



THE ANTARCTIC SOCIETY

7338 Wayfarer Drive Fairfax
Station, Virginia 22039

HONORARY PRESIDENT - MRS. PAUL A. SIPLE

Vol. 01-02

April

No. 3

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POLAR RESEARCH BOARD AND ANTARCTICAN SOCIETY ANNUAL LECTURE

EYE OF THE ALBATROSS: STATUS AND TRENDS IN WORLD FISHERIES

Presented by:

DR. CARL SAFINA

VICE PRESIDENT FOR MARINE CONSERVATION
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

MONDAY, APRIL 8th

7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES (Georgetown Campus)

Room 104, Green Building

2001 Wisconsin Avenue., N.W.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Reception to be held before and after lecture

6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. in the South Foyer

In 2000, Dr. Carl Safina was in the Antarctic as a participant in the National Science Foundation's Antarctic Artists and Writers Program, where he began writing a book using albatrosses as a vehicle to explore how the world's oceans are changing. In this talk, he will use the Antarctic as a starting point to discuss the major source of biological change in the sea: fishing.

After exponential rises in world fish landings earlier in the 20th century, catches leveled off in the 1990's; the limits of the once-limitless seas had been found. In many regions, fish populations have crashed, causing widespread social dislocation. Excess capacity has brought fishing power to twice that necessary to take the annual catch. The overcapacity has brought down the profitability of fishing: to catch \$70 billion worth of fish, \$124 billion is spent. Government subsidies largely plug the deficits. The reduced profitability of fishing is exemplified in the U.S. where depletions cost the gross national product \$8 billion annually, and 300,000 jobs. In the last few years, \$120 million in federal disaster relief was sent to fishing communities in New England,
(Continued Pg. 2)

DR. CARL SAFINA _

the Pacific Northwest, and the Gulf. However, recent good news indicates that these trends are beginning to reverse in some areas, with some recoveries underway due to improved management, and public awareness is up significantly.

Dr. Safina is the Vice President for Marine Conservation at the National Audubon Society. He started his scientific career studying at-sea feeding ecology of seabirds. Since 1990 he has worked to put ocean fish conservation issues into the wildlife conservation mainstream. Dr. Safina is author of more than a hundred publications, including the books "Song for the Blue Ocean" (1998) and "Eye of the Albatross: Visions of Hope and Survival" (May 2002).

BRASH ICE. We want to thank all of you folks who sent cards and letters to our Honorary President as she entered into her 90* year and semi-retirement. She enjoyed every one of them, but is not in a position to thank you all, so this is a big THANK YOU on behalf of her. Be sure to read the next column, as it pertains to something special which one of you folks did for her on Valentine's Day. The good news is that Ruth is doing much better than she did last month, and now can actually walk without a walker.

Remember as you read this newsletter that it is clearly up to you to decide if you are reading the truth. We continue not to let the truth get in the way of a good story. You have a responsibility as much as we have a responsibility!!

FOUR EMPERORS SERENADE AN ADELIE. It was around 10 a.m. on the morning of February 14th, Valentine's Day, and Ruth Siple, our Honorary President, was sitting in her living room when she thought she heard some birds pecking on her door. So she went to the door, and sure enough, four extremely large emperor penguins stood there, waiting to be admitted. They just had to be emperors as men don't go around wearing tails at that time of the day. And she said, "Who are you, anyway, and what are you doing here?"

One emperor had a very strong resemblance to Pete Bermel, looked a lot like him, although was a bit heavier, and even talked something like him, although a somewhat older, more matured voice. He answered, "Ruth, we know who you are, as our families once knew your husband when he was in Antarctica, and we recently heard about you and your 90th birthday. Please forgive us for being late, but we had a terrible swim crossing the dreaded Drake Passage. We come from two different colonies, one on the Bermel Peninsula (68° 27' S, 65° 22' W), which is our summer home, and another on the

Bermel Escarpment (85^U 17' S, 89° 30' W), where we raise our families. But we are here on behalf of the millions of all penguins in Antarctica. So please sit down so that we can get on with our singing Valentine to you, as we must return to the muddy Potomac and start our swim back home as our families await our safe return."

So Ruth sat down, and one emperor came forth with a special penguin Valentine card with a penguin holding a heart, another brought her a dozen long-stemmed American Beauty red roses, still another a heart-shaped box of chocolates, and the emperor who looked like Pete even gave her a stuffed penguin. Ruth was beside herself, overjoyed, almost speechless, and then one of the penguins had a pitch pipe, blew a note, and lo and behold, these emperors could actually sing. And how they sang!! The first song was HEART OF MY HEART, and every time they sang "I love you" Ruth would say very loudly, "I love you, too." And then they sang another, LET ME CALL YOU SWEATHEART. These emperors were looking with jaundiced eyes at a room full of penguin memorabilia, thinking for awhile as if they were still home. As they left, Adelie Ruth gave each emperor a big hug. As they waddled down the steps, one emperor looked at the others and said, "You know, this was worth that long, long swim."

That evening before going to bed, Ruth saw this card on the floor. She picked it up, read it, it had a name on it, an address. Said "Fairfax Jubil-Aires, Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America, Inc. SPEBSQSA." She thought for a few seconds, wondering, and then shaking her head, she said to herself, "No, it could not have been Pete and his buddies, those were real penguins, I know emperors when I see them." And Ruth danced in her sleep that night, recalling the most perfect Valentine's Day that any 90-year-old lady could have possibly enjoyed, and the singing Valentine from Bobbie and Pete (who, incidentally are still on their honeymoon after some 47 years of trying it out).

{P.S. On a trip to the South Pole in 1963, Pete found a stray 2x4, and nailed a SPEBSQSA insignia onto it, stuck it in the snow, and thus created the Southern Most Chapter of Barbershop Singing in the whole wide world. Today there are 33,000 members in 800 chapters, which include the four emperors from Antarctica. There are national groups in England, Ireland, Netherlands, Germany, Russia, South Africa, New Zealand, Australia, Norway, Sweden, and Japan. The latest effort is China and Pete is going there the last half of September as part of a 100-person singing group. You are truly an EMPEROR, Pete.}

NEWLY CONSTRUCTED GLACIAL ICE RUNWAY AT McMURDO.

The U.S. Air Force has certified a new ice runway near McMurdo capable of handling large military cargo jets. A U.S. Air Force C-141 Starlifter cargo plane landed safely on the compacted snow pavement of the existing Pegasus runway near McMurdo on Jan. 20, 2002.

Among the aircraft's 103 passengers was Charles J. Swindells, the U.S. ambassador to New Zealand, on his way to visit USAP installations and field camps.

Preparation of the runway pavement required the use of 100-ton pneumatic tire rollers to compact a thin snow cover, turning the snow into white ice, a material sturdy enough to handle four-engine military transport aircraft. The addition of this white ice pavement allows all-season landings of wheeled aircraft in the Antarctic for the first time in history. Currently, ski-equipped LC-130 Hercules cargo aircraft transport much of the cargo and many of the passengers to Antarctica. The new runway greatly enhances airlift capabilities to support USAP activities.

The newly developed compaction process protects the runway from sun damage while having the structural strength necessary to withstand the stresses imposed by the landing of large aircraft such as the C-5 Galaxy, one of the world's largest aircraft; the C-17 Globemaster, the newest air force cargo plane; and the older C-141s. Without a cover of snow as protection, the warm temperatures and high sun angles during summer would have damaged the runway.

Prior to the U.S. Air Force's certification of the Pegasus runway to handle the larger cargo aircraft, wheeled aircraft were able to land on the continent only very early and very late in the research season on runways that at other times of the year are useable only by ski-equipped planes. The principal austral summer research season begins in October and ends in February.

NEW SOUTH POLE STATION DOING JUST FINE.

Everything is on schedule for the completion and dedication of this beautiful \$155 million dollar state-of-the-art polar research facility for January 2006. It probably has the world's largest beer can, six stories high, with a Foucault pendulum rotating in the enclosed stairwell. In an era where corporate America is paying millions to have their name attached to sports arenas, just think if the government had sold its soul to Anheuser-Busch to have the now silverized beer can painted to look like a can of Bud, the price of construction could have probably been reduced by forty million - forty million more for research, plus free beer for the camp!

This past austral summer an 85-member construction crew worked

nine hour shifts around the clock, six days a week. On the seventh day, they must have gone to Disney World. The main focus was to complete the subsurface water and sewage utility tunnel. Said tunnel is six by ten feet, opening some forty feet below the surface providing a utility corridor for piping construction from the new station to the sewage bulb and water well, called by some Rodriguez wells. The project represented three summers of work and 3,071 feet of tunneling. The transition from the previous used dome water well and sewage bulb was also completed.

The structural steel framing and exterior shell framing/paneling for two of the multi-purpose elevated station wings were completed. Interior work was also done on another wing which is to house 50, as well as still another wing, this one for food service and mechanical. Presumably this must translate to kitchen and dining rooms. This whole building project seems to survive in spite of being strangled by a multi-lettered acronym, SPSE/SM (South Pole Safety and Environmental Upgrades & Modernization Project). Only the government could come up with that one!!

The austral summer population for the past season was 220. Besides the aforementioned eighty-five construction workers, there were fifty scientists, seventy-five in station operations, five supporting construction, and another five representing the Head Shed, NSF. As for the current wintering over season, the population has dwindled down to fifty-one (science, nine; construction, 21; operations, 21). The construction people are working inside, needless to say, in three of the wings. The transition from the current dome station will begin next summer, with the occupancy for fifty persons now scheduled to begin in February 2003. This will be followed the next summer by occupancy for food services, medical, and science.

The new elevated station has a design life of around forty to fifty years. They estimate they won't have to raise the footing (ten feet) for twenty-five years. And they are prepared for two more raisings in later years. The design and budget of this new station was approved with the demolition of the dome. Why don't they sell it to Anne Kershaw and let her make a hotel out of it. As Barnum said

LAKE VOSTOK, HIDDEN TREASURES.

Radar maps of the Antarctic interior made in 1996 revealed that a lake lay under the ice sheet. Lake Vostok is thought to be one of the world's largest, 48 kilometers (30 miles) wide by 225 kilometers (140 miles) long and 914 meters (3,000 feet) deep. Its waters have been sealed from air and light for perhaps

LAKE VOSTOK.... as long as 35 million years under the tremendous pressure of the continental ice sheet. An ice core - one of the world's longest - was drilled by a joint U.S., Russian, and French team at Russia's Vostok Station on the lake's western shore. But coring was stopped roughly 100 meters (328 feet) above what is thought to be the surface of the water to prevent contamination of the lake. The ice layers reveal a 400,000-year environmental record with microorganisms present throughout most of the core.

During the 2000-2001 Antarctic research season, NSF supported a detailed aerial mapping of the lake by specially equipped Twin Otter aircraft flown by the Support of Office for Aerogeophysical Research at the University of Texas at Austin. The radar sounding, laser altimetry, magnetics, and gravity surveys were a first, non-invasive step to explore Lake Vostok.

Lake Vostok, which lies buried under thousands of meters of ice high on the Antarctic Plateau, is thought to be home to unique habitats and microorganisms. Confirming the existence of life forms and unique biological niches without contaminating the pristine lake waters, however, is a difficult scientific and technical challenge with international ramifications.

According to a paper published in the March 21 issue of Nature, the hydrodynamics of the lake may make it possible to search for evidence of life in the layers of ice that accumulate on the lake's eastern shore. Scientists say such a possibility would provide another avenue for exploring the lake's potential as a harbor of microscopic life, in addition to actually exploring the waters of the lake itself.

The paper was authored by Robin E. Bell of Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory and her colleagues. Their research revealed that although the lake is perhaps millions of years old, its waters are relatively young. Bell's paper demonstrated that over a period of 13,300 years, all of the water was removed by the overlying ice sheet and replaced from other sources. The lake water captured by the moving ice sheet was carried as layers of ice over Lake Vostok's eastern shoreline, and then eastward away from the lake. Exploring those ice layers, they argue, is equivalent to exploring the lake itself.

Bell and her team analyzed the radar data and determined that the ice formation in the southern half of Lake Vostok holds buckling patterns frozen into the ice sheet as it flows over the lake. Following the trends of the buckled ice patterns, scientists were able to construct movement trajectories across the lake. They then calculated the time it took ice to move from the west side of the lake to the east - 20,000 years over a distance of about 56 kilometers (35 miles). By examining the ice flux out of the lake, the team determined that every 13,300

years the ice sheet removes the equivalent of the entire volume of Lake Vostok.

As the ice sheet removes lake water like a continuous conveyor belt, lake waters must be replenished, either by melting of the ice sheet or by subglacial meltwater. The source of this water remains a mystery.

"Our study is a critical step in the exploration of Lake Vostok," Bell said. "These frozen lake water samples will record the passage of the ice sheet and the processes across the lake. The data show that the location of the current research station on the lake may not be optimal for biological studies."

Bell added that "Lake Vostok is absolutely devoid of interference. The youngest water in it is 400,000 years old. It doesn't know anything of human beings, fossil fuels, or plastics. It is a window into life forms and climates of primordial eras."

TWENTY-FOURTH ANTARCTIC TREATY CONSULTATIVE MEETING (ATCM) by Ray Arnaudo

ATCM XXIV was held July 9-20, 2001, in St. Petersburg, Russia, after a gap of two years since the previous ATCM in Lima, Peru, in 1999. Although it was Poland's turn to host the meeting, they declined to schedule a meeting in 2000. The Dutch stepped forward and volunteered to host a Special Consultative Meeting in The Hague in September, 2000, in order to hold a meeting of the Committee on Environmental Protection, as required by the Protocol. All of the 27 Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties, except Ecuador, participated in the St. Petersburg meeting.

The two major issues were progress on a liability annex to the Environmental Protocol and agreement to proceed on establishing an Antarctic Treaty secretariat. The parties endorsed the U.S. proposal to take a step-by-step approach to the negotiations rather than try to negotiate a comprehensive annex on liability. As for a Secretariat, consensus was finally reached on establishing a permanent headquarters in Buenos Aires, Argentina, when the British finally agreed to let the process go forward.

After receiving the advice from the Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP), which held its fourth meeting, the ATCM also looked at a number of other issues. These included: the collection of Antarctic meteorites, cumulative impacts of human activities in Antarctica, environmental evaluations, *(Continued Page 5)*

TWENTY-FOURTH ANTARCTIC TREATY ___ specially protected species and areas in Antarctica, diseases of Antarctic wildlife, historic sites and monuments and handling of pre-1958 historic remains that had not been recorded. For further information, go to the Russian website at www.24atcm.mid.ru. All the working and information papers are there including the final reports for ATCM XXFV and CEP IV. The Argentines announced their intention to set up a permanent website for the Antarctic Treaty at some point in the future. You will also find more information at the State Department's website www.state.gov/g/oes/ocns, including the commemoration of the 10th Anniversary of the adoption of the Environmental Protocol. At the end of the meeting, Poland offered to host this year's ATCM in Warsaw, September 10-21.

COMMISSION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ANTARCTIC MARINE LIVING RESOURCES (CCAMLR) by Ray Arnaudo
CCAMLR held its twentieth meeting in Hobart, Australia, October 22 - November 2, 2001. All twenty-four Commission members attended, including Namibia, which attended its first meeting as a Commission member. The Commission chose a new Executive Secretary, Dr. Denzil Miller of South Africa, who replaces Estaban de Salas of Spain, who served in that post for ten years.

The Commission adopted a number of new conservation measures, focusing especially on the problem of overfishing of Patagonian toothfish, or *Dissostichus eleginoides*, better known in restaurants as Chilean seabass. The Commission implemented its Catch Documentation Scheme to monitor trade in toothfish products in 2000, and continues to work on improvements to the system. Stopping illegal fishing in CCAMLR waters is difficult, but CCAMLR members agreed that the current CDS system is having a positive impact on addressing illegal fishing activities, as all toothfish imported into CCAMLR countries must have appropriate catch documents. Check the State Department website (or www.noaa.gov) for more information. You will also find there the text of the 20th Anniversary Declaration. The text and further documentation on the meeting, conservation measures and the organization are available at the website at www.ccamlr.org.

TRINA BALDWIN, WRONG TIME, WRONG PLACE.

Some of you know Trina Baldwin, who was the O.I.C. of the wintering over personnel at McMurdo in 1990-91. She is a Naval officer, and once had serious aspirations of eventually becoming an admiral, but fate struck down her career on July 18th, a bicycle vs. car door incident/accident. She was coming home from her naval duties in San Diego, riding her bike, and bango, it happened Witnesses reported that she cleared the top of the car before landing in the street. She has no recollection of the entire event, including the ambulance ride to the San Diego trauma center. The good news is that there were

no broken bones or bleeding inside her skull. The bad news is that she received a "mild traumatic brain injury" and some torn ligaments in her hands/wrist. It took more than a week before Trina realized she had some brain damage. The Navy sent her to the Defense and Veterans' Head Injury Program at Balboa. The good news there was that tests showed where she was damaged and they believe she has a very good chance to recover much of those areas. The bad news was that Trina has brain damage.

She was removed from her job as the Desert Operations Officer, and put into a less stressful job, on limited duty, working a maximum of four hours per day. The Navy has plans to send her to Guam this summer. Meanwhile she realizes her opportunities in the Navy are no longer golden. Now she dreams of returning to McMurdo (after her military retirement) as the night baker! She wants to go back to enjoy the beauty of the place. Although she did not ask us to tell you people what happened to her or her condition, I am sure that she would like to hear from any of you, especially those who served under her. Trina's address is CDR M. K. Baldwin, CEC, USN, 536 G. Avenue, #4, Coronado, CA 92118-1640. Good luck, Trina, and God bless.

STONINGTONIANS GO TO STONEVGTON.

What were the odds back in 1948 that the Brits and the Yanks on Stonington Island would be breaking bread and toasting one another some fifty three years later at another place called Stonington? Well, whatever the odds, it happened in Stonington, Connecticut on October 13th and 14th, 2001. Of the w/o personnel, Kevin Walton, Dick Butson, and Bernard Stonehouse of the FIDS (Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey), and for the Americans, Jackie Ronne, Bob Dodson, and Georges de Giorgio, were in attendance. Another FIDS, who had been at Stonington in other years, showed up, Ken Blaiklock.

That year at that station will go down in history for many reasons. But, most noticeably, for being the location where two young brides, Jackie Ronne and Jennie Darlington, became the first two women to ever winter over on the ice. Jennie became the first woman to be impregnated on ice with child in the winter night, although the girl was born back here in the States. (See Reader's Digest 'Antarctica' for the comment by one of the Brits on hearing of two women on the island "Send more women".)

Three widely read books were written on that year on Stonington. One by Finn Ronne, commander of the U.S.

(Continued Page 6)

STONEINGTONIANS station, one by one of the brides, Jennie Darlington, and one by the Brit, Kevin Walton. They are often referred to as the Antarctic Trilogy. Three books on one year, all presenting entirely different stories about the year 1947-48! Which is most accurate? All depends on which side of the house you were living.

But they all had one common denominator, being located on the beautiful and magnificent Marguerite Bay. It doesn't get any better in the Antarctic, although it might be equaled by Almirante Brown. Isn't it a bit ironic that two beautifully situated stations both had personnel problems?

The reason that they went to Stonington, Connecticut, was to see if they could locate Nathaniel Palmer, the ex-American whaler whose boat, the HERO, sailed out of Stonington. They did visit the Nathaniel Palmer House, but Nathaniel was not there that day. The Stonington Historical Society owns and cares for his house. Several decades ago, NSF was going to bring back a large Antarctic rock and give it to the town as a memorial piece. But when they approached the town fathers, no one had ever heard of Nathaniel! But after this visit of true Antarcticans, perhaps the town now is much more cognizant of the relationship between the town and Antarctica.

The reunion was a grand success, and Mark and Sue Hamilton of Inuit Dog International actually brought eight huskies. Once upon a distant past, in the early 1960's, Ken Blaiklock held the Antarctic record for most miles sledged with dogs, something like 5,000. Sunday was a day of presentations and discussions, and guest speakers were author Michael Parfit, long-term Antarctic bureaucrat Guy Guthridge, and Kenn Black, a summer resident of Port Lockroy, representing the Antarctic Heritage Trust. Brigid Wainwright told them about her project to compile an electronic database and photo album of the thousands of dogs that served the Brits in Antarctica.

Ken Kother, former officer on the GLACIER, spoke of the efforts to get the GLACIER back into private service and, possibly, hic, a high class polar cruise ship. Bill Latady's son showed some of his father's slides, and Latter Day BASers at Stonington, Peter Kennett and Chris Edwards spoke of life at Stonington in 1963 and 1974, respectfully.

About fifty people attended and enjoyed one great reunion.

ANTARCTICA AND THE OLYMPICS.

Probably the very first winter-time gold and silver "medals" for achievements in organized sporting events were awarded by the very distinguished French doctor and expedition leader, Dr. Jean-Baptiste Charcot on the POURQUOI-PAS? Expedition, 1908-1910. Charcot founded the Antarctic Sporting Club and on May 9, 1909, they held

their opening ceremonies. For some unknown reason, CNN did not carry the events which consisted of, for the skiers, three races. One was a "flat" race, another was a race down a steep slope, and the third was "a fairly long race in which one might go as pleased." In other words, a slalom, a downhill, and a cross-country. Charcot wrote "in the evening I distributed the gold and silver medals, cut out of preserved food boxes, and the cardboard medal." A sailor by the name of Geuguen captured the gold, followed by another sailor, Thomas, winning the silver. Coming in third was Frachat, the motor engineer.

The next Olympian that we are aware of is the redoubtable Norman D. Vaughan of the USA. This ex-college drop out, now sporting an honorary Ph.D., participated in the 1932 Winter Olympics at Lake Placid, NY. Sledge dog racing was a demonstration sport for that Olympic, and Norman, an ever ready opportunist, fresh off the first Byrd Antarctic Research Expedition, was more than willing to demonstrate his capabilities as dog team driver. He spent parts of eight decades in the 1990's driving dog teams, and, presumably got it right. Norman was also a guest of the USA at the Winter Olympics in Grenoble.

The next Olympian, Peter Schoeck, comes with an asterisk, because our only verification of his being an Olympian are words that came from his very own lips. Peter, a German, no shrinking violet, he, carried a heavy load on his shoulder, trying to live up to his own manifestations. When he applied to go to the Antarctic during the IGY, "I asked Larry Gould to give me the most difficult job in the Antarctic." He ended up as head of both the aurora and glaciology programs at Little America V in 1957, that is, until he, unfortunately, hic, fell into a crevasse near Roosevelt Island and had to be air evacuated back to New Zealand. But long before that event, he had regaled us with stories of how he was on the German Olympic cross-country team. During the four months without sun - we refuse to call it midwinter darkness - Peter would ski out of camp, get himself lost, and then set up a rescue pattern which would eventually, much to the chagrin of the camp, bring him back home! One thing we do know, he was a hulk of a physical specimen, so perhaps he really was an Olympian!

Now let's go next-of-kin Olympians. Steve Den Hartog, known universally as Denny, has been to the Antarctic several times, been to the winter Olympics several times. But this w/o scientist at Little America V in 1958 was a spectator, as his own blood and water daughter skied for the USA cross-country team in not one, not two, but three winter Olympics. She, Dorcas Wonsavage, did admirably well, (Continued Page 7)

ANTARCTICA..... considering she was an American. The top thirty positions are always reserved for Eastern Europeans, then they let the others cross the finish line. She hung it all up after competing in Lillehammer in 1994. After all, she was 29, and everyone knows that by that age we are all washed up. So she married another skier, who became a dentist, and they are now living in Maine.

Another Antarctic connection in the Olympics is from the Outcrops of the Family of Fords, this model being a Model A as in Art Ford. Between many trips to the Antarctic, he fathered a daughter Jody, who eventually went off to college, and met a diver on campus nicknamed Flip. And how this guy, Phil Boggs, did flip. He won the gold medal in the 3-meter springboard at the Montreal Olympics in 1976. They got married and were very happily married until he got struck down by non-Hodgkins lymphoma in 1990. Jody is now Assistant Professor in the Department of Surgical Oncology at the University of Miami.

LARSEN ICE SHELF COLLAPSING (See Back Cover) by Associated Press, Joe Verrengia

An enormous floating ice shelf in Antarctica that has existed since the last ice age 12,000 years ago collapsed this month with staggering speed during one of the warmest summers on record there, scientists say.

Satellite images show that a piece of the Larsen Ice Shelf collapsed during a five-week period that ended March 7. It splintered into a plume of drifting icebergs. The piece of ice that broke off was designated Larsen B. It was 650 feet thick and with a surface area of 1,250 square miles, or about the size of Rhode Island. The ice shelf is on the Antarctic Peninsula and extends about 1,000 miles closer to the tip of South America than the rest of the Antarctic continent.

"We're seeing a very rapid and profound response by the ice sheet to a warming that's been around for just a few decades," said Ted Scambos of the National Snow and Ice Data Center at the University of Colorado. "We can use this as a sort of a guide for what's going to happen if the rest of the Antarctic should begin to warm because of climate change," he said.

The Larsen Ice Shelf has been under careful observation since 1995, when its northernmost sector, known as Larsen A, collapsed in a similarly dramatic event. The Larsen Ice Shelf now is about 40 percent of its original size. Previous measurements showed the Antarctic Peninsula has warmed an average of more than 4 degrees Fahrenheit during the past half-century, a rate that is as much as five times faster than the global average. But the overall climate picture

in Antarctica is anything but consistent. In fact, glaciers elsewhere on the continent are both thickening and thinning as temperatures show conflicting climate trends.

In 1995, when Larsen A broke off, the summer melt had persisted for 80 days, about 20 days longer than average. As for Larsen B, satellite images show that ponds of melted water were forming atop the ice in recent months. Later images showed the water was seeping into the ice sheet's interior, accelerating its demise. The next portion of the ice shelf is known as Larsen C. It is losing stability and could suffer the same fate in the coming years if the warming trend continues, researchers said.

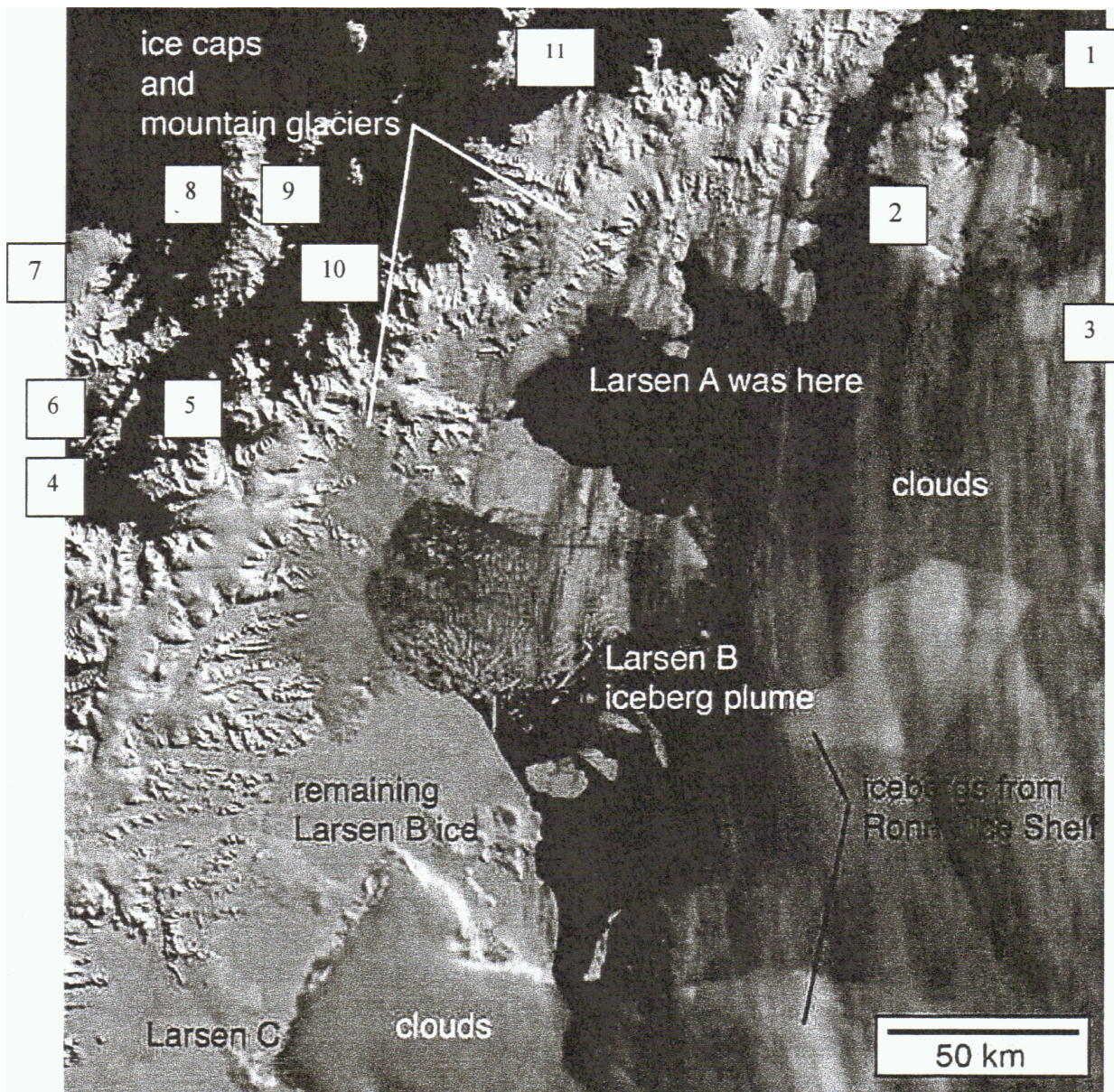
FROM WASHINGTON POST, 20 March 2002. The disintegration of the ice shelf- 1,260 square miles in area and 650 feet thick - was most alarming to some because of the extraordinary rapidity of the collapse. The shelf is believed to have existed for as long as 12,000 years before regional temperatures began to rise, yet it disintegrated literally before scientists' eyes over a 35-day period that began Jan. 31.

LATE BREAKING NEWS. Another iceberg, B-22, broke off from an ice tongue in the Amundsen Sea. The berg is located at 74° 56' South, 107° 53' West. It is 40 miles wide and 53 miles long, covering 2,130 sq. miles.

ANTARTICA IS IN CONSTANT AND SURPRISING MOTION (NASA and the Canadian Space Agency)

Twisted patterns of ice move outward from the center of the continent in all directions. In some places the flow is faster than 1 kilometer per year, while in other places it creeps at less than 10 meters in a year. Kenneth Jezek of Ohio State University's Byrd Polar Research Center said that satellite imagery points out previously unknown ice streams hundreds of kilometers long. We've seen one ice stream network that sends more than 19 cubic miles of ice to the sea annually - an amount equal to burying Washington, D.C. under 17,000 feet of ice every year. LET'S GO ICE STREAM!!!

Shackleton, Arts & Entertainment, April 7th, 8 p.m. EDT



5 March 2002 image of the northeastern Antarctic Peninsula

The northern part of the Larsen B ice shelf has disintegrated, sending approximately 720 cubic kilometers of icebergs into the ocean. Because the ice was already floating, it does not affect sea level. The southern edge of the break-out tracks to the melt-pond boundary observed in the 31 January image.

Image courtesy of Ted Scambos, National Snow and Ice Data Center, University of Colorado. Data from MODIS, on NASA's Terra Satellite, via the Distributed Active Archive Center system.

1. VEGA I
2. JAMES ROSS I
3. SNOW HILL I
4. WIENCKE I (PORT LOCKROY)
5. PARADISE BAY
6. NEUMAYER CHANNEL
7. ANVERS I
8. MELCHIOR IS
9. BRABANT I
10. GERLACHE STRAIT
11. TRINITY I