

EXPEDITION NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF BLUMENFELD AND ASSOCIATES, INC. ©

May 2013 – Volume Twenty, Number Five

EXPEDITION NEWS, now in its 19th 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.

PRINCE HARRY JOINS SOUTH POLE ALLIED CHALLENGE 2013

An expedition this fall involving three teams of wounded veterans from the U.S., U.K., Australia, and Canada will attempt to raise awareness and funds for military charities by trekking to the South Pole from Novolazarevskaya Station, the Russian Antarctic research station at Schirmacher Oasis, Queen Maud Land, 47 miles from the Antarctic coast.

Prince Harry, the expedition's royal patron, plans to accompany the team. In 2011, Harry, 28, joined a team of Walking with Wounded amputees that trekked to the North Pole, although he had to break off to attend the royal wedding of brother Prince William and the former Kate Middleton.

The team members of the 210-mile, four week Walking with the Wounded South Pole Allied Challenge will endure temperatures as low as minus 49 degrees F. and 50 mph winds as they pull pulks (custom built arctic sledges) towards the southernmost point on the globe. The expedition will highlight the veterans' courage and raise money and awareness for other veterans with cognitive and/or physical disabilities sustained in service to their nations. Each team will have an experienced polar guide.

The U.S. team is managed by No Barriers USA, a U.S. nonprofit organization founded by blind adventurer Erik Weißenmayer.

Some of the wounded joining the expedition include American Ivan Castro, who was blinded in an attack while he was serving in Iraq. The other three U.S. team members are: Margaux Mange of Lakewood, Colo.; Mark Wise of Colorado Springs, Colo.; and Therese Frentz of Del Rio, Tex.

(For more information: David Shurna, executive director, No Barriers USA, www.nobarriersusa.org, dave@nobarriersusa.org, 970 484 3633. View the official expedition website here: www.walkingwiththewounded.org.uk/southpole2013)

EXPEDITION UPDATE

114,000 Hams Communicate with Remote “DXpedition”

A 29-person ham radio expedition to Clipperton, one of the most isolated islands in the world (see *EN*, February 2013), included a team of 24 radio amateurs and five scientists and filmmakers from 10 countries. During ten days of occupation, the team set up and operated 10 radio stations, making a total of 114,000 individual contacts, a new record for such so-called “DXpeditions” (DX being ham-talk for “distance” or “distant”).

The team planned and carried out a variety of scientific observations and collections, including the first specimens of foraminifera, a major taxonomic group of microscopic animals important for the study of global climate. Other observations, including searches for a particular invasive ant and congenitally deformed seabirds, proved negative.

According to the project’s website, “the effort was carried out on time, below budget, with no casualties. No damage was done to the island or wildlife; the campsite was left cleaner than before the expedition.”

Read the expedition report here: www.tx5k.org

EXPEDITION NOTES

Sherpas and Westerners Battle on Everest

Ice picks were brandished in fury; rocks were thrown and blood shed onto the snow in a confrontation in late April so intense it is almost hard to believe. Three Western climbers were confronted by an angry mob of 100 Sherpas at their Everest campsite, 21,000 feet above sea level, in a bloody, unprecedented brawl.

"They told us 'Now we kill you,'" recalled Simone Moro, 35, an Italian climber who was one of the trio of Westerners. Beside him were Jonathan Griffith, 29, a British Alpine photographer, and Swiss climber Ueli Steck, 36 – one of the world's most celebrated mountaineers.

The 50-min. battle was only ended when an American woman put herself between the Westerners and the army of Sherpas, allowing the three men to flee. They all descended to base camp immediately, leaving the mountain soon after.

The fight broke out after the three Westerners appeared to disrespect the Sherpas and go against accepted climbing etiquette. They crossed paths on the Lhotse Face, a 3,700-ft.-

long wall of glacial blue ice, with a group of Sherpas who were fixing ropes for the commercial expeditions that were soon scheduled to climb the mountain. When the three were perceived to be getting in the way of the Sherpas in their workplace, fists flew.

Said Kenton Cool, one of Britain's most celebrated mountaineers, who makes a living by guiding people up some of the toughest mountain ranges in the world, "If ever you've been to this country, you will know what hospitable people they (Sherpas) are.

"The attack was so out of character. You see rudeness towards them all the time, and it greatly upsets me – people are dismissive, or expect their food and clothing to be carried for them. Some of it is unintentional cultural offenses, but other times it is blatant rudeness."

Cool continues, "They are kind and proud people."

The British climber, Jonathan Griffith, believes he and his friends were the accidental victims – an unlucky last straw – of a more general hatred towards the rich climbers who give Sherpas so much of their living; a hatred that for financial reasons needs to be suppressed. They were angry at the "financial gap" that had opened up on their mountain, and at rolling out bedspreads and making tea for clients who hadn't even bothered to learn their names.

"These Sherpas are doing a huge amount of work to get everyone up the mountain," he told *National Public Radio*. "I'm sure they must look at their clients occasionally and think they're being used."

Griffith's radio interview continues, "... you can't tell people when to climb and when not to climb. You know, this is mountaineering. It's meant to be a very free activity and that's why climbers enjoy doing it. So to be able to say the people have decided to fix the mountain on that day and that no one can climb it, is a very controversial thing to be able to say in the first place."

Sherman Bull, a retired surgeon from Stamford, Conn., has been on five Everest expeditions, summiting in 2001. He tells *EN*, "I tend to side with the Sherpas on this one. But it is a sad commentary on the current state of affairs on Everest.

"The pressures of time, money and, unsustainably large numbers seem to be killing the time-honored mountaineering ethic of courtesy, consideration, and the 'fellowship of the rope.'"

Bull continues, "If the situation is not addressed, there will be more serious consequences than happened here."

Late last month, the Nepalese authorities convened a peace conference at base camp, at which both sides signed a document publicly apologizing for their actions. A few days later Griffith and Steck left for Kathmandu, still shaken and vowing never to return.

Listen to Griffith's NPR interview here:

<http://www.npr.org/2013/04/30/180116787/everest-fight-reveals-cultural-chasm-between-climbers-sherpas>

Couple Completes 11,700-Mile, Human-Powered North American Odyssey

Amy and Dave Freeman landed their kayaks in Key West on April 4, 2013, completing a three-year, 11,700-mile expedition across North America by kayak, dogsled and canoe. Over 80,000 elementary and middle school students from around the world participated in the expedition virtually.

The Freemans began their human (and dog) powered North American Odyssey in Bellingham, Wash., on Earth Day (April 22) 2010. The purpose of their expedition was to highlight North America's waterways and wild places while engaging students, teachers and armchair adventurers in their journey via www.WildernessClassroom.com.

The Freemans also met directly with over 25,000 students at presentations they conducted along their route.

The North American Odyssey was sponsored by: Clif Bar, Current Designs Kayaks, ExOfficio, Go Macro, Mitchell Paddles, MTI Adventurewear, North Water Paddle Sports Equipment, Petzl, Wenonah Canoe, Wild Gift and many other companies.

Cavers Reach Most Remotest Point Inside Earth

A team of cavers have returned from a seven-week expedition to Sistema Huautla, a large deep cave system in Mexico. They succeeded in exploring 1,444-ft./440m into sump 9 at a depth of 266-ft./81m where the cave is entirely flooded using scuba diving equipment. Sump 9 is reportedly the "most remote point yet reached inside the earth," according to renowned cave explorer Dr. William Stone in 1994 after he reached sump 9 but was unable to dive its depths.

The final dive made by Jason Mallinson also established Sistema Huautla as the deepest cave in the Western Hemisphere with a total depth of 5,069-ft./1,545m measured from the highest entrance to the deepest point reached by Mallinson during his dive.

A team of more than 30 cavers from the U.K., U.S., Canada, Poland and Mexico worked for many weeks hauling ropes, camping equipment and scuba gear down into the cave to a depth of 2,756-ft./840m so that a team of five cave divers could carry on the exploration of this world famous cave. The cave divers first had to swim 1,969-ft./600m underwater through two flooded tunnels to reach their advance camp (camp 6). Here they spent one week exploring sump 9 and also looking for a way to bypass the flooded tunnel which represents the current end of the system. In total, the explorers didn't see daylight for over 10 days while they were carrying out their exploration.

The expedition which took more than two years to plan was led by British cave diver Chris Jewell who said “reaching this point was a mammoth task and I think it will be many years before someone is able to go further or deeper in this cave.”

(For more information: www.cdg-exped.org, www.facebook.com/cavedive)

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“I’ve always said that if you want to stay alive in the backcountry you better learn to travel with a good woman and listen to her. If you look at the statistics of who is getting caught, injured, or killed in risky sports, it generally isn’t women. Maybe they know something we don’t, can communicate more easily, and aren’t afraid to use the word ‘No’. Or maybe they are just more tuned-in to Nature’s signals and willing to listen to the message.”

– Doug Fesler, who with his wife, Jill Fredston, has spent more than three decades evaluating avalanche hazards, predicting avalanches, triggering them with explosives, teaching potential victims how to stay alive, and leading rescue efforts in Alaska. Taking summers off, they have paddled more than 25,000 miles together around the world. For the last four years, they have been sailing south from Alaska around South America and are currently along the east coast of the U.S., with an eye on the Canadian Arctic for the summer.

MEDIA MATTERS

Rowing the Northwest Passage

An expedition row across the Northwest Passage in the Canadian Arctic has gained the support of Irish energy firm Mainstream Renewable Power. Mainstream will sponsor the expedition, which will see four rowers attempting the 1,864-mi./3,000km journey, according to the *Irish Independent* (May 6).

Irishmen Paul Gleeson, Denis Barnett and Kevin Vallely, along with Canadian Frank Wolf, will set off from Inuvik in northwest Canada on July 1 and intend to row 24 hours a day, seven days a week for two to three months, working in shifts until they reach Pond Inlet in Nunavut.

The team will be making the journey in their 25ft-long customized rowing boat *The Arctic Joule*.

The feat will only be possible because the ice which usually makes the Northwest Passage impassable is melting as a result of climate change.

Mainstream boss Eddie O'Connor said the company was sponsoring the expedition to highlight the dangers of global warming: "This expedition allows us to demonstrate to the

world that there is an answer to global warming. . . we can have our electricity supplied by renewable sources."

NASA: Next Stop Mars

NASA administrator Charles Bolden has said that a manned mission to Mars is the space agency's top priority - and told space experts 'every single moment of our time and every single dollar of our assets' should be spent on the mission, according to a posting on the U.K.'s *MailOnline.com* (May 6).

Speaking on the first day of the Humans 2 Mars Summit at George Washington University, Bolden said, "Interest in sending humans to Mars has never been higher.

"We now stand on the precipice of a second opportunity to press forward with what I think is man's destiny, and that is to go forward to another planet."

Read the story here:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2320344/Charles-Bolden-NASA-chief-says-manned-mission-Mars-priority--happen-2033.html>

Lead an Incredibly Interesting Life?

A major cable television network is searching for fascinating male explorers and adventurers ages 63 to 80 to star in a new docu-series. This series will follow the day-to-day lives of men who have been through amazing experiences and have lived on to tell the tales to young people of the next generation. If interested, contact Lisa Matt, lisamatt@schweet.tv

CLIMBING FOR DOLLARS

Clothing, Communications, Ophthalmic Companies Support "Gift of Sight"

From May 15-29, 2013, an expedition of ophthalmologists and eye care professionals sponsored by Dooley Intermed International, will provide free eye examinations, eyeglasses and cataract surgeries to an estimated 1,000 villagers in the remote Mustang region of Nepal.

The 2013 Gift of Sight Expedition team will examine and treat an estimated 1,000 villagers in urgent need of eye care, including comprehensive eye screening, refraction, prescription eyeglasses, cataract and ophthalmic surgeries. *Expedition News* will accompany the team to lower Mustang dispatching daily updates and feature coverage for our June issue.

Supporters backing this effort in addition to Dooley Intermed are: the Paul & Irene Bogoni Foundation. Also, Sherpa Adventure Gear has joined as Official Clothing

Supplier. The company will provide Nepal-manufactured outdoor apparel for the team (www.sherpaadventuregear.com).

Keeler Instruments is providing assistance with ophthalmic equipment (www.keelerusa.com). Operation Restore Vision is also providing assistance (www.ismission.org/operation-restore-vision/).

DeLorme is supplying the company's inReach two-way satellite communicator, which will help the team stay connected anywhere in the world 160 characters at a time through the Iridium satellite network (www.delorme.com).

The expedition will issue daily blogs that will be posted to www.dooleyintermed.org. See the Gift of Sight trailer here: <https://vimeo.com/38847615>

MEDIA MATTERS

Tall Shoulders

When Felix Baumgartner broke the record for history's highest jump (nearly 128,000 feet above New Mexico last Oct. 14), he was figuratively standing on the shoulders of high altitude pioneer Col. Joseph Kittinger, now 84, who held the previous free-fall record of 102,800 feet set in 1960.

According to William Langewiesche's story in the May issue of *Vanity Fair*, Kittinger was participating in a government research program whose purpose was to explore certain aspects of human bodies in free-fall after ejection from a new generation of airplanes capable of flying at very high altitude. Through Kittinger's efforts, the problem of uncontrollable flat spins was solved using a small drogue parachute, about six feet across, which served to tame the spin. Ejection systems have since been equipped with just such stabilizing drogues, and countless lives have been saved as a result.

Baumgartner's jump was financed by Red Bull for a reported \$28 million for engineering, fabrication, and marketing. A record eight million people watched it live on *YouTube*.

Traveling Light

Bertrand Piccard's \$148 million attempt to build a solar-powered plane capable of circumnavigating the globe was profiled recently by Finn-Olaf Jones, writing in *WSJ Magazine* in April. Jones says the *Solar Impulse* craft – with its sleek, clean lines, white-gloss finish and rakishly angled 208-foot wings, “resembles what you might get had Steve Jobs reimagined a child's balsa-wood glider in giant form.”

Notes Andre Borschberg, a former Swiss air force fighter ace and McKinsey & Company consultant who is the project's CEO, “The crux to flying nonstop around the world with solar energy is being able to fly even when the sun isn't out, especially at night.”

The solution is four specially developed lithium polymer batteries that store energy from the nearly 12,000 solar cells – cells supported by individual sponsorships of around \$200 each.

The plane has held 64 test flights through Europe and North Africa – at up to 26 hours at a time. This month it will conduct flights in the U.S.

Says Jon Karkow, chief engineer for Richard Branson and Steve Fossett's *GlobalFlyer*, which flew around the world in 2005 on a single tank of gas, "When you look back at history you'll see that these leaps into new technologies might at first not look interesting, but an electric airplane like *Solar Impulse* will have trickle-down effects.

"Especially when you remember that we won't always have petroleum – but we'll always want to fly," Karkow adds."

Read the full story here: <http://stream.wsj.com/story/latest-headlines/SS-2-63399/SS-2-220402/>

Virgin Galactic Blasts Off

Richard Branson's space-tourism venture cleared an important hurdle in late April with the first powered test flight of its *SpaceShipTwo* craft. The 16-second test burn is a forerunner to the start of commercial operations late this year or early 2014. The trip would send passengers about 60 miles above the Earth's surface, at a maximum speed of about 2,500 mph. Virgin Galactic expects to charge the first 600 space tourists \$200,000 for a suborbital ride, according to the *Wall Street Journal* story (Apr. 29) by Andy Pasztor. The next 400 thrill seekers will be charged \$250,000 per ride.

Read the full story here:

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323798104578452901565132188.html>

High Altitude Education

The Khumbu Climbing Center, established in Nepal 10 years ago by Conrad Anker and Jenni Lowe-Anker, educates Sherpas in mountaineering skills that could save lives as they try to make a living guiding Westerners up the world's boldest summits. According to a story by Elizabeth Miller in the *Boulder (Colo.) Weekly* (Apr. 18), since their first class in 2004, they've taught more than 700 students the basic skills of mountain travel, including inspecting equipment, tying knots, belaying, rope management and wilderness first aid. The Alex Lowe Charitable Foundation now hopes to build a community center in Phortse, Nepal, for classes and training.

“When we started teaching our classes 10 years ago, we had a number of students who had summited Everest but they didn’t know how to tie a figure eight knot, which is the simplest knot in climbing terms,” Lowe-Anker says.

“Now there’s this desire to become as current as a Western climber, so wearing helmets in the ice fall, having proper crevasse rescue equipment and knowing how to use it, wearing the latest in boots and clothing – things like that really make a difference for them.”

Read the full story here: <http://www.boulderweekly.com/article-10967-high-altitude-education.html>.

Learn more about the community center here: http://alexlowe.org/kcs_building.shtml

ON THE HORIZON

Innovation Everest, Royal Geographical Society, London, through June 14

This landmark exhibition examines new and innovative expedition technologies since the successful ascent of Mt. Everest in 1953. In the 1950s, many companies sought the prestige of providing prototype equipment for the expedition, requesting in return reports on product performance. From lightweight, rubberized high altitude boot protection to powdered soups, and from red crystal snow dye to high tech oxygen apparatus, the expedition’s success or failure depended on over 150 (mainly British) manufacturers. These supporters hope to demonstrate how innovation in advanced materials, clothing, wireless and other technologies could give the 1953 expedition a winning advantage.

After the expedition, these technologies were then adapted for other end-uses, from specialized breathing equipment for asthmatic children to the free-flow ink designed for airplane use.

(For more information: www.rgs.org/collections).

Public Invited to Ronne Family Dinner, June 12, The Explorers Club

Norwegian-American Finn Ronne was a noted Antarctic explorer and veteran of five over-wintering expeditions. Like his father, Norwegian sailmaker Martin Ronne, who was a member of Roald Amundsen's expedition to discover the South Pole in 1911 and the first expedition of American explorer Richard Byrd, Finn followed in his footsteps as a member of Byrd's second expedition.

Ronne's expeditions accomplished much scientific work and discovered and mapped the last unknown coastline of the world, including the Ronne Ice Shelf. On June 12, an Explorers Club Members Dinner in New York will honor the legacy of the Ronnes and will include rare photographs, excerpts from a television documentary, and artifacts from expeditions.

Non-members of the Explorers Club can attend this event as the guest of Members Dinner Chairman Daryl Hawk.

(For more information: www.explorers.org, 212 628 8383)

EXPEDITION CLASSIFIEDS

Project Himalaya – Real treks and expeditions in Nepal and Northern India. We still go exploring, are opening up the Nepal Great Himalaya Trail and alternative trekking peaks in Ladakh, as well as offering unique range of treks. We are a small operation and really care about every detail, and offer best in class treks – <http://project-himalaya.com>

Women's Leadership & Adventure Summit, July 26-28, 2013, Golden, Colo. – Challenge yourself and reach your potential during a weekend of motivational speaking sessions and adventures! Choose from trekking, climbing, or paddleboarding and spend a day adventuring alongside professional athletes in the Colorado Rockies! Limited spaces available - APPLY TODAY: www.wlas2013.com

Advertise in Expedition News – For just 50 cents a word, you can reach an estimated 10,000 readers of America's only monthly newsletter celebrating the world of expeditions on land, in space, and beneath the sea. Join us as we take a sometimes irreverent look at the people and projects making Expedition News. Frequency discounts are available. (For more information: blumassoc@aol.com).

EXPEDITION NEWS is published by Blumenfeld and Associates, Inc., 1281 East Main Street – Box 10, Stamford, CT 06902 USA. Tel. 203 655 1600, editor@expeditionnews.com. Editor/publisher: Jeff Blumenfeld. Assistant editor: Jamie Gribbon. Research editor: Lee Kovel. ©2013 Blumenfeld and Associates, Inc. All rights reserved. ISSN: 1526-8977. Subscriptions: US\$36/yr. available by e-mail only. Credit card payments accepted through www.paypal.com. Read EXPEDITION NEWS at www.expeditionnews.com. Enjoy the *EN* blog at www.expeditionnews.blogspot.com.