



# THE ANTARCTICAN SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER

*"BY AND FOR ALL ANTARCTICANS"*

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**BRASH ICE.** This is the Newsletter which has been beset with more problems than you can shake a stick at, culminated this weekend by a dead body washing up on my rocks with his yacht submerged in shallow waters nearby. The good news is that the dead body was not identified as yours truly.

A real live body is that one who answers to the name of Norman Vaughan, who will be 100 years old on December 17<sup>th</sup>. He had hoped to spend it atop of Mt. Vaughan, and his close friend, famed mountaineer, Vern Tejas, had indicated that he would see to it that he made it, even if he had to carry him up there in a gunny sack. But the money was not forthcoming, so they are having a celebration in the Lower Forty-eight, in Telluride, Colorado. His family and friends are gathering there in the Hotel Telluride for a reception the evening of the 16<sup>th</sup>, a formal dinner the evening of the 17<sup>th</sup>. And Society members are invited! If interested, the contact is Bob Henricci, who can be reached on his cell phone at (617)650-1546, How often can one break bread with a hundred year old dog team driver who took both Admiral Byrd and the late Pope for a ride? We can't guarantee that you that you would be able to drink with Norman, as he does not partake in anything stronger than Ovaltine. It is hard to believe that a man who does not swear, does not smoke, does not drink can possibly survive that long . It must be Carolyn who keeps him alive,

This year seems to be one for the Emperor Penguin, as the feature film on the March of the Penguins captivated audiences around the world, and since its opening there has been a flotillas of articles in various newspapers and journals about penguins.. One in the NEW YORK TIMES of September 13<sup>th</sup> entitled "March of the Conservatives: Penguin Film as Political Fodder" resulted in a flood of letters to the editor. Then there was another one on October 11<sup>th</sup> in the NEW YORK TIMES on "DNA Studies Suggest Emperors is Most Ancient of Penguins" plus a real neat one in the October 22<sup>nd</sup> issue of SCIENCE NEWS on "Cool Birds, How Can Emperor Penguins Live Like That" We have abstracted freely from each of the later two articles. We hope that you will enjoy both, and trust that you won't regurgitate afterwards. If you want to buy the DVD on the March of the Penguins, it will be available on November 29<sup>th</sup>, an expensive Christmas stocking stuffer.

We always pick up our incoming phone calls with a certain amount of apprehension, as bad news travel fast. And so it was the other day when we got a call from Jean Portell, the daughter of the architect of the Antarctic Treaty, Ambassador Paul Clement Daniels, telling me that her mother, Teddy, had passed away at the age of 91 on September 21th. Many of you Washingtonians may remember Teddy from attending our almost-annual summer picnics. Others may recall meeting her at the State Department's ceremonies connected with the issuances of the Antarctic Treaty stamps. Teddy was a most delightful lady, befitting with great grace the gregarious Ambassador. In recent years she has fallen into bad times, not even being able to recognize the immediate members of her own family. She will be remembered fondly by all of us who were blessed with knowing her and the Ambassador.

It was with deep personal regret that I had to write the obituary of my old Little America V, 1957, roommate, Ron Taylor. He was ten years my junior, and died much too early of a massive heart attack. Some of you may take exception to my obituary on Roger Oble Nan, but I won't be concerned with your objections, as I wrote the obituary just for him. Although he was never a man of the cloth, I know, just know, that he will read this obituary and in his own inimitable fashion, get back to me with corrections! Our deepest sympathies go to his beloved Ming-Ying.

**CALENDARS.** We still have twenty more Hedgehog Antarctic calendars for 2006 in our stock bin. Per usual, they are photographic masterpieces, ones to keep and treasure at the end of the year. Price is a real bargain at \$14.00, check made out to the Antarctic Society, address is Box 325, Port Clyde, ME 04855. First come, first serve, as we are closing up shop in mid-December.

**LOGISTICAL HIGHWAY TO THE POLE** (George Blaisdell). A surface traverse capability, connecting McMurdo and South Pole, has been under development since 2002. This project will likely be completed this season (2005-2006) with a self-sustained round trip, delivering several pieces of heavy equipment to South Pole that otherwise would have required disassembly and multiple LC-130 flights to deliver.

The traverse so far has made excellent progress, achieving:

1. Establishment of a safe route connecting McMurdo to a point on the polar plateau less than 200 miles from South Pole,
2. Evaluation and refinement of a variety of equipment to arrive at a selection of vehicles that represents approximately 80% of what is assumed to be an "optimal" solution for mobility efficiency,
3. Discovery and exploitation of a suite of remote terrain monitoring tools that provide for safe and very efficient evaluation of the 1000-mile traverse corridor.

The initial focus for the USP traverse capability is obviously movement of fuel, routine resupply items, and construction materials between McMurdo and South Pole.

**ALTERNATE WAYS TO THE POLE, Skinning The Cat.** (Katy Jensen, via shameless pilfering from Bill Spindler's web site). There is more than one way to get to the South Pole, as evidenced by the motley parade of contraptions aiming for 90 South... some tested, some true, and some straight from the pages of Dr. Seuss:

...by air:

For only \$33,500 (from Chile) ALE and ANI will fly you to the South Pole for a pit stop and a hero shot, ([antarctic-logistics.com](http://antarctic-logistics.com)) Or you could pay Travelquest \$36,400 to camp overnight at 90 South and spend the next day meteorite hunting in the Patuxent Range. Just remember, the Antarctic Treaty "does not allow for the private removal of meteorites." ([tq-international.com](http://tq-international.com)) Or you could hitch a ride with Gus McLeod ([gusmcleod.com](http://gusmcleod.com)) who plans to cross both Poles in his single-engine Firefly this season. But why waste all that money and risk your reputation when you could get the National Science Foundation to *pay you* for going to the Ice? Just ask McMurdo shuttle driver Lonnie Clayton, who, at the tender age of 71 is celebrating the 50th anniversary of his first trip to McMurdo as an electrician on the *USS Wyandot*.

...by skis:

For those who have a lot of money AND a lot of energy to spare, ALE and ANI are again offering their "Ski the Last Degree" (60 miles = \$38,500) and "Ski South Pole All the Way" (730 miles = \$67,500) programs, ([antarctic-logistics.com](http://antarctic-logistics.com)) Børge Ousland is offering a similar, "two-degree" trip for those who are so inclined:

([ousland.no/english/trips\\_south\\_pole.html](http://ousland.no/english/trips_south_pole.html)) Other folks planning to arrive on skis include American WAVE Vidmar ([southpolesolo.net](http://southpolesolo.net)), Norwegian Rune Gjeldnes ([extreme-planet.com/exp/seal](http://extreme-planet.com/exp/seal)), Australians Rob Porcoro ([lassothemoon.org](http://lassothemoon.org)) and Matt McFadyen ([spl.net.au](http://spl.net.au)), a team of five Venezuelans [www.proyectocumbre.com](http://www.proyectocumbre.com). ve/#1 The Pole to Pole expedition will begin at South Pole this year and ski to the coast for the first leg of their adventure to the North Pole, ([pole2pole2000.com/home.html](http://pole2pole2000.com/home.html))

...by foot:

A two-man Malaysian team plans to stop at the Pole on their hike across Antarctica ([antarctica.mir.com.my](http://antarctica.mir.com.my)) and a five-man British team is re-creating Scott's historic trek using exactly the same route, technology, clothing, and food (insert your own morbid joke here— [southpole2005.com](http://southpole2005.com))

...by "other:"

Three Australians teamed up with New Zealand master inventor Peter Lynn to develop hi-tech, recumbent-seated "kite sleds" for their trip, ([kitesled.com](http://kitesled.com)) The three-man Spanish Transantarctic Expedition will use kite-powered sleds to cruise across East Antarctica.

([tierraspolares.es/catamaran/2003\\_4\\_i.htm](http://tierraspolares.es/catamaran/2003_4_i.htm)) And then there is the Ultimate Road Trip: the South Pole Traverse. This USAP-sponsored parade of heavy equipment is scheduled to hit the 1,020-mile Ice Highway from McMurdo to South Pole on Veteran's Day. For traveling in comfort, try the Ice Challenger, described by Bill Spindler as "a 1996 7.3 liter diesel 14-passenger Ford E-series van, heavily modified into a 6x6 with solar panels and a 110-gallon fuel tank." Woof! ([4x4offroads.com/south-pole-6x6-ice-challenger](http://4x4offroads.com/south-pole-6x6-ice-challenger)) Ultralight? Hot air balloon? ATVs? Sky-diving? The Russians have you covered with their National Youth Action SKY ODYSSEY Mission of the Peace ([poletim.ru/eng](http://poletim.ru/eng))

Don't laugh at these out-of-the-box thinkers - even the recent *Report of the OPP OAC Subcommittee on U.S. Antarctic Program Resupply* resurrected suggestions for creating a hardened ice runway at the Pole and using blimps to deliver supplies: ([nsf.gov/news/news\\_summ.jsp?cntn\\_id=104354&org=OPP&from=news](http://nsf.gov/news/news_summ.jsp?cntn_id=104354&org=OPP&from=news))

Sources: Bill Spindler's excellent web site: [southpolestation.com](http://southpolestation.com), Antarctic Sun 10/30/05, available via the just-recently launched [usap.gov](http://usap.gov) website

**HOW IT HAPPENED. (Marty Pomerantz)** I felt greatly honored by Paul Dalrymple's gracious invitation to tell you fellow Antarcticans ".....just what the hell you did." at South Pole. That this is a long story is attested by my recent book *Astronomy on Ice: Observing the Universe from the South Pole*. Furthermore, I wonder what I can tell people, many of whom know more about Antarctica than I do, that they don't already know? So this will have to be quite personal, as, incidentally, was requested by Paul.

It took me, a cosmic-ray physicist, a long time to convince NSF to do astronomy at South Pole Station. My proposals, not coming from a card-carrying astronomer, as well as a host of political shenanigans, jinxed my idea from being properly tested. Qualitative observations made with a couple of small borrowed telescopes over a full year by a cosmic ray winter-over had shown earlier that Pole might be at least as good as Palomar for optical astronomy.

But the irrefutable clincher came when I built an unprecedented vertical telescope, using optics provided by the Royal Swedish Solar Observatory, and electronics for the guiding system in thermally controlled packages developed in my laboratory. An exceedingly precise instrument for filtering out all the solar light except for a precise wavelength,

borrowed from the Max Planck Institute of Astronomy in Germany, was also housed in a heated box. A winterized 35mm camera attachment was at one end, and a quartz window at the other.

Around Christmas, 1978, I smuggled this equipment, labeled *cosmic ray detectors*, to South Pole. I did not feel too guilty about this bootlegging, since the Sun occasionally produces higher energy cosmic rays than those observed more frequently by other means, and Pole is the best accessible site in the world for studying them. In January, 1979, a Swedish colleague and I photographed the sun every ten minutes without interruption for 120 hours, although the good weather lasted longer. The measured resolution was at the calculated limit imposed by the telescope. We also made some other quantitative standardized checks of the seeing with borrowed instruments. And Larry Randall of the previously hostile Astronomy Division, the first NSF Rep, South Pole, was even more excited than we were at the quality of the pictures. The opposition melted.

The first authorized full-scale experiment, a collaboration with Eric Fossat and Gerard Grec from Nice, France, was fielded the following summer. With their instrument package for measuring Doppler shifts attached to our vertical telescope, viewing the sun as a star, the new field of *helioseismology* was born. This technique takes advantage of the fact that internal clappers (sunquakes) make the sun ring like a bell. Precise measurements of the frequencies of these solar oscillations provides the only method for "looking" at the solar interior. The rest is history (sounds like a plug for the book!) In a nutshell, similar collaborations with astronomers from home and abroad revealed that Amundsen Scott South Pole Station is also the best place on earth for observing radiations with wavelengths longer than the visual limit at the red end of the spectrum, as well as exceedingly high energy particles and electromagnetic radiation. During our final helioseismological campaign in 1994, there were 37 astronomers at the Pole!

Why did the germ of the idea that South Pole might be a good place to do astronomy hit me during my first (longer than planned) visit in January, 1960? Anyone who has worked there has experienced the physiological effects. Because it is so cold, you feel as though the altitude is significantly higher than that proclaimed by the placard posted at the Ceremonial Pole—higher than many observatories. And the sky is circumpolar. Hence, every target beyond the solar system remains at a fixed

inclination. The sun varies only slightly from day to day. So you can make long uninterrupted observations through a constant atmospheric path, thereby increasing the precision. And the water vapor content of the cold air is exceedingly low. On clear days, the unpolluted sky is deep blue, although there may be ice crystals which are invisible to the astrophysical experiments carried out at Pole. If you travel some distance from the dome, you don't see the heat and smoke rising from the station, and the terrain is uniform in all directions. Depending upon the nature of the experiment, there are additional esoteric advantages, such as the essentially zero speed of rotation of the earth's surface, or the characteristics of the ice deep below the surface.

And the beat goes on. A wide variety of astrophysical programs, involving many people, institutions, and, indeed, nations are being conducted in the Dark Sector on the side of the runway opposite the Dome. The fabulous new station will be dedicated next year. I am delighted that this assures the continuation of the world class science which has brought renown to Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station.

**ADDENDUM:** Physicist and astronomer Martin A. Pomerantz is director and president emeritus of the Bartol Research Foundation of the Franklin Institute, his scientific home for more than half of the twentieth century. Leader of many cosmic-ray expeditions, especially to both the north and south Polar Regions, Pomerantz completed 26 campaigns "on the ice," and in his new book, *Astronomy on Ice* (ISBN#1-4134-6861-6; 289 pages), he tells the story of how a combination of luck and propitious decisions took him to Antarctica. Professor Pomerantz has received numerous honors for his pioneering astrophysical research at the South Pole. Dr. Pomerantz has served on national and international boards on space science, geophysics, and polar research, and was chairman of the U.S. Committee for the International Years of the Quiet Sun, 1964-1965. He lives in San Rafael, California.

*Astronomy on Ice* describes the life-long journey leading Pomerantz to establish the South Pole as the best site in the world for a broad diversity of astrophysical research. The book shows how, after years of rejection, the author finally aroused interest in Antarctica within the astronomical community, how he fostered the evolution of the United States Amundsen Scott South Pole Station into the premier site for many different types of astronomical observations, and what he did to prove the validity of his innovative ideas, starting with the first observations of the sun's interior. Readers of *Astronomy on Ice* will share the thrills of overcoming obstacles in a hostile environment to experience those Eureka moments of scientific discovery.

**ANOTHER VETERAN,** John Annexstad. In this section, we are introducing a continuing series highlighting of some of the individuals who served in the IGY. We kick it off with Dr. John Annexstad, enjoying retirement in Walker, Minnesota, with some of the following in his own words. It is said that John never met a meteorite that he didn't like! Rather than writing a book of his experiences, the following is worth a look at what this remarkable IGYer did in his impressive career. Like many IGYers, John is a 6-decade person who has a continuing interest in Antarctica. In 1957-58, he did some work at Little America V and then wintered at Byrd. In 1960-61, he was on loan to the Chilean Antarctic expedition, and built and supervised the establishment of a geomagnetic and seismological observatory at Gabriel Gonzalez Videla Station, Paradise Bay, a location well known to tourists. Then, like many other IGYers, John went to graduate school at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks, obtaining a MSc. Degree in 1966 on micro-pulsations in Polar Regions. Summers of 1966-67 and 1967-68 he worked on conjugate point micro-pulsations at Macquarie Island as a member of the Australian National Antarctic Expeditions. From 1968 to 1986, he was Associate Curator for Lunar Samples and Meteorites at the Johnson Space Center, Houston, Texas. Six summers were spent in meteorite searches with the U.S. Antarctic Program, 1978-79 intermittently through 1988-89. In 1982-83, his daughter, Kris, accompanied John as a field assistant, perhaps the first father/daughter team to work in Antarctica. John's aspirations led him to the Ph.D. degree in glaciology and meteorites at the Johannes Gutenberg Universitat, Mainz, Germany. John left NASA to start a second career as Professor at Bemidji State University, Bemidji, Minnesota. His career highlights include not only working in the IGY, but also through the period of Apollo to the Moon, and meteorite discoveries. Leading a tamer life, he has worked as lecturer on the tour vessels *World Discoverer* (1998) and *Orion* (2004-05). Annexstad Peak is named for him in the Executive Committee Range, West Antarctica.

**COOL BIRDS.** (Abstracted from article by Susan Milius in the October 22, 2005, issue of SCIENCE NEWS). This is a good companion piece to the movie MARCH OF THE PENGUINS which was essentially an above water version of the life of the Emperor Penguin, where Cool Birds is its underwater equivalent. Gerald Kooyman of Scripps Institution of Oceanography at La Jolla, California who is known by many of our members, dismisses dives of 265 meters as being "modest." Studies have observed Emperor Penguins going as deep as 500 meters. Most

dives are in the modest range, and last only five or six minutes, but the birds have been known to remain underwater for as long as twenty minutes.

Paul Pongasis, another Scripps researcher, studies how deep-diving penguins manage their oxygen. They load up on it by taking advantage of an abundance of the compound myoglobin in their tissues. Also, Emperors have some 100 milliliters of blood per kilogram of body weight. The penguins also ration their oxygen stores using physiological tricks unavailable to landlubbers. When an Emperor Penguin dives, its heart slows, as does its use of oxygen. Penguins nearly deplete the oxygen in the special avian air sacs attached to their lungs, often dropping below 20 millimeters of mercury. . Penguins don't seem to suffer from their dives, and not only avoid the bends, but exit the water with great flair.

The article goes on with detailed information on their dieting. Fasting is a way of life when incubating their egg, and it is also associated with summer molting. To see where penguins go to fatten up, Barbara Wienecke's group fastened satellite trackers and dive recorders at two colonies on the Mawson Coast. Nine birds went on great feeding expeditions of 22 to 38 days. On the longest trip, a penguin traveled as much as 1,900 kilometers and reached points 600 km from the breeding site!

Emperors grow much denser feathers than do flying birds. Emperor feathers maintain an air layer for insulation when out of the water, but during diving, the water compresses the outer layer of oiled feathers so that it loses much of its insulation power. Even a modest dive subjects the birds to 20 atmospheres of pressure. Emperors, like all penguins, replace all their feathers in a single month. A molting penguin will actually drown if it ventures into water.

**FLIERS TURNED INTO SWIMMERS AS WINGS BECAME HYDROFOILS.** (Abstracted from article by Carl Zimmer entitled "DNA Studies Suggest Emperor Is Most Ancient of Penguins" in the New York Times, October 11, 2005). "Penguins are some of the most improbable animals in the planet. They have wings and feathers but cannot fly. They are not fish, but they have been recorded as deep as 1,755 feet underwater. And the most improbable is the Emperor Penguin, which waddles across 70 miles of Antarctic ice to reach its breeding grounds. Penguin ancestors probably began their evolutionary search while Tyrannosaurus rex walked the earth. Researchers at the Royal Ontario Museum concluded that penguins diverged from the ancestors of petrels and albatrosses about 71 million years ago."

Ewan Fordyce, paleontologist at the University of Otago in New Zealand, has studied the oldest known penguin fossils,

dating back to 60 million to 62 million years. These proto-penguins were not as adapted to diving as today's. Their wings could still bend at the elbow, "the joint was starting to become stiff, so the wing was starting to evolve into a hydrofoil" said Dr. Fordyce.

Dr. Sergio Luiz Pereira of the Royal Ontario Museum found that Emperor and King penguins belong to the oldest living lineage, while other species are more recent. Canadian researchers found that the penguin's common ancestors existed 40 million years ago - more than 30 million years after they think penguin evolved. Early penguins did not have to survive brutal travel conditions as Antarctica was covered in forests, much like we see in New Zealand today.

The ice age came later, about 35 million years ago. Geologists suspect that the change occurred as a result of South America and Australia drifting away from Antarctica. The ocean currents began to circle the continent, isolating it. The cooling climate may have killed off the older penguins. Not all penguins became extinct, Dr. Pereira said that "penguins had to adapt to conditions in Antarctica, or they had to leave." Dr. Fordyce is skeptical about the evolutionary timing, pointing out that the oldest fossils that may belong to the living lineage of penguins are only 30 million years old.

The history of penguins - partly driven by a cooling climate - is now running in reverse. Ocean waters are warming, and it is hard for scientists to forecast how they will affect penguins. Adelie penguins feed on krill that feed on algae that grows on ice. Adelie penguins have decreased by 70 percent the past thirty years off the Antarctic Peninsula, possibly as a result of retreating sea ice. They are being replaced by booming populations of chinstraps and gentoo penguins which can switch from eating krill to fish and squid. Dr. Giannini of the American Museum of Natural History has said "This will create an immense instability in the system with unpredictable consequence and that is not good."

**LITTLE HARRY DIES.** Roger-Oble-Nan was his handle, but his birth certificate showed that he was born as Ronald Charles Taylor. His baptism actually took place at Little America V in 1957, where he served as a forecaster in the first ever Weather Central in Antarctica. But he was known to many as Little Harry, as unfortunately he had a body which strongly resembled that of the Chief Scientist for the Antarctica during the IGY, Harry Wexler. . And he took meteorology with all the

seriousness of Wexler. But there was one big difference, Ron had a great sense of humor, something which no one ever accused Wexler of having in surplus. This writer got to know Little Harry somewhat, as we shared quarters at Little America V where most of the IGYers lived. Being ten years his senior, I confiscated the lower bunk. Weather Central was run like a Stateside operation, with forecasters practically chained to their chairs or stools. And its boss was a real misfit. Ron came to the ice with a foot locker full of books on meteorology and physics, and when he came off duty, he reached into the locker, pulled out a book, and retreated to his upper bunk, where he read until he fell asleep, most of the time fully dressed. Presumably he must have taken his clothes off some time during the winter to shower, but we don't even have an official confirmation of that either.

Weather Central was a most unique place, and its researchers went forward in different directions. One became a minister, one became a high ranking admiral in the Argentine Navy, another an oceanographer on a Soviet ship, two remained with the now defunct U. S. Weather Bureau, and Ron went on back to school, getting his Ph.D. in meteorology and then teaching at the University of Hawaii, then the University of Rochester, followed up by the University of Maryland. While at UCLA as a graduate student, a funny thing happened. He was asked to chaperon a bunch of Soviet meteorologists attending an international conference in Los Angeles to a military base outside of L.A. where there was some highly classified research going on. It happened that a childhood friend of mine from Worcester, Massachusetts, was with the FBI in Los Angeles, and he was assigned by his office to tail the Russians. So I had one FBI buddy tailing another one of my buddies escorting the Russians!

The Chairman of the Meteorology Department at the University of Maryland was a very eminent climatologist, Helmiut Landsberg, and he suggested to Ron that perhaps he might like to advance himself by applying for this open position at the National Science Foundation. Ron got the job and it changed Ron into a big time bureaucrat, although I don't think it changed Ron's stripes very much. Gene Bierly, past president of the American Meteorological Society, said that Ron had the reputation for supporting high-risk studies, sometimes outside the traditional world of academia, that led to developments of instrumentations to observe atmosphere electricity. At the same time, he steadfastly refused to become a participant in e-mailing colleagues! While at NSF his life was improved immeasurably when he met a fellow meteorologist, Ming-Ying Weei, and the two of them lead a very enjoyable, loving existence in the Washington area.

It would not be fair to Ron not to mention his mistresses, as they were numerable. Some were real classics, some were bound in real leather, but all were used and gave him many hours of happiness. Yes, he was a real bibliophile. Once I was the cause of a near catastrophe in his apartment. He invited Ruth Siple and me over to hear some of his fine music, as we were on the verge of getting a CD system. First he played some piano concertos, then he wanted us to hear the 1812 Overture. So he turned up the volume, it sent out a terrible vibrating blast which sent a whole wall of books in an adjoining room cascading onto the floor. He took it very calmly, said that he preferred to pick them up individually by himself.

But we will miss him for many reasons, and one is that now we have no one to write us after each Newsletter telling us what was wrong, what was omitted, what we should have said in better grammar. Letters were always in long-hand, on elegant stationery. And he supplied us with book reviews from the UK publications which came into his home. Ron was one of a kind, we are really going to miss him, although we haven't seen much of each other. In closing may I say that Ron lost weight as he matured, so he did not remain the Alter Ego of Harry Wexler!!

### **THE SHORE WHALING STATIONS AT SOUTH GEORGIA; A STUDY IN ANTARCTIC INDUSTRIAL ARCHEOLOGY**

by Bjorn L. Basberg, Novus Forlag, Oslo, 2004 (reviewed by Steve Dibbern).

This book chronicles the work done over a several year period to study, record and interpret the ruins of the shore whaling stations at South Georgia. It covers a short history of industrial archeology in general, the whaling history on South Georgia and then goes into detail about the remains of the stations as they are today. Basberg also describes his methods of collection and collation of data in enough detail to give the reader an understanding of the problems overcome relating to time available on site and equipment needed on a remote site.

To say that the book succeeds is an understatement. It is lavishly illustrated with historical photography, current color photography and detailed diagrams and maps of each station on the island. The text is detailed enough to teach you how the whale rendering process worked and how the people, primarily Norwegians lived. Have you ever seen a floor plan of Antarctic pigsty or grishus or how about the hydro-electric station at Grytviken? This

is an industry that has been roundly vilified in recent years but that should not deter a reader with an interest in Antarctic history from reading it. Basberg does not seek to glorify the industry but rather to explain how it worked and record its ruins, industrial archeology.

If you have been lucky enough to either work on South Georgia or visit as a tourist this is the book to explain what you saw, and it has better pictures than you probably took.

A couple of small criticisms; it has no index and although it is very logically arranged and has a very nice table of contents, still an index would have been a help. Even though the whaling was the scope of the book, some small coverage of the government buildings at King Edward Point would have completed the scene at Grytviken.

Seldom is a book better than you expected when bought sight unseen as this was for me. But Dr. Basberg's book is a beautifully executed record of some really sterling field archeology. It is available for about \$50 plus shipping (\$75 total by airmail) from the publisher Novus forlag at: Novus Forlag, Herman Foss gate 19, NO-0171 Oslo, Norway or by email at: [novus@novus.no](mailto:novus@novus.no)

**WHO IS THE REAL NICHOLAS JOHNSON?** Nick sent us an e-mail asking for a copy of the last Newsletter which had a review of his book, **BIG DEAD PLACE**, by Steve Dibbern, a prodigious reader of all Antarctic books. Naturally we sent him a copy of the Newsletter, but at the same time I asked him, "Do you talk as you write, or were you just trying to sell more copies of your book?" You might be interested in his reply.

"I smoke like a chimney and swear like a sailor. So to answer your question, I'd say I talk "worse" in real life, Frankly, it's amusing to me that people are so concerned with the language, when this really is just basic daily blue-collar language. It astounds me that the blue-collar perspective is so unaccounted for in Antarctic literature that the first bad words that come up are so shocking to some .....I have been a blue-collar worker off and on for fifteen years, and this language is just a drop in the bucket. I underplayed the language, but I was certainly conscious of including enough so that the writing would have credibility with a blue-collar audience, an audience usually ignored. One's tastes are one's own, and there is no arguing that. But I believe that those shocked by the "bad" language in the book are often indicating their non-recognition of typical working-class behavior, thus suggesting they are 1) middle class. 2) professional, white-collar, or of the more groomed

positions in society, 3) blue-collar but with family and children, and 4) among the older generation."

It looks by his own definition that the only people who will be thrilled by his book are those young to middle-aged SINGLE blue collar workers, which must constitute a small minority of all workers on the ice. And I seriously wonder how many of them actually buy and read books. Anyway, I am still to read the book, so can't really comment on the book. But I have several valued friends, who I think are broad minded, and each and every one has gotten disgusted and fed up with the contents of the book before they finished reading it.

However, our e-mails have gotten off onto other themes. He actually is a very nice guy to communicate with, and he writes very well and cleanly, too. He has a sincere interest in history, being somewhat of a scholar on World War II, although he is only 32 years old. When he found out that I had been a POW in Germany during that war, he wanted to know everything about it. So I have ended up with some sympathy for him, would like to drink beer and talk with him some night, but that doesn't look likely in the near future, as he is about to leave for employment in Iraq.

**GUESS WHERE WE'RE GOING.** We have a wonderful escape from Christmas, and all those never-ending carols and bell-ringing, preposterous looking Santa Clauses, kids with outstretched hands, et cetera, et cetera, thanks to John Spletstoeser. He has asked Tony Soper and me to join him on the very luxurious ROTTERDAM of Holland American Lines, on a twenty-day cruise to Antarctica, via the Falklands, ending up viewing the Chilean fiord coast. It's been five years since I have been there, and I can't wait to sail through the Lemaire Channel one more time. I will have a perfect holiday season, and I hope yours is not too bad, either.



Each year they have a South Pole specific and year specific patch. These patches are in addition to the standard USAP patches. This year's South Pole patch will reflect the change from the Dome to the new Elevated Station (a one hundred percent occupancy by January 2006). Each insuing year's patch will have the corresponding year changed. It seems the Siple Barber Pole with silvered globe remains a 50 year constant. Patches are for sale at the South Pole Station.

