



THE ANTARCTICAN SOCIETY

905 NORTH JACKSONVILLE STREET
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22205

HONORARY PRESIDENT — MRS. PAUL A. SIPLE

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Joint Meeting with The Explorers Club -Washington Group and
The Society of Woman Geographers

**Antarctic Tourism: Getting to the Bottom of
A Lonely Planet**

by Jeff Rubin

on

Saturday evening, December 6, 1997

at

The Cosmos Club
2121 Massachusetts Avenue NW

Social Hour 6 PM - Dinner 7 PM - Lecture 8:15 PM

The cost of dinner, including tax and gratuity, is \$40/person.
Make check payable to ECWG, and send to Frank R. Power -
13208 Glen Mill Road, Rockville, MD 20850 before December 2nd!
(No cancellations after December 4th.)

Dress will be black tie, or dark suit, if you prefer.

Jeff Rubin, journalist, writer, traveller, lecturer, and relatively recent bridegroom, comes before us as the author of the first comprehensive guide book to Antarctica - *ANTARCTICA: A TRAVEL SURVIVAL KIT*. For the past ten years Jeff has been carrying on affairs with penguins, first with the Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition to the subantarctic islands of Macquarie and Heard, as well as to Davis on the continent. He spent ten years working for TIME Magazine in Sydney and in New York. Most recently Jeff was the science and environmental writer for ABC News Online. He has lectured frequently on Antarctic tour ships, and has been to Antarctica nine times. He's small in stature, but large on words. Come and hear some of them!

*November 3, 1997 was declared Norman Vaughan Day by
the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.*

We still have calendars! Please buy! See page 2!

This is a somewhat shorter edition of a newsletter, as we are both short on news items and late in getting this draft put together. The new age technology spreads information and data around, but it also has its drawbacks. Are we creating a bunch of monsters who one-line e-mail messages to all hands, and leave it at that?

Here are some facts and figures about our Society. This is your 129th overall newsletter, of which Ruth and I have been involved in putting 110 of them to bed. Quite a record for two people, particularly when you think that we are still speaking to one another after some twenty-odd years, twenty-odd years of laboring for love with no recompense except for letters of appreciation from some of you kind folks which really make it all worthwhile. And let's not forget our lecturers, who now total 190, who have all made possible a very educational, enlightening, and enjoyable thirty-five-year history of Who's Who in Antarctica.

We hope that our future will continue to be bright, and we are really excited about the shot-in-the-arm being provided by Kristin Larson with her up-to-date reports on what is now going on in Antarctica. She is a real delight to work with, vivacious, alive, fun. She also just happens to be young, good-looking and single, with a delightful writing style. Her only drawback is that she is a law student, which will no doubt lead to her complete corruption. Meanwhile Brash Ice will remain a collection of taradiddles. Remember, our motto is "The Truth Shall Not Get in the Way of a Good Story."

BUY MORE ANTARCTIC CALENDARS FOR CHRISTMAS, PLEASE! Each year we find ourselves backed into the same old corner begging you to buy the Antarctic calendars of Colin Monteath with all those beautiful pictures of down below. And each year, it seems that some of our big spenders from yesteryear, who used to buy twenty or more, are cutting back. Anyway, here we are with an inventory of over a hundred, and time is running out, so if you have a mother-in-law or an uncle, why not send them one for Christmas? Next year we promise not to order so many! 'You know they are a real bargain, as you are practically getting them at cost, a cost reduced by bulk buying.

PBS, A HATCHET JOB OF THE WORST KIND. First, an American, whom we will not honor by calling him an author, put together a tirade, diatribe on Admiral Byrd which was subsequently published in this country; then a bunch of British characters came along and extended the debacle in something called a documentary, which our PBS stations picked up and presented on TV recently. Hopefully, because it is so biased and full of so much b.s., it will be totally rejected by the viewing audience. Byrd was actually a very decent man, was by no means an alcoholic, and was generally highly respected by nearly all of his men. I think I know somewhat of what I speak, as I was fairly close to Byrd's bridge playing partner, Henry Harrison; Byrd's biographer, Charlie Murphy; Byrd's rescuer, Bud Waite; and one of his dog drivers, Norman Vaughan And I knew a lot of the others, too.

It all dates back to this guy who had some sort of a personal vendetta against the Admiral, and was out to prove that he was both a drunk and a lousy navigator. I happened to be in the home of Henry Harrison, meteorologist on BAE 3, when this questionnaire of some sixty questions came in for Henry to answer. He showed it to me, and all the questions were so worded as to put Byrd in a bad light. It was a

travesty, but somehow the guy got the book published, even by a respectable publishing house. And then these people came over and interviewed everyone, but when they put the documentary together, they more or less followed the script of the aforementioned nameless book by the unnamed author, whose pudgy old face kept showing up on the screen every seven minutes. Without a doubt the most respectable member of the whole expedition, Al Lindsey, professor emeritus of Purdue University, who is an ageless 90 and has all his marbles, was not included in the film at all, IN SPITE of having been interviewed for four solid hours. Why? - because he is a Byrd supporter. His memory of the day's taping was "it was obvious that they were trying to maximize sensationalism. They did their best, unsuccessfully, to pry out of me something about Advance Base with which they could denigrate and discredit Byrd." The archivist at Ohio State University was told that he would be shown the script prior to the film release. He wasn't! One of the members of BAE II who was shown was Joe Hill. Joe telephoned Ruth the day following the initial showing, and was furious that he was part of the final product, because he thought it was going to be a truthful documentary.

If you really want something close to the truth about the whole affair, you should reread what Charlie Murphy presented as a prelude to Bob Rutford's Memorial Lecture on April 1, 1982. We weren't exactly certain if Bob could get the audience fired up, so we brought Charlie in as a crowd awakener-arouser, and his presentation, "Some Vagrant Recollections of an Elderly Antarcticist" was so good that we published it in its entirety in our newsletter of April 1982. He talked in great detail about Byrd being at Advance Base. This is the same Murphy who was making the daily contacts to REB. Our version is straight from the horse's mouth, by a highly respected member of the keyboard whose publications need no embellishments. Contrast the highly regarded, respected Charlie Murphy who WAS THERE vs. the mind wanderings of prejudiced interlopers hallucinating over what might have happened.

A month ago today, as we type this, five of the seven surviving members of BAE II held a reunion. And they all signed statements that they did not know Byrd to be anything more than a very casual social drinker. One was Byrd's cabin-mate going south on the ship; another was his orderly, both of whom would certainly have known. The whole film, by today's vernacular, sucks! Oh yes, if your name happens to be Alan Shapley, do you have any influence with Deborah? If so, could you possibly get her to return some precious letters to us from Charlie Murphy which she borrowed from us light years ago? Thanks!

Pete Demas was in town to hear Larry Gould give the 1979 Memorial Lecture, Christine Russell spent a lot of time interviewing Pete, whom some of you know as one of the tractor drivers who rescued Byrd. Pete has long since gone, but if any of you Washingtonians know Christine, could you ask her if she still has her notes from talking to Pete? We have about thirty letters in our files from Bud Waite, but they are all handwritten, and resemble penguin tracks more than penmanship. So there is stuff available which is truthful, but it sure did not get on PBS that evening of November 17th.

SOMETHING NEW IN TOURISM, PERHAPS. Yogi Berra could be the national spokesperson for the Antarctic, as his epic statement that it is never over 'til it's over could apply to so many things on the ice. When you think you have seen everything relative to tourism, with ice-breaking icebreakers taking tourists everywhere, from which they helicopter to the inner bowels of the continent, now we have a nation, Australia, contemplating making two of their stations available to the ultimate tourists who want to live there. This was hinted at by Representative Bob Hale of Maine when he was part of a visiting bunch of Congressional firemen visiting Antarctica in November 1957. While at McMurdo, Representative Hale gave an interview to the press which was widely circulated in which he predicted that hotels for tourists would eventually be

coming to McMurdo. Forty years later, almost to the day, Australia says that they have a money crunch, and wish to consolidate their research at their stations (Davis, Mawson, and Casey) at one station, making the other two available to tourists going there on strictly controlled expeditions.

The Australian stations are about 1,000 km apart from each other, each with its own transport system and infrastructure. Their logistics consume two-thirds of their Antarctic budget of about \$A60 million a year, leaving only one-third for research. The Australian government is expected to accept the recommendation of consolidating research at one station, leasing the other two to other countries or allowing tourists to go there. Australia expects to get a lot of static from environmental-conscious organizations, such as Greenpeace, so don't call your travel agent quite yet. But isn't it interesting? Wow!!

A CIGARETTE SMOKER CAN MAKE GOOD. The second doctor to winter over at the South Pole station was the son of a well-to-do California family, a man by the name of Vernon Houk. He did not seem to be overly impressive to most of us at the station. Of course he didn't have much to do except initial outgoing messages, so he sat at the end of the table, wearing mukluks, smoking cigarettes by the pack, consuming endless cups of coffee. No one there picked him for stardom. BUT he rose to become the Assistant Surgeon General, the second highest ranking official in the Public Health Service!! He became the Director of the Center for Disease Control's Environmental Services Division in 1972, and ordered the first major study of blood lead levels in the United States (1978). Houk was very well-known professionally for his continuing efforts to ban lead-based products from the home and workplace. In 1978, the government banned lead-based paint for residential use, and in 1982, began phasing out leaded gasoline. So next time you top off your gas tank, why not say, "Thanks, Vernon." In 1985 he was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal for his research on lead poisoning in the blood. And in 1988, orders followed up a study of blood lead levels. Vernon was deeply concerned that inner-city children were still being exposed to dangerous amounts of lead, and compared them to canaries in a coal mine. "Let us not let the next generation be so cursed." He died much before his time, at the early age of 64 (in 1994), although he looked in pictures like an old man. He was thirty years old when at the South Pole, so he was somewhat of a late bloomer in real life, although a most significant one. For an important national figure, he is remembered somewhat insignificantly in Antarctica by a bare rock spur in the Patuxent Range of the Pensacola Mountains.

SOLE CIVILIAN SCIENTIST AT LITTLE AMERICA V, 1956, DIES. Chet Twombly, meteorological technician, was the only civilian wintering over at Little America V in 1956. I don't really know the reason why, but presumably someone wanted upper air soundings from that station prior to the IGY. Chet was an interesting person, as well as a character. He had a strong interest in astronomy, and photographed a series of stars in the 1950s which appeared in the National Geographic Magazine. He was also interested in computers, and actually built one from scratch. And he had his own plane which he enjoyed flying.

But we must tell you a real funny story about his relief at Little America V in January 1957. The following is entirely truthful, as we were an eye/ear witness. The incoming scientific crew for Little America V for 1957 came to Antarctica on the USS CURTISS, and we were taken off the ship in Kainan Bay by a chopper. With us was the chief scientist for the Antarctic for the IGY, one Harry Wexler, a rather serious person without much of a sense of humor when it came to duty. By the time we all had assembled in the camp, Chet had his luggage by the door, waiting to go out to the chopper for the flight to the CURTISS. However, Harry wasn't really ready to release Chet right away, and said to him, "Chet, I want you to check out Sam Wilson

on your gear before you leave." Chet didn't bat an eye, walked over to his luggage, threw a duffle bag over his shoulder and said, "Harry, it has been a long, hard winter, and I don't want to miss that ship." Then he casually glanced at Wilson, and said, "Sam, the GMD is up that ladder," and walked out the door!!

KATHLEEN SCOTT, WHO WAS SHE? This soul is having a hard time making up his mind about Kathleen Scott, although one thing is for sure – she was one of the most gifted and talented women to ever be associated with Antarctica. Maybe The Most!

I was really enchanted about Kathleen after reading her autobiography, *SELF-PORTRAIT OF AN ARTIST*. Recently I have been reading Louisa Young's *THE LIFE OF KATHLEEN SCOTT*. Louisa just happens to be a granddaughter of Kathleen's, and has been a freelance journalist for the past twelve years. Her book was published in 1995 by Macmillan, but is rather hard to come by. I think one should read both books, but, if given a choice, maybe Louisa's book would be a more realistic single source reading, as Kathleen's autobiography printed only what was fit to be printed. Not that Kathleen led a jaded, tainted life, but her manipulation of men to her own advantage was a large part of her life according to her granddaughter. And, to a large degree, wasn't Kathleen the Great Protector of Captain Scott, and had a strong hand in the version of his diary released to the public immediately after his death? But so what? Wouldn't we all like to think that those left behind when we depart would become saviors of our lives, protectors of our true-life frailties?

I had this feeling when I read Kathleen's autobiography that she was a woman much ahead of her time, that she was a twenty-first-century woman. If she were alive today, no one would think twice about her life-style. She LIVED! She picked out Robert Falcon Scott as the man she wanted to father her children, not because she loved him. The love did come after they married. Not being successful in my one venture into marriage, I'm not expert on selecting a mate, but her way seems to be one worthy of consideration. She certainly had a bevy of men, distinguished men, who were attracted to her as a person. She does not appear in her pictures to be a person of great physical beauty, so she had to charm them in other ways. And charm them, she did.

I think if you have any intent on being famous, one should not keep a diary. There are very few of us saints left!! Kathleen kept most complete diaries, so her life in a way is an open book. Nixon had his tapes, Kathleen had her diaries, and no one really knows what happened to REB's journals! But Kathleen's personal life should in no way detract from her great talents as an artist, as a sculptress of international renown, whose works are in many of the great museums in the United Kingdom. However, one gets the feeling that perhaps Kathleen was much bigger in real life as a person than she was professionally as an artist. What do you think?

Most of the books on Antarctic women, and now I am referring to Barbara Land's and Elizabeth Chipman's books, have been devoted to women on the ice. And I grant you that the Gisela Dreschhoffs certainly merit serious contention as Antarcticans of Note. Several years ago, in comments on who was the foremost Antarctic explorer, I suggested that due consideration should be given to the late Mary Alice McWhinnie, as she opened more doors for women in Antarctica than any other person, changing the whole landscape of Antarctica. And I also wrote once-upon-a-time in this column that Lee Kimball should be the Antarctic Man of the Year for her great writings on the geopolitics of Antarctica. What I am trying to say is that all these women, plus those who stayed behind and supported, like Kathleen Scott, Ruth Siple, Harriet Eklund, and others, are part of the overall Antarctic picture. But, with due respect to all, Kathleen Scott stands out in my mind as the greatest Individualist.

Hey! We still have calendars! Order now for Christmas!

PRATTLE POLITICS. For this edition, Penguin Prattle takes a small, and short-lived detour to dredge up some news on budgets, bills and bipartisanship. Apparently science and research have become the "feel good" news that we can all rally behind, no matter what our political (or apolitical) stripes may be. From what the Prattler can tell, this bodes well for Antarctic science. What's good for the goose, is good for the penguins, too. Happy Holly-daze, back atcha in the new year!

BUDGETARY TRICK OR TREAT? Just before Halloween, President Clinton signed into law an appropriations bill providing NSF and several other agencies with their budgets for next year. The NSF appropriation is up approximately 5% over last year, and includes a real treat - \$70 million for the South Pole Station Rehabilitation project. Also signed into law is the National Science Foundation Authorization Act of 1997, which amends sections of previous National Science Foundation Acts dating from 1950, 1976 and 1988. The committee report on this Act made specific note of the strategic and scientific importance of maintaining an active research presence in Antarctica, and authorized a total of \$128 million for the South Pole Station, of which \$70 million was appropriated for the coming year. Congress has apparently taken the recommendations of the USAP External Panel quite seriously, and specifically notes that the Act's funding levels are consistent with the Panel's findings. (Recall that last year NSF convened the External Panel; a group of specialists, headed by former Lockheed Martin CEO, Norm Augustine, to review USAP's physical and logistical infrastructure.)

SOUTH POLE FACE-LIFT. The Office of Polar Programs has already initiated work aimed at rehabilitating South Pole Station. There are two parts to the effort. The first phase is to make immediate safety and environmental upgrades in order to bring the Station up to a more acceptable standard. The other phase is to conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment of the proposed new facility for South Pole. This environmental document will be packed full of interesting information and should be completed as a draft in late January. The draft will be available for public review and comment, before it becomes final. The Prattler will let you know when and how to get this document.

During December, NSF will formally break "ground" near the present South Pole Dome and begin construction of a new garage and shop, a fuel storage system and a new power plant. The plan is to erect a new arch for the garage and shop before the close of the season. Also, a new Atmospheric Research Observatory will be dedicated in January, to replace the aging Clean Air Facility. The new facility is twice as big, and will support research on climate, ozone, ultraviolet light and other atmospheric phenomena.

SCIENCE IS NON-PARTISAN. New legislation introduced in the Senate, the "National Research Investment Act," could double funding for basic research over the next ten years. If passed, this bill could prove to be very good for the U.S. Antarctic Program, especially during the next five or so years as the new South Pole Station is being built. What is the connection? Well, harkening back, once again, to the External Panel report that came out last April, there was talk of a possible reduction in Antarctic research funding to help offset the costs and logistical strain of construction at South Pole. While it is currently not clear how deep these proposed reductions could cut, the new "National Research Investment Act" may be able to help ameliorate USAP's competing needs. Senator Gramm (R-Texas) pretty much summed up the bipartisan spirit when he said, "President Clinton has talked a lot about building a bridge to the 21st Century and, our philosophical differences aside, I want to help him build that bridge [with research and technology investment]." The bill is sponsored by Senators Gramm (R-Texas), Lieberman (D-Connecticut),

Domenici (R-New Mexico), and Bingaman (D-New Mexico). Feel free to let them know *your* opinion!

SO CLOSE. 120 million years short of the goal, the multinational Cape Roberts drilling project abruptly stopped work last month due to weird weather. Readers may recall that this same project was also delayed last year due to insufficient sea ice on which to set up their drill rig. Unlike most ocean drilling, the Cape Roberts Project could not use a drill ship because the sea ice is *usually* too extensive in this part of the Ross Sea (about 75 miles north of McMurdo Station). And why Cape Roberts? For years polar scientists have been searching for exposed rock or sediment that dates back to the period when Antarctica was being transformed from a "lush landscape teeming with dinosaurs" into the land of many ice forms we know today. Since Antarctica hides more than 98% of its rock and soil beneath thick sheets of ice, the scientists turned their attention to a more accessible medium -the ocean. Through sonar imaging, it was determined that the marine sediments at Cape Roberts were the right age. The project engineers designed an ice-based drill rig, which was finally pressed in to use this past October. The drilling had been underway for just nine days when a fierce three-day storm charged through the region and broke up the sea ice dangerously close to the drilling operation. Within twenty-four hours the drill rig was disassembled and moved onshore. Gladly, the season was not a complete loss because the scientists were able to recover about 113 meters of sediment core dating back approximately 22 million years. The recovered core is considerably younger than the hoped-for sediments in the age range of 145 million years...but heck, if it has been around that long...what's another year?

NO ESCAPING EL NINO. Reports have been coming up from the ice that the weather is stranger than normal. Of course I think we say that every year, but there have been several unseasonably fierce storms in the area. The temperatures around McMurdo are averaging 10-15 degrees warmer than normal and winds more severe. Perhaps El Ninja would be a better name for the El Nino's Antarctic counterpart! These storms have kept McMurdo residents boarded up inside their rooms, replaying videos; have curtailed the Cape Roberts project; and delayed field deployment of several parties. The hardest hit has been South Pole Station which finally opened eleven days late. The South Pole delay is particularly noteworthy when one considers that eleven days represents more than ten percent of the total field season! So if you are headed south, be prepared for a rollicking good time.

POLAR PLUNGE. Well, it seems our Northern brethren and Sistren really know how to make a splash. During the recent launching of the U.S. Coast Guard's new ship HEALY, which OPP scientists will use to explore the Arctic, 600 guests got completely sloshed. And we're not speaking of fine champagne, of the sort Ruth Siple recently let fly on the new Antarctic Research Ship. Nope, the Coast Guard's guests, who included Senator Stevens (R-Alaska), and several OPP scientists and staff, were soaked through by a wall of greasy swamp water that was thrown up by the ship before righting herself in the Mississippi bayou. Like the tail that wags the dog, it appears that it was the ship that christened the guests! Boy, that Arctic gang is a tough group.

BYRD MEMORIALIZED. This past July, while your newsletter staff was resting on its collective summer laurels, a new statue of Admiral Richard Evelyn Byrd was dedicated in Winchester, Virginia. As many of you know, Admiral Byrd was the first to fly over both Poles, and also played a pivotal role in exploring and mapping Antarctica. He was a winner of the Congressional Medal of Honor, and a man who captured the hearts and minds of America. Dedication addresses were given by Secretary of the Navy, John H. Dalton, and Admiral Byrd's daughter, Mrs.- Boiling Byrd Clarke. The statue was funded entirely by contributions from friends, and was sculpted by Dr. Jay Morton.

Secretary Dalton reminded the audience that Albert Einstein once said, "We don't know one-millionth of one percent about anything." And went on to analogize this idea to the concept of exploration, saying that the monument of Byrd is not only an ode to the past...but also a challenge to embrace our future through continued courage and discovery. If any of you get over that way, let us know what you think. And while you are in the neighborhood, you may also want to visit Patsy Cline's grave site. She wasn't much of a polar explorer, but the woman sure could sing!

TWO BOOK REVIEWS ON DOGS IN ANTARCTICA by Steve Dibbern. *HUSKIES IN HARNESS* (A Love Story in Antarctica) edited by Shelagh Robinson. 1995, Kangaroo Press, Kenthurst, Australia; and, *OF DOGS AND MEN* (Fifty Years in the Antarctic) by Kevin Walton and Rick Atkinson. 1996, Images Publishing, Malvern Wells, England. Both of these books came about because of the expulsion of the last dogs from Antarctica brought on by decisions made at the Madrid Conference in October 1991. In short, all dogs (specifically) must leave the continent by 1 April 1994. Both are tributes to the dogs that Australia and the United Kingdom used in their national programs. Both books, also, contain scientific and emotional disdain for the process that doomed the use of the dogs. Both are also obviously labors of love and respect by many more people than those cited as authors or editors.

HUSKIES IN HARNESS is a collection of short essays by members of the Australian Antarctic Program. The format is that of a series of remembrances with a basic, but not too strict, chronology. There is a brief history of the beginnings of Australian dog breeding on Heard Island, and progressive stories to their use first at Mawson in 1954 and then at other stations. It is clear that Mawson was where it was happening with the dogs for the Aussies though. To leave the description of this wonderful book at that would be an awful disservice, however. It is a "Love Story in Antarctica," as the subtitle implies. Each essay is a heartfelt homage to the spirit and loyalty of what the writers describe as magnificent working animals and loyal friends. Although the essays are frequently outlines of specific traverses and trips, each one conveys the faith the men put in the dogs and the honest labor that they willingly gave. The book is well illustrated, (save the cover), with black and white photography, much of it credited to the drivers and scientists who wrote the articles.

Walton and Atkinson have done a wonderful job of chronicling the history of the use of dogs by the British from 1944 to 1994 in *OF DOGS AND MEN*. It is written as a chapter-by-chapter explanation of history, "how to," equipment, accomplishments and even includes such headings as "Grow-a-Pup" which explains puppy-raising practices, and "Kurahound," which is Brit-speak for the veterinary section. This book will be a treasure trove in the future when the people who had the privilege of working with the dogs are gone. Walton and Atkinson have a startling array of color photographs to lavishly illustrate this exceptional book. More than that, though, they have used the anecdote as the extended captions for the photographs throughout the book. At times it was difficult to decide if one should forge ahead with the text, or linger over the anecdotes provided by drivers from the very beginning to the very end.

Both books are excellent in offering bittersweet reminiscences of a time now passed. Both are very well done with a tip of the reviewer's hat to the beauty of the color photography in the British book. If any of you care to vicariously live in an era you missed, or wish to return to times you may have experienced, both are exceptional.

The reviewer is left with a sense of loss at the removal of the last dogs from Antarctica. Both books vigorously reject the politically correct "greenness" of the dogs' expulsion. They both put up the theory that the loss of dogs was a bribe to achieve larger goals, and that the bureaucrats who betrayed them had no understanding of the lack of any real threat that they represented or of the positive morale factor they were to the Antarcticans they served.