

**Press Release - 3rd of June 2009**

**« ARCTIC CALLING »: AN EXTREME JOURNEY BY SAILBOAT TO TAKE YOUR BREATH AWAY!**

The goal of Polar expedition "Arctic Calling" is to sail from the Pacific to the Atlantic via the Northwest Passage. This three month adventure will test the participants to their limits. Very few have managed to complete the crossing by sailboat as this maritime route is mainly frequented by ice-breakers.

Aboard the «Baloum Gwen», we will navigate in the extreme conditions of the icy Arctic Ocean. The risks for a sailboat to traverse these cold waters remain considerable and depend on a number of factors: drifting ice, currents, rough seas, fog, frozen winds, cold temperatures, getting trapped by forming ice, reaction of the sailboat (mechanical breakdowns) and its crew to the extreme environment (concentration, fatigue, psychological reaction to the midnight sun) plus logistical problems (sails, maps, instruments).

It's the turn of the 15-meter «Baloum Gwen» (White Whale in Bretagne language) of French navigator Thierry Fabing and its international crew to enter the history records of polar sea exploration by attempting as of June 2009 to traverse the meandering Northwest Passage from West to East.

Last year, the « Baloum Gwen» managed to successfully cross the Northwest Passage from East to West ([www.baloumgwen.fr](http://www.baloumgwen.fr)).

On the 5th June, 2009, the «Baloum Gwen» will leave the port of Sand Point of Alaska and set sail for the Pribilof islands (often called the Fur Seal Islands) heading for the Bering Strait. She will then negotiate the winds of the Beaufort Sea and begin the crossing of the famous icy Northwest Passage. She will sail along the isolated islands of the Canadian Arctic. We will then visit the Inuit villages in Nunavut and become acquainted with their lifestyle and their history. We are expecting to pass through Lancaster Sound and arrive at Pond Inlet of Baffin Island late in August 2009 marking the success of our expedition.

Since 21st August, 2007, the Northwest Passage has been navigable only for a few weeks. It's due to global warming and the increased melting of ice in the Arctic Ocean. However, no year is like the next one and this crossing remains a challenge that has to be tackled with great care.

During this unique Arctic experience of 90 days, I will conduct a series of projects and experiments of educational, cultural... nature. My International Polar Organization Arctic05 beyond its mission for information and making people sensitive to Arctic issues will also cover progress of the crossing through this website.

Memories, snapshots of the wilderness, observations, frustrations and temper tantrums will be shared. Furthermore, we will bring you the beauty of the polar region and make each one of us aware of the splendour of nature in the Arctic as well as its ever increasing fragility.

It is now the turn of «Baloum Gwen», its skipper Thierry Fabing and its crew to share with you the beauty and surprises of this wonderful adventure in the Polar Regions and all its perils!

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