

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.

FATHER AND SON CYCLE JAPAN; ICELAND IS NEXT

In the summer of 2009, Charles Scott, a middle-aged corporate executive, and his 8-year old son, Sho, left their home in New York City to ride connected bicycles 2,500 miles the length of Japan. Telling skeptical friends, “A child can accomplish a whole lot more than many people think,” the two mapped out a 67-day route that stretched from the northern coast to the southern tip of the mainland, passing through many of Japan’s most famous cultural sites and nature preserves.

Hoping to encourage efforts to combat climate change, they raised money for a global tree planting campaign, received press from around the world, and were named “Climate Heroes” by the United Nations

(<http://www.unep.org/wed/2009/english/content/climateheroes.asp>).

Scott, 42, described the estimated \$10,000 adventure as “a celebration of the bond between father and son, and a challenge to contemporary society’s notions of what is reasonable for a child to attempt.” Dismissing fears shaped by “a culture that is increasingly sedentary and mistrustful of the value of discomfort,” the pair cycled through uninhabited stretches of Japan’s northern wilderness, slept in a tent wherever they found themselves, navigated heavily populated, traffic-choked urban landscapes, struggled up and down mountains populated by wild monkeys, took on sumo wrestlers, meditated in a Buddhist temple, held hands in silence at Hiroshima Peace Park, made friends throughout the country, and explored the limits of quality father-son time.

The trip was almost entirely self-funded, with support from Intel which provided a mobile Internet device using their latest Atom processor and a wireless card that allowed Scott and Sho to stay connected and post blog updates throughout the country. Details from the adventure are at www.japanbikeride.com.

Scott and Sho have just announced their next bike adventure, scheduled for the summer of 2011. The pair, along with Sho's 4-year old sister, Saya, will circumnavigate Iceland, a 1,500-mile (including side trips) fully self-supported trip on two connected bicycles and a bike trailer. They will use press coverage from the ride to encourage action to address climate change. The route and other logistical details are still being developed and they are currently seeking \$10,000 in cash and in-kind support. (For more information: www.icelandbikeadventure.com).

EXPEDITION UPDATE

Larsen Reaches Three “Poles” in 333 Days

After over 44 days, Polar explorer Eric Larsen, 39, summited Mt. Everest on Oct. 14, making him the first-ever human to successfully reach the South Pole, North Pole and summit of Mt. Everest in a continuous 365-day period (see *EN*, September 2010).

On January 6, 2010, Larsen and his team successfully completed a 750-mile, 48-day ski traverse to the Geographic South Pole. Larsen and a separate team reached the Geographic North Pole on April 22, Earth Day, after a 51-day, 500-mile push that included snowshoeing and skiing across shifting sea ice and sometimes even swimming across open water sections of the Arctic Ocean.

His purpose for the Save the Poles Expedition is to connect people with the last great frozen places and the environmental issues that are impacting them. Larsen uses these expeditions to promote individual action and national legislation on climate change issues.

With today's advances in technology and new social media platforms, Larsen stayed connected with thousands of fans and expedition followers across the globe by harnessing solar power to assist with daily blog updates, tweets, podcasts, satellite phone calls and photo streams. Earlier this year, on Earth Day, Larsen checked in with Twitter and Facebook followers by sending what is reportedly the first ever “tweet” from the North Pole.

The Save the Poles Expedition was sponsored by Bing and Terramar, with major support from Goal0, Sierra Designs, MSR, Scream Agency, Stanley, Therm-a-Rest, webExpeditions and Optic Nerve. Eric splits his time between Boulder, Colo., and Grand Marais, Minn. (For more information: www.savethepoles.com)

EXPEDITION NOTES

Students On Ice Seek Students, Chaperones for Antarctica Trip

Sure, you can travel to Antarctica on a big, fat cruise ship and pay upwards of \$20,000, or you can apply as a chaperone or student on Students on Ice, an award-winning, 10-year-old organization offering educational expeditions to the Arctic and the Antarctic.

The Quebec-based organization has a few openings for chaperones and students to visit the Antarctic from Dec. 27, 2010 to Jan. 10, 2011.

The ship-based journey will explore southern South America, the Antarctic Peninsula and surrounding Southern Ocean. It will involve 65 international students, ages 14-18. The students will travel on this transformative adventure together with a team of 25 world-renowned scientists, historians, artists, explorers, educators, leaders, innovators and polar experts (last year it included one hanger-on: the editor of *EN*). Students on the expedition will develop knowledge, skills, perspectives and practices that will help them to be Antarctic ambassadors and environmentally responsible citizens.

Interested students and teachers/chaperones should contact the Students on Ice office to get more information and an application form, or apply online. The cost is \$12,500 USD and includes airfare from New York JFK, accommodations, and all meals and activities. (For more information: www.studentsonice.com, 866-336-6423, apply@studentsonice.com)

Picture This: Kodak Sells Last Roll of Film

So much for the closet full of Nikon film cameras and lenses we have back home. Somehow we missed this a few months ago: Kodak announced that it would retire Kodachrome, a brand name of color reversal film it had manufactured since 1935. Freelance journalist Steve McCurry, well-known for his 1984 photograph of Sharbat Gula, or the "Afghan Girl," published on the cover of *National Geographic* magazine, requested from Kodak to shoot the last roll of 36 frames it manufactured. McCurry explained to the *Wichita (Kan.) Eagle* (July 14) how he had chosen to shoot the last roll of Kodachrome produced by Eastman Kodak by capturing images around New York.

"Then we went to India, where I photographed a tribe that is actually on the verge of extinction. It's actually disappearing, the same way as Kodachrome."

As a professional freelance photographer, McCurry has used Kodachrome film for 35 years. "It's definitely the end of an era," he said. "It has such a wonderful color palette ... a poetic look, not particularly garish or cartoonish, but wonderful, true colors that were vibrant, but true to what you were shooting."

While he admits digital photography has its advantages, "I like having something to hold in my hand," McCurry continues, "With digital photography, it's just a hard drive. With Kodachrome, the film is real. You can touch it, put it in a drawer, and come back to it later. It's tangible. It's an object. With digital, the pictures only exist in a hard drive, in a memory chip."

If *National Geographic* does a spread on the journey of this final roll of Kodachrome, McCurry said it will likely come out in Spring 2011 and will consist of only four to six images selected from the roll. A *National Geographic* TV documentary is expected to air around the same time.

Trans Oz British Explorer/Cyclist Plans Bike Race

British explorer and cyclist Mike Laird, 41, a risk manager from Coulsdon, Surrey, undertook a solo journey across Australia by bike earlier this year, and has since launched the first ever Trans Oz Bike Ride. Registration for the race is now open, and Laird is looking for enthusiastic cyclists in May 2011 with an appetite for adventure to join him in the race, which will follow one route while being two races of differing stage lengths.

The Trans Oz Bike Ride will cycle from 1,300 to 1,988 miles (2,094 to 3,200 kms) northwards from Melbourne through the states of Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland before crossing the finishing line.

Laird, who developed the race, is a seasoned explorer and participated in the BBC's *Castaway 2000* program alongside Ben Fogle. He completed his own trans-Australian bike ride this year and is reportedly the first Briton to retrace the steps of 19th century explorers Burke and Wills across Australia solo and unassisted. He cycled over 2,000 miles from coast to coast – Victoria in southeastern Australia to the Gulf of Carpentaria on Queensland's north coast – to achieve his goal, which was completed in late April after 33 grueling days. Laird lost over 21 pounds during the ride and encountered many obstacles including giant monitor lizards, redback spiders and several brown snakes, as well as loneliness at times.

Laird says of the upcoming race, "Anyone with determination, bags of energy and a decent bike should reach the finish line." Proceeds benefit The Heart Foundation and the Starlight Children's Foundation.

The expedition of Robert Burke and William Wills' epic crossing of Australia from south to north in 1860 has long been part of Australian folklore. The pioneers led a team of 19 men, 26 camels and 23 horses to explore inland Australia for the first time, but it turned out to be a doomed journey as both expedition leaders died on the way back. All together seven men lost their lives, and only one man, John King, was rescued by Aborigines and returned alive to Melbourne. (For more information: www.transozbikeride.com)

American Polar Society Elects New President

Former Explorers Club President Alfred S. McLaren, Captain, U.S. Navy (Ret.), Ph.D., was recently elected president of The American Polar Society. A resident of Nederland, Colo., he is author of *Unknown Waters: A First-Hand Account of the Historic Under-Ice Survey of the Siberian Continental Shelf by USS Queenfish* (University of Alabama Press, 2008).

The American Polar Society, celebrating its 75th anniversary in 2011, brings together people interested in research and exploration in the Arctic and Antarctic; preserves the record of polar research and exploration; and supports and encourages research and

exploration in polar and polar-like regions. Early polar explorer/members involved in its founding and establishment as an international organization included: Admiral Richard Byrd, Sir Hubert Wilkins, Bernt Balchen, Finn Ronne, General David Brainerd, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, and Lincoln Ellsworth. (For more information: www.Ampolarsociety.org).

EXPEDITION MARKETING

Chin Up

The torrential downpour outside on the streets of Manhattan was reminiscent of the Himalaya as 200 climbing fans gathered on the Upper West Side to hear climber and professional photographer Jimmy Chin recount a spellbinding expedition in 2008 to summit what Conrad Anker called “the center of the universe” – Shark’s Fin, a stunning unclimbed blade defining the east face of Meru, a 6,450-meter (21,161 feet) peak located in the Garwhal Himalaya of northern India, high above the Ganges River.

The 19-day experience was harrowing. “Talk about the art of suffering,” Chin said. “You’re either gorging on food getting ready for the trip or starving somewhere.”

The talk began with a photo of Chin as a youngster in a sled. “Despite all my climbing, the coldest I’ve ever been was standing at a bus stop back home in southern Minnesota in a jean jacket on a 30 degrees below zero day. I guess that prepared me for a life of freezing,” said Chin, a North Face athlete from Victor, Idaho.

Later he praised the support provided by Sherpa. “Here we think we’re bad ass climbers and the Sherpa are running rings around us on an expedition, putting up ladders, fixing lines. They’re all super strong. They were born at 15,000 feet.”

The elusive granite feature on Meru, which resembles a shark's fin, is the exemplar of high altitude alpine big wall climbing, characterized by a 1400 meter (4,593-ft.) climb with the final 700 meters (2,297 ft.) an overhanging big wall. Chin, Conrad Anker and Renan Ozturk were pushed back just two pitches from the summit. It was painful watching the team spend five days in a two-man portaledge which resembles a hanging tent. Chin calls it his one-bedroom/no bath apartment – a “claustrophobic icebox no bigger than a single bed.”

He continued, “On the fifth day in a portaledge in a storm, you basically run out of things to say.

“One of the great things about climbing is that it’s an amazing vehicle to see the world and experience different landscapes.”

The Never Stop Exploring Speaker Series is a classic touring slide show that had all the trappings – an engaging speaker, a sweepstakes drawing, great music, a poster signing, and schwag such as free magazines, refrigerator magnets and lip balm. It was all part of a

multi-city tour sponsored by W.L. Gore & Associates, Outside Magazine, Paragon Sports, Primaloft Insulation, and The North Face.

Heading back outdoors again to hail a cab, the nor'easter pounding New York somehow didn't seem quite so nasty any longer.

Learn more about the Shark's Fin climb here: <http://www.thenorthface.com/catalog/sc-brand/meru.html>, www.jimmychin.com/

MEDIA MATTERS

Steve Fossett's Land Speed Racer For Sale

Steve Fossett, the millionaire businessman and adventurer perhaps best known for circumnavigating the world nonstop in a hot air balloon, was preparing to break the absolute land speed record – 763 miles per hour – when he died in a plane crash in 2007.

The entire land speed record project, called Target 800 MPH is for sale for \$3 million, according to Project 100 Communications, which is handling the sale on behalf of Fossett's wife, according to a story by Richard S. Chang in the *New York Times* (Oct. 17, 2010).

“The buyer pretty much gets the entire project, including a modified race transporter trailer, pickup truck and all workshop tools and jigs,” Chang writes.

Fossett bought the vehicle from Craig Breedlove, the five-time land speed record holder, in 2006. The car last ran in 1997 in an attempt to break the then-absolute land speed record of 633 mph. Fossett's crew subsequently made several modifications to the car to prepare it for 800 mph, including aero improvements to the rear body and wheel fairings to reduce drag.

During his life, Fossett set dozens of records. In addition to the balloon record, he also made the longest nonstop flight in aviation history, traveling 26,389 miles in a lightweight experimental plane. He set 21 sailing records and 10 glider records, including the world altitude record in 2006, when he soared 50,722 feet above El Calafate, Argentina. He competed in the Iditarod Dogsled Race in Alaska (finishing 47th in 1992) and even raced in the 24 Hours of Le Mans (twice, in 1993 and 1996).

Documenting the Northwest Passage

Canadian explorer and environmental filmmaker Mark Terry will begin a new documentary that will take him and his crew on a scientific expedition crossing the Northwest Passage.

The Polar Explorer is the name of the new HD feature documentary which will explore the depths of the Arctic seas in areas that were previously inaccessible just a few years ago. Due to warming temperatures and melting sea ice in the Arctic in recent years,

these areas have opened up and an expedition will take place this fall.

The expedition is being organized by ArcticNet, a Canadian network of scientists, public and private agencies and northern organizations representing 150 researchers from 30 Canadian universities, eight federal, and 11 provincial agencies and departments working in collaboration with research teams in Denmark, France, Greenland, Japan, Norway, Poland, Russia, Spain, Sweden, the U.K. and the U.S.

The 2010 ArcticNet marine program will be conducted on the Canadian research icebreaker CCGS *Amundsen* as part of a 125-day expedition that will allow scientists to sample at more than 200 oceanographic stations distributed in a geographical area extending from the Beaufort Sea in the west to the coast of Greenland in the east and from Nares Strait in the North to Hudson Bay in the south.

A new underwater camera will be used to record images never before seen by man. With a titanium housing that can withstand ocean depths of 6,000 meters (19,685 feet) and temperatures as low as -5 C. (23 degrees F.), this revolutionary camera will be key to surveying new depths and areas of the Arctic Ocean. Aerial photography from the ship's on-board helicopter will provide an extra dimension of stunning HD cinematography.

The Polar Explorer will be released in Spring 2011. For more information: Mark Terry, 416 899 5855, mark@polarcapproductions.com, http://www.theantarcticachallenge.com/docs/polar_ex.htm

EXPEDITION INK

The Boy Who Conquered Everest

By Katherine Blanc

(Hay House, 2010)

The next time you are facing a monumental task and feel overwhelmed by it, think of Jordan Romero. He's the thirteen-year-old boy who reached the summit of Mount Everest in May, accompanied by his mountaineer father, stepmother and three Sherpa guides.

As well as ice fields, crevasses and boulders, another obstacle that Jordan had to overcome was skepticism from the public. When news of his Everest success was made public, some in the international climbing community balked at the idea of a kid barely into his teens being put into the dangerous circumstances that come with climbing the world's tallest peak, and others made assumptions about how he got there. But to author Katherine Blanc, whose recently published book for children and young adults, *The Boy Who Conquered Everest*, documents Romero's story, the mountain climbing is secondary to the planning, the hard work and training it took to get there.

“People thought he was a rich kid who bought his way to the top of the world. Jordan does not come from money. He raised the money for his trips by selling t-shirts and

headbands, by holding taco dinners with some of the money going to the trip, by giving presentations to outdoor companies that then sponsored him with equipment rather than funds. He did it the hard, old-fashioned way,” says Blanc, 47, the daughter-in-law of famed cartoon voice Mel Blanc (*Bugs Bunny, Porky Pig, Barney Rubble*)

(When we heard that, we couldn’t pass up the opportunity to ask what it was like at the dinner table. Katherine tells us, “Mel frequently spoke to us ‘in character.’ And since Mel created over 1,500 character voices, you never knew who you might be talking to next.”)

But back to Romero: Not only did the Everest ascent make him the youngest person ever to reach the summit, it also got him one step closer to fulfilling his childhood dream of summiting the highest peak on each of the seven continents. In a three-year period starting just after his tenth birthday, Romero climbed Mount Kilimanjaro in East Africa, both Mount Kosciuszko in Australia and the Carstensz Pyramid in Indonesia (to satisfy any sticklers about his credentials), Russia’s Mount Elbrus, Mount Aconcagua in Argentina, then Alaska’s Mount McKinley, before tackling Everest.

While her book is aimed at young adults or kids, Blanc says Romero’s mindset appeals to all ages, including many adults. “‘Find Your Own Everest’ – that’s become his catch phrase,” says Blanc, a resident of Romero’s hometown, Big Bear Lake, Calif. “As the youngest person to summit Everest, Jordan holds a world record, but he really wants to use the book to urge kids, and adults for that matter, to get outside, put down the video games, get some exercise. ... He’s not telling everyone to pursue mountain climbing, just to set your own goals and dream big.”

In January 2011, Romero hopes to climb Mount Vinson Massif, the highest point in Antarctica, the final stop in his Seven Summits quest. His only obstacle is his age – Antarctica requires a climber to be 16, and Jordan is 14. Blanc says Team Jordan is hoping to obtain a special permit, based on his previous climbing record. (For more information: www.hayhouse.com).

EXPEDITION INK

Packing for Mars: The Curious Science of Life in the Void

By Mary Roach

(W.W. Norton & Company, 2010)

If there’s still a shred of young adolescent teenage boy left in your psyche, then Mary Roach’s latest book will rocket you back to the days when you liked to squash fireflies and thought every fart joke was hilarious. Her book about the side of the NASA space program never covered in *Life* magazine is at times hilarious, disgusting, and repellent, but always fascinating.

Quoting the astronaut Jim Lovell, Roach exposes NASA’s untold sanitation woes. The Gemini 7 mission, he says, was “like spending two weeks in a latrine.”

Roach writes that when the time comes for a journey to Mars, NASA doesn't expect a celibate crew. But when ground control nixed one Russian astronaut's request for a blowup sex doll on board, they said, 'We would need to put it in your schedule for the day,' thus certainly magnifying any spaceman's performance anxiety.

There's seemingly no question Roach, also author of *Stiff* and *Bonk*, wouldn't ask. She's told that male astronauts have a diaper alternative that fits directly onto their anatomy. In the way of Starbucks, where a small is termed a "tall," the men's devices come only in L, XL, and XXL.

In more than 300 pages Roach debunks the romance of spaceflight, no doubt making your average armchair explorer glad they rarely venture beyond the nearest bathroom.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"You give folks information, but what they do with it is their business."

– Doug Thompson, who runs a convenience store at the trailhead to Mt. Whitney, California's tallest peak. He told the *Los Angeles Times* (Oct. 23) of his first encounter with some lost hikers last month, "I was in the back of the store grilling hamburgers when I overheard them talking about going up the mountain," he recalled. "I walked out of the kitchen and said, 'Hey, we've got some snow up there and more storms on the way.' ... I even showed them a map on my computer screen showing a bunch of storms heading this way at more than 40 mph," he said.

The visitors decided to climb regardless. About 25,000 people ascend the 14,494-foot mountain each year, and "while a lot of them are physically strong, they don't always have much experience or the proper gear," Thompson said.

So far this year, five people have died on Mt. Whitney, and an untold number of hikers have suffered minor injuries, U.S. Forest Service officials said. Last month, more than 75 searchers combed the mountain area for separate groups of climbers marooned for several days after day trips under clear blue skies turned into howling, snowy ordeals.

WEB WATCH

Orbital Man Cave

Ten years ago this month, the hatch leading into the Zvezda service module was opened and the first three crew members to take up residency on the International Space Station (ISS) clambered onboard. Since then, the orbiting laboratory has been continuously occupied: 196 individuals have visited the ISS from more than 15 nations while the outpost has orbited the Earth 57,361 times, traveling some 1.5 billion miles.

The greatest testament to the station crew members' work has been the physical assembly of the facility, which has grown from just two modules to fourteen with a pressurized

volume equal to that of a Boeing 747. Inside, more than 600 research and technology development experiments have been conducted on the station.

Browsing through the photographs that the station's residents have taken over the past decade, there are signs – sometimes literally – that beyond the engineering and scientific accomplishments, the crews have also succeeded at incorporating part of themselves into the facility that they have called home. It reminds us of some space-borne man cave, despite the presence of female astronauts.

Log on to see images of college banners, comical 17,500 mph speed limit signs, mini basketball hoops, and our personal favorite: a small figurine of *Gort*, the fictional humanoid robot from the 1951 film, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. (<http://www.collectspace.com/news/news-110210a.html>).

ON THE HORIZON

Yo-Ho! Sea Stories at The Explorers Club, Nov. 20

On Nov. 20, The Explorers Club in New York will host its annual Sea Stories, a day focused on ocean exploration, scuba diving, and marine life. The presenters will include:

- Kim Fisher – “Exploring Spanish Treasure Galleons”
- Amos Nachoum – “The Ambassador of the Big Animals”
- Heather Knowles and David Caldwell – “Sinking off Cape Ann - The Story of the *U.S.S. Nezinscot*”
- Dr. Richard A. Cooper - "SeaBase1 - Ocean Floor Habitat”
- Steve Gatto and Tom Packer - “The *Bow Mariner* – A Modern Day Maritime Disaster”
- Joe Romeiro – “Filming and Saving Sharks”

Admission \$60; starting time 9 a.m. For reservations: reservations@explorers.org, 212 628 8383.

International Trans-Antarctica Expedition Reunion, Dec. 11, St. Paul

On Dec. 11, 2010, the six team members of the 1990 International Trans-Antarctica Expedition will gather for the first time in 20 years at a public event at Hamline University in St. Paul, Minn. Team members Will Steger (U.S.), Jean-Louis Etienne (France), Geoff Sommers (Great Britain), Keizo Funatsu (Japan), Victor Boyarsky (Russia) and Qin Dahe (China) will speak about their historic expedition, show video clips from their trip and comment on how the expedition has affected their lives.

On March 6, 1990, these six men from six different countries completed the first dogsled crossing of the Antarctic continent, traveling nearly 4,000 miles, over seven months. The historic expedition was designed to raise global awareness of the Antarctic Treaty and its 30-year review in 1990.

Twenty years ago, the TAE packed its bags for the departure to Antarctica at Hamline University. (For more information: Jennifer Gasperini, jgasperini@iphouse.com, or log onto Facebook then search “1990 International Trans-Antarctica Expedition Reunion”).

EXPEDITION CLASSIFIEDS

Join the American Polar Society – Please join us in commemorating our 75th anniversary of leading the world in polar research and exploration. The American Polar Society: celebrating the polar regions, with scientists, explorers and enthusiasts from around the world. A proud legacy ... a dynamic future. The polar regions are calling. So are we. Join our ranks. Support our commitment. Get involved. We invite you to become a member or sponsor. For more information: www.ampolarsociety.org.

You Want to Go Where? – *Expedition News'* editor and publisher Jeff Blumenfeld's book provides an inside look at expedition sponsorship, including how to develop a newsworthy project, identify likely corporate sponsors, and use the latest technology that allows instant communications with sponsors, media, family, and friends no matter where you are on earth. Special offer: order a personalized signed copy for \$20, including shipping and tax. Send check to: Blumenfeld and Assoc., Inc., 28 Center Street, Darien, CT 06820.

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