



SIGNALS FROM T•A•R•S•U•S

November 1999

Fall/Winter Greetings!

This newsletter accompanies *Signals* and either the Winter 1999 *Mixed Moss* or the Autumn 1999 *The Outlaw* (or, if you are family members, both of them). I hope that everyone had a delightful summer and fall; here in Eureka we had a relatively strange and late fall; our roses are still in bloom in mid-November, and only in the last week has it started to turn cold. The flowers are pretty thoroughly confused, but it remains sailing weather in Humboldt Bay (if we ever had the opportunity; constant travel interferes).

Membership Renewal for 2000

TARS membership renewals are due on 1 January 2000, and we really will be able to process your renewal! *If you find a Membership Renewal Form in this packet, your membership is up for renewal!*

If you didn't receive a form, your membership already covers 2000 because you have prepaid, or because you joined after 1 October 1999 and your membership is through 2000.

The form was produced for U.K. members, so the one you will get has an additional sticker attached with your name, membership number, and membership type; it also has the membership renewal amounts in \$US printed on it. Please make out a check now to The Arthur Ransome Society (or TARS) for the correct amount, and send it to me; my address is on the notice, on this newsletter, on the envelope this material came in, and nearly everywhere you look). If you want to change your membership type, indicate same on the renewal form and send it back with the correct amount for the new type of membership you want.

Welcome

Welcome to Debra Alderman and Moti, Akiva and Kayla Krauthamer; Neal, Alex and Thomas Becker and Ann Cudd; Jeanne Berryman; Tom Bolin; Maureen Eichner; Andrew Frank; William Frank; Zach Garrett; Hannah Lynch; Stephen McRobert; Mark Miner; Hap and Bar Smith and Suzannah Barbour; and John Tyner II. And my particular apologies to Leah Mickens for misspelling her last name as "Dickens" in the August newsletter.

Resumes

I haven't received any additions to the Resumes file for quite a while. Surely others out there would like to tell us how they found AR or have adventures to recount?

Congratulations to NBT Raffle Winners

TARSUS members Christopher Cory, Alex Ely and Doug Faunt were all winners in the 1999 Nancy Blackett Trust raffle. Congratulations to all and good luck everybody for next year.

Betty Jo Baerg

Betty Jo Baerg, a long-time TARSUS member, and U.S. Coordinator prior to me, passed away August 15th, 1999. A short obituary was printed on Page 63 of the current (Winter, 1999) *Mixed Moss*.

“A Really Big Adventure”

Several months ago, the BBC as part of a series on children’s authors did a segment on Arthur Ransome. I have not viewed it myself, but recently received a copy from a British TAR who posted on the Tarboard saying that he would make copies for TARS (for expenses only). If there is interest among U.S. TARS I will have it converted to U.S. format and make copies, again at cost only. I’ve had four or five requests so there is enough interest to do it, but I don’t want to get it done until I know how many copies to have made.

So if you would like a copy please let me know no later than December 18th. I don’t know what they will cost yet; it depends in part on how many copies we will make, but it will probably be \$20-\$25 counting shipping. You can write, phone or e-mail me; all of those directions are at the end of this newsletter.

AGM 2000

In the last Signals from TARSUS, we provided an “advertisement” for the next Annual General Meeting, which will be held on 26th to 29th May (Memorial Day Weekend; English Spring Bank Holiday weekend) on Lake Windermere. Refer to the last *SfT* for more details – and plan to attend!

Availability of the Swallows & Amazons Books

(Repeated with more information from the last Signals from TARSUS.)

Ted Alexander, who runs the TARS Society Bookstall from which many of us have ordered, tells me that there are some difficulties with getting all of the hard bounds in new editions. Specifically the

hard bounds periodically go out of print, so if you order a book currently out of print, he will place you on a “backorder” list and ship your book when it does become available. And there is always an undercurrent of worry that the publisher (Jonathan Cape) may decide not to reprint them, although so far this hasn’t happened.

For those who would like paperbacks, though, there are two possibilities. Godine, in the U.S., is producing a set of oversized quality paperback (so called “trade paperbacks”) which are quite superior. My impression is that they are not always available at all booksellers, and that they have not yet released all of the books, but you can certainly try your local bookseller.

For overseas TARS like us, there is another possibility. Several years ago the entire set of S&A books were brought out in a uniform paperback edition in the U.K. under the “Red Fox” label (Random House Children’s Books). These books can be found all over the U.K., so the Society Bookstall doesn’t normally carry them. However, Ted is willing to obtain them for Overseas members on special request, as they are not available in the U.S. (I’m not sure about other countries). If you are interested let me know and I can get a quote from Ted for the titles you would like.

Potential TARSUS Events

Two new members, Debra Alderman and Stephen McRobert, are interested in getting AR-related events going in their areas. Debra lives in Seattle, Washington; Stephen in Sunnyvale, California. Their contact information appears later in this newsletter. Debra is actively involved with her local library in Seattle; Stephen is interested in organizing events including sailing events on San Francisco Bay. If you are in either area and would like to help – or participate! – call, write or e-mail. Ike Stephenson, who lives in Wisconsin, has discussed on the Tarboard getting a weekend sailing event on Lake Muskegon together for next summer, in July or August. You can find Ike’s contact information in the TARSUS address list (this is the Younger Ike, not Capt. Ike).

A TARSUS Event on Lake Eyrie

Last summer, Mary Wessel Walker, a Junior TARSUS from Ann Arbor, Michigan, posted an account of a TARSUS sailing expedition on Lake Eyrie on the Centreboard, and sent a short account of the event to Dorothea for inclusion in *The Outlaw* (it's in the issue that Junior and Family members received along with this newsletter). Here is Mary's complete account of the expedition, along with some pictures! - Ed.

On the beautiful, sunny morning of Monday, July 12 of the Wessel Walker family set out for Sandusky, Ohio from Ann Arbor, Michigan. "Commander Walker" (Dr. Jim), Mary, 14, (that's me), and Margaret, 12, (Peggy?) set out in our van, loaded with "a most promising-looking hamper". We picked up Kaitlin McCarthy, 12, a Junior TARS, on our way. We hadn't known her before, but we called her up during the planning stages of the outing and she was able to join us. In the car we read from *We Didn't Mean to go to Sea*, because it is a drive of several hours from Ann Arbor to Sandusky.

When we arrived at the marina in Sandusky we were met by "Captain Flint" (Dr. Jim Phillips). His granddaughter Nicole, 10, led us to the *Promise*, a 45 foot Morgan yacht. We wondered if she were anything like the *Goblin*. Captain Flint told us that the *Promise* was maybe a bit bigger and had a different kind of sail (a Genoa) and a different kind of bow than the *Goblin*. The cabin layout was only a little bit different. Since Captain Flint had some business to attend to before we set out, Commander Walker, Mary, Margaret, and Kaitlin went to the conveniently located West Marine store (a boating supply store) across the road. We looked at a roll of signal flags and found "O" and "K" and the signal for a pilot, both "S" (old code) and "G" (new code). * See chapter six of *We Didn't Mean To Go To Sea**



The *Promise* (reproduced from *The Outlaw*)



When we returned to the *Promise* we broached the puncheon of Jamaica rum ("lovely stuff, our cook calls it lemonade") which the Wessel Walkers had brought along. Finally we were ready to set out. Because of the congestion in the harbor, Captain Flint motored out. The girls sat on the fore deck and enjoyed bouncing over the waves as we motored past the amusement park, Cedar Point. We agreed that we were having just as good a ride as any there, without the long lines! When we were outside of the harbor, Captain Flint and Commander Walker put up the sails. Mrs. Phillips, the professional worrier on board, had the girls come back into the cockpit. Mary helped put up the Genoa.

Soon after that we had lunch on the built-in collapsible table in the cockpit. The Wessel Walker's hamper contained an Arthur Ransome picnic! All of the food was labeled with quotations from the books, which we read aloud. We had home made brown bread (*Swallows and Amazons*) and marmalade (*Missee Lee*). A few adventurous people tried the sardines (*Peter Duck*) but Commander Walker had to finish most of the tin (later he was seasick!). Everyone tried some of the real ginger beer. It was much stronger than ginger ale and some people liked it more than others did. The whole thing was finished off with the closest we could come to squashed fly biscuits and Mrs. Dixon's toffee.



Nichole and Margaret ready for an Arthur Ransome Feast

We were sailing for Kelley's Island in lake Erie. Commander Walker took a turn at the helm. He found it quite different than the small boats he is used to. He had to steer entirely by the electronic equipment, including compass and radar. Also it took much longer to respond than he was accustomed to.



Nicole, Kaitlin, Margaret and Mary (Left to Right) singing "Spanish Ladies"

We sang sea chanteys, but unfortunately between us, we only knew two: Mary taught everyone "Spanish Ladies" which she had learned during the winter, and of course there was "What Shall We Do with a Drunken Sailor?". During the course of the voyage we made up lots of verses to "What Shall We Do with a Drunken Sailor?"!

When we reached Kelley's Island, Captain Flint and Commander Walker took down the sails and we motored in towards the island (this is a very large island) looking for a place to anchor for a swim. For a while it looked like we weren't going to get to swim, but in the end we found a great place. To our delight, the anchor went down without a hitch, and we did NOT find ourselves drifting out into the middle of lake Erie! We all changed into our bathing suits and put on our life jackets. Commander Walker jumped in, but the rest of us took the more cautious Roger approach at first. We climbed down the swim ladder.

The water was COLD! Mary and Commander Walker did not stay in for very long, Nicole stayed in a little bit longer than they did, and she enjoyed jumping off the ladder. But Kaitlin and Margaret stayed in for a lot longer than anyone else! Captain Flint had tied a fender to a rope and put it over the side for anyone who was tired to grab on to. Later on, Mrs. Phillips noticed the fender floating away, and Captain Flint motored out in the rubber dinghy and rescued it! After that he took photos of all of us standing on the deck of the *Promise* and also gave dinghy rides to the girls. We learned that the dinghy did not have a name, so we suggested the name *Vow*.

After our swim, we had tea and a ration of chocolate, accompanied by more quotations. Then we set sail to return to Sandusky. Mary, Margaret, and Kaitlin each took a turn at the helm. As we went we noticed that the waves were getting bigger. Captain Flint said they were six feet! It was very exciting. We made up another verse to "What Shall We Do with a Drunken Sailor?": "Put him in the dinghy in ten foot breakers!" Too soon we were back in Sandusky. Captain Flint told us that it was the best sailing he'd had in ages.



Margaret and Kaitlin enjoy a ration of chocolate and tea after their swim

Captain Flint would like to add, "the crew did an outstanding job of managing the helm when you consider that they are used to a tiller!" and that "the helm is a 48" destroyer type wheel. The crew stayed on course with a beam wind of 15-20 knots and 6' seas."

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Okay, everybody, now it's your turn to have an AR event or adventure – and then tell us about it! And I hope to see you next May on Lake Windermere!

Dave Thewlis
2301 C Street
Eureka, CA 95501-4108
E-mail: <dthewlis@dcta.com>

707-442-0547 (work, messages)
707-445-1689 (home)
707-442-9342 (fax)

