



THE ANTARCTICAN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

P. O. Box 40122

Washington, D. C. 20016

Volume 1, Number 4

May, 1976

MEETING NOTICE

Lecture

BIRD LIFE IN THE SOUTHERN OCEANS

by

Dr. George E. Watson, III

Curator of Birds
National Museum of Natural History
Smithsonian Institution

8:00 p. m., Thursday

May 20, 1976

The President's Room, The George Washington University Faculty Club

The Marvin Center

800 21st Street, N. W.

Washington, D. C.

The Marvin Center, also known as the University Center Building, is located on the west side of 21st Street, between H and I Streets. A limited amount of parking is available on the adjacent streets. Parking is also available for a fee on the lower level of the Marvin Center. Enter the parking area from H Street.

Dr. Watson is author of Birds of the Antarctic and Sub-Antarctic, published by the American Geophysical Union in December, 1975. He was principal author and convener of the 14th Map Folio of similar title, published by the American Geographical Society as one of its Antarctic Map Folio Series in 1971. Dr. Watson served as American Observer on a Chilean Antarctic expedition in 1963-64. He was a USARP scientist aboard the Icebreaker East Wind in 1966. He also served with NASA aboard the Croatan, going as far south as 60° S. This past February he made a quick cruise around Cape Horn as instructor on a ship sent out by the Smithsonian Institution.

ANTARCTICAN SOCIETY NEWS

At the annual business meeting of the Society, April 28, 1976, the following were elected for terms of one year.

President: Kenneth J. Bertrand Vice President: Kendall N. Moulton
Secretary/Historian: Charles E. Morrison
Treasurer/Membership Secretary: William B. Cooke

At the same meeting the following persons were elected to 3-year terms on the Board of Directors of the Society:

Robert J. Allen
Richard L. Cameron

Mrs. Sophie R. Dales
George E. Watson, III

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We are continuing our efforts to correct and up-date the mailing addresses on our membership rolls. After mailing out the last issue of the Newsletter eight pieces of mail were returned by the Postal Service. For each mailing the number has been reduced. If anyone knows of the current address of any of the people listed below, we would appreciate receiving a card or note, telling us what it is.

Mrs. Henry C. Collins
Mr. William J. L. Felts
Mrs. John V. Hansen (Ann Bach Hansen)
Mr. Richard J. Litell

Mr. James B. Franke
Rear Admiral James R. Reedy, USN
Mr. Vernor Stillner
Miss Linda Victory

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The annual garden party for the Antartican Society is being planned for the latter part of June. Details will be available in the next number of the Newsletter. It will be issued early to give you plenty of time to arrange your social schedule.

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ANNUAL DUES

Annual dues are payable on or before October 1. In order to curtail expenses and hold the dues at \$3.00, the Board of Directors instructed the Treasurer not to send out individual notices this year but to rely on reminders in each number of the Newsletter. Apparently this has not been entirely effective, for a considerable number of members have not paid dues for 1975-76. If you are one of them, please use the blank to mail your dues to the Treasurer. If you are not sure, send the check and it will be credited to 1976-77 if you are not in arears.

THE ANTARCTICAN SOCIETY
P. O. Box 40122
Washington, D. C. 20016

Enclosed is my check for \$3.00, payable to the Antartican Society, to cover my dues for 1975-76. If I am not in arears, I understand it will be credited to 1976-77.

Name: _____

Street: _____ Apartment: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

ANTARCTICA AND THE ARTS

Once almost the exclusive domain of the seal hunter and intermittently the goal of the explorer, Antarctica in the 20th Century became increasingly a field of investigation for science. Scientific activity reached a peak during the International Geophysical Year (1957-58) and has continued on a high level in the subsequent work of several nations under the direction of SCAR (Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research) of the International Council of Scientific Unions. The attendant publicity of this widespread interest in Antarctica by the scientific community apparently has alerted the people in the Arts to the existence of a unique and unfamiliar world in the south polar regions. It is an environment that has been interpreted until recently, in so far as the Arts are concerned, only by amateurs although some have been very competent. As the following will show, this is now changing.

The new interest in Antarctica by practitioners of the Arts has resulted in works of many forms. They include paintings, photographs, poems, narrative and expository prose, and most recently a symphony. In the United States some of these efforts have been supported in whole or in part by the National Science Foundation, through the Office of Polar Programs, and by the National Endowment for the Arts.

Recent American examples in which the Antarctic provided artistic inspiration are *Some Songs of the South Pole*, a book of poems by Edward A. Bacon, then Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (1960); "Barkentine Bear," a poem by Richard S. Black, Rear Admiral USNR (Ret.), *Naval Research Reviews*, Vol. 16, No. 1, April, 1963, pp. 12-13; *The Edge of the World, Ross Island, Antarctica* by Charles Neider, reviewed in the November issue of the *Antarctic Society Newsletter*, and the exhibition of paintings by Daniel Lang and photographs by Eliot Porter, described in the February number of the *Newsletter*. The poem *Adequate Earth* and the symphony based on it are discussed below.

A REVIEW

Donald Finkel, *Adequate Earth*, Atheneum, 122 East 42nd Street, New York, N. Y., 10017, 1972. xii and 51 pp. \$2.95.

This is a small volume of seven poems on Antarctica. The last poem is entitled "Adequate Earth" and gives its name to the volume. It is the seventh book by Finkel, a native of New York City and a member of the faculty of Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri, where he has been poet in residence since 1960. The poems are based on the writings of such famous Antarctic personages as Scott, Shackleton, Amundsen, and Byrd and on Finkel's own observations during a visit to Antarctica in 1970 under the auspices of the Office of Polar Programs of the National Science Foundation.

In his *Answer Back* (1968), relating to cave exploration, Finkel developed a collage technique which he has perfected in *Adequate Earth*. His reflections, in a variety of verse forms, on the awful and beautiful ice-drowned land and on the reactions of others to it are linked to appropriate quotations from some of the classic works on Antarctic exploration. Finkel warns, "I am concerned, however, lest some readers be led to misconstrue the function of the quoted passages. This is not a work of scholarship, but of the imagination. These precious scraps, culled from sledging journals, memoirs, histories, and technical articles are intended simply as lights in a constellation in which my own observations form an integral part."

To "help the traveller gain his bearings" Finkel points out that the first poem, ONE LAST RESORT, looks out from the door of Shackleton's hut at Cape Royds. ANGELS AND FOOLS related to Cherry-Gerrard's mid-winter trip to the Emperor penguin rookery at Cape Crozier. WONT IT BE FUN deals with the trek across the Ross Ice Shelf by Scott, Shackleton and Wilson in 1902-03. POLE BUSINESS is based on Amundsen's dash to the Pole from the head of Axel Heiberg Glacier, and SOME TIME on the tragic journey of Scott and his companions. HOW LITTLE relates to Byrd's reactions to the solitude of Advance Base. These "points of reference," if not absolutely necessary, are at least an assurance for the Antarcican that he is with the poet, but it is doubtful if they are sufficient for the uninitiated although the glossary (pp. 48-51) may help the latter. Perhaps it isn't necessary for one unacquainted with Antarctica to get some message from the poems.

The poems will probably appeal to a narrow audience because they are oriented around an environment that is strange to most people. However, anyone familiar with the Antarctic and with the epics of its exploration will enjoy Finkel's vivid and incisive reflections. KJB

ADEQUATE EARTH, A SYMPHONY*

While Eliot Porter's photographies and Daniel Lang's paintings were on exhibit at CEMREL, Inc., Saint Louis, Missouri, January 31-February 29, Robert Wykes's "Adequate Earth," a symphonic setting of seven poems published under that name by Donald Finkel, was performed by the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Gerhardt Zimmermann, February 5, 6 and 7 in Powell Symphony Hall, Saint Louis. The symphony has been commissioned by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Saint Louis Symphony Society.

The symphony was highly original, and according to the St. Louis Post Dispatch, "the most talked-about piece of new music to be done in St. Louis for at least a decade."

Wykes said, "From the beginning certain design features of the work were dictated by the nature of the poems—the use of multiple chorouses, the use of more than one speaking voice ... Now, in its final form, it seems to me a unique species; I would be hard put to cite a direct historical precedent."

The speaking voices were taken by baritone William Warfield as narrator and by Finkel, himself, as poet. The Washington University Civic Chorous, the University Choir and Madrigal Singers served as the three chorous groups.

The performance was generally praised, but a principal criticism of the work was "the lack of a text which severely impaired the public's ability to follow a work in which the text has been deliberately given primary importance by the composer." This is certainly a matter which is not difficult to correct in future performances, but the complexity and cost of producing the symphony may make them rare.

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The exhibition of Antarctic photographs by Eliot Porter and paintings by Daniel Lang will be at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Blacksburg, Virginia, from October 2-31, 1976. A more complete schedule for 1976 and 1977 will be carried in a later number of the Newsletter. However, the exhibit has an open schedule from June 26 to September 12. Anyone interested should write to Traveling Exhibition Service, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C. 20560.

* The above commentary by the editor has been assembled from articles in the St. Louis Post Dispatch, the St. Louis Globe Democrat, and from the official program of the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra.