

EXPEDITION NEWS



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EXPEDITION NEWS, now in its 15th 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.

SEARCHING FOR THE TACHIKAZE

Lewis “Chip” Lambert, 64, a clinical microbiologist and ski and dive instructor from Fremont, Calif., is launching an expedition in August to find the Japanese destroyer *Tachikaze* sunk off Kuop Atoll, south of Truk in Micronesia. His team will then proceed to the Mortlock Islands where the Japanese airbase was destroyed on Satawan Atoll – part of the Mortlock Islands in the Caroline Islands, administratively part of Chuuk State in the Federated States of Micronesia.

The region has not been extensively dove or documented. On Feb. 4, 1944, returning from Rabaul via Satawan, the *Tachikaze* ran aground and remained there despite intensive efforts to refloat her. Two weeks later it was sunk by aircraft and a torpedo during Operation Hailstone. The ship’s resting place remains to this day undiscovered.

The team will also study an unusual disease, recently described in medical literature, that has been attributed to the fresh water accumulation in Satawan’s WWII bomb and shell craters. *M. marinum* – Fish Tank or Aquarium disease – causes a tuberculosis-like sickness in frogs, fish and other cold-blooded animals.

Most team members have been identified and a waiting list has been started for other possible candidates, especially those who are expert divers and familiar with mycobacterial diseases. The Mortlocks are about as remote a place as left to explore, although Peace Corps volunteers have been stationed there since the 1970s, Lambert says. (For more information: chippamlam@aol.com, clambert@RAvelar.com) ▲

EXPEDITION UPDATE

Dupre Team Reaches North Pole

Lonnie Dupre of Grand Marais, Minn., is no stranger to the rigors of travel in the Arctic, but after 53 days on the ice, he was relieved and happy to reach the North Pole at 9:22 a.m. on Apr. 25. (See *EN*, March 2009). As leader of the PolarExplorers Peary-Henson 100th Anniversary Commemorative Expedition, he had another burden to carry in addition to the 175 pounds of food and supplies on the sled he was dragging behind him. “I didn’t want to let the memory of Robert Peary down,” he says. “I believe Peary did make the Pole in 1909, and I didn’t want to do anything less on this special expedition to honor their achievement.”

While Dupre and team are happy to see the North Pole, some of what they saw on the way was deeply disturbing. Lonnie, who was the first man to reach the North Pole in summer on his “One World” expedition in 2006, said, “I’ve never seen such large areas of recently open water. Not even in summer. The ice on these leads was very thin. Any thinner and in many places, we would not have been able to cross.” Also, multi-year ice floes are almost non-existent. “There’s only young ice, one to two years of age. That’s a clear result of climate change.”

At the North Pole, Dupre, Maxime Chaya of Lebanon, and Stuart Smith unfurled the official flag of Philadelphia’s Academy of Natural Sciences which also supported one of Peary’s first expeditions in the late 1800s. Just before reaching the North Pole, they lashed together their sleds to use as catamarans to get across a final broad area of open frigid water. It was a race against both time and “The Polar Treadmill” – southward-heading ice drift that snatches away

miles as explorers approach the North Pole. In the final days, for every mile they skied, they lost about a third of a mile to the “treadmill” pushing them back. By the time they arrived, the explorers had skied over 650 miles, averaging 12 to 14 miles per day.

The expedition was provided with insulated clothing, sleeping bags, vests, insulated parka and pants and other gear by Primaloft. Midwest Mountaineering supplied additional expedition gear and equipment.

First Unsupported American Ski Trek to North Pole

John Huston of Chicago, and Tyler Fish, 34, of Ely, Minn., reached the North Pole on Apr. 25, becoming the first Americans to make an unsupported ski trek to the North Pole. The Victorinox North Pole 09 Expedition was a brutal 54-day race (approximately 468 miles) against time to reach the North Pole before the ice became too dangerous and they missed their deadline for a planned helicopter pick-up. At nearly a dozen points they encountered open leads of water where the ice sheet had fractured and pulled apart; to traverse these leads Huston and Fish donned dry suits and swam across, pulling all of their gear along. They had departed from Ward Hunt Island, the northern tip of Canada’s Ellesmere Island, on Mar. 2. (See *EN*, October 2008).

The hardest portion of the trek was the last four days as the partners battled fierce winds, low visibility and a sea-ice drift that moved them farther from the pole when they stopped to eat and sleep. Temperatures ranged from minus 30 to minus 50.

Quote of the Month

“The mountain is not just a god for us but the snow and ice is the source for water we drink. Leaving behind human waste is not just insulting to the mountain god but also contaminates the source of water.”

– Appa Sherpa, 48, of Draper, Utah, speaking to the *Associated Press* prior to his departure to summit Everest this month for the 19th time, a record. Appa and his fellow climbers plan to carry down loads of trash that has accumulated on the slopes and educate other climbers about the negative impact that human waste has on the mountain.

“In the last three days, we covered 55 miles and slept three hours,” a weary-sounding Huston, 32, tells the *Chicago Sun-Times* (Apr. 26). “Our bodies and minds were so focused on the task at hand that nothing else mattered.”

The expedition was on a mission to raise \$100,000 for CaringBridge, a Minnesota-based nonprofit organization that creates supportive online communities for people with serious medical conditions. The team received no outside support. They carried and pulled, without dogs, all of the gear, food and navigational equipment they needed for the two-month journey. Major sponsors were Bergans of Norway, Delorme, and Victorinox. (For more information: www.forwardexpeditions.com).

EXPEDITION NOTES

Women of Discovery Winners – WINGS
WorldQuest (Wings) announced the 7th annual Women of Discovery Awards, which acknowledge excellence in a number of fields related to international exploration. The daring adventures and pioneering discoveries of award recipients have led to global and scientific advancement. Winners this year are:

- **WWQ Humanity Award: Aparajita Datta (India)**

Conservation Expert/Wildlife Biologist and Ecologist – engaged in long-term protection of threatened wildlife with local communities in northeast India.

- **WWQ Field Research Award: Leela Hazzah (Egypt)**

Lion Expert/Wildlife Biologist and Carnivore Conservationist working on critical lion conservation efforts in Kenya. Hazzah founded and directs the community conservation initiative, Lion Guardians, which trains local Maasai warriors to monitor lions and mitigate human-wildlife conflict within their communities.

- **WWQ Air & Space Award: Rosaly Lopes (Brazil)**

Volcano Expert/Planetary Geologist Volcanologist has led NASA exploration of Jupiter’s volcanic moon, Io, where she discovered 79 active volcanoes. Lopes is a specialist on the current Cassini mission to map Saturn and its moons.

- **WWQ Earth Award: Bolortsetseg Minjin (Mongolia)**

Dinosaur Expert/Paleontologist – one of a handful of young Mongolian paleontologists, she has been credited with spectacular finds, including locating 67 dinosaur fossils in the Gobi Desert in the span of one week.

• **WWQ Sea Award: Maya Tolstoy (United States)**

Deep Sea Expert/Acoustical Geophysicist – a marine geophysicist at Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, she researches mid-ocean ridge earthquakes and their impacts on life forms. (For more information: www.wingsworldquest.org)

Can You Hear Me Now? – It was only a matter of time. Word comes that a Nepali telecom firm plans to expand its mobile phone services to the top of Mount Everest.

As Astro would say, “Rut-row.”

Hundreds of climbers, who travel to Everest every year depend on expensive satellite phones to speak with their families as the remote Himalayan region does not have communication facilities.

“We are going to set up mobile towers in Thakdin, Manjo, Pheriche and Gorak Shep, which will bring the summit of Mount Everest within the network coverage,” Anoop Ranjan Bhattarai, director of the satellite service wing of Nepal Telecom, said.

Gorak Shep, in the Solukhumbu region, is located near the base camp of Mount Everest. “A mobile tower at Gorak Shep will provide connectivity to climbers at the top,” Bhattarai said, adding the firm hoped to finish the work by mid-June.

The U.K.’s Dialaphone blog sniffs, “It’s intended to help tourists, but four bars of coverage will only make things worse, convincing tourists that the highest mountain in the world is any goddamn place for tourists. We’re assuming that on receiving the news, the Mountain Rescue teams rolled their eyes, cancelled all leave, and agreed that the first time someone calls for rescue just because they’re tired they’ll be dropped down a crevasse.”

Easter Island Cave Project Seeks Volunteers – The Cultural and Natural History of Rapa Nui Caves Project seeks volunteers from June 24 through July 19. The caves are located on Easter Island, called Rapanui by the natives, at the southeastern end of the Polynesian Triangle, with Hawaii at the top and New Zealand at the southwest. Team members must be physically fit, not claustrophobic, and own both their own caving equipment and vertical gear. Individuals with experience in caving, rock climbing and/or mountaineering are preferred. They also must be First Aid/CPR certified and must have passed a physical within the last year. Participants are responsible for airfare from the U.S. to Easter Island, hotel accommodations, and other costs. (For more information: [Jut Wynne, jut.wynne@nau.edu](mailto:JutWynne@nau.edu)). ▲

 **MEDIA MATTERS**

Explorers Revolt at Royal Geographical Society – Over the last decade larger expeditions have fallen out of favor at the Royal Geographical Society in London, to be superseded by smaller, more academically focused trips. Now 78 of the Society’s 10,000 Fellows have called a special general meeting to redress the balance, as they see it. They want a return to longer expeditions, with more people, that will put the RGS back on the map, according to a story by Max Davidson and Stephen Adams in the U.K.’s *Telegraph* (Apr. 24).

Pen Hadow, the polar explorer, and Colonel John Blashford-Snell, who led an expedition down the Blue Nile in 1968, are among those who have put their names to the motion. Behind the argument lies a fight for the soul of the RGS.

Colonel Blashford-Snell said, “The RGS magazine has become steadily more dry and academic. What happened to those great expeditions that made your hackles stand up when you read about them? It should be possible for geographers to be adventurers as well as scientists.”

He believes the current name for a room in the South Kensington headquarters, which used to be called the Expeditionary Advisory Centre, summed up the change in culture.

“It’s now called Geography Outdoors. Enough said.” He added, “The RGS is an august institution, and its name still counts for something. It should be seen supporting projects that will attract young, outgoing people.”

However, his attitudes are not shared by the Society’s elected council, whose members believe there is little point in mounting expensive trips to places that have already been thoroughly explored.

As the world has shrunk, so geography as a subject has changed from mapping to obtaining a detailed scientific understanding of an area. Consequently it has fractured into many specializations, particularly at the postgraduate level, according to the *Telegraph* story.

Andrew Goudie, an RGS Fellow and Emeritus Professor of Geography at Oxford University counters, “There is no virtue in sending out lots and lots of people and making a big show of it. It is more effective to work with local field stations.”

Plush Peary, The Polar Pitchman, Meets Al Roker – The late Robert E. Peary received his 15 minutes of posthumous fame, at least in effigy, on April 6, 2009, the centennial

of his historic North Pole expedition. Several alumni of Bowdoin College in Maine, the explorer's alma mater (Class of 1877), made a brief appearance on NBC's *Today Show*, armed with plush Peary dolls. Wearing matching Bowdoin shirts, the group interacted with weatherman Al Roker in New York City's Rockefeller Plaza outside the popular morning show's studios. Roker hammed it up with one of the Peary dolls, repeatedly holding it up to the camera for a close-up.

The soft sculpture doll made exclusively for the museum is dressed in traditional Inuit clothing and carries a flag created for Peary by his wife, Josephine, which he carried on all his expeditions. Each time he reached his farthest north point, he cut a piece from the flag and put it in a cache. When he reached the North Pole he cut a long strip from the flag and left it at the northernmost point on the earth. The Plush Peary is available in the Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum gift shop and sells for \$16. Proceeds support outreach initiatives. (See an image of Plush Peary at www.expedition-news.blogspot.com)

Give Gay Penguins a Break – Antarctica's penguins aren't the only ones receiving the attention of media. For the third year in a row, a picture book about two male penguins who care for an orphaned egg has topped the American Library Association's Top 10 list of the most frequently challenged books.

Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell's award-winning *And Tango Makes Three* (S & S, 2005), based on a true story about penguins living in New York City's Central Park Zoo, has stirred controversy since its release. But the authors say they weren't surprised by the reaction.

Parnell says that while attending a book signing for *Tango* at the Book Expo a few years ago, many librarians waiting in line introduced themselves with, "I love your book, but I could never buy it for our library." The reason is because there's a "great deal of anxiety, especially among conservative parents when it comes to talking to children about gay families," Richardson told Debra Lau Whelan of *School Library Journal* (April 22). "The notion that telling a child about gay people will increase his chances of becoming gay is scientifically untenable, but it sure endures." ▲

EXPEDITION MARKETING

Anchor's Away – Skram Media, publisher of *Climbing Magazine*, announced the "Anchor Replacement Initiative (ARI) Road Trip," during which magazine staff will be hitting the road for a two-month cross-country tour to spread the word about anchor replacement. Led by Kevin Riley, ARI program manager, the crew will begin

a 3,000-mile road trip starting in New York and ending at *Climbing Magazine's* offices in Boulder, Colo., on May 16.

The road trip will offer informational sessions and clinics on the ARI, giving local climbers an opportunity to learn more about the program and how to apply to be ARI equippers themselves, to help keep their local crags safe and up to date.

Said Matt Samet, editor-in-chief at *Climbing Magazine*, "Thanks to the ARI, climbers feel safe again on classics that had become abandoned." Since the Anchor Replacement Initiative's (ARI) establishment six years ago, *Climbing Magazine*, The North Face, Petzl and countless volunteers across the country have visited 30 different destinations, maintaining over 1,500 anchors. In 2009, the ARI will increase the distribution of hardware by 15 percent over last year. (For more information: <http://climbing.com/community/ari/>).

Smarter Than Your Average Beer – Savvy marketers at the Icelandic brewery Ölgærdin Egill Skallagrímsson have reintroduced a brew called Polar Beer which was initially produced for British troops based in the country. "When British troops were sent to Iceland in WW II, they expected hardship, but they did not anticipate a lack of beer. And although the Arctic island's inhabitants were not allowed to brew, sell or drink beer for another 59 years, special provisions were made to make sure the soldiers would get their pint as usual," said an Ölgærdin press release.

A recent teaser campaign involved placing claw marks throughout Reykjavik, the capital city of this Ohio-sized island nation in the North Atlantic. We think the name is smart; after all, what else would you drink up near the Arctic Circle, perhaps with broiled Icelandic sheep's head (called svid), or a nice plate of nasty, foul-tasting hakaarl – fermented shark meat? We came across a few six-packs recently at the Keflavik Airport south of town, but preferred instead to stock up on skyr, an addictive yogurt-like dessert that the locals seemingly mainline. You can see a six-pack of Polar Beer at www.expeditionnews.blogspot.com. ▲

EXPEDITION INK

Thousands of Dollars in Expedition Grants Available: A Sneak Peak at *You Want to Go Where?* (Skyhorse Publishing, 2009)

Many of the adventure and expedition stories familiar to the readers of *Expedition News* will be retold in a new book from Skyhorse Publishing called *You Want to Go Where?* Written by *EN* editor Jeff Blumenfeld, it explains how with the right idea and proper advance preparation, it is possible to raise thousands of dollars in cash and

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outdoor gear and apparel for worthy adventures or expeditions. The book will be released June 16 and is currently available on Amazon.com for pre-order. Here's a sneak peak exclusive to readers of *EN*.

There's gold in them thar hills – discover the support just waiting for you. Here's a look at expedition grants available to worthy adventurers and explorers. If you're in need of money – and frankly, who isn't? – here are a few of the grant programs covered in the book.

American Alpine Club

The Club's grants program awards over \$50,000 annually to cutting-edge climbing expeditions, research projects, humanitarian efforts, and conservation programs. They include:

- **AAC Research Grants** – AAC Research Grants typically range from \$500 to \$2,000 and are given annually as a means for researchers to obtain critical seed funding to help secure sustainable funding opportunities. In 2008, 12 individuals were selected and a total of nearly \$10,000 was awarded through various funds. Proposals varied from study of the effects of atmospheric nitrogen deposition on alpine lakes to arterial oxygen saturation as a predictor of next-day acute mountain sickness. (www.americanalpineclub.org)
- **Mountain Fellowship Grants**—Since 1966, The American Alpine Club has encouraged young American climbers age 25 and younger to seek remote climbs more difficult than they might ordinarily be able to attempt. Any unexplored mountain ranges, unclimbed peaks, and difficult new routes are looked upon with favor, as is any project in keeping with the charter and purpose of the Club. In 2008, five climbers with an average age of 22 received a total of \$3,900 in funding for trips around the world. (www.americanalpineclub.org)

Banff Centre for Mountain Culture Grant

The Banff Mountain Grants Program supports projects that communicate the stories of mountain landscapes as places of ecological, inspirational, and cultural value, and that celebrate the spirit of adventure. Grant officials say the communications portion has to be central to the project – not “well maybe when I get home I'll go on the road with some slides.” Individuals or organizations may apply for grants of up to \$5,000 (Canadian) to fund projects that creatively interpret the environment, natural history, human heritage, arts, philosophy, lifestyle, and adventure, in and of the mountains. Projects must include a communications component (such as film, literature, photography) that brings the project before a public audience. (www.banffcentre.ca)

Charles A. and Anne Morrow Lindbergh Foundation

Each year, The Charles A. and Anne Morrow Lindbergh Foundation provides grants of up to \$10,580 (a symbolic amount representing the cost of the *Spirit of St. Louis*) to men and women whose individual initiative and work in a wide spectrum of disciplines furthers the Lindberghs' vision of a balance between the advance of technology and the preservation of the natural/human environment. (www.lindberghfoundation.org)

Earth and Space Foundation Award

In Mexico, a caving expedition studies human performance in extreme environments to improve astronaut selection. In the Sudan an expedition uses remote sensing from satellites to study savannah flood plains to improve the productivity of rice crops. In Antarctica researchers study microorganisms in ice and snow to try to understand possible habitats for life in cold extraterrestrial environments. Since 1994, these and other projects have been honored by Earth and Space Awards that have helped deepen the mutually beneficial connections between environmentalism and the exploration of space. The Foundation offers five Earth and Space Awards each year to expeditions that further the vision of “the earth as an oasis cared for by a space-faring civilization.” Awards are approximately \$500 each. (www.earthandspace.org)

Hans Saari Memorial Fund Exploration Grant (HSMF)

The HSMF Exploration Grant offers ski mountaineers an opportunity to receive grants for projects that expand the realm of ski mountaineering through technically challenging routes or uniquely inspirational exploration. Recipients are individuals whose goals reflect the belief that mountains are an integral part of the lives of the people who live amongst them and that physical achievement is only one component of the ski mountaineering experience.

In 2008, four grants totaling \$15,000 were awarded for expeditions to the Kamchatka Peninsula, Alaska's Tordrillo Mountains, and the Caucasus Range straddling the Republic of Georgia and Russia. The award was established in 2001, following the death of Hans Saari, a renowned writer and adventure columnist who was highly regarded for his ski expeditions, many of which yielded first descents of some of the world's most challenging peaks. (www.hansfund.org)

Journey of a Lifetime Award

A £4,000 travel budget is available for an original and challenging journey to result in a documentary for BBC Radio 4. The aim of the award is to promote global understanding. The journey planned must be interesting and original enough to form the content of a BBC radio documentary. (www.rgs.org/grants)

Land Rover “Go Beyond” Bursary

Run by the Royal Geographical Society on behalf of Land Rover, this award provides £10,000 funding and the use of a 110 Defender vehicle to help the successful participants “go beyond” when exploring their understanding of a particular geographical concept. The loan of a vehicle must be essential to the journey and you’ll need a U.K. driver’s license. (www.rgs.org/grants)

Mugs Stump Award

Mugs Stump was one of North America’s most prolific and imaginative climbers until his death in a crevasse fall in Alaska in May 1992. The Mugs Stump Award has helped committed climbers fulfill their dreams of fast, lightweight ascents in the world’s high places since 1993. Proposed climbs should present an outstanding challenge – a first ascent, significant repeat, or first alpine-style ascent – with special emphasis placed on climbers leaving no trace of their passage. Teams and individuals from North America are eligible. You don’t have to be famous, and both men and women are encouraged to apply. If you share Mugs’ vision of climbing as a celebration of boldness, purity, and simplicity, and have the determination to bring your dream to life, this award can help make it happen. (www.mugsstumpaward.com)

Rolex Awards for Enterprise

The Rolex Awards for Enterprise provide visionary men and women with the financial support and recognition needed to carry out innovative projects. Awards are presented every two years and focus on improving the planet and the human condition. Categories include Exploration and Discovery, and the Environment. In 2010, five young Laureates (aged 18 to 30) will be selected; in 2012, five Laureates and five Associate Laureates will be chosen from among applicants of any age, nationality, or background. Young Laureate candidates cannot apply; they must be nominated by individuals or institutions selected by Rolex. Laureates receive cash prizes and Rolex chronometers. To win, projects must be original, breaking new ground in a creative and innovative manner. (www.rolexawards.com)

WEB WATCH

Yikes! – If you believe an “adventure” is an expedition gone awry, then freelance adventure writer Christian DeBenedetti’s The Accidental Extremist Web site is for you. It’s for those who have had travel mishaps and aren’t afraid to share how foolhardy, careless, and recklessly arrogant they were on the road.

It’s said to be the Web’s first online home for the darkly comical side of travel, the side presented when the wheels come off entirely. Because travel isn’t just palm trees and coconuts. Often, it’s much more interesting — and hilarious. Though it’s only been around a few months, the user-generated site has generated brisk traffic (a recent day: 2,700 views) thanks to submissions by talented writers both known and unknown. (For more information: www.theaccidentalex-tremist.com). ▲▲

ON THE HORIZON

ManhattanHenge – Of all our upcoming event listings, this one is our favorite because it’s literally on the horizon. What will future civilizations think of Manhattan Island when they dig it up and find a carefully laid out network of streets and avenues? Surely the grid would be presumed to have astronomical significance, just as was found for the pre-historic circle of large vertical rocks known as Stonehenge, in the Salisbury Plain of England.

Manhattanhenge (sometimes referred to as Manhattan Solstice) is a biannual occurrence in which the setting sun aligns with the east-west streets of Manhattan’s main street grid. It occurs May 30, 31 and July 11, 12 this year. The term was coined in 2002 by Neil deGrasse Tyson, an astrophysicist at the American Museum of Natural History. It applies to those streets that follow the Commissioners’ Plan of 1811, which laid out a grid offset 28.9 degrees from true east-west.

At sunset, a traveler along one of the north-south avenues on the West Side looking east can observe the phenomenon indirectly, being struck by the reflected light of the many windows which are aligned with the grid. An observer on the East Side can look west and see the Sun shining down a canyon-like street. (For more information: www.haydenplanetarium.org) ▲▲

EXPEDITION CLASSIFIEDS

Death Valley and Mt. Shasta Cycling Trips - Join AdventureCORPS for five days of road cycling, yoga, and hiking at magical, mystical Mt. Shasta on July 29 - August 2 and one-of-a-kind Death Valley in February, 2010. <http://www.adventurecorps.com>.

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

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sometimes irreverent look at the people and projects making Expedition News. Frequency discounts are available. (For more information: blumassoc@aol.com).

Insulated Support for Cold Weather Athletes – CW-X Conditioning Wear 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 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. Studies show that when wearing CW-X tights there is 26 percent and 36 percent lower oxygen usage compared to regular Tights and Shorts respectively. New for fall/winter 2008-09: the Insulator line of insulated support Tights and Tops. (www.cw-x.com). 