

THE EXPLORERS LOG



THE EXPLORERS CLUB
WORLD CENTER FOR EXPLORATION
Official News Published Quarterly
Volume 49 Number 4
Fall 2017

KEN KAMLER M.D. MED'84

Donn Haglund FE'72, a personal remembrance

VANESSA O'BRIEN MR' 13

K2: third time's the charm

CAPT. RICK SABER MN'01

Amelia Earhart expedition 2017

DAMIEN MARKEN FN'14

early Maya tomb found in Guatemala

LESLEY EWING PH.D. FN'93

this is Africa: lions, cheetahs and aardwolves. oh my!

LINDLEY K. YOUNG FE'89

from the veterans archive: Colonel Robert B. Rigg



On July 28, 2017, Vanessa O'Brien MR'13 became the first American and the first British citizen to summit K2, the second highest mountain on Earth: 8,611 meters (28,251 feet) above sea level. The team approaching the summit. Photo: Vanessa O'Brien (see story, p16)

K2

third time's the charm

VANESSA O'BRIEN MR' 13
vobonline@gmail.com

"Never confuse a single defeat with a final defeat."
— F. Scott Fitzgerald



VANESSA O'BRIEN PRESENTS THE K2 MINI FLAG TO JIM CLASH. Photo: Elliot Severn



VANESSA O'BRIEN ON K2 SUMMIT, JULY 28, 2017

After six weeks of climbing with fellow female climber Hongjuan Dong of China, I am extremely grateful to add my name to the list of women who have stood on the summit of K2. I became the first American and the first British woman to successfully conquer the peak, and the twentieth woman overall. It took me three consecutive years of attempts, the first of which (2015) was also an official Explorers Club Flag Expedition (Flag #132, The Thinning of High Altitude Glaciers).

Our summit push was not easy; it lasted 16 hours. We were met with deep snow, horrific winds, increasing precipitation and extremely cold temperatures. Despite this, we still had to put in fixed lines, especially for our descent, which more than likely would be in the dark. While it takes a fair amount of effort to ascend 8,000 meters, I can assure you it takes very little effort to slip and fall, arm rappel off an old rope or rig a rappel device incorrectly when you are dehydrated, hypoxic, exhausted,

hurried and/or slightly blinded by weather conditions or darkness.

I was worried the entire time our team of 12 were ascending, as all the other teams had turned back, but as I looked around for signs of frostbite or fatigue in my teammates they were all amongst the strongest with whom I've ever climbed. No one flinched, ducked, baulked or shied away given these conditions. They came from Iceland, China, Nepal and Pakistan or, like myself, had been to the North and South Poles or had climbed five to 13 of the 8,000-meter peaks. Whatever mother nature was going to give, we were collectively willing to receive, so unless an act of God were to throw some misfortune our way, we were going to summit and descend.

When I reached the summit this year, I was relieved to have reached halfway and paused to take in the incredible views of what Galen Rowell had described in the Throne Room of the Mountain Gods. Here I was, standing

above the largest concentration of the highest precipitous peaks in the world separated by the longest glaciers outside of the North and South Poles. Who wouldn't be in awe of this view? I had a small Explorers Club flag tucked away in my summit backpack to mark the occasion. I presented this to Jim Clash FR'99, who accepted it on behalf of the Club at our Exploring Legends interview September 15, 2017.

For perspective, there have been 60 women—three times as many women—who have traveled into space, than have stood at the top of K2. While the first American man in space was separated from the first American woman in space by 20 years, this gap widens to 39 years for the first American man and first American woman on K2. So while we used to think of space as the final frontier, we might have to think again! To boldly go where no man, or woman, has gone before could be to the top of a mountain—a killer mountain, a savage mountain—where for every four that summit K2, one dies.



K2 FROM BASE CAMP AS EVENING APPROACHES. Photo: Vanessa O'Brien



FROM K2 SUMMIT, JULY 28, 2017 AT 4:40 PM. Photo: Mingma Gyalje Sherpa

FROM BASECAMP

activities at headquarters

Exploring Legends

JIM CLASH FR'99

jamesmclash@gmail.com



GREG OLSEN WITH JIM CLASH. Photos: Stacey Severn

THE SHOW MUST GO ON

On July 28, a planned Exploring Legends with astronaut/Everest summiteer Scott Parazynski FN'07 was derailed when Scott had a family emergency within a few hours of the event; he had to fly to Iceland. Not to be deterred, the Club made a few calls and secured Greg Olsen MN'07, a private-citizen astronaut, to fill in for Scott. Olsen went. Olsen regaled the packed audience with tales of his Soyuz flight to the International Space

Station in 2005. The high point was when Clash asked him what he was most afraid of. Without missing a beat, Olsen said he worried that his millennial grandchildren might not have enough drive to be successful in life.

After the interview, the audience was given a chance to ask questions, and Olsen was presented with a certificate for his appearance. In the end, no one asked for their money back for the last minute substitution, and all had a good time. The show must go on, and it did!

EXTREME SKIING

On September 28, at Club headquarters, Jim Clash interviewed Kristen Ulmer, extreme skier and author of *The Art of Fear: Why Conquering Fear Won't Work and What to Do Instead*. Ulmer is known for jumping 70-foot cliffs, throwing flips and ski mountaineering feats such as being the first female

skier to descend Wyoming's Grand Teton, so she knows something about fear.

The two discussed this as well as Ulmer's colorful skiing career, including being on the U.S. Olympic Team as a mogul skier, appearances in Warren Miller's famous ski films, women in athletics and her Ski To Live workshops in Salt Lake City. At the end of the interview, Jim opened the floor to audience questions, and afterward Ulmer signed copies of her book. A great time was had by all.



VANESSA O'BRIEN WITH JIM CLASH IN THE CLARK ROOM.

TOPPING K2

On September 15, at Club headquarters in New York, Vanessa O'Brien MN'13 was the guest of Jim Clash on this interview series. O'Brien, 52, this past summer became the first American and British woman (she has dual citizenship) to climb 28,251-foot K2, the world's second-highest mountain, located in Pakistan. She was the

20th woman to top out on K2.

After an introduction by Club President Ten Janulis, Clash and O'Brien covered her career as an ex-banker at Morgan Stanley, her one-time women's world record for climbing the Seven Summits and skiing the last degree to the North and South Poles (in eleven months) and, of course, her historic climb of K2.

This year was O'Brien's third try at the dangerous peak, which statistically has one death for each four climbers to make the top. She told the audience that the quality and determination of her smallish climbing group allowed it the flexibility to continue up when all other 2017 groups descended because of iffy weather.

"My summit day was exactly as Ed Viesturs had described," she went on to say, "too high winds and terrible accumulation of snow. But I remembered every word Ed said about Scott Fischer living in the present and he, himself, worried about the future and accumulation of snow, so we kept going."

At the end of the interview, Clash opened questions to the enthusiastic audience. More than a dozen were fielded. After Clash awarded O'Brien her traditional speaker's certificate, she had a surprise gift for the Club: a miniature framed Explorers Club flag she had taken to K2's summit.

The club that Peter Freuchen founded

ZYGMUNT MALINOWSKI FR'07

zmasource@msn.com



BRACKMAN'S PORTRAIT OF PETER FREUCHEN DOMINATES WEST END OF TEC'S GALLERY. Photo: Kevin Murphy

The Explorers Corner

ANDREW MCINERNEY

amcinerney@explorers.org



POSTCARDS FROM TRAVELING MEMBERS. Photo: Andrew McInerney

We're back from our Summer hiatus and the revamped Explorers Corner is off to a great start! Members and their guests have

continued to visit the bar, now open Monday through Thursday, in conjunction with the Club's many scheduled events, dinners, and lectures. New cocktails continue to be added to our exciting list of signature drinks: most recently the World Explorer Cocktail, submitted by Catherine Hickson FI '04 and Glenn Helmlinger of the British Columbia/Yukon Section of the Club's Canadian Chapter.

The bar now has over 30 signature cocktails, including the classic Freuchen Old Fashioned (it's freuchen delicious!), blood red Mosquito Mojito, sizzlin' Sahara Swizzle, and Heyerdahl Highball

"The largest and most striking portrait in the club is a full-length oil painting of the Scandinavian explorer Peter Freuchen by Robert Brackman, a Russian-born painter who also made portraits of Charles A. (1902-1974) and Anne Morrow Lindbergh (1906-2001), John D. Rockefeller, Jr. (1874-1960), and other society figures. Freuchen, who lost his toes to frostbite and his leg to frostbite and gangrene while on a mapping expedition to Hudson Bay in 1923, is shown standing in a confident pose reminiscent of portraits by the Spanish painter Diego Velázquez (1599-1660), or his American counterpart Thomas Eakins (1844-1916). The painting was exhibited in the annual exhibition of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia in 1958, where it won the Carol Beck Gold Medal as the best portrait of the year, an honor previously bestowed upon Brackman's teachers George Bellows (1882-1925) and Robert Henri (1865-1929). For a full account of Peter Freuchen's harrowing experience, during which he was forced to amputate his own toes and almost lost his life, see *Adventures in the Arctic*, ed. Dagmar Freuchen, (Julien Messner, New York, 1960)." *

Passing through Copenhagen I visited Eventyrernes Klub, the

Adventurers Club founded by Peter Freuchen, the Danish Arctic explorer, whose full-length imposing portrait adorns the Gallery at TEC NY headquarters. The Danish Adventurers Club is located in Nyhavn, a colorful waterfront district; it retains a members-only status with its own rules. For example, no photos are allowed inside. Mikkel Jungersen, the Club's current Chairman, was gracious enough to give me a short tour since some of the members were having their scheduled lunch meeting. Inside among memorabilia and artifacts—reminiscent of TEC except on a smaller scale—a large round table on the first floor stands out with members names carved randomly into the light lacquered table top. On the second floor Mikkel proudly pointed out a small library with books written by members and a bust of Peter Freuchen. During his later years Freuchen moved to United States, resided in New York and Connecticut, and joined The Explorers Club.

If interested, TEC members can visit Adventurers Club of Denmark with prior notice, contact: mjungersen@icloud.com

* NOTE: THIS DESCRIPTION OF THE FREUCHEN PAINTING IS EXCERPTED FROM ROBERT MCCracken PECK FN'83, THE MAGAZINE ANTIQUES, DECEMBER 2004 ISSUE.

(as served at the 70th Anniversary Kon-Tiki Celebration in Norway!). If you or your Chapter have a signature cocktail, please email recipes and descriptions to me.

The Explorers Corner continues with renovations—new refrigeration that keeps drinks arctic cold, and a new speaker system and television, which loops Explorers Club related footage (think 16mm tapes of the 1969 Lunar Landing, the original 1950 Kon-Tiki documentary, and Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom starring Jim Fowler MED '66). It's an excellent addition to accompany a pour of our very own Explorers Club Johnnie Walker whisky. Have any expedition footage you would like shown at the bar? Send us a note!

Postcards continue to fly in from around the world! Don't forget to send in yours while on expedition, and earn yourself a free beer, on us. Whether it's just to say a friendly hello, share a wild experience, or

educate us on the feeding behavior of Scarlet Macaws, we want to hear from you! Upon receipt, your postcard will be proudly displayed on the Bar Bulletin Board for fellow members to enjoy.

Remember, the Explorers Corner is open strictly to members and their guests. All members must open a bar account prior to or during their first visit. Supplied payment information will be strictly used for bar purchases, and cards are charged at the end of the month. Business casual or expedition-appropriate attire is appreciated during bar hours. Please also refrain from using your mobile devices; if you need your coordinates, we suggest you pay a visit to the Map Room!

For any inquiries, please call Headquarters at +1-212-628-8383. New cocktails and other Explorers Corner information is announced using our email and social media channels.