



SIGNALS FROM T•A•R•S•U•S

April 2000

Spring Greetings!

This newsletter accompanies the Spring 2000 *Signals*, and for those of you with Junior or Family memberships, *The Outlaw*. With luck you are all having a wonderful spring, and at least a few of us (myself included) are looking forward to the Annual General Meeting at Lake Windermere. (At almost the last minute I've managed to arrange to be there.)

We've got a fair amount for you this time, including four event or planned event announcements, the advent of a new book about the Swallows and the Amazons, and the first of an ongoing column by our new 10-Gong Contributing Editor. Read On!

Membership Renewal for 2000

If you have not yet renewed your membership for 2000, you have a big black spot on your address label and a renewal card is fastened to this newsletter. This will be the last mailing you will receive from TARS if you don't renew, as I will purge the membership list as of June 1, 2000. This is the "third time of asking" (renewal information was sent out in November and notices included in February). Membership was really due on January 1st, 2000.

In my last newsletter I said that those who hadn't renewed by now would only get a renewal card, but the U.K. has sent enough *Signals* and *Outlaws* for everybody currently on the rolls so everyone is getting them.

You can still renew in time to receive *Mixed Moss* – don't be sorry for a might-have-been!

Welcome

Welcome to new members Jim & Julia Browner; Colin Carter; Keith, Diane, Sophie & Emma Jones; Todd & Eileen Klein; Ralph, Beth, Lindsey & Luke Myers.

I'd also like to welcome Mary Heinking, who has moved from the U.K. to Sugarland, Texas, and Simon Youens, from TARS Canada, currently on extended assignment in Houston. (Texas is a nexus for expat TARS?)

Résumés

We have a new Résumé from Bill and Jane Jobe, and (as always) I would like to encourage all of you who haven't yet composed yours to do so and to send it off to me.

“The Ransomes Remembered”

In 1995, Brigit Sanders (whom we all knew as Bridget Walker) and her husband John Sanders produced a video called “The Ransomes Remembered” under the auspices of TARS. This video told the stories of Arthur and Evgenia from the 1920s, when they settled in England, until Genia’s death in 1975, told in interviews with those who knew them and accompanied by contemporary photographs and illustrations.

Only a few copies were available in NTSC (North American) format and all of any format are long gone. The video has now been re-released by TARS in honor of Brigit, who died last year, and in honor of the 10th anniversary of TARS. Again, a few NTSC copies were made and are available via the TARS Society Bookstall. However, if you want one you had better order it right now – as of the writing of this newsletter there are no more than 6 left.

Nautical Charts

Captain Ike Stephenson writes “Recently I received a very nice chart of Walto Backwaters and Harwich Harbour from Imray’s. Have another one that will carry me Pin Mill in the mails. These may be of interest to members: Imray Laurie Norie & Wilson, 20 The Broadway, Huntingdon, Cambs PE17 4BT Great Britain. I have been trying to get them to make a chart of Lake Windermere, without avail. Maybe a request from TARS/TARSUS might help.” So anyone interested in a good chart of Windermere or other of the lakes might consider writing them and adding their voices to Captain Ike’s.

Roger Wardale’s New Book

In this packet you’ll have received a flyer for *Arthur Ransome and the world of the Swallows & Amazons*, a brand new book by Roger Wardale. You will be able to get it from the TARS Society Bookstall once it is available – or if you want a pre-publication signed copy, you can order it directly from the publisher for £16.99 plus £5.00 shipping & handling (and you can use your credit card, which

the TARS Stall can’t currently do.) I don’t know what the regular edition will cost.

UPCOMING TARSUS EVENTS (Three Million Cheers!)

Second Annual *Promise* Expedition

Mary Wessel Walker, who wrote the article on the *Promise* expedition in the November, 1999 *Signals from TARSUS*, writes that there will be a 2nd annual TARSUS event in the Lake Erie Islands (not “Eyrie” as I had it in November) on the *Promise*, scheduled for “a good sailing day in the week of August 14-19”. (*Promise* is a 45 foot Morgan yacht.) Interested TARS should contact the Walkers on 734-996-0129 or via e-mail at: jcgw@umich.edu.

Sailing on San Francisco Bay (The Lord Mayor’s Expedition)

From TARSUS member Steve McRobert:

Attention TARS members in and around the San Francisco Bay area (and anyone else that might be visiting)! As a longtime AR fan but a new member of TARSUS (see my “resume” in the preceding issue of this newsletter) I have never met a fellow Arthur Ransome enthusiast face to face. My suggestion for solving this problem is for a group of us to go sailing on San Francisco Bay. I propose renting a boat from Cass’ Marina in Sausalito and sharing the cost. I have been sailing from this Marina for quite some years (the first time was in 1987) and find it quite the friendliest place to rent a boat that I know of. It is nothing like the “chain store” operations such as Spinnaker sailing.

They do not require any kind of certification for most of their daysailers, what they actually do (which is much more intelligent) is watch you rig the boat and then ask you to reef the mainsail. If you can promptly put in a reef and do it correctly they figure that you have probably done this before. Therefore if we need an extra skipper anyone else with solid experience of skippering a keelboat will be able to take a boat out on the Bay.

They have quite a wide range of boats. If we want to get a lot of people (realistically up to 8) on one boat and do not care very much about performance the Bristol 27 is the boat to have. They cost \$185 for a full weekend day. At the opposite extreme of the boats that I am qualified to take out they have two J 24s, which are basically big dinghies with a roof on the top and which

can be made to plane in the right circumstances. They cost \$165 for a full weekend day. They are very specific that the minimum crew for the J. 24 is four and the maximum is 5.

Everybody is welcome, regardless of age, sailing experience or physical ability. There is wheelchair access right down to the boat if needed, and a little muscle power would be needed to get anyone in a wheelchair on and off the boat.

It is necessary to be able to dress for any kind of conditions, regardless of the time of year. I have experienced sunny, warm days with light winds and smooth water but I have also experienced cold winds so strong that we had to take down the jib even with a fully reefed mainsail, and needed waterproofs because of the spray. The good news is that there are places on the Bay which are sheltered from the strong winds so on those kind of days it is possible to choose the kind of sailing experience we have.

One important point is that the Marina forbids black soled shoes on the boats.

I would like to have our first sail as soon as possible. I would like to suggest **Sunday the 21st of May**. I would not recommend the Memorial Day weekend because I would expect that the Golden Gate bridge will be even more gridlocked than usual for anyone trying to return to the peninsula after sailing. If not that date I am open to just about any weekend day or public holiday. The last weekend that I am available is July 22/23 because I am leaving on an extended vacation July 28th, not returning until October the second.

I am very much open to suggestions for other activities that would get those of us in California together as a group, either additional to the sailing or instead of it. If you are interested or have questions please send me an e-mail or telephone me.

I hope to meet some of my fellow Ransome enthusiasts very soon.

Steve McRobert
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business phone 408-749-5442
email: wittgenstein@netzero.net

Cass' Marina is located at 1702 Bridgeway at Napa Street in Sausalito, California. Their Web page is <http://www.cassmarina.com/index.shtml>. If you are coming to them on Highway 101, take the Sausalito/Marin City exit.

Mailing Address: Cass' Marina,
P.O. Box 643,
Sausalito CA 94966
E-Mail Address: staff@cassmarina.com
Phone: 1-415-332-6789
FAX: 1-415-332-5729

TARS Event In Georgia – June 21-24 2000

(Reprinted from the last issue)

Ahoy! All fans of Arthur Ransome's wonderful books! Ahoy!

I am planning a TARSUS (The Arthur Ransome Society U.S.) event at Sweetwater Campground, Lake Allatoona, Georgia from June 21 through June 24, 2000. My grandchildren should be old enough to learn to sail our canoe, row the dingy, and sail the semi-dory by that time. We'll be camping in Campsite 44.

We should have many good adventures similar to those the characters in Ransome's books experienced. While I have found the Great South West Pole and posted an ARS flag, we should go back and verify that the flag is still there. Of course, it will be necessary to take along proper provisions for the expedition.. The Great North West Pole remains to be discovered as well as exploring the rest of the section of the Lake where we will be sailing. A few of the landmarks have been named, but most have not.

Semaphore flags will be used for signaling experience, there are fish to catch, and then there are the knots of sailing and many other things to have fun learning as sailing and rowing skills develop. We'll probably race a bit too. Who knows what may develop?

We will watch videos of movies that have been made from three of Ransome's books. Around the campfire in the evenings we'll read some of Ransome's books aloud, roast marshmallows, sing the songs of sailing, and listen to stories some may wish to tell.

If you have children or friends that you wish to teach to sail, have a sailboat, or wish to just share adventures, come along and join us for this informal event. We'll be at Campsite 44, so go to

www.ReserveUSA.com/nrrs/ga/swee/swee4.html

and make reservations for a campsite in the same general area if you can join us for this auspicious, and perhaps "annual", event.

Please note that this is not an official ARS "sanctioned" event. I'm simply getting together with my grandchildren for four days of playing in the water and pretending to be Arthur Ransome characters. If you come to join us, please be prepared to be responsible for your own safety and for those who come with you.

Since I am also posting this outside the ARS news circles, some who read this may know nothing of The Arthur Ransome Society. In that case go to the web site www.arthur-ransome.org/ar/ and get acquainted with TARS and this particularly wonderful series of children's books...which old folks can enjoy too!

I look forward to hearing from any of you who wish to share in the fun my grandchildren and I will be having. You can send me email at: jsatt@gsu.edu

Cordially yours,
Jim Satterfield aka Captain G. Flint

**TARS CANADA
ONTARIO CORROBOREE 2000**

Dr. Robert Dilley, TARS Canada Coordinator,
forwards the following:

The 2000 Ontario Corroboree is being planned for JULY 8 (Saturday) at the Peterborough Sailing Club from 2 bells of the Afternoon Watch (1 pm for any landlubbers) to bedtime.

There will be sailing for everybody, including a Junior race. There will be games and crafts, and the inevitable quiz. There will be a BBQ supper and TARS snacks (with ginger beer).

For more information contact:

Ross Cossar; RR 2, Norwood; Ontario, K0L 1V0

Tel: (705) 639-1223

Email: lcossar@pvnccdsb.on.ca

(Membership List Updates Removed)

Accommodations for those coming from farther afield (prices in Canadian dollars: about 67c US):

4 minutes away:

The Old Bridge Inn B&B.

Youngs Point, Ontario K0L 3G0

Tel (Toll-Free): 1-877 613-6693

Fax: (705) 652-8661

1998 rates were \$55 + tax Sunday- Thursday; \$65 + tax Friday, Saturday and Holidays. Rates include Continental Breakfast.

Lakeview Cottage Resort

Youngs Point, Ontario K0L 2G0

Tel: (705) 652-7191

Fax: (705) 652-0363

Email: lakeview@pipcom.com

2000 rates are \$85 double, \$10 each extra person; \$460 per week, \$40 per extra person. Two-bedroom cottages will sleep 6, but maximum 4 adults per cottage.

6 minutes away:

SpringRock Tent & Trailer Park

Fully-serviced sites; washrooms, showers,
laundromat

Tel: (705) 654-3729

No rates available.

9 minutes away:

Lakefield Campground

Fully-serviced sites; central washrooms;
free showers

Tel (Toll-Free): 1-800 316-8841

Website: www.travelinx.com/camping.htm

No rates available.

From our new 10-Gong Contributing Editor:

In Which We Meet the *Wildcat* and Our Adventures Begin

Mary Wessel Walker

My family learned to sail in the summer of 1998, and by the end of the summer we were ready to buy a boat. Our experiences had taught us a lot about what we wanted from our sailing: adventure, not thrills. We wanted a small, trailer-able boat, but we didn't want the fast, wet, sailing offered by small boats such as the JY 15. We wanted a boat which could hold our gear for sailing and camping adventures, as well as all four of us and several friends. We wanted a boat which was not fast and easy to capsize, with a huge sail and a tiny hull. We wanted a boat we could row instead of using a motor.

Based on these criteria we considered getting a West Wight Potter 15, and we contacted the nearest Potter agent, Rob. We told Rob what we wanted in a boat, and he showed us the Potters he had in his yard. The Potter is a pocket cruiser, with a mini cabin. This made the cockpit very small, which was a downside. Rob then showed my parents some of the other boats he liked and gave them some advertising leaflets and brochures. My parents afterwards showed a brochure to my sister and me, and when we saw the pictures of ComPac's Picnic Cat, it might be called love at first sight. There, in the picture, was a Ransome illustration come to life.

The Picnic Cat is a 14-foot, gaff-rigged catboat. (A quick consultation with *The Picts and the Martyrs* reminded us that *Scarab* and *Amazon* were 13 feet.) She is made out of fiberglass, but she has a mahogany center board case (remember Roger asking about that "funny box" in the *Amazon*?), and teak "cockpit grate" (floorboards). Those features make it seem more like Ransome's boats. We had to put in our own oarlocks with Rob's help (actually, he put them in and we watched), but they've been a great help. Sailing without a motor really adds a new dimension to the experience (more fun but sometimes more stress, especially on these built up little inland lakes with cement waterfronts . . .). So far, we have had many adventures in the *Wildcat*, our Picnic Cat, and look for many more this season!

About the Author: Mary Wessel Walker, 10-Gong Contributing Editor, is a tenth grader at Huron High School in Ann Arbor, Michigan. She has been enjoying Ransome for about as long as she can remember; when she was little, her Granny used to read the books to her. She can be found sailing the *Wildcat* on lakes in Michigan with her parents and younger sister, Margaret. This column will be a regular feature in *Signals from TARSUS*; Mary would like to encourage all Juniors and other TARS to become involved in *Signals from TARSUS*.

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