



# The Antarctic Society

VOLUME 12-13

FEBRUARY

NO. 2

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**BRASH ICE.** It has been a time of trial and tribulation, not only here in CONUS with the likes of Sandy, but also on the ice with a terrible air tragedy claiming three lives in late January. However, there was one cause of celebration when our Honorary President, Charles Winthrop Molesworth Swithinbank was one of the Queen's highly honored New Year Day's acclamations. Charles was made a MBE "for services to exploration and research in the Antarctic." It did not surprise any true Antarctic who knows Charles, although many of us wondered what took the Queen all these years to honor someone who has performed at the very highest levels in Antarctica for seven decades.

The British Antarctic Survey (BAS) has been saved from being dismantled after a "climbdow" from the universities and science minister, David Willetts, and the National Environment Research Council (NERC). Willetts said to parliament "BAS is a national and international asset that delivers world-class environmental science, and this country's strategic presence in Antarctica and the South Atlantic." NERC agreed that it would not proceed with the proposal for merger. "I am delighted that the right decision has been made" said John Dudeney, BAS deputy director. He continued by saying that the BAS is outstanding and always has been, noting that it was about to embark on a landmark experiment to drill into a lake hidden deep under the Antarctic ice, a feat he compared to landing a spacecraft on Mars.

More good news from the U.K. Three bottles of rare, 19th century Scotch found beneath the floor boards of Ernest Shackleton's abandoned expedition base were returned to Antarctica after a distiller from Scotland, Whyte & Mckay, recreated the long-lost recipe producing a limited edition of 50,000 bottles. A sample was drawn with a syringe through the cork of one of the bottles. It was said that the whisky had "a pleasant aroma." Each bottle was priced at \$175.00, with five per cent of the proceeds going to the Antarctic Heritage Fund. The whisky is to be transferred to Shackleton's hut at Cape Royds and replaced beneath the restored hut as part of a program to protect the legacy of the so-called heroic era of Antarctic exploration from 1898 to 1915. One amazing thing is that when it was found, some 102 years later, the whisky was still sloshing around. Banana Belt Whisky, shall we say?

There is something new in the modus operandi of our treasury; we now are accepting PayPal as a convenient way for many of you, particularly those on the ice, to pay your membership. We hope that this may result in us getting new memberships from those who no longer do business the old fashioned way, by checks. Be sure to read the article that follows in this Newsletter.

There seems to be a proliferation of new books coming out on Antarctica. One of our members, Jason Anthony, has come up with a very interesting book on Antarctic food, HOOSH, which is reviewed later in this newsletter. Jason has gotten great publicity for his book, with the New York Times Book Review for December 2<sup>nd</sup> giving him very high honors. He is also working both sides of the streets appearing on radio talk shows, speaking at book reviews in public libraries' et cetera. We went to one of his presentations where he brought some of his own home-made cookies from a recipe of Amundsen's. The book is much, much better than Amundsen's cookies, believe you me. Another book came out recently, although we have not seen or read it, it's Gabrielle Walker's "ANTARCTICA: AN INTIMATE PORTRAIT OF A MYSTERIOUS CONTINENT" by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

The American Polar Society is hosting a Symposium on The Polar Regions in the 21st Century: Globalization, Climate Change and Geopolitics, to be held 15-18 April, 2013 at the Marine Biological Laboratory at Woods Hole, Massachusetts. The keynote speakers are going to be the distinguished National Medal of Science honoree, Lonnie Thompson of The Ohio State University, and Paul Mayewski, director of the Climate Change Institute at the University of Maine. Those who are interested in details should go to the APS website ([americanpolar.org](http://americanpolar.org)), where they can link up with the MBL website to find out about pricing, travel, housing, and eating. Or if you have a specific question, call (508) 289-7214.

**MISTER WAKIMOTO GOES TO.....ARLINGTON.** There is a new man on the streets in Ballston who will have as his responsibilities a directorate which includes polar sciences. His name is Roger Wakimoto, and he is coming to NSF from the National Center of Atmospheric Research (NCAR) where he has served as its director. He is leaving NCAR's beautiful bucolic hillside campus in Boulder where deer graze at will for a subway existence in a heavily populated

crowded major intersection of Arlington where screeching sirens of police cruisers, fire engines, ambulances and wreckers mingle with rear-end-collisions and bumper-to bumper traffic. We hope that Roger knows what he is getting into. He is going to serve as assistant director for the Directorate for Geosciences (GEO) where an annual budget of approximately one billion dollars supports core research in the polar, atmospheric, earth and ocean sciences. GEO manages facilities and an academic research fleet, including the newly launched R/V SIKULIAQ and the NCAR-Wyoming Supercomputing Center which was recently dedicated. His background includes a professorship in the Department of Atmospheric Science at UCLA, where he chaired the department. Good luck, Roger, and enjoy the commuting.

### **PRESIDENT'S LETTER**

(Charles Lagerbom)

With 2013 off like a rocket, I would like take this opportunity to thank you for the support you have given me as your president for the past four years. As the final year of my term begins, I would like to update you on some of the exciting things going on with the Antarctic Society.

The society website is ever-expanding and our webmaster constantly adding new content. Please check it out at (<http://www.antarctican.org/>). It is truly becoming the crown jewel of the Society. The slide scanning project has also grown by leaps and bounds since we started it nearly six years ago. The Society has undertaken this job to help preserve the Antarctic images from our members' time down south. And we have been gratified by the response. We have cataloged and scanned over thirty collections totalling nearly twenty-five thousand images. Saved for posterity, these images have been converted into a more modern digitized format with the original slide and digital copies being returned to the owner. As the overall collection grows, many are appearing on our society webpage and more will be forthcoming. The Society has also become home to some of our members'

complete polar collection of books, slides, photos, correspondence, maps, flags, clothing and other memorabilia. When a member no longer is interested, able and/or willing to hold on to their polar collections, they have turned to the Society. We have provided a secure, environmental-friendly repository for those items. When they arrive, the collections are cataloged, preserved (if necessary) and then stored in archive-safe files, folders, binders and bins. If anyone is interested in taking advantage of the slide scanning project and/or the collection repository, please contact me.

Another bit of Society news is that the Antarctic research vessel HERO has been featured in the November issue of Portland Magazine. You can download a PDF of the article at: <http://www.portlandmonthly.com/pdf/Working-Class%20Hero.pdf>). She is currently in pretty sad shape, sitting in the mud at Bay Center, Washington. I was contacted about it by Portland Magazine and we discussed the possibility and potential if the vessel could be purchased and returned home to Maine for preservation and display. Some contacts have since been initiated, people approached and interest expressed in this project. If you too are interested in the HERO and these developments, please send me your contact information and I will keep you in the loop.

**WEBSITE UPDATE** (Tom Henderson)  
Our website continues to post unique material that is often not available anywhere else. Examples include Bert Crary's status reports from the IGY (contributed by Guy Guthridge) and Patrick "Rediron" McCormick's memoir of his experience building McMurdo and South Pole Stations as a Navy Seabee. The latter is the most viewed document on the website over the past six months.

Another recent post is an excellent two-part article on the contribution of the reliable Ferguson farm tractor to Antarctic exploration. It was originally published earlier this year in "Ferguson Furrows," the magazine of the Ferguson Enthusiasts of North America

(FENA) organization. FENA has graciously allowed our Society to make the article publicly available on our website. It is a detailed and lavishly illustrated story of Ed Hillary's use of Fergusons in his historic traverse to the South Pole as part of the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition, 1955-58. Don't miss it.

We have posted Bob Benson's personally narrated film based on footage that he shot during the first winter at Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station in 1957-58. The film includes excellent shots of the famous incident where a caterpillar tractor was dropped from the air at Pole but the parachutes failed to open. What an impact!

We have also posted original film footage from the 1939-41 United States Antarctic Service Expedition (USASE) recorded by expedition member J.F. Ruttle. His grandson, Matt Oppliger, graciously made this film available to the Society. A portion of it was used in the official USASE film, but the majority has never been publicly viewed – until it was posted on our website. The most recent addition has been Dr. Ed Robinson's personally narrated film on the 1957-58 Ross Ice Shelf Traverse which includes Ed's own motion picture footage. This film appears nowhere else.

Finally, if you haven't visited the Time Trek application on our website recently, take a look. In the past six weeks, 532 events have been added dating from 1958-84 and 142 historical stations and bases have been added. There is much left to do, but this is a big step toward making Time Trek an invaluable resource for Antarctic history. So visit the website often. You never know what will appear there!

#### **PAY BY CREDIT CARD!**

Antarctican Society members can now pay for their annual memberships by credit card through our website, [www.antarctican.org](http://www.antarctican.org)! Simply go the About Us page where you will

find a PayPal option. Here is the procedure for using the option:

1. On the About Us page of the website, under “Membership,” you will see a PayPal “Add to Cart” button with a drop-down window. Click the down arrow on the right of the window to see the options for membership. Click on the option that fits your circumstance so that it now appears in the window.
2. Click the “Add to Cart” button, which will take you to the PayPal website page for the Antarctic Society. You will see your membership purchase item with the amount to be billed shown. If the information is correct, click “Check Out.” If the information is not correct, click the “Remove” shown beside the item and then click “continue shopping” when it appears, which will take you back to the Antarctic Society website to make another selection.
3. If you have clicked “Check Out,” it brings you to a new page. If you have a PayPal account, you can enter your password on this page and continue to pay through that account. If you wish to pay directly by credit card, click “Don’t have a PayPal account?” (lower right).
4. If you are paying by credit card, you will now see a new page where you will enter your credit card information. Fill this out and then click on the “Review and Continue” button at the bottom of the form.
5. Review the summary of your purchase on the new page and then click the “Pay Now” button on that page to finalize the charge to your card.

You may still pay by check if this is your preference. The credit card option is for the convenience of those who feel comfortable in paying online or who may not have a checking account.

**A SUBMERSIBLE NAMED DALE ANDERSEN.** Once upon a time a diver in the US Navy had a son, and he named him Dale.

A typical military brat, he was brought up in many foreign countries, lived in many states. He was a perfect offspring for a career which was to take him to the Antarctic, as well as the Arctic. As a Hokie from Virginia Tech, he came under the influence of George Simmons, and he worked with him in the Dry Valleys, first in 1978. He recently just came back from his fourth consecutive season at the Russian station Novolazarevskaya where he worked at Lake Untersee, the largest (11.4 square kilometers) and deepest (over 170 meters) freshwater lake in East Antarctica. He leads a team of scientists conducting a series of studies aimed at describing the physical, chemical and biological aspects of the lake, and to sample the microbial life found in the lake’s water column and bottom sediments. As far as Dale knows, this is the only location on Earth where, in a modern ecosystem, large conical stromatolites are formed as they did billion of years ago on early Earth. This whole study program is most unique in another aspect, it is all PRIVATELY funded, and Dale has to go out and beat the bushes between seasons so that he can continue this very interesting and important research. The good part is that the money can be uncovered for the logistics, the bad news is that he himself is not getting wealthy. But he appears to be as happy as a clam at high tide, particularly being able to go back to the Arctic in our summertime, where he has also worked for the past 17 years. Even though he is now 57 years old, he doesn’t appear to be slowing down or even thinking about retirement.

Dale had an eventful return from Lake Untersee, evidently riding shot gun on Santa’s sleigh, landing late Christmas Eve at his home in Lake Placid, where his Russian wife Sasha and daughter Masha, plus Siberian pup Nikita awaited him. But shortly thereafter bad things started to happen. Nakita, who was born in Inukjuak, just off Northern Hudson Bay, came down with a very aggressive form of acute lymphoblastic leukemia, and Dale lost his wonderful companion of nine years. Shortly thereafter Dale awoke early in the morning with abdominal pains, he had developed acute

appendicitis, four weeks after leaving Lake Untersee . Incidentally, Dale met Sasha on the FEDEROV back in 1990 when he was on his way to work at Bunger Hills. Could it have been part of a cultural East-West Exchange Program , sure sounds like it?

**SCIENTIFIC BREAKTHROUGH ON WHILLANS ICE STREAM** (NSF) In late January 2013, scientists and drillers with the interdisciplinary Whillans Ice Stream Subglacial Access Drilling Project (WISSARD) announced that they had successfully drilled through 800 meters (2,600 feet) of Antarctic ice to reach a sub-glacial lake and retrieved water and sediment samples that have been isolated from direct contact with the atmosphere for many thousands of years. The samples may contain microscopic life that has evolved uniquely to survive in conditions of extreme cold and lack of light and nutrients. To obtain the samples, they had used a customized hot-water drill.

WISSARD targeted a small lake (1.2 square miles in area) where several lakes appear linked to each other and may drain to the ocean, as the first project to obtain clean, intact samples of water and sediments from a sub-glacial lake. The achievement is the culmination of more than a decade of international and national planning. There are 13 WISSARD principal investigators representing eight different U.S. institutions. The interdisciplinary research team includes groups of experts in the following areas of science: life in icy environments, led by John Prisco, of Montana State University; glacial geology, led by Ross Powell, of Northern Illinois University; and glacial hydrology, led by Slawek Tulaczyk, of the University of California, Santa Cruz.

The WISSARD team will now process the water and sediment samples in hopes of answering seminal questions related to the structure and function of sub-glacial microbial life, climate history and contemporary ice-sheet dynamics. Video surveys of the lake floor and measurements of selected physical

and chemical properties of the water and sediments will allow the team to further characterize the lake and its environs.

A team of engineers and technicians directed by Frank Rack of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, designed, developed and fabricated the specialized hot-water drill that was fitted with a filtration and germicidal UV system to prevent contamination of the sub-glacial environment and to recover clean samples for microbial analyses. The numerous customized scientific samplers and instruments were carefully cleaned before being lowered into the borehole through the ice and into the lake.

#### **TWIN OTTER CRASHES ON MT.**

**ELIZABETH.** (Extracted from several issues of the Christchurch Press, forwarded by Margaret Lanyon) As this terrible tragedy has been given wide-spread publicity, probably all of you are very much aware of how one of Kenn Borek's planes, a Twin Otter, flew into Mt. Elizabeth, about half-way from the South Pole to McMurdo Sound, on January 23<sup>rd</sup>. A former general manager of the airline was monitoring the plane's flight on a computer, "detected it flying at just under 4000m, dropped to 2700m, then climb back to its former height travelling at 140 knots, before suddenly recording zero speed." He, Steve Pennikett, said that it was his candid opinion that the aircraft flew into the rocks.

Two rescue helicopters reached the site three days later, but a landing was not possible. The wreckage was spotted lodged in the side of a cliff on the mountain. Field teams were able to land close to the crash site on the fourth day, and they recovered some equipment from the plane's tail, including the cockpit voice recorder. However "it was too treacherous for the field teams to access more of the wreckage which was largely embedded in snow and ice on a steep mountain slope" . Poor weather forced the search to be called off until next season, sometime in October. The three men on board, all Canadians, were undoubtedly killed in the crash, and it was not possible to extract their bodies at this time. The pilot of

the plane was Bob Heath who has been flying in the polar regions for Kenn Borak Air since 1991. As we go to press, we have not heard anything relative to the contents of the cockpit voice recorder, which should provide crucial insight into the moments leading up to the crash.

**HOOSH:** A Review by Charles H. Lagerbom  
Jason Anthony's *Hoosh: Roast Penguin, Scurvy Day, and Other Stories of Antarctic Cuisine* University of Nebraska Press, 2012, 288 pages. Jason Anthony's new book, *Hoosh* is a wonderful journey through the history of Antarctic exploration uniquely viewed through the lens of food, cooks, provisions, preparation, nutrition, privation and even starvation.

In the early 1990s, I spent a field season high in the cirques of the Asgaard Mountains overlooking the Labyrinth of Upper Wright Valley. A team of three, we kept a pot of food going for over two weeks. We jokingly called it "who-hash" since who knew what was in it, as we ate from the pot at mealtime and then kept the leftovers to be used as a base from which to add other ingredients for the next meal. We added meat, noodles, rice, sauces, powdered juices etc depending on its consistency, too stiff or too liquidy. Pretty much anything went. We reasoned it was easy to reheat, as filling/tasty as we wanted it to be and did not need to be cleaned while in use. Little did I know that our culinary experiment would be yet one more of many stories, illustrative of Anthony's larger narrative of the cuisine history of the continent. He weaves our who-hash into a larger statement about the importance of food, its novelty, its creativity, its necessity and its variations throughout the history of Antarctica. 'Local' cuisine is exhaustively covered such as meals consisting of penguins, whales, seabirds, seals and so on, especially in the early 'heroic' days. Anthony adroitly covers such topics as scurvy, starvation and other nutritional deficiencies while highlighting cooking successes, tragedies, trials and triumphs many of which rendered the cook, chef or messmate involved either heroic or sometimes even villainous.

While the stories of the early days were well described and interesting, I found even more fascinating the modern era when food became not so much just a survival necessity but in addition one of the rather limited ways to make the entire Antarctic experience manageable, enjoyable and memorable. In fact, the author weaves the culinary history of the continent into the larger idea of what Antarctica means to those who have experienced it. He identifies that Antarctica itself is the great white menu that feeds those who go there, yet he also suggests that that contact only makes us hungrier for its beauty after we have left. I think most of us would agree.

The striking cover photo of two men about to butcher a seal sets the tone for this enjoyable read that is well worth your time. The many illustrations lend credence to the centrality or importance of food to all the Antarctic expeditions and visiting personnel. Fifteen pages of notes as well as a lengthy list of selected resources help for further information. One appendix highlights a *Hoosh* timeline/ expedition chronology while another offers some selected creative recipes of the 'local' cuisine. For a fresh perspective through a unique prism, Jason Anthony's *Hoosh* has successfully captured the 'flavor' of Antarctica.

**ORDEAL BY ICE – SHIPS OF THE ANTARCTIC** by Rorke Bryan, Sheridan House, New York, 2011, Reviewed by Steve Dibbern

Rorke Bryan has done a great service for all of us who are interested in Antarctic history. He has taken the sometimes minimal information out of the addenda of explorers' books and brought it forward to present a thorough history of the ships that allowed those explorers to accomplish (sometimes) their projects. Some were famous such as the *Endurance*, *Terra Nova* and *Discovery*, but many remained as anonymous footnotes in history books.

He starts with the earliest approaches to the continent including some expeditions I had no idea about, for example; Zheng He's early 1400 voyages. Bryan goes on through virtually all of the early probes toward Antarctica and supplies detail about the construction, physical statistics, and operational capabilities of each ship.

This attention to detail is followed through the historic periods, whaling, science support, ice breaking and into tourist ships. Indeed it is the chapters that cover the twentieth century that really excited me. Some of the ships discussed had no business near ice much less **in** it! Many expeditions could not afford the luxury of either purpose built ships or even used polar ships. Byrd's *Eleanor Bolling* and *Jacob Ruppert* land in this category. It is obvious from the text though that he has respect and affection for his subjects. Reading between the lines (and the back flap Bio) the reader becomes aware that Mr. Bryan has spent time on some of the later ships. He is a British Antarctic Survey veteran.

Ordeal By Ice is also a very attractive book as it is lavishly illustrated containing diagrams of hull cross sections, fine maps and lots of color pictures. There is an extensive bibliography and it is well indexed. All of this means that it is an attractive treasure trove for the Antarctic history buff. It is also attractive enough that it will hopefully pull in a few Antarctic neophytes and give them the bug. A great book to either read from cover to cover (as I did) or use as a reference (which I do).

**UNSUNG KIWI ANTARCTICAN HEROINE RECOGNIZED.** A young New Zealand lassie returned to her homeland in 1963 after a tour of duty in Canada, and she immediately applied for a position in the Antarctic office at Harewood. Although the position was only a summer support position, it seemed that it had potential for growth and longevity. She, Margaret Lanyon, ended up as an assistant to Walt Seelig in his role as the NSF Representative in New Zealand, and they made a truly great team beloved by all

personnel going through Christchurch to McMurdo. She even outlasted Walt, and continued onward in her position until her retirement in March 1999. Looking back on those days, Margaret says that they were "great years, great challenges."

But whenever olden Antarcticans gathered to relive their glory days on the ice, invariably they reminisce about what great times they had going through New Zealand and often they would recall what a great person Margaret was, how she greased their wheels to make their Antarctic transition one of less strain and pleasant memories. So much so that a bunch of us ancients and hopefully honorables decided that we should invite her to an Antarctic gathering here in the States. The site was picked, my hideaway on mid-coastal Maine, and invitations went out to many who had enjoyed the hospitality of Kiwis and still had a love for seeing Margaret at least one more time. Margaret was thrilled that so many who knew her in yesteryear still had a desire to see her again, and seriously considered coming to Maine. But her wish was tempered by her relatives and friends who thought that the trip might be too much of a physical strain on her, and in the end they prevailed upon her to send her regrets.

However, once you have the people, once you have made plans, we went ahead and had a party anyway. We had over a hundred people. The likes of Charles Swithinbank from Cambridge, England, the likes of Michele Raney from Balboa Island, California, the likes of Bob Dodson who is one of the few living survivors of the Ronne Antarctic Research Expedition, the likes of Polly Penhale who has occupied about every chair in the Office of Polar Programs at NSF, the likes of Tony Gow, honored recipient of the Seligman Crystal for his outstanding research on ice cores, the likes of George Denton who has followed his ice axe to most glaciated regions of the world, the likes of anaesthesiologist Warren Zapol who knows all about the behaviour of diving mammals, the likes of Charlie Bentley who occupies the Bert Cray

Chair at the University of Wisconsin, and even scientific giants like Lou Lanzerotti from Byrd and Siple stations who now serves his term as a presidential appointee to our most prestigious National Science Board. And the list goes on even to include such prominent youngsters as Liesl Scherthanner who has spent over a dozen seasons at the South Pole.

The Gathering honoring Margaret started off with Kiwi-born Tony Gow reading some words from Margaret to the audience in a converted garage theatre. In the beginning she directed the people “during the next few days you will be given the opportunity of sharing many of your memories and experiences in an atmosphere of warm friendship and learning “ Then she ended her words to the audience “For my part, I’ve always felt it was a privilege to earn a living doing something I enjoyed. The very special group of men and women with whom I worked over many years of involvement with the Antarctic program made that possible.” The rest of the day honoring Margaret was spent with many from the audience talking about their experiences and memories as Margaret had suggested. The first speaker was Karen Ronne Tupek who spoke about four generations of the Ronne family going to the ice. Probably the highlight of all the presentations was from Dale Andersen who had recently returned from still another season at the Russian base of Novolazareyskaya.

The following day, there were more exchanges of memories, mostly on a one on one basis. And we ate, and how we ate. The first evening we had haddock chowder by the best seafood chef in town. The next day we consumed both crabmeat and lobsters rolls, while Dick Cameron, David Marchant, and Charles Lagerbom manned the grill for those meat eaters. And the grill was still fired up the next day, although the main meal featured hot boiled local lobsters. Then it became time to take the bottles and cans to the redemption center, and to clean up the place.

In the ensuing weeks, various people sent in their pictures. One, Rob Flint, sent in a wonderful photo-book of his artistry with the camera. Before he left Port Clyde, Eagle Scout Mark Leinmiller uploaded all of his pictures onto our computer. And it did not take long for us to realize that we could put together a special photo book for Margaret. So much of the fall was spent collecting photos from others, including some from an old friend of Margaret’s, Chris Shepherd, who was not at the Gathering. Then the very best were pulled aside for the making of this special photo book, and we ended up with a volume of 100 pictures, plus an Antarctic map showing Lanyon Peaks (thanks to Pete Bermel) and a recently written Antarctic poem, BACK HOME, by the versatile Dick Cameron. Charles Lagerbom rushed over here one evening, and we put it all together sending it off so that it would reach Margaret before Christmas. It arrived there two days before!

However, we weren’t very proud of our hurried first edition, so we came up with a new version. Margaret received this one on January 26<sup>th</sup> and emailed back “The pearlised effect on the cover is stunning and it is certainly a handsome looking book. You’ve all worked tremendously hard to ensure the success of the publication, clearly driven by so much affection, combined with many fond memories. I am truly honoured to be part of it. What else can I say but thank you and warm regards to you and all my good friends.”

This picture book is named “Margaret Lanyon, An Appreciation.” It is eight inches by eight inches, some forty-one pages. There are a hundred pictures, seven of which include Margaret. Several of our friends, twenty-six to date, have said that they want copies. Even though the book is a tribute to Margaret, the rest of the photo-book is of her friends, people like you and me. If you are possibly interested, just let us know

**WE ALL SURVIVED THE BLIZZARD OF 2013! HURRAY FOR US!**