



CIRCUMNAVIGATORS CLUB

FOUNDED IN 1902

YEAR 2024

NUMBER ONE

# THE LOG

INSIDE: THE JOY  
OF PHOTOGRAPHY



**CIRCUMNAVIGATORS CLUB, INC.**  
**FOUNDED 1902**

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# The LOG

## THIS TIME AROUND

BY DAVID A. MINK - International President & Editorial Director

Everyone loves photos. Whoever wrote "A Picture is worth a thousand words" certainly got it right. In this issue of The LOG, we "focus" on that lively art form. Many Circumnavigators have identified photography as a favorite hobby. We have a number of outstanding photographers in our midst, among them Circumnavigator Suzanne Frye who sends us outstanding shots from her many travels. Thanks to Circumnavigator Judy Swanson (Naples Chapter) for the stunning cover shot, featuring Hatshepsut Temple in Luxor, Egypt. Her recount of Egypt travel and other great photos are featured. Other feature stories show some outstanding photos, while our Photo Spread reviews the winning shots from our last photo contest.

Finally, "Through My Lens" shows wonderful bird photography by esteemed photographer Circumnavigator Larry Glick.



Enjoy!

Luck to you,  
*David*  
David A. Mink





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## ***Thanks to***

**Circumnavigator  
Judy Swanson  
(Naples Chapter)** for  
the stunning cover shot,  
featuring Hatshepsut  
Temple in Luxor, Egypt.



# CLUB NEWS



## ***Order of Magellan goes to Lonely Planet team***

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The founders of the Lonely Planet guidebooks, Tony and Maureen Wheeler, were honored with the Circumnavigators Club's highest award. The Magellan event was held late last year at the Union League Club in New York City. The Lonely Planet series has sold millions of copies and guided multitudes of travelers around the world. Tony and Maureen are true travel experts with many miles under their belts. They gave a lively presentation of their world travels. The Wheelers join a distinguished list of Magellan honorees including adventurers, writers, politicians and astronauts. This is the first time that a husband/wife team have been honored.

## ***Dynamic Duo Celebrated***

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These best friends are world famous. Now members of the Circumnavigators Club, Ellie Hamby and Sandy Hazlip inspired travelers by circling the globe in 80 days at the age of 80. Due to Covid, they were actually 81, but who is counting. The dynamic pair met club members and gave a lively presentation at the Yale Club late last year. They recounted the fascinating story of their adventure, during which they rode camels, dog sledged in the Arctic, braved 20-foot waves in the Drake Passage, and the list goes on. During their trip they were featured in numerous news stories, even with a spoof on Saturday Night Live. We are gratified to have them in the ranks of our historic organization.



## ***Circumnavigators Enjoy House of Lords***

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The UK Chapter, hosted by Circumnavigator Lord Richard Faulkner, gathered for their annual dinner at the House of Lords in London during the holiday season. Thanks goes to Chapter President Helen Jenkins for organizing what she describes as the "best event ever." About a dozen Americans joined the party which featured speaker Per Besson with his program "Lessons from a Polyglot's Travels through 193 UN counties." The event was sold out as usual. The next House of Lords dinner will be on December 18, 2024. Members who want to attend are urged to contact Helen as soon as possible.



Past Presidents with Maureen and Tony

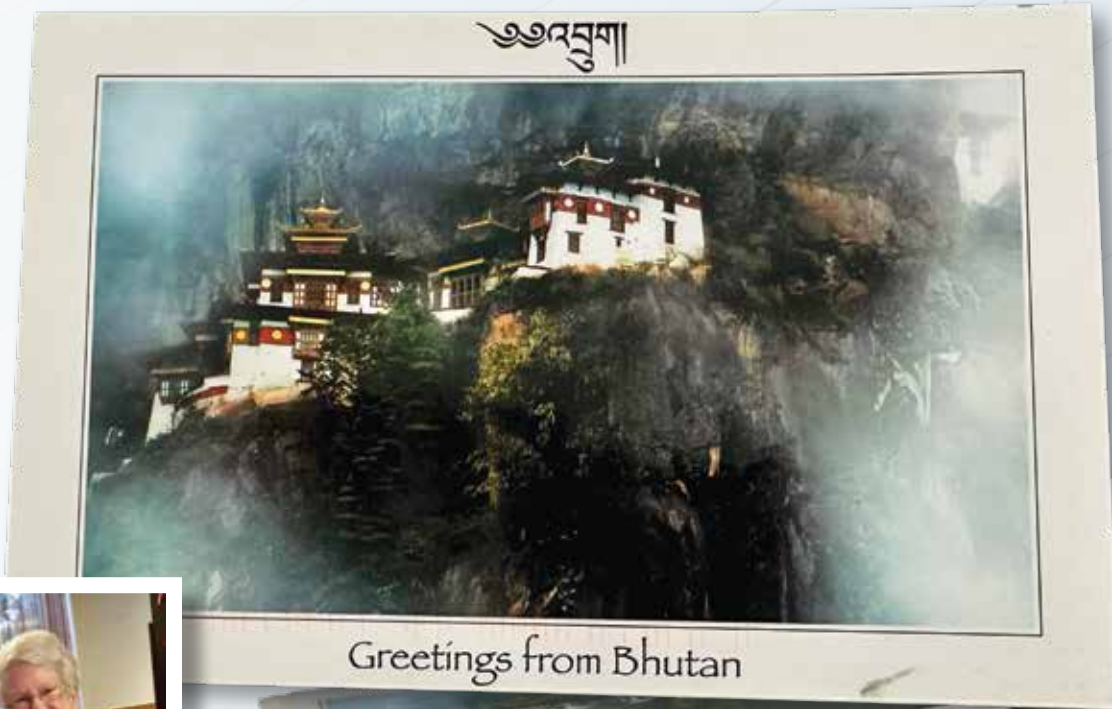


Helen Jenkins and Lord Faulkner



At the House of Lords

# Collector's Corner



Tom and Aunt Doris



BY CIRCUMNAVIGATOR KATIE KOONTZ  
(AT LARGE, CALIFORNIA)

Circumnavigator Tom Van Horn's career brought him around the world – literally.

"I was actually circumnavigating every quarter," Tom said.

His work for Accenture took him from his home in Colorado to the East Coast and beyond on a regular basis, including places in Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

The best way to keep in touch? Postcards. He would use these handwritten notes to connect with loved ones while he was on the road, starting with his daughters. His list eventually grew to about 15 different people who he would write to from each city he visited.

Writing postcards "gives you a chance to pause, to think where you are and appreciate your location. Then you are able to communicate that to someone who's never been where you are and will never be where you've been," he says.

Tom's Aunt Doris, now 94-years old, was one of the select recipients of his cards. Recently, Aunt Doris gave Tom a stack of postcards that she had kept from his travels – 147 to be exact. These postcards were written over a span of about 12 years.

"Reading through the cards was a special treat because I remembered pretty much where I was when I wrote each card," he said.

Today, Tom (Palm Beach Chapter President) is an avid Facebook user. He sees the link between the handwritten postcards he's sent over the years and the way that social media helps bring memories back.

"The reason I use Facebook is like the reason my aunt sent me all those postcards. When I wake up in the morning and I get a memory from Facebook that says 'here's where you were 12 years ago'... that's what Facebook's really good for," he says. Now he has the "real" things, too. Thanks to Aunt Doris.

# Collector's Corner



## A HONEYMOON CIRCUMNAVIGATION

BY CIRCUMNAVIGATORS  
ISAIAH AKIN AND RACHEL BARNETT  
(WASHINGTON DC CHAPTER)

We love to travel, so, when we got married, we knew our honeymoon had to be a grand adventure. Our friend, President of the Washington DC Chapter Jason Chang, had brought us to several Club meetings, sparking the idea to make our first circumnavigation. We settled on a month-long trip to seven countries: Japan, Thailand, Cambodia, Egypt, Jordan, Greece and England.

We used our accumulated airline points to get the tickets, and used the savings to hire some local guides and drivers. We also made pins that said "just married" in the language of each country, a move which resulted in lots of smiles, warm wishes and free desserts wherever we went.

Our favorite country of the trip was Japan. We enjoyed the eerie-quiet modernity of Tokyo, but it was the peacefulness of Kyoto that we will always remember. Our favorite spot was Saihō-ji temple, commonly called the Moss Temple. We had to send in a request to visit the temple, along with a self-addressed envelope (complete with Japanese postage), several months in advance. And shortly before our wedding we received the reply, a pass that would allow us entry on the day we would be in the city.

We arrived in the morning, and the nuns and monks walked us through the process. We sat at a table with a handful of other visitors (mostly Japanese religious pilgrims) and traced sutras with calligraphy brushes to get into an appropriate meditative state. Then we were allowed to wander the beautiful garden.

The peaceful two-tiered garden has over 120 types of moss growing on every surface, making it one of the greenest places we had ever seen. As we sat on a bench, a white crane landed in one of the ponds to hunt – a good omen for our marriage.



On the circumnavigation we saw numerous ancient sites, from the pyramids of Giza and the Treasury at Petra to the Parthenon in Athens. But our favorite was Angkor Thom complex, including Angkor Wat. Its beauty and history were mesmerizing. In an effort to spend as much time in an air conditioned car as possible (we have never been hotter than we were in Cambodia), we also drove out to Banteay Srei, or the Women's Citadel. This pink sandstone is one of the best preserved temples, with its impressive ornately carved surfaces, busty goddesses and animal-headed guardians.

Even though we were on our honeymoon, we also visited some friends during the trip. We stayed with our friend John in Thailand, and he was able to guide us to the best masseuses, a humane elephant rescue, and the Sanctuary of Truth. In Greece we stayed with our friend Kostas, a professor of Byzantine history, who gave

us a unique perspective on our visit to Thessaloniki, showed us the best pastry shops, and let us sample olive oil from his own grove of trees.

We ended our circumnavigation in London. Jason Chang pulled some strings with the UK Chapter President, Helen Jenkins, and we were lucky enough to meet Circumnavigator Lord Richard Faulkner at the House of Lords. He allowed us to sit with him during debate, and then took us over to the Commons as well. This was particularly interesting for us since we both work in American politics. A delightful tour guide, he also took us to tea in the Lord's dining room. It was an amazing finale to our journey.

We are delighted to now be part of the amazing Circumnavigators Club.





**Circumnavigators Sue Murphy and Suzanne Frye (New York Metro)** took an extensive tour of Egypt that included a festive New Year's Eve in Cairo.



**Circumnavigator Sally Cole (Palm Beach Chapter)** and her husband Larry circumnavigated the island of Madagascar on a three-week cruise on the ship Hebridean Sky. They had a great trip with many stunning photos. Luckily, they narrowly missed two cyclones that came through the region.





**Circumnavigators Ellie Hamby and Sandy Hazelip (At Large–Texas)** are the best friends who circled the world at the age of 81 with much press notice. The Dynamic Duo now reports in from their latest trip to South America. Ellie writes: “We have been in Brazil for ten days and just came from the Amazon where we had some exciting adventures. We went Alligator hunting and caught two (they were released back to the wild). We then went Piranha fishing and caught four which we ate in a Piranha Stew that evening. I did some swimming in the river with the Pink Dolphins. We had a blast and are headed next to the salt plains in Bolivia.”



**Circumnavigator Helen Jenkins (President UK Chapter)** visited Morocco where she enjoyed the wonderful Jardin Majorelle in Marrakesh and the ancient town of Lalla Takeroust.

Club Treasurer Jim Franch (Chicago Chapter) had a close encounter with a lemur in Madagascar.



Circumnavigators Virginia Foster and Arthur Hammonds (Pacific Southwest Chapter) visited Half Moon Cay, a private island in the Bahamas.



Honorary member Bertrand Piccard asked us to share his newest project with Circumnavigators. Order of Magellan honoree, the Swiss explorer having achieved the first circumnavigations of the globe in a balloon and more recently in a solar aircraft, unveils his new emission-free project: a green hydrogen-powered airplane to fly non-stop around the Earth, demonstrating how concrete solutions can help build a cleaner and more efficient world. With science company Syensqo as the main partner of this technological, environmental and human adventure, the limits of innovation will be pushed back to enable the development of the airplane, built in France by engineer and navigator Raphaël Dinelli.



In addition to her world travels, **Circumnavigator Suzanne Frye (New York Metro)** visited Brooks Falls in Katmai National Park, Alaska, where she got a close up view of bears in the wild.

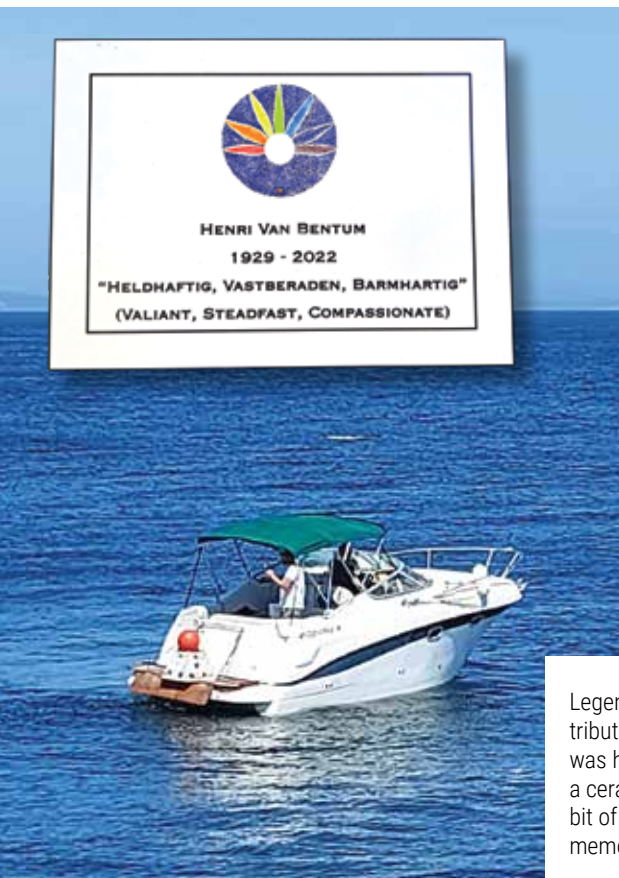


**Circumnavigator Anthony Bailey (Palm Beach Chapter)** and his fiancé Farley Rentchler travelled to Algeria and Libya. Anthony notes: "Both countries, which are still very much closed to tourists, turned out to be a truly amazing Aladdin's cave of rich cultural and historic sites. The locals could not have been more gracious is welcoming us. The Roman ruins in both countries are rightly considered some of the finest you can see anywhere in the world."





**Circumnavigator Sherri Donovan (New York Metro)** traveled to mainland Yemen, a country way off the beaten track for tourists these days. Her trip included the UNESCO awe-inspiring town of Hadramout, the Manhattan of Arabia Shibam with its ancient mud skyscrapers soaring out of the desert landscape. She reports, "Driving through Wadi Do'an with its panoramic views of sandstone cliffs and stops at picturesque villages like Buqshan village with its colored palaces was magnificent. The ancient UNESCO caved, arched market in Tarim is still active and honey is a not to be missed delicacy. Luck had its day when a cousin of Osama Bin Laden let me in to his childhood home in Rabat Bashin village." She also visited the shrine and burial place of Prophet Hood, believed to be a direct descendant of Noah, Sufi shrines and the tallest mosque minaret in Yemen, white colored standing narrowly at 150 feet.



Legendary **Circumnavigator Henri Van Bentum (At Large—Canada)** received a special tribute in his home country. Henri, a traveler and artist who passed over the horizon in 2022, was honored with a living reef memorial in the Salish Sea, Victoria, B.C. Henri's reef, with a ceramic plaque seen here, is composed of his ashes, crushed oyster shells, sand and a bit of low-alkaline cement. Soon it will be inhabited by many sea creatures. Like his life, his memory remains vivid and strong.



# EGYPT CLOSE UP

BY CIRCUMNAVIGATOR JUDY SWANSON (NAPLES CHAPTER)

ALONG WITH MY HUSBAND, CIRCUMNAVIGATOR BILL CAVELL, I VENTURED ON A THREE-WEEK TRIP TO EGYPT THAT INCLUDED CAIRO, LUXOR, ASWAN AND ABU SIMBEL. IT WAS A GREAT CHANCE TO SEE THIS WONDERFUL COUNTRY CLOSE UP.



We never take group trips, so I planned this trip myself with the help of Lonely Planet. Accompanied by two Canadian friends, we were able to focus on photography, always looking for the best light.

In Giza we stayed at the Mena House hotel and had a small van with a guide and driver. We covered the major sights and museums, but were disappointed that we were not allowed to deviate from the planned stops. Into the second day we jettisoned the van and guide and struck out in Islamic Cairo on our own. That was great. We loosely follow two walking guide books.

Our next stop was Luxor, where we spent three nights at the Al Moudira Hotel on the West Bank. Our room even had a fountain. I am an architect, so I try to select hotels more based on architectural charm than stars. We then hired a guide and driver for two days— one on the East Bank and another on the West Bank. The day on the West Bank, we got up early to be the first ones into magical Hatshepsut. The next day we were at Luxor Temple after sunset.

We then boarded "The Agatha", a dayhaybi with only 10 staterooms, run by Nour El Nil. A dayhaybi is a type of sailboat used to sail up the Nile. It has no motor, but in our case was accompanied by a tug to nudge us into our evening moorings. The rooms were on the lower deck and the upper deck

was for lounging and dining. In the evening we anchored either on uninhabited islands or lightly populated shoreline. When on the shore we went for late afternoon walks through villages or into the desert.

Our final stop on the cruise was Aswan where we stayed three nights at the Old Cataract Hotel.

We loved the hotel's history, unique charm and views of the Nile. We did some of the sightseeing via a felucca, a small sailboat. One of the unique highlights of the trip was a visit to the Daraw camel market.

Our last destination was Abu Simbel. We stayed in a Nubian hotel, which was architecturally interesting, but a little short on stars.

We enjoyed having breakfast in a small boat as the sun was rising on Abu Simbel.

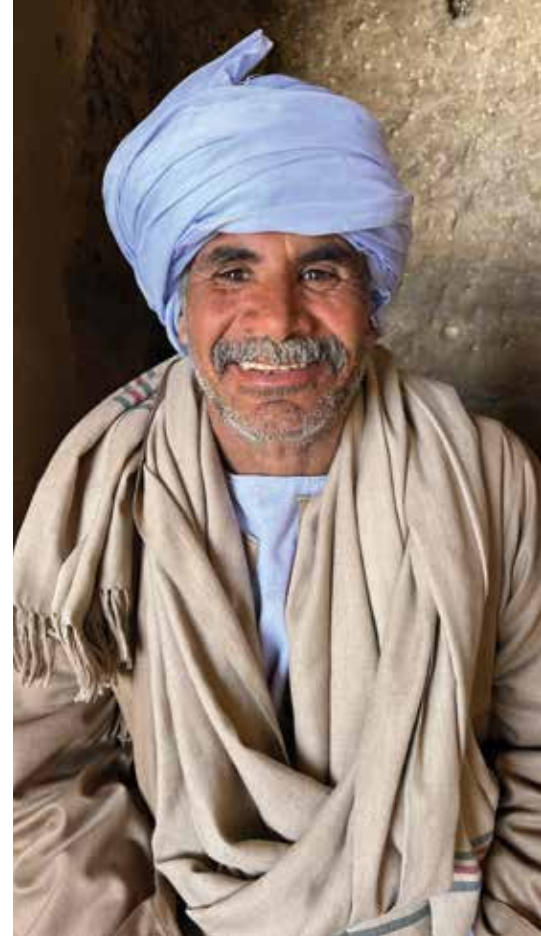
In conclusion, I have to admit that for years we were apprehensive about Egyptian travels because of concerns about risks, safety, etc. However, during our three-week travels, we never felt at risk or concerned about safety either with or without guides.

In all the worldly travels of our Circumnavigators, there are very few countries with the density of thousands years of history, cultures, along with pyramids, temples, mummies, hieroglyphics in such a beautiful desert environment as Egypt.

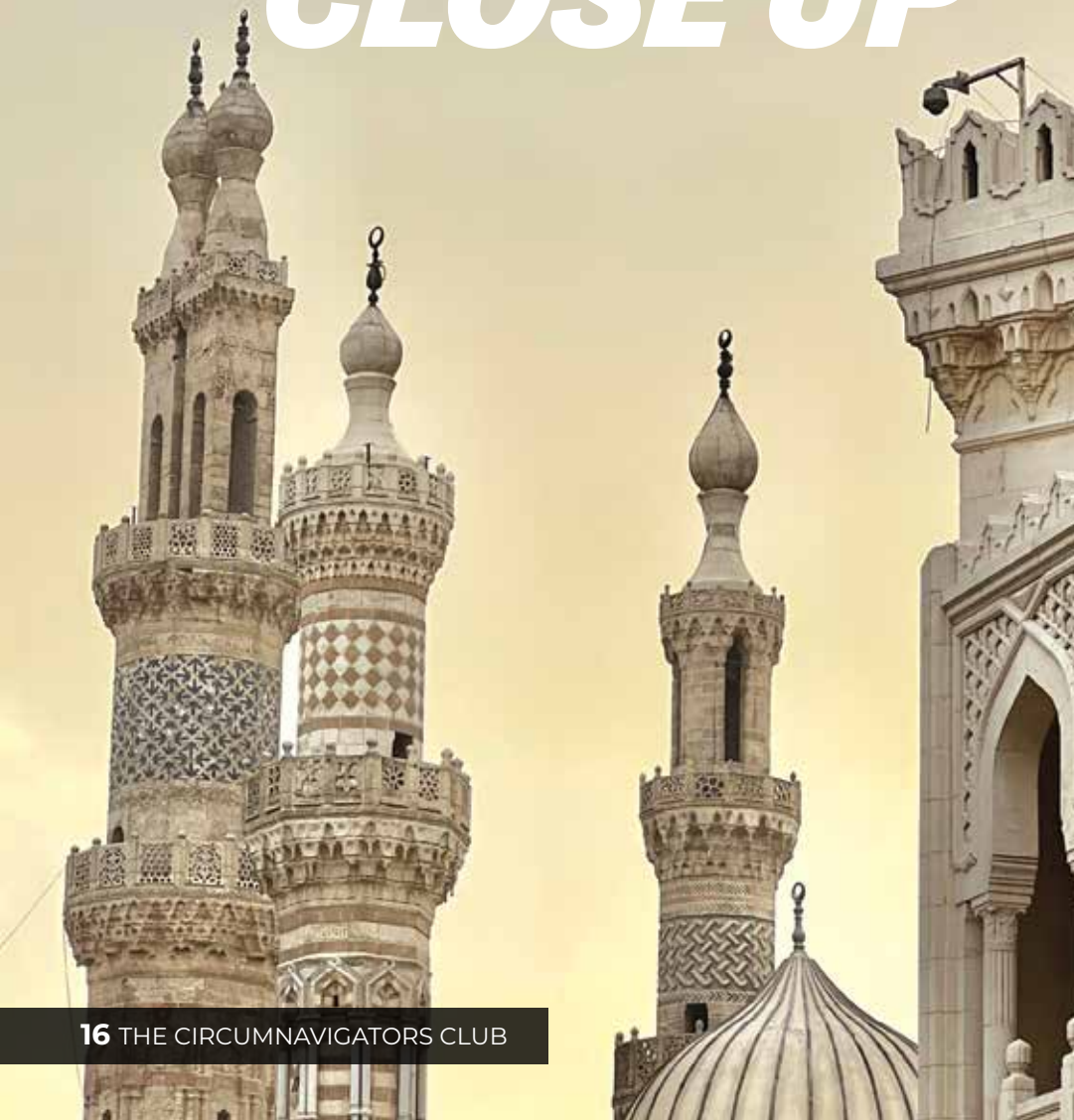


Judy Swanson

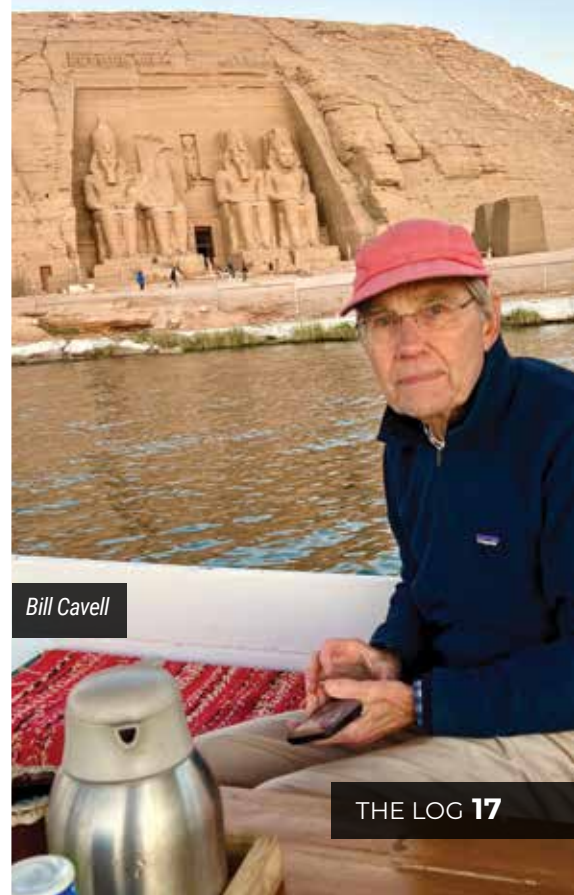
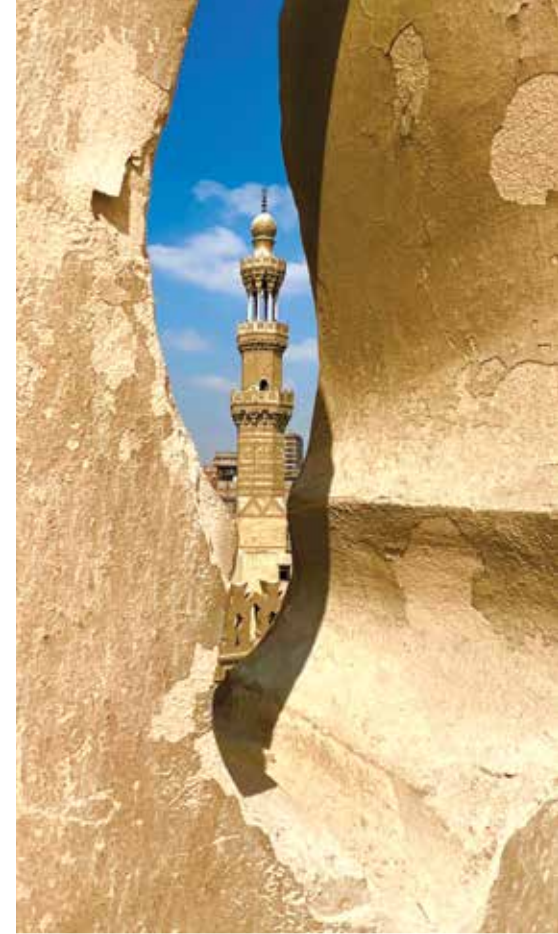




# EGYPT CLOSE UP







Bill Cavell



# ***BARGING THROUGH*** **800 YEARS OF HISTORY**

BY CONTRIBUTING EDITOR ROGER WEATHERBURN-BAKER

**WE ARE IN THE REGION OF CHAMPAGNE IN NORTHEAST FRANCE, AT HAUTVILLIERS, THE BIRTHPLACE OF DOM PERIGNON, THE BENEDICTINE MONK AND ABBEY CELLARMASTER WHOSE NAME IS FOREVER SYNONYMOUS WITH THE SPARKLING BUBBLY SHIPPED FROM HERE ACROSS THE GLOBE.**

Looking at the seemingly endless rows of vines parading in neat regimental file through the valleys and over the hills here, it's hard to imagine death and destruction once raged across this verdant landscape. Armored knights from the kingdoms of England and France clashed across these fields in the 15th century during the Hundred Years War.

A reminder of these events is the magnificent, 800-year-old cathedral of Notre-Dame de Reims, a triumph of vaulted Gothic architecture where 33 kings of France have been crowned. Captured by the English during the century-long war it was famously retaken in 1429 by troops led by Jeanne d'Arc, whose coronation of Charles VII here was her crowning achievement and a turning point in the war.



## BATTLE OF BELLEAU WOOD

In more recent times, one of the most important engagements in U.S. Marine Corps history, that continues to have significant impact on military culture today, occurred in this same countryside. It was the pivotal World War I Battle of Belleau Wood in June 1918.

That summer, a German army force had rolled across northern France to reach Chateau-Thierry near the River Marne, a scant 59 miles from the nation's capital. French and allied forces fought desperately to hold back the German advance, but on June 1 the Germans punched through the allied defensive line.

In response, an American Marine battalion forced marched six miles through the night to plug the gap, which they achieved as dawn rose on June 2. By evening, the U.S. forces held a 12-mile front across the fields and the Germans had suffered serious losses. They had retreated to become heavily entrenched in thick trees on high ground known as Belleau Wood overlooking the river valley.

On June 6, the Marines advanced toward the German position racing with bayonets fixed through waist-high wheat fields to be mercilessly mowed down by withering fire from German machine-gun nests hidden among the tree line above. The casualties sustained that day were the highest in

Marine Corps history, but they achieved a foothold in the woods.

In the ensuing days, the Marines attacked a further six times during what became the first large-scale battle fought by American soldiers in World War I. They suffered over 9,000 casualties, but their ferocious determination earned the respect of the enemy, who famously nicknamed them the Devil Dogs, after the vicious hounds of German folklore.

For many Marines, Belleau Wood is hallowed ground, considered the birthplace of their famed *esprit de corps*. Many still travel here today to salute their heroic fallen comrades and drink the water from a nearby spring, which folklore says assures them another ten years of life.

## LA NOUVELLE ETOILE

Aside from these historic sites, this lush and bountiful countryside is, of course, famous for producing the wine popped open at almost every celebratory occasion around the world. It's said that one vine here equals one bottle of champagne. In 2022, about 16,000 growers produced a total of 325 million bottles of champagne.

This summer, we were fortunate to sail through this historic and fertile landscape, being pampered with gourmet meals of local delicacies paired with local wines in the comfort of a 129-foot long, 17-foot-wide river barge. Converted from a heavy-duty transporter to a hotel ship 20 years ago, *La Nouvelle Etoile* is indeed a new star on the River Marne, boasting Wi-Fi, air conditioning, four en suite guest rooms, an elevator between decks, a hot tub on the foredeck, a spacious well-stocked saloon complete with piano, and a dining room beautifully laid nightly with Wedgewood porcelain and Christofle silver.

But what makes a lazy summer cruise on this ship truly incomparable is the genial husband-and-wife owner/hosts Bill and Lisa Desmond, supported by a veteran team that made the boat, the catering and the excursions flow seamlessly. Their crew includes a captain, a driver/guide, a superb chef, and a pair of delightful bilingual hostesses who do everything from serving evening cocktails to making the beds.



Devil Dog Fountain. Legend has it the Marines who drink from the fountain will survive battle.

# BARGING THROUGH 800 YEARS OF HISTORY

## RIVER MARNE

We were four couples collected from our hotels and driven 90 minutes in a Mercedes Sprinter northeast of Paris to the ancient village of Epernay, the *de facto* center of the champagne industry. Here on a tranquil stretch of the River Marne is where we were to begin our cruise. Here too is the famed Avenue de Champagne, a street flanked on both sides by elegant chateaux emblazoned with so many of the world's best-known champagnes it reads like the *carte des vines* at Maxim's Paris.

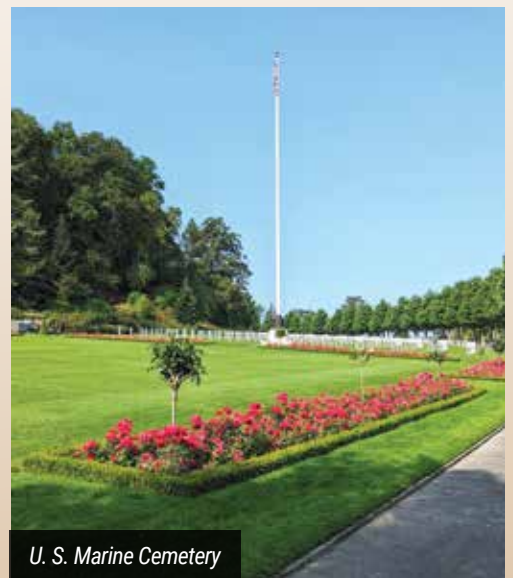
We were plunged straight into the spirit of things with a private tasting in Moët et Chandon's boardroom and a tour of their extensive network of underground wine cellars founded by Claude Moët in 1743. Napoleon was so impressed with Monsieur Moët's magic elixir he awarded him the Legion d'honneur. Today, Moët et Chandon, now routinely consumed by royal families around the world, is the world's best-selling champagne.



Cathedral of Notre Dame in Reims



Roger and Paula



U. S. Marine Cemetery

## **BARGING THROUGH 800 YEARS OF HISTORY**

### **QUEEN OF CHEESES**



It may not be so well known that this Isle de France region between the rivers Seine and Marne is also known as the birthplace of the Queen of Cheeses, the mouth-watering soft and delightfully creamy cheese known as Brie, first created by monks around Meaux in the 7th century. Here, we enjoyed another private tour of a spotless production plant, this time watching huge wheels of Brie soften almost as quickly as our will to resist.

I thought a mid-summer cruise on the River Marne through hillsides of slumbering vines would mean kicking back in a deckchair with a good book while a hazy world of sunflowers and dragonflies drifted by to the sound of gentle lapping in the shallows. Well, it did mean that, but daily excursions delivered so much more. We heard tell of kings and queens, saints and sinners, battles and treaties, nuns and monks, abbeys and castles, food and wine.

### **SUNSET ON THE SEINE**

In the end, we sailed back to Paris gliding past dark green poplars, linden trees, weeping willows, and river-level views of Notre Dame, the Louvre, and the Eiffel Tower awash in the glow of a golden summer evening.

Our week of wonderfully varied experiences in champagne country brought to mind a famous Dom Pérignon quote. When he first tasted his trailblazing blend of grapes from multiple vineyards, he famously cried, "Come quickly, I'm tasting stars!".

**La Nouvelle Etoile accommodates 8 passengers and operates seven-day, six-night cruises between Paris and Epernay during June and July annually, along with several other European itineraries between the months of April and October.**

**For more information visit [www.lanouvelleetoile.com](http://www.lanouvelleetoile.com).**



# ***HISTORY IN THE AIR***

## ***FLYING ACROSS AMERICA IN BOEING'S 247D***

BY CIRCUMNAVIGATOR BRIAN BAUM  
(PACIFIC NW CHAPTER)

**YEARS AGO, I WAS PART OF THE CREW THAT FLEW THE MUSEUM OF FLIGHT'S 1933-VINTAGE BOEING 247D AIRLINER ON A CROSS-COUNTRY TRIP FROM SEATTLE TO OSHKOSH, WISCONSIN, FOR THE EXPERIMENTAL AIRCRAFT ASSOCIATION'S AIRVENTURE FLY-IN. IT WAS QUITE AN ADVENTURE.**



## HISTORY OF THE BOEING 247

Considered the first modern airliner, the Boeing 247 set the standard for commercial aviation in the early 1930s. The sleek, all-metal aircraft was nearly 50 percent faster than the tri-motor aircraft then in service. Boeing's design was so advanced that United Air Lines bet its future on replacing its entire fleet with an unprecedented order for 60 aircraft while still on the drawing board. Even with its revolutionary design, the ten-passenger 247 was dominant for just over a year, surpassed by the larger Douglas DC-2 and DC-3. Most 247s (including the Museum's) were upgraded as "D" models to compete with the superior Douglas airliners. Seventy-five Boeing 247s were delivered from March 1933 to November 1934. Completely restored by a dedicated corps of volunteers, the Museum of Flight's 247D is only one of four survivors and was the last example to fly.

## THE TRANSCONTINENTAL JOURNEY

A total of seven crew members were aboard what was then the oldest flying Boeing airliner for the four-day, 2,000-mile, eastbound trip. Two Boeing test pilots shared the flying duties, four others took care of the maintenance of the aircraft, and I coordinated the public relations en route. What follows is a summary of our trip.

**Day One:** Delayed for three hours by weather, the 247D departed Seattle's Boeing Field. After crossing the Cascade Mountain range, fuel stops were made at Spokane, Washington, and Missoula, Montana. On the way to the first overnight stop at Billings, Montana, the aircraft reached 9,600 feet for its slightly turbulent journey over the Rocky Mountains.

**Day Two:** This day marked the 66th anniversary of our 247's entry into airline service with Pacific Air Transport, which

later became part of United Air Lines. In celebration, the pilots chose a less direct (but scenic) route to South Dakota. Flying low and slow over the Custer Battlefield, Devil's Tower, and Mount Rushmore reminded those onboard what the golden age of air travel was like, when pilots circled important landmarks along the route for the enjoyment of their passengers. A refueling stop was made at the South Dakota capital of Pierre, then on to the second overnight stop in Sioux Falls.

**Day Three:** An early morning departure from Sioux Falls took the 247D over the heartland of America to Mason City, Iowa. The local television stations took time from their coverage of the three presidential candidates in town that day to witness a unique sight. Two hours after leaving Mason City, the impressive Chicago skyline appeared. The aircraft passed the lakefront before landing at Meigs Field, where correspondents for both Chicago daily newspapers and Lester Holt, then the WBBM Television news anchor, joined us for a short flight.

**Day Four:** On to Oshkosh! Just one and one-half flying hours north of Chicago is the largest aviation event of its kind, the annual AirVenture fly-in, which draws more than 11,000 aircraft and 800,000 visitors annually. Over the next five days, the crowds took advantage of the opportunity for an up-close look at the 247D. The aircraft flew twice more during the show, once for an air-to-air photo session and again as a performer in the airshow. With everyone anxious to get home to Seattle, the return journey took just two days. The 247D made its final flight on April 2, 2016, when it went on permanent display at the Museum of Flight.

Our flight to Oshkosh provided priceless exposure for the Museum to hundreds of thousands of people at the airshow and countless others worldwide through television reports and newspaper, magazine, and internet articles. More than just a visit to an airshow, the journey of the 247D helped keep a unique chapter of aviation history alive.

This year, the Oshkosh event will be held July 22-28.



# A WEEK IN THE KINGDOM OF BHUTAN



BY CIRCUMNAVIGATOR ELIZABETH RIDER  
(NEW YORK METRO)

The Kingdom of Bhutan (or Druk Yul in Dzongkha, the local language) is an ideal destination for Circumnavigators: it is off the beaten path, is a fascinating blend of the deeply traditional and the modern, and its upbeat citizens embody the country's mission of imparting happiness.

Travel to Bhutan is tightly regulated by the government to prevent over tourism, so

advance planning is necessary. Visitors require time-specific visas and must pay a steep per-diem tourism tax.

My husband David and I hired a local tour company, Bhutan Swallowtail, to help plan our itinerary and secure the necessary flights and visas required for our week-long visit last June.

Two airlines service Bhutan's Paro International Airport-- Druk Air and Bhutan

Airlines. They operate several direct flights weekly from various Asian cities. We flew to Bhutan on an early morning flight from Bangkok. Because Bhutan's Paro Airport has one of the world's most challenging approaches - navigating hairpin turns through the surrounding Himalayas and heavy reliance on visual guidance - only a few pilots (24 when we were there) are qualified to fly into the country. Nevertheless, it is a beautiful flight: as we descended into Paro, we soaked up stunning views of the Himalayas, including Kangchenjunga, the world's third tallest mountain, as we sipped on Bhutanese cordyceps tea.

Upon our arrival, we were met by our guide and driver, childhood friends who shared a deep appreciation for their country and had great senses of humor as well. Dressed in traditional attire, they greeted us with "Kuzu zangpo la" - "hello." They stayed with us for the entire trip. With them, we felt as if we were traveling with old friends as we uncovered the rich history and culture, deep spirituality, natural beauty, and spicy food of Bhutan.

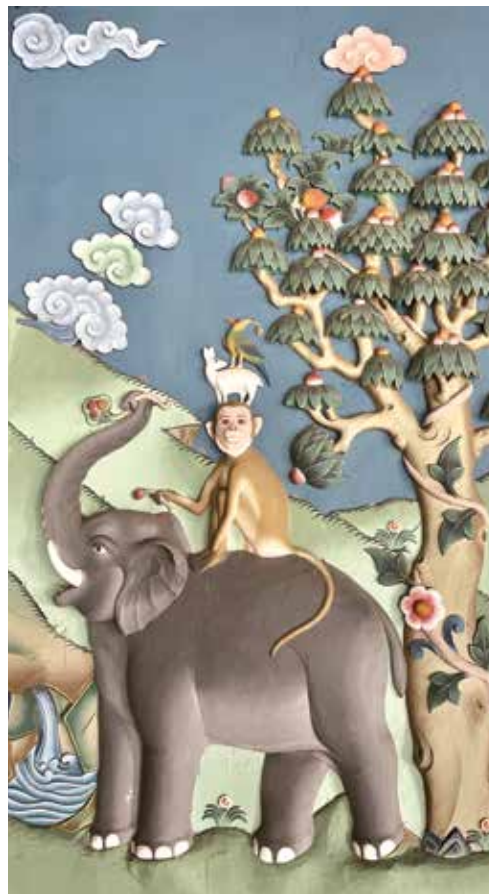






Our guides, along with the other Bhutanese we encountered, made us feel very welcome throughout our visit. Bhutan takes to heart the old Buddhist fable of four harmonious friends (an elephant, a monkey, a rabbit, and a bird) which is full of lessons about the importance of respect, cooperation, generosity, selflessness, friendship, and love of nature, among others. That these characteristics are genuinely embodied by the Bhutanese people is evident throughout the Kingdom, and as a reminder, the “four friends” are depicted on murals, paintings, carvings, and sculptures everywhere.

As “four harmonious friends,” we together with our guides hiked to remote temples and monasteries perched up high in the mountains, soaked up the spectacular scenery, marveled at the architecture of the dzongs (fortresses), enjoyed the delicious local cuisine, which includes many chilis (the national dish of Bhutan is called ema datshi or “chili cheese”), and learned essential phrases in Dzongkha, the language of Bhutan.



Our first stop was Thimphu, Bhutan's capital. There are no traffic lights in all of Bhutan and only one officer who directs traffic at the capital's single roundabout, so getting around is easy.

For hotel accommodations, we first based ourselves at Le Meridien in Thimphu, and later at Le Meridien in nearby Paro. The Meridien in Thimphu is centrally located in the capital and is more of a business hotel. By contrast, Le Meridien Paro, a ten-minute drive from the center of town, is beautifully set along the river and affords excellent views of the Himalayas. Both hotels have friendly and attentive staff, spacious rooms, and extensive breakfast and dinner buffets.

In and near Thimphu, we were able to experience various aspects of Bhutanese life. We visited the Tashichho Dzong, whose architecture and decoration are beautiful, especially its painted wood carvings. While there, we had the rare opportunity of seeing the resident monks interacting in the courtyard without any other tourists present. We enjoyed watching an archery competition, as archery is the national sport of Bhutan. We learned about traditional arts and crafts at the Choki Traditional Art School, and made a visit to the Gagyel Lhundrup Weaving Centre, where we purchased a kira, the local dress for women, which took the weaver a year and a half to make. We had a chance to meet her and learn about her background and weaving expertise. At the post office, we were able to create custom Bhutanese stamps with our pictures to use on the postcards we sent to family and friends back home.

In order to see Bhutan's natural beauty and remote historical Buddhist sites, we spent a lot of our time there hiking and trekking.

On our first trek to Dodeydrak Monastery, we passed colorful prayer flags and soaked up the sweeping views of Thimphu Valley. Bhutan's constitution mandates that at least 60% of the country's land be covered in forest, so we encountered picturesque landscapes at every turn. After three hours of hiking, we arrived at the monastery, which was nestled in the lush hillside and is home to 150 monks. We visited the monastery on an auspicious day in the Buddhist calendar and had a profound experience sitting with the monks as they chanted, meditated, and drummed in the

# A WEEK IN THE KINGDOM OF **BHUTAN**

incense-filled temples. On our hike down we hung our own prayer flags along the way. Our playful guide and driver, very much in tune with the latest technology despite preferring traditional Bhutanese dress, made hilarious TikTok videos of us as we hiked!

We spent a morning at the Dochula Pass, with its 108 chortens (stupas), and panoramic views of the Himalayas. We visited the beautiful Memorial Chorten which we circumambulated with many local people and where we spun prayer wheels. Later, we visited the Great Buddha Dordenma, nearly 175 feet tall, which overlooks the city below.

While based in Paro, we set off early on an all-day hike to Bumdra Monastery. Along the way, we passed many white prayer flags honoring the dead. We climbed from 8,000 feet (the elevation of Thimphu) to 13,000 feet and had extraordinary views all the way to the top. When we reached the monastery and campsite, lunch and ginger tea awaited us. The meal tasted exceptionally good after our challenging ascent. Once back down, we were exhausted but invigorated after completing the seven-hour (roundtrip) hike.

The grand finale of our trekking was our hike to Paro Taktsang, the Tiger's Nest Monastery, located on the cliffside overlooking the Paro



*David and Elizabeth at Tiger's Nest*





Valley. Often depicted in publicity for the Kingdom, the setting of the monastery is dramatic indeed! Paro Taktsang was built in 1692 and is where Guru Rinpoche first meditated and introduced Buddhism to Bhutan. According to the legend, the Guru was carried from Tibet on the back of a tigress, thus the name Tiger's Nest. We were fortunate to have had perfect weather on our ascent there - sunshine and crystal clear blue skies - despite it being the start of monsoon season in Bhutan. Once back at our hotel, we rested and recovered from the strenuous day in a traditional medicinal hot stone bath with artemisia herbs before eating a huge farewell Bhutanese feast.

On our final morning, we visited Kyichu Lhakhang, one of the oldest temples in Bhutan, where we offered a stupa with our prayers and good wishes for family and friends across the globe.

We left Bhutan with full hearts and immense gratitude for the opportunity to visit this warm, friendly, and fascinating country.

Tashi Delek (or "Luck to You!" in Dzongkha)



# SCYTHES AND SLIVOVICA



## A TALE OF HERITAGE AND HOSPITALITY IN SLOVAKIA

BY CIRCUMNAVIGATOR JOSH DATKO  
(AT LARGE, COLORADO)

Over a year ago, I became serious about finding my Slovak roots. Officially I am now a "Slovak Living Abroad" which is a certificate from the Slovak government recognizing my heritage to Slovakia via my great grandparents. Over a hundred years ago, my great grandparents left a small village in central Slovakia called Pohorelá and headed for Pennsylvania like many Slovak immigrants in that time. Last summer, I went to visit this familial village.

The problem was I didn't know anyone there. So, I emailed the editor of the village newsletter and explained my intentions. He suggested contacting a friend of his and just like that, I was invited to stay with my new friend's family for four days. I was soon to experience the overwhelming hospitality for which Slovaks are famous.

My hosts picked me up in Poprad after a five-hour train ride from Bratislava. We had a brief lunch at a local pub consisting of a well-stacked hamburger and beer as I think my host was testing my preference for alcohol for the next few days. I pulled a classic American move by trying to eat the giant sandwich with my hands before

admitting defeat and switching to a fork and knife – not the best first impression. After lunch, we had an hour drive winding through the low Tatra mountains, and then we finally arrived at Pohorelá.

Only my host, not the rest of the family, spoke English and, at the time, my Slovak language skills were basic. Despite this, I was able, with much help, to communicate with my host's family and friends and learn much about Pohorelá and life in rural Slovakia around the 1900s. For example, my great grandparents most likely walked the 200 km over the mountains to Krakov with not much beside their kroj, the traditional Slovak folk outfit. The Catholic church they attended is still there, even the same baptismal stand, which still has people streaming through it each day. I sat on a bench, most likely where my great grandfather sat, wondering if he had ever thought of his great grandkids.

While I was there, I learned to cut grass with a scythe. Pohorelá is home to the World Scything championship, so I learned expert tips like how to keep the scythe close to ground when returning from a cut. The grass must be half a meter tall or so to cut, but the scythe can make quick work of the grass. I was told that the competition entails cutting a fixed size of grass in the





quickest time. Points are removed for blades of grass over a certain height.

I also had an enthusiastic tour of a small museum which contained wooden models of Slovak life in Pohorelá. The owner of this miniature museum, who was featured on the famous television show "Na Chalupe" (at the cottage), called me a "pioneer" for making this trip but I feel like my great grandparents were more deserving of that title. But maybe then, immigrating to the U.S. was the trend. We ended the night in the village bar with more beer and slivovica cocktail, which is a surprisingly strong and clean plum brandy. I tried a few and I would recommend the pear-flavored variety.

The next morning the village loudspeaker system announced, after playing a brief folk tune, that an entrepreneur would be selling vegetables in the town. His truck seemed popular as we passed him on the way to Dobšinská Ice Cave, which is a UNESCO World Heritage site. Since the cave was thought to be the entrance to hell by those who first discovered, we enjoyed some slivovica, "for a safe return." The cave itself is incredible, large enough that an

Olympic Slovak ice skater practiced in the cave in 1960. My host prepared me, so I wore enough layers to endure the tour.

My generous hosts' enthusiasm for Slovak culture, tradition and history is already paying dividends. Inspired by my trip, my daughter proudly shared the Pohorela coat of arms with her elementary class one day. As I continue the experience of learning the Slovak language and await the outcome of my application for Slovak citizenship, I still think back upon my trip to Pohorela. I wonder what my great grandparents would think of it now.

While the world changes in three generations, family-tree wise, it's not that long. Will my great grandchildren trek to Colorado to get a glimpse of the life "in the old times?" Will they visit a friendly Coloradoan, who will let them stay with them and show them what their ancestors did in the 2020s? If they did perhaps, they will discover that despite the technological, political, and environmental changes, the importance of family, culture, tradition, and knowing when to leave these in pursuit of a better life remain.



Church at Pohorela

# AFRICA FROM THE GROUND UP

BY CIRCUMNAVIGATOR CYNTHIA BASSETT AND LISA KAESER

These days, the term “going on safari” typically brings to mind the savannahs of Kenya and Tanzania. Less commonly considered are the walking safaris pioneered in Zambia that provide an additional, exciting perspective to game drives in the bush country of sub-Saharan Africa.

My niece Lisa and I visited during the peak season of August, when every day opens with a glorious sunrise, fabulous bird and animal sightings and photo opportunities are plentiful, particularly in the early morning and at dusk as wildlife species make their way to the water. We took full advantage of these opportunities as we visited two of Zambia’s pristine national parks, South Luangwa and Lower Zambezi. The government of Zambia works closely with private companies to control access to these parks, ensuring a truly rare experience.

The Bushcamp Company runs the award-winning Mfuwe Lodge and six intimate bush camps within South Luangwa National Park. An easy flight from the capital city of Lusaka, Mfuwe’s airport, only two years old, is a short distance from the Lodge, and no more than two hours from any of the camps. Every room at the Lodge is the definition of comfort, combined with either a view of the bush and its inhabitants, or the lagoon full of happily grunting hippos. The food and drink easily rival any fine restaurants. The night we stayed, we were treated to a performance by a local theatre group on what it was like to live in the bush.

Over the next week, we were fortunate to stay at three of the smaller camps - Kuyenda, Chinden, and Chamilandu. Each has its own character, partially deriving from the lead guide/camp manager. The government requires extensive education and training over several years to become a guide, with walking guides among the most highly certified. This training ensures extensive knowledge that is readily shared with visitors, and the safety of both people and wildlife.



Deeply relaxing accommodations, including a chef’s creations of food from local sources, as well as more typical resort fare, can be in chalets at Mfuwe or thatched huts at the smaller camps, but no detail has been spared.

Activities - usually early and late in the day to take advantage of cooler temperatures - can include the walking safaris, in which you see animals from an appropriate distance (always accompanied by a Fish and Wildlife guard), trees, birds, and other plants. We learned things you might never otherwise hear about, such as the red ebony tree leaves that contain cyanide to discourage consumption, an elephant’s six sets of molars, and how long it takes fungus termites to build one of the famous mounds (hundreds of years). Game drives in sturdy Land Rovers, which allow closer access to the animals, permitted us to view prides of lions, leopards, giraffes, elephants and hippos, many types of antelopes, Cape buffalo, wild dogs, and innumerable bird species.

From Mfuwe we flew to the Jenki airstrip where a 45-minute boat ride on the Zambezi River took us to Chiawa Camp in the Lower Zambezi National Park. This park received its status in 1983, and by 1988 the Cummings family set about establishing the camp, bringing the concept of conservation and “responsible tourism” to Zambia. Being on the river, canoeing and fishing expeditions are offered along with walking and driving safaris, giving an additional dimension to bush activities. Combined with extraordinary food and hospitality, the camp lives up to its commitment to protect these sanctuaries.

Going on safari?  
Zambia should not be missed.





*Lisa and Cynthia*

# EXPLORING ED ON THE MOVE

BY CIRCUMNAVIGATOR ED HOTCHKISS (NEW YORK METRO)

**EDITOR'S NOTE: ED HOTCHKISS IS A VENERABLE WORLD TRAVELER AND GOES BY THE MONIKER EXPLORING ED FOR HIS WEB SITE.**

Recently, my wife, Khadija, and I had events and tours in Europe and Africa. They were spaced out by just a few weeks, so it made no sense to fly home in between to New York. So, we ended up traveling for almost three months to 13 countries in those two continents and Asia. Here are some of the highlights.

Our first event was the 10th Annual Trans Danube Swim. The event was started by Bubo, a Slovakian travel company, to showcase the Danube and Bratislava. We had friends either swimming or being spectators like us. Over 1,500 swimmers attempted the course and most finished within 30 minutes. The majority had orange flotation balloons but a few brave ones swam without them.

**Moldova** is the least visited country in Europe, which is surprising given its spectacular monasteries, excellent wineries and Soviet-era monuments. Of particular interest is the breakaway territory of Transnistria (Pridnestrovia), a narrow stretch bordering Ukraine not



recognized by any UN state. In 1992, the newly independent Moldova had a four-month war with Transnistria, then a ceasefire. Its status remains unresolved and it has its own government and currency. The area could not function without Russian support, mostly through free natural gas (by indefinitely postponing past payments, now over \$7 billion). There

are also 1,200 Russian "peacekeeping" soldiers there, although many are Transnistrians with Russian passports. The region has retained Soviet-era symbols, including this huge statue of Lenin.

**Turkmenistan** is a country that has partially opened but visitors must take a guide with them or join a tour. There are some bizarre policies in the white-marbled, capital city of Ashgabat, such as cars can be only one of three colors and must be washed before entering the city. It has an incredible natural phenomenon, the Darvaza Gas Crater (aka the Gates of Hell), a huge burning natural gas cavern lit by hundreds of natural gas fires. Soviet geologists in 1971 were drilling for natural gas in the area when the ground collapsed and the fire has been burning ever since.

**Iraq** was a country I had high expectations for and unbelievably it exceeded them. It has almost everything







*Ed at Gates of Hell*



*Khadija makes a friend*

on my list including 6,000 years of civilization, religious and ethnic diversity, tumultuous recent history and a bustling capital city. We traveled by road from Basra on the Persian Gulf to Kurdistan in the north. We were fortunate to be the only visitors during the most important Yazidi annual pilgrimage. Yazidis are a Kurdish-speaking religious group, indigenous to Iraq, Syria, Turkey and Iran. Their non-Abrahamic religion is based on belief in one God who created the world and entrusted it into the care of seven angels. Throughout their history, Yazidis have endured much systematic violence as they upheld their religion in the face of severe Islamic

persecution and attempts to force them to convert to Islam. We met so many folks there, some in traditional costumes.

**Ukraine** is in the midst of war now but in many places, life goes on with a surprising level of normalcy. However, in Kharkiv in the east, daily life is much more touch and go. It is only a short distance from the front line in the south and the Russian border in the north. Ten days before we arrived, a missile hit near our hotel. The projectile shattered the windows and pot-marked buildings. We went to a village called Kamyanka, about an hour or so drive SE of Kharkiv. The Russians

occupied and destroyed this nondescript village until the Ukrainians liberated it, yet only about 100 of the pre-war 1,000+ inhabitants have come back to rebuild and resettle. I spoke to a few through an interpreter who relied on NGO-provided food and supplies. They appeared happy to see a foreign group and some even gave us Ukrainian flags.

## Kenya

We finished our trip in Kenya to attend the Lamu wedding of Khadija's niece Jihan and her now husband Alexis. Both are entrepreneurs and met in Oxford while studying for their MBAs. She grew up in Mombasa and he, the son of Romanian immigrants, in France. Many of their classmates, now living around the world, attended and danced all night at the wedding.

After this trip, I've been to 136 countries and Khadija's count is 134, but not all the same ones. We are about 70% of the way in seeing all 193 UN members. Our goal is to visit all of them by 2026. So, here's to exploring many more countries and having tons of new, interesting experiences!



*At the Wedding*





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## ISAIAH AKIN



Isaiah is a Legislative Director affiliated with the U.S. Senate having served on several senate committees and worked for multiple U.S. Senators. Splitting his time between Washington, DC and Portland, Oregon, Isaiah completed his circumnavigation in 2023 with his new bride, Rachel Barnett, as part of a worldwide honeymoon. He joins the Washington DC Chapter.

## CHRISTINE ALLENSWORTH



A long-time resident of North Canton, Ohio, Christy enjoys a career as a sales and marketing executive in the healthcare industry. Having visited all 7 continents, she makes the extra effort to include Bangkok as a travel destination in order to visit family. Christy now divides her time between Ohio and Naples, and she will join the Naples chapter.

## JAMES BAMFORD



A resident of Washington, DC, James Bamford is the Distinguished Visiting Professor of National Security at the University of California, Berkeley. He is also an acclaimed author of multiple books related to spies and intelligence. James is a subject matter expert related to intelligence agencies, and has appeared on network television and in film documentaries. He is a member of the Explorers Club and joins the Washington, DC Chapter.

## RACHEL BARNETT



After a brief time as a nuclear and medical physicist, Rachel started her own business as a professional political fundraiser. She recently married Isaiah Akin and together they completed their circumnavigation in 2023 as part of their worldwide honeymoon. A member of the University Club of Washington DC, she splits her time between Oregon and Washington, DC, and joins the Washington DC Chapter.

## CHRISTOPHER BAZINET



A resident of Westbrook, Connecticut, and former IBM executive, Chris is a member of the Plum Island Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee responsible for review of molecular biology-based research protocols related to the ethical use of laboratory animals. He is also a current member and past board member of several organizations including the Conservation Commission, Town of Westbrook. He joins New York Metro.

## KATHERINE BAZINET



A career IBMer, and a resident of Westbrook, Connecticut, Katherine is a technical specialist manager leading a team of technical sellers focused on selling data, artificial intelligence and automation software to insurance and banking clients. Katherine is a member of the Business Advisory Board at Middlesex Community College, and a member of the Board of Directors at the Valley Shore YMCA. She joins New York Metro.

## WARNER BLOW



A resident of Naples, Florida, Warner is the former CEO of Sterling Commerce, Inc., acquired by IBM during his leadership. Warner has traveled to over 40 countries, attained the rank of Captain during his tenure in the U.S. Air Force, and is involved in several philanthropic organizations. Warner founded The Patti O. Blow Research Foundation at Ohio State University in his wife's honor. Warner joins the Naples Chapter.

## RON BOYD



A retired General Motors Executive, Ron lives in Naples, FL, with his wife Barbara. The Boyds spend the summer at their home in Missouri. Ron traveled at an early age as his father's naval career took him to foreign embassies. He has lived in Europe and Asia. He joins the Naples Chapter.

## MARLENE CROSS



A member of the Travelers Century Club, Marlene completed her circumnavigation in 2022. She has traveled to 136 U.N. listed nations and has committed to community service volunteering at several organizations where she has held a residence. Currently, Marlene brings her therapy dog to nursing homes. An avid golfer, Marlene is a resident of Ocean Ridge, Florida, and joins the Palm Beach Chapter.

## SHERRI DONOVAN



Managing her law firm in New York City, Sherri completed her circumnavigation in January, 2023, by traveling to the South Pole. At the pole, she walked around the South Pole marker crossing all 24 meridians of longitude. Sherrie is also a published author, lecturer on legal issues related to family law, and a member of the United States Supreme Court Bar. Sherri joins New York Metro.

## LINDA FREIRE



A co-founder and Chair of the Pan Am Museum Foundation, Linda enjoyed a 25-year career in the airline industry starting as a flight attendant with Pan Am. In 1988, she worked with Pan Am's Emergency Response Team in the U.K. assisting in the aftermath of the Pan Am flight 103 disaster. Linda often speaks to groups on the history of Pan Am. She joins New York Metro.



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## GARY FREY



Gary lives in the Memphis area of Tennessee where he is retired after a career in the aviation business. He traveled extensively in his job with Federal Express. Among the highlights of his career was flying with the giant pandas from China to Washington.

## AGNES (ANNE) GRANATA



Born in Belfast, Northern Ireland, and the daughter of a 4th generation sea captain, Anne lived internationally as an expatriate. Residencies include Mogadishu, Somalia, Caracas, Venezuela, London, England and Jakarta, Indonesia. She also spent 5 years in Los Angeles before settling in Naples, Florida. During her assignments, Anne would teach English as a Secondary Language, and volunteered in the community. She joins the Naples Chapter.

## RICHARD HORWITZ



A resident of New York City, Richard is managing director at Capital Markets Risk Advisors, and has spent his career at blue chip investment houses as an expert of structured financial transactions. Richard has authored several books and teaches courses at City College of New York and Baruch College. He holds a BS, an MBA and a PhD, all from MIT, and joins New York Metro.

## EDWARD HOTCHKISS



Ed has traveled to 136 countries and is the founder of ExploringEd.com where he blogs about his travelers and showcases his photography. A member of the Travelers' Century Club, Ed's career focused on banking until his retirement. He recently published "Station to Station: Exploring the New York City Subway," showcasing his photography. Ed joins New York Metro.

## PATRICIA IASSOGNA



Patricia was a flight attendant with Delta and Pan Am for 17 years before transitioning to a career in law. She spent a decade as a senior partner before joining Chubb insurance where she is presently the managing attorney in Connecticut. Patricia is also an active member of the Board of Directors of the Pan American Museum Foundation and a member of the Pan Am Historical Foundation. Patricia joins New York Metro.

## TIFFANY JUNGCO



A native of the Philippines, Tiff is a marketing manager who describes herself as a "passionate traveler, foodie and artist." Her recent four-month circumnavigation gave her the chance to experience all of her passions. She is also a member of the Philippine Global Explorers and the Philippine Debate Club.

## LYDIA KERR



Born in Berlin during the World War II bombing, Lydia now lives peacefully in Naples, FL with her husband Peter who was an American soldier. They have four sons, each married to a woman from a foreign country. Weddings gave her the chance to circle the globe. Lydia is now retired after a career in the drug industry. She joins the Naples Chapter.

## WENDY KNECHT



A former Pan Am flight attendant, Wendy is now Director of Fundraising for the Pan Am Museum Foundation. She is also a writer with travel stories published in several prominent magazines. She wrote Life, Love and a Hijacking, a memoir of her Pan Am days. Wendy has homes in California and Manhattan. She joins New York Metro.

## KAREN KRUGER



Living in Naples, FL, Karen has a Ph.D. and practices psychology in Florida. She is still recovering from Hurricane Ian in which she lost her home, car, office, passports, travel records and much more. Her travels have taken her on numerous service trips where she sets up clinics and schools and even assists in medical emergencies. She joins the Naples Chapter.

## JOSEPH LIM



A resident of the Philippines, Joseph is a professional architect with a passion for travel. Last year he took a trip to the Americas (North, Central, and South!) during which he decided to take the opportunity to travel there in one direction, and then continue in that direction to make his return journey a full circumnavigation. He has a fondness of the old world, of historic places, of ancient civilizations, and the intrigues and mysteries that come with it.

## ADAM MARSH



Living in southern England, Adam is a seasoned traveler with more than 200 countries under his belt. He was an executive for American Airlines during which he helped manage 39 round-the-world trips. He joins the UK Chapter.



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## NATHAN MARTIN



Nathan got his first major travel experience when, in high school, he was selected to visit the Sister City of his hometown, Decatur, IL—Tokorozawa, Japan. Since then, travel has been a passion. He travels the world with his wife, Katie Valleau (also a new member). He and Katie join the Chicago Chapter.

## DIANE MATHIS



A resident of Houston, TX, Diane is retired after a distinguished career in healthcare. Her consulting firm focused on strategic planning and customer service. With degrees from the University of Pittsburgh, she has been honored by the University as an outstanding alumnus and Legacy Laureate. She joins the club with her husband Larry.

## LARRY MATHIS



An accomplished executive in healthcare, Larry received the prestigious Gold Medal from the American College of Healthcare Executives. He wrote a book *The Mathis Maxims* which has been followed up by a recently published book *After the Mathis Maxims: A Quarter Century of Love, Life and Travel*. He and his wife Diane love exploring the world.

## DANIEL MCLAUGHLIN



After a long career in the U.S. Navy, Daniel now lives in Arkansas. He received many honors and citations while in the Navy. He circumnavigated on the USS Nimitz. Today, Daniel is enthusiastic about genealogy. He is also devoted to youth baseball.

## JOEL MEEKER



International travel began at an early age for Joel, fueling his passion for travel and also submerging him in the culture of the French. He studied theology and served as a pastor in France of nine years. Today he lives in Texas with his French-Canadian wife Marjolaine, where he is regional director for church-based organizations with outreach to the francophile world.

## DAVID B. MINK



David joins seven other members of the Mink-Koontz family in the Circumnavigators Club. He lives in Yardley, PA with a vacation home on North Carolina's Outer Banks. He has traveled extensively for both business and pleasure. David joins New York Metro.

## MARY NICE



Over the past 20 years, Mary has attended many Naples Chapter events. When her husband John, a long-time member, passed away, Mary decided it was time to join. Mary and John were married for 62 years during which they traveled constantly. Retired as a public school teacher, she has an exceptional record in volunteerism and philanthropy. She joins the Naples Chapter.

## LUIS RAMOS



Born in Puerto Rico, Luis moved to central Florida at the age of nine. He received a NASA scholarship to the University of Central Florida. He was passionate about space exploration and dreamed of being an astronaut. Unfortunately that dream ended when he was seriously injured by a reckless driver. He went on to a successful business career and began traveling with his wife Ronilynn (also a new member). He joins the Naples Chapter.

## RONILYNN RAMOS



Along with her husband, Luis, Ronilynn is an avid traveler. She says that travel is "the gift that keeps on giving." She began seeing the world at an early age, given that her father was in the military service with international postings. She is now retired from business and, over the years, has won honors as a writer and photographer. She joins the Naples Chapter.

## TAREQ SALAHI



An accomplished polo player, Tareq is international captain of Team USA. In the business world, he owns a winery and is chairman of Hotels at Sea. He spends much of his travel time on cruise ships. He travels extensively with his wife, Lisa Spoden, also a new member. Raised on his family vineyard in Virginia, he joins the Washington DC Chapter.



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## RON SCHNELL



Living in Fort Lauderdale, FL, Ron has an impressive resume of writing, speaking and organizing charitable events. With a computer science degree from Syracuse, he has been a technology leader for more than 40 years. His wife Staci is also a new member. He joins the Miami Chapter.

## STACI SCHNELL



Staci is a licensed marriage and family therapist, practicing in Florida and Arizona. She and her husband Ron found our club on the Internet after their recent circumnavigation. They are enthusiastic about joining the Circumnavigators and making the world a better place. She joins the Miami Chapter.

## ANN SHERWOOD



Ann and her husband Jim Foreman have recently moved to Naples, FL from Connecticut where they maintain a summer home. She is a daughter of a long-time club member, the late Marilyn Sherwood. Ann did her circumnavigation as a "Semester At Sea" while studying at Stanford University. Besides travel, she enjoys golf and tennis. She joins the Naples Chapter.

## CAROL SOMMERS



Living in Chicago, Carol is a retired teacher who taught French in Holland for ten years. She is an enthusiastic scuba diver with dives in many parts of the world. Her deep dive last year in Indonesia completed her circumnavigation. She joins the Chicago Chapter.

## LISA SPODEN



Along with husband, Tareq Salahi, Lisa joins the Washington DC Chapter. She is a member of the International Polo Tour Association. She travels year round on cruise ships promoting polo. Lisa holds a Ph.D. in health service administration and has published numerous articles for professional and trade journals.

## JENNIS TAYLOR



A retired teacher living in Portland, OR, Jennis heard about the Circumnavigators after a recent article in the Wall Street Journal. She is an avid traveler who has been to each of the seven continents at least twice. Jennis is involved in a number of charitable and civic organizations.

## ELVIN TOO



A resident of Singapore, Elvin is an entrepreneur and business advisor. He spends most of his time developing digital-enabled mental wellness programs for caregivers. He has a degree from the University of Pennsylvania and worked in the United States before moving home to Singapore. He loves travel, having explored 22 countries. He joins the Singapore Chapter.

## KATHLEEN VALLEAU



Katie is a financial planner in Chicago. She and her husband Nathan Martin (also a new member) love to travel and have taken trips with their two young children, most recently a road trip through Bulgaria. Their daughter Amelia 7, has visited 36 countries and son Theo has visited 13 at the age of three. Katie and Nathan join the Chicago Chapter.

## MARIANNE WOLK



Marianne lives in Manhattan with her husband Richard Horwitz (also a new member). She is a retired equity research analyst and professor, having written hundreds of reports and articles in major publications. She loves the adventure of travel, both international and domestic. She joins New York Metro.

## SUHAIMI ZAINUL-ABIDIN



Living in Singapore, Suhaimi is the CEO of Quantedge Capital, an investment management firm that has garnered numerous international awards and accolades over the years including Top 5 Large Hedge Funds by Bloomberg, Best Asian Billion Dollar Hedge Fund by EurekaHedge, and Fund of the Year by AsiaHedge. He devotes much of his time volunteering for charitable organizations. He joins the Singapore Chapter.



## FOUNDATION PRESIDENT'S *LETTER*

Dear Fellow Circumnavigators:

The 147 young scholars the Foundation has sponsored over the years have undertaken research projects on a remarkably broad range of topics of global significance. The two grantees recently selected for this summer's circumnavigations are no exception, and their projects are as timely as they are interesting.

John DiPierri of Georgetown's School of Foreign Service will study the dynamics and effectiveness of local government systems in countries ranging from Brazil to Switzerland, and how their interactions with regional and national governments drive civic engagement and public policy.

Lucia Barnum of Northwestern's Medill School of Journalism will undertake a cross-cultural study on community-based responses to wildfires, which, unfortunately, affect more and more parts of the world each year. She will examine social organizing and community mobilization in the wake of fire-based disasters and the policy implications such efforts have.

If you have not already done so, I encourage you to have a look at the complete list of research projects of your Foundation Scholars since 1971 (accessible in the Foundation section of the Club's website). It is a testament to the seriousness of purpose of the recipients of our grants, many of whom have used their Foundation projects as the basis for university theses, media articles and publications, and for their own subsequent careers. If any of the projects catches your eye, contact headquarters for a copy of the full research paper.

And please follow the progress of John and Lucia's circumnavigations this summer on their travel blogs. They will be pleased to know that you're joining them on their journeys of discovery!

Luck to you!

Greg Rider

## CIRCUMNAVIGATORS CLUB FOUNDATION SCHOLARS 2024

*Our 2024 Foundation scholars are leaving soon on their trip around the world!  
Wish them luck as they begin their adventure.*



**JOHN DiPIERRI**  
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

**RESEARCH TOPIC:**  
*"Dynamics and effectiveness of local government systems, and how their interactions with regional and national governments drive civic engagement and public policy."*



**LUCIA BARNUM**  
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

**RESEARCH TOPIC:**  
*"Social organizing and community mobilization in the wake of fire-based disasters and the policy implications such efforts have."*



## 2023 SCHOLARS REFLECT ON THEIR EXPERIENCE



Seapark Beach near Hollywood, Northern Ireland.

**ELIZABETH HYUN**  
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

"My travel-study experience in the summer of 2023 was undeniably one of the most impactful moments of my life. Throughout my trip, I gained profound insights into my research topic and life in general from the diverse and incredible people I encountered. I had the opportunity to enjoy breathtaking sights, immerse myself in rich cultural experiences, savor delicious foods, and stroll among beautiful architecture during my journey. Overall, this experience expanded my perspective and challenged me to grow in my independence, flexibility, and courage. I hope to carry the lessons and memories that I learned from travels deep into my future."



Sofia took this photo during a one-day trip to the Cham Islands, off the coast of Hoi An in central Vietnam.

**SOFIA DOROSHENKO**  
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

"For me, the travel-study experience meant having the most extraordinary summer of my life. I had the privilege of learning about the historical, political, and social aspects of societal memory in each country through my research project, and then actually living in each country for two weeks gave me a deep and lifelong connection with these six places. This grant gave me the opportunity to see the world in an unfiltered and self-directed way, which I would have never gotten the chance to do on my own. In the end, I made friendships with the people I interviewed, I learned from countless locals and travelers, and I grew so much in my personal life through this incredible journey around the world."

## OVER THE HORIZON

**Robert Brannigan**  
Omond Beach, FL  
June 2023

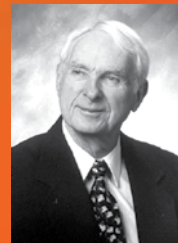
**Alexander Dreyfoos**  
West Palm Beach, FL  
May 28, 2023

**John Nice**  
Naples, FL  
April 8, 2023

**Wynnell Schrenk**  
Naples, FL  
July 26, 2023

**Maxine Seifert**  
Naples, FL  
July 20, 2023

**Paolo Valcini**  
Australia  
October 5, 2023



Past President of the Desert Chapter, Charles Bivenour, passed away on December 17, 2023 at the age of 94. Chuck also served as

Foundation Coordinator with Barrett Honors College at Arizona State University. He and his wife Nancy were devoted life-long travelers and dedicated much of their time to the Circumnavigators Club and Foundation. Chuck was held in high esteem by his fellow Circumnavigators and will be greatly missed and long remembered.

Many talented photographers in the Circumnavigators Club submitted photos for our recent Photo Exhibit/Contest. Their efforts raised funds for our Foundation. The photos were judged by three professional photographers. Here are their picks for the best of the best.

## ARCHITECTURE

### FIRST PLACE

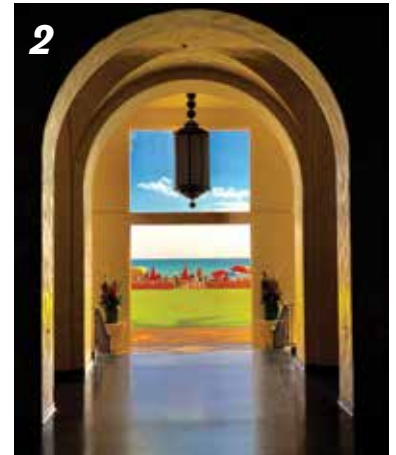
Judy Swanson (Naples Chapter)  
Hatshepsut Temple in Luxor, Egypt

### SECOND PLACE

Jennifer Teague (Washington DC Chapter)  
Doorway to the Scent-sational  
Jennifer got this stunning shot at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel in Oahu. She and her husband delightfully surprised to encounter this arch on the way to the beach.

### THIRD PLACE

Pamela Girtman (Naples Chapter)  
Bathed in Light  
Brightly lit Miami



## FLORA & FAUNA

### FIRST PLACE

David Mink (New York Metro)  
A close encounter in South Africa.  
This impressive beast brushed right past his jeep.

### SECOND PLACE

Ellie Hamby (At Large, Texas)  
Ellie and her son Kel were in Kruger South Africa when this elephant charged. Ellie told Kel she was going to keep shooting and if they died there would be good documentation. Fortunately, the elephant stopped just in time.

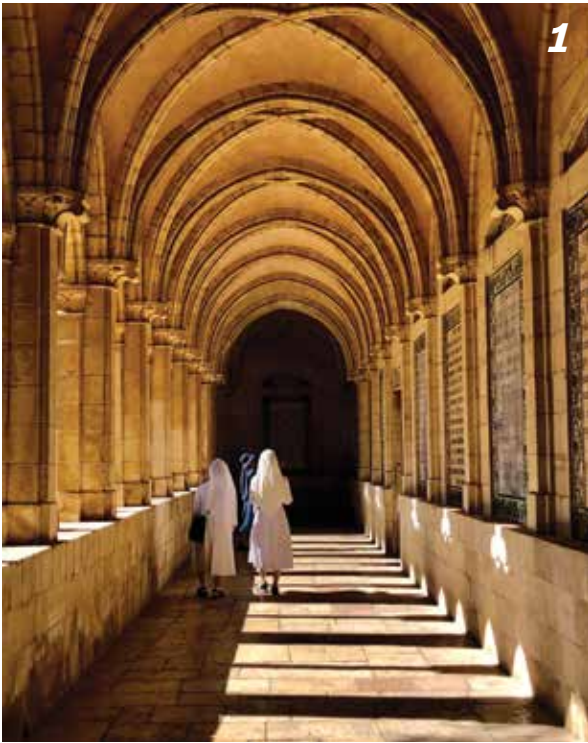
### THIRD PLACE

Bill Girtman (Naples Chapter)  
got this shot on the last day in Africa. It was the final "Big Five" he saw on the trip and the animal disappeared in an instant.





# THE JOY OF PHOTOGRAPHY



## HUMAN INTEREST

### FIRST PLACE

Searching for Doa Bapa Kami (The Lord's Prayer)  
Jennifer Teague (Washington DC Chapter) watched Malaysian Nuns at the Church of Pater Noster in Jerusalem.

### SECOND PLACE

Abrahamic Encounter  
Jennifer Teague (Washington DC Chapter) on the Mount of Olives

### THIRD PLACE

Tonga Woman with a well-placed bone  
Ellie Hamby (At Large, Texas) got this shot in a remote village in Zambia. Having a bone in the nose is a sign of beauty in the tribe. Notice the selective coloring emphasizing the necklace.



## LANDSCAPE

### FIRST PLACE

Central Park in New York City  
Judy Joseph (New York Metro)

### SECOND PLACE

Home Alone  
David Mink (New York Metro) found this peaceful, solitary home in Norway.

### THIRD PLACE

Cruising Away at Sunset  
Pamela Girtman (Naples Chapter) enjoyed this beautiful sight at the end of a visit to Saint Barts.



# chapter highlights

## WASHINGTON DC

Washington DC Chapter held a meeting during which members received a presentation by Circumnavigators Foundation grantee Sofia Doroshenko. The Georgetown University student shared her travel-study experience that lasted three months, taking her entire summer break.



## CHICAGO

Chicago Chapter held an event in the wine cellar at Francesca's in Chicago. Steven Cory Solomon talked about his experiences as a Rotary Scholar in Durban, South Africa. He shared how Dr. Jane Goodall and Archbishop Desmond Tutu changed his life through global opportunities beyond his wildest imagination.

## SINGAPORE

President Ang Hao Yao presided over the 2024 AGM on January 11th and then hosted members and guests to an excellent Chinese dinner. The event was held at the Tower Club with its view of the iconic Marina Bay.



## PACIFIC-SOUTHWEST

Pacific Southwest Chapter members had a very special time at the home of Kathleen and George Beebe complete with dancing girls, flight attendants, and a video presentation of the Beebe's' 15th circumnavigation with tips on how to travel using miles from credit cards. George is front and center in his pilot outfit.



## PACIFIC-NORTHWEST



Pacific-Northwest Chapter enjoyed a wonderful holiday celebration.



## MIAMI



Miami Chapter had a meeting at the Fort Lauderdale museum where Chapter President, Carolyn Stein welcomed new members Staci and Ron Schnell.

## UNITED KINGDOM

UK Chapter held its annual dinner at the House of Lords, sponsored by Circumnavigator Lord Richard Faulkner. Thanks goes to Chapter President Helen Jenkins for coordinating another wonderful sold-out event. About a dozen Americans made the journey to London to join the UK members and guests. Featured was speaker Per Besson with his program "Lessons from a Polyglot's Travels through 193 UN counties."

# chapter highlights

## MICHIGAN

Michigan Chapter gathered at The Daxton Hotel in Birmingham, MI for a weekend long party in August to celebrate the Motor City during the Annual Woodward Avenue Dream Cruise. At Large members from Houston, Mark and Sylvia Russell, flew in for the event.



## PALM BEACH

Palm Beach Chapter enjoyed a wonderful evening at Ruth's Chris Steak House with guest speaker Richard Rene Silvin, author of "SS Normandie-The Tragic Story of the Most Majestic Ocean Liner".

## NAPLES

Naples Chapter enjoyed an interesting presentation given by the former President of the Travelers Century Club – Timothy Skeet, who spoke of his various adventurous circumnavigations. Members of several different Travel Century Clubs were also in attendance. Three new members were introduced at the meeting.



# THROUGH MY LENS TIPS FOR A TRAVELING PHOTOGRAPHER

## BIRD'S EYE VIEW

BY CIRCUMNAVIGATOR  
LARRY GLICK  
(AT LARGE, TEXAS)



Wildlife photography may be the most challenging form of photography, and I believe bird photography is the pinnacle of the art.

I have photographed birds in temperatures from minus 33 degrees (-48° wind chill) in Northern Minnesota with a resulting index finger frostbite, to 118 degrees in the Luangwa Valley in Northern Zambia. That is an exacting 151-degree range. Many birders keep life lists of all birds they have seen. A new bird is called coincidentally "a lifer." My life list now stands well over 7000, placing me among the top birders in the world. And I am one of the very few people on earth to have seen all 15 species of Cranes.

### Let's talk about composition.

When I use the term composition, I am not referring to all the rules that you should read in a book. They are important to learn. However, composition to me means that someone will want to look at your photos for more than an obligatory five minutes. Is there enough interest to keep their interest? My first composition rule: is the bird's eye(s) clear in the photo? That is my prerequisite.

I would like to especially comment on the next three photos shown. Note in the White Stork photo the little baby at the very bottom of the picture. I had noticed a third bird, but it disappeared quickly. I went to a higher elevation (climbing up a steep hill) hoping to get the little chick in the frame. I think it makes the picture.





**The Green Pheasant (Japan's National Bird)** is certainly different. Is it really a photo? Indeed it is! Although this took years of training and a comprehensive knowledge of exposure and manual focusing, it is certainly intriguing.



**The Ribbon-Tailed Astrapia** is a member of the otherworldly Birds of Paradise from Papua New Guinea. How do you photograph a 4-5-foot-long tail, that looks like a ribbon? This particular photo took about 90 minutes to get. Vertical/horizontal, move back, move up. I never could get just what I wanted until the Astrapia was nice enough to wrap THAT TAIL around THAT BRANCH! YES!! Composition at its extreme.

So, how do you start. My suggestion: go to a local park or waterway. Practice with birds perched and then in flight. Then repeat. It will be fun, fulfilling and indeed, frustrating at times. The reward is seeing nature at its finest and most beautiful. GO!





*Red Crowned Cranes in Japan*



*Papuan Lorikeet in Papua New Guinea*



*Pine Grosbeak in Minnesota*



*Steller's Eagle in Russian Waters*



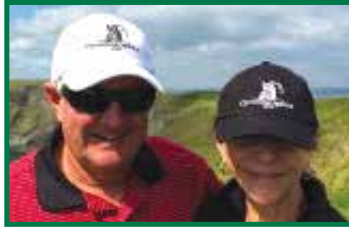
*Sclater's Crowned Pigeon in Papua New Guinea*



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## Club Merchandise



Contact Executive Director Tracy Sancilio at  
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. You no longer have to make reservations through our Executive Director. The Yale Club welcomes you to stop in or call for reservations. 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.