



The Antarctic Society

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NO. 3

HONORARY PRESIDENT

Dr. Robert H. Rutford

PRESIDENT

Dr. Anthony J. Gow
117 Poverty Lane
Lebanon, NH 03766
petprotector@comcast.net

VICE PRESIDENT

Liesl Scherthanner
P.O. Box 3307
Ketchum, ID 83340
schernli@hotmail.com

TREASURER

Dr. Paul C. Dalrymple
Box 325
Port Clyde, ME 04855
Phone: (207) 372-6523
pcdal@roadrunner.com

SECRETARY

Joan Boothe
2435 Divisadero Drive
San Francisco, CA 94115
HooDooskr@aol.com

WEBMASTER

Thomas Henderson
520 Normanskill Place
Slingerlands, NY 12159
webmaster@antarctican.org

ARCHIVIST

Charles Lagerbom
16 Peacedale Drive
Northport, ME 04849
icechip@bluestreakme.com

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NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Guy Guthridge
gguthrid@yahoo.com

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LOOKING BACK FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF TODAY

Decades after returning to lives in lower latitudes, four veterans in this issue describe their Antarctic sojourns from a modern perspective. Cliff Dickey, near the end of that first winter at 90°S in 1957, "knew then that the United States would never leave the South Pole." Teacher Joanna Hubbard, 16 years after a season at Palmer Station, says the experience "likely set the stage to keep me in education for the long haul."

Attorney Jim Porter, with 84 months on the Ice including four winters, says, "I appreciate the inquiry about tying my Antarctic past to my federal present, but it's no use. I cannot identify any causal connection. *But I used to be interesting!*" Our own Joan N. Boothe gives us Walter Roots's take on the 1950s South Georgia Survey. "I thought I knew about everything published regarding that project," Joan writes. "Now we have wonderful recollections of what was a significant, but today little known or remembered, expedition."

Cory Laughlin's "Stowaway in Antarctica" rounds out our bylined articles. A frightened bird, far from home, found support and a happy ending.

John Spletstoeser, a Society stalwart, scientist, administrator, Antarctic, and good friend since the 1960s, died 25 January 2016. An obituary, in preparation, will be published in the July newsletter.

Every newsletter article started from people (most Society members, some not) who want the Antarctic story told. We have some material for the next (July) issue, need more. Write *your* story. Suggest ideas and sources.

Jump to the last page if you are committed or considering coming to the July Antarctic Gathering in Maine. Important: if you are going to be there, it's not enough just to make a hotel reservation. Tell Paul Dalrymple or me you are coming (if you haven't already) so caterers can plan meal quantities.

Guy Guthridge

Sixty-year-old random memories from the first winter at 90 South

by Cliff Dickey

Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station, at the geographic South Pole, has operated continuously since its establishment in 1956. This recollection is by one of its original inhabitants, the Navy electronics technician. Cliff and Jean live in Newport News, Va.



South Pole Station, first season (1956-1957). The footprints are the author's. The photo is from grid north, now in the clean air (upwind) zone.

There were 18 of us: nine scientists and nine Navy support men, plus one dog. When the last plane flew away for the season, I wondered "What did I get myself into now?" Until then, we had been too busy to think.

All time zones come together at the South Pole. It would have been reasonable to select Greenwich as our time. However, we worked closely with McMurdo coordinating flights; they worked closely with New Zealand; so we all used New Zealand time.

We maintained a 24 hour a day schedule. That way, we kept breakfast and dinner separate. We also had a "day" crew and a "night" crew. The meteorologists scheduled observations and balloon runs around the clock. The radio shack was manned 24 hours a day to communicate with air operations. Our radioman, Bill McPherson, couldn't do 24/7, so I became a

second radioman (I was the Navy electronics technician), and we split it 12/7 each.

Air operations included Air Force and Navy planes. The Air Force flew mostly C-124s and dropped our supplies by parachute. Most of the parachutes worked, but not all of them. Parachutes whose lines tangled gave us "streamers," and parachutes that didn't open resulted in "free falls." On more than one occasion, I noticed the C-124 had one or two out of four engines feathered, but they made the drop and got back to McMurdo safely.

Parachute drops were an all-hands event, to chase the parachutes and cut the shroud lines to keep the wind from blowing the packages away. One, with part of our barracks, escaped into a whiteout where we couldn't chase it. Paul Siple and Jack Tuck went after it later in the Weasel, followed its track for about 13 miles, then radioed the tractor to bring them more gas and pull the package back to camp.

We had a snow-packed runway for planes equipped with skis. Those were the Navy planes, P2Vs and R4Ds. It was almost a constant job to keep the airstrip dragged, knocking off the tops of sastrugi and filling in the gaps.

Our weather was cold and colder. Our builder, Tom Osbourne, would bring 2x4s into the galley to warm them enough to pound nails into them. He said otherwise it was like driving a nail into a railroad track.



In 1957, before the sun has set, the flag is at half mast in commemoration of the 11 March death of Admiral Richard E. Byrd.

After sunset we were still on a 24-hour schedule. If we slept late on a Sunday, we'd be messed up for several days, like jet-lag or worse. Since then, I've taught some classes about Antarctica, and found that people have a hard time with the concept of six months of daylight and six of darkness. I explain my tour at the Pole like a tour they might get from a travel agent, e.g., four days and three nights. My tour at the Pole was two days, one night, but lasted all of 1957.

We didn't have all the tools we needed, but we found a work-around for things we really needed. On our tractor, a bearing went bad. We needed a ten-ton tool to remove it, and had only a ten-pound sledge hammer. We packed ice around the axle, used a torch on the bearing, and did a lot of pounding. We fixed it. Our movie projector had at least six months of movies, and only one bulb. We put a resistor in series with the bulb to make it last. We used baling wire for lighting the snow mine.

Chet Segers, our cook, had trouble baking cakes. All the Navy recipes were for sea level, and the South Pole is at 9,000 feet. Denver recipes didn't work either. A baking company took a plane to 9,000 feet and experimented to find out what worked at that elevation. Of course, they got some publicity out of it. The Navy told us not to do that kind of stuff again, but we didn't care, because we had our cakes, and what could the Navy do to us anyway?

Judging distance and size on the snow was difficult. Twice I went out to investigate an object on the horizon; it turned out to be a beer can the Air Force had accidentally dropped. The first time, I just kicked it. The second time, I stomped it into the surface so it wasn't visible. When the runway at McMurdo melted, we didn't have any flights and ran out of cigarettes. We searched the surface for discarded butts. The last plane dropped mail. The bag ripped open. We searched the snow for letters.

When Sputnik went up, its orbit took it close to us. Paul Siple, Jack Tuck, and I

tried to get a visual on it, but failed. We could hear it on the radio. I have a reel-to-reel recording of it, but no way to play it to find out if it's still good.

I knew then that the United States would never leave the Pole.



Clifford Dickey Howard Taylor Earl Johnson Robert Benson Paul Siple William Johnson
Melvin Havener Herbert Hansen Thomas Osborne William McPherson Arlo Landolt Chester Segers
John Tuck "Bravo" Edward Remington John Guerrero Kenneth Waldron William Hough Edwin Flowers

"That's us," says the author: the 18 men who made up South Pole Station's first winter, 1957.

We dug a snow mine to supply water and to study the layers of the snow. We got down to about 90 feet vertical depth, although we were at an angle. Below about 15 feet it was ice, not snow, and we had to chip it instead of shoveling. We had a parachute bag on a banana sled to haul the ice up to the surface, pulled by a homemade electric winch, powered by a motor from one of my spare transmitters, with a lot of parachute lines. Our melter was an old-style soft drink dispenser, with exhaust from the generator piped through it.

Chet, the cook, had Sunday off, so if you wanted to eat, you had to fix it yourself, although Chet left supplies in the galley. All eighteen of us took turns as mess cook. The duties were to bring in ice from the snow mine to fix with the fruit juice. Ice crackled when you poured the juice on it. We washed dishes, pots and pans, set up the tables, and helped Chet any way he needed. The mess cook got to choose one of his favorite meals for everyone to have.

Everyone had “house mouse” duties, also. We kept the heaters going and swept the hallways in the barracks. These duties lasted about a week, then rotated. This practice started after the airdrops ended.

1957 was the year of the Asian flu pandemic. When the first visitors arrived in the spring, all the wintering-over guys took turns catching it.

TEA (Teachers Experiencing Antarctica and the Arctic) – 16 years later

by Joanna Hubbard

In 1999, some NSF reviewer(s) took an unusual chance on a very new teacher and, half-way through my third year of teaching, I was on the RV *Laurence M. Gould* headed to Palmer Station as part of a scientific team looking at the chemical ecology of marine invertebrates and macroalgae. That experience likely set the stage to keep me in education for the long haul, certainly set key markers in my classroom practices for teaching science in a realistic way, and introduced me to the fantastic working environment of polar programs.

While formatting my resume on the application for the TEA program, I thought about leaving my SCUBA diving certification off the list, but shrugged and kept it in. You never know what might happen. I had been fortunate in becoming part of the group of science teachers involved in a state-wide NSF systemic change grant when I started teaching, primarily because I said “yes” to anything more experienced colleagues recommended to me. “Yes” to the POLARIS program. “Yes” to their summer training programs, which led to “Why Not” apply to TEA, and finally to a big “Yes” when, during our May orientation at NSF, the Office of Polar

Programs manager asked if I would possibly be interested in SCUBA diving in Antarctica.

The preparatory cold water dives I took around Washington’s Olympic Peninsula were among some of the most beautiful dives I’ve ever done. Swimming through the milky blue water spiked with orange bull kelp over a carpet of purple and pink sea stars and urchins remains a favorite.

But the payoff of being one of the small group of individuals privileged to see the underwater forests in Antarctica was breathtaking. Our collecting of macroalgae primarily focused on the browns; big, sturdy plants that clung tenaciously to rocks, took up huge amounts of space in collecting bags, and made up layers so thick in some places that a diver could disappear underneath. Of course unique vertebrates are around, too. Gentoos are still my favorite penguin because a group of them met us at the surface at one dive and followed us down to 110 feet: hard to focus on what you are supposed to be accomplishing with plump black and white torpedoes zooming around you. You will have to find me in person to hear the leopard seal stories!

My experience with Teachers Experiencing Antarctica and the Arctic was my first true scientific field experience. I got to see firsthand the advance preparation in the lab, the academic and intellectual collaboration, and the teamwork that made the Antarctic field season productive. Everyone working at the station, staff or science, had worked so hard to get there and was incredibly proud of doing the best job they could. It was and is a fantastic work environment for that reason. Joining an entire community of competitively selected people dedicated to making the scientific enterprise possible was wonderful.

After seeing what was possible, it is not a coincidence that every position I have taken since was in a situation that supported strong collaborative teams. It is a challenging way to work, but it makes

difficult jobs like teaching more rewarding and less draining. Experiencing the working environment on station in Antarctica helped me create and support a collaborative environment for my students in the classroom.

My time with TEA was also the first time I was involved in interdisciplinary science, chemistry + biology + ecology + physics. Up to that point my scientific training had been compartmentalized. Even my work in a molecular genetics lab in college hadn't required acknowledgement or use of other disciplinary areas. With my students, that dose of reality has been influential. Nearly all my teaching focuses on digging in deeply to one topic or problem through the lenses of all applicable scientific disciplines. Integrated science is what is happening all around us, and I want to make sure that is what my students see, rather than separate "Biology" or "Chemistry" topics.

Since my time with the TEA program I have taught 7th graders, left the classroom to do K-12 teacher and curriculum support in science, gone back to the classroom to teach 8th graders. I have received a Presidential Award for Excellence in Science Teaching and am currently a Capitol Hill Albert Einstein Distinguished Educator Fellow in D.C. with Congressman Mike Honda. I got to go back to Antarctica with the ANTArctic DRILLing program at McMurdo Station. Through them I was involved in the International Polar Year and helped to found the Polar Educators International professional teachers' association.

All of this, and the many other education related activities I have been involved in during the years since, stands on the foundation of my early experience with TEA. The professional development I received through the program was excellent, but the actual participatory experience was the key. Just like our students, teachers apply knowledge best when they have been immersed in it. I was probably always

going to be a decent teacher. But TEA helped me step out of the standard way of doing things, and it keeps me going back to the classroom.

TEA's successor PolarTREC (Teachers and Researchers Exploring and Collaborating) places K-12 teachers in 3- to 6-week collaborations with field scientists in polar regions.

"Antarctic People" was my heartfelt tribute

by Jim Thumper Porter

The editors of the Antarctic Society newsletter saw fit to publish my old poem, "Antarctic People," in the October 2015 edition. Via the omniscient medium of Society member Bill Spindler, Guy Guthridge contacted me to inquire whether I'd be willing to provide the readers with the backstory, if any, of the poem. I was honored by the request, and happy to say yes.

In the years before writing "Antarctic People," it had been my good fortune to have a diverse and interesting career on the Ice – four summers at Siple Station (where I reminded a coworker of Thumper, the rabbit in *Bambi* – a nickname I bore happily through 18 years of Antarctic deployments); summers and two winters at McMurdo; work at two field camps (Northern Victoria Land and South Beardmore); and a few weeks at South Pole, all these trips occurring between 1976 and 1988. "Antarctic People" was written during a summer at Palmer Station, which was followed by a full year at Palmer. I spent my last three Antarctic seasons at South Pole, culminating in a winter there in 1994.

Sojourns at Palmer Station filled part of that interim period. By the time of my first trip to Palmer, in October 1988, I had

had the opportunity to work in a number of places with a wide assortment of people; each experience bringing its technical and social challenges; and every challenge surmounted (or at least, endured!) by the idiosyncratic and ephemeral communities that form on the Ice.

I had been a carpenter's helper at Palmer Station for about three months when, on 28 January 1989 the Argentine Navy ship *Bahia Paraiso*, departing Palmer after bringing its tourists for a visit, struck a submerged pinnacle and tore a 50-foot long gash in its hull.

The ensuing hours and days proved enormously taxing for the 26 or 27 of us on station. More than 300 people, including about 100 tourists, were aboard the *Bahia Paraiso*. Soon after the ship ran itself onto the pinnacle, passengers and crew boarded life boats and life rafts. The station personnel were called on to tow life rafts to shore (about two miles); carry on a flurry of communications with the *Bahia Paraiso*, other ships in the vicinity, other bases, and the United States; feed and shelter hundreds of strangers speaking a mix of languages; try to save the ship by sending out our large portable fuel pump on a lifeboat; all while protecting our guests from harm and our station from our guests. And always the underlying dread of what would happen if the hundreds of thousands of gallons of diesel fuel in the ship's hold were spilled.

All of the tourists and many of the Argentine military personnel were able to depart that night on other cruise ships, but we continued to host a sizeable group of Argentine military people for days.

Late in the afternoon two days after the grounding the ship rolled onto one side, spilling propane tanks and fuel drums into the sea. Station personnel in Zodiacs worked for hours rounding up all that they could find – a strenuous and heart wrenching task; our ire and frustration was exacerbated by the inactivity of several military ships that sat at anchor nearby.

Later still, *Bahia Paraiso* turned completely over. Over the space of days and weeks, much of the ship's cargo of fuel spilled, fouling the air and water and killing birds and other wildlife.

The physical and emotional toll exacted on the station crew may be imagined. We were very, very conscious of our need for mutual support and comfort. Besieged as we were, by people we didn't know and threats we never expected, it's little wonder that we developed something of a siege mentality.

One of our number, Heidi Goodwin, was an excellent artist. In the aftermath of the *Bahia Paraiso* disaster, she proposed that we have an art show. I am utterly without talent as a graphic artist. But I had always enjoyed the challenge of writing poetry. "Antarctic People" was my submission to the station art show. And while it was primarily an exercise in putting together verses that have rhythm and rhyme (more or less), I hoped to tell a true story. It is not a new story. Surely every Old Antarctic Explorer comes to recognize that it is the unique *human* environment that draws us South year after year. It is the same story underlying Apsley Cherry-Garrard's wonderful passage in *The Worst Journey in the World: Antarctic 1910-13*:

Some will tell you that you are mad, and nearly all will say, 'What is the use?' For we are a nation of shopkeepers . . . And so you will sledge nearly alone, but those with whom you sledge will not be shopkeepers: that is worth a good deal.

After his final trip to Antarctica, Thumper went to college and earned a law degree, leading to a job as an attorney with the Department of the Interior in Washington.

The 1950s-era South Georgia Survey

by Joan N. Boothe



Grytviken, South Georgia, is at left. Of the two tall peaks, Mount Nordenskjöld is to the right, and Mount Roots is on the left.

South Georgia, a 110-mile-long island, lies just south of the Antarctic Polar Front. Despite having been visited by thousands of sealers in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and inhabited year-round by whalers since 1904, maps of the island in 1951 consisted of little more than an iffy outline of the coast with a few bits of the rugged, glacier-covered mountainous interior sketched in. In late 1951, however, six men arrived to begin an ambitious effort to map the entire island. Led by Antarctic veteran Duncan Carse, the South Georgia Survey (SGS) team included trained surveyors, a geologist, and mountaineers. Among them was 24-year-old Walter Roots, a Canadian mountaineer and skier.

More than 50 years after spending six months on South Georgia in 1951-52, Alec Trendall, the SGS geologist, asked Walter to contribute a chapter about the work of the 1951-52 team to a narrative account of the South Georgia Survey. The book that Roots contributed to was published in 2011 as *Putting South Georgia on the Map*, a gloriously illustrated and wonderfully written work. In the meantime, Roots's family persuaded him to publish his account privately. This work, *Sledge, Tent &*

Theodolite appeared in 2008. What follows is from both books.



Walter Roots during the expedition.

The men of the 1951-52 SGS sailed from England to South Georgia on a whaling ship, reaching South Georgia at the beginning of November. Here was the island they were to survey, a stunning unmapped land. Roots recalls, "*It looked like a mass of terrific alpine peaks — snow and bare rocks right across the horizon. . . . As for roughness and number of peaks, it certainly beats anything I've seen.*"

The SGS team established its base at the British administrative settlement at King Edward Point. The seldom-used local jail became their home for the times that they were not in the field, "*a rather nice abode,*" Walter called it.

A few days of getting organized, then it was out into the field. Walter would be a participant in all the significant trips into the South Georgia interior. They began with a reconnaissance trip into the interior of the southern part of the island, followed by a

similar reconnaissance trip to the northern part of the island. Then it was on to the serious survey work, beginning with what was planned to be a 50-day survey trip to cover the southern interior and west coast of the island.



Manhauling up the Ross Glacier. Walter Roots is third from the right. Duncan Carse made the photograph.

This journey began in early December. A sealer landed them at Royal Bay, and then they headed away from the coast, manhauling their sledges up a glacier. Things went well at first, until the weather turned on them. During eleven days tent-bound, they celebrated Christmas. They capped the evening *“Reading aloud as the book was passed around we did Shakespeare (Macbeth if I remember correctly — perhaps a bad choice). Carols were sung as Alec picked them out on his recorder and there was Christmas music via short wave*

from . . . Mozambique.” Two days after Christmas they moved on and resumed the survey.

New Year’s Day, disaster struck. Alec Trendall, the recorder-playing geologist, slipped on a snow slope, slid a few feet, and then plunged into a crevasse. Team-member Kevin Walton, who had participated in a crevasse rescue in the Antarctic several years previously, organized things, and then had the other men lower him into the crevasse. He found Trendall 180-feet down. Walton roped Trendall to himself, then signaled those above to pull them out. Roots remembers, *“We began to pull up None of us can say how long it took. Certainly not less than two hours, maybe four, it doesn’t matter. . . . Finally came the last 30 feet or so, when muffled voices could be heard and we could pull more easily. . . . Then we had Alec on a sledge and back to the lunch halt where we could put a tent over him. Thank God.”*



Alec Trendall on the sledge following his fall into the crevasse.

Roots, in his role of expedition medico, diagnosed Trendall as having shock, cold, scrapes and lacerations, bruising, none of this really serious except for the shock. But Trendall’s knee was another matter. Was it broken or “simply” dislocated? With the degree of injury uncertain, it was clear that they had to end the journey and return to King Edward Point. They converted one of their two sledges into a litter for Trendall. With only

one other sledge, it was impossible to transport all of their gear and supplies, so they created a large depot of provisions before they departed. The plan was that later in the season, they could return here and resume this part of the survey. Several days later, they reached King Edward Point. When Trendall was examined by the doctor at the Grytviken whaling station, the diagnosis was that his severely dislocated knee was too serious to treat at South Georgia. He was evacuated to England.

Trendall was gone, and with him the geology work of the season. But the survey effort was still intact, and it went on. A successful survey of the central part of the island followed up on the Northern Reconnaissance trip. Then it would be back south to complete the southern survey.

With Roots in charge of a four-man team, the resumption of the southern survey trip began in mid-March. This time, it took only three days to reach the place where they had turned back to evacuate Trendall. But where was the depot of food that they were depending on? They couldn't find it, despite frantic digging. Once again, they had to turn back. That was bad enough, but it was only the beginning of an escalating series of problems. A smashed sledgemeter. A sledge towrope breaking and the sledge careening down a slope on its own. A flooded campsite. The worst was to come. A day later, howling winds roared in. As they lay inside holding on as best they could, the tent that Roots shared with one of the men *"vanished from over us! Also, everything that had been in it and around it. . . We hopped, in our sleeping bags, over to the other tent and asked to come in. . . . We would now be four people in the small tent. . . I watched a full five-gallon tin of fuel go bounding up the glacier like a child's balloon. . . . [and then] While eating lunch, there was a 'crack' and the sledge went. . . ."* The next morning, calm at last, a search for the vanished tent and the escaped sledge turned up both, seriously damaged.

They began their desperate retreat with Roots and a companion setting out to walk to Cumberland Bay to summon help. At last, luck was with them. After 6-7 miles, the two men spotted a ship coming to shore to hunt seals. *"We ran to the beach like madmen By 6 pm the other two were also on board, and we were eating an enormous supper of pork chops. . . ."*

The 1951-52 SGS team left South Georgia in mid-April, once again as passengers on a whaling ship. Their work was an encouraging success, but there was still much to be done to complete the map. Duncan Carse would return for three more summers, with a team of four in 1953-54, eight in 1955-56, and by himself in 1957-58.

Walter Roots would not be with any of these later teams. He married shortly after his return home in 1952. After his marriage, Walter went back to college to complete his teaching certification and then spent the rest of his working life as a teacher. He never returned to South Georgia, but his time with the SGS had a lasting impact on him. Asked about this in later years, he responded that it given him *"a wider outlook, an appreciation of people and places one probably would not have had otherwise. Four facets of life which seem important were enhanced: humility, independence, resilience and understanding."*

Stowaway in Antarctica

by Cory Laughlin

Cruising to Antarctica presents challenges like high seas, frigid temperatures, seasickness, and icebergs. We faced all of these on our trip this past austral summer with the Holland America Line *Zaandam*, a cruise ship carrying 1,400 passengers. One more wrinkle presented itself on 11 February 2016 when a tiny, frightened bird was discovered hiding under an outside stairwell.



The stowaway diving petrel.

My husband, Scott Drieschman, was the naturalist on the ship and we are both aware that seabirds can be swept onto decks during storms, and can also become deck bound when attracted by ship lights. A caring couple spotted a movement under the steps and alerted us to the little stowaway. Scott picked up the bird to examine its condition. This common diving petrel (*Pelecanoides urinatrix*) was wet and cold and needed immediate care. Since these birds nest in burrows where they are safe from predators, we created a make-shift nest in our state room closet – a laundry bag in a box. Only about 130 grams, these pelagic divers must eat often. They prey on krill and other small crustaceans.

Food was one problem to solve, but we had another more critical issue to address. The species of bird before us does not occur in Antarctica, and we were smack in the middle of the Lemaire Channel in the Antarctic Peninsula. Diving petrels inhabit the ocean waters between 35 and 55 degrees south. Their nesting habitat is subantarctic islands where they prefer grassy slopes with loose dirt for their breeding dens. My best guess was that our visitor had been blown on the deck during high winds off Cape Horn, and remained hidden for three days. The only solution was to feed our petrel for the next few days and release it near the Falkland Islands, close to the same latitude as Cape Horn.

Scott and I have raised thousands of penguins, puffins, and other seabirds. We relied on common sense to nurture our stowaway back to health. It was important that it be dry and fattened up before release.

Off to the restaurant we went and asked the chief food steward for raw shrimp and fish. When we said it for a seabird in need, our request was first met with a frown and reluctance. He told us to come back later, and at that time he gave us a bag with fresh salmon, scallops, and prawns – enough to feed a sea lion, but that was fine with us! Our petrel eagerly gobbled bits of the seafood. We scheduled five feedings a day and kept our diminutive seabird's "burrow" clean so the feathers would retain water-proofing. Without clean feathers it could not be released.



The stowaway adjusts to conditions aboard the cruise ship.

It is quite impossible to remain completely detached to a wild creature you are helping. Both sexes look alike in this species so we could not know for sure if we had a male or female. But, I picked this bird to be female. Our bird "Petra" was calm, bright-eyed, and did not hesitate to "knock" on the closet door when she was hungry. I always got the feeling that she knew we were helping her. There is a balance between science and emotion that I sometimes have a problem keeping. That is okay, as long as it does not affect research. It is part of being human.

As we approached the Falkland Islands we "beefed" Petra up, adding extra

calories for the days ahead. And then it was time. I gave our petrel a little push off my open hand and she fluttered down to the ocean surface and lay on the water with wings out. After a few anxious moments our week-long tagalong dove, wings flashing under the surface of the blue sea. Gone.

Common diving petrels can dive to 180 feet. They fly through 40 foot waves and negotiate the roughest waters in the world. We had just helped one of the most fearless, toughest creatures in the world. What began as a “wrinkle” ended up a gift.

Working ponies and dogs commemorated, at last

“The names of products, sled dogs, or pets,” sniffs the United States Board on Geographic Names in its *Policy Covering Antarctic Names*, “will ordinarily not be considered appropriate for application to *natural features* [emphasis added].”

No problem. Colonel Ronnie Smith, U.S. Air Force (Retired), was in-theater Commander of Operation Deep Freeze (the DoD logistics support to the U.S. Antarctic Program), 2005-2008. After researching the history of Roald Amundsen’s and Robert F. Scott’s 1911-1912 South Pole expeditions, Col. Smith recommended that aviation waypoints – hardly natural features – on the route between Christchurch, New Zealand, and McMurdo, Antarctica, be named for some of the ponies and dogs that, during Amundsen’s and Scott’s traverses to the South Pole, shouldered a good part of the load.

"Once the names were developed with the aid of the Christchurch Aviation Authority, I worked with the U.S. National Geospatial Intelligence Agency, which makes the maps, to get the new chart printed in time," Smith says. "I had to coordinate with all the embassies in the United States and internationally who would be affected.

And I had to get the Department of State on board.”



The presentation in Christchurch NZ by U.S. State Department Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton to Rob Fenwick, Chairman of Antarctica New Zealand. The chart rests in the Canterbury Museum next to the Robert Falcon Scott display.

The State Department got on board, all right. In November 2010, then-Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton presented a copy of the new aeronautical map at a meeting of the U.S. Antarctic Center and Antarctica New Zealand in Christchurch. She said, "The map has many benefits, but one especially unusual feature. As a reminder of the sacrifices it took to conquer the conditions on the continent, 11 of the waypoints have been named after the unsung heroes of Antarctic exploration – the dogs and ponies that made those early trips possible. In the story of the Antarctic, the names of the explorers are well-known and famous, but now they're joined by the likes of Helge and Snippet and Bones and Nobby."

Read “Ponies of the Southern Sky,” by Colleen Rutherford Archer, in the January 2016 *Equus Magazine*:
<http://equusmagazine.com/article/ponies-southern-sky-30724>

Henry Worsley's ending goal

We have lost a Society member with the recent death of Henry Worsley. An attendee at our Port Clyde gatherings, Worsley died near the end of an attempted 1,100-mile solo, unaided crossing of Antarctica from Berkner Island via the South Pole. He had successfully descended the Shackleton Glacier and was on the Ross Ice Shelf when he requested airlift out of Antarctica 30 miles short of his "journey's intended end," to use the *New York Times*'s phrase in its 26 January 2016 obituary.

News accounts mostly leave out the rationale for where this ending point is located. Worsley's shackletonsolo.org web site does not:

"Once clear of the mouth of the Shackleton Glacier, Henry will travel out onto the Ross Ice Shelf, to find a suitable site which is crevasse free and flat enough to land a small aircraft. He expects to be picked up by late January 2016. He will then be flown back to the Union Glacier camp where he will wait to be flown to Punta Arenas in Chile to complete the expedition."

Worsley collapsed short of his goal and was flown back to Punta Arenas, Chile, where he died.

In addition to the *Times*, *The Economist* and other world-scale publications widely covered his progress and end of his epic journey, and the Society's web site directs readers to other sources. He will be missed.

Correction: Jorgensen obituary

The January 2016 issue erred by stating that Arthur "Art" Jorgensen, who died 30 October 2015, was at Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station during its first winter. Pole Station was started in late 1956; the first winter was 1957. Jorgensen wintered in 1958.

Cliff Dickey (see page 2), John Spletstoeser, and others called attention to this mistake.

***Update!* Antarctic Gathering, July 2016, Port Clyde, Maine**

Wow! So far, a hundred people – old timers and newcomers – have told us they will come to Port Clyde for another Antarctic Gathering, Friday through Sunday 15-17 July 2016.

We've held these gatherings every other year for a decade. People enjoy the Maine coast and meeting with comrades to renew memories or trade new ones.

Friday afternoon: beverages on the lawn; for dinner we may have fish chowder.

Saturday: we open our garage to speakers with tales of Ice experiences or science or other; a catered lunch is on site.

Sunday: a local lobsterman prepares a midday feast.

Where: 155 Marshall Point Road, Port Clyde, Maine 04855. Cost: a donation bucket will be conspicuous.

See January newsletter for lodging info, or email Paul Dalrymple or your editor.

All who tell us they're coming will receive an email in June with more particulars, including a list of Saturday speakers.