

Agnes Milowka – Modern Day Explorer...Dreamer...

by Margo Sanchez, Scuba Diver Girls, November 2011

Agnes Milowka's private excerpts about exploring, cave diving, and living your dreams...an amazing woman changing the face of women's diving.



Finding new cave is not just about going diving... it is exploring in its purest form. There aren't places above water or above ground where humans have not ventured. One would really struggle to be in a spot where no human ever has set foot before and Google Earth has further taken away all mystery. Yet exploration, in the true sense of the word, is still possible beneath the oceans and beneath the ground. When going into a virgin cave, no one, absolutely no one can tell you what is around the corner, what to expect and how you can prepare.

Most well known explorers are either sailors typically from the times when you could still discover continents, folks who flew or sailed around the world, north and south pole conquerors, mountain climbers, or European or Spanish discoverers of stuff in the US, mountain rangers or rivers etc. Robert Ballard takes the ocean

exploration hat. Everyone else gets the 'modern day explorer' tag. Which more often means very little, except for clever marketing... it is usually someone, who runs around in the footsteps of others, before them, repeating their exploits with the benefit of today's advanced technology, or explores 'culture' and hangs with indigenous people and somehow thinks that is exploration.

I think there is a space to fill as a modern day explorer, but exploration is about exploring... going where no man has gone before... and yes ideally learning something new, mapping it all, taking aesthetically pleasing photographs and at the end of it all sitting down and sharing a good story.

I want to spend my time finding places on this planet that no one has ever been to before. I love cave diving for this very reason that you know, no one has been there before. It is an untapped resource in terms of discovery. There are a few people in the world doing it obviously, but cavers and cave divers are such a minority.

It would be wonderful to make what I do more accessible to the mainstream... so that folks sit on the edge of their seats waiting to hear whether an expedition was successful or not... the way that perhaps it was back in the day, when they were first pushing Mt Everest or heading out to the South Pole. I doubt I can mobilize the interest of whole countries the way the Shackleton did for example ... but then again ...

When I was a kid, I loved books and stories about explorers and dreamed that one day I would do the same thing... then came the realization that exploration is no longer possible, that it has all been done, that all the questions have been answered, that the prying eyes of Man have seen it all... so I gave up the dream, as most people do and simply read the books of how others did it.

It is only through diving and my experiences discovering kilometers of new passage, that the dream has been rekindled, it is only now that I realize, I was wrong and that we haven't even scratched the surface and there is so much more to find. Caves are the final frontier and there is so much left to be seen and explored. It is a phenomenal feeling to reach a place that no other human has ever seen before. I want to be the one to find it all.

I love the idea of showing folks that the dream can be real, that there is more out there to find... that there is more to aspire to as a young person than being just like Paris, wearing the latest fashion, dating a footy player who has a fast car. I think that society needs people who take risks, who go outside the square, who they can look up to, who chase their dreams and achieve them – someone who they can look up to and emulate.

I have the desire, the burning need, the passion – I want it more than anyone else. I want to go where no man has gone before... repeatedly. While I am not the only one who does this kind of stuff and I might not be the best – I will be the best. This is what I want to do and where there is a will there will be a way. I am willing to do whatever it takes and work my ass off... Nothing can beat the moment you unwind a reel into completely new and uncharted territory. One feels pure, unadulterated joy and happiness, all peppered with a bit of a thrill.

I googled explorers... modern day explorers... cave diving and caving hardly pops up on the Richter scale of interest from the public. Can a crazy ass cute Aussie chick change this?

Agnes was changing this when her life was cut short in 2011 by a tragic accident, however, Agnes left a huge mark on the world of diving in so many ways. We, at Scuba Diver Girls celebrate her life and hope to follow her example. Here are some of the projects she worked on...

Brian Williams, Karson Winslow, Agnes Milowka, Jason Raupp. 2006. Port Albert Archaeological Project: Report of Investigations. Manuscripts on file at Maritime Archaeology Unit, Heritage Victoria, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

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Agnes Milowka, David Kalinowski, David M. VanZandt. 2007. Pre-disturbance Survey of the Historic Granite Island Causeway and Baths. Manuscripts on file at Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia.

Agnes Milowka, David Kalinowski, David M. VanZandt. 2007. Site Inspection Report Star of Greece. Manuscripts on file at Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia.

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<http://www.agnesmilowka.com/index.php/about-agnes/underwater-work.html>