



*Posted by Lori Bostick, Chaperone Dec. 29, 2007*

"I now belong to a special class of mortals, I have seen the albatross!"

Greetings from the Drake Passage! We certainly are experiencing the "Drake Lake" this morning and not the dreaded "Drake Shake"! We also learned how to prepare and "Drake proof" our cabins. In addition we are now just learning about the "Drake diet".

To reflect back on our long journey to the end of the earth, most of us met in Miami Christmas Day afternoon, and it was wonderful to see the eager and excited faces! Yes, it was a long journey south, but well worth it all, and a privilege to go where not many have gone. It has been amazing to be joined together with people from 15 countries, top educators and scientists, and most importantly our students who bring so much energy and enthusiasm. We are ambassadors of the world!

Ushuaia is a bustling city with a population of 65,000, and quite charming. The scenery of this city surrounded by glaciers was spectacular, especially from our hotel called Hotel del Glacier nestled in the mountain overlooking the Beagle Channel. Our first adventure was a 5 hour hike to and from the Lagoon Esmeralda. It was truly a test of stamina and began our bonding as a team. The hike consisted of wearing knee high rubber boots, and trudging through the mud bogs where many of us lost our boots and learned how to rotate our ankles to slide out of the mud. Once we reached the lagoon, we saw our first glacier up close! Several took the plunge into the beautiful blue lagoon. As Geoff Green told us the night before, "Stop and think where you are and what you are doing at least once a day."

As I stood next to the railing this morning watching the albatross following us, tears came to my eyes. I cannot wait to see my first penguin, my first iceberg, and see the most beautiful and fragile place on earth.



*Posted by Lori Bostick, Chaperone Dec. 30, 2007*

Part 1:

Greetings again from the Drake Passage!

This morning and most of the day has been somewhat different sailing, a little rougher but still considered not too bad. The weather has changed to fog, rain, wind, and cold! The Drake Passage is about 2 miles deep, and it is very interesting to visit the bridge. The first iceberg was sighted on radar about noon today, but we could not see it because of the fog.

Our ship, The Ushuaia, is quaint. It was a working ship, and renovated into a more comfy passenger ship, but still a bit rustic for many. For those who have seen the ship's layout online, my room is #420. The food has been very good on board! My roommates have been from Portugal and Canada.

I tend to spend most of my free time either outside or in the library. Although, both yesterday and today have been jam packed with outstanding lectures on icebergs, Ernest Shackleton, penguins, Antarctica songs/music, photography, seabirds, and next will be the zodiac boat briefing. I have been helping out with the daily ship's newsletter, and it is amazing to see the students so thrilled and enthusiastic creating The Daily Ice Cap.

We are hoping to see Elephant Island at 5 PM today. Perhaps we will do our first landing and see our first penguins! During our Shackleton lecture today the dynamic Dave Fletcher, an expert on Antarctic history, explained what the importance of this island with the Endurance Expedition. This is where Shackleton and 5 others left the other 22 men April, 1916, but finally returned to the entire crew intact after 4 months.

Today is Brendan's birthday! There is a surprise party planned for him tonight...so shhhhh!

Part 2:

It is now almost 9 PM. Yes indeed we took the zodiac boats out to Elephant Island! We saw our first icebergs and chinstrap penguins which brought a sense of extraordinary joy to all of us! But

to top this off we just experienced a pod of humpback whales flashing their tails and blowing their spouts to us to wish us all a grand welcome to Antarctica and happy birthday to Brendan!



*Posted by Lori Bostick, Chaperone Dec. 31, 2007*

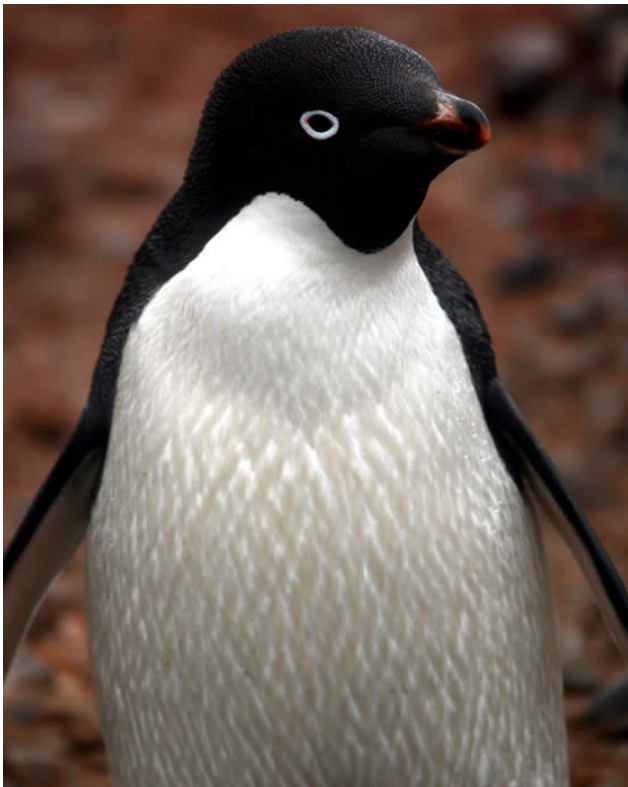
Happy New Year! Happy birthday to Jack! Happy Antarctica!

Part 1:

"We are sailing, we are sailing, and will meet you at the end of the world." This line came from one of the songs by Ian Tambyn, our Canadian musician/song writer onboard. How true that Antarctica becomes you, envelopes the soul, and you want to return! I truly believe in your lifetime, you must visit Antarctica (I want to do this again!).



Today was the moment in time that I will never forget...my first glimpse and step onto Antarctica! We were prepared for our initial zodiac landing this morning onto Brown Bluff as we sailed through the Antarctica Sound and Iceberg Alley. The spirits were high, the excitement was bouncing off the decks as we stepped onto our zodiacs and headed straight to the Antarctica coastline greeted by thousands of Gentoo and Adelie penguins. It was sleeting and the waves a bit choppy, and the ice was sloshing onto the beach. We laughed and smiled as the penguins slipped and slid into the icy cold blue water watching and waiting for us! I felt like Neil Armstrong as he stepped on the moon for the first time, it seemed like another world! We were in awe as we observed the penguins walking in long lines back and forth along the shoreline. How amazing the penguin parents are as they sat on their pebbled nests, waiting for their chicks to be hatched soon. And we admired the thousands of parents feeding their newborn chicks not caring that we humans were only 5 feet away from them! Yes, Esveidy, the first penguin I saw, I named Twinkie for you!



Part 2:

This afternoon we did a landing onto Hope Bay on the Peninsula which is a research center for Argentina. This was a very interesting community as it is one of only two locations on Antarctica that children are living on the continent! They were very proud to give us a tour and treated us so kindly with hot chocolate and what looked like Indian fry bread. But when we were ready to depart, a wind of 70 knots blew in and we had to wait for it to calm down. So we waited and waited and waited, and it got colder and colder and colder. Perhaps it got down to zero degrees F with the wind chill. Finally by 8 PM we made a run for it and quickly in three trips by our brave zodiac drivers, we arrived to our ship safe and sound with an unbelievable story to tell! This landing showed us the power of this continent.

It will probably be a late night tonight with our celebrations, and a morning landing at Deception Island. Happy New Year!



*Posted by Lori Bostick, Chaperone Jan. 1, 2008*

Happy New Year 2008!

I set sail for a shore many never see,  
This is the one that set me free!

New Year's Day morning was a spectacular morning waking up to the entrance of Deception Island! (This was so very different than what I was doing last New Year's Day!) We hurried to the bridge and we watched the captain carefully steer the ship through the narrow passage into Neptune Bellows. It is still an active volcano that erupts about every 20 years! We could see through the rain and wind the steam coming from the edges of the water. After breakfast we had to wait for the winds to die down, but finally boarded the zodiacs for our next landing. I began to think how we seemed like pros now with the zodiacs!

My zodiac was the first to land at the old whaling station. I was excited to learn and finally see the station that was used in the early 1900s. The rusted oil tanks, the dilapidated wooden boats, an abandoned airplane hanger, and several derelict houses still stand along the shore. The question that was posed to us: what shall be done with all of these old worn down relics? This is presently a debate for the Antarctic Treaty Committee. Then most took the plunge and became members of the Antarctic Swim Team, dipping from the hot pools of water just dug then into the cold water of the bay! Due to the poor weather conditions this evening, there was only one landing today.

This evening we will have the privilege of having a presentation by a Russian Cosmonaut Mikhail Tyurin, who just returned from the Russian space station after 7 months. I sat with him at breakfast yesterday morning, and found his story very interesting!

Danco Island and Neko Island are our stops tomorrow which are on the western side of the peninsula. Miss you all!!!!



*Posted by Lori Bostick, Chaperone Jan. 3, 2008*

Greetings from the bottom of the earth! We traveled today to the most southern point we are going on this trip, to the end of the Lemaire Channel on the west side of the Antarctic Peninsula. It has been a very busy 2 days for us with several landings per day, and we have noticed that as we travel south it has gotten colder. We woke up this morning to the deck full of snow, and some of the students even made a snowman!

The last two days have been sensational with many outdoor workshops! To all of my Sundance students, the greatest classrooms I have ever participated in have been in a zodiac boat going through the gallery of icebergs, the hike up and the slide down a glacier, and sitting next to the bay watching the skua bird pick at the remains of a dead penguin. Our ship certainly proved to be the primo icebreaker that she was built for, as this morning she demonstrated her worth because we sailed through the ice waters. We also landed at Port Lockroy (a British post) where we mailed our postcards. It is the most visited spot in Antarctica. We have invited the three people who run the old base to the ship for a BBQ dinner tonight!

Thank you to my family, friends, colleagues, and students for everything you have done for me supporting this adventure. Also many thanks to the parents of all of our students, as this was a life changing experience for us all. As we wrap up this incredible expedition, there will be much reflection on the mission we have awaiting us when we arrive home. Let us make it through the Drake calmly...remember the good karma!



*Posted by Lori Bostick, Chaperone Jan. 4, 2008*

Greetings from the Drake Passage once again and my final journal entry. There is a bit of melancholy onboard the ship today as we sail towards civilization and thoughts of home, and numinous reflections upon everything we experienced on the most precious and most beautiful continent in our world. The Ushuaia is now our "philosophical ship", we are "sailing into a sustainable future" and we must convey something back to our planet with new ideas and new attitudes. We have learned that we must live within our means, and only take out what we put in, so that we all can live in a way that can continue forever.

We are presently going through the processing segment of the trip. Oh yes...the processing...how do we communicate with everyone at home what we have just experienced? People will continuously ask, "How was Antarctica?" Many will be interested, but some will be really interested in finding out about our adventure and what we have learned. Besides our photos and perhaps off the cuff statements or responses, it is our duty to become a mover and shaker and do something with what we have learned! For me, it is no longer the feeling that I have reached the 7th continent, but rather what is it that I can do to make our world a better place.

“At this point in our relationship with Earth, we work for an evolution, from dominance to partnership; from fragmentation to connection from insecurity to interdependence.”

Thank you to Geoff Green and SOI for giving our youth this unforgettable and most valuable experience of a lifetime! The scientists, educators, crew, and the participants from 15 countries have given our students a most remarkable gift!

I look forward returning home to my family, friends, and to my classroom.

I will see you all soon!

