

# 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.**

## **EXPEDITION UPDATE**

### **Soldiers to the Summit is Bullish on Connecticut Surgeon**

In 2010, seven disabled soldiers reached the 20,075-foot summit of Lobuche, a spectacular Himalayan peak at the foot of Everest. The “Soldiers to the Summit” team included four members with post traumatic stress, three leg amputees, two blind climbers, and one who had spent over three years in a wheelchair. Also on the trip was Stamford, Conn., surgeon Sherman Bull, 75, who at the age of 64 was at the time the oldest climber to summit Mt. Everest (2001). (See *EN*, October 2010).

Dr. Bull addressed a church group in his hometown of New Canaan, Conn., on Oct. 12, telling the audience of mostly retirees, “We have created a generation of damaged goods (through war) that will be with us for a lifetime and beyond.

“I felt tremendously responsible for this team. We were ready to stress them physically but not mentally and emotionally – many were experiencing post traumatic stress including one veteran who had killed so many people they wouldn’t let him re-enlist.”

Bull later said the veterans on the trip “took partying to a new level,” as he flipped a Powerpoint slide to an image of an amputee drinking out of his prosthetic limb.

The expedition, which included blind climber Erik Weihenmayer, is the subject of a documentary from Serac Adventure Films called *High Ground*, directed by award-winning filmmaker Michael Brown and the Outdoor Adventure Film School.

*High Ground* is in final production now and will be released next year, initially at some major film festivals. Also planned is a nationwide tour with special screenings for sponsors as well as VA hospitals.

Next spring and summer, soldiers will travel to Colorado for two intensive training sessions. Then in December 2012, they will travel to Ecuador and to climb Cotopaxi, a 19,347-ft. volcano. (For more information: [www.soldierstothetsummit.org](http://www.soldierstothetsummit.org), [www.seracfilms/highground](http://www.seracfilms/highground)).

## **EXPEDITION NOTES**

### **Walking the Amazon**

On Aug. 9, 2010, British explorer Ed Stafford walked into the history books after completing the longest jungle expedition ever undertaken, thus becoming the first man to walk the length of the Amazon River. Previously thought of as an “impossible” feat, Stafford’s success in navigating the entire length of the 4,000 mile Amazon on foot from its source in Peru to the mouth of the river on the shores of Brazil proved once and for all that if you have a dream, and you have the determination to succeed then nothing is impossible.

Stafford, 35, a former Captain in the Devon & Dorset’s Light Infantry regiment of the British Army who was inspired by reading the story of Sir Ernest Shackleton, filmed and blogged his deadly journey the entire route.

At The Explorers Club on Oct. 26, he tells *EN*, “Sure we had all the technology – but we were in areas of the Amazon where rescue was hopeless. We could have Facebooked and Tweeted ourselves with great photos showing us dying. That’s just the risk we understood going into this.”

Up to 70 percent of the trip involved hacking through dense jungle at the rate of four miles per day. “But it was easy really,” he joked. “All we had to do was put the river on our left and keep walking downhill.”

His tale of true grit, bravery and determination to succeed against all odds has led to him being described by *The Daily Mail* as, “Britain’s most intrepid hero since Scott of the Antarctic.” His new book, *Walking the Amazon*, comes out in the States in spring 2012. (For more information: [www.edstafford.org](http://www.edstafford.org)).

### **First All-Female Team Paddles From Minneapolis to Hudson Bay**

Ann Raiho and Natalie Warren finished the historic 2,250-mile route from Minnesota to Hudson Bay in 85 days, becoming the first all-female team to canoe the journey. The project was supported by Sierra Designs. Titled the “Hudson Bay Bound” adventure, the trip was inspired by the fur trade route outlined in the 1935 book *Canoeing with the Cree* by Eric Sevareid who recounts a canoe trip with his friend Walter Port.

Raiho and Warren were struck by the fact the trip had never been completed by an all-women's team, and saw a potential journey as a way to inspire other women to plan and embark on their own multi-day adventures.

Raiho and Warren were not only the first women's team to complete the arduous journey, but also were the fourth team ever to complete the trip.

The two canoeists left Minneapolis on June 2, and reached York Factory in Hudson Bay on August 25. In total, 70 days were spent canoeing, including seven wind-bound days on Lake Winnipeg.

“Our biggest physical challenge was paddling upstream on the Minnesota while the river was in flood condition and the state was experiencing record high temperatures for June,” said Raiho. (For more information: [www.hudsonbaybound.com](http://www.hudsonbaybound.com)).

### **Hardest Climb by a North American Woman**

adidas Outdoor athlete Sasha DiGiulian, 18, achieved the most difficult documented climb by a North American woman on Oct. 15, when she completed “Pure Imagination” in Kentucky's Red River Gorge, a 5.14d grade 9a climb, in only six attempts. Pure Imagination was first climbed by American Jonathan Siegrist in November 2010.

DiGiulian has been climbing for the past 11 years. At the present time she is first in the world ranking for Female Outdoor Sport Climbing, winning first place overall at the IFSC Climbing World Championships in Arco, Italy, this summer. She is also the current Pan-American Champion; the U.S. National Champion, female division; and undefeated Junior Continental Champion, female category. (For more information: [www.sasha-digiulian.com](http://www.sasha-digiulian.com))

### **North Face Team Summits Meru's Shark's Fin**

The North Face athletes Conrad Anker, Jimmy Chin and Renan Ozturk summited the Shark's Fin route on the northwest face of the 20,700-foot Meru in the Garhwal Himalaya, one of the last great unclimbed features of the range. With favorable weather, complementary skills and good climbing conditions, the group was able to finish on Oct. 2, almost a week ahead of schedule in a stark contrast to previous attempts.

Anker first attempted the route in 2003 but had to turn back two-thirds of the way up. In 2008 Anker returned with his current climbing team and spent 19 days on the wall before having to retreat just 100 meters from the summit.

Shark's Fin represents one of the world's ultimate mountaineering tests. In the last 30 years top alpinists have attempted the climb but none of them were successful, until now. The face represents a combination of climbing features – the first third is an alpine snow-

and-ice route, the middle section is a mix of ice and rock, while the last section is a grueling overhanging headwall.

To outfit their expedition, the group used and tested The North Face's new Meru Kit, built specifically for high-altitude mountaineering. According to Chin, the trio used knowledge from their previous attempts to incorporate certain design elements into the products. At the end of the day the kit allowed the climbers to focus on the important aspects of their ascent.

As Ozturk said, “climbing with such close friends in one of the most visually stunning parts of the Himalayas is the kind of adventure that fuels my soul.” (Read the expedition dispatch here: <http://www.neverstopexploring.com/blog/meru-sharks-fin/>).

### **Jawbone Found of Earliest Known Modern Human in Northwestern Europe**

A piece of jawbone excavated from a prehistoric cave in England is the earliest evidence for modern humans in Europe, according to an international team of scientists. The bone first was believed to be about 35,000 years old, but the new research study shows it to be significantly older – between 44,000 and 41,000 years old, according to the findings that will be published in the journal *Nature*. The new dating of the bone is expected to help scientists pin down how quickly modern humans spread across Europe during the last Ice Age. It also helps confirm the much-debated theory that early humans coexisted with Neanderthals.

Beth Shapiro, the Shaffer Associate Professor of Biology at Penn State University and a member of the research team, explained that the fragment of maxilla – the upper jaw – containing three teeth was unearthed in 1927 in a prehistoric limestone cave called Kent's Cavern in southwestern England. Shapiro explained that the new and more-accurate date is especially important because it provides clearer evidence about the coexistence of Neanderthals and anatomically modern humans. (For more information: Beth Shapiro, 814 863 9178, 814 321 8389, [beth.shapiro@gmail.com](mailto:beth.shapiro@gmail.com)). See high resolution images at <http://www.science.psu.edu/news-and-events/2011-news/Shapiro10-2011-2>).

### **Apple Macintosh Makes Field Research Easier**

Three explorers advised how technology has changed the face of exploration during a first-ever Explorers Club presentation Oct. 18 within the Apple store on New York's Upper West Side. As crowds of Mac addicts clamored for the latest iPhone 4S gizmo and bellied up to the Genius Bar, Edmundo R. Edwards, Patricia Vargas Casanova, and Claudio P. Cristino of the Easter Island Expedition explained how they used Apple products to understand the culture of Eastern Polynesia and the mysterious moai that stand on the shores of Easter Island. The presentation was introduced by Explorers Club President Lorie Karnath.

After the three purchased an armload of gear at bargain prices compared to their native Chile, they explained how Macintosh computers were used to reconstruct 30,000 tons of statues – 15 in all – destroyed in the 1960s by tsunami.

Vargas enters her field notes directly into iPads to save time transferring data later. Before the Mac, every day in the field required another day keyboarding findings. “Now, we take notes at the site and synch it later that night to our main computer,” she said.

“This kind of equipment is incredible. Plus, if we stumble upon a find on our day off, we can record it using the iPhones we carry in our pockets everyday.”

Their next stop is Pitcairn Island in the southeast Pacific, home of the *Bounty* mutineers. (For more information: [www.islandexplorer.org](http://www.islandexplorer.org)).

### **Exploration Continues to Thrive**

Two of the six awards at The Explorers Club Lowell Thomas Award dinner in St. Louis on Oct. 15 went to researchers from a technology institute at the University of California, San Diego – Thomas E. Levy and Albert Yu-Min Lin. Both are passionate about championing the use of advanced technologies to shed light on – and conserve – the world's cultural heritage. Lin was on hand to accept his award, while Levy recorded his remarks from the field, where he is leading a new expedition and living in a remote tent camp without electricity in southern Jordan.

"We are searching for the political and economic center of Iron Age copper production some 3,000 years ago in the southeastern Mediterranean basin," said Levy. "We are using state-of-the-art cyber-archaeology to help revolutionize our understanding of the relationship between archaeology and ancient Near Eastern texts – specifically, the Old Testament or Hebrew Bible."

Fellow UCSD researcher Albert Lin was cited for his exploration of the Mongolian steppe in search of uncharted heritage sites, notably the lost tomb of Genghis Khan. Accepting his award, Lin talked about his four-year effort to do so without digging in the ground. Instead, his team used non-invasive technologies, including satellite imaging, ground-penetrating radar, and unmanned aerial vehicles, as well as crowdsourcing to engage the public in the search via a National Geographic web portal running applications developed at UCSD.

Recalled Lin after the event, "It was clear from other awardees and fellow Explorers Club members that exploration in the name of understanding the world around us continues to thrive, with even more purpose than before, given the urgency of taking what we learn and applying it to conservation."

### **QUOTE OF THE MONTH**

*The world is a book, and those who do not travel read only a page.*

– St. Augustine of Hippo (354 - 430)

## **CLIMBING FOR DOLLARS**

### **McNeill-Nott Award Deadline Nears**

With the untimely death of Sue Nott and her partner Karen McNeill on Mt. Foraker in 2006, The American Alpine Club partnered with Mountain Hardwear to establish an award in their memory. The McNeill-Nott Award seeks to preserve the spirit of these two talented and courageous climbers by giving grants to amateur climbers exploring new routes or unclimbed peaks with small and lightweight teams.

The Award focuses on projects that have strong exploratory and adventuresome mountaineering objectives. These elements are more important than the technical rating of the climbing objective.

Two or three grants totaling \$7,000 are awarded annually to amateur teams that best meet the criteria for pursuing an exploratory objective. The application deadline is Jan.1, 2012. (For more information: [www.americanalpineclub.org](http://www.americanalpineclub.org), [grants@americanalpineclub.org](mailto:grants@americanalpineclub.org).)

## **MEDIA MATTERS**

### **Uniforms for Armchair Explorers**

English designer Nigel Cabourn conducted a “style autopsy” on the body of George Mallory, discovered on Everest in 1999. Cotton gabardine, woven silk, tweed, a shred of flannel shirting has provided inspiration for this season’s hottest looks, according to a story in the *Wall Street Journal* by Darrell Hartman (Oct. 8-9). All the rugged, retro winter wear out there can be read as an attempt to dig these bygone heroes out of their frozen graves.

“The difficulties these expeditions faced, their sheer determination to reach into the unknown, it sparks an idea,” said Gilded Age designer Stefan Miljanich who is showing fur hoods and hand-knit sweaters inspired by North Pole explorer Robert Peary.

Cabourn continues, “People don’t think of Everest as romantically as they used to. In the 50’s, if you went up there, you couldn’t get help from helicopters. I think heroes like Hillary have captured something precious that we don’t have today.”

### **Five U.S. Peaks to Tackle**

Gordon Ranow, the director of programs for Alpine Ascents, a guiding outfitter in Seattle, states the obvious in the *Wall Street Journal* (Sept. 13). He tells reporter Jen Murphy that anyone gearing up for a climb should get outside as much as possible.

“There is a big difference between working out for an hour in a gym and an hour outdoors in all weather. If you have to work out inside, try to do things that mimic climbing, like the stair climber or elliptical.”

He suggests walking three or four days a week with a heavy pack to prepare for a climb, and recommends this bucket list of worthy U.S. mountains to attempt: Mount Shasta (Northern California), Mount Whitney (California), Mount Rainier (Washington), Grand Teton (Wyoming) and Mount Washington (New Hampshire).

## **EXPEDITION MARKETING**

### **X Marks the Spot**

A competition to build an underwater robot is just one of the initiatives that might be funded under a new partnership between the X Prize Foundation and the Shell Oil Co. The three-year, \$9 million program, called the X Prize Exploration Prize Group, aims to spur the development of innovative technologies to explore the Earth, sea and space through competitions with significant cash payoffs.

"We're here to celebrate a new partnership with the vision of reinvigorating and inspiring a new generation of explorers," X Prize Foundation chairman and CEO Peter Diamandis said during an October Explorers Club news conference to announce the initiative.

"We're entering a day and age where anybody who really, truly has the impulse and desire to go and explore someplace can make it happen." (For more information: [www.xprize.org](http://www.xprize.org))

### **Wingsuit Pilot Joins Evolv Sports Team**

Footwear manufacturer Evolv Sports has added legendary climber Steph Davis to its climbing team. Davis is a professional rock climber, alpinist, big-wall climber, BASE jumper and wingsuit pilot currently based out of Moab, Utah. She is the author of *High Infatuation* (Mountaineers Books, 2007) and blogs at [www.highinfatuation.com](http://www.highinfatuation.com). She is currently writing another book about wingsuit flight and free soloing called *Learning to Fly*, to be published by Touchstone/Simon and Schuster. Davis has been pushing the limits of climbing for 20 years in many disciplines. She is known for her free ascents of El Capitan, climbing some of the hardest cracks in Moab and free soloing long, committing routes. (For more information: [www.evolvsports.com](http://www.evolvsports.com)).

### **Everest IMAX Filmmaker Partners with Coke**

Beginning this month, white will be the new red. Coca-Cola and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) are joining forces in a new campaign to help protect the polar bear's Arctic home. For the first time ever, Coca-Cola is turning 1.4 billion of its iconic red cans white in celebration of the polar bear and committing up to \$3 million to WWF's polar bear conservation efforts. The Coke is also asking fans in the U.S. to join the "Arctic Home" campaign by texting donations.

Coca-Cola and WWF also have partnered with Academy Award nominated filmmakers MacGillivray Freeman Films, which is working with Warner Bros. Pictures and IMAX Corporation to co-produce the new IMAX film, *To The Arctic 3D*, scheduled for release in 2012. Coca-Cola's "Arctic Home" television commercials and content on the website, ArcticHome.com, feature sneak preview footage from the film. (For more information: [www.ArcticHome.com](http://www.ArcticHome.com), [www.oneworldocean.org/tothearctic](http://www.oneworldocean.org/tothearctic)).

## WEB WATCH

### Why Travel the World?

National Geographic Society chairman emeritus Gilbert Grosvenor tells Ford Cochran in a website post on Sept. 19, "Travel, I believe, is the best way to acquire an education. When you stay home, you miss out on the sensations you experience and the insights you gain when you travel. ... You absorb the sights, the sounds, and the smells of a place when you're there on the spot. You mingle with the people. You get a feeling for contemporary life that you simply can't get in any classroom. I value that kind of education, and I've continued it on into retirement because I find it so stimulating." (Read the entire interview here: <http://blog.nationalgeographicexpeditions.com/2011/09/why-travel-the-world/>)

### Or You Can Just Dial for Matches

*Backpacker* magazine Editor in Chief Jon Dorn shows you how to get a fire going with nothing but your cellphone, a piece of steel wool, and some tinder. It would have to be pretty grim before we take our phone apart for warmth – how else could we play Angry Birds? But it's a good skill to know nonetheless. See: [http://www.backpacker.com/start\\_a\\_fire\\_with\\_your\\_cellphone/videos/82](http://www.backpacker.com/start_a_fire_with_your_cellphone/videos/82)

### Rob Hall's Daughter Climbs Kilimanjaro at 15

Sarah Arnold-Hall, 15, the daughter of New Zealand mountaineer Rob Hall (1961-1996) who died on Mt. Everest in 1996, has climbed the highest peak in Africa, Mt. Kilimanjaro, with her mother, Jan Arnold. The mother and daughter took eight days to climb the 19,341-ft./5895m peak as part of a three-week trip to Africa in September, according to *Wayfarer*, the blog of polar explorer Bob McKerrow.

Kilimanjaro is the tallest freestanding mountain in the world and every year an estimated 30,000 people make the arduous, but not technically challenging climb.

"Someone said the last day is like trying to climb three Empire State Buildings on a 16-degree angle, and on one lung," Sarah said.

When she was 10 she visited Mt. Everest's base camp at 17,598-ft./5364m, but said she found the extra altitude on Mt. Kilimanjaro much harder.



Sarah's father died on Everest nine weeks before she was born. An expedition leader, he was trapped 656-ft./200m from the south summit in a deadly storm with a client. Eight climbers died in that storm and before he died Hall called his wife in Christchurch via satellite phone telling her not to worry too much and to "sleep well, my sweetheart."

But, as Sarah and Arnold gently imply, the fact she completed the climb is not a cue for reporters to write, as some have done in the past, that Sarah is following in her famous father's footsteps.

Arnold, who climbed Everest in 1993 with Hall, is keen to continue climbing. But Sarah is up-front in that she doesn't necessarily share her parents' love of climbing, McKerrow blogs. She has her eyes on Paris as her next overseas destination, and among other things would like to see the Eiffel Tower.

Arnold says Rob Hall was much more than a climber. "He was a designer and entrepreneur and by age 23 he had 12 people working for him manufacturing tents and packs. He had quite another side to him."

McKerrow posts on his *Wayfarer* blog, "Rob Hall's death was tragic but it is such a pleasure seeing his daughter Sarah, who Rob never knew, and her mother Jan, climbing Kilimanjaro and enjoying life." (See the entire post here: <http://bobmckerrow.blogspot.com/2011/10/rob-halls-daughter-sarah-climbs.html>).

## **BUZZ WORDS**

### **“Hominology” – Paging All Sasquatches**

A still-unrecognized branch of biology that studies hairy upright walking creatures, as championed by a handful of Russian devotees. It sounds more scientific than “Yetiology,” “Bigfootology,” or “Sasquatchology.” (Source: *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 29-30)

## **IN PASSING**

### **Michel Peissel, Tibet Expert and Adventurer**

Michel Peissel, a French explorer and an ethnologist who devoted a good part of his life to recording the culture of Tibet and led numerous expeditions to seldom-traveled places, died on Oct. 7 at his home in Paris. He was 74. The cause was a heart attack, his son Jocelyn said.

In 16 books and more than 20 documentary films, Peissel chronicled his explorations of inaccessible or ignored regions of the globe, including the Tibetan high plateau, remote Russian river towns and unrecorded Mayan ruins, according to his obituary in the *New York Times* (Oct. 16).

A noted storyteller, he was fond of sharing some of his harrowing tales, such as the time he lay with two broken legs in freezing winds, or the time his truck was stuck for days in mud and ice until a passing caravan of yaks pulled it free, or the day a part of his mule train dropped off a precipice and animals, tents and provisions were swept away in a roaring stream.

“Travel with him was always a triumph over the impossible,” said one of his sons, Olivier, a sometime travel companion.

Added Explorers Club member Frederick P. Selby, author of *Postcards from Kathmandu* (Vajra Publications, 2008), "Michel Peissel was a passionate, curious, adventuresome, restless man. He was one of the last 'real explorers' who utilized endurance and body strength to reach his objectives. The Himalayan regions were never out of his thoughts, particularly the land and people of Tibet.”

## **EXPEDITION CLASSIFIEDS**

**Women Needed for Peaks Foundation Trek** – Peaks Foundation has just launched 10 new climbs for 2012 and are looking for women who want to travel to unique regions, bag a peak and create positive change for women and girls in mountain communities across the globe. Trek the Peruvian Andes, the high Himalayas or even the mountains of Morocco. For more information on how to join a climb, visit [www.peaksfoundation.org](http://www.peaksfoundation.org) or contact [info@peaksfoundation.org](mailto:info@peaksfoundation.org).

**DreamQuest Productions** - An award winning full service film production company with over 20 years of experience in adventure & expedition film production. Contact us to see how we can help your expedition! Tel. 661.998.3524, [www.dreamquest.tv](http://www.dreamquest.tv), [info@dreamquest.tv](mailto:info@dreamquest.tv)

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