

EXPEDITION NEWS



September 2007 - Volume Fourteen, Number Nine

EXPEDITION NEWS, now in its 13th year, is the monthly review of significant expeditions, research projects and newsworthy adventures. It is distributed online and 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 AMAZONAS DEPARTS

This month, the Expedition Amazonas team will begin a source to sea paddle of the Amazon River, by far the world's biggest and longest river. From its source high in the Andes of Peru, to the Atlantic Ocean off Brazil, the expedition is a massive test of skill and perseverance over seven months and 4,350 miles (7,000 km). The expedition is partnered with the environmental and indigenous rights action group, Amazon Watch.

Together they will highlight the absolute need for a balance between global, sustainable development and the protection of the earth's natural environment, along with its most vulnerable populations.

Australian team member Mark Kalch, 30, says, "The team has been flat out preparing for this trip over the past months. In no way is the awesome power of the Amazon being underestimated. However, we are extremely excited to tackle this challenge head on and are thankful for the opportunity to be able to raise awareness of climate change issues we all feel passionately about."

The five-person team, ages 23 to 32, is comprised of professional guides, adventurers and explorers from the U.K., South Africa and Australia. They will travel on foot and by raft through some of the world's most inaccessible terrain, including some of the world's most dangerous whitewater. The top three sponsors are Kokatat, Suunto, and Teva. (For more information: Nathan Welch, 0061 0414 069 556, media@expeditionamazonas.com, www.expeditionamazonas.com). ▲▲

EXPEDITION UPDATE

Amelia Earhart Expedition Reports Promising Finds

The 70th Anniversary Amelia Earhart Expedition returned last month from Nikumaroro, an uninhabited atoll in the Republic of Kiribati, where Earhart and her navigator are believed to have landed and died as castaways. (See *EN*, April 2007). Expedition leader Ric Gillespie reports, "Although no human bones or teeth turned up, there were a number of objects found that are very exciting and may prove to be highly significant. Do personal effects we recovered reveal the identity of the castaway whose bones were found on Nikumaroro in 1940? Did aircraft parts found in the island's abandoned village come from Earhart's Lockheed Electra? Research and analysis now underway may soon provide the answers."

Gillespie continues, "We consider the 70th Anniversary Expedition to be a huge success."

The expedition team departed Los Angeles on July 12, arriving at Nadi International Airport, Fiji, on July 14. Transferring to the nearby port of Lautoka, they boarded the 120-ft. Fiji-based *Nai'a*, used on three previous expeditions, for the 1,000-mile, five-day voyage to Nikumaroro. Archaeological operations on Niku focused on the Seven Site – the "castaways' campsite" location the team began excavating in 2001. The goal there was to determine whether objects or remains are present which might reveal the identity of the castaway(s) – possibly Amelia Earhart – who died there.

On July 24, the 15-person team celebrated Earhart's 110th birthday at the very spot where she may have passed her 40th.

continued on page 2

The ultimate fate of Amelia Earhart continues to intrigue the public, as witnessed by the hundreds who attended a lecture about the lost aviatrix late last month in Saipan, in the Northern Mariana Islands. Scores packed into an auditorium to listen to the lecture by archaeologist Dr. Thomas F. King who participated in the recent expedition.

The recent \$330,000 expedition was supported by Backwoods, the Midwest retailer, FedEx Express, and Stihl. The TIGHAR's Earhart Project is also accepting donations from individuals via PayPal. (For more information: www.tighar.org).

Expedition 360 Ends - Finally

Faithful readers of *EN* since the mid-1990s will recall news about Englishman Jason Lewis, 39, and his efforts to be the first to circumnavigate the globe entirely under human power. Now that project is about to come to an end.

Lewis has announced Oct. 6 in Greenwich, England, as the completion date for his epic expedition. After riding through Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Austria, Germany to Belgium, the final crossing of the channel in the pedal boat *Moksha* will be completed over three days in early October, pending favorable weather. Then, after lifting her out onto a mobile trolley, a group of expedition team members and supporters will push her up the hill to the Royal Observatory for the final crossing of the zero degree line of longitude. This is represented by a strip of brass embedded in the cobblestones, the same that he and his teammate, Steve Smith, 40, crossed on their outward bound journey 13 years ago.

Moksha is the custom designed, custom built pedal boat that suffered many near fatal accidents, from colliding with a

coral reef outside the Turks and Caicos Islands in 1995, to being rear ended in a traffic jam going to a school presentation in Colorado in 1996, to capsizing and nearly sinking in a storm off Morro Bay, Calif., in 1998. "And yet she has faithfully delivered every crew member who has ridden in her safely to the other side of every piece of water she has been asked to cross. *Moksha* is as much a part of the team as any of us, and you never leave a team member behind," Lewis writes in his on-line journal.

Expedition 360 is an attempt at one of the last great firsts for true circumnavigation: reaching antipodal points on the surface of the globe using only human power (no motors or sails). Bicycles, in-line skates, kayaks, swimming, walking and their unique pedal powered boat are being used by Lewis and an international team to travel over 45,000 miles across five continents, two oceans and one sea from 1994 to 2007. (For more information: www.expedition360.com). ▲

EXPEDITION NOTES

The Danube Isn't so Blue Anymore – An expedition surveying pollution and wildlife in the Danube River reached Hungary's capital of Budapest in late August. Eighteen scientists aboard three ships are traveling for almost seven weeks down the length of the 2,375-kilometer (1,476-mile) river — flowing through 10 countries — collecting water and wildlife samples to measure water quality and pollution along the river and its tributaries. "We are giving the Danube a health checkup," said Philip Weller, executive secretary of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, which organized the study. Known as the Joint Danube Survey 2, the trip began Aug. 14 in Regensburg, Germany, and will end this month in the Danube's delta in Romania and the Ukraine.

Weller said the goal was to gather information to improve Danube-related policies of countries along river's basin, home to more than 80 million people.

I Love Lucy – Lucy, or more formally AL 288-1 (a nearly half complete skeleton of "Australopithecus afarensis"), is on display at the Houston Museum of Natural Science, the first stop on an 11-city U.S. tour. The visit to the United States is not without controversy. *Australopithecus afarensis* is an early descendent of humans. Lucy, herself, was discovered on Nov. 30, 1974, by the International Afar Research Expedition (IARE), which consisted of Maurice Taieb, Donald Johanson, and Yves Coppens.

About 3.2 million years ago Lucy lived in what is now called the Awash Valley of the Afar Depression, a desert region in

Quote of the Month

"It was flat, there was plenty of oxygen and there was no danger, except for the polar bear that came into the village."

- Seattle climber Ed Viesturs recounting his experience last spring on Will Steger's Global Warming 101 Expedition. "I drove a dog team for the first time and got to meet Cheryl Tiegs," he tells media during a Mountain Hardwear press conference last month in Salt Lake.

northeast Ethiopia. Several hundred bone fragments were discovered of Lucy, the first skeleton of *Australopithecus afarensis* ever found. In addition to the fossil of Lucy, over 100 artifacts such as ancient manuscripts and royal artifacts from a dynasty Ethiopians believe stretches back to the son of the biblical King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba will be on display.

Many experts are critical of the tour because they say that her bones are too fragile to handle moving around so much (and may be permanently damaged as a result) and they also contend that the bones should be reserved for scientific study and not shown as a tourist attraction. Among the scientific organizations and scientists against such a display are the Smithsonian Institution (Washington, D.C.) and Kenyan archaeologist Richard Leakey. However, other scientists contend that museums trade museum pieces on a regular basis. They also say that such a public display will help to inform the public on human evolution.

Why Not Put in a Starbucks As Well? – Environmental experts must conduct a study and give their approval before workers can build a planned paved road up to the Mount Everest base camp, a Tibet government official said in July.

The \$20 million project, expected to be a showcase for the 2008 Olympic torch relay up the mountain, was to have turned a 67-mile stone-and-dirt path into a blacktop highway that snaked from the foot of the mountain to a base camp at 17,060 feet. But some activists have expressed concern about the road's environmental impact on the region, where global warming is causing glacial retreat.

The new highway was to be a major route for tourists and mountaineers, and officials have praised it as a way to make life easier for locals. In April, organizers for the Beijing Summer Olympics announced ambitious plans for the longest torch relay in Olympic history, an 85,000-mile, 130-day route that would cross five continents and reach the 29,035-foot summit of Everest.

China says it has ruled Tibet for centuries, although many Tibetans say their homeland was essentially an independent state for most of that time. Chinese communist troops occupied Tibet in 1951, and Beijing continues to rule the region with a heavy hand.

Waterman Studies the Melting Arctic – Jonathan Waterman, 51, is an author, filmmaker, citizen lobbyist and story teller who enthralled a room full of outdoor retailers during a trade show in Salt Lake last month. Waterman, who has dedicated most of his career to understanding and protecting the Arctic, has spent 200 days in the field over the

course of 18 trips. "This place keeps my clock spinning," he said in reference to the vastness of the region. "It takes days, sometimes weeks, to adjust to the scale of things."

In 2006 he returned to the 19 million acre Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) with noted 20th century naturalist George Schaller who conducted a 1956 field survey of the area that led to the creation of the Alaskan refuge. The "lean, mean, 73-year-old" taught him the "dying art of scatology" among many other observational skills. With worries about the greening of the Arctic at hand, Waterman documented how trees and shrubs are marching north due to warming temperatures. Also worrisome: more bluebird sightings, more parasites in fresh game, and smog obscuring the stars. "Life is changing for the people of the north. It should be our constitutional right to have this remain untracked wilderness," says Waterman, who calls polar bears the "poster child for global warming." Waterman's most recent book is *Where Mountains are Nameless: Passion and Politics in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge* (W.W. Norton & Company, 2005).

Nepalese Seek Peak Fee Cut – Ang Tshering Sherpa, president of the Nepal Mountaineering Association, is campaigning to reduce peak fees in his country in order to attract more climbers. The Nepalese government has formed a Royalty Revision Committee, and Ang Tshering's hope is that fees will be reduced across the board, according to the American Alpine Club News. In general, Nepal's peak fees are higher than the fees for comparable mountains in Pakistan, India, and even China. According to Reuters, Nepal is already considering a 50 percent cut in its peak fees for Mt. Everest's relatively unpopular fall season.

With the end of the decade-old Maoist insurgency last year, tourism has rebounded in Nepal (up 36 percent in the first seven months of 2007 compared with 2006) but it is still far below historical levels. Ang Tshering asks that climbers and guides e-mail their comments on reducing peak fees to office@nepalmountaineering.org and to the Ministry of Tourism at tourism@mail.com.np.

NASA Lightens Up – NASA deserves to have some fun these days, what with chipped heat shields and diaper-wearing wacko astronuts pepper spraying romantic rivals. When the space shuttle Discovery launches the STS-120 astronaut crew in October, the force will be with them.

Stowed on-board the orbiter, in addition to a new module for the International Space Station, will be the original prop lightsaber used by actor Mark Hamill as Luke Skywalker in the 1977 film *Star Wars*. The laser-like Jedi weapon is being flown to the orbiting outpost and back in

honor of the 30th anniversary of director George Lucas' franchise.

Grease Bombs – That's what you get when you take warm slices of Spam and add them to a large chunk of cheddar cheese on a grease-soaked bagel. It's climber Erik Weißenmayer's favorite taste treat, and one he shares in the new booklet, *Recipes From the Athletes & People at Mountain Hardwear*. Ed Viesturs weighs in with "Ed McMuffins" – Rye Crisp cracker, salami, Swiss cheese and mustard on a cracker. (For a free e-mail version of the recipe book, contact Val Dietrich at vdietrich@mountainhardwear.com). ▲▲



MEDIA MATTERS

Hubble is Today's Greatest Explorer – See if a 5th grader knows this one: what is the world's most popular museum? No, not the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Not the Louvre in Paris. At a running average of nearly nine million visitors per year, it's the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. According to nationally renowned astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson, quoted in the Aug. 5 *Parade* magazine, the museum is "an American legacy to the world. But, more important, it represents the urge to dream and the will to enable it."

He continues, "These traits are fundamental to being human and have coincided with what it is to be American." Tyson believes the greatest explorer today is not even human. "It's the Hubble Space Telescope, which for nearly two decades has offered us all a mind-expanding window to the cosmos."

Tyson goes on to say, "... space exploration ... draws from the ranks of astrophysicists, biologists, physiologists, chemists, engineers and planetary geologists. Their collective efforts have the capacity to improve and enhance all that we have come to value as a modern society."

The *Parade* story also includes an amusing photo of astronaut Buzz Aldrin wearing a t-shirt that reads, "Actually, I am a rocket scientist."

Alex Lowe Dinner Turns Out Climbing Royalty – The climbing world's finest attended a fundraiser for the Alex Lowe Charitable Foundation at Snowbird, Utah, last month. Funds went to the Khumbu Climbing School, a project of the foundation named for climber Alex Lowe who died in 1999 at the age of 32 in an avalanche on Tibet's Shishapangma. Attendees of the dinner included Pete Athans, original Seven Summiteer Dick Bass, Jimmy Chin, Dave Hahn, and Yuichiro Miura, the first man to ski down Everest.

According to a story in the Salt Lake *Tribune* (Aug. 9) by Brett Prettyman, "The Khumbu Climbing School started in 2004 with a mission to increase the safety margin of Nepali climbers and high altitude workers by encouraging responsible climbing practices in a supportive and community-based program." About 60 students have gone through the 10-day school each year. Climber Conrad Anker, who would go on to marry Lowe's widow, Jennifer, tells the *Tribune*, "What each student learns, they pass on to other local people. Our goal is to eventually get everything in their hands for it to grow into a self-sustaining mode with no Westerners involved." (For more information: www.AlexLowe.org). ▲▲

CLIMBING FOR DOLLARS

Nott and McNeill Honored – With the untimely death of Sue Nott and Karen McNeill on Alaska's Mt. Foraker in spring 2006, the American Alpine Club (AAC) and Mountain Hardwear established a new grant called the McNeill-Nott Award. Sue Nott was a long time member of the AAC and a Mountain Hardwear athlete. She had a close and frequent partnership with Karen and both climbers had tackled new and established test pieces alike.

This new award seeks to preserve the memory and spirit of these two talented climbers by awarding grants to help realize the dreams of amateur climbers attempting new routes or first ascents. Special attention will be given to projects that have strong exploration and adventure components, and these components will be weighted more heavily than technical difficulty. The application deadline for the McNeill-Nott Grant is March 1 for expeditions departing no later than April 30th of the following year. (For more information: www.mountainhardwear.com). ▲▲

EXPEDITION MARKETING

Professional Schleppers Team with Luggage Maker

"We're professional beggars and professional schleppers who are lucky to have teamed up with Samsonite," said Fabien Cousteau, grandson of famed underwater explorer Jacques-Yves Cousteau. Speaking at a press conference for the luggage manufacturer at the Outdoor Retailer Summer Market in Salt Lake last month, he detailed how he's obsessed with sharks – understanding and protecting them. Fabien Cousteau says sharks are terribly misunderstood to be vicious man-eaters and this attitude is contributing to their demise.

He explained how a specially designed shark-shaped submersible was developed to allow researchers to get up close and personal with Great White sharks. In November 2005, CBS television aired Cousteau's special titled, *Mind of a Demon*. With the help of a large crew, Cousteau created the 14-ft., 1,200 pound shark submarine for the show. The sub, named *Troy*, looked just like a real Great White shark and moved among giant sharks without any disruption. Fabien controlled *Troy* from inside the sub and shot film from the sub's many hidden cameras.

When the device malfunctioned once, he had to swim 150 yards to shore in shark-infested waters with just 10-ft. visibility. "It was the most tense 15 minutes of my life," he said.

The Cousteau's first shark film was a documentary for *National Geographic Channel* titled *Attacks of the Mystery Shark*. The film explores a series of shark attacks off the East Coast of the United States and clears up some misconceptions about those attacks.

Fabien Cousteau, a third-generation ocean explorer and filmmaker, shares his famous father's and grandfather's love of deep-sea adventure. As a boy he dove for the first time when he was only four years-old – a custom tank had to be made to fit his body. By the time Fabien was seven, he had begun accompanying his father, Jean-Michel, and grandfather, Jacques, on expeditions, his first to Papua New Guinea. When Fabien turned 12 he began joining the crew of his grandfather's ships *Calypso* and *Alcyone* on every break from school.

As an adult, Fabien took time to study economics and worked in marketing to try his hand on land. But the call back to the sea was strong and he returned to carry on the Cousteau legacy of ocean adventure and environmental education. He enjoys exposing a young audience to the thrills and lessons of the ocean. And, it doesn't hurt that *People Magazine* named Fabien the "Sexiest Man of the Sea" in 2002.

The Cousteau family (Fabien, father Jean-Michel and sister Celine) is currently working on a new PBS TV documentary about the Amazon—recording what has happened in the region since the last Cousteau expedition 25 years ago. In all, only 10 to 15 percent of the Amazon has been explored, according to Fabien. *Return to the Amazon* is scheduled to air on PBS in February 2008. The Samsonite sponsorship seems well suited for this project: Fabien reports traveling to the Amazon with 13 people and 67 pieces of luggage.

You Bet Your Life

Are you using a harness that can fail because of wear, age, or damage? In the wake of Todd Skinner's tragic death from harness failure in Yosemite Valley last year, Arc'teryx, Mountain Gear, and Rock and Ice Magazine have launched a harness testing program to find out how reliable old faithful truly is. It's part of one of the first large scale harness tests conducted by the outdoor industry. They are seeking old, used harnesses for testing. Those who participate will receive a \$25 gift certificate good towards an order of \$125 or more on Arc'teryx products at Mountain Gear.

The study hopes to demonstrate the real world effects of time and use on harnesses, establish a lifespan for harnesses, and determine safety guidelines. A full report of findings will be published in a future edition of Rock and Ice Magazine. (For more information: www.mountaingear.com/harness).

Swiss Connection Helps Promote The Alps IMAX Film

Attesting to the fascination people have with a great adventure story well told, MacGillivray Freeman Films, Laguna Beach, Calif., teamed up with companion book publisher Simon and Schuster and film sponsors Holcim and Switzerland Tourism to coordinate a series of special events, promotions, advertising and publicity for the IMAX film, *The Alps*. In all, the effort generated 55 million impressions of meaningful exposure for the wide-screen presentation. The film details what it takes to climb the Eiger, and is a poignant story about a son's efforts to overcome personal demons surrounding the climbing accident that took his father's life.

During an 11-city promotion tour last March, the son, John Harlin III, 51, gave dozens of media interviews, presentations and book signings in conjunction with film showings. Media appearances included *CBS Sunday Morning*, *Fox & Friends*, and *NBC Radio*.

The Switzerland Tourist office ran ads in 14 national and local monthly magazines, it appeared in the tourist office's own promotion material with a circulation of seven million, and the film was hyped on Swiss International Airlines flights.

A spokesperson for the Esquire IMAX Theatre in Sacramento said, "The audience was so riveted by his story that they just soaked it all in and didn't want to leave." (The film continues its run this fall. For locations, see www.alpsfilm.com). ▲

ON THE HORIZON

An Evening with Wangari Maathai – Wings WorldQuest and The American Museum of Natural History's Science & Society is hosting a Sept. 25 talk in New York with Nobel Peace Prize laureate Wangari Maathai, the celebrated political activist, feminist, and environmentalist. She is the founder of the Green Belt Movement, an environmental group in Kenya that has restored indigenous forests and assisted rural women by paying them to plant trees in their communities.

Since 1977, it has planted more than 30 million trees in Kenya and has been replicated in dozens of other African countries. Maathai is currently Kenya's Deputy Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources and a Member of Parliament. Her new memoir, *Unbowed*, will be available for signing. (For more information: 212 769 5200 or visit www.amnh.org/programs).

The Lowell Thomas Dinner – The Explorers Club Lowell Thomas Awards Dinner returns to New York on Oct. 18 at Cipriani Wall Street. Each year the awards are presented by Rolex Watch U.S.A., Inc., and the president of the Club to those who have distinguished themselves in various fields of exploration. In 2007, leading individuals "Exploring Climate Change" will be honored: polar explorer Will Steger, filmmakers Adam Ravetch and Sarah Robertson (*Arctic Tale*), oceanographer Richard Feely, Ph.D., geochemist W. Berry Lyons, Ph.D., glaciologist Paul Mayewski, Ph.D., glaciologist Julie Palais, Ph.D., and atmospheric scientist Susan Solomon, Ph.D. Master of ceremonies is the Discovery Channel's Josh Bernstein. The awards are named for Lowell Thomas (1892-1991), the legendary journalist, broadcaster and explorer who made "Lawrence of Arabia" famous. Thomas was a 53-year member of The Explorers Club. (For more information: www.explorers.org). ▲

EXPEDITION CLASSIFIEDS

Mountaineering Books – World's largest selection of mountaineering books and DVDs, plus Polar, Trekking, Guidebooks, New, Used and Collectible. www.chessler-books.com, 800 654 8502.

Costa Del Mar Sunglasses – The leader in high performance polarized sunglasses is interested in sponsoring expeditions. Help us "See what's out there™." See Costa Del Mar's online video network dedicated to water sports and angling adventures (www.costachannelc.com). Submit film footage of "you-had-to-see-it-to-believe-it" extreme water sports and fishing expeditions. Contact Laurie Driggs at ldriggs@costadelmar.com for information. Learn more about our commitment to exploration and adventure travel at: <http://www.costadelmar.com/adventures/>

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).

Himalaya Climbs and Treks – Five percent discount for Explorers Club members. Climbs and Treks with Dan Mazur and SummitClimb.com - Africa, Himalaya, Aconcagua, Everest Basecamp Treks, Kilimanjaro and Mt. Kenya Treks and Climbs. Ascents and walks around Tibet, China, Nepal and around the world with our experienced friendly team. Established for 18 years. Novices, and experts are welcome. 360 570 0715, info@SummitClimb.com, www.summitclimb.com.

Four Legs Good, Two Legs Bad – LEKI, the world's largest ski, trekking and Nordic Walking pole company, Buffalo, N.Y., introduces three new P2 Grip/Strap Trekking Poles for 2007. Lengthen and shorten the pole strap with the one touch locking tab on top. Grips are vented to reduce weight. See more at LEKI.com.

Tights, Tops and Sport Support Bras for Athletes – CW-X Conditioning Web is specifically tuned to provide total support to the key muscle groups and joints of the lower limbs and upper body. Tights and Tops, and the company's new Sports Support Bras, are made for a wide variety of high-energy activities, including running, fitness walking, hiking, cycling, skiing, snowboarding, track and field, and other fitness activities. It has been worn to the summit of Everest on at least two occasions. (www.cw-x.com). ▲

EXPEDITION NEWS is published by Blumenfeld and Associates, Inc., 397 Post Rd., Suite 213, Darien, CT 06820 USA. Tel. 203 655 1600, fax 203 655 1622, editor@expeditionnews.com. Editor/publisher: Jeff Blumenfeld. Assistant editor: Jamie Gribbon. ©2007 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. Layout and design by Nextwave Design, Seattle.