

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 3, 2008

Phone: 312.251.3095
Fax: 312.251.1332
etracy@tawanifoundation.net
www.tawanifoundation.org

TAWANI 2008 INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE TEAM PREPS FOR ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION
Distinguished Science Team to Explore Remote Region of Antarctica for 45 days

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA - An international team of distinguished scientists, teachers and explorers from the United States, Russia, Austria and New Zealand are about to embark on a six-week expedition to Antarctica to study the icy ecosystems of the Untersee Oasis, including perennially ice-covered Lake Untersee.

The first wave of the Tawani 2008 International Antarctic Expedition Science Team will depart Cape Town, South Africa on November 5, 2008 for Novolazarevskaya Station, Antarctica, and a few days later, travel inland to the Untersee Oasis, setting up a camp next to Lake Untersee. The fifteen-member team lead is Art Mortvedt (*Manley Hot Springs, Alaska*), a veteran Arctic and Antarctic explorer and is joined by science lead Dale Andersen (*Lake Placid, New York*), who has worked extensively with NASA and the National Science Foundation on science projects around the Antarctic continent and in the high arctic.

The team will be on the ice for forty-five days in the Untersee Oasis of Antarctica where they will launch an interdisciplinary campaign to study this remote ecosystem. By studying the lake, soil and glacier ecosystems of the region, the team can better understand the physical and chemical environments that constrain life, and also identify novel organisms that have exploited these unique niches. These investigations will shed light not only on how life adapts to such extremes on Earth, but also shapes the search for life on other planets such as Mars as well as the icy moons of the outer solar system planets Jupiter, Saturn and Neptune, and even provide a glimpse of what Earth's earliest biosphere was like billions of years ago.

The expedition is funded by the Tawani Foundation (*Chicago, Illinois*) and is jointly sponsored by an international collaboration of the Russian Arctic and Antarctic Institute, NASA's Astrobiology program, the Von Braun Center for Science & Innovation (*Huntsville, Alabama*) and the Planetary Studies Foundation (*Galena, Illinois*). This expedition follows a ten-day recon mission earlier this year to the region and is the outgrowth of research activities involving Tawani founder and CEO, James N. Pritzker and Richard Hoover, a researcher at the NASA Marshall Space Flight Center. Pritzker will serve as the expedition co-lead and historian and Hoover will serve along with Andersen and Valery Galchenko of the Winogradsky Institute in Moscow as the science team co-lead. The prestigious science team of specialists in the study of life in extreme environments includes: Vladimir Akimov (*Pushchino, Russia*); Birgit Sattler (*Innsbruck, Austria*), Chris McKay (*Mt. View, California*), Ian Hawes (*Wellington, New Zealand*), Alicia Anzaldo (*Chicago, Illinois*), Cindy Main (*Chicago, Illinois*), Pavel Parkhaev (*Moscow, Russia*), Mikhail Levitan (*Moscow, Russia*), Asim Bej (*Birmingham, Alabama*) and Michael Storrie Lombardi (*Pasadena, California*). Critical transportation and logistics support for the team is provided by the Antarctic Logistics Center International (ALCI).

An additional objective of the mission is an internet-based educational program to foster and promote interest in science, research, education and exploration. An educator's guide has been developed for teachers and students in the US and around the world to participate in daily team reports, view photographs and video, and to take part in various science projects to be conducted during the course of the expedition.

To learn more on the science of the expedition, the education plan and team members, visit the Tawani 2000 International Antarctic Expedition website at: <http://expedition.tawanifoundation.org/>

TAWANI ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION FACT SHEET: http://expedition.tawanifoundation.org/TAWANI2009_FactSheet.pdf