

GLOBAL CLIMATE EXPEDITION SET TO LEAVE MONDAY

by Bill Curry

April 4, 2004 -- After arriving in St. Thomas nearly a month ago, the ToptoTop Global Climate Expedition team is preparing to leave this Monday for the British Virgin Islands. Led by ToptoTop founders Dario and Sabine Schworer, the expedition has embarked on a monumental journey to climb the highest mountain on each of the seven continents in order to publicize the growing problem of climate change. (See ["Global expedition set to arrive Monday"](#).) This Sunday, the Schworers will share their experiences in the U.S.V.I. during a final 2 p.m. presentation at Beans, Bytes and Websites in Royal Dane Mall in Charlotte Amalie.

"On Sunday we want to thank the people of the Virgin Islands for all their help," said Dario.

"So many friends"

To say that the expedition has been touched by the warmth of the St. Thomas community would be an understatement. During an interview Saturday in Charlotte Amalie, Dario said, "Never have we met so many friends. We are very sad to leave."

The list of individuals and companies who have opened up their hearts, and even their homes, to the Schworers is seemingly endless. In addition to receiving a free slip from Crown Bay Marina and a variety of other services, the Schworers were able to use scuba equipment at no cost from Blue Island Divers in order to make underwater repairs to their sailboat.

When the Schworers' laptop computer died last week, MSI Inc. stepped up and purchased a new \$2,000 laptop for the expedition -- a critical need, given that all the navigation for the boat is done via computer. St. Thomas resident and ToptoTop member Jean Braure, and his family, also lent the Schworers assistance whenever needed, while Alex Randall of WSTA-AM gave the Schworers use of his Water Island home.

And that doesn't even scratch the surface. Other companies lending help to the expedition include Keep Left (clothing), Budget Marine (radio repairs), Beans, Bytes and Websites (free Internet use), Tickles Pub (meals), and Caribbean Dried Foods, just to name a few. Although the list of generous individuals is simply too long to recount in this article, the Schworers haven't forgotten a single one. Each and every person they've come across is recorded in the couple's expedition notebook -- a collection of business cards and fond wishes from those whose generosity and kindness have inspired the Schworers to continue their amazing journey.

Critical needs still remain

While the Schworers and its expedition members are very thankful for the generosity of the St. Thomas community, the expedition failed to meet its fund-raising goal of \$5,000 -- the money required to see the members through to their arrival in Hawaii, tentatively scheduled for late October. In order to for the expedition to continue, the Schworers need roughly \$1,000 a month to cover costs for food, general living expenses and upkeep of their 50-foot sailboat, Pachamama.

Currently their account only has \$3,000, which is not nearly enough to get them to Hawaii. Given the cost of traveling through the Panama Canal (\$1,000-plus) and the fact that the expedition will be traveling through poorer countries, where future fund-raising opportunities will be limited, is a definite cause for



ToptoTop Global Climate Expedition leaders Dario and Sabine Schworer.

concern.

Although the Schworers are troubled by their shortage of funds, Dario has faith that the expedition will be able to continue. Speaking in his native Rumantsch, Dario says, "Dio proveda," which roughly translates into "God will provide."

"When I was a boy, this was a phrase my grandmother always used, and I believe in it. We come from a small village in Switzerland, and faith is an important aspect of our lives -- not a fundamentalist type of faith, but just knowing that things will be taken care of. This gives us a great power to keep going," Dario said.

Individuals who want to make a donation to the expedition or learn more about ToptoTop's experiences in St. Thomas are invited to come by Beans, Bytes and Websites at 2 p.m. Sunday. For more information about ToptoTop, visit its [Web site](#).

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