THE ANTARCTICAN SOCIETY

c/o R. J. Siple
905 N. Jacksonville Street
Arlington, Virginia 22205

HONORARY PRESIDENT — AMBASSADOR PAUL C. DANIELS

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By Popular Demand ....

The Antarctican Society
proudly presents
an old-time favorite

THE UNITED STATES RESEARCH PROGRAM IN ANTARCTICA

by

Dr. Edward P. Todd
Director
Division of Polar Programs
National Science
Foundation

Wednesday evening, May 12

at 8 p.m.

Board Room (Room 540)
National Science Foundation
18th and G Streets NW

Dr. Todd is a northeaster from Newburyport who came to Washington to seek fame and fortune in the sacred rooms of the National Science Foundation. Then one day he found himself the Director of this nation's most perilous and also most exciting program, the United States Antarctic Research Program (USARP). Dr. Todd goes to the ice each year to escape 18th & G Streets and to see firsthand what kind of an operation he is running there. Be sure and come on the 12th to hear him tell it as he sees it from The Director's Chair.

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Good News! No Bergy Bits! We had to go to press early with this Newsletter as both Ruth and I have mid- to late April involvements with members of our respective families. Bob Rutford's 1982 Memorial Lecture was not ready for printing, but Charlie Murphy's memorial comments were, so-we are using Charlie's now and will use Bob's in June.

The May 12th meeting will also be our annual business meeting. One amendment coming up for vote - making the treasurer's position semi-permanent so in the future Ruth Siple can legally succeed herself. Anyone with a face like Ruth's has to be honest. Slate of officers (President, Secretary and five Board members) will be presented for election by acclamation. Come to vote "yes" so that we can get on with the meeting. Light refreshments and coffee for those who vote the party line. P.C.D.

412 Paid Members as of April 6

WE THANK YOU!

Charlie Murphy, seventy-seven years old, has not lived by the sword, but by the pen and he has done quite well, thank you. When you look at Charlie you see a hulk of Boston Irish, a throwback to John L. Sullivan, although his kind face with the map of Ireland immediately lets you know he's a man of passion and words, far from ever being a stevedore. He was brought up in Newton Center, somewhat removed from the Irish stronghold in South Boston, and he did something very un-Irish — he went to Harvard rather than Boston College. After a couple of years, he decided he had to start his life's pursuit in journalism. He went to the Big Apple where he latched on to the Associated Press, then went to the Evening Post, and from there to the World. Charlie was the CBS man with Byrd on the 1933-35 expedition, and it is strongly rumored that you can detect the fingers of Charlie in the writing of Byrd's Alone. After BAE II Charlie was associated with Time, Inc. for thirty-four years, covering politics and national strategy for both Fortune and Life magazines. He has been very active in the Security and Intelligence Fund here in Washington. In his speech he makes several references to James Angleton, which should be a familiar name to most of you, as Mr. Angleton was formerly head of counterintelligence for the CIA. We were pleased that Mr. Angleton could come to our dinner and lecture, as did another one of Charlie's delightful local friends, retired Air Force Colonel Vincent Ford (who had also come to an earlier Memorial Lecture). Charlie's speech was a sheer delight, especially when you realize that he put it all together in a couple of days. When he finished he received a resounding, continuing applause for several minutes. Those of you who know the present-day Charlie Murphy, who never passes a bar without paying his due respects, will be particularly enthralled by his great story about the Golden Stalactite. Charlie now lives on Pickle Street, Grafton, Vermont 05146.

SOME VAGRANT RECOLLECTIONS OF AN ELDERLY ANTARCTICIST

- Charles J.V. Murphy

When the Antarctican Society asked me to dip into a dimming memory for a recollection or two of the Second Byrd Antarctic Expedition, 1933-35, my response was, "Why me?" That experience was over and done with half a century ago, and in all the years since I've never had occasion to render such an account before strangers, and, for that matter, and no doubt for excellent reasons, I can't recall ever being invited to do so.

People learn to be wary of polar travelers. Isolation tends to make windbags of us all. I remember meeting the dean of American Antarcticists, Dr. Laurence M. Gould, when Admiral Byrd was assembling his first Antarctic party in 1928, the last year of the Calvin Coolidge presidency. Gould impressed me at the time as a reserved, laconic, professorial fellow, and I judged his reticence to be the professional armoring of a geologist - a scholar who communes with rocks. When next I encountered him, in this same company, he was reverently and irretrievably launched on an autobiographical pilgrimage disguised as a history of Antarctic geological research which took him the better part of two hours to complete.

Paul Dalrymple dissipated any apprehensions with the assurance that the intellectual contribution this evening would be supplied by Dr. Robert Rutford. All that was expected of me, I was told, were a few nostalgic reminiscences about life at Little America, now gone with Nineveh and Tyre, at a time before most of the practicing generation of Antarcticists had been born. In other words, I was to present myself as a survivor of an endangered species. When Byrd mustered the winter party in the vicinity of 78 degrees South latitude, we numbered 56. Now we are down to 25, and a third of those are geriatrics.

I trust I am not trespassing on the privacy of the distinguished Dr. Rutford if I claim a certain remote kinship with him. The evening's program identifies him as President-elect of the University of Texas at Dallas, currently *a* Vice-Chancellor at the University of Nebraska. Perhaps the most conspicuous honor bestowed upon me in recognition of my *stay* in Antarctica came from the state of Nebraska. The Governor made me an Admiral of the Nebraskan Navy, an institution wholly bereft of annals for want of a sea to sail on and an enemy to fight. It tells something of the intellectual gulf which separates Dr. Rutford's generation of Antarcticists from mine that the subject of his discourse will be the emerging significance, in both, *a* national and international context, of that no longer distant continent.

When the gallant Admiral Byrd took us there, in the first year of Franklin D. Roosevelt's first administration, it never occurred to any of us, I suspect, that a place consisting entirely of ice, snow, cold, wind, rock, and a vast emptiness could be fitted into a context of any kind. Even the choice of a name for our hamlet on the Ross Ice Shelf betrayed a certain provincialism - Little America. I read the other day that the Soviet Union maintains no less than eight permanent stations on the continent and the United States has four. The Chileans, the Australians, the Argentines, and the New Zealanders all dispatch expeditions there on a fairly regular basis, and visitors from Communist China, Japan, West Germany, France, and even Poland swell the tourists into the region. In 1933, we were the only people there, and on more than one occasion, as time drifted on, I found myself wishing that I was somewhere else.

Even more instructive are the contrasts between what might be called the standard of living available to an Antarctic resident nowadays and what constituted our lot in the little shanty town of Little America above the Bay of Whales. Today, I am told, a private room, hot baths and showers, hi-fi sets, toilets that flush, a clinic, beds with a change of sheets, reading lamps, rugs on the floor, a bar open around the clock, electric washing machines, snack bars, and mess halls offering menus superior to those served up at the flag officers' mess at the Pentagon are among the standard creature comforts accorded an Antarcticist berthed at McMurdo Sound. With these come, of course, regular flight schedules to and from New Zealand, carrying mail and fresh stores through the months of daylight and generous allotments of time for radio telephone conversations with family and friends at home. When we were there, the ships came and went once in the season and that was that. I dwell on these amenities not from a tardy surge of envy, but rather out of a simple recognition of the realities of class differences from the point of view, say, of a survivor of the Donner Party reading in his old age of the mansions and social doings of the Railroad Barons who had followed him through the Pass into San Francisco.

The winter party of the Second Byrd Expedition subsisted at what might fairly be described as the Tobacco Road, or Third World or Have-Not standard of existence. In terms of what we had to do with, we were closer to Scott, Amundsen, and Peary than we were to those who come and go today. In fact, the austerities imposed upon us by circumstances were in some respect hardly more congenial than those accepted by the whalers out of New Bedford and Salem. For one thing, we were not financed out of the Federal Treasury. Richard Byrd was the last of the successful entrepreneurial explorers-, and the expedition was, I believe, the last major polar expedition to be organized, financed and directed as a private enterprise. Byrd raised the money he needed by cadging donations from rich individuals and organizations, by lecture tours, by selling to marketing firms the right to claim the honor of being the expedition's chosen supplier, and by scavenging the storage dumps and depots of the government and private companies for surplus equipment that would be useful to him.

Our principal vessel was a single-screw, single-hull cargo ship that had rusted in mothballs since World War I. The Navy leased it to Byrd for $1 a year. It was hardly a bargain even at that price. A New York beer merchant, Jacob Ruppert, made a handsome donation in cash for the privilege of having the aging ship renamed after him. The hard times that compelled Byrd to press on with the money-raising, at best a humbling experience even in the best of times, through the darkest of the depression years, led inevitably to several painful, even embarassing compromises. The JACOB RUPPERT lacked standard ballast, and Byrd had no money to buy it. He ballasted the ship with soft coal offered to him free by a coal merchant in Norfolk, and he used the surplus for heating the shacks at Little America. The most unpleasant memory I carry from life underground was the agonizing difficulty of trying to start a fire in the morning chill under a layer of frozen soft coal and the puff of choking black soot that would explode in one's face when a fresh shovelful was tossed on the fire. A welcome gift of cash was raised in a wholly unexpected and potentially em— harassing quarter. The Lydia Pinkham Company, makers of the famous vegetable compound for women, gave $5,000 with the understanding that a mountain, or an equally impressive topographical feature, be named after the lady founder. A comedy of errors, too complicated to explain here, later led to a quarrel with the executives of the company. To the relief of most of us, if not to Admiral Byrd, who had to pay back not just the $5,000,but also had to absorb a commission of $1,500 pocketed by the professional money-raiser, the commitment did not have to be met.

It was the same with people. Byrd had no money for salaries. The military services seconded a handful of pilots, mechanics and ship's officers; the universities a few scientists; and the Weather Bureau the meteorologists. The Norwegian government generously detached an experienced ice pilot to take our ships through the pack ice; otherwise our company consisted of volunteers. The volunteers in the ice party - those, that is, who wintered at Little America - drew no pay at all. The ship's crews berthed in Dunedin on the South Island of New Zealand, were doled out $5 a week per man for pocket money - hardly enough to pay for the bus ride into the city and a few beers.

A drawback with volunteers is that a leader has no real control over a troublemaker. On the eve of the departure of the second ship from the Bay of Whales, the physician who had volunteered to serve the Winter Party, decided that the prospect had lost its attraction for him and he announced his determination to desert the expedition and leave for home with the vessel. It was touch and go whether a sea relay worked out with the New Zealand government would enable us to bring another doctor down to Little America and leave time for the old barkentine, the BEAR OF OAKLAND, to complete a second passage of the Ross Sea before the ice closed in. The New Zealander, a fine doctor, was part Maori. His bedside manner was hardly soothing, though. I all but severed my forefinger one morning while chopping wood and I telephoned the doctor across the camp to say that I needed help to stanch the flow of blood. "Bad luck," Dr. Potaka acknowledged. "Get the fire started. Heat up some water. Call me when it's boiling and I'll come over."

In New Zealand, the ship's companies managed one way or another to make ends meet, even on their meager remittances. One fellow, a hunchback Australian beachcomber and confidence man named Creagh whom Byrd had signed on in Panama, on the way south, as a ship's cook proved exceptionally ingenious. Well into the winter night, a signal from the Navy Captain in command of the ships at dock in Dunedin reported to us in Little America that Creagh had been arrested as an imposter and would I authorize him to take him back on parole. The charge was that Creagh had booked himself into a number of provincial theatres for a lecture on "The Last Hours of Mati Hari," and he was advertising himself as "Lieutenant Creagh, in charge of the firing squad." My answer was, yes, take him back by all means. A man of Creagh's imagination and brass was too invaluable to lose.

As I suggested at the start, the ambitions of the Second Byrd Antarctic Expedition, in keeping with its means, were fairly simple, even primitive, I read in the New York Times the other day that the National Science Foundation, which directs and supports the United States' activities in the Antarctic, has in motion for the current year a program calling for the deployment of some 287 scientists - quite enough to staff the scientific faculties of at least two colleges - and their investigations are to take them into some fourscore different fields of esoteric interest. A scientific program of such splendor and magnitude was, of course, beyond even the wildest imaginings of the early Byrd men. To be sure, a solemn emphasis was laid upon the scientific aims of the expedition, such as they were. Even at that early stage some of the glamour was off exploration for its own sake. It was no longer enough for a professional explorer to answer, as the Englishman Mallory did, when asked why he was obsessed with the desire to scale Mt. Everest, that he had to do it "because it is there." People were beginning to argue that whatever was there, beyond the horizon, had to promise something of practical or abstract worth.

So Byrd took south with him two fine physicists, a geophysicist, two biologists, a geologist or two, and two meteorologists. For his second—in—command, Byrd chose the senior physicist, Dr. Thomas Poulter of the Armour Institute, whose forte was low-temperature physics - a first class human being, physically strong, marvelously competent, and ingenious in the practical skills of the artisan, brief in speech but long in moral strength. A dear man, in every respect. Even so, the scientific component - to use the jargon of the day - constituted only a small but highly self-disciplined and purposeful nuclei of the population of Little America. They represented a fig leaf, so to speak, for imparting an intellectual sanction to Byrd's central purpose, which still was physical discovery in its most elementary aspect - finding lands, mountains, glaciers and seas never seen before.

Fifty years ago there still was a fine harvest to be had here, and our vehicles -a two-engine Condor biplane, long obsolescent, a single-engine monoplane, and a newfangled helicopter - were assembled primarily for that fairly simple-minded mission. We also had some 150 Siberian huskies for sledging parties to far-off sectors. They served as the last surviving relics of turn-of-the-century polar travel. And with a view to mechanizing surface travel and mitigating its drudgery, Byrd also introduced the first belt-driven tractors. Unfortunately, the only vehicles within the means of his shrunken purse were three grossly underpowered machines built by the Citroen people of France for an expedition into the Sahara Desert. Beggars not being choosers, Byrd accepted them anyway, and though the mechanics who had to keep the machines running learned to curse them as nothing ever invented by man has been so cursed, they performed quite creditably and were the means of saving Byrd's life.

All the same, Byrd was shrewd enough to perceive that if his work was ever to catch wide public attention - if it was to produce book sales and lecture fees that would enable him to pay off his mountainous debts — he would have to inject something wholly novel into his agenda. He had, after all, bagged the last remaining prize in sheer adventure with his spectacular flight to the South Pole only four years earlier. The idea that he latched on to at the last minute, was to winter alone on the Ross Ice Barrier, at what we came to call the Advance Base. What happened to him there - his close call with death, and the gallant relief journey taken by Poulter and four companions - is a fairly familiar story. I shall limit my comments on the event to two general observations - my knowledge of Byrd’s display of character under pressure and the phenomenon of discord and divisiveness which Byrd's- predicament generated in the shacks of Little America, by then long buried under snow.

The years since have witnessed one or two misguided, ill-intentioned and even dastardly attempts to blacken Byrd's reputation. The most mischievous assault was made by one of Byrd's own principal lieutenants - Bernt Balchen, a flyer who accompanied Byrd on both the quite desperate trans-Atlantic crossing in 1927 and the hardly less hazardous flight to the South Pole two years later. Balchen, late in middle age and having held his fire until after Byrd's death in 1957, branded Byrd a faker. His leadership in the Antarctic, according to Balchen, was incompetent and haphazard, and his claim to having flown to the North Pole with Floyd Bennett was fraudulent. By Balchen's calculations, their little plane - little, that is, by present standards - was incapable at its designed speed of completing the round trip to the Pole and back to its take-off point on Spitsbergen, above Norway, within the time cited by Byrd in his navigational accounting. What Byrd did, Balchen argued, was to order Floyd Bennett, a Navy warrant officer junior to Byrd in rank and social station, to fly around in idle circles over the empty northern sea once they were out of sight of Spitsbergen, and stay out no longer than was necessary to validate the navigational reckoning - a reckoning flawed, so the charge went, by Byrd's error in over-estimating the plane's speed by a full hour. In support of this monstrous libel, Balchen insisted that Bennett had himself made to him a death-bed confession of the fraud.

Here is a point that I can refute from personal experience. I was with Balchen and Bennett on the flight that ended in Bennett's death. It was in 1928. We were flying to Labrador to retrieve the crew of the German monoplane Bremen that had been forced down off the coast there, in a snow squall, after completing the first air-crossing of the North Atlantic east to west. We were in a drafty Ford tri-motor, a species of aircraft long extinct. En route, Bennett came down with a raging case of pneumonia. He had been terribly hurt the year before in the crash of an airplane he and Byrd were testing for the trans-Atlantic crossing. He collapsed at the controls directly after the take-off from Detroit and thereafter dozed fitfully in his seat, coming to only long enough to take over the controls for a landing on the ice of a lake near Quebec, where we were to refuel and shift from wheels to skis, before going on to Labrador.

Once on the ground, I summoned a doctor and together we took Bennett to a small hospital. Balchen and I went on to Labrador. Bennett died while we were gone. There was no deathbed confession. The din inside the pilot's compartment of a Ford trimotor hardly encouraged confession during the long flight. Moreover, it would have been wholly outside the character of either Byrd or Bennett, and unthinkable in terms of their relationship, that they could have brought themselves to indulge in such a conspiracy. Byrd and Bennett had shared a risky apprenticeship in polar flying off Greenland two years before the polar flight. Men who had perpetrated a fraud of the magnitude imagined by Balchen would hardly have trusted each other to bear the high risks attaching to the flights already in Byrd's plans for the Atlantic and the Antarctic. Even more convincing was an analysis of the flight made by one of Byrd's men, the late Pete Demas, an aeronautical engineer. It was a garbled transmission of a news dispatch to the New York Times from Spitsbergen that misled Balchen. The dispatch when received fixed the departure time an hour later than it actually was.

Byrd was a romanticist, a Virginian of the most aristocratic lineage in the American genealogy. When the notion of the Advance Base was first conceived, the hope was to plant a shack on the rim of the polar plateau, some five or six hundred miles south of Little America. Three men would man the station. They would measure the earth's fiercest winds and deepest cold, contemplate stars visible through an atmosphere of the most serene clarity and in an intellectual as well as physiological way contemplate a man's capacity to endure isolation. The scheme foundered because

the difficulties encountered in re-establishing the expedition at Little America delayed the departure of the trail parties. With the summer light drawing short, it became evident that the farthermost point within our reach was only 120 miles or so out and that the work of the station would consist of little more than simple meteorological measurements.

Byrd decided to assign to himself the duty of station master. I suspect the idea was in the back of his mind from the beginning. A year or two before we left the United States an absorbing narrative had been written by a British explorer, an amateur, who through a failed connection had been compelled to pass a winter night alone on the Greenland ice cap. His account fascinated Byrd. He kept going back to the psychological and spiritual ingredients of the experience. No doubt he wished to test himself in the same situation. It was a rash enterprise. It was a mistake. Byrd was not mechanically minded. He couldn't fix things. He had never looked after 'himself. Advance Base was in place by March, as the winter darkness came on, and Byrd cheerfully took up his experience in being alone as the tractor party withdrew.

By June, he was in desperate straits. For communicating with, us at Little America, he depended upon a transmitter powered by a gasoline-driven generator set on a ledge in a tunnel outside his shack. From Little America, I talked to him two or three times a week over our voice transmitter. He responded in code. At the end of one of our schedules, without our knowing it, carbon monoxide fumes seeping into the shack felled him. He barely recovered consciousness and when he did the poisoning had left him weak and wretched. Thereafter, not daring to risk the fumes again, he was obliged to resort to a hand-cranked generator. Before leaving us, John Dyer, an M.I.T. graduate who was in charge of the broadcasting equipment, had given him quick instruction in Morse code. Byrd's inexperience with the code, combined with his physical weakness, made his messages difficult to decipher, and, what became increasingly ominous, he began to miss schedules.

At first, we put down the lapses to uncertain magnetic phenomena and the garbles to clumsiness. Dyer was the first to suspect that something was seriously wrong with Byrd himself. As he studied the messages and gauged the blurred and tardy responses, he became convinced that Byrd had suffered a physical failure or accident of a serious nature. I was some time extracting from Byrd, on the Barrier 120 miles south of us, an admission that fumes had poisoned him and that he remained quite weak. He insisted, though, that he could and would manage to last out the stay and was in no need of help.

But the conviction took hold that he was verging on helplessness and it was our duty to go out to him. The risk of attempting his relief was heightened by the circumstances that the crisis had risen halfway through the winter darkness, with temperatures down to 80 degrees below zero and razor-sharp winds prevailing on the Barrier. There was no certainty that a party navigating in darkness and blizzard could find the flags marking the trail to Advance Base, and evade the crevasses on the way. Sledging there was out of the question. Dogs would have perished in the cold. That left only the tractors, unreliable machines at best and extremely vulnerable, because of their weight, to crevasses.

So grave were the risks that the most experienced men of the winter party drew up an estimate in which they calculated that the chances of our ever reaching Byrd with tractors were one in twenty-five, and the attempt should not be made unless Byrd himself called for help. Poulter and I ruled to the contrary. Byrd, after all, was not only the leader of the expedition but an Admiral of the United States Navy. He could hardly be expected to ask five men to risk their lives in the face of such odds to save him alone. It was equally unthinkable that his own people should consider presenting him with such a choice.

The controversy over what should be done and how it should be done raged through the camp. It divided us for days. Poulter resolved the dilemma by announcing that he would lead the expedition himself and call for volunteers. The justification that was presented to Byrd over the radio was that Poulter was anxious to make the trip in order to conduct certain celestial observations at the higher latitude. I doubt that Byrd was ever taken in by the gentle deception. Indeed, he seemed to welcome the proposition.

Poulter had no difficulty in enlisting volunteers. He set out in weather fearsomely cold, depending for navigation upon a tricky combination of sextants and candles and flashlights mounted in cairns. He finally made it to Advance Base on the third try, in July, and none too soon. Byrd was on the surface when they drew near, and his appearance was shocking. He could not have withstood the punishment of the tractor journey back to Little America, and Poulter and his party stayed with him for three months, until the return of daylight allowed us to send out a plane to bring him back in.

There never was any question of Byrd's courage, his fortitude, his concern for others, even his modesty. He was a gallant man. My friendship with him was among the firmest I have known. And my admiration for Tom Poulter, for his tenacity and perseverance, for his gentle spirit, is hardly less.

At Little America, I shared another enterprise with Poulter that was quite as risky in an intramural context, but perhaps not so creditable in an historical sense, yet one which involves perhaps the most precious secret still to be unlocked on the continent. That secret involves the whereabouts and condition of what my friend James Angleton likes to call the Golden Stalactite of Antarctica.

A recent press release from McMurdo Sound announced that the interest of scientists in the Antarctic is fast shifting from the accumulation of pure knowledge for the enrichment of theory into the practical exploitation of tangible resources - the minerals, oil, the fish in the sea, and the like. The author of that confident dispatch was ignorant of the existence of a store of value equal to the treasure of the Incas, the hoards of the Pharaohs. That treasure has lain for half a century, undisturbed, sleeping the sleep of a fine wine in its cask, under whatever remains of the observation shack in the center of Little America through the dome of which Doc Poulter used to track the wheeling constellations before he set out for Advance Base.

The Golden Stalactite is a spike of frozen amber-colored liquid of uncertain length. It is formed of approximately equal parts of 100-proof, pre-World War I Golden Wedding bourbon and rye poured through a hole bored in the floor of the shack by Poulter and the senior biologist, Dr. Perkins of Rutgers, during the month of April 1934. One can be certain the whiskey froze almost instantly as it descended into the ice and no doubt the top of the spike rests directly under the floor.

We had a drinking problem at Little America. Accounts of the contemporary social regime at the South Pole and McMurdo Sound stations hold that the supply of alcohol is ample and marijuana is imported by those who favor the weed over the traditional products of corn and rye. When our expedition sailed from Norfolk, prohibition was still in force in the United States. Byrd saw no harm in taking along whiskey for medicinal purposes and festive occasions. An executive of Schenley distilleries, New York's famous official greeter, Grover Whalen, who had welcomed Byrd back from his several celebrated flights, demonstrated his appreciation of the hardships in store for Byrd and his men by contributing sixty cases of whiskey from Schenley's finest reserve stock.

Trouble was, after we settled in at Little America, there was no place to store the

liquor under a measure of reasonable control. Travel among the shacks in the compound was by way of tunnels created by stacking crates of supplies in parallel files on the surface, roofing them with tarpaulin, and letting the drifting snow cover them. Whenever the cook, the carpenter, or a mechanic ran short of anything, he simply rooted around in the underground galleries for the crate holding whatever he needed. The side of the crate would be ripped open, the contents removed, and the box left in place, to support the walls of the tunnels. The cases of bourbon and rye similarly entered the life-support systems in a very real sense. When a man had emptied the bottle in his foot locker, all he had to do was to repair to the right tunnel and replenish his supply.

No one gave much thought to the amount of drinking until after Byrd had been established at Advance Base. The effort had quite exhausted the winter party. It had also delayed the process of bringing under cover a goodly fraction of the essential stores from the staging depots set up between the camp and the Bay of Whales as the ships were being unloaded. Darkness was coming on; the days were growing shorter, the cold turned sharper, and it became increasingly difficult to muster working parties for the unfinished task. While a handful of workers labored on the surface, their shipmates gathered around the stoves in the shacks below were raising their voices in convivial song or snoozing in the bunks.

There were several close calls. While crossing camp on the surface, it was easy to lose one's way in the blizzards that swept up without warning. A man who had had too much to drink could easily wander off across the Barrier in the darkness or fall through the covering of a tunnel. More than one man did and death would have come quickly had a companion not come upon them in time.

What made the situation particularly delicate was that the announcement in the press that Byrd had gone off by himself brought a flurry of anxious wireless messages from the parents of younger members who feared their sons had been left to fend for themselves. An accidental death from drunkenness, quite apart from the necessity of restoring discipline in the camp itself, was a disgrace the expedition could hardly risk, in Byrd's absence. Or so I reasoned. It was I who persuaded Poulter, himself a teetotaler, that the liquor had to be destroyed. If our people could not draw on the stock sensibly, then let's get rid of the stock. It was, I came to realize afterwards, a silly decision, perhaps the most deplorable in a long catalogue of misjudgments. Yet even then I had the wit to realize that if the men caught us in the act of wanton destruction, they might kill us in our tracks.

So the foul deed was accomplished covertly, by stealth. While the camp slept, Poulter and Perkins emptied the cases in the tunnel, one after another, over a period of several weeks, and carried the bottles to Poulter's shack. Poulter bore a hole in the floor of his shack and the glorious fluid was poured through it, bottle after precious bottle. We had failed to anticipate that disposing of the empty bottles would present a problem. That was resolved by smashing the bottles inside gunny sacks and scattering the splinters over the snow on the edge of the camp.

The drinkers were slow to awaken to the drought setting in. Many of them had accumulated small reserve stocks of their own. The assumption was that Poulter and his scientists had simply moved the whiskey- into secret caches and a systematic search, would in good time bring it all back to hand. Indeed, as days- wore on and the reserve stocks were depleted, men who had not braved the cold of the open Barrier for weeks emerged from the tunnels, armed themselves with, long brass sounding rods and formed little parties to probe the depths of the snow for the lost whiskey.

Quite rightly, they concluded that the stuff had to be under or close to Poulter[1]s shack. The searchlight of Poulter's tractor had hardly disappeared below the horizon as he set out on his dangerous winter journey before half a dozen of his com-

panions were hacking away at the ice around his shack. They were certainly close, but not close enough. What those parched souls never imagined was that the prize they sought was no longer in bottles. Instead it had been transformed into a Golden Stalactite pendant from the floor of the shack.

In their desperation, the drinkers turned to moonshining. First the compasses were emptied of alcohol; then the biologists discovered that their supply of alcohol for preserving specimens was being pilfered. Our Maori physician invented a still. While the ships were refitting in Wellington, on their way south, a friendly merchant had presented the expedition with half a dozen cases of a patent medicine called Dr. Baxter's Lung Preserver. It had a phenomenally high alcoholic content. Dr. Potaka ran the stuff through his little still. He never succeeded in ridding it of a tarry gummy residue, but he was never without a customer.

Even now my blood runs cold when I ponder the puritanical reasoning that led me into promoting that egregious profligacy. However, this is not to say that it was necessarily a mistake beyond redemption. My friend Angleton upbraided me for not having the foresight to arrange with Poulter and Perkins to have a strong hook frozen into the inverted bottom of the spike. The Saudi Arabians, he reminded me, are considering towing from the Antarctic oceans into the Arabian Sea whole block-long icebergs to be melted down for drinking water. It would be no trick, my friend went on, for a hovering helicopter of the power developed in the Vietnam war, to hoist the Golden Stalactite from its frozen scabbard and transport it to a safe vat in New Zealand. My only response was an enigmatic smile. The secret of whether a hook was attached to that delicious amber stream and the whereabouts of the map on which Poulter fixed its precise location in the camp is one that remains with me and strengthens my intention to live a lot longer.

So that was how it was with us. We Byrd men went without whiskey. And again in contrast with the Antarcticists of the hour we went without women. I dare not say in this company that we were better off without either one. The shrewish sniping aimed at the chivalrous Paul Dalrymple for his light-hearted skepticism of the value of a woman's work in the polar regions leaves me gun-shy. Permit me to note merely that a woman in polar haberdashery is hardly an inviting object. Historical oversight may not in itself explain the failure of the Eskimo culture, ancient as it is, to produce a Joan of Arc, a Cleopatra, a Helen of Troy, a Clare Boothe Luce, even a cover girl or a Vogue model. Cold does not foster a flowering of womanly graces. Byrd, when in a speculative mood, used to discourse on the pleasure of finding beyond the last mountain range a lush, tropical valley, nourished by thermal streams and populated by Amazons comely in appearance and of an amiable cast of mind. The vision was one I found pleasing. The Garden of Eden - serpent, apple and all -seems a far more appropriate setting for woman than an Antarctic godown.

With women or without, we Antarcticists constitute a fairly special fellowship. We are rather like shipwrecked mariners in some respects. Leaving aside such distinctions as technical and academic pursuits, the experience we share is made up of a long passage in isolation, loneliness, deprival, perhaps even a considerable emotional strain, even the occasional brush of danger.

The recollection of hardship and unhappiness, like the memory of pain, is the most ephemeral of memories. For myself, I shall say that I soon forgot the squalor and dirt of Little America, the hunger for privacy, the pettiness of the little quarrels. What I came to remember was the extraordinary beauty of the skies, the majesty of the auroral displays, the beauty of the ice when the moon shone on it, the pervading stillness, and, above all else, the kindness, the thoughtfulness, the decency of good men. Best of all, in that setting and in their company, I came to terms with myself.

Forgive me for rambling on so long. I warned you in the beginning that the Antarctic makes windbags of us all. Thank you.