

# 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.**

## **CROSSING THE COLDEST PLACE, AT THE COLDEST TIME OF YEAR**

British explorer Sir Ranulph Fiennes, 68, announced last month plans to lead the first team on foot and motorized vehicle across Antarctica during the southern winter. The Coldest Journey expedition starts from the Russian base of Novolazarevskaya (“Novo”) to Captain Robert F. Scott’s base at McMurdo Sound via the South Pole. The expedition will take six months and span 2,485-mi./4000 km, mostly in complete darkness. This is reportedly the first-ever attempt at a trans-Antarctic winter expedition.

On the equinox, March 21, 2013, the six expedition members will begin their journey to reach the Ross Sea. One hundred years ago on the same ice shelf, Capt. Scott and his polar team died on their return from the South Pole.

The Coldest Journey team will be entirely self-sufficient and there will be no search and rescue facility available, as aircraft cannot penetrate inland during winter, due to darkness and risk of fuel freezing.

Sir Ranulph and his skiing partner will lead on foot, pulling a ground-penetrating radar system which will help them avoid crevasses up to 200 feet deep.

The rest of the team will follow closely behind in a Mobile Vehicle Landtrain (MVL). The MVL will be made up of two Caterpillar D6N track-type tractors which will pull two specially designed cabooses for scientific work, accommodations and storage, including fuel designed not to freeze.

During the traverse, the expedition team will live in the main living caboose, which will consist of two 28-ft. insulated containers locked together to create four heated areas.

Described by Guinness World Records as the world's greatest living explorer, Sir Ranulph has run seven marathons on seven continents in seven days, and at the age of 65, climbed Everest. Of the Antarctic traverse, Sir Ranulph said, "This will be my greatest challenge to date. We will stretch the limits of human endurance. Britain and the Commonwealth have a strong heritage of exploration, from Captain Cook 300 years ago to the present day."

The Coldest Journey team is also attempting to raise an impressive US \$10 million for Seeing is Believing, a global initiative to prevent and treat avoidable blindness ([www.seeingisbelieving.org.uk/](http://www.seeingisbelieving.org.uk/)).

During the sea voyage to the Antarctic coast, the team will carry out scientific tasks to provide data on marine life, oceanography and meteorology. While crossing Antarctica they will also help scientists who are compiling information about changes to the ice shelf and the effect of climate change upon the poles.

The effort will be sponsored in part by Bridgedale WoolFusion Summit socks which the team tested in a cold chamber, and an impressive list of 160 other partners and sponsors including Microsoft and Panasonic. The Coldest Journey is an entirely independent venture said to be one of the U.K.'s largest non-governmental initiatives ever.

(For more information: [www.thecoldestjourney.org](http://www.thecoldestjourney.org))

## **EXPEDITION UPDATE**

### **Bringing the Boys Home**

Lou Sapienza, an explorer/polar archaeologist from North South Polar, Inc., East Hampton, N.Y., has returned from a successful mission to Køge Bugt, Greenland, for the U.S. Coast Guard to locate the debris field of a WWII amphibious U.S. Coast Guard biplane that crashed with three on board in 1942. The debris was found by ground penetrating radar (GPR) at a depth of 38 feet below the ice sheet surface. The project was titled "The Duck Hunt" and began in 2008. North South Polar (NSP) is a team of preeminent explorers, scientists and specialists, all global experts joining forces for the most difficult recovery missions in the most challenging environments on earth.

Sapienza's team will return in 2013 to excavate and recover the crew to return them to their families through the US DoD Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC). The team will also attempt to locate eight additional in-glacier aircraft this season (See *EN*, July 2011).

The forthcoming book, *Frozen In Time* by Mitch Zuckoff, due for release in spring 2013, is an account of the crash history of the three aircraft involved, the ordeals and fates of

their crews, and the recovery effort thus far.

“The expedition was epic in its accomplishments. Sir Ernest Shackleton would have been proud,” Sapienza tells *EN*. “But what could go wrong did. Through sheer team determination and improvisation we overcame all obstacles and succeeded in our six-day mission just 45 minutes before the helicopters came in to evac us from the site. Adding to the drama – we even had a team member fall through an ice bridge into a crevasse – lucky we're always roped.”

Sapienza continues, “We now have 43 MIAs on our docket to locate and recover – from Greenland to Antarctica to the Philippines, Papua New Guinea and even California. We hope to provide closure to families that still long to have loved ones home after 70 years.”

(For more information: lousapienza@gmail.com, [www.nspolar.us](http://www.nspolar.us), [www.favf.us](http://www.favf.us))

## EXPEDITION NOTES

### Busy Week for Exploration in New York

Just a few weeks before Hurricane Sandy devastated the metropolitan New York region, the exploration world came together at The Explorers Club for the 2012 Lowell Thomas Awards weekend. Events included an entertaining “Exploring Legends” discussion with deep-sea explorer Don Walsh, an awards dinner in a renovated garage in Chelsea, and a three-quarter page photo essay featuring Club members in the *New York Times* one week later. Here are some highlights:

- **One With Your Machine** – The Exploring Legends event was covered by Megan Snedden of *The Huffington Post* (Oct. 15). James Clash, moderator, asked Don Walsh, who accomplished a record dive with Jacques Piccard to the Mariana Trench in 1960, whether he ever got scared.

Snedden reports Walsh’s reply, “No, you're on your game, you're very alert. Being scared and having fear zaps your mental acuity and you can't afford to do that because you have to stay very sharp. All these practice dives we had been making in Guam were exactly the same, so by the time you reach the deepest dive... you become, I don't want to say 'one with your machine,' but close to it.”

Walsh says he and Piccard checked their depth during the dive using TNT charges. “What we used were four-pound blocks of TNT... and we had someone with a stopwatch and we'd hear (the TNT) go, 'bang,' then we'd stop the stopwatch... and that gave us an indicator.”

Read the *HuffPo* story here: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/megan-snedden/explorers-club\\_b\\_1963206.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/megan-snedden/explorers-club_b_1963206.html)

- **“Mindfulness” Dinner** – Approximately 200 members and guests attended the black tie Lowell Thomas Awards fund-raiser on Oct. 13, many decked out in exploration medals, kilts, strapless cocktail dresses, and funky knit caps. While the *New York Times* photographed members in a makeshift studio alongside one wall, attendees bid on such diverse items as a phrenology hand-painted bicycle helmet from Belle Helmets, an autographed Sir Edmund Hillary dinner menu from 1985, a ride in the Goodyear Blimp, and a mini Explorers Club flag signed by astronauts James Lovell and Buzz Aldrin. Here are some memorable quotes from three recipients of the Lowell Thomas Awards:

*“There are still people in the Amazon living independently from our industrial world. This is one last frontier we must truly protect.”*

– Scott Wallace, author and journalist

*“There are ways to tell complex stories without dumbing them down. There’s not a square yard of earth not mapped by satellites which can show us where problems exist.”*

– Sir David Attenborough, filmmaker

*“I inherited the family business of envelope-pushing. ... who better than explorers to lead the way in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?... Too many people live within a comfort zone. Exploration is the opposite. We need to step outside the comfort zone and outside certainties. As pioneers, we must fight against common assumptions ... we need to get into the unknown and search for that moment of rapture which is magical ... life has meaning and hope as soon as we try to explore it.*

– Bertrand Piccard, keynote speaker, aeronaut

- **Experiential Glint** – Photographer Christopher Lane spent two days at Club events photographing over 1,500 images of dozens of members for a photo spread in the Oct. 21 edition of the *Times*. While some female members grumbled that only one woman was included – Thor Heyerdahl’s daughter Bettina Heyerdahl – the coverage was considered exceptional in terms of building awareness for an organization always in search of new members and financial support. Writes reporter Alan Feuer, “(the Club is) actually about the faces: some fresh, some craggy, but all bearing that experiential glint brought back from the planet’s farthest places.”

View the *Times* story here:

<http://www.nytimes.com/slideshow/2012/10/21/nyregion/20121021EXPLORERS.html>

## **Climbers Applaud Peaceful Use for Drones**

Good to know there’s a peaceful use for drones, at least in the exploration field. Word comes about a climb last summer by Mammut pro David Lama who stood together with Peter Ortner and Corey Rich on the summit of the 20,509-ft./6,251m Nameless Tower in Pakistan, also known as Trango Tower. Starting from the sun terrace, it took them ten hours to complete the Eternal Flame route, long considered to be one of the toughest

routes over 5,000 meters (16,404 feet).

There were three members in the rope team on the imposing face, but a fourth pair of eyes was following and watched their every move. Remo Masina from the Swiss company, Dedicam, controlled a backpack-sized camera drone, supported by four propellers, from the base of the face. Events on the rock were documented up close using a mounted camera. This resulted in breathtaking video and stills which had never been produced before in this area and at these heights.

"The outcome was completely uncertain," said Masina. "We were unable to test the drones under real conditions before the project." A completely new type of drone had to be constructed for the expedition to Karakorum in order to ensure that all requirements relating to height and range were met.

The joint project between Mammut and Dedicam achieved a milestone in the alpine photo and film world, and opens up new possibilities with so far unseen pictures of the largest mountains in the world.

View some of the drone images here:

<http://www.mammut.ch/basecamp/en/entries/basecamp-news?iframe=1>

### **Eleven Months to Go Until Exploration Day**

Seems not everyone is quite so thrilled with Christopher Columbus whose special day was first celebrated nationally in 1937. Columbus Day is, needless to say, viewed very differently by different groups of Americans. Some people forget it's a holiday at all. Some Italian Americans see it as a point of cultural pride. Other people — especially Native Americans — point out that Columbus personally oversaw the murder and enslavement of thousands and see the holiday as an intrinsically cruel celebration of the beginning of massive genocide and generations of oppression.

A campaign is underway to replace Columbus Day with Exploration Day. The logic is this: Columbus Day is about one man and the (actually untrue) claim that he was the first person to discover America. Inherently, that's Euro-centric, which is a big part of why it sits awkwardly in a pluralistic country. But exploration is inclusive. The ancestors of Native Hawaiians were explorers who crossed the ocean. The ancestors of Native Americans explored their way across the Bering land bridge and then explored two continents.

Look at the history of America and you can see a history of exploration by many different people, from many different backgrounds. Sometimes we're talking about literal, physical exploration. Other times, the exploration is conducted in a lab. Or in space. But the point is clear: This country was built on explorers. And it needs explorers for the future, say organizers of Exploration Day.

Exploration Day would allow Americans to honor the importance of exploration – and

the pride taken in being explorers – without marginalizing some Americans and without perpetuating damaging myths about U.S. history. Bonus: Exploration Day could double as a holiday for science.

(Read more at [www.ExplorationDayUSA.org](http://www.ExplorationDayUSA.org)).

### **Himalayan Stove Project Issues Commemorative Everest Poster**

A poster commemorating the 50th anniversary of the first five U.S. mountaineers to reach the summit of Mount Everest in May 1963, has been created by the Himalayan Stove Project. The poster is being released in a numbered, limited first edition of only 250, and is available for a contribution of \$250, exclusively on the website of the Himalayan Stove Project – <http://www.himalayanstoveproject.org/>. The group provides clean cookstoves to individuals and families living in the Himalayas who now cook with traditional, rudimentary cookstoves or over open fire pits inside their homes, consuming excessive amounts of precious fuel and polluting the indoor air to dangerously unhealthy levels.

### **Climber Braves Hurricane Sandy**

Everest climber Sherman Bull was seen walking his dog Denali, a stocky long-haired Alaskan husky, down the streets of New Canaan, Conn., during the height of Hurricane Sandy. Bull tells the *New Canaan News* (Nov. 2), “I enjoy bad weather. I climb mountains. I get a rush from it. I’ve seen higher winds in Antarctica. I do watch for falling debris, though; that’s something you have to look out for.”

Bull appears in director Michael Brown’s new film, *High Ground* (2012), a documentary that follows a team of veterans returning from combat in Afghanistan and Iraq as they set out to climb a towering Himalayan peak in Nepal to overcome challenges and heal the mental and emotional ravages of war.

### **QUOTE OF THE MONTH**

*When we were young, we loved to climb, run, jump and swing: to play. It’s part of who we are, yet it’s often absent from our adult lives. We have evolved to expect, and to endure, a little physical hardship every now and then, but it’s often absent from our lives. But the fact is that we feel and act much better when we push ourselves – and play a little too.*

– David Breashears, filmmaker, explorer, mountaineer, and author in the foreword to *You’ll Know at the Finish Line: A Spartan Guide to The Sport of Obstacle Racing* by Joe Desena and Andy Weinberg (Spartan Race, Inc., 2012). The e-book is free at [SpartanRace.com](http://SpartanRace.com).

### **EXPEDITION FOCUS**

#### **Anti-Science Cynics Cannot Win**

**By Erden Eruç**

*Felix Baumgartner, 43, an Austrian skydiver and BASE jumper set the world record for skydiving an estimated 24-miles, reaching an approximate speed of 834 mph, or Mach 1.24. In doing so, he became the first person to break the sound barrier on a descent without vehicular power. Erden Eruç is founder of the nonprofit Around-n-Over with a mission to educate and inspire children. He has completed a human powered circumnavigation and holds records in ocean rowing. He's particularly upset regarding one story about Baumgartner that aired on NBC.*

On Oct. 14, I was riveted in front of my computer to watch the live broadcast of the high altitude jump by Felix Baumgartner. It took me back to the day when as a middle school student I had watched astronauts walk on the moon live on a black and white television. Felix executed a controlled experiment, carried out methodically after seven years of well-defined preparations. The highest altitude and the fastest fall were among the firsts to explore for mankind.

There was no desire for an adventure, all had to remain under control, a complete checklist was carried out during the mission, the outcome was a successful landing. Of course there were unknowns to be explored, data to be collected, hence the experiment. A whole team of trained minds had been assembled to collaborate in making history, to design a variety of equipment ranging from the spacesuit to the balloon to sensors for scientific experiments to cameras, in order to see through that challenge.

Now retired Joe Kittinger, the distinguished USAF pilot who held the record for the highest jump since 1960, was his voice link at mission control. Dr. Jonathan Clark, the husband of the late Columbia shuttle astronaut Laurel Clark, was the medical director on the team. Dr. Clark had been on the SCSIT (Spacecraft Crew Survival Integrated Investigation Team) assembled by NASA in 2004 to investigate the ways astronauts might survive a crippled spacecraft in the future. The least that a person on the street could have done was to have some humility, to shut up and to learn from the experiment.

However when I clicked haplessly on a news piece on the MSNBC website hoping for new information, I found NBC's Mike Taibbi, categorizing Felix among "history's other daredevils in search of fame, not heroes risking all for others or even for a noble idea." In the same breath, Taibbi was juxtaposing Felix whose achievement he framed as a one shot wonder to be admired, with the space shuttle astronauts who were "the best of us, the hopes of mankind testing the limits of human achievement." (See: <http://video.msnbc.msn.com/nightly-news/49409925>)

Taibbi was so off the mark and sounded so ignorant about how integrated and linked the two were, it was mind boggling. Neither this person, nor his producers, nor their minions who had assembled his contrarian statement probably days in advance of the jump for purposes of boosted ratings, could connect the dots. They had missed an opportunity to educate their audience.

Baumgartner had just jumped from the edge of space becoming the first skydiver to break the sound barrier. There was poetry in the fact that 65 years earlier on the same date in 1947, Chuck Yeager had piloted the Bell X-1 rocket plane to become the first person to achieve supersonic speed. Yet Taibbi was belittling Baumgartner as a daredevil who would be forgotten tomorrow. Thanks to what we learned from this mission by Baumgartner, the future astronauts will perhaps have a way to jump off a failed spaceship to survive and will not have to burn with such a ship upon reentry into the earth's atmosphere. Shouldn't Taibbi be asking instead whether Baumgartner will be remembered along with John Glenn, a pioneer of space exploration, or with Chuck Yeager, a wizard of flight who was the first to break the sound barrier?

It is such deliberate cynicism, such closed-minded babble, such willful ignorance from his kind in the media that corrupts the social conscience about what is possible for mankind. These reporters and correspondents forget that their amplified voice on the public airwaves is a privilege to be handled responsibly. They act as kingmakers, they promote their own cronies, they categorize the public into winners and losers, and they insult our intelligence in doing so. If an accomplishment is so grand that it defies being ignored, they carry on to denigrate the same, becoming parasites to share the spotlight. They trip us, they stand in our way; they corrupt our minds about our limits as humanity, about our future.

It is our duty as explorers, as parents, as educators, as role models to combat this insidious anti-science venom with equal passion, to push back with all the power that we can muster. We cannot let the cynics clip our wings, shape our destiny, define our future, or deflate our desire to explore our boundaries, be it in space, or at the depths of oceans, or under miles of rock in a cave, or among mounds of encyclopedias in a library.

Erden Eruç  
President  
Around-n-Over  
<http://www.Around-n-Over.org>

## **MEDIA MATTERS**

### **Fishing for Meteorites? You Need a License Now**

A fishing license for the sky. That's what Leonard David of SPACE.com calls the Bureau of Land Management's new policy governing the collection of meteorites found on public lands.

The policy, issued Sept. 10, provides guidance to the BLM's field office managers for administering the collection of meteorites on public lands in three "use categories": (1) casual collection of small quantities without a permit, (2) scientific and educational use by permit under the authority of the Antiquities Act, and (3) commercial collection of meteorites through the issuance of land-use permits.



As noted in the new policy, the extraterrestrial origin of meteorites, as well as their relative rarity, "has made them highly desirable to casual collectors, commercial collectors and scientific researchers."

In the world of meteorite collecting, the new rules have sparked a flurry of comment on the Internet and on a special mailing list dedicated to the topic, according to SPACE.com.

"I have mixed feelings about the new BLM guidelines," said Michael Gilmer of Galactic Stone and Ironworks, in Lutz, Fla. "I think this is all about money. Meteorites flew under the regulatory radar for a long time."

The bottom line is that no one has any rights to collect meteorites on federal lands for profit or for science without permission from the BLM in the form of a permit, according to the federal agency.

For more information:

[http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/info/regulations/Instruction\\_Memos\\_and\\_Bulletins/national\\_instruction/2012/IM\\_2012-182.html](http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/info/regulations/Instruction_Memos_and_Bulletins/national_instruction/2012/IM_2012-182.html)

## **CLIMBING FOR DOLLARS**

### **New IMAX Award Announced for Aspiring Filmmakers**

It can be tough to get a movie made if you don't have a major studio backing you with gobs of cash. But soon, aspiring filmmakers will have another avenue to pursue their dreams.

*Newsweek* and *The Daily Beast* announced last month that the company is creating the IMAX Award, a new honor for filmmakers interested in creating movies around the theme of exploration. A \$25,000 prize will be awarded either as a scholarship or given as a lump sum for production expenses.

The contest was designed to commemorate *Newsweek's* Explorer issue, which will go on sale Jan. 6. It will also celebrate the 40th anniversary of IMAX, which revolutionized film production by providing a method to shoot larger images with greater resolution.

The deadline for submission of a maximum two-minute trailer is Nov. 30, 2012. A panel of judges will select 10 finalists, which will then be voted on by the public. The winner's film will premiere at *Newsweek* and *The Daily Beast's* Explorer event set to take place in January 2013.

(For more information: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/sponsored/2012/10/imax-awards-contest-rules.html>)

## **WEB WATCH**

## **What Color is That Glacier?**

It sounds like a simple question – what color is a glacier? Allen Pope, a glaciologist from Cambridge, UK, compiled a video from six field seasons around the Arctic and Antarctic, to show how complex that answer is, why it matters, and his role as a researcher to help answer that question. Pope is studying for a Ph.D. in Polar Studies at the Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge (Trinity College).

You can see his fascinating three-minute video here: <http://vimeo.com/51589462>

## **Explore Responsibly with iNeverSolo.com**

Explorers and outdoor enthusiasts have a powerful new, and absolutely free tool literally at their fingertips when heading out for their next big project. The brainchild of an outdoorsman, pilot and engineer, iNeverSolo allows you to create a plan for your outdoor activity so that, if you don't make it back when you said you would, an email and text alert goes out to the people you designate and they can track you down.

Developed by Colorado engineer and licensed pilot, Jed Mitchell, iNeverSolo is built on the tried and true model of the pilot's flight plan. "The simple goal," according to Mitchell, "is to let others know where you've gone, in case you don't make it back." Outdoor users can enter and activate their plan with iNeverSolo for free; sponsors and advertisers cover the site's costs. (For more information: [iNeverSolo.com](http://iNeverSolo.com))

## **ON THE HORIZON**

### **Exploring the Boundaries: the Science of the Extremes, May 28-29, 2013**

Lorie Karnath, former president of The Explorers Club, is co-chairing along with Prof. Bengt Norden, chair of physical chemistry at Chalmers University and former Nobel Committee chair, a two-day symposium to be held May 28-29, 2013, at the prestigious Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences in Stockholm called *Exploring the Boundaries: the Science of the Extremes*.

The program will focus on planet earth, space, other planets and satellites and theoretical aspects of extreme exploration, while considering the convergence of physical forces and chemistry as well biotic prerequisites such as how life forms exist in extreme conditions.

The symposium will include a number of preeminent research and field scientists who will look into questions ranging from the beginnings of the universe and the possibilities that this holds, to prerequisites for survival under varied extreme conditions ... and if life is found elsewhere could mankind communicate?

The program is hosted by The Molecular Frontiers Foundation and The Royal Academy of Sciences, which awards the Nobel Prizes each year for the sciences. The Foundation represents a global effort to promote the understanding of science. (For more

information: [www.molecularfrontiers.org](http://www.molecularfrontiers.org), [molecularfrontierssab@yahoo.com](mailto:molecularfrontierssab@yahoo.com))

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