

Lessons Learned From the Polar Ice

With the recent 100th anniversary of the conquest of the South Pole, stories of survival and death on the seventh continent were prevalent. Roald Amundsen arrived first, in

LENS



December of 1911, followed about a month later by Robert Falcon Scott, who got there on January 17, 1912. But Scott's ordeal on the ice, recounted in the notebooks he kept as his five-man team struggled and failed to complete the 1,300 kilometer journey to safety, has almost relegated Amundsen's accomplish-

For comments, write to nytweekly@nytimes.com.

ment to a historical footnote.

Another failed polar exploration, an attempt to traverse Antarctica by Ernest Shackleton from 1914 to 1916, has also inspired numerous books. But Shackleton succeeded where Scott did not: all 28 men in his team returned home alive. His group's two-year odyssey — after their ship, the *Endurance*, was crushed by ice and sank — navigating the open seas of Antarctica in lifeboats and crossing icy terrain, also seems to outshine Amundsen's triumph.

Nancy F. Koehn, a historian at Harvard Business School, recently wrote in *The Times* that her case study about Shackleton's leadership of a mission that quickly turned into a struggle to survive has "drawn more interest from executives than any other I have taught."

"Shackleton can serve as a role model," Ms. Koehn wrote, "even though his expedition, judged by its initial objectives, was a colossal failure."

Almost nobody faces the life and death struggles of those polar explorers, but almost all of us can learn lessons from what Ms. Koehn described as "Shackleton's ability to respond to constantly changing circumstances."

Tiziana Lauretti has responded to the changing economics of farming to embrace what is called "multi-functional agriculture," one of the survival tactics many small operations in Europe now employ, *The Times* reported.

Visitors to her three-hectare family homestead near Pontinia, Italy, come to see an array of farm animals, as well as two peacocks, or

to buy homemade prune or strawberry jam. She plays host to schoolchildren "who have never seen an egg outside of a supermarket" she told *The Times*, or who get their hands covered with flour while baking pizza in a small wood-burning oven.

"I couldn't make a living only by selling strawberries and plums," Ms. Lauretti told *The Times*. "Either you have a large farm, or you diversify, like we did."

In a place like Rochester, New York, survival means finding a way to replace the lost jobs and prestige that comes with the downfall of Kodak, which declared bankruptcy on January 19. A company whose name was once synonymous with pictures and yet somehow missed out on the boom in digital photography it helped invent, employed

62,000 workers in Rochester 30 years ago. Now it's more like 6,200.

Half of those employees still work for other companies in Rochester, many spun off from Kodak, using skills they gained there, according to *The Times*.

Michael Alt, director of the office park now located on the 500-hectare site where 30,000 Kodak workers once labored and where some Kodak refugees now work in other businesses, said Rochester believed it could overcome the demise of one of America's manufacturing giants.

"Maybe when the quicksand gets up to your neck you ought to be reaching for the rope, but it's not there yet," Mr. Alt told *The Times*.

But that does not mean a person stops trying to reach for it.

TOM BRADY