



CIRCUMNAVIGATORS CLUB

FOUNDED IN 1902

YEAR 2022

NUMBER ONE

# THE LOG

**INSIDE:**  
Wining and Dining in Italy





**CIRCUMNAVIGATORS CLUB, INC.**

**FOUNDED 1902**

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# The LOG

## THIS TIME AROUND

BY DAVID A. MINK - International President & Editorial Director

Many thanks to the members and leaders who have kept the Circumnavigators Club rolling during these challenging years of the pandemic. Good news is that Chapters are moving ahead with "live" events, as well as Zoom meetings. Circumnavigators are also getting back to international travel as you will see in the following pages.







*Early Club members in 1902*

In this issue, there are several stories of ambitious member trips. Circumnavigator Larry Glick (At Large, Texas) takes us on a photo tour to South America; Circumnavigators Sue Murphy and Suzanne Frye (New York Metro) wine and dine throughout Italy; Circumnavigators Norm and Susan Dailey (Washington DC) explored Saudi Arabia. Read about more exciting trips in this issue.

The Club is now in its 120th year with a bright future ahead and a long history of making the world a better place through friendship and understanding.



Luck to you,  
*David*  
David A. Mink

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## *Thanks to*

**Sue Murphy**  
for the stunning  
cover photo in  
Pienza (province of  
Sienna), Italy.



# CIRCUMNAVIGATORS REACH 7<sup>th</sup> CONTINENT

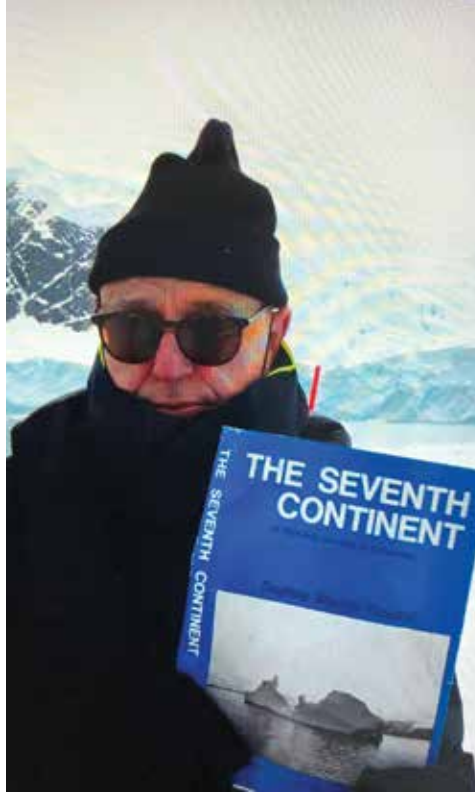
BY DAVID A. MINK  
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

**Henry and Cris Fuhrer (Pacific Southwest Chapter)** had a dream to travel to Antarctica as their seventh continent to visit. But the pandemic got in the way and they waited two years to make the trip. They did it last month! They reported that it was worth the wait. Henry reports:

"We left Tierra del Fuego on the brand new Viking Octanis Expedition ship, cruising the famous Drake passage for two days. We landed on "Terra Nova" on Neko Harbor—mission accomplished! Neko offers stunning views and a rookery of Gentoo penguins. The weather was accommodating, just one degree above freezing. We made several stops in Antarctica, including "Scenic Sailing by Special Operation boat" that revealed stunning scenery."

Congratulations to the Fuhrers for their accomplishment.

Circumnavigators, let us know if you visit all the continents. You will receive a certificate and join the list on the web site.







◀ **Circumnavigators Ann Swinford and husband Mo El-Fouly (Michigan Chapter)** traveled to the amazing Galapagos Islands. Here is Mo with one of the famous giant tortoises. Ann also spent a week on safari in Kenya where she got up and close to the Masai.

▼ **Circumnavigator Suzanne Frye (New York Metro)** visited Dubai for the World Expo.



▲ **Circumnavigator Katie Koontz (New York Metro)** made a swing through western Europe with stops in France and the Netherlands.



▲ **Circumnavigator Jason Chang (Washington DC Chapter)** took the club flag to Berlin.



▲ **Circumnavigator Michael Pully (Pacific Southwest Chapter)** traveled to Germany where he attended a vintage Porsche event and got in some sightseeing.



◀ **Circumnavigator Marilu Ramirez (New York Metro)** visited Mexico aboard the Grand Princess. She played with a lively dolphin in Costa Maya.



## A WORLD OF

# CATS



*Hanging cat paper mache.*

BY KATIE KOONTZ  
NEW YORK METRO

Based in Elmhurst, Illinois, Circumnavigators Barb and Jim Franch have traveled the globe in search of cats. From prints and photos to carvings and jewelry, to real life pets, they have amassed nearly 300 items for their cat collection.

But the Franches were not always cat people.

They did not grow up with cats. It was not until the late 1970s when a friend came to stay with the couple that they were talked into getting their first two cats. Eventually the friend moved on, but the cats stayed.

"By then we had fallen in love with them," Barb says. "And that's how we got cats."

The Franches have been cat owners ever since, rescuing their feline friends from shelters, as well as in their own backyard.

Cat figures from Netherlands, Turkey, Sicily, Guatemala and Jerusalem  
Cat figures from Netherlands, Turkey, Sicily, Guatemala and Jerusalem





## Collector's Corner



▲ Curio cabinet with cats of crystal and porcelain

In addition to their love for cats, Barb and Jim share a passion for travel. They have been to all 50 states and over 100 countries.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, they began gathering pieces featuring cats on their travels: a small etching from Canada, a matchstick carving from Mexico, a porcelain figurine from Italy, a double-sided embroidered cat from China.

By the 1990s, after 30 years of travel, and accumulating hundreds of cat pieces, it was obvious, their hobby had turned into a collection.

Now they have accumulated hundreds of items, most of which are displayed in two glass cabinets in their home. But if you look closely, you'll find pieces of their collection everywhere — from the cement cat in the front lawn, to one of Jim's favorite pieces, the Garfield-like papier mache cat hanging from the ceiling of their powder room.

Almost the entire collection features domestic house cats.

"We have made an exception to our definition in a few places when something feline-themed is not a house cat, but it is so indicative of the visited country that we bent our rules," Barb says.

These few feline-themed exceptions include a miniature tiger painting from India, and a lion from Israel made from 2000-year-old Roman glass. One of the most recent additions to their collection was from a January 2020 cruise when they bought a Guatemalan jade jaguar.

Barb's advice for other collectors? Don't hesitate if you find a good item because you can't count on coming back.

"When you see it, you buy it."

▼ Some of the framed art pieces.



# SAUDI ARABIA

## LAND OF CONTRASTS

BY NORM DAILEY  
(WASHINGTON DC CHAPTER)



Getting the daily kayak fix



Why Saudi Arabia? We heard that question many times, before, during and after our recent two-week tour. The reasons for selecting Saudi Arabia were mainly superficial—it added another country to my collection (now 213 on the Travelers Century Club list); it was open to Americans, even with the Covid epidemic; and after traveling across the causeway from Bahrain to Saudi Arabia many years ago, I was determined to go. If someone says I can't, I tend to find a way. My wife Susan, agreed to accompany me in last October. She had a fair amount of trepidation over how women are treated in this conservative Muslim country and concerns over politics. Our local paper, the Washington Post has printed a number of negative stories related to the killing of columnist Jamal Khashoggi, jailing of dissidents and the proxy war in Yemen.

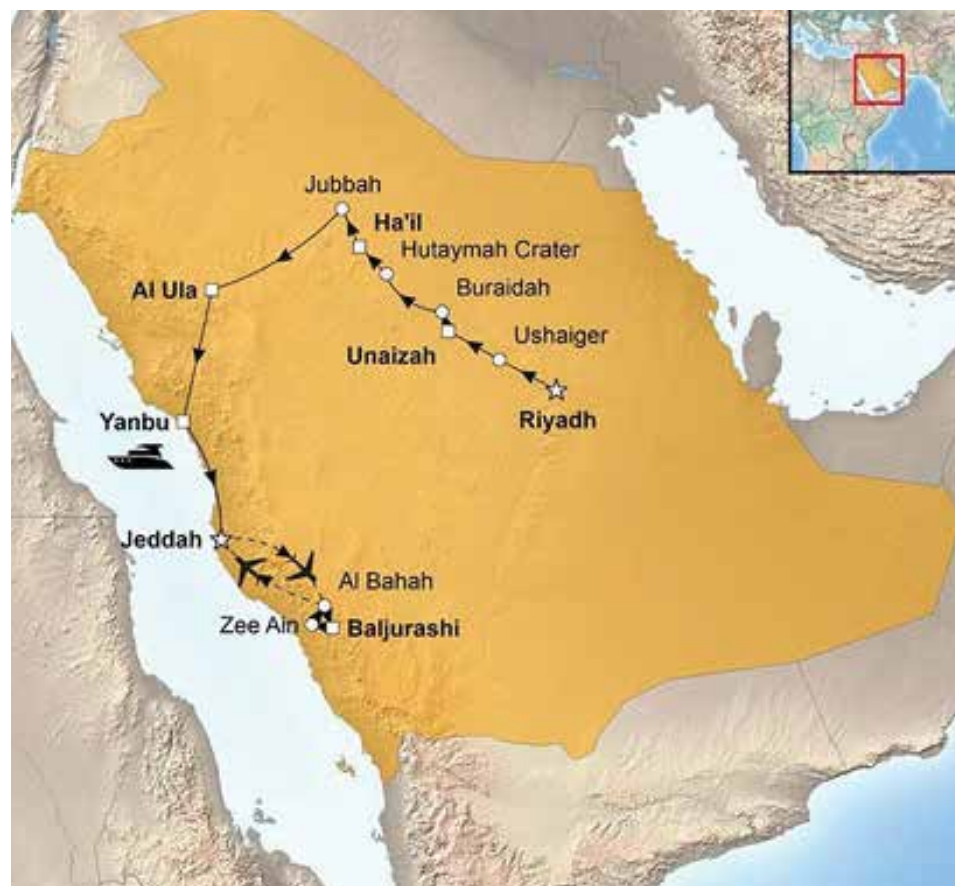
After returning from our tour, the reasons to go are much clearer. It has a fascinating culture and history. In Riyadh, there seems to be a race to modernize, but throughout the country you can see history preserved going back thousands of years. Plus, across the country, one can experience amazing natural landscapes and people who were extremely welcoming.

Our second day in Riyadh was one of the most critical in understanding the Saudi culture. Visits to al Masmak Fortress, the Qasr al Hoqm (Justice Palace) Park and National Museum of Saudi Arabia, brought into focus the brutal nature of the rulers that was required to achieve and stay in power.

It was at the Masmak Fortress where the future King Abdulaziz returned from exile



*Rock tombs of Hegra*



and conquered the Fort with only 40 men. He then proceeded to unify over the next 30 years various tribes, sheikdoms, etc., into the current Saudi Arabia. Unlike, say, England, where succession is granted by birth order, succession in Saudi Arabia is messy, with Kings having many wives and many, many sons, with most vying to be the King's favorite. Alongside this competition were the King's half-brothers who were also vying to become the Crown Prince and heir apparent. Not condoning, but now understanding, that accepting dissent within the family and even the Kingdom reflects weakness, that might impact power. I can also see that modernizing to a limited degree, perhaps limits dissent as an alternative to violence.

Part of the modernization is increasing tourism. As American tourists, we learned that our tour was closely monitored by Security police, sometimes following us and sometimes just checking in nightly with our guide. We were told that this was to ensure our safety, as any negative experiences could adversely affect the push for more tourists in the future.

The Qasr Al Hokm Park, is the former location of public executions and floggings. Next to the park is the home of the CPVPV (Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention

of Vice or simply the religious police) which today has very limited powers primarily due to modernization efforts.

The National Museum, established in 1999, provided many insights into Arab culture. A yellow line guides you through the museum, tracing the history of the Arab Peninsula from the Big Bang up to modern Saudi Arabia, incorporating religion and ruler succession.

I could gush for many paragraphs about the natural wonders we saw, but instead for brevity, I will list them, and hope readers recognize them in the photos. The order is not by their magnificence, but instead follows our journey: Edge of the World, Hutaymah Crater, massive red sand dunes, Madakhil Rock Arch, Elephant Rock, and the Red Sea (snorkeling).

Man-made wonders also exist including: the new city within a city, King Abdullah Financial District (in which we receive a short tour by development staff); 10,000-year-old rock art near Jubbah and al Ula. We enjoyed seeing the tombs of ancient Hegra (similar to Petra) and the Maraya Concert and Conference Center, which in my opinion is one of the most beautiful buildings in the world. The building is fully mirrored outside which makes it almost disappear as it reflects the rock and dunes surrounding it. More



## SAUDI ARABIA — LAND OF CONTRASTS

*Elephant Rock*



man-made wonders include the AlUla Old Town, modern Jeddah Fountain, Al Malad village and Zee Ain Heritage village. Al Malad village was a bit unnerving for me as it has twin towers. The guide then mentioned that five of the hijackers from 9/11 came from the surrounding village and another eight came from within the same general area. As a former New Yorker at the World Trade Center on 9/11, this was haunting and never mentioned in any history of 9/11.

An awesome experience was visiting the Saturday Buraidah Camel Market/Auction. We were told up to 2,000 camels were being sold that day. The sounds and experience were memorable.

I mentioned earlier about some off-itinerary activities that were really special. The first was a visit to our guide's sister's home. A modern home in Ha'il. Outside it looked like a townhome. As you enter the front door, there is a large room to the right that is only for men. The room had carpet on the floor, cushions at floor level around the walls, a hot pot for making tea or coffee and of course a TV. I was only allowed to visit this part of the house. I was told that if male guests stay overnight, they stay in this room on the floor. Susan was guided to the rest of the house, including kitchen, dining room and family room. There she socialized with our guide's sister and met the children.

Our second surprise was simply driving down

the road and seeing a small tent with boxes stacked up. As we pulled off the road one early morning to investigate further, we met some migrant beekeepers from Yemen. They were in the process of making bread in a

homemade oven. They were very willing to share fresh honey and warm bread for breakfast.

The third surprise was driving past our scheduled lunch spot on the side of Shada al Asfal Mountain and then climbing even higher. The road tested the limits of our four-wheel drive vehicle. Finally, we came to an abandoned house where we meet some local men who shared a picnic lunch with us, including more fresh honey. A great afternoon.

As noted earlier, in planning for the trip, we expressed a strong desire to experience the foods of Saudi Arabia. This was communicated to our guide, who did not consider himself to be a food expert. He felt he was more specialized in history and landscapes. In fact, he was the perfect Saudi "foodie" as he simply took us to places he enjoyed. These weren't touristy places, nor did we eat at any high-end restaurants.

Many places were like an American fast-food restaurant. You walk up to the counter and order, with your food brought out to you. The difference was many times we ate on the

*Buraidah camel market*





## SAUDI ARABIA — LAND OF CONTRASTS

floor on rugs with a disposable plastic sheet spread out over the carpet, and no utensils. Also, one section of the restaurant was for bachelors or singles (men) and a separate section, many times upstairs, was for families (women).

One of our favorite dishes was Kabsa Hashi (baby camel with rice). There is even a fast-food restaurant chain called Hashi Basha, dedicated to this specialty. Another favorite, which we had almost every afternoon, was Karak, a strong tea with spices purchased from a drive through coffee kiosk. Someday I hope Starbucks will add this to their menu. We ate way too many dates, with one memorable tasting where the dates were served with goat fat (melted butter.) Our taste buds loved the combination, maybe not our arteries. We also ate at outdoor markets, where Saudi Woman in full Burkas cooked at home before selling dishes served out of crock pot. It was wonderful. Finally, I can't say enough about the various types of bread served with most meals. Usually served hot, and many times standing is as our plates.

Maybe the question is not, "Why should you go?", but maybe, "When should you go?"



*Susan treated to tea, dates and goat fat*



*Men's room in a typical home*



# ***MEDITERRANEAN WINING AND DINING***

BY SUE MURPHY  
(NEW YORK METRO)





Our goal was the truffle festival in Alba, Italy. The festival is held for several weekends every year from mid-October to early December. Alba is famous for its white truffles and, of course, we wanted to experience a real truffle hunt. However, weren't going to settle for one great event on our first trip abroad in over a year.



*Suzanne Frye and Sue Murphy*

We began in Malta, a new country for me, but Suzanne had been there years ago. Malta is comprised of three islands but is still a very small country. Amazingly, it has five Michelin star restaurants. We wanted to try them all, but were only able to go to De Mondion and Ion. We ate outside at both and enjoyed lovely views and great food. De Mondion had the more traditional menu and Ion was a modern innovative restaurant. No surprise that seafood was the leading menu item in almost all the restaurants, but we didn't know that Malta has several wineries that make rather nice wines. Our favorite winery was Marsovin.

We will need another trip to get to those other restaurants in Malta, but for us it was onto Italy. We had tortellini en brodo at La Casa Del Brodo in Palermo – a restaurant that has operated there since 1890. It was simple, delicate and perfect. From Palermo we did a day trip to Lampedusa which is a small island south of Sicily. It is a beach area mostly visited by Italians but has also become a refugee area for migrants from North Africa. It is a good place to have seafood which is what we had for lunch: a traditional Sicilian trio of smoked fish---tuna, salmon, and swordfish.

A flight to Bari and a car ride later we were in Matera – an ancient city built into the

hillsides in Puglia in the arch of the boot of Italy. Our accommodations were in the Sextantio Le Grotte Della Civita which was a series of rooms carved out of the hillside so that basically every room was a cave but with electricity and running water. Dinner was at Vitantonio Lombardo which is also a cave built into the hillside. We had an unusual tasting menu with items such as, *I dropped an Egg in the Garden*, *Pizza in Black* and *the Last Kiss*.

Every region in Italy produces wine so the next day we did a wine tasting at Casal Dragone winery which was accompanied by a robust sample of local delicacies. The wines were very good – mostly blends of cabernet, merlot and primitivo. A specialty of the area is the aglianico grape which produces a full-bodied red wine. Dinner was at Ristorante Francesca, another cave. This area of Italy is really known for its mozzarella, and it seems we had some version with every meal. A new type for us was Stracciatella which is stretchy, creamy and delicious. The restaurant served it in a radicchio cup surrounded by prosciutto and some great bread. It was heavenly. We enjoyed it with a white wine made from fiano grapes – a grape we had never heard of before. It turns out that would happen over and over in our trip north in Italy. So many regions have grapes unique to that area and we were constantly discovering new grapes and new wine.

From Matera, we drove through the hill towns Alberobello, Locorotondo, Martina Franca and Ostuni. Alberobello is known for its

*Hotel in Matera*



distinctive small, whitewashed buildings with conical roofs known as trulli. We stopped to do a wine tasting at Tenuta Patruno Perniola. This is a small family-owned winery that makes great wine. A wine tasting at Fellingine took up the rest of our afternoon. This is a large winery with a big selection of white, rose and red wines. On these visits we discovered primitivo red wines and vermentino white wines. We recommend anyone who likes wine to give these a try.

We drove to Gallipoli and enjoyed dinner at La Vinaigrette. Once again, seafood was the star of this waterside restaurant. New for us was the red prawn which is served raw. Not sure



*Rooftops of Alberobello*

## ◀ Lunch in Lampedusa



*Dinner at Grotto Palezzese*



*Parmigiana Producer*



*Truffle hunting*



we would order that one again. However, our Italian wine knowledge was improving, and we enjoyed the Rocci Puglia Bianco made with negroamaro grapes.

We were then onto Lecce for some sightseeing and lunch at Alle due Corti which served the typical food of the area and has been in business for at least three generations. Grandmother oversees her kingdom by relaxing at a table in the front of the restaurant.

Ostuni is a charming hilltop town and a good opportunity to try Puglian olive oil. We realized that Tuscan olive oil is marketed heavily in the United States, but the Puglian oil is a bit softer and more subtle. I bought a

few cans back to share with friends and do some taste comparisons.

In Polignano a Mare is a well-known restaurant by the sea, Grotta Palazzese. It is built into a grotto, so the setting is unique and beautiful. You have a choice of a la carte, or a tasting menu and we chose the former. As the restaurant is extremely expensive, we would recommend choosing your dishes very carefully. Quite frankly, we were more impressed with the setting than the food.

Montepulciano is a place for sightseeing, wine and food. We tried some very traditional wine makers who follow the same wine making system their grandparents used. For us, these wines were too acidic and too tannic. I think we prefer the new wine making methods that use smaller oak barrels that soften the wine more. Lucky for us,



*Truffle eggs*





*Truffle dinner*



*Prosciutto vault*

that is what DeRicci does, and we enjoyed a wonderful tour of their facility and then a lovely wine tasting.

Dinner the next night was at La Terrazzo del Chiostro in Pienza which was the perfect ending to another lovely day. The restaurant is inside a converted 15th century monastery which also houses a hotel. We enjoyed a glass of sparkling wine followed by a Toscano Vermentino with our fish and pasta – cacio e pepe made with the pecorino cheese for which Pienza is known.

The next day we had a great wine tasting at Ciacchi Piccolomini d'Aragona. Their Brunello di Montalcino was wonderful. By now we were pretty spoiled by having such good wines but our tasting at Partizia Cencioni did not disappoint. Unusual for this area, it is a family-owned winery run by the women of

the family. Unfortunately bringing home wine from Italy isn't very practical so we will have to look for these wines here.

Onto Chianti territory and a great wine tasting at Tenuta Lilliano which specializes in Chianti Classico. Next, we visited the famous butcher store Antica Macelleria Cecchini and then lunch at the well-known Antinori winery. This winery is built into the hillsides to almost disguise its appearance. The food and the wine were both excellent.

Finally, we arrived in Florence. We stayed at the Pitti Palace and ate our first dinner at Trattoria Sostanza famous for making Bistecca alla Fiorentina. This is a very popular but casual restaurant with a tiny kitchen and every dish prepared to order. The next night dinner was at La Pescatoria which as the name suggests specializes in seafood and that



is exactly what we had. We started with a tartare and a crudo platter followed by seared tuna and roasted octopus. It was delicious.

Florence launched a great culinary trail. Balsamic vinegar tastings and a visit to parmigiana producer Hombre in Modena. From there we toured a salumificio which produces prosciutto. Then, a major highlight of our trip, a truly extraordinary dinner at Osteria Francescana. This is a three-star Michelin restaurant that only has about 12 tables and for which we made reservations three months in advance. We had a 12-course tasting menu and the food was amazing as was the service and the presentation. Chef Massimo Bottura stopped at every table during the evening to personally greet all his guests.

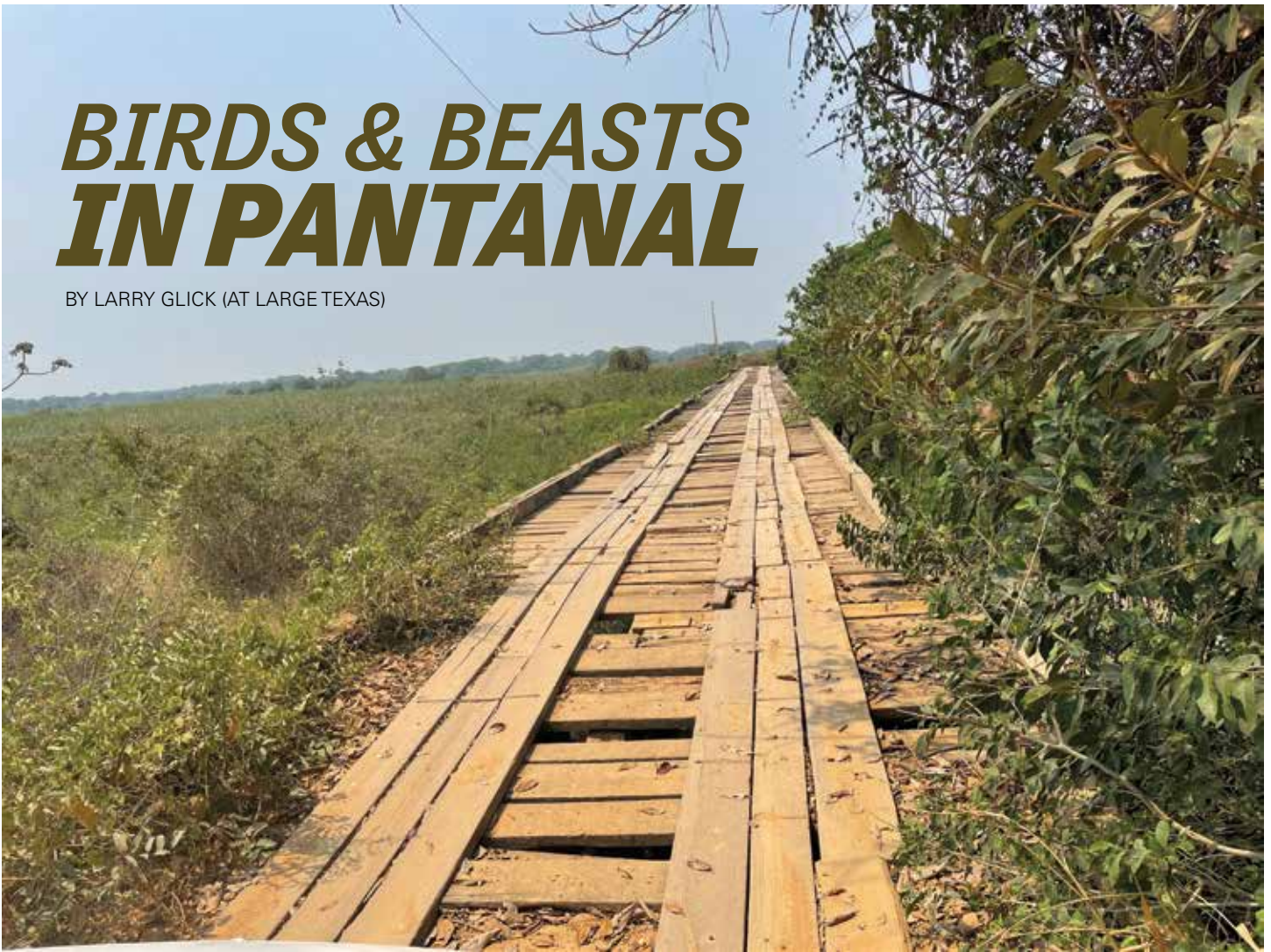
In Turin, we started with a fabulous dinner at Ristorante Casa Vicina. We previewed truffles at our elegant dinner at Ristorante Del Cambio – a restaurant dating back to 1757. On our way out of the city, we took a tour of the Turin food market with marvelous fresh fruits and vegetables.

To end our trip, we headed to Alba and got to our second Michelin three-star restaurant of the trip, Piazza Duomo, in Alba. That was followed by a morning hunting truffle, and we found a few with some help from the professional truffle hunter and his dog. Alba is known for its white truffle which are more delicate than black truffles. Our dinner that night had truffles in abundance in every course accompanied by champagne and great wine. The following day, we got to the Truffle Fair, held annually over several weekends in October/November. This highlight was the reason for the timing of our trip which we had postponed due to Covid from the previous year. It was the fruition of a three-year plan. We had never seen so many truffles. There were hundreds of them in all sizes and even at this source, they were not cheap. We got to sample some with pasta and with eggs at the festival. It was an amazing experience and a great way to end our trip.



# BIRDS & BEASTS IN PANTANAL

BY LARRY GLICK (AT LARGE TEXAS)



**THERE ARE MANY GREAT DRIVES IN THE WORLD. THE SEWARD HIGHWAY IN ALASKA, THE AMALFI COAST ROAD IN ITALY, AND THE GREAT OCEAN ROAD IN AUSTRALIA COME TO MIND. ADD TO THAT LIST THE AMAZING TRANSPANTANEIRA HIGHWAY IN BRAZIL. THE 90-MILE GRAVEL AND DIRT ROAD CROSSES THE LARGEST TROPICAL WETLAND IN THE WORLD KNOWN AS THE PANTANAL. IN THIS SHORT STRETCH ARE 120 BRIDGES, MOST STILL MADE OF WOOD.**

Traveling South, the highway ends in Porto Jofre, surely the jaguar capital of the world. That is jaguar in *Panthera Onca*, not the British motorcar. Based on the number of worldwide film crews present while I was patrolling the waters around Porto Jofre, others agree.

The Pantanal is roughly the size of the state of Washington or England. Seven hundred bird species and 236 mammalian species have been documented in this, the largest flooded grassland on earth. Besides the

jaguar are endangered species such as the South American tapir (with a prehensile nose trunk), the Giant River Otter, and the Giant Anteater. The ocelot hunts at night, the tamandua (lesser anteater) digs for termites and ants, the Crab-eating Fox looks for crabs, and the largest rodent in the world, the capybara is omnipresent. The jaguarundi, (which my guide called the "Ghost of the Jungle") was a shocking sighting. Including brief sojourns to the Amazon (to seek the endangered Harpy Eagle and the critically endangered





Woolly Monkey), my birding life list increased by almost 500 new "lifers". In the birding world, a lifer is a bird that a birder personally sees for first time. I am now approaching a magic number for me of 6,000 distinct birds seen in the world.

My adventure with the Giant Anteater was thrilling. Among the strangest creatures to inhabit our planet, it has poor vision, but amazing sense of smell and sound. As we began on foot to search for these mystical creatures, I pulled out my DEET spray for mosquitoes. My guide, one of the true experts on this species, quickly said, "Not today" as he nixed the application of any scent the anteater would detect. We found a large male and tracked it for almost 30 minutes. Carrying both of my lenses and adroitly missing any twigs was part of the fun. We got within 20 yards at one point.

In total, I saw 16 jaguars, including 15 in and around Porto Jofre. Each sighting was magnificent. The jaguar is the third largest cat on earth behind the lion and tiger



but has the strongest bite of all cats at 2000 psi. Its primary prey is the capybara, as well as the ubiquitous caiman - the South American cousin of the alligator and crocodile. You need that 2000 psi to bite into a caiman, I guess. My adventures included jaguars in trees, jaguars with babies, and jaguars in the water. We watched a jaguar climb a tree and leap into the water, most probably for a caiman, but come up empty. I met the founder of a wonderful organization, the Jaguar Identification Project, who is attempting to sustain this threatened population for future generations to witness. (The Glick family is now a contributor). As in other parts of the world, wild animal populations are under siege as conflicts grow and deforestation increases. The immediate Pantanal threat to the jaguar is the enduring conflict with cattle ranchers. Only the values of ecotourism to all concerned will save this most beautiful cat.



I continued a six-continent tradition of planting trees in both the Amazon and the Atlantic Forest. I have recently heard that the mango trees I planted in Uganda eight years ago are bearing fruit and are being visited by the Mountain Gorillas. YES!

My bird count on this trip included eagles, herons, ibises, woodpeckers, kingfishers, toucans, parrots, parakeets, storks, macaws and cardinals, but also names such as woodcreepers, hoatzins, marsh antwrens, cotingas, guans, curassows, attilas, aracaris, horneros, flickers, troupials, manikins, limpkins and trogons.

The Sao Paulo Marsh Antwren was just recently discovered. I am one of the first to ever view this new species that is not yet officially listed by some birding organizations. I counted it as a lifer.

It was an outstanding adventure.



*Barefaced Curassu*



*Aracari*



*Plush-crested jay*



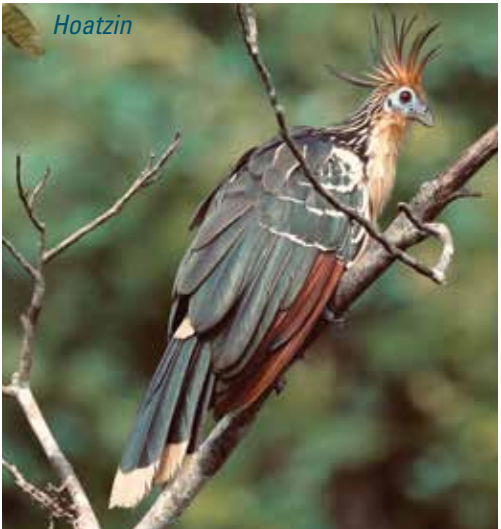
*Hyacinth Macaws*



*Blue & Gold Macaw*



*Hoatzin*



*Toco Toucan*



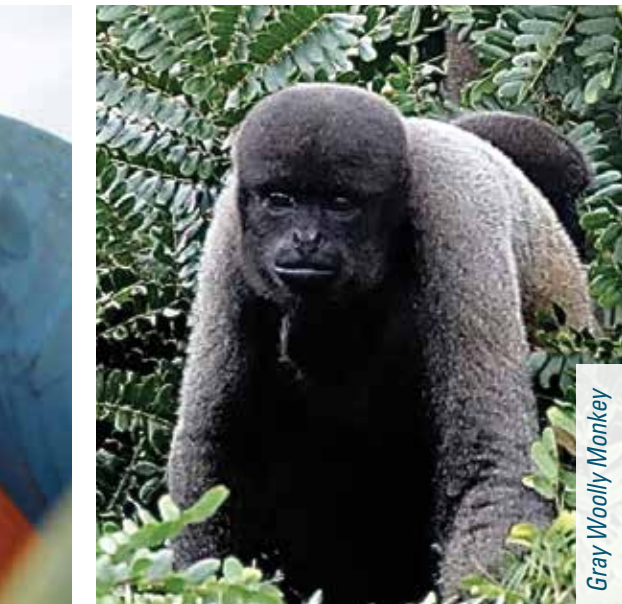




Red & Green Macaw



Crab-eating fox



Gray Woolly Monkey



Armadillo



Lesser Anteater



Tapir

ALL PHOTOS BY LARRY GLICK



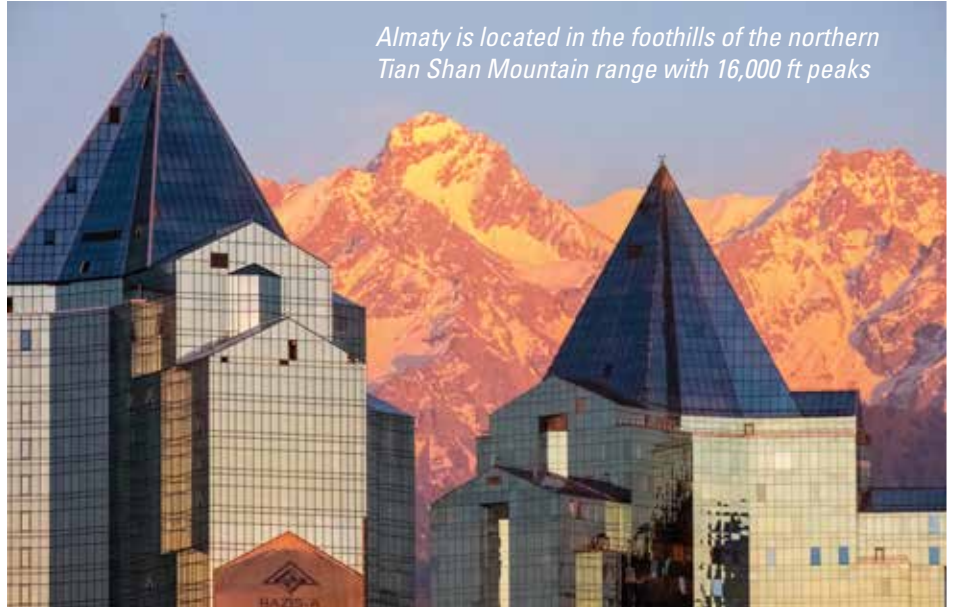
# KAZAKHSTAN BEFORE

BY MARIA AND GUNTHER WINKLER  
(NAPLES CHAPTER)

**EDITORS NOTE: KAZAKHSTAN HAS BEEN IN THE NEWS AS THIS FORMER SOVIET REPUBLIC HAS BEEN ROCKED BY VIOLENCE AND TERROR. THE WINKLERS VISITED DURING A PEACEFUL TIME.**

We visited Kazakhstan as part of a Central Asia tour just before the pandemic. More correctly, we visited the southeast corner of this huge country where Almaty is located. It was the capital before Nursultan Nazarbayev, who ruled the country since 1991 with a strong hand and a personality cult, built a new capital and named it after himself, Nur-Sultan. Protests eventually forced Nursultan Nazarbayev to step down as president and a snap presidential election was called in June 2019. This was exactly the time when we visited Almaty and its surrounding province.

Almaty is nestled in the foothills of a major mountain range. Its location impresses with a dramatic backdrop of snow-covered peaks with altitudes of over 16,000 ft. The city is the business center of Kazakhstan, a country that is rich in oil, natural gas, and minerals. This wealth is reflected in modern high-rise buildings and international luxury hotels.

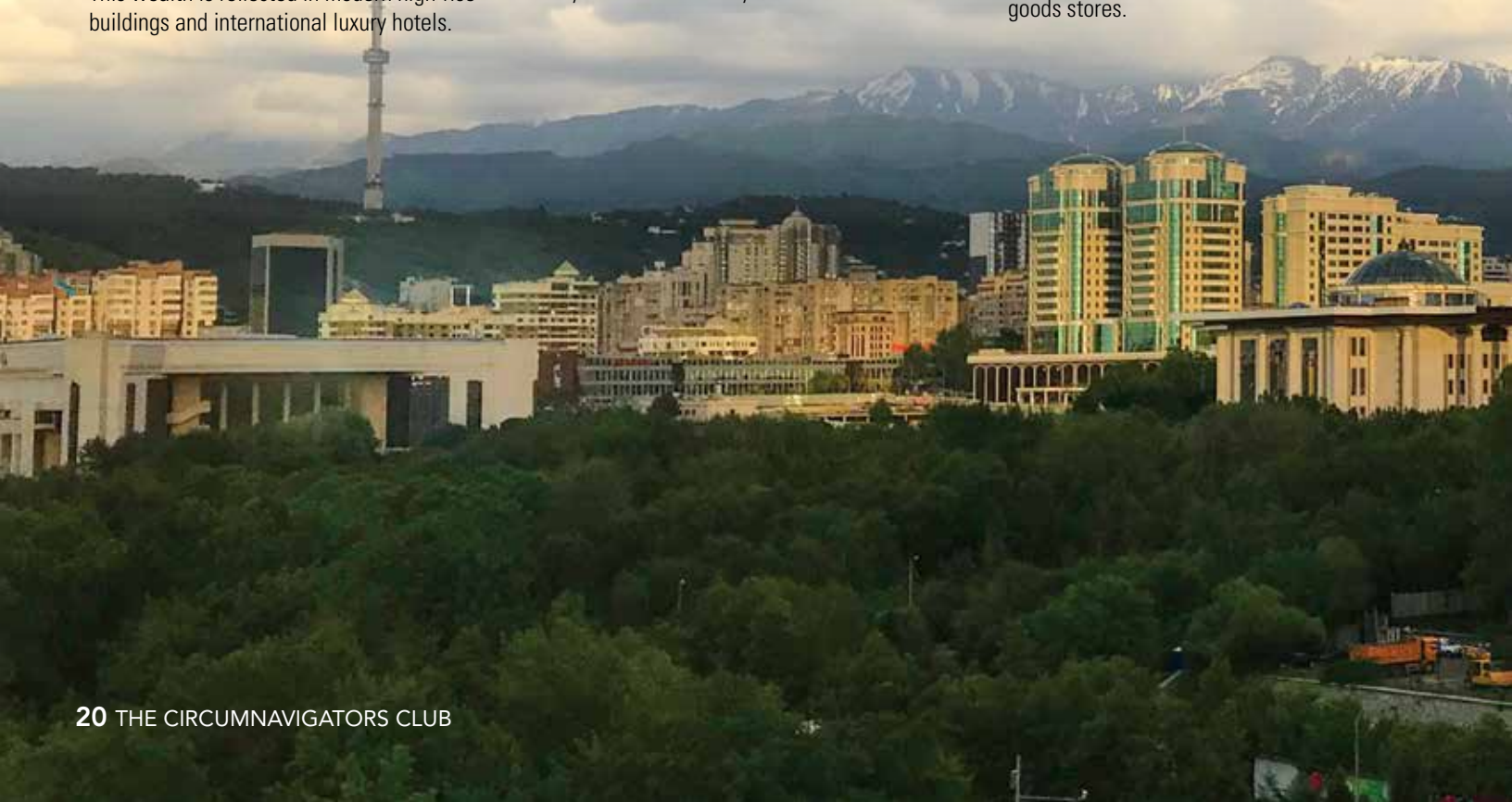


*Almaty is located in the foothills of the northern Tian Shan Mountain range with 16,000 ft peaks*

Via a local internet website, we found a young woman who guided us through the city for a few hours. Her English was impeccable, although she said that her first foreign language that she learned was Russian and she had never left the country to study English abroad.

At that time, Almaty was peaceful, and we had a wonderful time exploring the city and its rich history that reaches back

many thousands of years as demonstrated by impressive ancient petroglyphs nearby. Archeologists believe that this is where horses were first tamed and ridden. No wonder that this region became rich through horse trading in ancient times and the fabled people of the Scythian tribes buried their leaders covered in gold. Today's riches are seen in upscale malls with brand names such as Saks Fifth Avenue and many of the world's expensive luxury goods stores.





# IT BURNED



*The more than 2,000 year old remains of the Scythian Golden Warrior were excavated in 1969 and became a symbol of Kazakhstan's independence.*

Walking the sidewalks of Almaty, we encountered billboards that advertised the upcoming elections. Although presumably a democracy with free elections it was clear that one candidate Tokayev, who represented the ruling party of Nursultan, had the leading edge. His large picture was on top of each billboard while the other candidates were mentioned below with small pictures and in small print. Tokayev eventually won with 71% of the votes, which was rather a disappointment for the party and maybe a preview of the dissatisfaction with a quasi-dictatorial and Russia-friendly government that led to the unrests in 2022.

Early this year all changed. Massive protests and violence took over. There were many riots and deaths. We have seen on the news pictures of burning buildings and we are wondering what has become of the people who welcomed us in 2019 warmly and friendly and with a showing of great pride for their country.



*At a local market in Almaty.*



*A dance performance in traditional Kazakh costumes.*



*Almaty is the business center of Kazakhstan and a modern city.*





EDITOR'S NOTE: AUTHOR AND ADVENTURER ALBERT PODELL OFFERS THIS PERSONAL COLUMN FOR THE LOG.

## RAMBLING WITH AL

BY ALBERT PODELL  
(NEW YORK METRO)

# *It Ain't Easy Staying King of the Hill*



It wasn't easy when we were kids, and it's certainly harder when you're 84.

As many of you know, I began my quest to visit every country on earth back in 1962 and finished the slog in 2014 with #196 (Yemen), from which I narrowly escaped when the Houthis started kidnapping foreigners. By then, a couple of Brits and a few rich Russians had also visited every nation, although the Ruskies skipped Kosovo, which their homeland refuses to recognize as a country. I was the first American to achieve this goal, although two guys later claimed to have also done it, but they flinched by avoiding deadly Somalia and going instead to Somaliland, which does not count as a country, as will be explained below.

In the last five or six years, there has been an explosion of country counters, and we now have adventurous travelers claiming to be the youngest to visit every country, the first female, the first female of color, the first to

do it without flying, the first to do it for under \$100,000, the fastest to do it (which seems senseless to me because I refuse to count airport stopovers as a visit), all seeking their fleeting 15-minutes of fame in Guinness. I could legitimately claim to be the oldest person to visit every country, but I find that a dubious distinction I'd rather bypass.

The main problem I've found with these wannabees is that they almost all cop out and avoid Somalia, going instead to Hargeisa, the capital of Somaliland. So let me make this perfectly clear: *If you visit Somaliland, you are not visiting Somalia.* Somaliland broke away from Somalia to form its own country more than a dozen years ago. If you want to go Somaliland, you have to get your visa at the consulate of Somaliland; you do not get it from the Embassy of Somalia. They are totally different entities. You cannot count Somaliland as Somalia, and if you do not visit Somalia, then you cannot honestly claim to have visited every recognized country on earth.

I will readily admit that, by all rights, Somaliland *should* be fully recognized as an independent country because it meets all the criteria of the 1933 Montevideo Convention on Statehood. The only reason that the U.S. and other Western countries have refused to recognize Somaliland as an independent country is because they fear this will upset and weaken the already struggling government of Somalia they support in Mogadishu. So they ignore reality and substitute *de jure* for *de facto*.

The other aspect in which I find these country collectors to be deficient is that they often whoosh through a country in an hour or two, such as touching down in Iceland en route to Europe, or landing to re-fuel in Cape Verde en route to the States from South Africa, or opting to count the one-hour delay between flights on some tiny South Pacific island-nations instead of being willing to wait seven days for the once-a-week island-hopper airplane to return, as I did on Kiribati and others.



The biggest challenge to remaining king of the hill is that there are more than a dozen hills on the horizon – entities that wish to become independent countries – including, but not limited to, Abkhazia, Apiya, Aruba, Basque-land, Bohemia, Cook Islands, Curacao, Greenland, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Northern Cyprus, North Mali, North Nigeria, Western Sahara, East Libya, East Congo, South Ossetia, South Yemen (aka Aden), Palestine, Padania, Pitcairn Island, Quebec, Dagestan, Chechnya, Sardinia, Assam, Sikkim, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur, the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (aka Spanish Sahara), Somaliland, Ruritania, Tibet, Transnistria, and the potential breakup (or breakdown) of Belgium into two separate countries because of language differences.

I keep a weekender-size bag packed in case any one of them succeeds in making the move to full statehood. I've almost had to use it five times in the past decade – when Scotland held a referendum and by a narrow margin voted to remain part of the United Kingdom; when the government of Catalonia in Spain decided to break free, to which Spain reacted with ferocity, including imprisoning the separatist leaders; when the Kurdish enclave in northern Iraq decided to become the country of Kurdistan, before their dreams were quashed by the arrival of Iraqi tanks; in 2021 when Chunk State, one of the four entities that comprise the Federated States of Micronesia, was forced by the Coronavirus, to postpone its referendum on independence; and, most recently, this past December, when the residents of New Caledonia in the South Pacific held a referendum on independence and voted to remain an overseas territory of France.

I had a bit of a scare in the past year when two new names popped up on the UN membership list: Eswatini and North Macedonia, but, using my criteria for when a country is a country, saw no need to re-visit these places since these



were merely changes in their names, not their geography or populations.

The country that previously had called itself Macedonia changed its name under duress to Northern Macedonia to placate their neighbors in Greece who have insisted that the name “Macedonia” is historically inseparable from Greek culture and that since ancient Macedonia lies within the geographic confines of modern Greece, it had the sole right to the name. As for Eswatini, it was merely the returning by King Mswati II of the former southern African Kingdom of Swaziland on its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary to its ancient original name.

As reported in the January, 2020 *Circumbits*, I've been waiting for a decision from the National Parliament of Papua New Guinea to see if they would approve the results of the referendum of December 11, 2019 on the island of Bougainville in which almost 98% of the voters cast their ballots for independence. It might seem that such a huge majority would morally compel New Guinea to release its hold on Bougainville, but this overlooks politics and the fact that, for many years, the huge copper and gold open pit mine on Bougainville supplied about half of PNG's national budget.



PNG unduly delayed the grant of independence on Bougainville for fear that it will set a precedent that will inspire the secessionist movements in its regions of New Britain, New Ireland, and the rest of the restive PNG Islands Group, but push came to shove last year and the PNG parliament reluctantly consented to grant Bougainville some autonomy next year and full independence by 2027, confronting me with the need, at age 90, to rush off to one of the most inaccessible islands on earth, and one whose tiny, antiquated airfield is being used for grazing cattle.

The careful reader might well question my use of the word “rush.” Like, what's the hurry, Albert? Why not just go to the newborn nation at a leisurely pace, make your visit, and regain the right to say you have visited every recognized country in the world?

Time for confession: You see, I'm sort of a competitive guy, and if I rush to visit the newest country on the globe, and get there on the day, or immediately after, it becomes independent, why then, for at least a few bright and shining days, I could truthfully, if immodestly, claim the title of *The Only Person on Earth to Have Visited Every Country*. Now that's really being king of the hill!!!





# In Our Circle



**EDITORS NOTE: OUR HISTORIC CLUB HAS OUTSTANDING MEMBERS. HERE WE PROFILE ONE OF THEM, ADVENTURER THOMAS AMBROSE WHO HAS BEEN A MEMBER FOR 24 YEARS AND HAS SHARED MANY OF HIS TRAVEL STORIES IN THE LOG.**

## THE EXPAT ADVENTURER

BY MICHAEL PULDY  
ASSOCIATE EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

Like so many of us, Circumnavigator Thomas Ambrose didn't start out to be a traveler of the world. Born in Oklahoma City, armed with a geology degree from the University of Oklahoma, and a masters from Rutgers, he would soon be off to New York City and then to see the world.

As Tom will tell you, he has an unquenchable fascination with rocks. Oil and gas companies also like rocks. With this perfect match, Tom found a career in the oil industry working for the likes of Kewanee Oil and Texaco. He found oil in Cuba, he found oil in Colombia, he found oil in Ecuador, and he found oil in Indonesia. And he found adventure as an American expatriate.

Over the years, he maintained residency in Cuba (before, during and after the Cuban revolution), Colombia, Indonesia, and Singapore, just to name a few. In addition, because family life doesn't stop when you're on assignment, Tom's daughter Natalie is Cuban born. Serge, his son, graduated from high school in Singapore.

While Tom's international residences provided him with a great home base for regional travel, Tom also loves road trips. There was the 14,000-mile driving tour of Europe in his European delivered 1972 Volkswagen Beetle Cabriolet – that he still owns. He is also very proud of his 23,000-mile Alaska to Chile trip by car, bus, train, and air.

Despite all these amazing adventures, Tom required ten years to complete his first circumnavigation.

Nevertheless, Cuba has always held a soft spot in Tom's heart.

His first foreign post was in Cuba with Cuban Kewanee in the late 50s. In 2013, he returned to Cuba with his daughter, Natalie, to survey the Cuban Karsts found in the Viñales Valley, the epicenter of Antillean Karsts and now a UNESCO World Heritage Center.

As Tom described his return adventure, "I used my 1957 ESSO road map as my expedition guide and all the old landmarks were still in place."

Today, Tom and his wife Thora reside in their Bali inspired home in southern Florida, built in 1990, and inspired by their seven years in Indonesia.

Tom is a member of the Palm Beach Chapter.



# chapter highlights

## UNITED KINGDOM

Members enjoyed their annual House of Lords dinner on December 9.



## CHICAGO

Members enjoyed a wonderful holiday event on December 4.



## MICHIGAN

Members got together for a holiday brunch and a chance to catch up in person. Floy and Lee Barthel were honored with the Globe award for sponsoring the Michigan Circumnavigators Summer Safari event for many years.



## NAPLES

Members enjoyed a festive holiday party at the Naples Yacht and Sailing Club.





# chapter highlights

## PACIFIC-NORTHWEST

Members celebrated the holidays with a fifteen foot Christmas tree. Will and Maria Mason hosted a wonderful dinner with unique and delicious dishes.



## PACIFIC-SOUTHWEST

Members gathered for brunch at the home of Virginia Foster (Chapter President) and her husband and member Arthur Hammons in La Jolla on February 5.

## PALM BEACH

Members had lunch at the Paradiso Restaurant and enjoyed author and lecturer Rene Silvin describe his experiences on the Concorde and the many famous passengers who flew on this fabled aircraft.







## FOUNDATION PRESIDENT'S *LETTER*

Dear fellow Circumnavigators:

2022 is a year of promise as we anticipate the resumption of circumnavigations this summer by Foundation grantees – the first such travel since the summer of 2019. Two young women from Northwestern University and one from Georgetown are eagerly finalizing preparations for their departures at the end of the spring semester (see more about them on the accompanying page). Many variables must be taken into consideration for this to happen: health-driven university travel policies, State Department and CDC travel advisories, and entry and quarantine regulations of countries planned to visit, but we are pleased to report that our grantees are planning carefully for safe and healthy travel and are developing realistic itineraries that include alternative research venues if last-minute changes are required. Please join me in collectively crossing our fingers in the hope that we may once again launch grantees on voyages of discovery this summer.

As many of you already know, 2021 marked the 50th anniversary of the Foundation's first around-the-world travel-study fellowship in 1971. To help observe a half century of our one-of-a-kind grant program, we conducted extensive video interviews with many of our Foundation Scholars, key participating university officials, chapter coordinators, and Foundation officials. Excerpts from the interviews were then incorporated into a short documentary film, *Around the World for Half a Century...and Counting* which we encourage you to view, as it provides a glimpse into the many elements that have made our grant program such a success over the years. A link to the video is posted on the Foundation page of the Club's website, [www.circumnavigators.org](http://www.circumnavigators.org). Access links to the individual video interviews, which are being released on a staggered basis over the next three months, will also be posted on the Club website. They make for fascinating viewing!

Finally, the Foundation's board of directors joins me in extending thanks to those of you who have responded to our winter fundraising appeal; your generosity will help assure that our second fifty years of grant-making gets off to a good start. To those of you who haven't yet made a donation, please have a look at the anniversary documentary video and I know you'll agree that there's not a more relevant or rewarding investment a Circumnavigator can make than affording bright, inquiring young men and women the opportunity to do what we all love so much: traveling and learning about the world around us.

Luck to You!

Greg Rider

## OUR SCHOLARS

*Stay tuned! Our Foundation scholars will tell us what they discovered on their amazing circumnavigations.*

*We will ask them about the countries they visited, highlights, favorite places, lowlights/surprises, dining experiences, and, most importantly, about friendship and what they learned about themselves.*



**MACKENZIE GENTZ**  
Northwestern University

Topic: Linguistic "Baggage":  
A Global Examination  
of Adult Accent Training  
in English as a Second  
Language (ESL) Speakers.



**VIVICA LEWIS**  
Northwestern University

Topic: Birth Control Bans to Contraceptive  
Care: Investigating Cultural Shifts  
Surrounding Contraceptives in Historically  
Restrictive Countries & the Impact on  
Youth Education & Engagement.



**EMILY HARDY**  
Georgetown University

Topic: Human Rights Gone Wrong:  
An Investigation into the Socio-Cultural  
Factors Responsible for the Adoption  
or Rejection of Four Major International  
Human Rights Conventions.







# WELCOME *aboard*

THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE WERE ELECTED TO OUR "GREAT CIRCLE" BY OUR BOARD OF GOVERNORS

## DELPHINE ADAMS



A Polish American, Delphine lives in Naples, FL. She has had

a distinguished career as an attorney, specializing in real estate and working in several states, including California. Her many interests include wine and spirits tasting, horseback riding, motorcycling and pilates. She joins the Naples Chapter.

## MARY ELAINE CHRISTIAN



Originally from Tennessee, Elaine is now retired in Naples,

FL. She maintains a second home in Jackson, TN, where she is active in many civic and charitable activities. She has been named chair of Jackson's bicentennial committee. Elaine joins the Naples Chapter.

## MELODY DILL



Raised in Wisconsin, Melody now has a home in Southwest

Florida, as well as several other locations, including a lodge in South Africa. She and her husband Jon (also a Circumnavigator) are avid travelers. They made their circumnavigation with just one stop in Singapore. Melody joins the Naples Chapter.

## JEAN DOLAN



Born in Sarasota, Jean is a fifth generation Floridian, now living in West

Palm Beach. Her varied career included librarian and builder for which she received acclaim. She has been involved in many civic and charitable activities. Jean founded the Jazz Society of Palm Beach to raise scholarships for jazz students in Florida. She joins the Palm Beach Chapter.

## MICHELLE DOYLE



Michelle recently moved to Naples, FL to be close to her parents Morrie and

Ann Doyle who are involved in the Naples Chapter. Michelle has strong connections to North Carolina where she and her husband started a craft brewery and purchased a golf course. Besides travel, she enjoys boating, photography and, of course, craft beer. She joins the Naples Chapter.

## NGOSONG FONKEM



Ngosong is an attorney working in Milwaukee, WI where he specializes

in Customs and International Trade Law. He previously lived in Malaysia, teaching law at the oldest university in Malaysia. He is co-author of a book— Trade Crash: A Primer on Surviving and Thriving in Pandemics & Global Trade Disruption. He enjoys playing soccer and sailing.

## VALERIE HORN



Valerie lives in Connecticut where she designs one-of-a-kind jewelry.

She travels four months of the year, primarily to the Far East where she finds inspiration for her jewelry. Valerie also travels around the United States showing at private parties and charity events. She will be a member of New York Metro.

## MARII MAK



A resident of Chicago, Marii works for the Department of Homeland Security, negotiating

checkpoints, border crossings and customs. She received anti-terrorist training in Jakarta, Indonesia. She also had the honor of guiding veteran GIs in successful quests to find children they had fathered during the Vietnam War. She also worked as an actress in several movies and television shows. Marii joins the Chicago Chapter.

## DAVID PAVEY



Living in San Bernardino, CA, David is a retired Air Force commander

with many ventures and honors. Colonel Pavey served in Operations Desert Storm and in Iraq. He was commander of Baghdad Airport in 2008. Among his many honors are the Bronze Star and Legion of Merit. He joins the Pacific Southwest Chapter.

## CHRISTINE SADRY



Born in Poland, Christine came to the United States as a child and grew

up in Philadelphia. Now living in Naples, FL, she had a career devoted to peacekeeping including work with the United Nations. She and her husband spent many years on peacekeeping missions around the world. Christine joins the Naples Chapter.

## BARBARA SAVAGE



A resident of Wellington, FL, Barbara is Founder and Executive Director

of the Tribal Trust Foundation (TFF), devoting resources to indigenous peoples throughout the world. She has traveled to many remote and dangerous areas to help indigenous tribes preserve their cultures. Barbara has written a book: Savage: A memoir. She joins the Palm Beach Chapter.

## ALAN WEISS



Alan is a consultant on business matters with many notable clients.

He typically makes 20 keynote addresses each year and he has published more than 500 articles and 60 books, including his best-seller Million Dollar Consulting. Alan reports that he once played on the game show Jeopardy, losing badly to a dancing waiter from Iowa. He lives in East Greenwich, RI.



# SCUTTLEBUTT



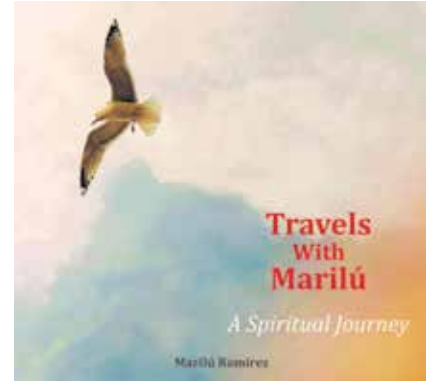
**Miami Chapter...**Chapter President Carolyn Stein reported that the Miami Chapter is regrouping after a period of inactivity. They held a "live" meeting during which Howard and Linda Taft made a presentation on their National Geographic tour of Borneo and Uganda. The event was well attended and enjoyed by all. Circumnavigators who are snowbirds with seasonal visits to the Miami area should get in touch with Carolyn.

## New Book...

Circumnavigator Marilu Ramirez (New York Metro) has written a book: *Travels with Marilu: A Spiritual Journey*. The publisher notes:

"Ramirez has deep roots in two cities: San Juan, Puerto Rico

and New York City. And, yet, she is better understood as a wanderer, a veritable citizen of the world. Her passion is travel. She is never happier than when roaming the byways, country lanes, urban avenues, seascapes, and archaeological sites of terrains ranging from the rice paddies of Vietnam to the crowded plazas of Spain to Jordan's ancient heritage sites. In this book of photographs taken over the course of many years in 33 countries, she addresses the magic and intention of human activity as well as the sublime majesty of nature." Marilu will make a presentation to New York Metro Circumnavigators in May.



## OVER THE HORIZON

Roberta Cervelli  
Naples, FL  
March 26, 2020

Rex Ciavola  
Boca Raton, FL

John Colliver  
Louisville, KY  
August 12, 2021

James Furby  
La Jolla, CA  
July 20, 2021

Joyce Greenberger  
New York, NY  
August 1, 2021  
  
Frank Leonetti  
Palm Beach Gardens, FL  
July 20, 2020

A. Jean Minnick  
Elkins, WV  
February 25, 2021

Edward Stegemann  
Naples, FL  
January 13, 2022

Stephen Warner  
Tampa, FL  
August 23, 2021

Paul Webster  
Wayzata, MN  
June 2, 2021

Karl Wyss  
Naples, FL  
January 20, 2022





# THROUGH MY LENS

## MY HOMETOWN

TIPS FOR A TRAVELING PHOTOGRAPHER

BY  
CONTRIBUTING  
EDITOR

ROGER  
WEATHERBURN-BAKER  
Naples Chapter



*Kari Wright finds the peaceful Bellingham Bay near her home in Washington.*

During the last couple of years, many of us have not been traveling as far and wide as we might have done pre-Covid. Instead, we've been staying close to home and putting our cameras aside.

That's a shame. Staying home shouldn't mean the end of creative photojournalism. We invited some of our best award-winning photographers to show us what could be done with the theme *Myhometown*.

We told them we're looking for unusual images of the sights, places or things around them that hint at their location, pique curiosity, tell a story or simply prove that while we all love to travel and miss it, there are many wonderful shots to be captured right in our own neck of the woods.

Some of their work is shown on these pages. We think you'll agree that while they may have been grounded by Covid their eye for a creative image remains inspired.



*Henry Restarick enjoys wildlife galore right in his Louisiana backyard.*

Through their lens, an empty beach and boardwalk, or a row of silent volleyball nets, easily stir memories of glorious summer days passed. A proud osprey, a magnificent cathedral, or a pristine lake still look majestic and compelling in their hands. Even a neighbor's tire covered with snow, or the eerie reflection of a twisted tree bent over a mist-covered lake, demonstrate a creative photographer can capture brilliant shots even out of the mundane, and without straying too far from home. Our thanks to them all.

*Ann Swinford captures a foggy tree at dawn in Ann Arbor, Michigan.*







▲ Paul Buescher relishes the colorful homes in North Portland, Oregon.



Lisa Brighton shoots a stunning view of "Blue Ice" in Mackinac, Michigan.



▲ Michael Puldy loves the volleyball beach in Manhattan Beach minutes from his California home.



▲ David Mink finds beach, boardwalk and French Fries in Ocean City, NJ.



▲ Ann Swinford's neighbor is "Dreaming of Spring" in snowy Michigan.



▲ Majestic St. Louis Cathedral is nearby for Janet Restarick in New Orleans.





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## Club Merchandise



Contact Executive Director Tracy Sancilio at  
[club@circumnavigators.org](mailto:club@circumnavigators.org) or  
go to our website [www.circumnavigators.com](http://www.circumnavigators.com)  
to purchase to following items:

Ladies Scarf - \$ 25 | Hat (Black or White) - \$20 | Red Tie - \$25 | Club Badge - \$50

## CLUB HEADQUARTERS The Yale Club of New York City

*50 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, New York 10017*



The Yale Club is International Headquarters for the Circumnavigators Club allowing members to utilize the facility for private dining, special events, cocktail receptions and meetings. The club offers three restaurants including the elegant Roof Dining Room, the pub-like Grill Room and the Yale-inspired Tap Room. Members will have access to these rooms by checking in at the front desk and letting the staff know you are a Circumnavigator Club member. There are also well-appointed guest rooms available from studios to suites. When booking an overnight stay, guests have full access to the club including all three restaurants, a full-service library, and a fitness facility with a swimming pool, squash courts, cardio equipment and freeweights. Once a reservation is made, a personal credit card is required upon arrival. Reservations for overnight accommodations must be made through the Executive Director – please contact headquarters at 201-612-9100 or email at [club@circumnavigators.org](mailto:club@circumnavigators.org). Please do not call the Yale Club directly.