

Operation Raleigh offers travel, challenges, to those who qualify

By NANCY ATKINSON
Staff Writer

Centuries ago, men such as Sir Walter Raleigh ventured onto the ocean in search of exotic lands, thieving pirates and rare spices for their sovereign leaders. In this second Elizabethan age, when spices come from the corner grocer, and pirates and exotic lands are only a television set away, the world seems very tame.

However, young people still can have many adventures through Operation Raleigh, a four-year multinational seagoing expedition commemorating the explorations of Sir Walter Raleigh. Be it diving for shipwrecks in the Caribbean, searching for the lost city of Cuidad Blanca or aiding Peruvian Indians with medical supplies, the 4,000 participants, aged 17 to 24, will meet many challenges in 16 three-month phases of scientific, community, service and conservation projects.

Patron Prince Charles said the expedition would provide "young people with a unique opportunity to seek challenges, develop their skills and learn to overcome what may seem, like impossible problems." He appeared on "20/20" Dec. 6 to publicize the undertaking, and Mark Bensen, director of operations at the Raleigh headquarters of the program, appeared on "Good Morning, America."

Venturers will come from several countries. There will be 1,500 from the United States and 1,500 from the United Kingdom. Twenty percent will be underprivileged, and 1 percent will be physically handicapped.

"Apart from the adventure and the high degree of international understanding that it promotes, there are a great many more tangible benefits for mankind," said the Hon. Walter H. Annenberg, KBE, honorary president of Operation Raleigh. "Not least is the way in which it broadens the outlook and horizons of so many of our country's future leaders."

The expedition is similar to the Peace Corps and Outward Bound in its emphasis on science and service, but it also is a youth leadership development project, said Anne Smith, N.C. chairman of Operation Raleigh.

Venturers must be physically fit, speak English, be able to swim 500 yards and have compatible personalities. Interviews and a rigorous "selection weekend" follow the written application to test initiative and compatibility.

"The type of people that apply are going to be qualified," said Sue Frankel, a selected venturer. The UNC senior from Kensington, Maryland, said the main focus of the selection weekend was to see how the applicants reacted to stressful situations.

Frankel is interested in scuba diving in Peru in Phase III or Phase IV. She is not sure yet in which phase she will participate, but said, "We will get together with the Operation Raleigh people and get something figured out with our schedules and our needs and their schedules and their needs."

The program's first phase began last November and will end Jan. 16. Tar Heels Jennie C. Grainger, 22, and Christopher Bensen, 20, are participat-

ing in that phase. About 100 North Carolinians are expected to join.

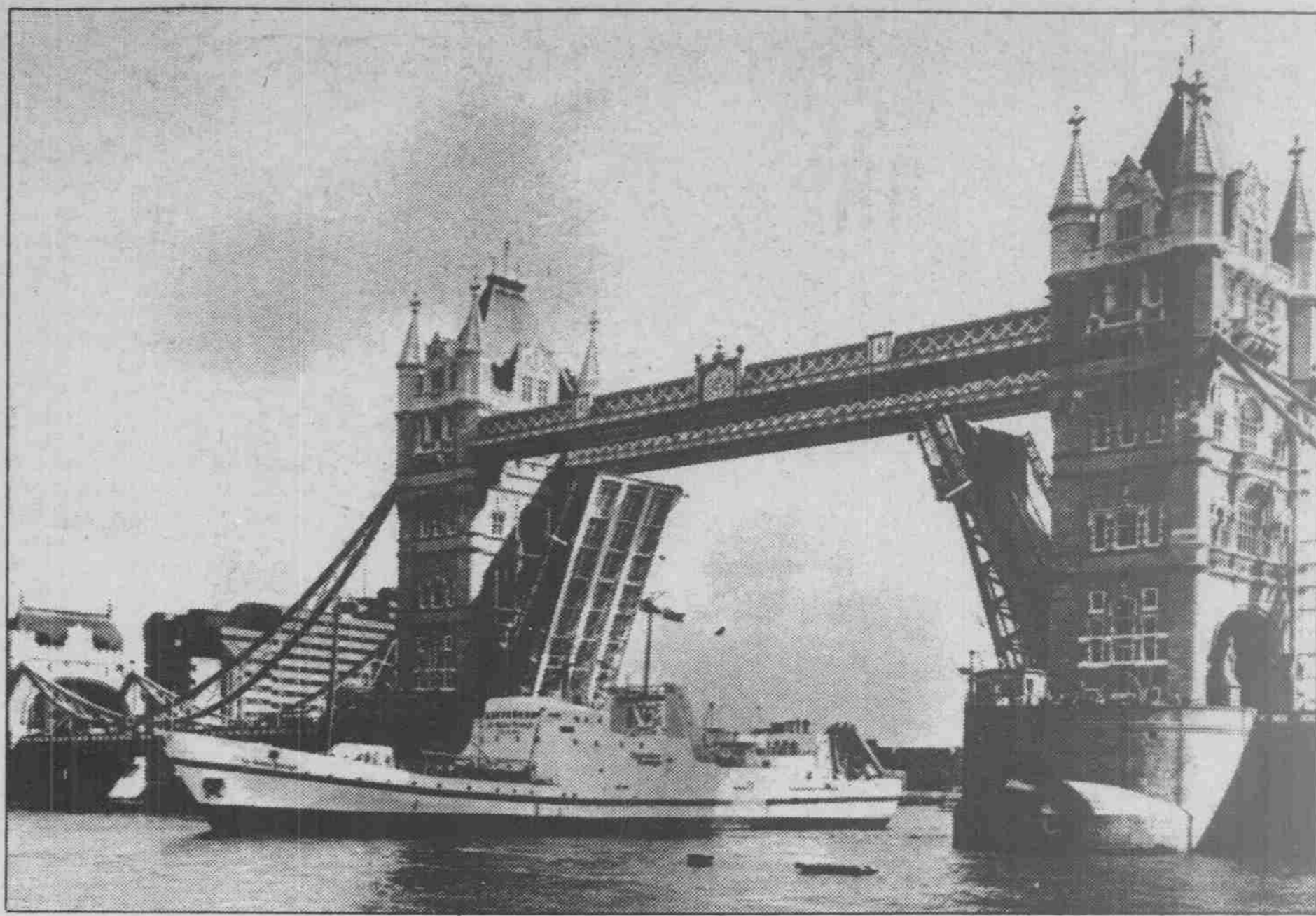
The cost of sponsorship for one venturer is \$5,500, which will be raised through contributions from corporations, foundations and individuals. Operation Raleigh is a registered charity in Great Britain and has tax exempt status in the United States, Australia, Canada and Hong Kong.

"Our participation is not contingent on us being able to raise the money," Frankel said. "Operation Raleigh raises most of the money, and we can go out with a staff member to businesses." Grainger, for example, found Twinings Tea Company to sponsor her expedition.

Frankel looks forward to developing practical and survival skills on her voyage.

"The thing about Operation Raleigh is to know you're having an adventure and are providing a service at the same time," she added. "I would encourage anyone with an interest to try to get involved."

People interested in applying for or helping to sponsor the voyage may write to Operation Raleigh USA, 109 E. Jones Street, Raleigh, NC 27611, or may call 733-9366.



The SES Sir Walter Raleigh passes under London's historic tower bridge and begins its four-year voyage

Morton overshadows all in 'Brother,' even the director

Steve Carr

Review

The *Brother From Another Planet* is not the best film of the year, but it certainly is the sweetest. Depicting the odyssey of a black extraterrestrial, the film is director John Sayles' wittiest and most charming work to date.

Sayles has a knack for eliciting natural and unaffected performances from actors, yet this writer/director-editor/actor always remains in the spotlight of his films. In *The Brother From Another Planet*, however, Sayles

gets such a good performance out of his star, Joe Morton, that Morton upstages everyone, including Sayles himself.

Perhaps the best way to describe

Morton's performance is "gloriously innocent." Not a single word passes his lips, not even a laugh or a growl. Morton conveys bewilderment through a twitch in his brow or an open mouth, and he does it subtly and beautifully.

Morton's face has the kind of window expressivity that went out with silent films, making his performance all the more astonishing. His body movements also perfectly capture his character's awkwardness without hindering the joke of having an alien respond to all that is familiar to our culture.

Not to discredit Sayles, however, there are a number of inventive touches to *The Brother From Another Planet*. The Brother crash-landing his spaceship on Ellis Island is one of the director's many deft strokes. And the scene where the Brother first walks down 125th Street in Harlem is full of so many sounds, colors, dialects and languages that even a seasoned New Yorker can empathize with the Brother's bewilderment.

Morton is such a dynamic performer, though, that Sayles' direction eventually becomes pretentious and even tiresome. Sayles prevents the audience from soaking up all the glories of Morton's performance, instead opting for a

moralistic plot development involving a child who dies from a heroin overdose. The child's death, while certainly a tragic and shocking image for human and alien alike, is a questionable motivation for the Brother to track down the killer. At this point, Sayles yanks the spotlight away from Morton and starts to pontificate.

The black alien's quest leads him to a rich and very white office firm that supplies heroin to blacks in order to "solve cash-flow problems," as an executive puts it. What is bothersome about the implicit message in this scene is that Sayles, a white person, tries to speak on the black experience, and he comes across as very white. Using drug trafficking as a metaphor for black oppression is a gross trivialization.

For the most part, however, *The Brother From Another Planet* is sheer joy as entertainment. Morton's performance is both hilarious and touching, and until the drug subplot intrudes, Sayles does an excellent job of sustaining a light-hearted yet firm touch. The individual characters who meet the Brother and see different facets of themselves and their ethnicity make a social statement far superior to the later plot contrivance.

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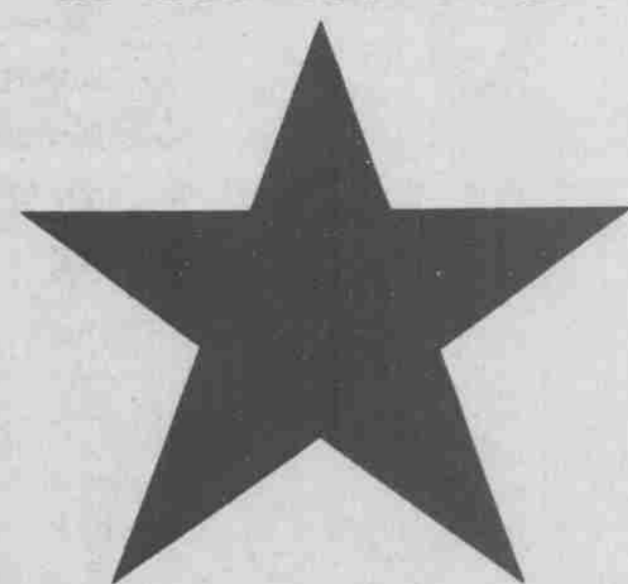
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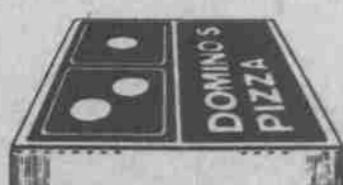
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