

# Class of 65 Newsletter

## Bulletin d'Information—Classe de 65

Issue/Numéro 101



May/mai 2017

*Disclaimer: This Newsletter is produced for members of the RMC Class of 1965 and is based primarily on inputs from members of the Class of 65. It is not an official publication of the Royal Military College nor does it purport to represent the views or opinions of all members of the Class. Unfortunately, the Editorial staff lacks the linguistic skills to produce a bilingual version. Items are published in the official language in which they are received.*

### Editor's Corner/Coin du rédacteur

There is lots of information to pass along in this issue so I am getting it out before I go for in my second knee replacement next week. If it goes as well as the other one, I should be almost as good as new again—if that is possible for one of our advanced age!

First of all, **Roger and Bonnie Chiasson** have submitted a very interesting and tempting invitation to accompany them on a trip to Japan next year.

**Alain Pellerin** has provided an interesting historical snippet from his temporary domicile in France.

Also included is a report on **Jim Carruthers'** annual presentation of swords recognising outstanding naval cadets at RMC.

The focal point of this issue, however, is an excellent summary of our Class' very impressive gifting record, put together by **Keith Ambachtsheer, Steve Arnold** and **Charlie Emond**. You are encouraged to read this report carefully, with two purposes in mind—to ensure that you are familiar with the program; and, to give and share some thoughts on how it might be improved or modified in the future.

Finally, **Gerry Mueller** has provided the first part of what will be a multi-part travelogue on a trip that he recently made to Antarctica via South America.



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### Invitation to Japan by 6606 Roger Chiasson

As most of you know, Bonnie and I spent three years in Tokyo from 1995 to 1998, while I was the CF Attaché in Japan. We have returned twice since our return, with friends and relatives in tow. For our last trip, in 2012, we sent out an invitation through this letter to any classmates who might be interested in joining us. Barry and Margaret Mitchell took us up on the offer, and if I can speak for them, they enjoyed the trip.

We have decided to do it one more time, in April of 2018, to coincide with the peak of the Japanese cherry blossom season, which is nothing short of spectacular. We would like to extend the invitation again to any class member and significant other. The dates are from 31 March to 14 April 2018. We use an itinerary which is based in Tokyo, with a few day trips outside to such places as Kamakura and Fuji-Hakone National Park. We also have a few rest days scattered throughout the itinerary, to recharge from the other busy days of sight-seeing, including a lot of walking and manoeuvring stairs in subway and train stations.

So if you want to know more, email us at [chiassonr@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:chiassonr@ns.sympatico.ca) - we will send you a detailed itinerary, a fairly accurate cost estimate, and a request to let us know, if you want to commit, by **2 June 2017**. I want to stress that Bonnie and I do not profit from the trip - we merely love Japan, and it means a lot more to us when we can share it with friends. Also, in addition to the things that other tourists see and do, we include some in-depth things like a visit to a sumo wrestling stable, and dinner in an enchanted forest restaurant (google Ukai Toriyama Mount Takao).

### Historic Visit by 6349 Alain Pellerin

The Sixth Fleet was anchored in Villefranche sur Mer, just outside Nice, until 1967 when asked by de Gaulle to leave.

The 50 th anniversary of their departure from VSM was recently celebrated with high level US and French naval authorities present. The celebrations were organized by the US Navy League.

I am renting an apartment in VSM for one month starting 31 March. A great little finishing village with a great naturel harbour.





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### 2017 Naval Cadet Awards by Jim Carruthers

I was honoured to be invited to the RNC Naval Mess Dinner recently. Other NAC members in attendance included Cmdre Luc Cassivi, Cmdre Mark Watson and Capt (N) Dave Benoit as senior MARS, LOGS and MARE representatives. Each year swords are presented to the top graduating Naval Cadets. Several 'pussers' sponsor the LOGS sword which was presented by Mark. I fund and present the MARE and MARS swords also presenting each of the 54 graduates with an 11 volume set of 'Salty Dips' – the 'unofficial' history of our RCN. Thanks to Dave Soule for wrapping and shipping the SD sets. Winners were:

- **LOGS** - 27000 NCdt Gee Choi , from Vancouver, BC, is a fourth year Honours Business Administration student, and a future Naval Logistics Officer. He has been an active member of the RMCC Varsity Men's Soccer time throughout his time as a cadet, and was most recently the Cadet Wing Sports and Recreation Officer.
- **MARE** - 26983 NCdt Thomas Song, from Maple Ridge, BC, is a fourth year Electrical Engineering student and aspiring Marine Systems Engineer. He is the Captain of the RMCC Tae Kwon Do Team, is a member of the 450 Club for the RMC PPT, and is currently the Cadet Squadron Administration Officer for 10 SQN. (Below right)
- **MARS** - 27111 NCdt Alek Robaczewski, from Chicoutimi, QC, is a fourth year Honours Physics student and a Maritime Surface and Sub-Surface Officer in training. He is an avid member of the RMCC Sailing Team, and is currently the Cadet Division Leader for A Division. (Below left)





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### **Class of 1965 Gifting to Canada's Military Colleges**

A 25-Year Story by Keith Ambachtsheer, Steve Arnold, and Charlie Emond

*Over the course of the last 25 years, the members of the Class of 1965 have donated a total of \$1.9M to the RMC Foundation. Of this total, \$677K went into The Class of 1965 Endowment Fund. Today, after many years of positive investment returns and \$121K in payouts, the Fund value stands at \$1.1M.*

*Through the \$121K payouts, the Class of 1965 has supported two projects – The Class of 1965 Teaching Excellence Award; and, The Class of 1965 Professorship in Leadership. A third project, The Class of 1965 Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning, is on the drawing board. With a current value of \$1.1M, the Fund has the ability to continue to pay out \$60K per year on a sustainable basis. This report's goal is to share the 25-year gifting story of the Class of 1965 Endowment Fund, and to set the stage for deliberations on where we could/should go from here.*

#### ***The Class of 1965 Teaching Excellence Award***

The purpose of *The Class of 1965 Teaching Excellence Award (TEA)* is to recognize and promote excellence in teaching at Canada's Royal Military Colleges. All academic faculty members (full-time, part-time and sessional), military and civilian, are eligible. Each year, students and faculty nominate a number of professors for the award at their respective institution. A Selection Committee, generally consisting of two student representatives, three faculty members and a Class of 1965 representative, meets to consult with nominators before choosing the recipient.

The award consists of a cash prize donated by the Class of 1965, a certificate and a plaque. The prize is awarded to the winner in recognition of his/her "*exemplary concern for students, dedication to teaching, enthusiasm in lecturing*" and "*ability to stimulate learning*".

Recipients of the *TEA* are held in high esteem by both their students and their colleagues. Customarily, the Award is presented at a public lecture given by the recipient during the fall semester.

#### ***TEA History***

The *TEA* started in 1989 with a conversation between classmates about a gift to RMCC to celebrate its 25<sup>th</sup> year reunion in 1990. A *TEA* selection process involving students, faculty members and a Class representative was devised and enough funds collected to launch this initiative with an annual prize of \$3,000. With the 30<sup>th</sup> year reunion in sight, the Class decided to place the *TEA* on a permanent footing through a \$60,000 endowment, an achievement marked by a plaque in the entrance to the RMCC Library celebrating the *TEA* winners.

With its 35<sup>th</sup> year reunion, the Class wished to set a new standard for class giving by raising the Class of 1965 Award for Teaching Excellence to \$5,000 and launching other initiatives to support academic excellence. Just short of the Class of 1965's 50<sup>th</sup> year reunion, funds were identified to offer a \$1000 prize for the *TEA* faculty member recipient at the re-opened Royal Military College - Saint Jean (CMRSJ).



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### Class of 1965 Gifting (Continued)

Since 2001 our Class has contributed \$84K towards teaching excellence, setting a new standard for class gifting to the College that all Class members can be proud of. *The Class of 1965 Teaching Excellence Award* continues to have a major impact on the quality of the learning experience at both Colleges. The Award has been described by some as *'the best Class gift ever'*.

#### ***The Class of 1965 Professorship in Leadership***

Below are the highlights of the current Terms of Reference (TOR) for *The Class of 1965 Professorship in Leadership*. It reflects the original thinking of RMC Principal Emeritus John Cowan and Rear Admiral Morse's vision of a process "to attract and retain 'star' scholars at RMC." The Class of 1965's involvement started just after the 35-year Reunion in 2000 in our search for the 'next big thing' after the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the successful *Class of 1965 Teaching Excellence Award*. Principal Cowan "persuaded us that our 'next big thing' should be a Class of 1965 Professorship."

#### **Terms of Reference - *Class of 1965 Professorship in Leadership***

##### Objective

*The Class of 1965 Professorship in Leadership was first established in July 2011 through the generosity of the Royal Military College (RMC) Class of 1965. Its objective is to promote research and scholarly activity in the broad area of leadership at RMC. Leadership is broadly defined as the ability of a person to "lead" or guide other individuals, teams, or entire organizations. Its stated intent is to attract and retain top scholars at RMC.*

##### Identifying the position

*Prior to selecting a new Class of 1965 Professor in Leadership (hereafter referred to as the Professor/Professorship), the RMC Deans' Council will identify an academic position that is vacant, funded and slated to be filled within the following 12 months. The position will be associated with the Professorship for up to 10 years. The position could be located within any Faculty or Division at the Royal Military College of Canada. The decision on which position to select will be based on the teaching and research needs of RMC at that point in time. To the extent possible, advertisements for the position will reference the Professorship.*

##### Timelines

*The duration of the Professorship is 5 years renewable for an additional 5 years.*



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### Class of 1965 Gifting (Continued)

#### What is required of the Professor

*The Class of 1965 has made available \$25K/yr of funding to support the Professor. Of these funds, \$13K/yr will be awarded to the Professor by the Foundation and \$12K/yr will be used to support course relief for the Professor.*

*It is expected that the Professor will use the title "Class of 1965 Professor in Leadership" in the signature block of all RMC emails as well as on their RMC website. Furthermore, the Professor will acknowledge the contribution of the Class of 1965 in all publications and presentations.*

*The Professor in Leadership will present a public lecture once per calendar year. Public lecture is broadly defined here to include presentations at a department or faculty seminar, presentations to the RMC Club, or at some other venue agreeable to both the Professor and the Class of 1965.*

#### **The First Recipient**

The first recipient of the Professorship was Dr. Nikolas Gardner. He also served as Chair of the War Studies Graduate Program at RMC. Dr. Gardner's research interests include the First World War, British imperial and military history, and military privatization. He is the author of *The Siege of Kut-al-Amara: At War in Mesopotamia, 1915-16* (2014), and *Trial by Fire: Command in the British Expeditionary Force in 1914* (2003). He has also published book chapters and articles in a variety of journals including *War in History*, *The Journal of Military History*, *the Journal of Contemporary History*, *The Historian*, and *the Journal of the Middle East and Africa*.

After five years in the position, Dr. Gardner has indicated that he will be taking up a new position at the UAE National Defence College in Abu Dhabi. In response to an inquiry by Steve Arnold how he felt about being the first *Class of 65 Professor in Leadership*, this is what he wrote (in part):

*Taking up this new position in Abu Dhabi has been a difficult decision for me, as I have very much enjoyed teaching at RMC and getting to know some fantastic cadets over the last five years. I also very much appreciate the ongoing efforts of the Class of 65 to establish the Professorship, and just as importantly, to follow up to ensure that it was being managed in accordance with your original intent. To be honest, when I arrived, I was surprised that the terms of the Professorship were not clear to the College administrators. This has been an ongoing challenge, and your efforts have made a big difference in establishing the Professorship as a viable position in spite of College and government regulations working against it. Funding associated with the Professorship made a significant contribution to finishing my book on the First World War in Mesopotamia, as well as the History Department's conference on 1917, the proceedings of which have just been published by UBC Press. I want to thank you and the Class for your continued support. I regret that my departure will mean additional work for the College and your Class, but I believe that the Professorship is a valuable contribution to the College, whoever holds it.*



### Class of 1965 Gifting (Continued)

With Dr. Gardner's departure, a new scholar will need to be hired and assume the Professorship. Fortunately, it will be done with much clearer terms of reference than was the case five years ago. RMC's academic leadership is currently discussing next steps in the search and hiring process. Class investment in the Professorship to date has amounted to \$37K.

#### ***Class of 1965 Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning***

The third major initiative in support of educational excellence at Canada's military colleges is the *Class of 1965 Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CITL)*. The end state vision for the *CITL* is to be an innovation catalyst in the development of new courses, creative teaching and learning skills, improved student mentoring and counselling, student academic success services and the development of advanced teaching/learning technology.

The *CITL* concept received "overwhelming support" at a joint meeting of the RMC of Canada and CMRSJ faculty. A Committee of eighteen members was struck with faculty from all academic areas, the student body, the three Colleges (RMC, CMRSJ and Canadian Forces College Toronto) and other stakeholders such as the Canadian Defence Academy. The Committee has since had several meetings. Furthermore, the *CITL* committee initiated and completed a survey of cadets in order to identify the educational/learning needs of these students.

According to Vice-Principal Academic Phil Bates, there has been significant activity in improving student success in the classroom based in large part on the survey. A Math Centre has been set up to help students in all faculties. These evening tutorials support cadets who are struggling in math. This complements the Writing Centre that has existed for several years. RMC is also currently investigating a two-day break added to the Thanksgiving weekend. This 5 day extra-long weekend would allow cadets to decompress after a high-tempo period, and just before mid-terms.

Also, in concert with the recent Special Staff Assistance Visit (SSAV) report, resources have been requested to develop the following activities related to cadet success at RMC:

- Improving information access by hiring of five employees to fill vacant positions at the RMC library. These positions are required to maintain student access to library facilities and information.
- Improving student study areas by developing a student learning commons as part of the Massey Library. Learning commons or group study and work areas are common at most universities but are currently lacking at RMC.
- Improving math teaching by hiring two university teachers (UTs) to replace vacancies currently filled by sessional hires. Resources have also been requested to allow the Math Centre to become sustainable. The goal is to improve the delivery of this key component of the core curriculum.



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### Class of 1965 Gifting (Continued)

- Improving writing skills by hiring one UT to be the director of the RMC Writing Centre. This would provide leadership and additional mentoring capacity to the Writing Centre.
- Improving second language by hiring a term teacher and a term language instructor in order to offer a minor in French as a second language pilot program. This would encourage students to raise their levels of language proficiency in reading, writing and oral expression beyond the minimum levels required by the College. Two indeterminate language instructors have been requested to provide additional instruction to cadets and backup for other instructors in case of illness.
- Student support Coordination. Two positions are requested to support the *Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning*. These people would provide general academic guidance to students by directing them to the most appropriate resource: Writing Centre, Math Centre, Library, or other academic advisor. They would also coordinate teaching develop seminars for those in both the Academic and Training Wings.

While these resource requests are not yet being funded under the *CITL* banner, they are targeted at improving student success and are consistent with the *CITL* vision. The essence of the Class of 1965 *CITL* gift is the idea that things can be done to make better teachers and better students. However, it doesn't mean that the Class of 1965 can or should fund all of these activities.

According to Dr. Bates, one of the biggest hurdles is how these support activities should be organized within the *CITL*. There are related discussions underway on the future form of the Graduate Studies and Continuing Studies Divisions at RMC that will likely shape *CITL*'s structure.

These important initiatives are all forerunners to the creation of an integrated *CITL* design and implementation plan. While its creation is the logical next step, it is likely to be a multi-year project.

#### **Looking Ahead**

We noted that the current sustainable payout rate of the Class Endowment Fund is \$60K/yr. In contrast, the current annual payment obligations are \$6K for the two *TEA* awards and \$25K for the *Professorship* (once the position is filled again). Unless we decide to increase these amounts, that would leave \$29K/yr for future *CITL* funding already in place. How much could the College 'ask' for *CITL* funding actually be? Because we won't know until the *CITL* design and implementation plan (including a budget) is completed, Dr. Bates suggests that as an interim measure, the \$29K/yr could be used to hire two temporary Teaching Assistants (TAs), one for the RMC Writing Centre and one for the RMC Math Centre. This Student Support Co-ordination could be the first step towards an eventual *Class of 1965 Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning*.

In conclusion, it is fair to say that the ball right now is in the court of RMC's academic leadership. A new *Class of 1965 Professor in Leadership* must be recruited, and the beginning of a design and implementation plan for the *CITL* must be initiated. Meanwhile, we welcome any feedback (comments, suggestions, questions) you may have based on this report.





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### Christmas & New Years 2016 in South America and Antarctica

#### Part 1-Overview

A trip covering this much territory cannot be reported in a single edition of our Newsletter; this will be a summary and highlights. Subsequent parts will focus on the more interesting places and experiences. **Part 2** especially will be on Antarctica, the continent that is scenically very beautiful, but is also fascinating geographically, geologically, ecologically, and a geopolitical construct unlike any other on our planet.

And, a question, perhaps a challenge! In some correspondence with **6345 Georges Wilson** prior to our travel, he theorized that I would be the Class of '65 member that has travelled furthest south. Having reached 65°02' S, I (and Georges) wonder if anyone has beat that. (And Georges suggests I might have been the only one from the class to have set foot in Brazil – not on this trip – so it would be interesting to hear on that too.)

**Background:** This was the trip that wasn't going to happen! It had been on our bucket list for some years, but is only available during our Winter. A sudden departure of the Rector of the church at which I serve as an (unpaid) Assistant Priest in early November made it unlikely that I would be able to get away over Christmas and New Years. But then my Bishop appointed a two-year Priest-in-Charge, and suggested (bishops suggest, not order, but it's the same thing) that I “disappear” for a couple of months, to give the new person a clear deck to establish themselves “in charge”, rather than have parishioners do end runs through me. And thus, very quickly, within hours we had booked this cruise: 21 days, Valparaiso, Chile, to Buenos Aires, Argentina, down the west coast, into Antarctica for near a week, and up the east coast. The working out: getting there and back, travel documents, transfers, hotel bookings, shore excursions, and, most important, wine packages, took considerably more time (and as it turned out, money) than the cruise booking, but that's detail. The large picture was settled very quickly.



Cruise departure was Dec 20, but with the exigencies of Winter travel, we decided on a Dec 17 departure. Leaving Waterloo early in a large-area ice and sleet storm, delays caused by that weather in boarding, then de-icing, understaffed immigration in Santiago, a “misplaced” bag, and then transfer to our Valparaiso hotel, we were “on the road” for just about 24 hours. I.e., normal travel. We had gone from winter to summer in a day, and settled, high on the hillside that Valparaiso is built on, in the rooftop bar and restaurant of our hotel, drink in hand, and contemplated the sunny blue waters of Valparaiso harbour, and what looked like much of the Chilean Navy, in mothballs!

**Valparaiso and Chilean Wine Country.** We didn't get to see much of Valparaiso, except what we drove through, several times, but it goes on the list of “Places We'd Like to Spend More Time In”. We saw more of the Casablanca Valley (which we had driven through transferring from Santiago) and San Antonio Valley, wine growing regions inland from Valparaiso. There we toured two organic/bio-dynamic wineries (Emiliano and Matetic), both forgoing use of chemicals for fertilization or pest control, however not other technology, such as drip irrigation and powered fans for frost prevention. Given my understanding of Canadian practice, both these wineries would more likely be classified as “transitioning to organic”, as they were still using pressure-treated wood for their vine supports, while in Canada, to get the organic designation, requires stainless



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### Christmas & New Years 2016 in South America and Antarctica (continued)

steel or other inert materials for five years or more. That said, there was nothing to complain about any of the wines we tasted, nor about the very fine (and not cheap!) lunch we had at our second winery. [Back in Ontario I checked, and none of the wines we tasted are available, and only one from each winery is listed – one of the dubious benefits of living under the world’s largest alcohol monopoly; they don’t do small (less than a 20,000 cases) quantities except for the rare and vintage wines.]

Next day we transferred to our ship, Holland America Lines’ Zaandam, one of their medium (around 1,200 passengers) ships, with reinforced (but not ice breaking) hull for Antarctic cruising. Not without drama; we had pre-booked the transfer with our hotel, and for reasons never clear, one too small for our luggage taxi arrived, resulting in much finger pointing, arm waving and running around in small circles (mostly in our mutual language, Spanglish), until sense prevailed, a second equally small taxi arrived, we loaded up, and transferred. At doubled cost, the princely sum of Cdn\$16 more! A bargain; we got there in good time, and settled into our cabin, ocean view, right behind our assigned life boat, all of 20 steps from deck!

**Three Ports in Chilean Patagonia.** After a day at sea sailing south, we had three days of visiting towns in Patagonia within Chile (Patagonia also includes parts of Argentina). All three were tender ports; that is, the ship anchors off shore, and visitors travel to shore in a life boat, a somewhat chaotic process with closely scheduled shore excursion passengers mixing it up with those eager to get off “on their own”. Returns are simpler, as you simply get on the next tender, and if you are on a ship-controlled shore excursion and delayed, a tender will hold for you. If you are own your own and miss the last tender, you are “on your own” in how you catch up with the ship!

Our first port-of-call was **Puerto Mott**, a town on a large bay off the Pacific Ocean, and the seaport for the Chilean Lake District. As our English-speaking (with an Austrian accent!) guide informed us, as a city it’s most distinguishing characteristic is the 50,000 people who DON’T live there, but commute into it every day for work. It is however the easiest way for cruise ship tourists to access the Lake District, a landscape not unlike the English Lake District with small lakes and sleepy shore line towns, except the surrounding hills are higher, with the occasional volcano. We visited the lakeside town of **Puerto Varas**, the City of Roses, with surprising architecture of a recognizably German character. A park in the centre of town had displays as part of a “Tannenbaum Fest” – Christmas Tree Festival. Shops were selling Wurst, and cafes offered Kuchen (more like buttercream torte than cake). In the 1840’s and ‘50’s Chile encouraged German immigration into the district, and this area still has a German character in its architecture, the names of shops, and some very large businesses, supermarket chains, food distributors, lumber companies with German names that have become national. This German character is even more pronounced in the town of **Frutillar** where there is a museum of German settlement, and buildings that would not look out of place in the Black Forest.





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### Christmas & New Years 2016 in South America and Antarctica (continued)

After a short overnight sail, still inside the bay protected from the Pacific by large islands, our next port was **Castro**, the largest town in the Chiloe archipelago. This is a grouping of a few large and many small islands, connected by a road and ferry system, with the major ferries large enough to carry passenger buses. For us, the main attraction were the many wooden churches, the results of Jesuit mission work in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Jesuits brought with them blueprints of typical European churches, but found no local sources of stone to build them, and so turned to local artisans.

Mostly ship builders, these realized the plans in wood, using traditional ship-building methods, including wooden pegs in place of nails. Many of these churches are now UNESCO World Heritage sites, five of which we visited. Alas, only two were open to visitors. One in Castro was termite infested and being fumigated, and two more were simply closed because the person with the keys didn't show up. Also of architectural note in Castro along the seashore were rows and rows of *palafitos*, wooden houses on stilts, very colourfully painted. Intended as the homes of fishers, whose boats would float outside at high tide, and rest on the mud at low, they are now more commonly upscale cafes, craft shops, and boutiques.



Another overnight sail in protected waters brought us to **Puerto Chacabuco**, a small fishing town, whose main industry today, as for many others in this region, is mussel and salmon farming. The town itself is unremarkable, but is on the *Carretera Austral*, the 1,240 km road from Puerto Montt to Villa O'Higgins built during the Pinochet years by the Chilean Army to facilitate troop movements to and within Patagonia. We used that road to drive through the very beautiful Simpson River valley, to the town of **Coyhaique**. The route is one through misty mountains, with very low-hanging clouds, across the Andes whose highest point here is less than 6,200 ft., past mountainsides with high waterfalls, through a pass a mere 1,475 ft. at its highest point.



Coyhaique is nestled in a beautiful valley bowl, very near the Argentinian border. Geographically, west of the Andes is temperate rainforest, east is semi-desert, this affects culture, as did being cut off from Chile by the mountains until the road was built. The people relate more to Argentina and *gaucho* culture; cattle rather than crop and fishing oriented. And seriously meat-eating, as we discovered at our lunch stop. As our guide explained, "snack" in this part of Patagonia means a meal between meals! And with beautiful Andean wool products, and June bought a poncho for a price so low we haggled it up, if they would give us a bag for it!

This day was Christmas Eve, and after an "international" dinner, each dish sourced from a different country, we loitered in various bars until the Christmas Concert. Partly professional, led by the ship's singers and dancers, with three choirs, one international, drawn from the entire ship's company, and one Malaysian and one Indonesian; with no attempts at the political correctness of avoiding religious language. Featuring a good



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selection of both popular and religious Christmas carols, the concert ended with a very moving speech by the Captain, and everyone singing Silent Night in their own language. About as moving a Christmas Eve celebration as I've attended. That was the highlight; the Midnight Mass which followed was about as uninspiring as I've ever had the misfortune to attend!

**Two Days of Cruising Fjords and “Canals”.** The latter being “channel” in English. Christmas Day and Boxing Day were spent in the Chilean fjords, a series of channels behind islands off the Pacific coast, with occasional exposure to the ocean, which was fortunately quite calm.

From Puerto Chacabuco the first routing by night is through the Darwin Channel to the Pacific, a reminder that for the next several days our ship will be travelling backwards along the route taken by HMS Beagle in 1833 with Charles Darwin on board, recording what he observed in his diary. By daybreak of Christmas Day the ship was in the Messier Chanel, a reasonably wide passage with high mountains

on each side, with occasional glimpses of the Patagonian Icefield on the top, and two glaciers descending



The weather was variable, with bright sunlight and white fluffy clouds alternating with gloomy overcast and fog. Two of the highlights of this part of the journey are passing the wreck of MV *Captain Leonidas*, with an interesting story of a theft of cargo and a failed attempt to conceal that by sinking the ship, and later the wreck of the passenger ship *Santa Leonora*, with its story of a nervous helmsman not knowing the difference between “alright” and “all right” from the pilot.

Overnight the ship again went a short distance into the Pacific, before again going behind islands, back into the Sarmiento Channel for Boxing Day. Much of the scenery on this day was obscured by fog and mist, accompanied by high wind and rain, thus not a good day to be on deck, or for photography. In the evening, we entered the Straits of Magellan, the channel separating Patagonia on the South American mainland from Tierra del Fuego. Overnight we sailed to ...

**Punta Arenas.** In English, Sandy Point, it looks exactly like that, flat, and brown. Had alarm set at 5:30, for a shore excursion scheduled to meet at 7:15. However, arrival was not without drama; we discovered that the ship was standing off-shore; the port was closed because; a) high winds would make docking, even with side thrusters, a problem, and b) the pilot boat could not get out of port. Almost immediately it was announced that a speed boat excursion to *Isla Magdalena* was cancelled because of winds and high seas. This was not good news, as that was where we were headed, although not by speed boat. After about an hour the winds died down enough that the pilot could come on board, and the ship could dock. A bit more wait, and our excursion to the penguin colony on Magdalena Island, involving a 2-hour ferry ride each way, was on. After a short (500 m? Cruisers tend to be elderly, but ...) bus ride, we boarded a large ferry, and two hours later, met our 1<sup>st</sup> penguins, the Magellanic penguin colony on Magdalena Island, as many as 60,00 breeding



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pairs, plus as many as two chicks per pair; even though half the adults were at sea fishing, that's a lot of penguins!

Penguins are not afraid of humans; they evolved not knowing us. There is a long, perhaps 2 km walkway around the island, with a thin wire barrier supported on slender poles perhaps 75 cm off the ground, all around the island. That's to keep humans out of penguin territory, but does not keep penguins from waddling up to you, and quizzically looking you in the eye, as if they are thinking, "What are you?" Penguins also smell of fish, their main diet (including krill), and at certain parts of the route it pays to move fast to get back upwind. Also nesting on this island are skuas and Dominican gulls (both much larger than herring gulls that infest our lakes), who prey on penguin eggs, and then co-exist with penguins once both have chicks. However, the gull and skua population is increasing, because climate change, which down here makes it warmer on average, favours them, and thus negatively impacts penguins. This was our 1<sup>st</sup> hint on this journey that what we were seeing was changing, and was different from what Charles Darwin might have seen. That was reinforced the next day!



**Beagle Channel; aka Glacier Alley!** Another early day; on deck by 7:00 without showering or shaving, ready for sightseeing and taking photos. Beagle Channel has four major glaciers on its northern shore, plus some smaller ones. At the time Darwin sailed here on HMS Beagle in 1833, he described all glaciers as tidewater, descending to sea level. Today, there is one tidewater glacier remaining, all the rest are hanging glaciers, some of them very high up in the mountains. Another sign of climate changing/warming over the last 2 ½ centuries (and very like what Capt. George Vancouver described at what is now Glacier Bay in Alaska; it was not a bay, but a glacier at the time he sailed there; now the glacier has retreated several dozen miles, and is almost in Canada). By the time the glacier show ended, there was just enough time to shower, shave, have lunch, and get ready for our next port ...

**Ushuaia; the End of the World.** Or so this city in Argentina advertises itself. At one time it was the southern-most town in the world. These days, Puerto Williams, Chile, a bit south-westward (and 13.8 km closer to the South Pole), formerly a small naval base, has grown into a town with a civilian population larger than Ushuaia's, but so far the latter has not given up. As we drove through on our guided tour, we were constantly reminded that we were passing the southernmost town (including McDonalds, casino, and golf course) in the world.



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### Christmas & New Years 2016 in South America and Antarctica (concluded)



Our excursion took us to *Estación de Tren*, outside *Parque Nacional Tierra del Fuego*, for a one hour ride on the *Tren del Fin de Mundo* (the Train to the End of the World), a narrow gauge (60 cm) railway, using modern cars, but antique small steam engines (for environmental considerations having been converted from coal to cleaner [but not much] diesel to raise steam). The tracks are the remains of Ushuaia's time as a penal colony; it was built, and used, by prisoners to chop wood for the town. The destination is, again, the End of the World, this time a post office that is the southernmost on the planet, inside the National Park. (Of Canadian "interest" is the fact that this part of the world is being ravaged by Canadian beavers, which some less than aware fool imported in the 1940's, thinking to grow a pelt industry, which now have gone out of control. And I thought that Canada Geese were our only noxious gift to the world!) Driving back was from Mile 0 (northbound) of the Pan-American Highway (though it appears there are several locations that compete for that honour).

Ushuaia is also the departure port for many supply vessels for Antarctic research stations, several of which were in port, and also the home port of a number of ice-breaking tourist ships capable of operating further south than we would go. That sail southward would begin in earnest in the morning. **(to be continued)**

### Concluding Notes

Thanks as always to the contributors to this periodical, with a special vote of thanks to Messrs Ambachtsheer, Arnold and Emond for putting together the excellent gifting article which, I am sure will have been an eye-opener to many of you and, which I hope will stimulate some thought and comment.

Please note Roger Chiasson's deadline for response to his very kind and exciting invitation.

BZ to Jim Carruthers for his continued, significant material support to the College and, in particular to its naval component.

Thanks also to Alain Pellerin for his little historical squib—a perfect type of input for this newsletter.

Finally, thanks to Gerry Mueller for the first part of another of his very interesting and amusing travelogues—once again to a place that I for one, hope never to get closer to than via Gerry's descriptions!