

EXPEDITION NEWS

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EXPEDITION NEWS, founded in 1994, 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.

100 MILES OF WILD: MADAGASCAR'S LIMESTONE LABYRINTH EXPEDITION

Travel company Kensington Tours has partnered with Adventure Science to launch an expedition to the remote unexplored northern section of the Strict Nature Reserve of Madagascar's Great Tsingy. From Oct. 1-16, 2014, a highly skilled team of explorers and scientists will trek, climb and crawl through the UNESCO World Heritage Site to document the secrets of 100 miles of the region's labyrinths of sharp rocks, towering cliffs, endangered creatures and deep caves.

The 100 Miles of Wild: Madagascar's Limestone Labyrinth Expedition will showcase one of Africa's final frontiers. The expedition has multiple goals: to expand the knowledge of lemur distribution within the park to estimate population numbers; to identify diversity and potential new species; to locate Jurassic period dinosaur mega tracks that are believed to exist in the area; to conduct preliminary investigation into an unexplored system of caverns and caves; and to create a detailed map with accompanying photos and video in order to share their findings with the rest of the world.

The expedition will be led by Dr. Simon Donato, a Kensington Tours' Explorer in Residence, star of the Esquire Network's Boundless and founder of Adventure Science. Team members include George Kourounis, an elite global adventurer and host of The Discovery Network's Angry Planet series and Travis Steffens, a renowned primatologist who studies the biogeography of lemurs in Madagascar. Rounding up the 14-person team are an engineer, climbing experts, a former U.S. Army ranger, a communication specialist, Malagasy Park officials and a local Kensington Tours guide.

Sponsors include DeLorme inReach, Delta Airlines and Farm to Feet socks.

For more information: <http://www.adventurescience.ca/madagascar/index.html>

EXPEDITION UPDATE

Franklin Expedition Ship Believed Found

This has been a big year for marine discoveries, considering the news in May that the *Santa Maria* was presumed located off Haiti. This month Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced one of two ships lost more than 160 years ago in an ill-fated expedition to the Northwest Passage led by British Capt. Sir John Franklin has been found by Canadian archaeologists attached to the Victoria Strait Expedition. (See *EN*, August 2014).

It could be the *HMS Erebus* or the *HMS Terror* – researchers aren't sure yet. Harper's remarks at Parks Canada's laboratories in Ottawa follow an earlier announcement that two artifacts from the 19th-century Arctic expedition were found on an island in Nunavut, Canada's northernmost territory

Both the *Erebus* and *Terror* were icebound during the expedition that left England in 1845 in an attempt to chart an unnavigated portion of the Northwest Passage.

The well-preserved wreckage was found on Sept. 7 using a remotely-operated underwater vehicle recently acquired by Parks Canada. Its location remains confidential in an attempt to deter looting.

Sir John Franklin and 128 crewmen were lost in the original 1845 expedition. Skulls believed to be of the members of the expedition were found and buried on King William Island in 1945.

But for 167 years it has remained a mystery as to why Franklin and his men were never heard from soon after the Royal Navy had mounted one of the best equipped Arctic explorations in its history to find a possible trade route between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

Harper's government has poured millions into the venture, with the prime minister himself taking part in the search. Read his statement here:

<http://www.pm.gc.ca/eng/news/2014/09/09/statement-prime-minister-canada-announcing-discovery-one-ill-fated-franklin>

Explorers Museum Hosts Inaugural Weekend

On Sept. 6 to 7 the new Explorers Museum near Dublin hosted an inaugural weekend (see *EN*, January 2014). The event was held at Charleville Castle, County Offaly, where the first expedition to Everest was launched under the leadership of Col. Charles Howard-Bury.

In 1921 he was the leader of the Mount Everest Reconnaissance Expedition, organized and financed by the Mount Everest Committee, a joint body of the Alpine Club and the Royal Geographical Society. In 1922 he wrote a full account of the expedition, published as *Mount Everest The Reconnaissance, 1921*.

The opening weekend included a luncheon honoring museum patron Sir Ranulph Fiennes, and the first Explorers Film Festival, whose winner, *The Aviatrix* produced by Nylon Films, is the story of the journey of Lady Heath who in 1928 was first to fly solo from Cape Town to London, and Tracey Curtis-Taylor who 85 years later set out in a vintage biplane to fly that adventure again.

Sunday included an inaugural Explorers Museum "fireside chat" held next to a roaring fire at Charleville Castle, presented by Dr. G. Terry Sharrer, long-term Curator of Health Sciences (ret.) for the Smithsonian Institute.

Said co-founder Tim Lavery of the World Explorers Bureau, "Protecting and increasing the diffusion of knowledge of explorers past and present will serve to inspire a new generation of explorers."

For more information: www.explorersmuseum.org

EXPEDITION NOTES

Newly-Discovered Dinosaur Feared Nothing

Scientists have discovered and described a new supermassive dinosaur species with the most complete skeleton ever found of its type. At 85 feet (26 m) long and weighing about 65 tons in life, *Dreadnoughtus schrani* is the largest land animal for which a body mass can be accurately calculated. Its skeleton is exceptionally complete, with over 70 percent of the bones, excluding the head, represented. Because all previously discovered supermassive dinosaurs are known only from relatively fragmentary remains, *Dreadnoughtus* offers an unprecedented window into the anatomy and biomechanics of the largest animals to ever walk the Earth.

"*Dreadnoughtus schrani* was astoundingly huge," said Kenneth Lacovara, Ph.D., an associate professor in Drexel University's College of Arts and Sciences, who discovered the *Dreadnoughtus* fossil skeleton in southern Patagonia in Argentina and led the excavation and analysis. "It weighed as much as a dozen African elephants or more than seven *T. rex*. Shockingly, skeletal evidence shows that when this 65-ton specimen died, it was not yet fully grown. It is by far the best example we have of any of the most giant creatures to ever walk the planet."

The gold standard for calculating the mass of quadrupeds (four-legged animals) is based on measurements taken from the femur (thigh bone) and humerus (upper arm bone). Because the *Dreadnoughtus* type specimen includes both these bones, its weight can be estimated with confidence.

“With a body the size of a house, the weight of a herd of elephants, and a weaponized tail, Dreadnoughtus would have feared nothing,” Lacovara said. “That evokes to me a class of turn-of-the-last century battleships called the dreadnoughts, which were huge, thickly clad and virtually impervious.”

Read the complete story by Rachel Ewing of Drexel University here:

<http://drexel.edu/now/archive/2014/September/Dreadnoughtus-Dinosaur/>

Dots All Folks!

How did we ever miss this? Morse code, the 160-year-old communication system, now has a new character to denote the "@" symbol used in e-mail addresses.

Late last year, the International Telecommunications Union, which oversees the entire frequency spectrum, from amateur radio to satellites, voted to add the new character.

The new sign, which will be known as a "commat," consists of the signals for "A" (dot-dash) and "C" (dash-dot-dash-dot), with no space between them.

The new sign is the first in at least several decades, and possibly much longer. Among ITU officials and Morse code aficionados, no one could remember any other addition. "It's a pretty big deal," said Paul Rinaldo, chief technical officer for the American Radio Relay League, the national association for amateur radio operators. "There certainly hasn't been any change since before World War II."

Perhaps the most famous Morse communication is the international distress signal S-O-S. It consists of three dots, three dashes, and three more dots. Please, let's not monkey around with that one.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"I just wanted all the wars to be over so that we could spend the money on starships and Mars colonies."

— Grant Morrison, *Supergods: What Masked Vigilantes, Miraculous Mutants, and a Sun God from Smallville Can Teach Us About Being Human* (Spiegel & Grau, Reprint edition, 2011)

EXPEDITION FOCUS

Navy's SEALAB Was a Game Changer

By Ben Hellwarth

This summer marked the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Navy's first SEALAB, a prototype sea-floor base that was a historic game-changer for diving.

SEALAB I was a 30-ton steel vessel resembling a stout submarine that was placed off the coast of Bermuda. It enabled four volunteer Navy divers to spend 11 days nearly 200 feet

below the surface instead of the mere minutes that conventional diving methods would have allowed.

There had been just a few such forays into sea dwelling, including one staged by Jacques-Yves Cousteau a year earlier, but the SEALAB I venture in July 1964 was the first to demonstrate both a greater depth and duration than ever thought possible by using a revolutionary method known as “saturation diving,” so named because it involved allowing a diver’s body to fully absorb the gases breathed under the pressure of a given depth.

The concept of saturation diving had its skeptics because it ran contrary to conventional diving methods and the long-established limits that greatly restricted dive times in the name of safety – basically the deeper the dive, the shorter the possible stay, often just a matter of minutes, before a diver had to begin the gradual process of surfacing, known as decompression.

With the prospect of long-duration saturation dives came the need for a shelter like SEALAB I, which was about the size of a school bus. On the inside it was outfitted like a camper and – here’s the tricky part, very different from a submarine – the special mix of gases inside was pressurized to match the water pressure outside. That meant a hatch in the floor could remain open and the seawater stopped at the brim. The “aquanauts” could don dive gear and leave their habitat at any time of day or night, affording them access to the seabed of a kind previously available only in science fiction. SEALAB I, and later SEALAB II and III, opened new doors to ocean exploration and had a swift and lasting impact on military, civilian and commercial diving operations.

For more information: see *SEALAB: America’s Forgotten Quest to Live and Work on the Ocean Floor* (Simon & Schuster, 2012), by Ben Hellwarth.

<http://www.zocalopublicsquare.org/2014/07/21/is-the-final-frontier-under-the-sea/chronicles/who-we-were/>

Ben Hellwarth is a Los Angeles-based freelance journalist received got his start in journalism after graduating from the University of California, Berkeley. In the 1990s he won a number of notable awards as a staff writer for the Santa Barbara News-Press, then part of The New York Times Regional Newspaper Group. Visit him at www.benhellwarth.com

MEDIA MATTERS

Starshade Will Help Peer at Exoplanets

Sara Seager, an astrophysicist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, is on the hunt for aliens. She thinks we might be able to find them within the next 20 years, according to an Aug. 23-24 interview by Alexandra Wolfe in the *Wall Street Journal*.

Prof. Seager, 43, thinks there's something out there, "just by the sheer numbers of planets," she says. "Every astronomer knows that every star out there has at least one planet, and we have over 100 billion stars in the galaxy, and upward of hundreds of billions of galaxies in our universe."

The problem is that the bright light from the stars makes it nearly impossible to see the surrounding planets. Prof. Seager is working with NASA to develop a "Starshade" to help block the light of stars so telescopes can better see exoplanets (planets outside our own solar system), which have become her specialty.

Read the entire story here: <http://online.wsj.com/articles/an-astrophysicist-in-search-of-e-t-1408650066>

Going to the North Pole? Here's What to Pack

On May 6, Polar adventurer Eric Larsen successfully reached the geographic North Pole after a grueling 480-mile unsupported traverse across the Arctic ocean. Along the way he negotiated severe windstorms, unusually thin ice, arctic swimming and polar bears.

Larsen and his teammate Ryan Waters completed this unsupported, unaided Last North expedition in 53 days—setting a new American speed record (a Norwegian team did it in 49 days in 2006). They were the only team attempting a “land to Pole” crossing to reach the North Pole this season, and the only team since 2010 to accomplish the feat. They are only the second American team to ever complete the crossing, according to the story by Aaron H. Bible in *Elevation Outdoors* (July/August 2014).

Claiming six major polar expeditions notched in his proverbial belt, Larsen's overarching goal now is to connect people with the last frozen places on earth, while highlighting the environmental issues impacting them. With the release of the National Climate Assessment in May (<http://www.globalchange.gov/ncadac>), his experiences and observations from the front lines of global warming seem especially relevant, writes Bible.

Our favorite part of the story is Larsen's expedition gear list which covers everything on the trip, right down to his overboots, tent brush, Stanley insulated flask, pencil flares and Mossberg 500 pump action pistol grip shotgun.

Read the complete packing list here: <http://www.elevationoutdoors.com/polar-explorer-eric-larsen/>

EXPEDITION MARKETING

Adventurers Named to Granit Gear Team

Backpack manufacturer Granite Gear announced their official athlete roster of 2014-2015. Athletes include: polar explorers Lonnie Dupre, Eric Larsen, and John Huston, professional thru-hiker Justin “Trauma” Lichter, and blind hiker Trevor Thomas, each of

whom has shown impressive persistence in pushing the limits of their specific disciplines.

All these internationally recognized outdoor professionals will be involved in gear testing and research and development.

“Both our athletes and our customers’ safety directly depends on the quality and durability of our gear,” says Mike Meyer, senior director of Design & Development. “Our athletes really put our gear to the test in some of the most extreme environments on the planet. Their product feedback is a tremendous asset.”

This year, the athletes are participating in various events such as climbing Denali in January, hiking the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) through the winter months, an impromptu triathlon across the state of Colorado, and various week-long explorations and adventures around the U.S. They will also join Granite Gear during various trade shows and events throughout the year.

For more information: <https://www.facebook.com/granitegearhq>

EXPEDITION INK

Isabella – the Warrior Queen

By Kirstin Downey (Nan A. Talese, Doubleday, October 2014)

Reviewed by Robert F. Wells

Chances are, if you hear of Spain's Queen Isabella, you might imagine her and King Ferdinand waving goodbye to Christopher Columbus as he sails West in 1492. What you probably don't know is much about how this extraordinary leader became unquestionably the most powerful force in Europe during the latter part of the 15th Century. At the time, lineage dictated who ruled what. Isabella's was (and still is) suspect. But few can ignore her impact as the world shook off a medieval past, faced Ottoman intrusions laced with atrocities – and navigated through the inane intolerance of The Inquisition.

Europe grew up as a collection of city/fortress states. If you think of what it might be like for a gazelle in Africa to survive, knowing that lions, hyenas, crocodiles, etc. were just waiting for a chance to eat you... you have a pretty good idea what survival was like on the continent around 1450. Isabella? Nothing less than the right person at the right time.

She was a born leader, fair, honest, fearless, compassionate, intelligent and utterly devoted to Catholicism and its God. She unflinchingly shared or gave credit to her husband, Ferdinand, who often proved he seldom deserved it. Meanwhile, the French hated English hated The Turks hated the Portuguese hated the Italians... and the list went on. And to top it off, The Vatican offered as much piety as a petty party of pick-pockets.

Males (of course) thought no woman was "up to" leading nations. In fact, until Isabella's time, history was punctuated by perilously few leading ladies. Joan of Arc – one of

Isabella's heroes – was burned at the stake a few decades earlier, primarily because "as war and in prison, she had worn men's clothes". (Someone should whisper to Hillary Clinton to avoid pant suits!)

But listen, Isabella and Joan preceded Catherine the Great and Queen Victoria by centuries. Face it, men have a wonderful ability to keep women from doing what they are fully capable of doing. And the Muslims during the 1500's initiated matters to extremes, forcing women to conceal their bodies in "voluminous robes... leaving them to stumble along the streets, when they were allowed to venture out of their homes." Even tips of fingers were not to be seen... (What is it about men who create these strictures?)

Isabella, looking westward, was the one who saw promise in a New World. She took the risks against conventional thinking. She inspired explorers to treat natives with dignity and respect... which soon lapsed in disaster. The Europeans delivered smallpox to the islands. And in turn, the Caribes and others thanked them by passing on syphilis to Europe. What a trade!

As with many current historians, Downey plumbs newly accessible original sources to deliver fascinating insights to Isabella's reign. Credit to Isabella is due. And having the author bring forward a tapestry of tales about this laudable Queen and Spain's history during this period is equally overdue.

Robert Wells, a member of The Explorers Club since 1991, is a resident of South Londonderry, Vt., and a retired executive of the Young & Rubicam ad agency. Wells is the director of a steel band (see www.blueflamessteelband.com) and in 1989, at the age of 45, traveled south by road bike from Canada to Long Island Sound in a single 350-mile, 19-hr., 28-min. push.

ON THE HORIZON

Adventure Film Festival Returns to Boulder, Oct. 2 to 4, 2014

The 10th anniversary of Boulder's homegrown Adventure Film Festival will be held in the Colorado city on Oct. 2 to 4. Organizers promise, "gritty, profound, shocking, visceral, and inspiring independent films that manifest the spirit of adventure." The three-day weekend also includes the Adventure Street Fair featuring gourmet food trucks, climbing wall, interactive green screen, live music and more.

Adventure Film's line-up was handpicked by a dedicated, Boulder-based selection committee from over 200 entries submitted from 19 different countries. With the support of filmmakers, sponsors, non-profits, partners, volunteers – all adventurers Adventure Film Festival will feature the 2014 award winners on a world tour traveling from Boulder to Asheville to Mexico City to Santiago, Chile, with several major cities in between. Since its inception, Adventure Film has presented live shows to over 100,000 people worldwide.

For more information: www.adventurefilm.org

Explorers Club Lowell Thomas Awards Dinner, Oct. 11, 2014

The annual awards dinner named for the famed broadcaster is this year themed, “Imagination in Exploration,” Oct. 11 at Bowers Museum in Santa Ana, Calif. Awardees are distinguished entrepreneur, inventor and geophysicist **Sheldon Breiner**; shark researcher **G. Chris Fischer** of OCEARCH; ocean explorer **David. G. Gallo** of Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution; polar explorer and philanthropist **Frederick D.A. Paulsen**; and a strong supporter of education, **Edward P. Roski, Jr.** Tickets start at \$300.

For more information:

http://www.explorers.org/index.php/events/detail/the_2014_lowell_thomas_awards_dinner

Wings WorldQuest Women of Discovery Award, Oct. 16, 2014

With their cutting-edge science, spirit of adventure, and capacity to transport attendees to realms seldom seen, the Women of Discovery Awards, Oct. 16 in New York, have become a “must attend” event. Established in 2003 by Milbry Polk and Leila Hadley Luce, the WINGS WorldQuest Women of Discovery Awards recognize outstanding women who are making significant contributions to world knowledge through exploration. The awards come with a research grant, travel to New York, and opportunities to present field research to the press and the greater public. To date, 73 pioneering women have received the WINGS WorldQuest Women of Discovery Award.

Proceeds from this event will benefit the improvement and expansion of WINGS WorldQuest’s mission to inspire and support women explorers in the field.

Awards this year will honor: Arita Baaijens (Biologist, Netherlands), Daphne Soares (Neuroecologist, Brazil), Felicity Aston (Meteorologist, Great Britain), and Helen Thayer (Educator, New Zealand). Master of Ceremonies is the actor Uma Thurman. Tickets start at \$275.

For more information: 914 522 2434, info@wingsworldquest.org

EXPEDITION CLASSIFIEDS

Documentary Filmmaker Available – Daniel Byers, documentary filmmaker, specializes in capturing adventure expeditions around the world, from Afghanistan to Everest, including several with Explorers Club members and National Geographic TV. His films have been featured internationally at major conferences, and won over a dozen festival awards including Banff Mountain Film Festival. He’s always looking for a good adventure, so if you want the story of your expedition told, have a look at his work at skyshipfilms.com and give him a shout.

Get Sponsored! – Hundreds of explorers and adventurers raise money each month to

travel on world class expeditions to Mt. Everest, Nepal, Antarctica and elsewhere. Now the techniques they use to pay for their journeys are available to anyone who has a dream adventure project in mind, according to the new book from Skyhorse Publishing called: "*Get Sponsored: A Funding Guide for Explorers, Adventurers and Would Be World Travelers.*"

Author Jeff Blumenfeld, an adventure marketing specialist who has represented 3M, Coleman, Du Pont, Lands' End and Orvis, among others, shares techniques for securing sponsors for expeditions and adventures.

Buy it here: <http://www.amazon.com/Get-Sponsored-Explorers-Adventurers-Travelers-ebook/dp/B00H12FLH2>

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