

The

# Adventurers' Club News

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**SOUTH POLAR PLATEAU - AMUNDSEN-SCOTT STATION  
WINTER OVER 1981 - 1982**

# The Adventurers' Club News

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## Fire at the South Pole

Robert G. Williscroft #1116 - Editor

*...in the middle of three million square miles of ice,  
and the nearest fire department is 700 miles away!*

### Adventure

It started out when I was a youngster in Montana where my father pastored a small church in Conrad in the southwestern corner of the state. The other kids wanted to be...well, whatever kids want to be in rural Montana: Farmers, postmen, bankers. But little Bobby – me – wanted to be a fireman, because it clearly was the most exciting thing a person could do, so far as I knew from my extensive three and a half years experience in the big world.

When a missionary working as a doctor in pre-Red China came to our church, I discovered something more exciting than putting out fires: I decided to become a medical missionary in China.

This lasted through my early teens. At the

time, the idea of going into Space seemed impossibly remote, but the idea of studying about Space and the Universe seemed to me even more exciting than being a medical missionary in China, and so I shifted my focus again.

And then two things happened. The



*Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station (1981) - Cut-away Drawing*

International Geophysical Year was launched, where, among other things, the United States mounted a Trans Antarctic Expedition and set into motion plans for a permanent presence at the South

Pole, and, in October, 1957, the Russians launched Sputnik.

Suddenly just studying about Space was not nearly so exciting as actually going there. It was a long stretch from my boyhood dreams of becoming a fireman, but I was driven by the same underlying urge –

*(Continued on page 2)*

(Continued from page 1)

high adventure.

I tested with the Naval flight program, and essentially aced all their exams and work-ups – except one small portion of the eye exam. Bottom line: I could not become a jet fighter pilot; *ergo sum*, no Gemini or Apollo in my future. My brush with Naval Aviation, however, opened a new door to adventure, one that I had touched back in 1950, when I found myself exploring a regional exposition set up on a commons green in the ancient English city of Bath. The British Submarine Service had set up a periscope and recruiting station, where I spent several happy hours playing with the scope and being regaled by a crusty British submariner.

### Submarine Service

Outer Space was out, but Inner Space opened its doors, and I spent several exciting years as an enlisted submariner. Then I got lucky, was selected for a scholarship program, and attended University of Washington at the Navy's expense. While there I joined a ship-born expedition into the high Arctic.

And it happened again! I suddenly remembered my excitement back in 1957 as I read about the intrepid adventurers

crossing frozen Antarctica and establishing a permanent post at the bottom of the world. My mother had written me expressing her disappointment that I had



*Daily run at the bottom of the world - Alt: 10,000 ft; Temp: -70°F*

turned away from my childhood religious beliefs, and I wrote back, encouraging her to see her son standing one day at the bottom of the world.

I completed college, was commissioned an officer, and went back into submarines for several more years. But the tug of the Earth's frozen wastelands formed a backdrop for all my activities: Vietnam (adventure), deep sea diving (more adventure), very deep, long duration saturation dives conducting esoteric underwater espionage (high adventure), and finally transferring my commission to the NOAA Corps, and finding myself actually in the high Arctic for three years of spine tingling adventure in the frozen north.

(Continued on page 7)

## How the U.S.S. McMORRIS (DE1036) Helped Win the Race to the Moon

Fredrick Gary Hareland

*"The four Claud Jones-class escorts were the ultimate attempt to develop inexpensive mass-production ships. Slow and lightly armed, they were considered abject failures, ending their careers as Electronic Intelligence Platforms."* U.S. Destroyers, an Illustrated History, p282, Norman Freidman, U.S. Naval Institute Press, 1982)

### THE MIGHTY MAC

The *Mighty Mac* as USS *McMorris* (DE1036) was affectionately referred to by her crew was the forth and final ship of the Claud Jones class of Destroyer Escorts, all commissioned between 1959 and 1960. This class embodied several advanced features including a unique upper deck arrangement, aluminum mast and superstructure, and powerful sonar detection equipment.

Too slow for ASW and too lightly armed for effective surface combat, their ultimate mission would be determined by an early feat of extremely long range capability demonstrated by the *Mighty Mac* in 1960. *Mighty Mac's* historic 14 day, 4,966 mile non-stop transit of the Pacific from San Diego California to Yokosuka, Japan set a record, and was the first time any U.S. destroyer type vessel ever attempted a voyage of this distance without in-route logistical support.



U.S.S. *McMorris* (DE1036) - *The Mighty Mac*

During the 1960s the *McMorris*, as a fighting ship, was an oxymoron due in part to the rapid advances in nuclear submarine technology. The underwater speed and increased depths of Soviet nuclear subs made *McMorris* an obsolete Anti submarine Warfare (ASW) platform. Since Anti-submarine Warfare was the stated purpose behind building the *McMorris* to begin with, what to do with her was the question!

The key to *Claud Jones*-class operational economy was a combination of diesel propulsion and a very flexible engineering plant configuration. The ships had forward engine rooms containing two of their four Fairbanks-Morse diesel propulsion engines, and an after engine room with the other two. The large compartment separating these engine rooms was the Reduction Gear Room, where massive reduction gears and pneumatic clutches reduced the engine

*(Continued on page 4)*

(Race continued from page 3)

RPM and transferred the power to a single shaft driving a single screw. From the main control the engineer could take local control of the main engines, throttle them up or down and clutch them in or out for any combination of operational profile

**...the Russians were about to stage another space spectacular that would up stage the U.S. and win the Space Race.**

required by the bridge including reversing or clutching out the screw.

During her spying career *McMorris* would arrive on station and then go into Dead in the Water (DIW) mode, sometimes for days at a time, the only sounds coming from her generators and ventilation fans. DIW could be most uncomfortable for the crew, as the ship's motion was an unnatural wallowing and depending that could induce motion sickness in an instant.

The US Navy had many missions during the cold war, and the *Mighty Mac* would be most useful as an electronic intelligence platform. While fulfilling her new mission she would be on constant recall, ready to get underway for worldwide deployment at an instants notice.

These short-notice deployments were not always appreciated at the time by the crew who were your typical "navy liberty hounds," however in retrospect we had many exciting missions and travels. The *Mighty Mac* turned into our magic carpet, transporting us to the other side of the world and back. My two years aboard her became a fantastic adventure.

I was a flunk-out from the US Navy's

Nuclear Power School at Mare Island Navy Shipyard near San Francisco. Unlike some of my classmates who flunked out on purpose to get out of the nuclear program, I did it the old fashioned way – by being just too dumb. I can still remember Lt. Cmdr. W.S.Cruden, the schools CO peering down at me from behind his big desk and exclaiming that he guessed that they were just going to have to "trip me out on an overload."

Thus I became a *Mighty Mac* electrician. I reported onboard June 14, 1968, and stayed with her until July 20, 1970, the most exciting two years of my life.

### THE SPACE RACE

During 1967 and 1968 the Central Intelligence Agency had accumulated enough intelligence to suspect that the Russians were about to stage another space spectacular that would up stage the U.S. and win the Space Race. The CIA believed the Russians were planning a manned circumlunar spaceflight by the end of 1968. The CIA also knew that the Soviet Union's *Zond*, which was a lightened and automated version of the Soyuz manned craft, was designed to go to the moon and back.

In the summer of 1968, a single navy ship quietly slipping away from her Pearl Harbor usually signaled a covert heating up of the Space Race. And so, in early August the *McMorris* commenced a four month odyssey to the Indian Ocean volcanic island Mauritius, and changed history.

(Continued on page 11)

## ▲ Frigid Adventure

By Robert H. I. Silver(#728) and David Watts-Morgan

Time is money. And, contrary to popular belief, money can buy you time. Once in a while the question arises, which to choose – whether to spend your time to save your money or vice versa. The difference between a smooth and easy life and one royal pain after another is usually to be found in the decisions we make, so these choices are important to us. We tend to define ourselves by how smart our choices are, and to a certain extent by how smart other people think they are. We don't want to be seen as living our lives like a Keystone comedy. Each choice we make is more

or less carefully considered, and we need a good outcome to validate our reasoning.

The other Sunday, my good old Frigid-aire bit the dust. It had been wheezing for some time, and finally it gurgled and died.

The first thing to do was to scope out the extent of the problem before me. I measured the fridge. I measured the kitchen door. I measured the hallway and the angle of the corridor. I measured the width of the stairs and the overhead clearance of the stairwell. I measured the angle at the bottom of the stairs and the clearance into the parking garage.

I concluded that if I stuck with the measurements of the original, now defunct, refrigerator, there shouldn't be any snags. So I got in the car and drove to Goodwill.

I'm in favor of Goodwill shopping for several reasons. For one thing, people these days

get rid of perfectly good items just because they're tired of them. In the old days things were built to last. These days people want to renovate their kitchens, or whatever, based on whim rather than necessity. The good old stuff goes to Goodwill, and the store checks and refurbishes the donations.

Plus, did I mention, you can save a small fortune?

I found the ideal piece. I looked it over...measured it...asked it questions. It passed all the tests and showed no tendency to become blabby. I then went in search of the delivery

department. It transpired that the only way to achieve immediate delivery, an essential part of the equation, was to make use of the services of the Goodwill delivery sub-department, located on the sidewalk outside.

I struck a deal struck, despite the language barrier. The new fridge was loaded onto the back of a battered pick-up truck. It didn't look really safe, the guys explained to me that laying a fridge on its side messes up the Freon pump and creates airlocks. These guys obviously were experts.

We pushed the fridge up against the back of the cab and secured it with about eight inches of frayed garden twine. Then we all squeezed into the front and enjoyed a thrilling but collision-free ride to my apartment gate. These guys had long ago learned that time is money. No gap in the traffic went un-exploited.

(Continued on page 6)

*(Frigid continued from page 5)*

I had brought the remote control for the gate along in my pocket but we didn't need it. Just as we arrived, a car emerged from the gate and my driver, who, as I said, had already shown himself to be an opportunist, decided he could make it before the gate slid shut. He stomped on the gas and we shot through the closing jaws with an inch to spare.

I had never actually tried that before. Normally one stops, clicks the button, waits patiently, and eventually creeps through in low gear. I've always thought it was best that way, without really knowing why.

We found out why.

One thing I had not thought to measure was the height to the ceiling of the parking garage. I mean, why would one? Nor had I measured the distance from the gate to the speed bump, but it was too late now. I only managed one half-syllable of warning before we reached it. The driver stood on the brake, and the pick-up stood on its nose. The fridge and its eight inches of garden twine were launched into the air.

I don't know who designs these parking garages or if all parking garages have the grey-water and sewer lines positioned right over their speed bumps, or if architects are prone to sly humor, but there was something premeditated about the way the fridge rocketed out of the truck bed and smashed through the overhead pipes carrying the aforementioned facilities.

One of the crew managed to escape and find a safe and dry vantage point to watch the show. The rest of us sat in the cab with the windshield wipers going as nameless substances and fluids poured relentlessly over the truck and its contents.

When the flood had slowed to a trickle and we could survey the mess, it became apparent that my carefully planned mission was a bust. The fridge was dented beyond repair.

At this point we entered into some more, um, negotiations. But there is no use trying to explain the subtleties of ethical responsibility across a language barrier. The calculations eventually came out to cost of truck cleaning, plus clothes cleaning, plus the cost of the fridge, plus the cost of the plumber who had to be called. On a Sunday.

I know Sears delivers and installs fridges for less than that, but you have to consider what is the best way to spend your valuable time.

It's not just a question of money.

### NOTICE

Meal costs will be increasing slightly to keep pace with inflation. The cost increases will go into effect on March 1, 2006.

- Regular Meals \$15.00
- Ladies Night \$16.00
- 10 Tickets will be available for \$150.00

Tickets purchased prior to the price increase will be honored for a regular meal.

Tickets used for ladies nights will still have a \$1.00 surcharge.

**Thank you for your understanding.**

*(Fire continued from page 2)*

## Bottom of the World

And then the opportunity of a lifetime presented itself, and – for me – it was a no-brainer. I accepted the assignment, and in the Summer of 1981, found myself underway for Antarctica and the South Pole, where I would remain for the next thirteen months. In mid December, 1981, I disembarked at the bottom of the world from a ski-equipped Hercules C-130, and took my first breath of the icy thin air on that ten-thousand foot plateau.

It was so cold that I feared I had frozen the tops of my lungs. After just a few steps I was panting and out of breath. My face and lips felt seared, and I quickly under-

stood the reason for the standard hood with a deep, fur-lined tunnel protecting the face – preventing skin, eyes, and mucus membranes from nearly instant freezing in the frigid air.

As I surveyed my new home, I recalled my letter to my Mom so long ago. This was adventure, I thought, this was high adventure, extreme adventure.

In an ironic twist, although my primary task was to monitor the National Science Foundation atmospheric experiments at the Pole, I was assigned the additional task of

Station Fire Marshall.

I had come full circle.

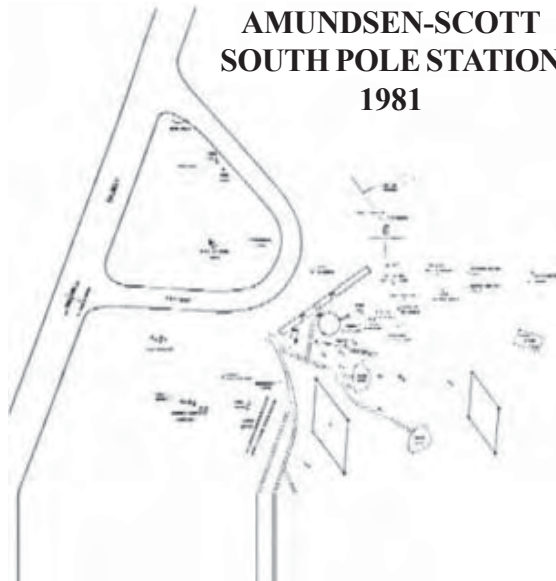
Most people don't understand how dry Antarctica really is. The atmosphere is so dry, in fact, that nearly everything exposed to outside air eventually dries up, and if it is inherently flammable, it becomes even more so in this brittle condition. Consequently, we took fire very seriously down there.

During the first three months there was a moderately large crowd at the Pole, reaching 65 at one point. We drilled for various emergencies, but most importantly for fire. We actually had a small fire in the roof of the power plant that we were able to extinguish without much difficulty.

As Summer came to an end, the population dwindled until only eighteen of us remained to watch the last C-130 depart, leaving us in total isolation for the next nine months. Whatever I had experienced before, I thought, THIS was really high adventure, in CAPS, primed. With hindsight, it's probably good that I didn't know what lay ahead.

Months passed as our activities became simple routine. We practiced our firefighting skills under every conceivable scenario – except inside the corrugated steel arch

*(Continued on page 8)*



*(Fire continued from page 7)*

that contained our Goodyear fuel bladders. The reason was simple: In our tests, we had been unable to ignite the DFA (diesel fuel arctic) that was doped to stay liquid down to eighty below. As Fire Marshall, however, I began to feel guilty, and eventually I approached the Station Manager with a proposal to drill at least once in the Fuel Arch.

We set it up, and a week later spent an entire day running through the plan and practicing the actual procedures we might need in case of fire in our fuel supply. It was fun, and we all felt better for the drill. During the drill we had discovered that the Scot Air Packs did not function very well at 80 and 90 below zero. The regulators froze up, but we were able to get a few minutes of additional air time by storing the air bottles inside, and bringing them out just before using them.

## Fire

One week later I was sitting in my lab located a couple hundred yards upwind from the main Pole Complex. It was about noon – and suddenly the fire alarm sounded. Shortly after, the Station Manager announced over the speaker system that this wasn't a drill, and that the source of the alarm was the complex that contained our small sickbay and the fuel bladders.

I hustled to don my outer clothing, since rushing to the main station without it would risk almost certain death. The end of the fuel arch was about a hundred yards from

my lab door. I ran the entire distance, and arrived at the door at the top of the arch well winded from my exertion at the Pole's extreme altitude. I turned the door knob, and the door blew open from internal pressure, knocking me on my back. Black smoke billowed from the open door.

***I turned the door knob, and the door blew open from internal pressure, knocking me on my back. Black smoke billowed from the open door.***

I got up, forced the door shut, and hurried along the

outside of the arch to the main entrance – another hundred yards. Clearly, I had a major problem.

As I made my way to the entrance, I pondered our situation. Obviously, a fuel bladder was on fire. We were totally isolated, some 900 miles from the nearest help, even if it could actually arrive – which was doubtful, and I had no idea how to solve the problem. Sure we had drilled a week earlier, but this was the real thing. It wasn't a game, and it wasn't funny.

As an added safety measure, earlier in the year we had constructed a double barrier with snow blocks between the entrance to the fuel arch and the rest of the station. When I arrived, gasping from my exertions, the station personnel were assembled at the barrier, awaiting my directions.

We had to extinguish the fire, for without fuel, we had no heat, no electricity, no water – without the fuel we were dead!

I donned a fresh, warm Scot Air Pack, and then gingerly opened the door after ensuring that everyone else was safely behind the snow barrier. Greasy black smoke roiled out. Four of us cautiously entered

the pitch black, smoke filled arch. It was hot, even though the outside temperature was minus 80 degrees. And the noise was deafening.

We attempted to reel the dry chemical PPK or “Purple K” extinguisher hose from the back wall toward the fire, but the hose shattered into thousands of pieces. It was never designed to withstand such cold. As a backup we each carried a portable PPK extinguisher, and together we played our purple streams ahead of us as we approached the blazing inferno.



*Goodyear fuel bladder after fire - Note piles of soggy insulation*

ered with a three foot thick insulating layer of fiberglass. This material was soaked with DFA, and as soon as we removed the Purple K, the flames came right back with a vengeance.

We had to do something fast!

Arless, the electrician figured that the electrical heat blanket under the insulation must have been shorted, and was feeding the fire with continuous sparks. We didn't have time to go to the power panel at the other side of the station to throw the breaker – we had to solve the



*20 ft high snow tower melted by fire's heat*

The cold was on our side, and the combination of chemical and cold helped to beat down the flames, but we couldn't extinguish them. The blazing bladder was cov-

problem right then, or we weren't going to solve it at all.

Heroically, Arless told us to beat down the flames, and as we did so, he slogged

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*(Fire continued from page 9)*

across the burning bladder to the local connection on the far side, and literally pulled the plug on the fire. His shoes filled with DFA at about minus 70 degrees, so he was in immediate great personal peril.

Fortunately, Arless's idea worked, and this time the fire stayed out. We rushed him to



*Author - discussing aftermath of fire*

sickbay where the Doctor commenced immediate treatment of his frostbitten feet.

Later, we took stock of our situation. Half our remaining fuel was gone, but if we were careful, we could last until new fuel could be flown in – about two months out. Most of our “Purple K” was gone, but we still had some CO<sub>2</sub> extinguishers. We determined that the bi-metallic circuit

breaker that should have opened the circuit to the heat blanket had crystallized in the cold. It was completely non-functional, like the Purple K hoses.

### **What If?**

Then we got to thinking. What if we had not drilled, or what if the fire had happened in the middle of the night? It certainly would have taken us a lot longer to get our act together. Thus we would have arrived at the snow barrier perhaps fifteen or twenty minutes later that we actually did. By this time, most of the oxygen in the arch would certainly have been consumed, and the arch would have been filled with super hot explosive gas.

When we opened the door to enter the arch, the fresh oxygen most likely would have caused a gigantic explosion, funneled by the arch straight at the entire station crew, except for the female cook who was pregnant and away from the immediate vicinity, and the 18 year old radio operator who was keeping McMurdo and the rest of the world apprised of our situation.

I don't believe they could have survived by themselves.

As it turned out, because of a bit of planning and a lot of luck, they didn't have to. Arless's feet healed nicely, and the rest of us earned the right to tell a dandy tale of high adventure.



(Race continued from page 4)

## THE TRANSIT

Our transit from Pearl Harbor to Mauritius took 35 days. We arrived on September 4 and spent the first two days relieving



*The Russian Ships Morzhovets and Nevel*

our sister ship, U.S.S. *John R. Perry* DE1034. The Soviets were already there with two of their command-control and recovery ships, the *Morzhovets* and *Nevel*, standing by for the next Russian space shot. The *McMorris* and her crew of 180 officers and men would be onsite with the Russians to confirm U.S. intelligence, and enable the U.S. to respond to this latest threat to national security and prestige.

Our stay in Port Louis was cut short when, on September 6, the Soviet ships got underway. Our job for the next month and a half would be to dog the *Morzhovets* and *Nevel*. When they got underway, we got underway; where they would go, we would go. It wasn't these ships that Uncle Sam

was interested in, of course, it was what they were up to, what they were doing, what space craft they were tracking.

Both Soviet vessels were ex-*Vostok* class former timber carriers that were completely modified with a comprehensive array of tracking, direction finding, and communications equipment. These vessels literally bristled with antenna designed for tracking and controlling Russian spacecraft. Likewise the *McMorris* who also bristled with specialized antenna, designed to keep track of the Russians and their activities.

We were good at our job and provided critical intelligence during the cold war. The *Mighty Mac* was a true cold war warrior, and I'm still proud to have served aboard her.

## D.I.W.

We blindly followed our Soviet lead ships with no idea where we were headed. Eventually we arrived at 32° 64' South Latitude by 65° 55' East, Longitude, and went into DIW mode along with our Russian quarry. On the morning of September 15, 1968, while our little armada was bobbing around the southern Indian Ocean, the left launch pad at Site 81 in Tyuratam commenced preparations for the launch of *Zond 5*.

At exactly 21:42:11 UTC, on September

(Continued on page 12)

*(Race continued from page 11)*

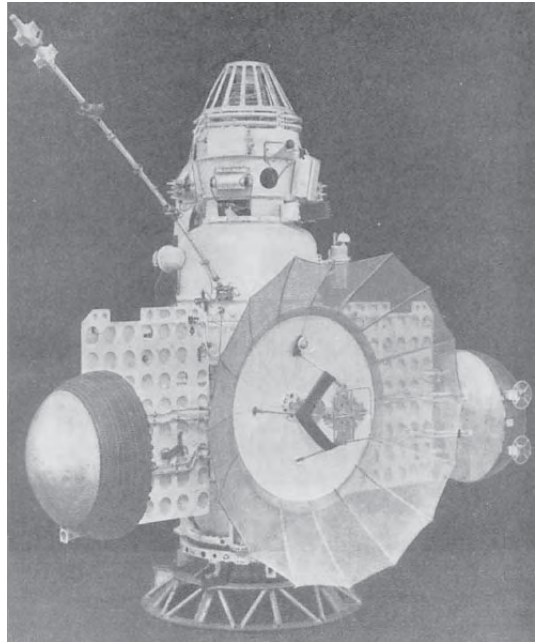
15, 1968, the giant Soviet Proton-K heavy lift booster burst into life with an ear splitting crescendo of synchronized rocket engines. Six long shards of fire provided nearly 2 million pounds of thrust sending *Zond 5* on its long journey to the moon. *Zond 5* went down in the history books as the first spacecraft to go around the moon and be successfully recovered back on Earth.

### THE SPLASH DOWN

The Soviets designated *Zond 5* as *Soyuz 7K-L1*. This circum-lunar spacecraft carried a payload of film cameras, and a host of living specimens including turtles, meal worms, plants, wheat, pine, and barley seeds, wine flies, bacteria, and chlorella. Three days later on the 17<sup>th</sup>, it made a course correction and swung around the Moon only 1,950 Km from the surface and headed back toward Earth. *Zond 5* caused a panic in the West when Jordell Bank Observatory picked up a human voice coming from the spacecraft while still in the vicinity of the Moon. The voice turned out to be a tape-recorded experiment to test the communications system. On the flight back to earth *Zond 5* took high-quality photographs of Earth from a distance of 56,000 miles.

*Zond 5* was aimed for a narrow corridor between 22 miles and 30 miles above the Earth; 6 miles too low and it would burn up, 15 miles too high and it would skip out of the atmosphere, never to return. Skimming into the atmosphere at nearly 25,000 mph, the decent vehicle of *Zond 5* was aimed for entry over the South Pole, and splashed down in the Indian Ocean only

about 60 miles from the Russian tracking ships and *McMorris*. It was a very busy night that September 21, 1968, as our three ships hi-tailed it toward the *Zond* splash zone. The Russians finally hauled her safely aboard the next morning, but not before *McMorris* had a chance to photograph and probe *Zond 5* electronically, and collect chemical and debris samples.



*Zond 3 - Similar to Zond 5. Flew past the Moon*

For years there has been controversy over whether *Zond 5*'s original planned landing was supposed to be the Indian Ocean. or a land recovery in the Soviet Union. Anatoly Zak reliably informed me that based on RKK Energia archive documents, *Zond 5* was scheduled to land in Kazakhstan. Due to several problems, however, the flight control system was unable to activate the

main orbit correction engine. As a result, ground controllers used a series of firings with the attitude control thrusters to direct the spacecraft into the Indian Ocean.

Nice job Ruskie's bringing the spacecraft down only 60 miles from your ships, from a lunar distance of 240,000 miles. I'd call it a real bull's eye!

*Zond 5* was the first circum-lunar spacecraft to be recovered back on earth and its September 1968 flight was a very important success for the Russians. Immediately thereafter, the CIA warned NASA that a Soviet manned circumlunar flight was imminent and that the next launch window for them would be as early as December 1968.

## APOLLO 8

All three ships headed back to Port Louis for refueling and in our case a little R&R. We arrived back in Mauritius on September 26 and commenced our long awaited liberty. The Russian ship with the recovered spacecraft onboard wasted no time in heading back to sea and Bombay India where *Zond 5* would travel overland back to her birthplace in the Soviet Union.

Once home, *Zond 5* was examined by engineers and scientists who also checked on their onboard experiments so that decisions could be made about their next step toward a manned moon mission. The Soviets were very serious about beating the U.S. to the moon with a manned spacecraft, and on November 10, 1968, *Zond 6* commenced its journey.

NASA officials had seen and heard enough about the Soviet *Zonds* to make a

momentous decision. On September 11, one day after the launch of *Zond 6*, while the spacecraft was en-route to the Moon, Acting NASA Administrator Paine made the formal decision to send *Apollo 8* to orbit the Moon!



*Apollo 8 Patch*

The decision to go for the Moon in *Apollo 8* was a gamble that everything would work perfectly. Since *Apollo* contained 5,600,000 parts, even if it functioned with 99.9 percent reliability, we could still expect 5,600 defects.

At the time Astronaut Bill Anders is said to have told his wife Valerie that he had only a fifty-fifty chance of getting back alive. Christopher Craft, Director of NASA Flight Ops. told Astronaut Frank Borman's wife Susan that the chances of success were probably fifty-fifty. *Apollo 8* was the most dangerous space mission ever up to that time.

Nevertheless, *Apollo 8* was scheduled for launch on December 21, 1968.

*(Continued on page 15)*



Who is this guy, and what the heck is a “Thrawn Rickle”?

The first is easy: I’m the new kid on the block - the newest proud member of the Los Angeles Adventur-

er’s Club...and your new Editor.

The second...well, the above definition of the words gives you a hint. A *rickle* is a loose, dilapidated pile of stuff - any kind of stuff. *Thrawn* means stubborn - like most of you fellow members, so this is something you can understand.

Thus, a *thrawn rickle* is a hodgepodge of stubborn, opinionated material, and this is what I have chosen to name my monthly column. It will be the place where you get a piece of my mind on whatever. I will try to keep the material on point. That is to say, that it will reflect in some manner the material presented elsewhere in the magazine - but not necessarily.

If I get my gander up about something, you’re likely to hear about it here. I don’t mean politics and the other “taboo” stuff, but things we all as adventurers are interested in. I’m sure that if I start to get too far afield, the good members of the Board will drag me back into line.

This column, and our entire magazine for that matter, will be a lot better if you take time to respond to these meanderings. Send me an email (aclaeditor@argee.net), or

drop a snailmail line to me (that’s a regular letter-through-the-mail for you old-timers!); but let’s make this a two-way street. I need all of you to make this journal a success!

As you all know, I am stepping into some very large shoes. Bob Williams has been doing a bang-up job as editor for nearly half my life. I don’t expect to be able to fill his shoes as he did, and I ask you not to make comparisons. I will take everything he has done before me, learn from his experience, and try to build on his foundation.

Bob has generously offered to help me wherever and whenever he can. Others have stepped forward as well, offering their skills and assistance.

I will be taking advantage of much that you folks can offer - not everything all the time, but a lot. Especially, I want photographs of everything that happens. If you can give me digital photos, all the better, but any photos are better than none. Also, please give me feedback on what you see here, not just in this column, but in the magazine in general.

Please send me your stories and articles. Although you can send your materials in any fashion, I really would appreciate receiving it in some kind of electronic format, like an MS Word document. It is better if you attach your material to your email rather than including it in the body of your email. And don’t forget the photos!

Deadline for submissions is the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month. This is a firm date. Please keep this in mind.

Let’s rock ‘n roll!

(Race continued from page 13)

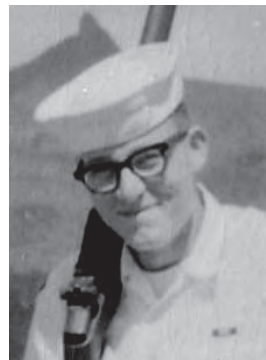
## END OF THE RACE

On December 8, 1968, the Russians lost the Moon Race to the United States. Pavel Balyayev was scheduled to be launched to the moon from the Tyuratam Space Launch Complex, but a technical glitch showed up in the first stage-boosters with less than four hours to go in the countdown. Balyayev was removed from the capsule, and after a thorough inspection of the booster, *Zond 7* was launched unmanned.

About twenty-seven miles out, the pogo effect set in, and *Zond 7* was shaken apart and blown up. In those days only successful Soviet space missions were reported in the media, and so *Zond 7* reappeared for an unmanned launch, in August 1969.

## MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

On October 19, 1968, *McMorris*, after completing her vital mission for the U.S., steamed out of Port Louis, Mauritius, for the last time. We were homeward bound via Albany and Sydney, Australia, Noumea, New Caledonia and Tarawa, Gilbert Islands. We arrived back in Pearl Harbor in December, in time to hear *Apollo 8* astronauts read the first ten verses from the book of *Genesis*, a fitting ending to our mission and the Space Race.



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## THURSDAY NIGHTS AT THE CLUB

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Bob Zeman

### Night of High Adventure - October 23

Our annual Night of High Adventure in October was truly "A Showcase for Excellence." A crowd of almost 200 showed up at the Sheraton Delfina to hear four great speakers, participate in a silent auction, eat good food and enjoy camaraderie with fellow adventurers.

Chairman Pierre Odier stated that this was the seventh year that the Adventurers' Foundation had sponsored the event. He then introduced Club President Vince Weatherby.

Vince read greetings from members who could not attend. These included Don Taylor, Bob Gannon, Milt Valois, Jim Freeburn, Ib Melchior, Steve Roulac, Bill Althaffer,

Martin Simon, Norman Dyrenfurth and Vimal Gairola.

The four traditional toasts were given:

Youngest member Steve Lawson — "to adventure, the shadow of every red-blooded man

Oldest member John Booth — "to the game"

Newest member Claude Hewlitt — "to every lost trail, lost cause and lost comrade

Longest member Bob Benner — "to gentleman adventurers"

All ladies present were given a gift of hand and facial creams donated by Jack Nethercutt.

Master of Ceremonies Jim Dorsey then welcomed all multi-lingually and introduced the program.

Roger Dunham is a board certified specialist in internal medicine. But in the late 1960s he was a nuclear reactor operator on a U. S. spy submarine. He described an operation which is still cloaked in secrecy.

His sub was the first and last of its class and was big and slow. It held 120 men and could fire Regulus missiles and carried one nuclear torpedo. . Elvis and Priscilla Presley toured the boat one day.

Roger had signed up for six years. This was after the Thresher sunk in 1963 and the Scorpion went down in 1968. Interestingly both the former commanding officer of the Thresher and the former executive officer of the Scorpion were on board his sub.

The incident began out at sea when the sound of breaking up of a submarine was heard. This sub turned out to be Soviet and Roger's sub searched for it for two months without luck.

Roger's boat returned to port and then came out again to search. This time it was successful and the downed sub was found and photographed with a skeleton outside. How did he get outside?

Life on board had its problems. A 70-foot wave washed a man overboard; an electrician went psychotic and a cable broke.

Roger's book, *Spy Sub—A Top Secret Mission*, censored by the Pentagon tells the story of this incident.

Dr. Pamela Logan has been working and traveling on the Tibetan plateau for nine years and is the founder and president of Kham Aid Foundation which assists Tibetans of the eastern plateau. In 1996 she was named "Woman Explorer of the Year" by the Scientific Exploration Society.

The Tibetan plateau averages 12,000 feet

high. It is a land of extremes and about the size of Europe. The eastern part known as Kham is a land of high mountains, roaring white water rivers and hidden enclaves of well-preserved Tibetan culture.

Pamela enjoyed the horse festivals. In fact access to some villages is limited to horseback travel. The yak is used for food, milk and hair for tent shelter. The boys learn to fight with knives.

Buddhism is the religion and there are monasteries. These preserve the intellectual tradition with wall murals. Pamela has taught conservation skills to the Tibetans. She has also started programs for education of Tibetan children, distribution of wheel chairs for the disabled, planting trees, training 79 midwives, building greenhouses and better architecture.

She once was caught in the middle of a rumble between two clans and had to escape via a ditch.

Our third speaker was James Brown III who spoke on "Adventures in Flying the F/A-22 Raptor."

Jim was commissioned in 1978 and has flight tested the A-7, all models of the F-15 Eagle and other prototype aircraft. He joined the Lockheed Skunk Works in 1994 as an experimental test pilot.

Jim is now the lead test pilot for the Raptor program at Edward Air Force Base. He conducts airborne testing for envelope expansion, structural loads, avionics countermeasures and weapons.

He rises at 3 a.m. and then showers and eats before flying to his tests. The plane achieves 600 miles per hour at takeoff and then rises a mile every eight seconds pull-

ing multiple forces of gravity. These G's cause heavy blood pressure in his toes and could lead to loss of periphery in his vision and other problems.

But at 60,000 feet he can see the curvature of the earth. And at sunrise, all the colors of the rainbow are visible on the horizon.

He told of an incident in which a vulture had picked up a rabbit on the ground and was carrying it. The Raptor hit the vulture and shattered the canopy. The co-pilot was covered in rabbit fur and blood.

A squadron of Raptors is being set up at McGill Air Force base in Florida. Jim's video of this stealth aircraft going through its motions was excellent.

Our final speaker was Dr. Pascal Lee of NASA-Ames Research. His subject was "Studies of Extreme Environment for future Planetary Bases."

Dr. Lee is co-founder and chairman of the Mars Institute. He showed a slide of the family tree of life. Its three main branches were archaea relating to the oldest rocks; bacteria which are present in water and eucarya which is the rest of life.

Mars is a global polar desert. There is no liquid water on Mars but there are traces of it in the rocks, dunes and sands of the surface. The largest mountain on Mars is Olympus Mons which is 600 square kilometers at its base and 26 kilometers high.

Both the U. S. and European Space Agency has scheduled plans for trips to Mars. The schedule calls for a crew exploration vehicle developed between 2008 and 2010. A return to the moon is planned for 2015 to 2020. Putting humans on Phobos comes in 2020 to 2025 and humans on Mars in 2025 to 2030.

These humans would walk around, study and discover. Tests on Earth are being conducted on Devon Island in northern Canada, the largest uninhabited island on Earth. In the Haughton Crater, there is ground ice, rock glaciers, sapping valleys and canyon gullies.

A human spacesuit now weighs 300 pounds so extra vehicular activities would be done in pressurized vehicles. The crew size will be five to eight and will have a mix. Criteria would be knowledge, health, motivation, adaptability and altruism.

After the speakers President presented the first annual Adventurer of the Year award to one who has been to China and Tibet, studied whales in Mexico, explored in Myanmar near the Golden Triangle to record cultures of the hill tribes and been up the Mekong River—all in 2005. This award went to Pierre Odier.

Pierre accepted the award. He then thanked those who had worked hard to make the evening a success—Jim Heaton for promotion; Steve Lawson for audio visual; Don Waters for greetings and Gene Arias for photos and the kitchen crew for feeding all on short notice.

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## December 1, 2005

President Vince Weatherby opened the ladies' night meeting.

Unfortunately, the bell was tolled for Wally Bagley #779. Wally served under Admiral Halsey in the Third and fifth Fleet invasions of Iwo Jima, Guam, Saipan and others in the Marshalls and Marianas. He had served two terms as treasurer and one term as second vice president of the Club.

Tributes were given by Ted Williams, Joe

Brown and others.

Ed Boden showed up from North Carolina. Since we last saw him, he had driven the length of Route 66 from Chicago to Santa Monica.

Steve Waterford flew in from Florida and talked about a new development in photography for three-dimensional prints. Steve has been through five hurricanes in five years.

Robert Williscroft is healthy after his surgery.

Steve Bein dove on an oil rig off of Long Beach. He then flew to the Cayman Islands to view the sea life and a sunken Soviet destroyer. He needs someone to assemble the aircraft he bought.

Dave Finnern sailed to Catalina to dive with Steve Lawson. Small craft warnings came up and they couldn't sleep. Some sailboats were washed onto the shoreline.

Bob Ianello stayed at Sea Ranch to free dive for abalone. No luck. But he did find Bolinas mushrooms which were good eating.

Roger Haft leaves soon for Antarctica stopping in Argentina, Uruguay and Ushuaia on the way.

Rogelio Nochebuena talked about the Volvo ocean racing. Seven boats left Cadiz, Spain and two have made the first stop in Cape Town. After that, next stop is in Australia.

Bob Walters says that the American fighter aces will meet Sunday in Balboa Park in San Diego.

Paul Isley said that the showing of the Band of Brothers will start January 14<sup>th</sup>. Don Mallarkey, a Band member, will attend a future showing.

## **Competing for the Gold by Pat McCormick**

Pat McCormick was born and grew up in Seal Beach. She swam and did flips off the bridges of Naples in Alamitos Bay. A diving coach spotted her and invited her to the Los Angeles Athletic Club where she practiced and learned from Sammy Lee and Victoria Draves.

Pat tried out for the 1948 Olympics as a teenager and missed making the team by one percent of a point. But this just made her more determined to make the 1952 team which she did. Three weeks prior to the trials she hit her head on the bottom but she still qualified.

The 1952 Olympic Games in Helsinki were the first to host the Soviet Union which was expected to win many medals. Ironically, prior to the last event which was a diving event, the U. S. and Soviet Union were tied in gold medals. Pat won the gold in the 10 meter platform diving and three meter springboard diving.

Pat kept on competing and qualified for the 1956 team going to Melbourne. Here again she won two gold medals despite having a baby just two months earlier.

Over the years Pat has won the UPI woman athlete of the year, Sullivan award for outstanding amateur athlete and shared the Associated Press athlete of the year with Mickey Mantle. She appeared on the Ed Sullivan show twice.

There are five parts to a successful dive—the ready position, the approach, hurdle on one leg, jump or take off and entry into the water.

During her heavy training Pat was doing 100 dives per day six days a week.

Pat's daughter Kelly made the 1984 Olympic team and earned a silver and then

earned a bronze in 1988.

Pat has formed and now runs a foundation for disadvantaged children in Orange County. She is proud of this and Dr. Sammy Lee sits on her board.

She admires Peter Uebberoth who ran the Olympics like a business when she served on the 1984 Olympic Organizing Company.

Currently, the country has excellent training facilities but private pools seldom have boards.

Pat is a motivational speaker and believes that one can dream, focus and feel what one is striving for. She quotes from Emily Dickinson and is still going strong these days.

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## December 8, 2005

Board member Bernie Harris returned from Virginia and Washington, D. C. He visited the Stephen Urby branch of the Smithsonian and saw the Gossamer Albatross, Enola Gay, Concorde, and the spacecraft that went to the moon.

Bob Silver hired day laborers to transport his new refrigerator. But when they got to the driveway he said stop and they went go. The frig hit and broke an effluent pipe and the waste went everywhere.

Treasurer Roger Haft leaves for Argentina on Sunday on the way to Antarctica. Stuart Bird-Wilson passed out invitations to the British United Service Club Christmas dinner on December 16<sup>th</sup>.

Bob Walters showed some 30 mm shells that could have had a nuclear core. These shells can penetrate a tank and then spray molten metal.

Steve Bein returned from Cayman and Cayman Brac. His slides of the fish and wrecks were excellent.

## Bill Altaffer—the world's most traveled man

Bill started with a story of a trip to French Guiana. He wanted to get on the French missile base in his car. He acted official and when asked for his identification, he pulled out his Costco card. He was waved on in.

Bill was recently featured in the Los Angeles as the world's most traveled man. Having recently visited Wake Island and North Korea, he counts all 324 places possible on the Travelers' Century Club list. Bill brought along his fellow traveler Monty Anderson.

Bill showed slides of his recent trip to Russia and Tuva. He landed in Moscow and used the subway which was clean. He showed the gold leaf on the Cathedral and visited Lenin's tomb.

He then flew to Abakan on the way to Tuvinskaja Autonomnaja Oblast (Tuva.) He drove to Shushenskoye where Lenin was exiled in 1897-98. The wooden cabin where Lenin lived is still standing. Bill noted that Lenin like to work standing up.

The region is near the center of Asia and there is an obelisk there. The gold which used to adorn it is now in a Moscow museum. Gold was originally discovered by the Scythians in the Valley of the Tsars near Turan. This was a day trip from Kyzyl.

The area is near Mongolia and Bill stayed in a ger camp along a river. Huge fish were caught here. But Bill wanted to ride a horse and learn about the Old Believers. He did note that Chinggis Khan (Genghis Khan) invented the stirrup and this helped his Golden Horde.

Next it was on to Irkutsk and Lake Baikal storage of 20% of the world's fresh water. There is a small ski slope where Vladimir Putin skis.

Then it was on to Alta Mongolia for a

short trip to the Flaming Cliffs where Roy Chapman Andrews found dinosaur eggs.

Bill wasn't done yet. He showed us about 10 slides of his visit to North Korea including the vessel Pueblo which was a war prize from 1969.

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## December 15, 2005

President Vince Weatherby welcomed close to 70 members and guests to the annual holiday party.

The hors d'ouvres were excellent and the prime rib dinner furnished by Emily and John was delicious. Vince presented a tip of appreciation for their year long cooking.

Glasses were charged and the four toasts were given by Bob Benner (lowest number), John Booth (oldest member), Steve Lowest (youngest member) and Robert Willisroft (newest member.)

Our revered Bob Williams, who served as editor of the News for 24 years, drove in from Hemet. He looks great but said that health and distance prevented him from continuing. He said the experience had been great and he enjoyed it. Vince presented Bob with a plaque of appreciation and engraved cross pens.

Robert Willisroft was inducted as the newest member #1116. He has wintered over in Antarctica and is an expert NOAA scuba diver.

Robert told of a diving expedition to the Puget Sound in which the most of the divers swam around one side of an island and he and another expert swam around the other side to meet the boat. When the two surfaced, the current had carried them a mile away from the boat and on the way to Canada.

They did not have a buoyancy compensator because they were wearing dry suits.

So they found a floating log and hopped on. Nearing San Juan Island they were spotted by and hailed a seaplane. It notified a nearby boat which picked them up and then transferred them to their boat. But the pilot of the seaplane notified Robert's boss who wondered why the two expert divers on the trip got in the most trouble.

Vince then brought the Board members on stage for thanks. They included Gene Arias, Bernie Harris, Alan Feldstein, Robert DeMott, Pierre Odier, Mike Smith, Jim Heaton, Steve Bein and Jim Dorsey. Roger Haft was off to Antarctica.

Vince, who volunteered to serve a second term as president then introduced the new Board. They include Shane Berry, Bob Walters, Steve Bein, Robert de Mott, Alan Feldstein, Gene Arias and Bernie Harris.

John Goddard said that he was driving 30 miles south of Cabo San Lucas when he spotted a humpback whale being escorted by four dolphins. He followed them down the coast at about 10 knots and speculated on the reasons for this close relationship.

Roy Roush has just finished his new book Knights of the Order of the Golden Circle. The Knights were former soldiers in the Confederate Army who did not accept the Appomatox surrender and wanted to keep on fighting. They had stored caches of gold and precious metals in various places. Roy heard about a cache at Glorietta Pass in New Mexico and pursued the story. Roy donated a copy of his book to the Club.

It was great to see members Gene Wallace from Laguna Beach, Tim Schweigart from Solano Beach, Sven Wahlroos from Tarzana, and others we had not seen in a while.

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## Forthcoming Programs

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- February 2, 2006** - “Bush Piloting in Alaska” Tom Koff’s interest in aviation started at the age of 5. He was a professor of bacteriology-parasitology at Cal Poly and also joint owner of a fixed base operator-flight school (FBO). Finally, he was required to decide which of his two full time occupations he would keep and he chose flying. He eventually sold his interest in the FBO, and went sailing around the world. When the money ran out, he flew his Cessna 185 to Alaska for a month’s trip, found that he wanted to be a bush pilot, the opportunity presented itself, and he proved his capabilities. He lives in the off season in Central California. Each year he loads his 185 with gear and his dog and flies to Alaska where he works as a bush pilot in Alaska, returning in November.
- February 9, 2006** - Open as of 1/22/06. One of several excellent speakers, or two are in the process of being booked. Check web site for up-to-date info (www.adventurersclub.net.) Come and visit and be surprised .
- February 13, 2006** - Monthly Board of Directors meeting (members and invited guests only)
- February 16, 2006** - “Return to Kilimanjro” Kim McCoy
- February 23, 2006** - “LA County Sheriff’s Dept and Defending Against Terrorism” Lt. John P. Sullivan is Lieutenant with the Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department, Emergency Operations Bureau, Los Angeles Terrorism Early Warning Group (TEW), where he serves as Director of the National TEW Resource Center. In that role he is responsible for training and doctrine development issues for a national TEW network based on the Los Angeles TEW model. He is also a researcher and practitioner specializing in intelligence, conflict studies, terrorism and urban operations. He also serves on the Interagency Board for Equipment Standardization and Interoperability (IAB) as well as the Board of Advisors for the Terrorism Research Center.
- March 2, 2006** - “Update on travel Medicine” Alan Spira MD. Dr. Spira has talked to us a few years ago. His talk was informative and helpful to those travelling. He will bring us up to date on the current new diseases “out there” and tell us how to deal with them. IF you travel, this is a must.
- March 9, 2006** - “Spelunker Extraordinaire” Lloyd Swartz. Lloyd is an outstanding extreme 4 wheeler and caver. He has many firsts in caving. Recently, he was instrumental in passing federal statutes regarding Underground Conservation.
- March 16, 2006** - “Iraq Combat Experience” Robert Kolesar. LAPD Detective. Army Reserve Master Sergeant. Went to Iraq in 2004/2005 for nine months. Ended up in combat for 35 straight days in Najaf. Was paratrooper in the 70s and has been a competitive shooter with the police and Army since. Has photos plus two short videos. Some combat scenes not for the weak hearts. He’s cocky, witty, and damned smart.
- March 23, 2006** - **LADIES NIGHT** - “Band of Brothers Documentary” Don Malarkey. One of the members of Easy Company in WWII which was the subject of the documentary produced by Tom Hanks. Be prepared to be enriched by the talk by this gentleman.
- March 30, 2006** - “Bird Photography in the Neo-Tropics” Joe Fuhrman. Comes from an family of ornithologists. Has made 11 expeditions to South and Central America. His photos are world class and he is an outstanding speaker.

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**FIRST CLASS MAIL**

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