supported by a steel frame.

The Bootmobile will be touring America throughout 2012 in celebration of the 100th anniversary, as well as a reminder for people to enjoy the outdoors. As part of this initiative, L.L. Bean has partnered with the National Parks Foundation for the Million Moment Mission. L.L. Bean is looking to raise \$1 million for the National Parks Foundation – and here's where the Bootmobile comes in. L.L.Bean will donate a dollar to the National Parks Foundation for every person to share their visit to the Bootmobile or their outdoor experiences. To find out more about the mission, to upload a picture or to share an outdoor experience, visit L.L.Bean's Facebook, Twitter and YouTube pages or visit the website www.llbean.com/100th.

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Easy on the Self Congratulation

A wire service story steered us wrong about certain elements of British adventurer Felicity Aston's Antarctic crossing early this year, during which time she became the first woman to ski across the continent alone. Aston got back to us with great, well, felicity.

She writes, "Unfortunately there were several inaccuracies in your report about my recent expedition. Firstly, although I was able to send messages via SMS direct from my satellite phone to my Twitter account I wasn't able to receive any replies or retweets - neither was I able to access the Internet or Facebook.

"The tweet you quote as written by me, was in fact (quite clearly) a congratulatory announcement by my home support team. Any Tweet posted by my home support team

was prefixed by exclamation marks. I am horrified that your readers may now think that I congratulated myself in this way.

“I did not have a support team in Antarctica, I had one friend in Cyprus looking after admin while I was away as a favour (she did this on a voluntary basis on top of her regular full-time job and we called her my 'home support') and the fact that I carried two satellite phones and a Personal Locator Beacon was a condition of both the logistical operators (ALE) that flew me into and out of Antarctica, and the insurance company.”

Aston continues, “However, you did better than my local paper which described me as a mum of two, which was a big surprise to my friends, family and long-term boyfriend (I am in fact unmarried with no children!).”

Best wishes,

Felicity Aston

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Good “Catch”

We goofed in our February issue. Bill Pruitt, producer of Original Productions’ reality series *Deadliest Catch*, wrote us last month, “Love the quote of the month. But is this gentleman Fridtjof Nansen like Benjamin Button? Born in 1961 and died in 1930? THAT’S amazing!”

Nansen was actually born in 1861.

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Ripped From the Pages of EN – Read the book that was spawned by *Expedition News*. Autographed copies of *You Want to Go Where? – How to Get Someone to Pay for the Trip of Your Dreams* (Skyhorse Publishing) – is available to readers for the discounted price of \$14.99 plus \$2.89 s & h (international orders add \$9.95 s & h). If you have a

project that is bigger than yourself – a trip with a purpose – learn how it's possible to raise cash or in-kind (gear) support. Written by *EN* editor Jeff Blumenfeld, it is based upon three decades helping sponsors select the right exploration projects to support. Payable by PayPal to blumassoc@aol.com, or by check to *Expedition News*, 28 Center Street, Darien, CT 06820 USA.

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