



Shipping News

Aurora Expeditions Newsletter - February 2005

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CRUISING TO THE HEART OF NATURE

My goodness, we are already into 2005, right in the middle of our Antarctic Peninsula season on board Polar Pioneer, and we're eagerly putting final touches to our long awaited East Antarctica and Ross Sea program.

Shortly after the return of the Great Gamers from China and the 'Stans', Greg and I set off for Ushuaia. It was grand to be back on board Polar Pioneer once again, with all the crew and Kapitan Gena. It felt like coming home instead of going to work! Oh – I know – most of you wouldn't agree that working in Antarctica is work! We witnessed an Adélie penguin chick's head poking out of an egg and played 'whoopsie' with baby elephant seals on the beach.



But perhaps our greatest excitement is finalising the program for our newly found vessel, Svetaeva, a bulkier version of Polar Pioneer with the same ice strength. Polar Pioneer on steroids, as Rosy calls it!

With Svetaeva we plan to realise a long-held dream – our Ross Sea and Commonwealth Bay program. A comfortable extremely strong ice ship, equipped with helicopters and Zodiacs, designed for long ocean passages ... HOW EXCITING!

Antarctica in our own backyard. Deep Antarctica here we come.

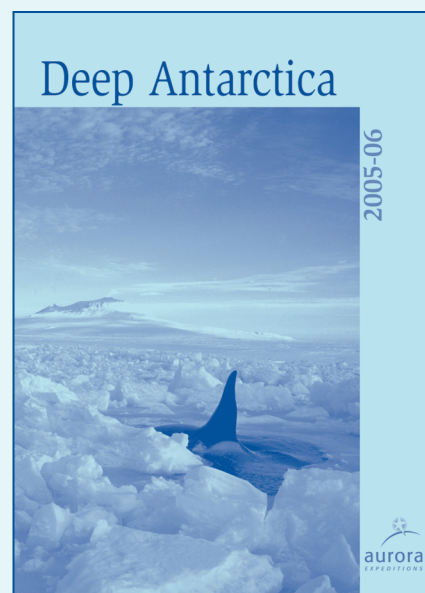
Margaret Werner

Aurora Expeditions

ROSS SEA AND MAWSON'S ANTARCTICA ABOARD SVETAEVA

Inspired by the explorations of Mawson, Scott and Shackleton's 'forgotten Argonauts', Greg, Margaret and many of our expedition staff have participated in adventures and expeditions to Commonwealth Bay and the Ross Sea. We now believe we've found the ideal safe, comfortable helicopter-equipped vessel, **Svetaeva**, to embark on a substantial program of voyages to this glorious area, and we've planned three voyages departing from Hobart or Bluff between December 2005 and February 2006. **Svetaeva's** inaugural Aurora voyage, 'Mawson's Antarctica', aims to visit Mawson's hut at Cape Denison, Dumont d'Urville research station and penguin colonies of the east Antarctic coastline, before negotiating the maze of icebergs near the Mertz Glacier tongue to explore the rarely visited Oates Land coast. The two Ross Sea voyages, weather and ice permitting, will take us back in time to the historic huts of Scott, Shackleton and Borchgrevink. We also hope to visit massive Adélie penguin colonies, enjoy dramatic views of the Trans-Antarctic Mountains, sail past the towering Ross iceshelf, and take helicopter flights to the Dry Valleys, where hypersaline lakes, hanging glaciers and wind-sculpted boulders create an extraordinary spectacle. On all three voyages we plan to call in at two or three sub-Antarctic islands – specks of land teeming with royal, king and other penguins, several species of albatross, snorting elephant seals and frisky fur seals.

We're now finalising our brochure for these voyages. Contact us for further information or to reserve your spot – we expect our Mawson's Antarctica and Ross Sea berths to fill fast. Get in while the US dollar's weak!



SVETAEVA – OUR NEW 2nd SHIP



With her ice-strengthened hull, helicopters and comfortable accommodation for around 100 passengers, we are excitedly anticipating the adventures we'll share with our passengers onboard Svetaeva in Deep Antarctica. We hope you'll join us!

NEW OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND

Exciting opportunities keep presenting themselves at Aurora, and we're now seeking a new person.

We'd like to congratulate Michael Travers, our Sales and Marketing Manager for the past five years, and his wife, Deb, on the arrival of baby Jessica in January. We wish the expanded family all the best for their travels in Italy this year. When he returns home Michael will settle into a new life, dividing his time between fatherly duties and assisting us in the office part-time. So we're seeking a new face at Aurora.

We're looking for a passionate and experienced full-time Marketing and PR Coordinator. If you have experience in marketing, or know someone with passion who's been a proven success in advertising and PR, please contact us. We'd prefer to recruit someone from the 'Aurora family' – ideally, one of our *Shipping News* readers.

For further information about the position, or to forward an expression of interest, please:

email auroraex@auroraexpeditions.com.au

or give us a call on 02 92521033.

ICEBERGS IN NZ WATERS

With growing concern about global warming, variations in seasonal ice conditions around both polar regions are of increasing popular interest. A sighting of 15 icebergs, some up to 3 kilometres wide, seen in the Southern Ocean about 700 kilometres southeast of New Zealand made recent news. Considered a shipping hazard, they were reportedly the first icebergs sighted in NZ waters since 1948.

On our own first Antarctic voyage of this season in early November, *Polar Pioneer* encountered a band of pack ice in the Drake Passage about a day further north than we normally find ice. Conversely, when we ventured into the Weddell Sea, Kapitan Gena was surprised at the lack of fast ice attached to the shoreline, allowing *Polar Pioneer* unexpected access deep into several bays. Some phenomena like these may in fact be normal variations. However, collapse of polar ice shelves and other apparently atypical ice observations might also be a consequence of human induced climate change.

Because changes in global temperature have a particularly significant impact on Antarctica and the surrounding sea ice zone, much Antarctic science is directed towards climate-related observations and collection of data for input to global climate prediction computer models.

MID-WINTER DINNER

*Greg Mortimer & Margaret Werner
and the Aurora Team
cordially invite you to the*

Aurora Expeditions Midwinter Dinner

*Tuesday 21 June 2005 at 7.00 p.m.
Taronga Zoo, Sydney*

\$125 per person

RSVP by Friday 3 June 2005

*Call Jo on 02 9252 1033 or
email jo@auroraexpeditions.com.au*

HELLO FROM SANDY, OUR NEW GENERAL MANAGER



In November 2004, holding a degree, two graduate diplomas and 20 years of skills in business management, education and adventure travel, my career path brought me to the front door of Aurora Expeditions as General Manager.

I was excited, nervous and peaceful all at once, like coming home from a journey to family with a big suitcase full of presents, photos and, of course, some obligatory items of washing. Things were comfortable and welcoming

with a hint of mystery and the unknown.

The career trail stories that I bring to Aurora are many,

including me wearing an enormous orange as a suit and selling freshly squeezed juice in my first job. A small ascent along the way included working alongside Father Chris Riley to build his charity into a business supporting the homeless and on the last leg of my voyage home, I took the helm of the Royal Australian Navy organization, Young Endeavour Youth Scheme, and steered my way towards gaining a Masters in Management and Law.

My first few months here as General Manager have been filled with challenge, glaciers, humour and bergy bits. An orientation voyage to the Antarctic Peninsula left me wide-eyed in a way that my university lecturers could only dream of.

It's been a long journey to finally make it to Aurora, but when I walked across the threshold into the office on that first day, I stepped at once onto ground that presented the most precious mixture of elements on my career path – integrity, warmth, excellence and adventure. I look forward to many more years of bergy bits and glaciers alike.

WILD SCOTLAND

We're delighted that so many past Aurora passengers share our excitement about our inaugural 'Wild Scotland' voyage this July. The itinerary blends a fascinating mix of nature, history and culture, and we look forward to exploring raucous seabird colonies, well-preserved neolithic villages, startling, rugged scenery and crofting settlements lost in time. Over 11 days we'll journey from Aberdeen to Oban, calling in at the Orkneys and Shetlands, then (Atlantic weather permitting) island hopping between tiny specks of land off northwest Scotland, before visiting the Western Isles, perhaps to sample a single malt or two. We already have a waiting list for Wild Scotland 2005, and expect to include the voyage again in our program for 2006. So if you missed out this time and might like to join us in 2006, let us know and we'll keep you informed of our plans.



CLIMATE CONFUSES BEARS

A recent Sydney Morning Herald article suggested that Russian black and brown bears, and also Arctic polar bears, may be becoming confused. Early January temperatures across a great swathe of Scandinavia and northern Europe were 8 to 9 degrees above normal, encouraging some bears to awake from hibernation. Little did they know that temperatures substantially below zero would follow the balmy snap.

A major report entitled 'Impacts of a Warming Arctic: Arctic Climate Impact Assessment' anticipates that rising temperatures and melting ice will have multiple impacts on Arctic flora, fauna, people and ecosystems. It suggests that the marine habitat for polar bears and some seals and seabirds may shrink, pushing some species towards extinction. Indigenous hunting communities could face food scarcity, and the survival of some Arctic cultures may be threatened. Melting ice might slow the ocean circulation that brings heat from the tropics, affecting global and regional climate. And trans-arctic shipping may soon become feasible during summer.

To read more about these worrying but fascinating topics, see <http://amap.no/acia/> or <http://www.pewclimate.org/>.

WELCOMING JO

We're thrilled to welcome Jo Street to our office, where she looks after administration and assists with reservations. Jo recently moved here from sunny Queensland, where she gained her passion for tourism while working at resorts on Fraser Island and the Sunshine Coast. A wildlife enthusiast, Jo lived for two months aboard the Oceania Project's research vessel, *Karma*, conducting whale research in Hervey Bay. She enjoys photography, and assisting with her boyfriend's vineyard in Mudgee – our office staff have enjoyed sampling the product! Jo often answers our phones and looks forward to hearing our passengers' tales of adventure from their voyages.



OUR VIP CLUB SUPPORTS ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

At Aurora we're proud of our commitment to protect the Antarctic environment, and we contribute small grants to scientists to research topics where our activities may have an impact. For each new member of our VIP Club (passengers who have made three or more journeys with us), we make a contribution to our research fund.



We are pleased to help fund Aurora naturalist Dr. Gary Miller's participation in an important meeting in Curitiba, Brazil this July. Every four years, the Scientific Committee for Antarctic Research (SCAR) holds an international biology symposium. It attracts scientists from all over the world who conduct biological research in Antarctica, from plankton to seals and mosses to birds.

Dr Gary, who conducts research on the presence of avian diseases in South Polar skuas, will present results from three

summers of research at Australia's Davis Station in Antarctica.

We're also proud to support important research by Leanne Gillespie, a past Aurora passenger. As part of her Master of Applied Science degree at University of Sydney, Leanne will investigate the effectiveness of Virkon boot disinfection in avoiding potential translocation of diseases in Antarctica. Her research will assist in determining the most appropriate way to clean our footwear between landings at different penguin colonies, in order to avoid spreading or introducing disease.

We were delighted by an email we received from another past passenger, Judy Horsburgh, who recently moved to Hobart to undertake the Antarctic Studies course at University of Tasmania. Her excited news was about the opportunity to join a marine science trip as a research assistant on the Australian Antarctic Division's icebreaker, the Aurora Australis. Judy is currently at sea for nine weeks in the Southern Ocean! We look forward to tales of adventure on her return.

AURORA EXPEDITIONS 2005/2006 JOURNEY CALENDAR

Dates	Destination	Ship	Options	Trip Leaders
10-25 April 2005	Amazon voyage (upriver)	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>		Greg Mortimer, Dr Gary Miller, Rhan Flatin, Frank Hopfe, Amma Szal, Chris Cutler
25 Apr-9 May	Amazon voyage (down river)	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Kayaking	Rhan Flatin, Dr Gary Miller, Frank Hopfe, Amma Szal, Chris Cutler, Al Bakker
6-16 June	Kimberley Coast Broome-Broome	<i>Coral Princess</i>	Kunmunya hike, helicopter sightseeing	Mike Cusak, Chris Done, Dr Garry Darby
17-27 June	Kimberley Coast Broome-Broome	<i>Coral Princess</i>	Kunmunya hike, helicopter sightseeing	Mike Cusak, Chris Done, Dr Garry Darby
27 Jun-7 Jul	Kimberley Coast Broome-Darwin	<i>Coral Princess</i>	Kunmunya hike, helicopter sightseeing	Mike Cusak, Chris Done, Len Zell
11-21 July	Wild Scotland	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>		Peter Malcolm, Sue Werner, Dr Gary Miller, Carol Knott
28 Jul-7 Aug	Spitsbergen Circumnavigation	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Sea kayaking, tundra hikes	Henrik Lovendahl, Sue Werner, Dr Alan Burger, Dave Burkitt, Al Bakker
7-17 Aug	Spitsbergen Circumnavigation	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Sea kayaking, tundra hikes	Henrik Lovendahl, Sue Werner, Dr Gary Miller, Dave Burkitt, Al Bakker
17-30 Aug	Spitsbergen-Greenland-Iceland Jewels of the Arctic	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Sea kayaking, tundra hikes	Greg Mortimer, Dr Gary Miller, Robyn Mundy, Al Bakker
30 Aug-12 Sep	Iceland-Greenland-Spitsbergen Jewels of the Arctic	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Sea kayaking, tundra hikes	Greg Mortimer, Dr Gary Miller, Robyn Mundy, Al Bakker
18 Nov-6 Dec	Falklands, South Georgia, Antarctic Peninsula	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Alpine crossing, extended hikes	TBA
6-17 Dec	Antarctic Peninsula Climbers and Photographers	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Climbing, kayaking, camping	TBA
9 Dec-2 Jan 2006	Mawson's Antarctica Commonwealth Bay and Beyond	<i>Svetaeva</i>	Helicopter flights	TBA
17-27 Dec 2005	Antarctic Peninsula Christmas Trip	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Camping, kayaking	TBA
27 Dec-6 Jan 2006	Antarctic Peninsula New Year's Voyage	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Camping, kayaking	TBA
4-28 Jan	Ross Sea Exploration	<i>Svetaeva</i>	Helicopter flights	TBA
6-24 Jan	Falklands, South Georgia Antarctic Peninsula	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>		TBA
24 Jan-4 Feb	Weddell Sea and Antarctic Peninsula	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>		TBA
30 Jan-23 Feb	Ross Sea Exploration	<i>Svetaeva</i>	Helicopter flights	TBA
4-15 Feb	Across the Circle	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>		TBA
15-26 Feb	Across the Circle Climbers and Divers	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Climbing, diving	TBA
26 Feb-17 Mar	Antarctic Peninsula, South Georgia, Falklands	<i>Polar Pioneer</i>	Alpine crossing, extended hikes	TBA



POSTAGE

PAID

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