

EXPEDITION NEWS

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EXPEDITION NEWS, now in its 19th 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 NOTES

Where No Google Has Gone Before

In an effort to map parts of the planet where vehicles can't go, Google is working with third-party organizations to gather imagery from hiking trails, beaches, canyons, and mountaintops.

The tech giant is petitioning explorers to take Google Maps through South American jungles, into Africa's canyonlands, among Asia's thousands of islands, across Hawaiian lava fields, and more.

The company announced that it's asking third-party organizations to strap on its Street View Trekker backpack and contribute imagery to help Google "build the very best map of the world."

To kick off the new pilot program, Google first partnered with the Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau. People at the bureau have already started hiking around the Big Island of Hawaii, collecting images on the island's most popular spots, such as Volcanoes National Park, Akaka Falls, Waipio Valley, and more. They plan to continue onto the other islands next.

The Trekker backpack is equipped with a 15-lens camera system that pops out of the top of the wearable pack and constantly records images. Each lens points in a different direction so that when combined all of the images can be stitched into 360-degree panoramic views.

Apply for the Trekker here:

<http://www.google.com/help/maps/streetview/learn/cars-trikes-and-more.html#trekker>

Nest of Rare Bird of Prey Found

For the first time in more than 50 years, researchers have found a nest of one of Central America's rarest birds of prey, raising hope that there is still time to prevent its extinction in that region.

For unknown reasons, populations of the once-common Red-throated Caracara (*Ibycter americanus*) have crashed in Mexico and Central America, according to the Honduran Conservation Coalition, which made the discovery.

The nest was found in Honduras, deep in the pine forests of the northeastern province of Olancho. In February and March, local conservationist Isidro Zuniga located and tracked three small groups of caracaras across some of the most remote terrain in Honduras, according to Mark Bonta, a geographer at Penn State-Altoona and leader of the research team. Every day for six weeks, Zuniga sat in a blind and recorded the daily activities of a caracara family that raised a single chick.

The project was funded in part by The Peregrine Fund.

"This is huge," said biologist David Anderson of The Peregrine Fund. "It's like thinking that bald eagles are extinct and then rediscovering them in the mountains in your state."

The Red-throated Caracara is still common in parts of South America, but until recently was believed to be gone from its former range north of Panama.

The Honduran Conservation Coalition and its partners hope that confirmation of the caracara's nest will lead to concrete actions on the part of the Honduran government to protect still-virgin areas of pine forest in a corner of Central America dominated by extremely biodiverse but highly threatened habitat.

Robert Hyman, coalition co-founder added that, "this is an exciting and important discovery that demonstrates what can be achieved with a dedicated team of individuals. We look forward to continuing our exploration of these critically threatened Mesoamerican ecosystems."

(For more information: www.honduranconservationcoalition.com)

Team Skis to Magnetic North Pole Just for the Adventure

No scientific research. No charity tie-in. No matter. Sometimes it's good to get out there just for the sheer adventure and personal challenge. Last April, a group of one South African and 11 British men, including travel writer and filmmaker Mike Laird, 44, flew to Resolute Bay, Canada, where they established a base for four days finalizing gear and supplies before walking and skiing more than 342-miles/550 kms over 27 days to the Magnetic North Pole (MNP). The men's ages ranged from 32 to 59.

Setting out across the ice was deceiving. The sun shone, the wind abated, the team unzipped their wind suits. The serenity was short lived and brutally broken with the return of expected plummeting temperatures, fierce headwinds and swirling clouds of snow. At one stage adverse weather kept the expedition team tent bound for three days. Nonetheless, they reached their goal on time to rendezvous with the pick-up plane.

One expedition member had to be extracted with severe frostbite to three fingers, luckily coinciding with the arrival of a resupply plane. Morale remained excellent throughout due to the dynamics of the group, according to Laird, who resides in Edinburgh, Scotland. He says the trip, organized by Polar Adventures, Surrey, U.K., was self-funded by each participant for approximately £24,500 per person (about \$38,154).

“The outstanding question no doubt faced by those who have reached the Magnetic North Pole before is, 'What's next?' Several of the team are, unsurprisingly, now planning to reach the South Pole,” Laird tells *EN*.

The MNP is currently shifting at a faster rate than at any time in human history – almost 40 miles a year – and some experts believe that it may be the beginning of a complete pole reversal.

The changes are beginning to cause major problems for aviation, navigation and migratory animals that use the Earth's magnetic field to orient themselves. Some airports have changed the names of their runways to better correspond to their current direction relative to magnetic north.

(For more information: www.jockandthebeanstalk.com)

African Trail Honors 150th Anniversary of the Bakers

African explorer and anthropologist Julian Monroe Fisher, 58, from Eureka, Calif., has announced plans to establish the Sir Samuel and Lady Florence Baker Historical Trail from Gondokoro, the location of the modern day capital of the new nation of South Sudan, to Baker's View, overlooking Lake Albert in western Uganda. Fisher traveled to Uganda recently to begin placing historical markers at locations where Sir Samuel and Lady Florence Baker camped while on expedition in the Central African region during their two expeditions in the 1860's and 1870's.

The Uganda portion of the Sir Samuel and Lady Florence Baker Historical Trail will be launched in January 2014 to coincide with the 150th anniversary of Baker's expedition.

The trail was placed in conjunction with the Uganda Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife & Antiquities, The Uganda Wildlife Authority, the Ministry of Wildlife, Conservation & Tourism for South Sudan, the descendants of the Victorian explorer Sir Samuel White Baker, RailRiders Adventure Clothing, and Costa Del Mar Sunglasses.

Fisher and his team, including David Baker, the great-great-grandson of Sir Samuel Baker, were credited with correcting maps of Uganda by establishing the true location of Baker's View, the location where Sir Samuel Baker became the first European to see Lake Albert and to subsequently name the lake for Prince Albert.

The concept for the trail evolved out of Fisher's research of Sir Samuel Baker in preparation for his upcoming RailRider's 2012-16 Great African Expedition, an ethnographical study of the descriptions of African kingdoms in the diaries, letters and books of the Victorian age explorers, as compared to 21st century realities.

Says Fisher, "The Bakers are respected in South Sudan and Uganda for their expeditions and their effort to abolish the slave trade. Today South Sudan and parts of northern Uganda are emerging from years of conflict."

(For more information: contact@julianmonroefisher.com, www.thebakertrail.org)

Remembering Ned Gillette 15 Years Later

News that nine mountain climbers, including one U.S. citizen, and their local guide were killed by the Taliban in the pre-dawn hours of June 23 at the Nanga Parbat base camp in northern Pakistan, recalls the death of another American adventurer 15 years ago next month.

The recent attack brings back the haunting memory of the death of American adventurer, mountain climber, sailor, skier, photographer, journalist and author, Ned Gillette, of Sun Valley, Idaho, who was killed in Pakistan in 1998. Edward "Ned" Gillette, then 53, was shot to death in his tent in an apparent botched robbery attempt. His wife, Susie Patterson, then 42, was injured in the attack and recovered. Two suspects were taken into custody and charged with murder and assault.

Gillette, considered by *Outside Magazine*, "one of the most successful adventurers of his era," was a master at providing value to his sponsors. In a whirlwind of manufacturer visits at the Outdoor Retailer trade show in the late 80's to mid-90's, he would explain his next project and recap the one just past. With his trademark Cheshire cat grin and deep raccoon tan, he would present sponsors with lengthy trip reports and conduct slide shows for one project or another, whether it was "Row to Antarctica," the crossing of the Drake Passage from South America to Antarctica in a specially-made 28-ft. rowboat called the "Sea Tomato" (1988); or trekking Marco Polo's 6,000-mi. Silk Road route from China to the Mediterranean (1994).

We still miss the rascal.

John Glenn Named Honorary Chairman of The Explorers Club

Senator John H. Glenn, a Mercury astronaut and the first American to orbit the earth, has been named as the new Honorary Chairman of The Explorers Club, only the third in the Club's 109-year-old history.

Glenn succeeds James Fowler as Honorary Chairman. Fowler, a professional zoologist and former host of the Emmy Award-winning *Mutual of Omaha Wild Kingdom*, was best known for bringing exotic animals to *The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson*. (For more information: www.explorers.org).

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"You're off to great places. Today is your day. Your mountain is waiting, so get on your way."

– Theodor Seuss Geisel, a.k.a. Dr. Seuss, *Oh the Places You'll Go*

EXPEDITION FOCUS

Why is Norway Home to the World's Greatest Explorers?

– A special report from *Expedition News*

One Norwegian explorer discovered the New World 500 years before Columbus. Another was first to cross Greenland by land. In 1911, a Norwegian was first to the South Pole, and in 2006, a fellow countryman nailed history's longest solo and unresupplied ski journey, 3,000 miles across the South Pole region.

Who exactly are these people? When an opportunity came to visit Oslo and Bergen we jumped at the chance to determine why Norway is home to the world's greatest explorers.

Erling Kagge, arguably Norway's best-known living polar explorer, told us over a lunch of fish soup and bread at his home in a suburb of Oslo, "In a country of five million, polar explorers here are as famous as football players in the states. Exploration has been a part of our culture for 1,000 years. Being an explorer in Norway is a natural state of being."

He should know. Kagge and fellow countryman Borge Ousland were first to ski to the North Pole unassisted (1990); Kagge was first to ski to the South Pole solo and unsupported (1992-93); and by 1994 had become the first to reach to reach the North Pole, South Pole and the summit of Everest.

"In Sweden or Denmark, you'll hardly find an explorer," he generalizes. "This is a Norwegian thing."

We had to see for ourselves, starting with three museums dedicated to seagoing exploration. It seems Norwegians haven't met an old ship they didn't want to enclose in a museum of one sort or another. With a \$45 daily Oslo Pass that granted us free admission to some 40 museums, we began our quest with a visit to the aptly-named Viking Ship

Museum housing three ships discovered in large burial mounds: the Oseberg Ship (820 A.D.), the Gokstad (890 A.D.) and the Tune (built around 900 A.D.). Keeping those craft company were human skeletons, magnificent sleds, wagons and animal head posts, all attesting to the wanderlust the Vikings who from about 800 to 1050 A.D. were the lords of the sea, sailing west to the British Isles, then over the North Atlantic to Iceland, Greenland and Newfoundland.

Leaping forward 1,000 years, we next toured the Fram Museum which houses the *Fram*, the world's most famous polar ship. The 128-ft. wooden vessel was used on three important Norwegian expeditions: it carried Fridtjof Nansen on a drift over the Arctic Ocean in 1893-96; transported Otto Sverdrup to the arctic archipelago west of Greenland – now the Nunavut region of Canada – 1898-1902; and sailed Roald Amundsen to Antarctica for his South Pole expedition of 1910-12.

Norwegians consider Nansen (1861-1930) to be the most important man in the country's history. He was a doctor of science, humanitarian, diplomat, winner of the 1922 Nobel Peace Prize, and most impressive to us, the first to cross Greenland (1888). He returned to Oslo (then called Christiania) a hero on May 30, 1889, when one-third the population of the city turned out to greet the team.

In his book, *The First Crossing of Greenland* (1919), he writes, "It was hard to cross Greenland, but in full seriousness I must say that it is even worse to return."

Nansen is also known for something else. In a display of an endearing quirky Norwegian sense of humor, our hosts couldn't wait to tell us about Nansen's habit of mailing naked photos of himself at the age of 67 to his Norwegian-American girlfriend. (What?)

"Sure, just Google it," we were told.

We did and it's not pretty – there's Nansen pulling an Anthony Weiner. It's definitely cringeworthy. Google it yourself if you don't believe us.

Amundsen doesn't get much slack either. There on a wall in the Fram Museum opposite full panel displays honoring the explorer, was a newspaper cartoon from the grossly politically incorrect Danish cartoonists Mikael Wulff and Anders Morgenthaler. Below the pen name WuMo, the two joke that Amundsen completely forgot to tell the world about his sexual encounters with penguins. Ouch.

Next up was the Kon-Tiki Museum, located adjacent to the *Fram*. Thor Heyerdahl (1914-2002) gained worldwide fame when he crossed the Pacific Ocean on a balsa raft, proving that it would have been possible for South American Indians to have reached Polynesia in pre-Columbian times.

In 1947, the 46-ft. raft traveled from Lima's port of call, Callao, to Rarua in French Polynesia, 4,340 miles in 101 days.

In addition to the original raft, the museum is a treasure trove of memorabilia from the voyage – Heyerdahl's 1951 Oscar; the U.S. military rations they ate in addition to the flying fish that landed on deck; and a chew stick from the team's pet parrot, Lorita, which they did not eat – it flew away in a storm.

The new *Kon-Tiki* movie, released in 2012, has been seen by one out of every five Norwegians, and has brought new interest to the museum, founded in 1950. Visitation increased 50 percent last year, 20 percent so far in 2013.

At the Holmenkollen Ski Museum, just outside of Oslo, we saw skis dating to 600 A.D., and those belonging to British Captain Robert F. Scott (1868-1912) within a display honoring Amundsen's historic discovery of the South Pole in December 1911.

Scott's skis within a display honoring Amundsen? Scott, who arrived at the pole a month later and perished with his team on the return, would most certainly roll over in his grave if he knew. Dozens of tourists from Japan, Italy, Poland just walked by as we stayed to linger on the exhibit, which includes a stuffed sled dog – Obersten (“The Colonel”) – who went to the pole with the famed Norwegian.

Next stop was Bergen, on the west coast, a seven-hour train journey from Oslo. It was here, in damp, rainy skies that we began to understand the Norwegian love of the outdoors. Despite the weather, locals everywhere are jogging, hiking, Nordic Walking, screaming downhill on mountain bikes, cross-country roller skiing, and racing down switchback mountain roads on skateboards (wearing spiked metal gloves).

Synnove Marie Kvam, president of the Norway chapter of The Explorers Club, tells me, “Norwegians have a close relationship with nature. We need to be respectful because there's so much harsh weather.”

Indeed. Norwegians seem specially adapted to the cold and wet. Gore-Tex waterproof/breathable is the outerwear of choice. Children play in schoolyards in brightly colored slickers, oblivious to the rain. Standing there, soaked down to our Jockeys, the ticket-taker for the *M/S White Lady* fjord boat says, “This is actually quite good weather in Bergen.” (Assuming, of course, you descended from the Vikings).

Bergen, the city of seven mountains has not one, but two lifts to nearby mountaintops – the Ulriken643 cable car and the Floibanen Funicular, both popular with tourists and locals alike.

Historian Sturla Ellingvag, a friend of Erling Kagge's, provided some insight on the Norwegian outdoor ethic. “If you're a parent and your five-year-old hasn't been camping in the mountains with you, it's called bad parenting.”

But there's more to the Norwegians' spirit of exploration. Listen to Eva Britt Kornfeldt of the Oslo Visitors and Convention Bureau: “Swedes, they do as they are told.

Norwegians? We are a stubborn, impulsive, inventive and independent people. But above all, we're curious."

Bergen city guide Jim Paton explains that according to the Viking Law of Inheritance, the farms were inherited by the eldest sons. The younger children had to make their fortune elsewhere as they were left to their own devices.

"Exploration is in the Norwegian genes. It's part of their Viking heritage, living in a severe climate and being confronted by the elements."

There's a park near Bergen's Hakon's Hall, in the shadow of the Rosenkrantz Tower. Below a statue of King Haakon VII is a row of cannons protecting the harbor. A sign warns of a "high rampart."

Rampart?

It's not the sort of word you'd see in the U.S. warning of a steep 40-foot drop just beyond. Were this in the litigious states, there would be a high fence protecting visitors from themselves. A sign reading "Danger." Maybe a skull and crossbones.

But this is Norway, a still sparsely settled, self-reliant country lying 40 percent above the Arctic Circle – home to a people with literally centuries of exploration experience in their genes.

MEDIA MATTERS

Born to Win Emmy's

The National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences awarded *Born to Explore with Richard Wiese* an Emmy for Outstanding Achievement in Single Camera Photography at the 40th Annual Daytime Entertainment Emmy Awards in Los Angeles last month. *Born to Explore* was also nominated for Outstanding Travel Program.

Each week the show, seen on ABC stations, embarks on adventures around the world, inspiring stories about nature, people, places and the planet.

"This award is not only a reflection on the outstanding cinematography of John Barnhardt and Greg Harriott, but the entire *Born to Explore* team as well. We are very proud that in only our second season, we have been nominated for three Emmys and have won one," says show host and executive producer Richard Wiese, former president of The Explorers Club.

The series has officially been renewed through the 2016 season.

EXPEDITION MARKETING

Whole Foods CEO John Mackey Backing Vegan Hiker

Around here, Whole Foods is nicknamed “Whole Paycheck” because of its higher prices. Thus it’s great to know some of that money is being returned to worthy causes. The latest to come our way involves Josh Garrett who is carrying more than a backpack as he hits the grueling Pacific Crest Trail, a 2,655-mile trek from Mexico to Canada – he’s carrying a message about the plight of animals in American factory farms.

Garrett, 30, a Santa Monica College track coach and exercise physiology instructor, set off last month on the hike, in which he intends to raise awareness and funds for Mercy For Animals – a national charity working to prevent cruelty to farmed animals and promote compassionate food choices and policies.

In 2009, Garrett hiked the trail and called that trek the greatest experience of his life. Now, a vegan for 18 months who feels stronger than ever, he wants to promote the benefits of a plant-based diet.

Whole Foods CEO John Mackey thinks Garrett can do more than that – Mackey thinks Garrett can break the current 64-day Pacific Crest Trail speed record (set by Scott Williamson in 2011), and is sponsoring Garrett by providing hiking gear, support, food and water. Mackey, who shares a passion for plant-based eating, hiked with Garrett on a portion of the Continental Divide Trail last summer.

Garrett hikes fast. In 2009, he thru-hiked the Pacific Crest Trail in 88 days, a comfortable pace for him, and about half the time taken by most hikers. To break the record he’ll have to average 42 miles per day across terrain such as the blazing Mojave Desert and the steep Sierra Nevada Mountain Range, while carrying a 30-pound pack.

Garrett is confident that fueled by plants and compassion, he can trounce his previous speed, barring fires, snowstorms, or snake bites.

(For more information: Garrett will use Twitter @VeganHiker to update followers on his progress. Also see www.MercyForAnimals.org/VeganHiker).

BUZZ WORDS

Arctic Bump

“Pilots at Alaska Airlines liked to tease out-of-state tourists by announcing the imminent crossing of the Arctic Circle. Just as the plane passed over the line, pilots goosed the controls to make the plane wobble, producing the 'Arctic bump.' The airline banned the practice after a passenger complained, but many pilots smile coyly when asked if they still do the bump.”

– Susan Carey, *The Wall Street Journal*, April 13, 2007.

(This was a favorite trick used by the late Terry Smith, then 62, pilot of the crashed de Havilland Otter floatplane that took the life of longtime Alaska Senator Ted Stevens, 86, in 2010).

EXPEDITION CLASSIFIEDS

Project Himalaya – Real treks and expeditions in Nepal and Northern India. We still go exploring, are opening up the Nepal Great Himalaya Trail and alternative trekking peaks in Ladakh, as well as offering unique range of treks. We are a small operation and really care about every detail, and offer best in class treks – <http://project-himalaya.com>

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