

Antarctica Sun Times - *ONLINE*

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Summer Season Makes Quick Recovery

by JO2 Trevor Poulsen

The 1996-97 summer season in McMurdo got off to a shaky start early this month. Four days of bad weather nearly disrupted the season opening.

The set-back was only temporary, however, according to National Science Foundation Representative, Antarctica, David Bresnahan.

"We hoped to have the helicopters on station on the 2nd of October, but the delay forced us to adjust our schedules," he said. Additional flights from Christchurch quickly brought the season back on schedule.

"We planned the season to take into account the transfer, but we just got here a little later than a typical season," he added.

Bresnahan said the '96-'97 summer season is a crucial period in the transition of Navy-supported activities to civilian control.

"The big change for this year is the new commercial helicopter operations," Bresnahan said. "We'll have four helicopters - one Bell 212, which is the commercial equivalent to a Huey, and three A-Stars, which are smaller. They are single-piloted and without crewmen, so that causes a significant change in the operation."

This summer season has also brought significant changes to various departments in town. Antarctic Support Services (ASA), a civilian contractor for the United States Antarctic Program (USAP) has subcontracted with two companies starting this season.

International American Products, Inc. (IAP) now provides food, janitorial, barber and laundry service, while Space Mark Incorporated (SMI) currently operates the power plant, water plant and provides support in the Vehicle Maintenance Facility.

ASA Area Manager Stan Wisneski says the changes have proceeded smoothly and customers shouldn't notice a difference in service.

"The season opening has been very good," he said. "The biggest difference is that we don't do the hiring and training (in those areas)."

Wisneski said that on Feb. 1 ASA will replace Naval Support Force Antarctica personnel now working in Morale, Welfare and Recreation, the Ship's Store and Disbursing. He added that significantly fewer ASA employees, 124, will stay through the 1997 winter.

This season's changes are designed to boost efficiency within USAP, according to Bresnahan.

"We're looking across the board, how we operate, trying to see things that we can do to still provide the same kind of support in a more cost-effective way," he said.

From The Editor:

On behalf of the "Antarctica Sun Times" staff I would like to welcome everyone back to McMurdo. The main goal of this newspaper is to keep all members of the U.S. Antarctic Program (USAP) informed of the events and issues occurring within the program.

We also want to give our readers more insight as to what USAP is all about and what types of research is performed in Antarctica.

This newspaper comes in two forms, a paper version and an electronic version which we email to all USAP locations in Antarctica, Christchurch and the U.S. We also display this newspaper on the Naval Support Force, Antarctica website. The address for that website is: <http://www.asa.org/nsfa>

We also welcome your input. If you have an idea for an article or an article which you have written please stop by our offices in Bldg. 155 or email it to me at: nsfa15. We would also like to hear more from the field camps this year.

Again, this is a USAP-wide publication and belongs to every member of the program. We hope you find it informative and look forward to serving you this season.

Sincerely,
Brady Bautch
Senior Chief Journalist, U.S. Navy
Managing Editor

President Signs Environmental Protocol to Antarctic Treaty

by NSF Public Affairs

On October 1, President Clinton signed into law H.R. 3060, the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty. The United States, along with the other 25 consultative nations to the Antarctic Treaty, signed the protocol and five annexes in October, 1991.

The Senate gave its advice and consent to ratification in October 1992, and the Administration and Congress have been working since then to develop legislation to implement the protocol.

The new law provides clear authority to implement the protocol's environmental impact assessment procedures for Antarctic activities.

It also conserves flora and fauna, addresses waste management and disposal, and has provisions for area protection and management.

"We are very pleased with the passage and signing of the legislation," said Cornelius Sullivan, director of the National Science Foundation's Office of Polar Programs. "The law protects the environment of Antarctica, safeguards scientists' ability to carry out their studies of this natural laboratory, and promotes the principle of responsible stewardship for those who travel to this unique place on Earth."

"We're pleased with the leadership of the House Science Committee and the Senate Commerce Committee in developing and actively supporting this legislation," said Joel Widder, deputy director for legislative and public affairs at the National Science Foundation.

Although the U.S. Antarctic Program already complies with the law's environmental provisions, the bill's passage and signing by the President lends the force of law to such protection, and designates specific responsibilities for federal agencies to enforce the protocol.

All 26 consultative nations must ratify the protocol to put it into force. The U.S. passage of enforcing legislation is expected to spur the remaining non-ratifying nations--Belgium, Finland, India, Japan, and Russia--to action.

SCIENCE PROJECT UPDATE

by JOC(AW) Jacqueline Kiel

Vertical Profiles of Polar Stratospheric Clouds, Condensation Nuclei, and Ozone in the Antarctic Winter and spring Stratosphere (S-131).

Dr. Terry Deshler and his team will continue to research the annual springtime depletion of ozone above Antarctica. This includes making balloon-borne measurements of ozone, polar stratospheric clouds (PSC) and condensation nuclei above McMurdo Station. The project will include using an instrument with a new data system which will provide researchers with additional information concerning the composition of PSC particles. Approximately 50 balloon payloads, containing PSC, aerosol and condensation profile measuring instruments, will be launched.

Metabolic Physiology During Embryonic and Larval Development of Antarctic Echinoderms (S-006).

This research involves investigating the physiological mechanism used by feeding Antarctic larvae to survive the long period of starvation prior to the phytoplankton bloom. Recent studies do not support the suggestion that feeding larvae turn to another food source. Dr. Donal Manahan and his team intend to compare stage specific metabolic development of benthic marine invertebrates in the cold waters of McMurdo Sound to temperate larvae. They also intend to determine the mechanism(s) of low metabolism in Antarctic larvae.

The Chemical Ecology of Shallow-Water Antarctic marine Invertebrates (S-022).

The objectives of this research is to characterize and quantify chemically mediated ecological relationships among antarctic benthic invertebrates. Some of the research includes looking at chemical defenses of adult invertebrates, evaluating eggs, embryos and larvae for bioactivity and looking at the functional role of coloring in various invertebrates. Drs. Bill Baker, James McClintock and their team will visit several areas to collect specimens, including Cape Evans, Turtle Rock, Cape Crozier and the McMurdo Station vicinity.

Safety Hazards Abound In McMurdo

by JO2 Trevor Poulsen

McMurdo's extreme environment offers many lessons in safety. Every year, a whole new population of town residents is educated in the local art of survival.

Many activities performed back home can be dangerous in Antarctica if done without a greater degree of caution. That's why every work center in McMurdo maintains strict safety guidelines.

The Housing Department has a set of rules for town residents living in dormitories. These rules deal with fire prevention and protection in berthing areas and are posted in all work centers.

Any device with an open flame or exposed heating element is prohibited. This includes hot plates, unattended irons, incense, candles and the like. Microwaves, coffee makers, hot air popcorn poppers and similar appliances are permitted.

Assistant Housing Coordinator Jen Stone says the dormitories were designed to be extra safe. "There are extinguishers on every floor, doors on both ends of the dorm and alarms in every room," she said.

The Fire Department also works to ensure safe conditions throughout McMurdo.

"Safety is the first thing we deal with," said Fire Chief Walt Brown. "When we do drills, for example, they're all walk-throughs."

Brown said firefighters are available to provide fire extinguisher training for those who request it. "We inspect buildings for fire hazards every three months, so we have to leave (more frequent inspections) up to workplace supervisors. They're our front line of defense because we're not going to be there all the time."

McMurdo hasn't witnessed many fires in recent history, according to Brown. The last "major" blaze occurred two years ago in a food warehouse when an unauthorized battery charger ignited a palette.

McMurdo's good record doesn't lessen the need for disaster preparedness, however. Every summer season, the community participates in a Mass Casualty Drill. This season's surprise drill should occur sometime in late December or early January, Brown said.

AROUND USAP

by JOC(AW) Jacqueline Kiel

McMurdo Station - Because of the bad weather at the beginning of the season, flight operations had fallen behind schedule. However, as of Oct. 10, operations were up to date and are running according to the original plan. Antarctic Development Squadron SIX (VXE-6) commenced with local familiarization training for flight crews. They currently have four aircraft at McMurdo Station.

Helicopter operations began Wednesday, Oct. 16. PHI, the helicopter contractor for the United States Antarctic Program (USAP), operates three AStar helicopters, also know as "Squirrels." They also have one Bell-212, which is the same as a Navy UH-1N Huey.

A three-member research team was taken to the Lake Vida camp on Sunday, Oct. 10. They will be researching the possibility of a pocket of hyper-saline liquid water beneath the ice of the lake. Taylor Valley Camps, including Lakes Bonney, Fryxell and Hoare were opened last week.

Marble Point was opened the week Oct 14-19. Twenty sling loads of equipment were moved from Marble Point to Taylor Valley camps. Marble Point is a refueling depot for helicopters heading to and from the Dry Valleys.

R/V Nathaniel B. Palmer - The ship departed Lyttelton, NZ on Oct. 2 and proceeded south to the Ross Sea. Enroute the ship encountered some severe weather which included waves in excess of 40 feet. This weather also caused several of the research vans on deck to break loose and receive damage. However, no crewmembers were injured. The ship reached the ice on Oct. 8 where it began the first Antarctic Environment Southern Ocean Process Study (AESOPS).

The R/V Nathaniel B. Palmer is operated for the National Science Foundation by the Antarctic Support Associates. The vessel is on long-term charter from Edison-Chouest Offshore. The vessel is 308.5 feet in length and can break three feet of level ice while traveling at three knots. The ship can accommodate up to 39 scientists.

R/V Polar Duke - Operating just north of Anvers Island in southern Bransfield Strait, research aboard the Polar Duke has continued on schedule. Research is showing dramatic daily changes in ozone concentrations.

The R/V Polar Duke is a 219-foot ice-strengthened research vessel which supports three vital missions to the USAP. Those missions include marine scientific research, cargo and logistics, and personnel transport to various research stations throughout the Antarctic Peninsula, primarily Palmer Station.

South Pole - Preparations on the South Pole Skiway were recently completed. Maintenance due to drifting snow is completed as necessary. The winter-over crew has painted several areas in anticipation of Station opening. Those areas include the Galley walls, the Science Building Tech Shop walls, and the Freshie Shack floor.

Winter flight operations are expected to commence on Oct. 28.

Christchurch, NZ - The National Science Foundation sponsored a reception to kick-off the season opening on Saturday, Oct. 5 in the U.S. Antarctic Program passenger terminal. The following day was "Antarctic Festival Day" celebrating the beginning of the summer season.

The Naval Antarctic Support Unit (NASU) held its second auction on Saturday, Oct. 19, to dispose of furniture and other obsolete items. These auctions are being held in preparation of the destruction of the old barracks behind the Southern Lights as NASU reduces the size of its compound.

NASU welcomed onboard LCDR Robert George on Oct. 20. LCDR George assumed the duties as the units Executive Officer the following day.

CHAPEL NOTES

Sunday Services

8 AM LDS

9 AM Protestant

11 AM Catholic

NSF Brings Backs Photographer

by Samantha Tisdal

Thin polypro gloves provide but scanty protection from the elements when one is photographing the Ice, and Ann Hawthorne has the perma-frosted fingertips to prove it. But for this NSF Writers and Artists grantee, a little frostbite is a small price to pay for the privilege of working in Antarctica.

"It's cold, awkward work," Hawthorne admitted. "You don't want to change your lens, your film breaks,

and your camera sticks to your face and the best shots are when you're down with your back in the snow and your parka's open, and you just want to go get a cup of coffee!"

Hawthorne, a freelance editorial documentary photographer, has been subjecting herself to such dubious pleasures since her first stint on the ice in 1984. That year, she had a contract with NSF to do a three-and-a-half month "Blitz Documentary," taking as many photos as she possibly could of every aspect of the United States Antarctic Program. In 1991, she was invited to journey back to the ice, this time to the Antarctic Peninsula as a Writers and Artists grantee. Since then, she's made five additional trips to the Antarctic, including two sea voyages on the M/S Explorer which were not funded by NSF.

Those who attended Hawthorne's standing-room-only presentation at the galley two weeks ago know that her Antarctic (and other) photographs have appeared in such publications as National Geographic, Newsweek, Time Magazine, Der Spiegel, Paris Match, and Air and Space, among many others. She also works with the Discovery Channel, and has been doing an assignment for their online magazine during this sojourn to the Ice.

What is it about Antarctica that keeps drawing Hawthorne back? "Probably the fact that I can't really answer that question," she mused. "This place is just unbearably beautiful. I've been luckier than I can express in the places I have been able to go here."

Take, for example, the Lone Wolf Nunatak, located at the head of the Byrd Glacier, a full 350 miles south of McMurdo station. Here she accompanied a scientist friend on a quest for meteorites, and spent her days in profound solitude, photographing ice-scapes that might as well have been on the moon.

As many times as Hawthorne has been to the Ice, the magic of it never wears off. This year, for the first time, she experienced Winfly -- and a whole new palette of visual exotica.

"I thought I had a notion of what Winfly would be like, being such a 'jaded old hand,'" she laughed, tongue in cheek. "But since I got here in August, I've been going around with my mouth hanging open. The day I arrived, the full moon was just setting over the Royal Societies, and the sun was coming up on the other side. Dawn was actually moving into twilight!"

"I stayed out for two hours one time just watching the aurora outlining Mt. Erebus, swirling in a helix of color and form and dance all the way across the sky to the Southern Cross. That was pure fantasy."

The photographs Hawthorne's taken here this season will become part of a traveling exhibit of her Antarctic work, scheduled to debut next year at the University of North Carolina Institute for Arts and Humanities. She'll be returning to her home in Washington D.C. at the end of this month to prepare the project.

Fire Prevention And You

by McMurdo Fire Dept. Staff

The McMurdo Fire Department would like to welcome everyone to another exciting summer season at McMurdo Station. We have a new Fire Chief, Walt Brown, who brings with him 38 years of fire service experience. The department also includes 38 certified firefighter/EMTs, two of which are Paramedics. We have made many changes and now that everyone is here our days are filled with training and fire prevention. National Fire Prevention Week has come and gone; however, that doesn't mean we can let our guard down to fire risks. As you have heard, fire risk is very severe in Antarctica and we need your help to prevent fires from starting.

Some of the best ways that you can help in fire prevention is by watching for the following things:

1. **Incense and candles are not to be used in the dorms, or other facilities**
2. **Smoking is only allowed in designated areas**
3. **Blankets, clothes, etc. are kept away from heat sources and particularly space heaters**
4. **Nothing is covering or hanging from sprinkler systems or smoke alarms**
5. **Hot plates and toaster ovens are not allowed in dormitories**

Also, report any exposed wires or missing socket covers to the trouble desk so they may be repaired. If you have any non-emergency questions or concerns, feel free to call the trouble desk x2555 (which is operated by the fire house) and we will be happy to assist you. Remember, in an emergency, x911 will get you the immediate attention you need.

We would like to invite you all to come by and visit the Fire Station (not just to check out your footplans).

We are looking forward to a fun filled and safe summer season, and once again we at the fire house say, "Welcome"!

NAVY NEWS

FY97 Defense Authorization Bill Contains Good News For Sailors, *Courtesy of BUPERS Public Affairs*

WASHINGTON (NWSA) -- The Bureau of Naval Personnel (BUPERS) is highlighting some of the key compensation and personnel initiatives contained in the FY97 Defense Authorization Bill benefiting Sailors.

- **Pay Raise:**
A 3.0 percent pay increase in Base Pay and Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS), and a 4.6 percent increase in Basic Allowance for Quarters (BAQ). These increases take effect Jan. 1, 1997.
- **Dislocation Allowance (DLA):**
Also effective Jan. 1, 1997, DLA will increase from two months BAQ to 2.5 times a Sailor's monthly BAQ.
- **Minimum Variable Housing Allowance (VHA):**
Subject to approval by the Secretary of Defense, effective Jan. 1, 1997, VHA floors will be established in certain high cost geographic areas to better assist Sailors paying for off-base housing.
- **Family Separation Allowance (FSA):**
FSA is authorized for the senior member of dual-military couples who are separated by military orders. This allowance became effective Oct. 1.
- **Basic Allowance for Quarters (BAQ):**
Three changes to BAQ will become effective July 1, 1997.
 1. BAQ is authorized for E-5 Sailors without family members who are assigned to sea duty.
 2. Continuous BAQ/VHA is authorized for single Sailors when executing permanent change of station (PCS) orders to a deployed unit.
 3. BAQ is authorized for dual military couples (below E-6) on sea duty at the "without dependents" rate for the senior member of the couple.

MCMURDO MWR HIGHLIGHTS

Southern Exposure Events

Wednesday, Oct. 30, 8 PM - Bingo

Thursday, Oct. 31, 9 PM - Karaoke

Friday, Nov. 1, 8 PM - Country Dancing

Ice Cave Trips

Friday, Nov. 1, 1830 - Departure is from the Galley Parking lot.

Sunday, Nov. 3, Cape Evens/Ice Cave Trip, 1200 - Departure is from the Galley Parking Lot.

General Notices:

Any department wishing to schedule a Cape evens or Ice Cave trip please contact MWR at Ext: 2443

Performers wanted:

Any Jazz or folk music guitarist wishing to perform at the Coffee House/Wine Bar, please contact MWR at 2443.
