



# THE ANTARCTIC SOCIETY

905 NORTH JACKSONVILLE STREET  
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22205

HONORARY PRESIDENT — MRS. PAUL A. SIPLE

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Dr. Michele E. Raney, 1993  
Dr. Doyle A. Harper, 1994  
Dr. Edith L. Taylor, 1995

*ANOTHER NOONER NEAR THE BALLSTON METRO STATION!*

**Private, Public, Governmental: IAATO and  
the Protection of the Antarctic Environment**

by

Barrel F. Schoeling

Executive Secretary

International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators

111 East 14 Street, Suite 110

New York, New York 10003

on

*Wednesday, March 5, 1997*

**12 Noon**

**(Come early, please!)**

National Science Foundation

4201 Wilson Blvd., Arlington

**Room 360**

**(Sign in at Security Desk!)**

Barrel Schoeling was a founding member of the International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators (IAATO), and has participated in annual meetings with NSF since 1988. He was named to the Antarctic Section of the U.S. State Department Advisory Committee in 1991, and since 1992 has been a U.S. delegate to the Antarctic Treaty Consultative meetings. He was elected Executive Secretary of IAATO in 1995.

Barrel is an enthusiastic naturalist who has traveling boots, binoculars, and a camera whose bounds have no limits, although he has a strong affinity for the polar regions. He has led tourist expeditions to the Antarctic since 1987. He became a small business man in 1996 when he founded *GEOGRAPHICA*, a mail-order book service, specializing in natural history and exploration.

Barrel is an Ivy Leaguer, graduating from Brown University with a degree in biology. He has been a college professor and also has worked at the American Museum of Natural History.

*Come and hear all about Antarctic tourism from one who  
knows all about Antarctic tourism!*

We have not gone underground nor have we vacated the post, but a series of events beyond our immediate control put us out of operation. First of all, this taradiddler got an invite from a tour company to be the historian on six consecutive cruises to the Antarctic, and since it was the 40th anniversary of my first going there, I could not turn it down, especially because it got me out of the country over that dreadful, stressful Christmas season. We thought we had protected our flanks by getting a massive input from Al Lindsey on what it was like to winter over at Little America II in 1933-35, and that was going out as a newsletter in January.

But on the way to the Forum, our Honorary President and Society worker, Ruth Siple, came down with a bad case of shingles, and she sort of went under cover, shall we say, with pain. They had to give her some strong medication, and one thing led to another, so to make a long story less long, she was hospitalized three different times, most of January and the early part of February. It seems all of her major problems were caused by the medication, and it is only now in late February that Ruth has recovered enough to resume an active role in our Society. So, we are all back at our respective posts, and away we shall go, with Kristin Larson's Penguin Prattle adding a touch of reality to these newsletters.

There are some changes being initiated with this issue, both good news and bad news. The Postal Service has changed things, and rates have gone up, so for small outfits like ours, it was deemed more feasible to mail everything first class. So within the capabilities of the Postal Service, you, hopefully, will get your newsletters much faster. But if we put out our usual ten-page newsletters, the cost would go up appreciably. So we are going to reduce the number of pages to eight, and keep our dues, for the time being, at least, at our current low rates. What remains the same is that there will be some truths, some fictions, some fabrications in what you expose yourself to when you open these newsletters.

**ANTARCTIC TOURISM.** As our March speaker is the Executive Secretary of the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators, and since this soul has just returned from serving as historian on six consecutive milk-run trips to the Antarctic Peninsula, it might be a good time to personalize our thoughts on Antarctic travel.

Antarctic tourism is big business, and is getting bigger all the time. When the National Geographic's *TRAVELER* covered a tour ship's trip to the Antarctic in their May/June 1990 issue, they cited only three different companies as being active in Antarctic tourism. This past austral summer, there were nine companies, thirteen different ships. And next year will be even bigger, at least in number of passengers as two of the large ships, the MARCO POLO and the VISTA MAR, will be going to the ice

We feel that although there may be close to ten thousand travelers going to the ice each year, most really do not know the options available to them. At least ninety percent of those travelers do not know that there are vendors other than the one with whom they booked. Ten years ago there was a lot of repeat traffic, but nowadays with lowering prices one finds some ships booking with all first-time Antarctic travelers.

It's an entirely new ball game with the introduction of so many of the Russian ships, particularly the influx of the smaller vessels which carry around thirty-six people, an exceedingly popular way to go. Two years ago we quoted the venerable British Antarctic scientist, Bernard Stonehouse, as saying that he expected tourism in Antarctica to double and redouble by the year 2000. We think Bernard got carried away a bit in his enthusiasm for what puts scones on his table, although the way the Japanese people are buying tickets to Deception, Paradise, Half Moon, he may be right.

We think Jeff Rubin's paperback, a Lonely Planet publication, *ANTARCTICA*, is a great step forward in educating travelers about the opportunities and options available in Antarctica. We understand from Barrel that there will be two other Antarctic-type guide books coming out in the next year, one by Moon Publications, the other by a British firm called Cadogan. The International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO) publishes their *NEWS*, and their IAATO Membership Directory lists IAATO objectives and includes a profile of member companies. Darrel has fulfilled requests for some 500 copies in recent months, so the word from the horses' mouths is at least getting to some of the travel agencies.

The Antarctic Peninsula will always be the big attraction for Antarctic tourists, as the thrills per dollar spent cannot be equalled elsewhere in Antarctica. With the influx of Russian ships on the scene, prices have dropped, and no longer is Antarctica a luxurious visit for only those with deep pockets. A young Japanese lady two years ago told me that it was so cheap to travel to Antarctica that she could not afford to stay home! But one should still do some comparison shopping. A man from Vancouver told me that he could have saved well over a thousand dollars on a trip to Antarctica if he had first flown to London and gone down with a prominent English travel group.

It's interesting to talk to the tourists about why they are traveling to Antarctica. Most are going for the whole package, although birders from around the world have a real sense of their priorities. All companies seem to make certain that all cruises give their travelers the opportunity to visit some base in Antarctica, to step on the Antarctic continent, to visit Deception Island, and to see tens of thousands of several species of penguins, hundreds of seals, tens of whales. The piece de resistance for me is the Lemaire Channel, where it all comes together in all its glories. And the Neumayer Channel is not far behind. No one, absolutely no one who goes to Antarctica is shortchanged!

Another big change of late are the ships. You can choose between yachts that carry less than ten passengers to large liners that carry over four hundred. The one constant is the Drake Passage, which has to be traversed. I had the ultimate pleasure this past austral summer to be on a relatively new Russian research ship, the *AKADEMII IOFFE*. This Finnish-built ship (1989) has a lot of stabilizing equipment, and sailing on her was a sheer delight. If anyone avoids Antarctica because of skepticism about rough seas, they should go on the *IOFFE*, as it cuts down swells and waves to mere ripples. There are several small Russian ships now which carry thirty-six people, and the word we are getting is that, in spite of their rock and rolling, everyone loves the camaraderie of being on such small ships. You have that old faithful, the *EXPLORER*, which has been in Antarctic waters for years and years, and is loved by legions of its travelers. So there's a ship for everyone, a cruise for everyone. You just have to match your profile with your ship with your interests and your pocketbook.

Antarctic travel has certainly changed dramatically in the last five years with people now having the option of going on a Russian icebreaker with helicopters. This past austral summer saw the first-ever circumnavigation tourist cruise of Antarctica. Now we are really talking megabucks, in the range of tens of thousands of dollars. The world is really full of a lot of people who have so many greenbacks they don't know

what to do with them, and it's up to the tour companies to come up with the ultimate cruises. But let's hope that the Dry Valleys never become as popular as Half Moon Island. We believe that the number of tourists who have flown to the Geographical South Pole now totals over a hundred. If the Antarctic Peninsula gives more per dollar, then the South Pole gives the least – they could get the same view by visiting International Falls in January!

When is the best time to go to Antarctica? Depends on when you can get away, and what you want to see. Let's assume that penguins are the number one attraction, that people can't get an overdose of seeing their newborn, then the best time to go to the Antarctic Peninsula would be from mid-December to mid-January, when it is practically daylight around the clock. And if you go over Christmas, it's a great way to escape the commercialism of what was once a religious holiday. Penguins are a great equalizer for kids and grandchildren on December 25th? No penguin, no matter how young, has ever been heard to say, "Is that all?" And some companies even give a small token reduction in fares over the holidays.

By the end of January, chicks in some of the rookeries are getting ready to fledge, and are not quite so adorable. But if you want to go south to Marguerite Bay, hoping to see East Base, then you had better plan on a late austral summer trip in late February-early March. And some exciting things occur outside of the Penguin World, as in late February the EXPLORER made the first-ever circumnavigation trip around James Ross Island (see an adjoining article). So travelers should do their homework, not shoot a spear into a barrel of fish; make their seasonal selection on what turns them on. And books like Jeff Rubin's are going to help people make the best choices for themselves.

There will always be some variables where tourists will be playing Russian roulette, and this is relative to expedition leaders, to planned stops, and weather. I have sailed with three different companies over the past seven years. The main differences are in the expedition leaders, some of whom are strong leaders, some are what I call hands-on leaders who are active lecturers and like the last word, and some are hands-off leaders who leave the lectures to the lecturers. Really tremendous differences among leaders! And some know the landing sites much better than others. Repeat travelers come back and think because they are going to the Peninsula they will automatically go to Paulet Island or to Petermann Island, and when they find out that the itinerary does not include their favorite sites, feel victimized. So travelers can control their choice of ships, the length of their itinerary, but they can't control who will be expedition leaders, where visits will be made, or the weather.

Are there any Pied Pipers, either expedition leaders or lecturers, who by themselves attract tourists to return with them to the Antarctic? It is my impression that Peter Harrison, British-born ornithologist, comes closest to being the Antarctic Pied Piper, as I have known quite a few who have followed Peter around Antarctica and the world. Barrel tells us that Matt Drennan is sort of a Pied Piper and has a following of his own. Peter has a cult following, no matter where or when. One self-avowed widow follower has supposedly found the love of her life when a wife conveniently died. One of my most favorite Antarctic travelers is the Whale Spotteress from Pittsford, New York, Dotte Larsen, who made many, many trips on the EXPLORER. She told me that it was the overall package which kept bringing her back, but confesses to having enjoyed the lectures of historian Alan Gurney, whose first of two books on the history of Antarctica, *BEYOND THE CONVERGENCE*, has recently been published. Charles Swithinbank, glaciologist and lecturer, has two books coming out on his Antarctic career. The first, *ALIEN IN ANTARCTICA*, will be out this spring.

The Antarctic has not really proven a very good hunting ground for either male or female looking for spouses, so buying a ticket to the south isn't paramount for finding a life partner, although our West Townsend, Vermont-Monhegan Island, Maine member,

Ruby Court, ended up with artist Lee Winslow Court. And the above-mentioned Peter Harrison met Shirley Metz in the Antarctic, and that led to wedding bells. And now veteran Antarctic John Splettstoesser and Cuverville's Kim Crosbie are very much items. But if you are looking for a life partner, your chances are probably better in the express line of your local supermarket.

**EXPLORER CIRCUMNAVIGATES JAMES ROSS.** Two years ago we wrote a short article in these pages on "The Warming of the Antarctic," telling therein about a large berg breaking off from the Larsen Ice Shelf, about Stonington Island becoming a true island, about warming in the Dry Valleys. Climatologists deal in neat little packages of thirty-year periods, so it is impossible to get a good handle on what is happening in Antarctica (where records of even forty years are rare), although events happening like ice shelves disintegrating and glaciers melting sure lend credence to warming, especially on the Antarctic Peninsula. J. Murray Mitchell, why did you have to die so young when the world truly has a need of thee?

As we go to press, Victoria Underwood informs us that the M/S EXPLORER, owned and operated by Abercrombie and Kent and Explorer Shipping Corporation, has circumnavigated James Ross Island, which is supposedly another first in the annals of Antarctica. And the expedition leader is a woman! Can you believe that? Says so right here in the fax, that the Scottish lassie, Kim Crosbie is the leader. Could it really be that her romance with John Splettstoesser, who was on the ship as a lecturer, was so hot that it melted the remaining ice around James Ross and made it all possible? Our illustrious president, Ron Naveen, was also aboard, although he was an innocent bystander to it all. The ship's captain, Uli Demel, a veteran of over sixty-five Antarctic voyages, was on the bridge for this historic occasion. It's not the first time, nor will it, in all likelihood, be the last, when the EXPLORER makes history, as she was the first passenger vessel to transit the Northwest Passage in the Arctic in 1984.

**NEAL SULLIVAN INDICATES THAT HIS TIME HAS COME TO MOVE ON.** Neal Sullivan only planned on fulfilling his four-year commitment as Director of the Office of Polar Programs, and, sure enough, he is a man of his word, and has indicated that he will move on. However, he has been talked into staying on for a few more months, so will be in Ballston for several more months.

Neal is the seventh official director of the Office of Polar Programs (formerly the Division of Polar Programs). Tom Jones, Louie Quam, Joe Fletcher, Bob Rutford, Ed Todd, and Peter Wilkniss preceded him. But there are many who will say that there was another director in there, as didn't Helen Gerasimou more or less serve as the acting director for a considerable period of time? She certainly was the surrogate mother to many going to the ice back in the 60s and 70s. Louie really wasn't in the director chair much longer than to have a few cups of coffee, as his wife's failing health necessitated his leaving the position after one year. Rutford and Fletcher weren't there many years, with Bob answering the call of academia, or was it following the footsteps of Gentleman Jim? Fletcher found the crosscountry commuting between Washington and his west coast residence overbearing. The power of the position struck home when readers of The New Yorker opened up an issue about fifteen years ago and saw a cartoon of a parka-clad man strolling down a city street in a blizzard, and around his neck hung a sign "ED TODD."

Now the speculation begins as to who follows next. We once heard that Charlie Bentley might consider a short term in Washington. Rutford is too young to really hang it up, but on the other hand he may be too old to go up on Capitol Hill and fight over budgets. But since when did Bob ever back down from a challenge? And the USGS made John Behrendt an available commodity on the flesh market when they

abandoned their Antarctic geological research. The government, supposedly, likes to promote from within, so they could move P2 into the position. A lot of good candidates.

**STEVE LEATHERWOOD, THE CONSUMMATE MARINE SCIENTIST, THE CONSUMMATE HUMAN.** Steve Leatherwood died at age 53 on a California beach where at sunset he saw dolphins at play and two migrating whales, exciting him to say to a child nearby, "Look, do you see that?" Steve was born in rural Alabama, some distance from the Gulf of Mexico. But in the 1960s, while scuba diving off the coast of Florida, he came around a coral reef, and a dolphin was staring him in the face. His sister said that it was love at first sight, a love that summoned Steve to distant parts of the world, introduced him to a vast variety of marine mammals, and beckoned him into a distinguished career as a scientist and conservationist. The Leatherwood Guides to marine mammals have been described as being to "marine mammals what the famous 'Peterson Guides' are to bird watching."

Steve died from lymphatic cancer, surrounded by family and friends. He was a most unusual person. I had the pleasure and the honor of being with Steve on a 23-day Antarctic cruise back in 1990 when we were both lecturing on the WORLD DISCOVERER. He was such a nice guy that Ruth Siple wanted to adopt him! Everyone shared her love for the man, and nearly a hundred and fifty of his dearest friends showed up on February 15th at Scripps Institution of Oceanography for one of three memorial services honoring Steve (another one was at Texas A&M, where Steve got his PhD, and the other at Ocean Park in Hong Kong, where Steve most recently worked).

From 1978 to 1989 Steve worked at Hubbs-Sea World Research Institute. In 1991 he served as chairman of the Cetacean Specialist Group of the World Conservation Union, where he oversaw a worldwide network of scientists working to prevent extinction of animals. His fervent desire for marine conservation led him to serving on the advisory boards of thirteen different scientific/conservation organizations, most of which focused on interactions between humans and marine mammals.

Steve was a man of many hats. He loved classical music, probably in part to being self-taught by whales. He did not play any musical instruments, but said that music was a language he understood, but did not speak!

Some of you may remember him from appearing in a made-for-TV underwater film in which Steve appeared with Australian supermodel Elle Macpherson and Olympic-famed, multi-gold-medalled Matt Biondi. He was traveling in some pretty famous company then, but they were, too.

Victoria Underwood, who supplied most of this information on Steve wrote, "Steve was one of the most prolific and productive professionals to have ever graced this earth. He authored well over one hundred scientific papers, over two dozen chapters in popular and technical books and field guides to the cetaceans of both coasts of North America. He encouraged many individuals to work in the marine sciences, and was a great champion of this field. Steve was an academic through and through, but those of us who were lucky enough to have known him recall the delightfully playful and inquisitive side of him that loved to explore and experience all that the universe had to offer."

**PETER WILKNISS RETIRES, BUT RETOOLS.** Peter Wilkniss, former Director of the Division of Polar Programs, officially retired from the National Science Foundation on January 3, 1997. We have it from a most reliable, impeccable source that Peter will live again as a polar figure in the private sector. As we go to press, Peter is drafting a master plan which runs the gamut from the old to the new, and he has promised to outline his hopes and dreams in a forthcoming newsletter.

**PENGUIN PRATTLE.** Greetings South-o-philes! It has been such a time since last we wrote that I considered changing my byline to Penguin Pallor, or even Penguin Pratfall!

Some nice bergy bits have come up on my radar screen recently, but before launching into that, I think it only fair to reveal my newest transmogrification. I have lately accepted an opportunity to assist in the development of regulations stemming from U.S. legislation on Antarctic tourism and conservation that was signed by President Clinton last October. Yes, this does entail leaving the National Science Foundation, but my new job will keep me in close contact with the many Antarctic friends and experts that I have come to know over the past nine years. In fact, this new job rolls many favorite things into one neat little package: Antarctic science, environmental conservation, writing, and law. In truth, I think I would have taken this job even if it didn't pay! And to allay your fears, I promise that fresh news will continue to wag this newsletter!

**BUTTERSCOTCH AND PINK POPCORN.** Antarctica is again heading into its twilight months, bathed for weeks and months in lovely low-angle pastel light. In my opinion, there is no nicer time to be there...sure enough the thrill and racket of the rookeries has disappeared and whale sightings become rare, but perhaps it is the solitude and rising wind, the surety of a coming darkness that makes this phase of the Antarctic cycle seem so poignantly bittersweet. By now, most summer residents have fled north, reducing the total continental population from about 4,000 to about 1,000 hearty souls. Radio communications allow these isolated pockets of humanity to share in an obscure camaraderie, but mainly it is a time for voyaging inward. It's a chance to get "the knittin' done" as a friend of mine often says! This year McMurdo Station is experimenting. Most of the town's population departed before 22 February, but an additional 83 "unwinter-overs" will remain there until 7 March and depart via C-141 from the Pegasus Blue Ice Runway. These folks are staying the extra 2-3 weeks to button-up the town for winter which helps offset end-of-season time crush presented by a longer research season, and allows for an overall reduction in winter personnel. Speaking of small winter populations, this year McMurdo will have only 155 folks, bringing the population to its lowest level since construction started in the late 1980s. Also, it is noteworthy that this will be the last winter for Navy personnel. What a long and distinguished chapter that has been!

**HUMAN LEGENDS.** The Ross Island community was graced this past January by not just one, but two human legends! The first one arrived surreptitiously on January 11th, as a lone skier gliding down the "Willy Road" (a snow road connecting the residents of New Zealand's Scott Base and McMurdo Station with the local Williams Field "airport," the road is also a gateway to the vast Ross Ice Shelf). The man was tidy and unassuming, so much so, that the people he passed along the road did not realize that they were witnessing history, as well as the making of a new human endurance record. The guy was Norwegian Borge Ousland and he was completing the final leg of his solo trans-Antarctic trek, in only 64 days, completely unsupported!

Mr. Ousland had tried the previous year to make his solo trek across Antarctica, only to be stymied at the South Pole. That particular achievement gave Mr. Ousland the distinction of being the first person to reach both poles, solo and unsupported. But he was not satisfied. So he came back for another crack at the continent. This year's trip had been planned as an 80-day sojourn, starting at Berkner Island (78 degrees South and 45 degrees West) on 15 November. During the trek his boot soles cracked, but he refused a new pair at South Pole because that would have been support! He made the journey on skis (which had been specially painted by his 8-year old son), and with the aid of a wind sail. On one record day he covered 226 kilo-

meters! Because of his fast travel time, Borge opted for a longer, yet safer, route off of the Polar Plateau by traveling down the Axel-Heiberg Glacier, (the same route followed by another famous Norwegian, Roald Amundsen), instead of the shorter, crevassed ice fields of the Beardmore Glacier (the route taken by Robert F. Scott). Regarding his colorfully painted skis he said, "They reminded me to take more caution because it's more important to go home alive to my family than cross Antarctica." The lucky guy got both!

The other intrepid visitor to Ross Island was Sir Edmund Hillary, who came to town to help celebrate the 40th anniversary of New Zealand's Scott Base. Many of you will recall that Sir Edmund, besides being the first man to reach the summit of Mt. Everest with Tenzing Norgay, also led the New Zealand contingency of the Commonwealth Transantarctic Expedition of 1957-58. Both Sir Edmund and Mr. Ousland traveled to the South Pole via LC-130 to stand side-by-side at the place their respective heroes and forefathers had toiled so hard to arrive at earlier in this century. Both men provided excellent lectures to the residents of Ross Island.

**ART-ANTICA.** The Prattler hopes to bring readers regular news of upcoming art exhibitions and recently released books inspired by the Seventh Continent. If you know of any, please write the newsletter or e-mail me (note my new e-mail address below).

Lucia de Leiris is currently having two art exhibits of her Antarctic images made from visits to Palmer Station and McMurdo Sound. These exhibits are in Newport, Rhode Island and in Barrington, Rhode Island, but unfortunately will terminate on March 9th.

**OTHER FISH WORTH FRYING.** This year more meteorites were found by National Science Foundation researchers, bringing the total number to over 8,000 found by this group during the past twenty years in Antarctica! These are the same folks who picked up the famous Martian meteorite which may or may not contain traces of microscopic life. NSF and NASA have initiated a special joint research project to further explore the mysteries of that rock.

The Congressionally-mandated external review group, led by Mr. Norman Augustine, visited Antarctica in late December for a tour of McMurdo and South Pole stations. On the whole, the group was very impressed by the U.S. Antarctic Program, and even held "town meetings" at both locations to get grass roots opinions. A comprehensive report on their findings and recommendations will be out in late March. Watch this column for a complete review of that report, which will also be posted on the World Wide Web.

Just when you thought Antarctica had become too civilized with too many of life's conveniences (good and evil), McMurdo Station sprouts an ATM machine! That's right, a "money tree" appeared right in the middle of town this year. All you have to do is give it a shake and out comes crisp greenbacks. The most amazing part is that it also provides the account balance...stateside spouses be warned!

Another successful set of live educational TV broadcasts emanated from the Seventh Continent in January, this time from Palmer Station and the research vessel POLAR DUKE. All sources agree, that these were the best yet. The Prattler is checking on shows available in video format, and will report back soon!

Please make note of my new e-mail address: [k\\_larson@earthlink.net](mailto:k_larson@earthlink.net) I apologize to those who have been victim to unresponsiveness when writing to my former address.

**RIDDLE.** Where can you sit on a beach and enjoy icy Antarctica? (the answer will be in the next Prattle, and no, it won't be a swimsuit issue!)