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newspaper for
Atherton,
Portola Valley,
Woodside and
Menlo Park.

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ENDS TO THE THE EARTH

Polar geologist **Art Ford** is
an expert lecturer aboard cruises
to the Antarctic and the Arctic.
Last summer he visited the
North Pole on the world's
largest ice breaker.

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News This Week

■ Schools

Message to Atherton residents concerned about quality of education at Selby Lane School: get involved. / **PAGE 5**

■ Menlo Park

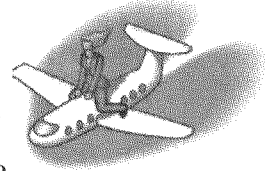
The city may face \$2.3 million revenue shortfall this fiscal year if trend in sales-tax revenues continues. **PAGE 5**

■ Election 2002

Menlo Park council candidate Lee Duboc tops spenders as latest campaign finance statements are released. **PAGE 10**

■ Sports

Menlo-Atherton High names 33 from five decades to Sports Hall of Fame. **PAGE 22**



To the ends of the earth

Do you know the differences between the North and South poles?

For starters, the South Pole is some 10,000 feet high on a continent; the North Pole lies in an ocean 10,000 feet deep.

"The interior of Antarctica is the world's largest desert. It has less rain than Yuma, Arizona," says Menlo Park geologist Art Ford. "In the Arctic, you see only snow, ice, water, and polar bears."

Dr. Ford knows what he's talking about. He spent 35 years with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) studying geology in the remotest spots on Earth, both in Antarctica and Alaska. He's visited both poles.

Now happily retired, Dr. Ford is sharing his knowledge, experience, and passion for polar places with passengers on cruise ships. In 22 trips to Antarctica, he's introduced them to penguins, volcanoes, and plate tectonics. Last summer at the other end of the world, he lectured on geology,

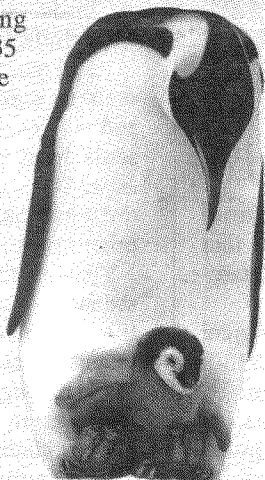


Photo by Art Ford

Chick of an emperor penguin gets protection on the feet of a parent for the first weeks of life.

while the world's largest ice breaker crashed through sea ice to the North Pole.

"I was surprised how much water there was," he says in an interview in the Menlo Oaks home where he and Carole have lived for almost 40 years. The house is crammed with spectacular pictures of scenery and penguins; there are penguin models in every cranny. "This is definitely a penguin house," says Mrs. Ford.

Mrs. Ford, who has accompanied her husband on a few trips, will be heading out with him after Christmas on his third and last Antarctic trip this winter. "I had to go to find out what he loved," she says. "I fell in love with it too."

In 1960, a telegram changed Art Ford's career from academic geologist to polar explorer.

Polar geologist Art Ford is an expert lecturer on cruises to the Antarctic and the Arctic. Last summer he visited the North Pole on the world's largest ice breaker.

By Marion Softky
Almanac Staff Writer

The young man from Emunclaw (means "home of evil spirits"), Washington, was teaching geology at San Diego State University. He had married Carole, his high school friend and college sweetheart, and had earned a fresh Ph.D. from the University of Washington.

The August telegram from the USGS invited him to join the first expedition into Antarctica to study the geology of the Thiel Mountains, 500 miles from the South Pole. After consulting Carole, he accepted. "How could I say no?" he asks.

In less than a month, he was on his way, in charge of the ge-

See **ENDS OF THE EARTH**, next page



Photo by Carol Iwe

At home in Menlo Park, Art and Carole Ford are getting ready for more trips to Antarctica during the southern summer. Dr. Ford, a polar geologist, lectures on polar geology to passengers cruising both the Arctic and Antarctic.



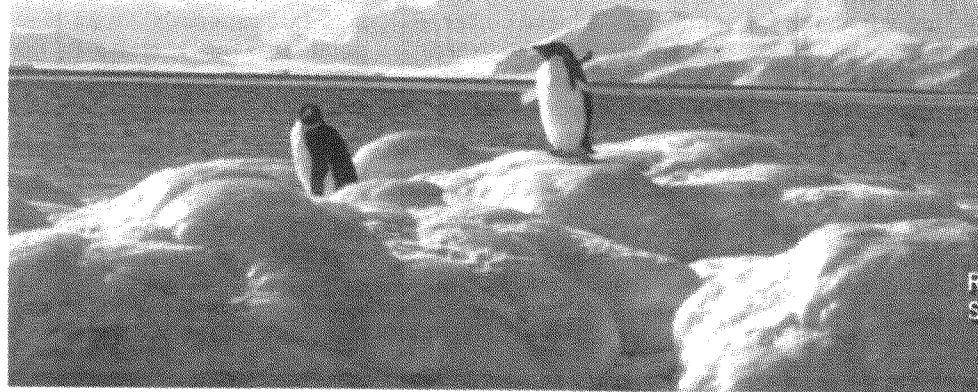
Photo by Art Ford

Zodiacs take tourists close to Antarctic scenery and wildlife.



Photo by Art Ford

Russian ice breaker Kapitan Dranitsyn slams through the ice pack in the Weddell Sea; when it stops, passengers disembark and check for wildlife.



A TASTE OF THE PENINSULA

A cornucopia of restaurants and cafes providing the finest dining from brunch to dessert.

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Espresso. Serving the valley
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Sunday Brunch. Innovative
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and innovative cuisine in an
elegant country setting, nes-
tled among the redwoods.

Ridgeside Cafe

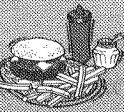
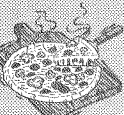
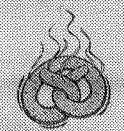
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DESTINATIONS

ENDS OF THE EARTH

continued from previous page

ologists for the first of two sum-
mers he spent studying the un-
charted range.

In 1960, Dr. Ford gave up his
academic career to join USGS.
He moved to Menlo Park in
1964, where he and Mrs. Ford
raised two daughters — who
graduated from Menlo-Atherton
High School, and recently re-
turned for its 50th anniversary
reunion.

For 35 years Dr. Ford jour-
neyed frequently to Antarctica,
and occasionally Alaska. He be-
came such an authority on
Antarctica that in 1974 the En-
cyclopedia Britannica invited
him to write its chapter on the
southern continent. "All in all, I
went on 13 expeditions. I
was expedition leader in
about half," he says.

During his time working
in the interior of a continent
the size of the United States
plus Mexico, Dr. Ford en-
countered all sorts of things
besides rocks and ice. There
were also occasional "mo-
ments of terror."

While there is virtually no
wildlife now in the contin-
ent's interior, Dr. Ford and
other scientists have discov-
ered fossils, signaling a far
different climate long ago.
At one time, five species of
dinosaurs roamed Antarctica.
Plants laid down a thick deposit of
coal some 300 million years ago,
he says.

Possibly his group's most ex-
citing discovery was a meteorite,
still the third largest ever dis-
covered. Dr. Ford remembers
picking up the two strange rocks
— about 75 pounds total — and
passing them around. "None of
us had ever seen a meteor be-
fore," he says. "It was very
heavy, very magnetic and made
of iron. We suspected it was not
of earthly origin."

As for one moment of terror,
Dr. Ford still vividly remem-
bers an aero-magnetic survey
back in 1960. They were towing
a magnetometer behind a DC-3
when the plane flew into some
clouds where no mountains
were charted. Soon, the mag-
netometer readings became very
strong — which meant they
were close to rocks; then the
readings went flat when the
"bird" hit a rock and broke off.
With zero visibility, the pilot
tried to fly out.

"At one point we felt the plane
shudder when the pilot was turn-
ing to fly away," Dr. Ford recalls
vividly. "The next day we saw
the wing tip dented and
scratched. Two inches closer, and
we would still be there."

"The best way to get close-
up pictures of penguins is to sit

on the ground and let the
penguins come to you,"
says Dr. Ford. "They're
very curious."

Part of Dr. Ford's job as
staff on Antarctic cruises
is to keep passengers at
least five meters from
penguin nests. The most
curious of 17 varieties
of penguins is the knee-
high Adelie penguin, he
says. "They'll come
right up to you."

Dr. Ford was first asked to lec-
ture on an Antarctic cruise in
1996, not long after he retired
from USGS in a big shakeup.
Peninsula naturalists and popular
tour leaders Doug and Gail
Cheeseman invited him on their
second cruise to Antarctica. Since
then, he has lectured on Cheese-

A pair of black-browed albatrosses pose for
photographers on one of Doug Cheeseman's
Antarctic cruises.

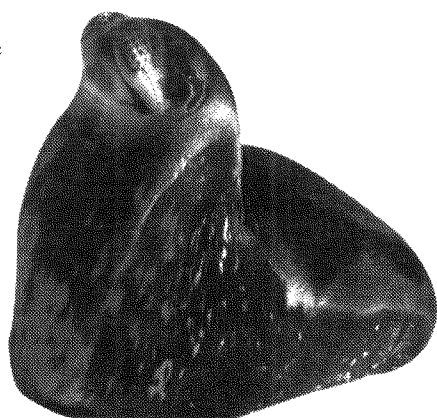


Photo by Art Ford

A Weddell seal keeps a wary eye
on photographers.

man Antarctic safaris, as well as
Quark and Clipper cruises.

Dr. Ford especially enjoys the
Cheeseman trips. "It's the best
tour," he says. "If you want to go
to the Antarctic, go on a small
ship of 100 or less. We can
visit three or four more pen-
guin colonies than you can
on a large ship, and we can
get closer to shore."

The problem with really
large cruise ships — carrying
more than 100 passengers —
is that the international
Antarctic Treaty allows only
100 people to go ashore at
one time, to protect the
wildlife, Dr. Ford explains.

Besides penguins, the
Antarctic experience includes
birds — albatrosses, gulls,
petrels, skuas, and more —
and mammals, from little fur
seals to massive elephant seals,
and whales. "Sometimes leopard
seals hunt in pairs," Dr. Ford
says. "One chases a penguin in
the water onto the ice where the
other grabs it."

Then in the Antarctic, there's
scenery — deep narrow channels
through glacier-covered moun-
tains; spectacular icebergs. "One
of the highlights is cruising among
icebergs in zodiacs," he says.
"Every landing is a wet landing."

But summer weather in
Antarctica is surprisingly mild,
he adds, generally high 30s and
mid 40s in mid-summer. But it's
often wet.

Next summer, Dr. Ford is al-
ready signed up for two Cheese-
man trips to the Arctic, north of
Norway. Participants will enjoy
spectacular scenery and abun-
dant wildlife, including polar
bears, walrus, birds, and rocks,
he says.

Meanwhile, Dr. Ford remem-
bers last summer's Arctic high
point: the Quark cruise to the
North Pole aboard the giant
Russian ice breaker, Yamal.

"There were 45 passengers and
40 GPS (global positioning sys-
tems) instruments to make sure
we got to the North Pole," he
says. "We had a celebration party
with champagne on the ice. "A
few daredevils went swimming
and got a certificate, 'I swam at
the North Pole.'" ■

If you're interested

Art Ford has lectured
with these companies that
cruise to Arctic and Antarc-
tic regions:

■ Cheeseman's Ecological
Safaris, 1-800-527-5330;
www.cheesemans.com

■ Quark Expeditions, 1-
800-356-5699; www.quark-
expeditions.com

■ Clipper, 1-800-325-0010;
www.clippercruise.com

In addition, Adventure
Network International flies
tourists from Argentina to
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stay at Patriot Hills base
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formation: 1-866-395-6664,
www.adventure-
network.com.

For an overview of
Antarctica, Dr. Ford rec-
ommends a new coffee-
table book first published
last year in Australia. He
contributed articles on ge-
ology to "Antarctica: The
Complete Story," by David
McGonigal and Dr. Lynn
Woodworth, forward by Sir
Edmund Hillary. Five Mile
Press, 2001, \$60 (\$45 on
Amazon.com, he says).

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