



# THE ANTARCTICAN SOCIETY

7338 Wayfarer Drive  
Fairfax Station, Virginia 22039

HONORARY PRESIDENT--MRS. PAUL A. SIPLE

**Presidents:**

Dr. Carl R. Eklund, 1959-61  
Dr. Paul A. Siple, 1961-62  
Mr. Gordon D. Cartwright, 1962-63  
RADM David M. Tyree (Ret.), 1963-64  
Mr. George R. Toney, 1964-65  
Mr. Morton J. Rubin, 1965-66  
Dr. Albert P. Crary, 1966-68  
Dr. Henry M. Dater, 1968-70  
Mr. George A. Doumani, 1970-71  
Dr. William J. L. Sladen, 1971-73  
Mr. Peter F. Bermel, 1973-75  
Dr. Kenneth J. Bertrand, 1975-77  
Mrs. Paul A. Siple, 1977-78  
Dr. Paul C. Dalrymple, 1978-80  
Dr. Meredith F. Burrill, 1980-82  
Dr. Mort D. Turner, 1982-84  
Dr. Edward P. Todd, 1984-86  
Mr. Robert H. T. Dodson, 1986-88  
Dr. Robert H. Rutford, 1988-90  
Mr. Guy G. Guthridge, 1990-92  
Dr. Polly A. Penhale, 1992-94  
Mr. Tony K. Meunier, 1994-96  
Mr. Ron Naveen, 1996-98  
Dr. Paul C. Dalrymple, 1998-2000

**Honorary Members:**

Ambassador Paul C. Daniels  
Dr. Laurence McKinley Gould  
Count Emilio Pucci  
Sir Charles S. Wright  
Mr. Hugh Blackwell Evans  
Dr. Henry M. Dater  
Mr. August Howard  
Mr. Amory H. "Bud" Waite, Jr.  
Dr. Charles W. Swithinbank  
Dr. Paul C. Dalrymple

---

Vol. 99-00

August

No. 1

---

## NOONER COMING SOONER!

Life on Ice:  
A Journey to the Frozen Deserts of Antarctica

Dr. Robert Wharton

September 20, 1999, 12:00 noon  
National Science Foundation, Room 110  
4201 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, Virginia 22230  
Ballston Metro Station

Bob Wharton is a Research Professor at the Desert Research Institute's Biological Sciences Center in Reno, Nevada. He has an international reputation for his studies of cold desert environments in Polar Regions, and is particularly well-known for his research of perennially ice-covered lakes in Antarctica. He is a veteran of 11 research expeditions to Antarctica, and is a member of the National Research Council's Polar Research Board. Bob developed and led the NSF-funded McMurdo Dry Valleys, Antarctica, Long-Term Ecological Research (LTER) project for five years which involved extensive field work, and led NASA/NSF-supported studies of ice-covered lakes in the Arctic and Antarctica as terrestrial analogs of early Martian environments. In addition to many important scientific publications, Bob's work was featured in the October 1998 issue of The National Geographic magazine.

---

NEW ZEALAND ANTARCTIC CALENDARS FOR THE MILLENNIUM, ORDER NOW! We are again offering what we feel is truly the best of the photographic Antarctic calendars, those put out by Hedgehog House, published by Betty "Smiles" Monteath, featuring the excellent photography of her husband, Colin. We highly recommend their calendars as they feature the pristine Antarctic environment. The price, the same as last year - \$11.00, includes mailing anywhere in the U.S. or Canada. Checks should be sent directly to the Antarctic Society, 7338 Wayfarer Drive, Fairfax Station, Virginia 22039.

## Brash Ice

In the good old summer time anything goes, and here we go. First we want to thank all of you who responded to our questionnaire. We actually heard from about a fifth of our membership, and the answer came back loud and strong to continue with our present format, not to go electronic. And the new double column layout appeared to be a winner, too. Majority rules - Ruth, Kristin and I have settled into a comfortable triumvirate, and we probably weren't going to do much more changing anyway!

Let me say something about our constituency and our history. About fifteen years ago, over two-thirds of our members had geographical features named for them in Antarctica, which means that they supposedly had done something worthwhile in Antarctica. And then take it back another fifteen years, and our Society was really a Good Old Boys Club. Now our face is changing, and that is why we brought Kristin aboard two years ago, to bring us up-to-date on Antarctica today. She has spent many suns and moons in Antarctica in the past ten years, and knows many of the new players.

Anyway, some of the Latter Day Antarctic Saints wanted less ancient history, and perhaps a bit more in the way of current events. And yet there is still the old guard, a significant other, who requested more info on the good ol' days. One guy asked for more on Deep Freeze I and II, another asked for news on cargo ships of the old days, like the ARNEB. Also in recent years, with the environmental protocol coming into effect, the flourishing of tourism, we are getting a lot more, shall we say, Antarctic Eco-tourists and enviro types as members. We see our mission as covering the ice front...a little bit of everything, some old, some new.

We have elected not to cover the story of the medical doctor at the South Pole because it is too sensitive a story, the press has already given extensive national and

international coverage of the airdrop, and there are rumors floating around which we cannot validate, so we are abstaining.

And we are bending a bit in this issue by including an obituary of a very distinguished Congressman who had a lot to do with Antarctic funding, and Antarctic science. This obit was written by an Antarctic, one of our members, who requested to remain anonymous. This person served on his staff, and knew him well. I also had the pleasure of knowing this very distinguished man and gentleman, as once upon a time I was gainfully employed by the government and was involved in the drafting of the National Climate Plan, which he championed. His company must have enriched those of you who met him when he visited Antarctica.

There is another anonymous spread— on the late Mary Swithinbank — a very touching tribute by a person who knew her quite well.

*Foothold on Antarctica* by Charles Swithinbank is now available from Charles (7 Home End, Fulbourn, Cambridge CB1 5BS, Great Britain) for only \$35 surface, \$40 airmail. This is the third volume on his illustrious Antarctic career, and is about the first international expedition The Norwegian-British-Swedish Expedition to Maudheim, 1949-52. This will be reviewed in the next newsletter, but we can assure all readers that anything by Charles is going to be really outstanding. Never in the history of modern mankind have so many famous polar people been on one expedition - such as Gordon Robin, Valter Schytt, Fred Roots, Gosta Liljequist, Ove Wilson, and Charles Swithinbank.

Charles needed a little diversion after Mary's death, so he came to the States and had lessons to learn how to fly a jet fighter. Charles is 72, going on 27.

While on the sorrowful topic of those passing to the beyond, we must sadly add

the name of two other Antarctic notables: Captain Price Lewis, Jr. (write-up follows), and Dr. Harrison Holt Richardson. Dr. H.H. Richardson, of the U.S. Antarctic Service Expedition, 1939-41, died on 17 July 1999 at his son's home in Claiborne, Maryland. Besides being a medical officer, he also served as a dog team driver and as a meteorological observer. But he is probably better remembered as being the first to take color movie film images in the Polar Regions.

Eagle Scout Bob Wharton wrote in and volunteered to give us the upcoming Antarctic Society lecture. We applaud his initiative and beseech others to follow in his footsteps. We are always seeking good Antarctic lecturers, and encourage any of you who would like to address our Society in Arlington, Virginia. If so, please contact our Honorary President, Mrs. Ruth Siple at the address on our letterhead.

Tom Frostman, a micrometeorologist at Plateau Station back in the late 1960's, continues his work as director of training and development for the Prevention Research Institute, living in Colorado and working in states like Kentucky, North Dakota, Iowa, Georgia and South Carolina. His program focuses on the prevention of, not treatment for, the ills of alcohol overindulgence. Some states mandate Frosty's program for their DUI offenders. In November, Frosty goes to Sweden to start a massive training for all military officers, including the Supreme Commander himself. What about Antarctica?

Jean Portell, daughter of the late Ambassador Paul Clement Daniels, architect of the Antarctic Treaty, wants you folks with any tidbits of information about scrimshaw by Antarctic whalers to pass it along to her. Jean is an art conservator with expertise in the care of ivory. She recently gave a presentation on historic scrimshaw at the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Scrimshaw Collector's weekend at the Kendell Whaling

Museum in Sharon, Massachusetts. Write to her at 13 Garden Place, Brooklyn, NY 11201 or [ieandp@aol.com](mailto:ieandp@aol.com).

**TRIBUTE TO MARY** (Anonymous). Heroes of the Soviet Union were decked with medals, but other heroes - the wives of Antarciticans - are seldom honored. The fact is that some Antarciticans owe their careers to the women in their lives. How else could they raise a family while treading where no man ever trod before? Charles Swithinbank ("Forty Years on Ice") lost his wife Mary to the big C in March this year. Back in 1960, with already two Antarctic winters under his belt, he had briefly appeared in the Northern Hemisphere to marry her, then later to father their first child, and again to begin their second. This time, a month before she gave birth, he left home to spend 18 months with the Soviet Antarctic Expedition.

While history records that some wives in similar circumstances have written: "Don't expect to find me when next you consent to come home", Mary was smiling when, 18 months later, she presented Charles with the 18-month old son he had never seen. And so it continued for his next 20 sojourns in Antarctica. Never did she attempt to dissuade him. Homecoming, of course, had its compensations. To a friend she confided that few women are privileged to enjoy twenty honeymoons - particularly with the same man.

A key feature in Mary's background was that she was bred in Alaska, where absentee menfolk were the norm. Having once lived in a log cabin in Denali Park, it was no big deal to bring a son into the world in the dead of winter in the bedroom of Charles's unheated house in England. The walls were hung with photographs of Antarctic scenes and there was ice on the inside of the windows. Her recipe for survival was to laugh about such things.

After Charles retired, Mary accompanied him on several Antarctic cruises, finding -

to nobody's surprise - that she loved the place as much as he did. When she died, a nephew wrote simply: "God danced on the day that Mary was born. Now she is dancing with Him."

**PRICE LEWIS, JR. DIES.** A man of the sea and ice, Navy Captain Price Lewis, Jr. died at age 79 of congestive heart failure on August 10<sup>th</sup> at his home in Thurmont, Maryland. He commanded icebreakers in both Polar Regions, and finished his government career as a program manager for polar operations in the Office of Polar Programs at the National Science Foundation. He served in the Navy for 24 years, was in both WWII and the Korean War, was a schooner master in the South Pacific for the Congregational Church, and taught at Columbia University where he received a master's degree in management. His interests included restoring old houses, botany, and tree farming. His widow and six living children (one died in 1997), a brother and five grandsons will carry on his legacy.

**ED TODD IS ALIVE, SORT OF** (E. Todd). My primary activity for the past couple of years has been a desperate attempt to keep the medical profession solvent. A year ago, in May, I fell and dislocated and broke my left shoulder. In December, I had several heart attacks and wound up with a triple coronary bypass. More recently I had some rather adverse reactions to chemotherapy.

Sometime last year, Barbara and I decided it was time to give up trying to take care of a big house so this past February we moved into a retirement and continuing-care facility called Westminster at Lake Ridge, a part of the city of Woodbridge, Virginia. A nice setup. My address is now Edward P. Todd, 12242 Cathedral Dr., Lake Ridge, VA 22192-2232, and e-mail is [epaytodd@aol.com](mailto:epaytodd@aol.com). The hard part of the move was my fixation on antique tools, but a friend of mine in Kansas City bought the most important machine tools, and the

boys from the local collectors' club also had a field day.

**THE HONORABLE GEORGE E. BROWN, JR.:** March 6, 1920 July 15, 1999 (anonymous). Representative Brown in his 18<sup>th</sup> term in the House, was Ranking Democrat on the House Science Committee and a senior member of the House Agriculture Committee. He was the oldest current House member and the longest serving member of the House or Senate in the history of his home state, California. He was Chairman of the House Science Committee during the 102<sup>nd</sup> and 103<sup>rd</sup> Congresses, and was probably best known in Congress for his work on science and technology issues.

Brown was a recognized leader in creating the Federal Government framework for science and technology. In the mid-1960's and again in the 1980's, he led an effort to restructure and strengthen the National Science Foundation, enhancing NSF's portfolio in engineering research, science and engineering education, and development of advanced technologies. He also developed legislation shaping the permanent science advisory mechanism in the Executive Office of the President, established in 1976 as the Office of Science and Technology Policy. To foster environmental preservation and science technology in the service of society, he was instrumental in the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency and the Office of Technology Assessment in the early 1970's. Later in his career, he promoted international scientific cooperation, authoring legislation to establish joint research programs between U.S. researchers and their counterparts in Mexico and Russia.

Representative Brown participated in a congressional delegation visit to Antarctica in 1968 to review the facilities of the U.S. Antarctic Program and the contribution of Antarctic research to science and society. He received the NSF Distinguished Public

Service Award in 1990, on the occasion of NSF's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Following his death, Dr. Rita Colwell, Director of NSF, said, "George Brown was the wise man of science in Congress. In his long and distinguished tenure with the Science Committee he was the most articulate spokesperson for continuing investments in science and technology for the nation's long-term well-being."

**HISTORY OF THE BUILDING OF MODERN ANTARCTICA BEING WRITTEN** (Dian Belanger). Historian Dian Olson Belanger and members of the Antarctic Deep Freeze Association have obtained a grant from the National Science Foundation to assemble and preserve the history of a landmark era, when the foundations of today's endeavors on the polar continent were established.

This project will document the United States Navy Seabees' construction and operation of seven scientific stations on the ice during the first years of Operation Deep Freeze in the mid-1950s, so that the Antarctic aspects of the International Geophysical Year, July 1957 - December 1958, could take place. I will outline the scope and accomplishments of the IGY, which in turn, led the participating nations to formulate a legal basis for devoting the region to the peaceful, cooperative pursuit of scientific research. The story will conclude with the signing of the Antarctic Treaty. A brief introductory chapter sketching American and other exploits in the southern high latitudes since the eighteenth century will set the context and a final chapter will provide some of the results and consequences of these mid-century developments and suggest issues of continuing and emerging significance.

The first year of this 30-month project has focused on gathering the oral histories of a wide variety of Antarctic veterans. I have already interviewed more than thirty participants representing all seven U.S. IGY stations and numerous professional and technical specialties. These have included construction mechanics, pilots, medical

officers, scientific leaders, electricians, radio operators, graduate students just tasting polar careers, policy makers, construction engineers, builders, and others.

Using the oral histories plus extensive documentary research as source material, I will write a history of this important time and place. My work will meet the professional standards of historical scholarship, but I also intend for this lively, engaging human story to appeal to broad audiences. The writing should be completed early in 2001, with publication to follow. The author welcomes personal Antarctic journals and other appropriate private papers as resources. Photocopies that need not be returned are preferred. Please contact me, Ms. Belanger, at [dobelanger@aol-com](mailto:dobelanger@aol-com) or 301-258-0708.

## BOOK REVIEWS

**THE FIRST ANTARCTIC WINTER.** In the last newsletter we reviewed John Behrendt's excellent book, *Innocents on the Ice*, a first-hand account by a distinguished American Antarctic scientist and policy maker about his experiences in an early IGY station (Ellsworth in 1957). Now comes along another interesting book, which in a way is sort of a companion book to John's, although it is about an expedition that occurred decades and decades ago: The Southern Cross Expedition of 1898 - 1900. There are certainly similarities in both camp leaders, Finn Ronne and Carsten Borchgrevink. This book, *The First Antarctic Winter* by Janet Crawford, granddaughter of physicist Louis C. Bernacchi, who wintered over at the expedition headquarters on Cape Adare, was published last year in New Zealand. It is only the third book ever written on the expedition. Basically the book consists of the written words in Bernacchi's diaries, which were said to be sort of in the vein of a "father confessor," writing down incidents which he found unsatisfactory to talk about more openly. Sort of a forerunner to e-mail! The book is quite elegant with a striking

laminated jacket, embossed gold-foiled front, new maps in a rear packet, over 300 supporting notes, pen and ink drawings and many previously unpublished photographs. You can get a copy of this book from Colin Bull, Polar Books, P.O. Box 4785, Rolling Bay, WA. For \$50 plus mailing charges, or from the publisher, South Latitude Research Ltd., PO Box 36-269, Merivale, Christchurch, 8001, New Zealand for about \$30 U.S..

**THE FRIGID MISTRESS** by George A. Doumani (John Spletstoeser). George Doumani has a knack for writing, and is also fair in what he writes. The book recounts events in George's life during five expeditions to Antarctica, beginning with 1958 when the IGY was already underway, and ending in 1965. George wintered at Byrd Station in his first year, and also participated in the over-snow traverses in Marie Byrd Land, exploring new territory along the way. Much of the contents of the book revolve around personality differences among everyone involved, some of it reflecting the interactions among Navy and civilians, station life and its associated problems of isolation and confinement during the winter and also the little things that become enlarged into big things for no apparent reason. For example, the choice of the daily movie at the station, choice of music played and its volume during meals at the station, minor peeves that flair up into words that one regrets later; and so on.

Knowing George personally it is easy to understand that he would often be the mediator, and would control his words and temper. Much of that comes out in his book. He is also a hard worker, which makes a big difference in situations where everyone is expected to "pull his own weight." (Pulling *her* own weight did not apply at that time in the U.S. Program— "she" did not appear until the 1969-70 season, and then every season since).

Considerable discussion is paid to food and cooking, natural subjects for discussion in Antarctica, whether at a station or in the

field. George's culinary experience shows through, and is also well received by his mates. Considering all his expeditions, George's credentials as a scientist and author are shown by his research in paleontology, resulting in significant contributions to the literature of the genera and species of invertebrates. His selected list of "Recommended Reading" provides details. Black and white photos provide details of station- and traverse-life. George's sense of humor appears at numerous places in the book, as evidenced by the "smell" that is the common denominator of anyone doing fieldwork in Antarctica. After finishing his traverse, George and others returned to Byrd Station and were confronted by a station individual who complained about the way they all smelled. George's thoughts on it are as follows: "I cannot describe the smell. It is probably diesel fumes deeply impregnated into our clothing, plus a mixture of cooking smells from the wanigan with a dash of body odors, a whiff of smelly socks and underwear, and a sprinkling of dandruff for seasoning." (page 133).

The part about the book that made me think of the realities of this kind of life-explorer, scientist—which often takes a considerable toll on family situations, is told by George in the final chapter, Coming Home, in which he raises the subject about Antarctica, The Mistress. Many of us know "The Mistress" he talks about so well, because it is difficult to ignore the magnetism of that part of the Earth. In George's case, he talks about the consequences that are sometimes inevitable—divorce. He says, "This is a terrible price to pay for the pursuit of exploration and knowledge, a price that is never factored into the overall cost of these achievements." And so it goes.

**USS GLACIER AGB-4.** There is such a proliferation of military groups of ancient and honorable Antarcticans that we just can't keep up with them. Ben Koether, who served on the Glacier back in 1961, founded

the Glacier Society, which is an organization dedicated to restoring the USS/USCGC *Glacier* as an operational museum honoring all those who served on the ship in both Polar Regions. I would think that anyone who ever served on a forever-rolling ship like an icebreaker would want to bury it in Davy Jones Locker...but then again those folks have hard heads, are slow learners, or just plain enjoy suffering. They hope to bring her back to Bridgeport, Connecticut to serve not only as a tourist attraction but also as a school-ship "learning platform for K-12 students" involving science and a bunch of other things too numerous to mention. Right now the *Glacier* is docked near San Francisco undergoing restoration. If you are interested in helping support this monumental effort or want to volunteer, contact Ben at: Glacier Society, PO Box 1419, Bridgeport, CT. 06601, ph. 203-375-6638, fax: 203-386-0416, or e-mail: [benkoether@mindspring.com](mailto:benkoether@mindspring.com), or website [www.glaciersociety.com](http://www.glaciersociety.com).

And if you are really into it, there will be a *Glacier* reunion in late September. If you like wine and cheese, gambling, reminiscing, Budweiser beer, bus tours, animals galore and a couple of meetings, this could be just the excuse you need to be in good ol' St Louis for the autumn colors. The reunion is planned for September 22-26, Radisson Hotel, St. Louis Airport.

**TOUR GROUP UPDATE** (Denise Landau). The International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO) is a member organization founded in 1991 to advocate, promote and practice safe, environmentally-responsible, private travel to Antarctica. This year the 10th IAATO General Meeting was hosted in Hamburg, Germany by IAATO member Hapag Lloyd on June 28 -30, 1999. A total of 58 people from 9 different countries attended. Participants included full and associate members, expedition leaders, lecturers, ship's officers, Non-IAATO member tour companies, government reps, NGO's, university

professors and researchers. IAATO is in the process of updating its membership list. A new list will be placed on the IAATO website during the month of August. During the General Meeting, the new Executive Secretary, Denise Landau was voted in. Darrel Schoeling has served IAATO well since its beginning in various capacities, but decided to pursue his educational book business, *Longitude*, on a fulltime basis.

IAATO's new contact details are as follows: PO Box 2178, Basalt, CO 81621, phone: 970-704-9178, fax: 970-704-9660, website: [www.iaato.org](http://www.iaato.org) e-mail: [iaato@iaato.org](mailto:iaato@iaato.org).

### **Penguin Prattle**

Well, this "summer edition" has slipped almost into autumn and for that I must shoulder most of the blame. My excuse? I was dragged, kicking and screaming, to Italy where, for all of June and a good part of July, I was force-fed gelato, pasta, Titian, Botticelli, Etruscan ruins, and oh yes, some coursework on European Trade law. All-in-all, a splendid kidnapping, though a far cry from those moonlit solstice nights in McMurdo. Never can, nor want to get those pixels out of my brain.

The folks at NSF's Polar Programs have also had a busy summer. At the moment, they are putting the final touches on the Annual Science Program Plan. This is the volume that describes upcoming ice research projects, so we will wait until our next newsletter for highlights of the upcoming ice field season. NSF staff has also been pouring over at least five multi-volume proposals submitted by teams who hope to win the Antarctic support contract. This competition occurs every ten years, and generally attracts nationally ranked companies. As if this wasn't enough, NSF also organized an unusual mid-winter airdrop mission earlier this summer in response to a medical need at South Pole. They are also continuing close oversight of the complex construction effort of the new South Pole Station.

One upcoming project that we do know about involves an extensive international effort in conjunction with the Antarctic Pack Ice Seals (APIS) research program. The U.S. component will rely on the R/V *Nathaniel B. Palmer*, which will support onboard helicopters for the first time! More on that in the next edition.

**MANAGERS' REVELATIONS.** Few Americans have undertaken a wider array of roles in Antarctica, and distinguished themselves more consistently than Captain Al Fowler (USN, ret.). Al served as Captain, Naval Support Force Antarctica (CNSFA) between 1972 - 1974, and then went on to be Deputy Director of Polar Programs from 1974 through 1988. Recently, Al completed his impressive tour of duty, stepping down from his post as the Executive Secretary of COMNAP (Council of Managers of National Antarctic Programs), where he served from 1988 through 1997.

Captain Fowler has done us all a tremendous service by capturing his Antarctic experience in a new book, *COMNAP: The National Managers in Antarctica*. The book's manuscript is currently under review by an international group, and we shall notify our readers when it comes off the press. It will, no doubt, provide a revealing glimpse into the inner workings of the Antarctic program decision-making process.

**WINFLYING.** John Lynch from Polar Programs has kept us up-to-date on the progress of this year's "winter fly-in," which commenced August 20. The first flight touched down at the Pegasus blue-ice runway less than five hours after leaving Christchurch! During the Winfly operations temperatures at Pegasus ranged from -40 to -50F, and were a little warmer in "town" (McMurdo). A reconnaissance party to Cape Roberts is already underway and early season research has been initiated.

One of the most intriguing Winfly projects each year involves ozone depletion research. Through the combined efforts of the U.S. "balloon fliers" from Wyoming and the Italian lidar project, both of which are based out of the Crary Science and Engineering Center in McMurdo, excellent information on this annual atmospheric phenomenon is produced. Dr. Terry Deshler, Principal Investigator from the University of Wyoming, in Laramie, told me that during this first week of Winfly measurements had already indicated a strong presence of Polar Stratospheric Clouds, or PSCs. These clouds are closely correlated with ozone depletion because they provide a substrate for the chlorine-ozone chemical reaction. Recent research efforts have focused on determining the nature and composition of the PSCs, which change seasonally. They hope to better predict what types of conditions favor ozone depletion. Dr. Deshler also said that the level of depletion has more or less stabilized in recent years, which he attributes to the fact that the earth's atmosphere is now at a "chlorine maximum." Because of the worldwide ban on the chlorine-containing substances that cause ozone depletion Dr. Deshler expects that in the next decade, or even sooner, the level of ozone should start returning to natural levels. Certainly something to look forward to, eh?

**SHACKLETON SAILS SOUTH.** Okay-so I lied, or actually was misled into lying. The *James Caird* is coming to Washington DC after the wonderful Shackleton exhibit leaves its New York mooring. Earlier reports (that are thankfully wrong) had it that the little cork of a boat would be returning to its home in England, and that the National Geographic Explorers Hall show would feature only the photos and memorabilia of the expedition. Not! We just got word from a reliable inside source that the *Caird* will be gracing the local show, and I can't urge you strongly enough to get thee there. Until you stand in the room with the boat that made the most amazing sea passage possible, it's hard to



Imagine the effect that it has. Please don't take my word for it! The National Geographic exhibit opens on November 16 and runs through February 6. Caroline Alexander, the curator of the New York Natural History Museum show and author of the newest book on Sir Shackleton will be presenting two lectures in conjunction with the show on the evenings of December 2 and 3. For information and tickets for the lecture call 202-857-7700. Early reservations are strongly recommended!

**BACK-TO-BACK ANTARCTICA.** While on the topic of the National Geographic Explorers Hall programming, please take note of another Antarctic-flavored show that follows closely on the heels of the Shackleton exhibit. Running from February 25 through June is the exhibit that was put together by the Minnesota Museum of Science and has been on the road. This is a comprehensive exhibit covering most aspects of Antarctica's natural history and geography. The details of the Washington show have yet to be worked out, but we will include updates as they come up.

**POLE CATS MAKING GREAT PROGRESS** (excerpted from Antarctic Research Hearing). On June 9, the House Science Subcommittee on Basic Research held an oversight hearing on the U.S. Antarctic Research Program. Karl Erb, Director of NSF's Office of Polar Programs, testified that Congress had provided almost all of the funding needed to complete the modernization, enabling "substantial advance procurement." He reported that both the modernization (totaling \$127.9 million; construction to be completed by 2005) and the upgrades (\$25 million; through 2002) are on schedule and on budget and "proceeding vigorously." Questioned about the impact on the science programs of diverting resources to construction, Erb said that although the program's ability to "deploy large new research projects certainly will be curtailed over the next three years," as anticipated,

"the capability for research embodied in the new station will more than compensate for the short-term impacts." Donal Manahan, Chair of the National Research Council's Polar Research Board, noted that "the Board had solicited input on this question from a range of scientists, and overall, the responses were very positive." Most scientists, Manahan said, felt no negative impacts from the modernization. The largest impact was experienced by geoscientists, which Manahan said was not unexpected because of their requirements for extensive logistical support. Other issues discussed were the unique research opportunities in Antarctica, the need for improved weather forecasting to reduce the number of logistics flights turned back, the imminent obsolescence of some communications satellites used by the program, and the impacts of increasing tourism on Antarctic research.

**SOUTH POLE VISUALS.** For some great images and personal "war stories" from the South Pole Station, the Prattler suggests taking the following cyber tour:  
<http://alizarin.physics.wisc.edu/rschwarz>  
<http://people.delphi.com/billspindler/>  
<http://205.174.118.254/nspt/>

**CREATURES FROM THE ICE LAGOON.** New life forms continue to emerge from the least likely locations in Antarctica...like the story line from some thriller (chiller?), Dr. John Priscu describes the new "biotica" from recently discovered liquid water inclusions in the 4-meter thick ice cover of Lake Bonney. These meltwater pockets form in response to solar heating of wind-borne sediment particles that become trapped within the sea ice. The sediment particles then serve as nutrient-enriched microzones that allowed the establishment of microbial communities. The most amazing part is that these communities are phylogenetically and ecologically different from those in the water column and in the sediments. These microbial communities carry out processes such as photosynthesis, nitrogen fixation

and decomposition within the inclusions. This study shows that life near the freezing point can be both active and complex. The research findings were reported in *Science* (Vol. 280, pp. 2095-2098, 1998).

And while we have you thinking of murky places covered in ice and filled with alien life forms, try this one on for size....It is now thought that microbes that are completely unknown to scientists may exist in "Lake Vostok." Wait a minute! *Lake Vostok*???? The map of Antarctica clearly shows a Vostok Station (and if your map is old like mine it says that Vostok Station "belongs" to the USSR). Yes right, Vostok Station is the one high up on the polar plateau, which besides serving some of the most horrendous vodka (origin = bathtub?), is best known as the place that has recorded the lowest temperatures on earth (-126.9 degrees Fahrenheit). As part of a joint U.S. French - Russian project scientists have drilled down through the polar plateau producing the world's longest ice core, and in the process discovered that at the base of the ice sheet was not mud or rock but water and lots of it! Lake Vostok is roughly the size of Lake Ontario. Drilling over the lake was stopped approximately 120 meters above the water to prevent contamination, and now researchers are examining options for further exploration of the lake waters and underlying sediments in a manner that won't contaminate them.

A recent NSF press release states that "there are several reasons other than the possibility of discovering unknown forms of life for exploring the lake. Water below the ice, which has been cut off from the outside world for hundreds of thousands of years, may have a unique chemical composition. There may also be an active tectonic rift below the lake, which may be warming its waters. Or sediments at the lake bottom may contain a record of ancient climate conditions". Robin E. Bell, a geophysicist and a co-editor of the report entitled *Lake Vostok: A Curiosity of a Focus for Interdisciplinary Study*, says it "illustrates the emerging importance of the lake for

understanding the processes which may have triggered the evolutionary explosion on earth and perhaps on other planets, as well as deciphering the geologic history of Antarctica."

**POLAR MAIL.** Not all of you will know what PolarMail was, either because you were in Antarctica too early or too late. For a long period of time, ending only in the past few years with the advent of reliable e-mail and voice communications, PolarMail served a vital function in many of our lives. It was a volunteer communication service provided by dedicated souls, and often made the difference between a tolerable winter of separation and one of degenerating gloom! Long-time ice man, Al Oxtan wrote to us recently that the PolarMail folks could use some cheering-up of their own so I have taken the liberty to forward an excerpt o] Al's message so those of you inclined can dash off a letter to the former Queen and King of Ice Communications!

**From: A. J. Oxtan**

oxton@atsvax.rsmas.miami.edu or  
[ajo@TheCatDragdlnn.org](mailto:ajo@TheCatDragdlnn.org)

Louise and Rick (PolarMail) Johnson were there when we needed them, handling messages between us on the ice and the folks at home before e-mail usurped their most important role. Rick and, at times, his children relayed messages, typed seemingly endless letters, scrimped and scrounged for the equipment and postage to keep the mail moving. And Louise ran PolarFlowers, PolarGifts, PolarShovels with a personal touch that the internet has not matched.

Rick was more than once the first "ice" person to know when someone's parent died and then had the task of sending a message: Call Home—I can't tell you why... Now they need us. Louise needs us especially. She is gravely ill. They can be contacted at Louise & Rick Johnson, 909 Briedinger Road, Nazareth PA 18064-9352, or [polar@epix.net](mailto:polar@epix.net).