



THE ANTARCTICAN SOCIETY

7338 Wayfarer Drive

Fairfax Station, Virginia 22039

HONORARY PRESIDENT - MRS. PAUL A. SIPLE

Vol. 01 – 02

November

No. 1

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Annual Dinner Meeting and Lecture

In conjunction with the Explorers Club and Society of Woman Geographers

Saturday, December 1

Cosmos Club

2121 Massachusetts Ave. NW Washington DC

Cocktails 6:00 Dinner 7:00

Black tie Preferred

Please join us for this very special event and hear stories about one of Antarctica's foremost explorers and artists

Dr. David M. Wilson

Great nephew of Dr. Edward Wilson

Dr. David Wilson will present slides and lecture about his great uncle, Edward Wilson of the Antarctic (1872-1912) who was on both of Scott's Antarctic expeditions and died with him on the return from the Pole. Dr. Wilson (the elder) is widely regarded as one of Antarctica's finest artists and pioneering scientist-explorers. He served as assistant surgeon, vertebrate zoologist and artist on the 1901-1904 'Discovery' Expedition and as Chief of the Scientific staff on the 2nd Terra Nova* expedition. David's topic is particularly timely given that this year marks the start of the centenary of the 'Discovery' expedition, which represented the first major penetration into the Antarctic Interior.

Dr. David Wilson is accomplished in his own right. He earned his "doctor" title studying the philosophical problems of inter-culturalism, and is devoted to locating and protecting polar archives, as well as preserving stories of Antarctic exploration history. Like his great uncle, David is a keen ornithologist, and has frequently lectured on cruises to Antarctica. Dr. Wilson has also co-authored two Antarctic books: *Cheltenham in Antarctica: the Life of Edward Wilson*, and *Discovery Illustrated: Pictures from Captain Scott's first Antarctic Expedition*. The Penguin Prattle Section, at the end of this newsletter, gives info on obtaining these books.

To participate in this special event, please **send this coupon** to Markie Hunsiker, 5705 Nevada Ave. NW, Washington DC 20015. Reservations must be received by Nov. 28 and no cancellations or refunds will be made after Nov. 29.

Please reserve _____ spaces for _____ (name) and _____ (guest)
Enclosed is a check for **\$45.00 per person**, payable to "ECWG."

Brash Ice

September 11, 2001, A Day of Infamy, Pearl Harbor II. A day that we will always remember, and we will always remember where we were as the planes struck. I was with a dear friend from Little America V, 1957, Hugh "Blackie" Bennett, watching the video of Bert Crary's Memorial Service, when a neighbor called with the news. I can remember being at Dye II on the Greenland Ice Cap when news came over the radio that President Kennedy had been assassinated. I can remember being in a German POW camp when the Germans called us all out on to a hillside to tell us that our President, Franklin Delano Roosevelt had died, and that someone by the name of Harry Truman was now our new president. So we have a general idea what it must have been like at our American stations in Antarctica to hear that dreadful news of September 11th. We are running a colored picture of our station at the South Pole taken shortly after the tragic happenings, with our flag at half-mast.

There was a tremendous out flowing of sympathetic messages from abroad that poured into our Antarctic headquarters in the NSF building in Arlington, Virginia. Our Antarctic colleagues wished to show their support, and at the same time were expressing their own sad feelings. From one of our ex-presidents, Polly Penhale, we learned of the terrific impact that those messages had on the staff. Antarcticans had again rallied around one another to show that we were truly united as one, one continent, indivisible, under the Antarctic Treaty.

We are showing two more colored prints, which came from a British Antarctic Survey press release of a fire at Rothera Station. One picture is of the station before the fire, with its majestic setting on Adelaide Island, just off the Antarctic Peninsula, south of the Antarctic Circle. The same aircraft that brought out the sick doctor from the South Pole in early winter used Rothera as its staging base. The other picture is of the Nigel Bonner biological laboratory in full blaze. Thank God there were no deaths.

Sara Wheeler's highly anticipated book on Cherry-Garrard has hit the streets in the UK and early reviews are highly favorable. This should be a good one, considering both the author and the Lead Man.

OAEs and OTHERS. Norman Vaughan is still alive, but this should not come as any surprise as he is only 95 and has a lot of living planned for the future. We saw him here in Maine in August when he and Carolyn were visiting Vinalhaven Island for a granddaughter's wedding. He is still active each winter on a 700-odd-mile memorial serum run of the Iditarod. If you have a team of dogs or a snowmobile, and want to join Norman, contact him now.

Like the Marines, there is still room for a few good men/women.

Norman had something interesting to say about a fellow member of the first Byrd Antarctic Expedition, one Victor Czegka. Vic Czegka, machinist on the first Byrd Antarctic Expedition, 1928-30 was recently honored in his home town in Czechoslovakia on the occasion of his 120th birthday. A half-bust statue from his waist up was unveiled. Unfortunately arrangements could not be made for Vic to attend to his own unveiling, as it seems he has been dead for quite a few years, and is incommunicado. Too bad, as I think Vic would have enjoyed it all. Norman Vaughan was asked by a Czech in Anchorage if he and Carolyn would like to attend, they said "yes," but promised tickets never materialized.

Louie Quam has died at age 95. He was top dog hi the Office of Polar Program, 1967-72. Louie was a geologist and a geographer, a past president of the Association of American Geographers, whose real interest was in the arctic. How he ended up at NSF we will never know. Maybe a marriage of convenience. His wife was quite ill at the time, and, if our memory is correct, he retired to take care of her. Visiting hours for Louie are being held at Quam Heights, 71° 03' S, 167° 48' E. A quiet, unassuming, gentleman who did not create waves. Say goodbye to Louie.

Tony Meunier is not exactly an OAE—although he did w/o at the original South Pole Station—but this past president had a heart bypass this Fall. It must have been one hell of a large bypass, more like bypassing the Panama Canal. In fact, he had two operations, one in the morning, one hi the evening. Seems in recovery, they decided that they had not done a complete job, so wheeled him back in for an encore of ripping his chest apart and doing another one. The real problem was that all of those cashews Tony ate when looking for meteorites with Bill Cassidy had come back to haunt him, closing up an artery by over 90%. He is now a very svelte 222.

Believe it or not, there is something now called the Old Antarctic Explorers Association. There is no indication how "old" you have to be, how much of an "explorer" you have to be. Presumably just having been there is enough. They have an interesting membership dues structure. Annual dues are ten bucks, but if you are 81, you're in for a five spot. Then they have lifetime memberships based on your age, from \$110 if you're 45 and below to \$10 if you between 76 and 80!! If interested e-mail penguin64@worldnet.att.net or write OAE Association, Inc., 4615 Balmoral Drive, Pensacola, FL 325041

Scott did not have a very long run at the Savoy Theatre in London, closing up after one month. The play, ANTARCTICA, by David Young, opened in Toronto in 1998. Supposedly it is "an inspiring play, taking you on a powerful journey to the ultimate destination- the human spirit". The polar fraternity enjoyed the nuances, but the critics were not too kind. Curtains.

Get your 2002 Calendars NOW

We are again offering the New Zealand Hedgehog Antarctic calendars for sale, but we have a limited number this year. Only 100. First come, first served, with no reordering. As those of you who have been privileged to own one or more of the Hedgehog calendars, you know that they feature the very best of Antarctic pictures. Price is \$12.00, which includes mailing to your door stoop. What a bargain!! Order NOW from Ruth Siple at our Society's address shown on our letterhead.

Book Review: The Coldest March, by Susan Solomon, reviewed by Murray P Hamlet, DVM. Thirty years ago I was intrigued by the story of a British explorer who tried to use horses to get to South Pole and died in his attempt, while a Norwegian successfully used dogs to get to the Pole and back. What folly I thought; how foolish when horses can't eat horses whereas dogs can eat dogs. Over the years, I have read numerous accounts of both expeditions defining the planning, the crew selection and the motives of the two leaders. I don't think my opinion of either has changed, but this book defines the potential of an extremely cold winter as the major cause of Scott's failure.

The author vividly describes frustrations and resource-consuming side trips creating diversions that sapped the mental and physical strength of Scott's crew, while Amundson appears to have been much more goal directed. She describes in detail the trials, failures, and exhausting efforts of extremely brave men. She gives due credit to Scott's admission of leadership failures and mistakes that he made. She lays out the circumstances and timelines to allow the reader to make value judgments on the impact of these events. She makes a good argument for cold injury, infection, scurvy, and altitude illness adding to the deaths of some members.

Her compelling and vivid description of the travails of these powerful men is gripping. Although each had his shortcomings, each had unique strengths and added value to his expeditions. The author makes it clear that Scott overextended these men on trivial missions, which severely sapped their energy and compromised their ability to make the final push to the Pole. Her major premise is that the reason for Scott's failure was that he ran into the

coldest winter in history, but it was Scott's poor leadership skills that accounted for the failure of the expedition and his demise. True it was cold, but he started late with mentally and physically exhausted men and horses, and with equipment that was doomed to fail.

Amundson, on the other hand, started early with rested, healthy men, powerful dogs, and a focused mission in mind. Men of both missions were probably quite similar in motivation, but the leadership, planning and preparation by Amundson was quite superior to that of Scott. Amundson, as part of his planning, avoided the hard winter that killed Scott. He anticipated the potential of a hard winter, started early, and was confronted with severe weather only at the end of his trip. All these things point to superior leadership.

Although the author's comparison of the expedition records of temperature and wind with subsequent meteorological records, clearly defines the severity of the winter, the impact of its role on Scott's failure is hard to assess. It should be considered as only one of many events that led to the deaths of Scott and his man.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS ON SUSAN SOLOMON'S BOOK. Our review of Susan Solomon's book was done by one of this country's foremost authorities on cold weather injuries, and an expert on polar clothing, Dr. Murray Hamlett. He is Almost Retired, having officially hung it all up at the Army's Research Institute of Environmental Medicine, but he remains active as a retired annuitant and consultant. Anyone who has ever heard Murray give a presentation on any subject will recognize in his review above, that he has mellowed in retirement. Perhaps we should have sent along a case of beer with the book!

Susan's book was very meaningful to me as I had wintered as the micrometeorologist on the Ross Ice Shelf at Little America V in 1957, and I had served in the same capacity at the Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station in 1958. So I was somewhat familiar with the terrain and conditions experienced by Scott. Plus the fact that I had an association through Dr. Heinz Lettau with Chuck Stearns, who was the architect of the network of automatic weather stations that Susan used in her comparison studies. And I have to confess after fifty odd years of taking weather measurements all over the globe that there is a certain inbred reluctance on my part to accept any unattended automatic weather observations from a severe climate! However, time has long since passed me by, and somewhat begrudgingly, I have to admit that Chuck's automatic readings are probably as good as those taken by Scott's party on the trail. The easiest job in the Polar

Regions, as well as one of the hardest, is to take an accurate temperature reading over snow in the sun.

And I think Murray's comment about Susan's book not changing his opinions on the expeditions of both Amundsen and Scott will be quite valid for most of us. Time has not been kind to Scott, but he makes out quite well in Susan's book. Certainly Huntford's most thoroughly researched book on Scott and Amundsen did nothing to enhance Scott, as he was pretty well defrocked by the end of that book. However, if you have read Huntford's NANSEN and his SHACKLETON, you know that he writes with his sword out of its sheath, no holds barred. If you can't stand the heat, stay out of Huntford's kitchen.

My ADVICE is if you want to know about Scott, read Huntford, if you want to read about a once in a century abnormally cold march, read Solomon. I think Susan's book will be a big seller, maybe in the top five of all Antarctic books. In spite of the resurgence being experienced by Shackleton in recent years, Scott is still an Antarctic demigod. It is a book for all ages, too, as even kids should know about people from the Antarctic Heroic Age. And to know something about weather should not corrupt anybody, either. Buy, read THE COLDEST MARCH, alias Weather or Not!

FIRE IS THE SCOURGE OF ANTARCTICA. But it could have been worse at the British Antarctic Survey Station, Rothera, on the Antarctic Peninsula. Fire was detected at 1:00 am on 28 September 2001 in the loft of the Bonner Laboratory. The building was evacuated and no one was at risk. Darkness, snowdrifts, and 50 kts winds meant that the fire could not be brought under control, and they had to let it die out naturally after efforts to put out the fire with a snow blower and a small fire engine were futile. Winds picked up to 75 kts forcing the twenty-one wintering over personnel at the station to return to the safety of their main living accommodations. After all, the bottom line on any Antarctic fire is the safety and welfare of its people, and here there were no casualties. Well Done, Rothera.

Rothera is the center for the British biology, geoscience, and atmospheric science programs. The Bonner Laboratory opened in January 1997, and was equipped with sophisticated scientific instruments, a dive facility, and a marine aquarium. The main research programs supported at the Bonner Laboratory were Life at the Edge-Stresses and Thresholds and Antarctic Biodiversity: Past, Present, and Future. Both programs were studying the ability of organisms to cope with the harsh Antarctic

environment at a time of global warming and environmental change. (Excerpted from a British Press Release, see website www.... For additional details).

THE GREAT HERSHEY HOAX. Hershey Chocolate labors under the impressions that all people are fools, as they are displaying a Hershey bar which they claim came from the South Pole, buried there some 60 years ago. That's a pretty good act considering no one was at the South Pole from 1912 to 1956. Some explorer by the name of Douglas Troup- who's he? - found it in January 2000.

ANOTHER CHOCOLATE STORY. Back in the mid-fifties, this Antarctic Sandcrab read that people in Antarctica developed this craze for chocolate. So he entered into a personal agreement with Hershey for two large cartons of chocolate bars. These were placed into a large Conex container with his scientific equipment, locked and delivered to Davisville, Rhode Island for shipboard transportation to Little America V. In due time both the Sandcrab and the Conex container were on the Ross Ice Shelf. When he went to check out the container, lo and behold it had been broken into, and the two cartons of Hershey chocolate bars were missing! Then and only then did the Sandcrab realize that some Navy guy was really looking out for his health.

SOUTH POLE IGY REUNION. It seems that all reunions are popular, although the 50th may be the best as your clock is running down...and fast. Towards that end the Brits from Stonington Island in 1949-50 recently met in, of all places, Stonington, CT. And they invited their American cohorts from over the hill, members of the Ronne Antarctic Research Expedition, to join them. The worm turns, as in the beginning the word was put out from the American commander that the Ronne contingent was not to associate with the fellows over the hill! (note: we will provide a full report on what transpired at this reunion in our next newsletter).

A couple of months ago an ex-Navy man whom was at the South Pole in 1958, one Ed White, thought that he would try and locate some of the civilians who were at the Pole with him. As he was computer literate, he went on the internet and asked the whereabouts of the oddest civilian name at the station, Dewitt Baulch. And it coughed up one name, that of Dee Baulch out in Colorado. But that was good enough, and Dee gave Ed my name, and now we are going to have an All Hands Reunion of all personnel who wintered-over at the South Pole in 1957 and 1958, the International Geophysical Year.

Altho it won't be our 50th, too many of us are dropping like flies and others are critically ill, time is of the essence. Taps have sounded for Paul Siple, Jack Tuck, Palle Mogensen, Vernon Houk, Steve Fazekas, Ron Mozetic, and Donald Norman. Eight out of thirty-seven gone, not a very good sustaining average, slightly less than 80%. And some of us still alive might be said to be The Walking Wounded, on our own Baatan March, Two of us, Kirby Hanson and Jim Burnham, have been fighting Parkinson for over a decade. When you get right down to counting the Able Bodied, well less than half. So is it any wonder that we are going to meet in Forest Hills, Georgia, next spring. The spear heading up this reunion is that same Ed White.

We now know where all but one of the winter-overs is located, so Ed has a great handle. That guy may not be altogether missing as much as being detained, as he was one of two of us who ended up serving time. Interesting talking to these folks about what they had been doing in the interim period since the South Pole. We all have read hi the papers and magazines about the accomplishments of the 1958 station doctor, Vern Houk, who made headlines for many years for his research at the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta. I don't think any of us who put up with him in 1958 ever picked him to achieve fame and glory. Another surprise was John Guerrero who was at the Pole hi 1957. He became a very active war correspondent in the Middle East for a Swiss news agency. John actually got shot up in Yugoslavia, but is aok now.

Not many people still working. Charlie Greene, '58, owns his own company and can not afford to retire. He is the only one still working in the polar regions, as he has made a lifetime out of studying sounds of whales in the arctic. Mario Giovinetto is still doing polar research, but from behind a chair at NASA in Greenbelt. A couple of years ago he was awarded a very distinguished medal/citation by his homeland, Argentina. Bob Benson, '57, is also working full time at NASA in Greenbelt, and Arlo Landolt, '57, is a full time professor at Louisiana State University.

One of the amazing things about the IGY Pole Cats is that many are repeaters, with at least two, Ed Flowers, '57, and Jim Burnham, '58, coming back to the South Pole in later years. Mario came back to the Pole on the first America over-snow traverse, and Kirby returned several times when he headed up the U.S. Clean Air Facility programs around the globe. Another interesting factor is that many new PhDs came out of those two years, seven in number. It is going to be an interesting Non-50 Reunion.

MISSING IN ACTION—MARINE EXPEDITIONS.

About six short years ago Marine Expeditions was carrying about a third of the Antarctic tourist business to the ice on a fleet of suddenly available Russian ships. The> were charging the lowest fares of any of the Antarctic cruise companies and appeared on the surface to be doing fairly well financially. Then they expanded the company to include subsidiary outliers handling global trade. And suddenly their bubble burst, and hi spite of frantic sleight of hand efforts to salvage what had been a successful operation, they had to go belly up, declaring bankruptcy on June 6th of this last summer.

The TORONTO GLOBE AND MAIL of 9 June 2001 had a great understatement that read "Marine Expeditions had a checkered history." The company was formed by a young entrepreneur by the name of Sam Blyth, who took over a previous low-cost adventure cruise company called Polar Cruising Corporation. They seemed to keep their head above waters with their Antarctic operations, but when they started up the World Cruise Company, that was the beginning of the end.

Several of the members of our Society served as lecturers from time to time, besides myself who was with them for three seasons, Brian Shoemaker, Jeff Rubin, and Bob Dodson also lectured. There was a certain charm about lecturing for Marine Expeditions, but Pay Day something of a Russian Roulette. However, the travelers were of the finest kind, being in many cases low income people who had saved a few dollars to fulfill an Antarctic fantasy. There was none of this talk like I experienced on my first cruise where dinner conversation revolved around how many cruises each of the passengers had been on during their lifetime.

If I had a complaint about Marine Expeditions, it is that occasionally they did not hire qualified lecturers. I served two seasons where the so-called penguin expert had never seen a solitary penguin until they arrived hi Antarctica! And I was on three cruises where some of my fellow lecturers walked off the ship at the last minute. Once I found myself as the sole lecturer when the ship pulled out of Ushuaia! So life was both very exciting and very interesting with Marine Expeditions, but I thought their passengers were just great. I am truly sorry to see Marine Expeditions go belly up, I deeply appreciate the opportunities they gave me to return to Antarctica, and I loved their passengers. Thanks for the memories, they were glorious, especially on the old DISKO!

PENGUIN PRATTLE
(KRISTIN LARSON)

"Today we are all Americans"...a phrase that resounded in all quarters of the globe in the aftermath of the attacks...and perhaps nowhere more acutely than in that emptiest of quarters: Antarctica. With the first rays of the sun on, or just below the horizon, and winter-overs full of excitement and dread about their pending release from the ice, September is already a very poignant time. This year particularly so.

Big ugly news hits wintering populations particularly hard. I know this from my own gripped emotions as news of the massacre in Tiananmen Square filtered in, and again when we learned of the fall of the Berlin Wall (not ugly but plenty big). The isolation of Antarctica gives both comfort and anxiety. When you are protected by an almost insurmountable buffer of time, temperature and space, fears of bombs and anthrax take on an almost surreal quality. On the other hand, the feeling of vulnerability and helplessness that comes with the happening of an absolutely unknowable and unthinkable event is greatly magnified and trenchant in winter Antarctica. Almost instantaneously a web of comradeship races out across the continent joining points of humanity at all outposts...the feeling of community is powerful and indescribable.

But now...it's November, the winter is long past for all but South Pole. A new research season is well underway, and from the sounds of it, impacts on the program have not been substantial. Some cargo planes have been diverted to other missions, some National Guards, who support flights to and within the continent, have been called to duty, and scientists traveling home with samples may face difficulties. These inconveniences seem trivial in comparison to the mental changes wrought by the altered landscape. And, as with other global upheavals, we will remember just where we were when we heard the news, especially if we were part of that non-demonstrational winter-over community.

ANTARCTICA

Random News about Antarctic artists and writers

Dr. David Wilson's Books: How to Get 'Em: *Cheltenham in Antarctica: the Life of Edward Wilson*, is a concise biography of Dr. Edward Wilson, published by Reardon Publishing in December 2000. It is co-authored with David Elder, a local Cheltenham librarian, who helped with the Cheltenham research (Uncle Ted grew up in Cheltenham). This book can be ordered directly from David

via airmail if you would like a signed copy. It works out to US\$21 with postage and packing. Dr. Wilson's other book, which is due out this week (also from Reardon) is *Discover Illustrated: Pictures from Captain Scott's first Antarctic Expedition* is co-authored with Judy Skelton (the main expedition photographer's granddaughter) for the 'Discovery' expedition centenary and contains over 500 pictures of the expedition and extracts from Skelton's and Wilson's diaries. This is a heavy book to post and is cheapest by surface mail (delivery in 4-6 weeks). Signed copies via surface mail, are US\$75. This centenary issue of the book is limited to 2,000 copies. There is also a collectors edition which is hand finished, boxed, numbered and limited to 100 copies at US\$120. Both books should be available through Barnes and Noble or Dalton Book Dealers, except for the special issue, which is not available via bookshops and is already over half sold.

TO ORDER: David cannot accept personal checks, however he is happy to accept dollars in cash, or alternatively he can accept international money orders in sterling (£14 for "Cheltenham in Antarctica" and £50 for "Discovery Illustrated"; £80 for the special edition). The address is: 71 Myddelton Avenue, Enfield, Middlesex, EN1 4AQ, United Kingdom.

PAINTERLY POLAR-PILES. A wonderful show highlighting the beauty and whimsy of life in Polar Regions is now on at the Meridian International Center in Washington DC (1624 Crescent Place, NW), through January 4. It features the work of NSF grantee Alan Campbell whose beautiful paintings of many Antarctic quadrants gives great reinforcement to the ongoing sponsorship of artists by NSF's Office of Polar Programs. The show also includes the prints of Inuit artist Jessie Oonark and the huge photographs of Icelander Pall Stefansson. So for those of you in the hinterlands, this should serve as evidence that there is more to do in the nation's capital than contemplate gas masks and argue budgets!

WU GETS WOWS. Norbert Wu, recipient of several Antarctic artist-writer grants for his exquisite underwater photographs and cinematography tells us that his upcoming film, *Under Antarctic Ice*, will air on PBS in February or March 2002. The script was developed by Michael Parfit (the well-known author of *South Light*), and is narrated by film star Hilary Swank. Norbert, who was present for film's premier at the Jackson Hole Film Festival, feels that the film moves along nicely and accomplishes the goals that he set out for this latest project. It vividly captures both the underwater community of McMurdo Sound along with telling tales from the local human community. Norbert's searchable database of images can be found at www.norbertwu.com or www.norbertwustock.com

TREATY MATTERS

HOME SWEET HOME. For those of you who follow such things, the fact that the Antarctic Treaty finally has a place to hang its bunny boots, is pretty exciting news. Unlike most other treaty-created organizations, the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS) has been homeless since its establishment in 1961, relying, instead, on the rotating host country for its annual meetings and coordination.

There are several reasons for the peripatetic nature of the ATS, one is that its has not always been as complex as it now is; complexity brought about by the increasing need for coordination of environmental protection protocols, growing membership, and a trend towards complicated multi-nation scientific missions. The other reason is steeped in historical rivalry that has existed between the United Kingdom and Argentina. It seems that over the past decade or so, the prime candidates for the Secretariat have been Australia or Argentina. However, Australia is already the home for CCAMLR (Convention on the Conservation of Antarctica Living Resources), so the general consensus has increasingly favored Buenos Aires...that is, for all members but the UK. Recall the small matter in the Falklands Islands. However the landscape has apparently thawed and during this year's annual Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting in St. Petersburg, Russia, it was announced that Argentina would be the Antarctic Treaty's new home base. When's the house warming?

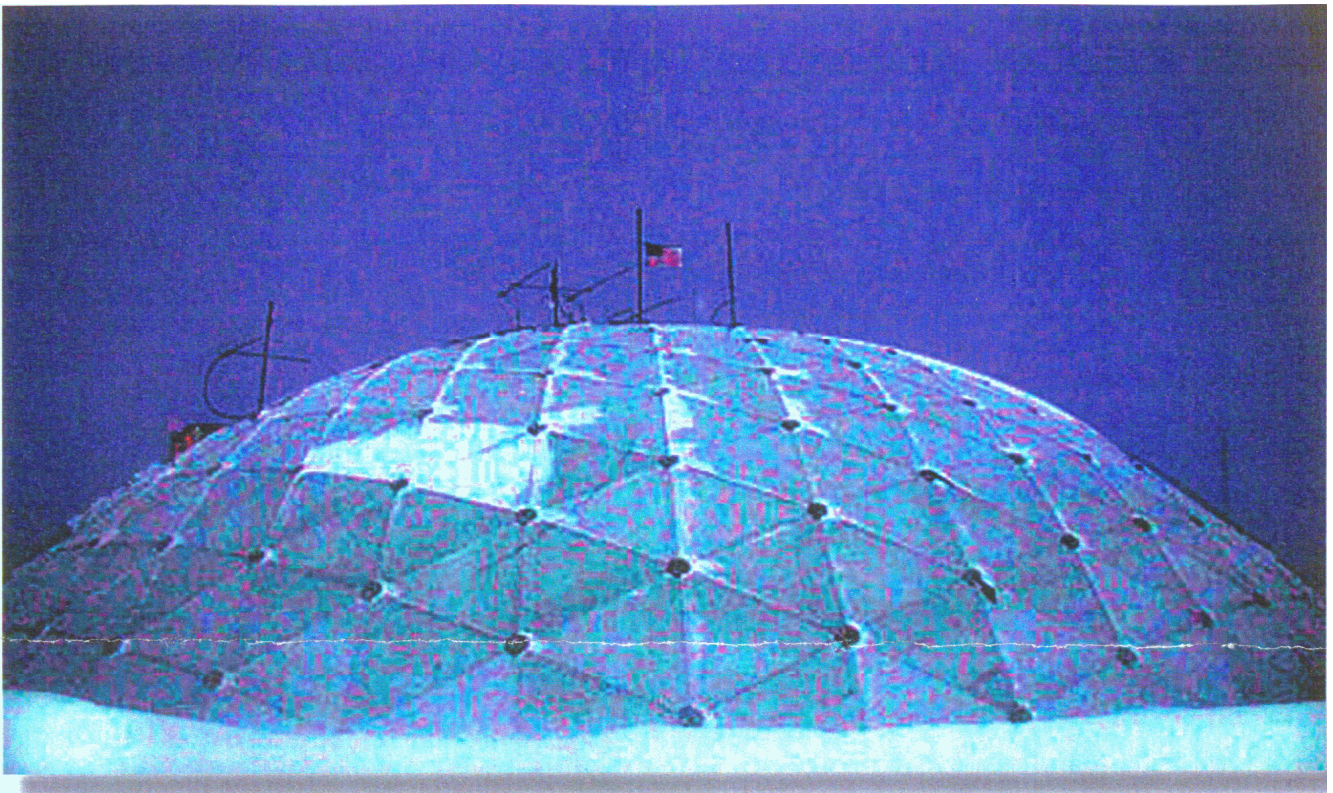
SPEAKING OF NEW HOMES. Looks like our Czech friends may soon be joining the swarms of Antarcticans at King George Island and become the 10th nation to build a scientific base there. Their 10-person summer base is planned for Turret Point on the island's southeast end. Break out the Pilsner Urquell!

OF BIRDS AND FISH. There is not too much in common between these denizens of two vastly different realms, but a new international agreement protecting Southern Hemisphere albatrosses and petrels has been signed precisely because of their linkage to one another. The purposeful mortality of one (the fish) has led inadvertently to a precipitous decline in the other (the birds). The new agreement comes under the 1979 Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, and protects 21 albatross species and seven petrel species. While this new albatross agreement focuses primarily on habitat and pollution control, it is complemented by recent developments under the CCAMLR agreement. In their meeting last month parties to CCAMLR devoted considerable time to discussing methods that will minimize the huge bird by-catch

problems associated with toothfish (Chilean Sea Bass) long-lining. Polly Penhale, one of the US Delegates to that meeting will provide details in our next newsletter. So if you like your sea bass on a plate, but also enjoy leaning over the rail of your favorite ice breaker watching those acrobatic albatross wheel in your wake, hope may be at hand.

CRUISE NEWS. While we plan to give you a full report on the current cruise season in our next letter, there were a few tidbits that seemed worth gnawing on in the interim. According to a recent story on the Australia-based Antarctic website (www.antarctican.com), the International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators (IAATO) is in the process of "revamping" their membership options to include two new categories. One of the new categories is for "big ships" that can carry upwards of 500 passengers to Antarctica. Under the old rules, membership in the highly effective IAATO organization was limited to ships carrying less than 400 passengers. One of the primary reasons for the change that allows for bigger ships is that these behemoths would probably have cruised to Antarctica anyway...what is it they say-about the devil you know? The other notable new travel category is "air cruising" which is set up to accommodate a new plan for flying tourists to Antarctica to meet ships for shorter duration cruises, thereby circumventing the memorable Drake. More on all this soon. But while I am on the topic, thanks again to Greg Mortimer of Aurora Expeditions for taking time during the June IAATO Meetings in Washington DC for sharing slides and thoughts about his tasty little adventure ventures in Antarctica.

ICE-CESSIVE. Reports are coming in that this year's wintering crew in McMurdo never saw open water in front of the station!!! Hard to imagine that, I mean open water is: one of the privileges of wintering...taking those stunning photos of mist rising off the sound into caramel colored light with the dome of Mt. Discovery in the background. But, according to Dave Bresnahan, the big ice berg, known (or, in some cases, cursed) as B-15 has lodged itself into a position that greatly tempers wind flow into McMurdo Sound. Without the usual winds and associated wave action, the so-called annual ice around Ross Island has failed to break-up and float out as it does most years. As a result, the ice in front of McMurdo Station is already 10 to 15 feet thick and growing and also covered in rough sastrugi and pressure ridges. This is in contrast to the usual 3-5 feet thick, smooth annual ice that is perfect for ice runways and Weddell seal foraging. This development will undoubtedly have impacts on both the logistics and science of the coming season, and we will be keeping tabs. To monitor the ice from the comfort of your desk go to <http://uwamrc.ssec.wisc.edu/amrc/icebergmain.html>.



South Pole Station, September 2001



Bonner Laboratory
Rothera Research Station
January 1997 - September 2001

The Bonner Laboratory at Rothera Research Station has been completely destroyed by fire. Burning stopped in the early hours of Saturday (29 September) local time following heavy snowfall. The cause of fire is still unknown-investigations are underway.

