



SIGNALS FROM T•A•R•S•U•S

July 2000

Summer Greetings!

This newsletter accompanies the Summer 2000 *Signals* and *Mixed Moss* and contains reports of The World's Whopper (the Summer 2000 AGM on Windermere) from TARSUS who were there, a report on the TARSUS event in Georgia, and the second column by our new 10-Gong Contributing Editor. Read On!

Welcome

Welcome to new members Ian Baker; Gwendolyn, James, Linda, Nina, Victoria Chick; Maya Gillett; Victoria Knauss; David Liebenberg; Max Pagel; Kristin Yancey.

The Nancy Blackett Summer Raffle 2000

As in previous years, the Nancy Blackett Trust is conducting a Summer Raffle to help preserve Arthur Ransome's 'best little boat'. Prizes for the raffle include a "Blakes" Norfolk Broads Yachting Holiday, a TV/Video Recorder, a John Lewis/Waitrose Voucher for £100, a set of the Swallows & Amazons books in hardback, a subscription to Classic Boat, and many other prizes.

TARSUS members may purchase tickets at a rate of £1.00 per book of five tickets, which is \$1.65. Please send checks to me (Dave Thewlis) at my address at the end of this newsletter, and indicate on the check that it is for the NBT Raffle. Make your checks out to TARS or The Arthur Ransome Society. I must receive your order by September 8 to ensure that it is recorded by NBT before the drawing on September 30th.

New Production Coordinator

Beginning with this mailing, TARSUS now has a separate mailing and production coordinator: Anne LeVeque, in Washington D.C. She and her team of volunteers will receive the bulk shipments of publications from the U.K., arrange for the printing of *Signals from TARSUS* and other U.S.-originated items, and package and mail the individual mailings. I remain the U.S. Coordinator and the editor of *Signals from TARSUS* (but I'd be happy to talk with someone interested in editing *SfT*!) I'm delighted to welcome Anne and her crew in supporting TARSUS.

Second Annual *Promise* Expedition (Repeated from the April *SfT*)

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 on the *Promise*, scheduled for "a good sailing day in the week of August 14-19, 2000. (*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.

Amazon Publications

The 2000 publication from Amazon, *A Ransome Book-Case*, is now available and has been sent to all those who subscribed in advance. Copies of *A Ransome Bookcase* can now be ordered from the TARS Bookstall for £16.00 plus postage.

For 2001 Amazon Publications will publish a new edition of Taqui Altounyan's *In Aleppo Once*, which has been out of print for many years. It will be lavishly illustrated with photographs provided by Taqui Altounyan and John Sanders, as well as color plates of relevant paintings by Dora Collingwood.

TARSUS members may subscribe to the 2001 publication for \$25 which includes shipping . To subscribe, send a check for \$25 to me (address at end of newsletter) made out to TARS or The Arthur Ransome Society. I must receive your order no later than March 2001. The book will be available by the 2001 AGM.

TARS T-Shirts/Sweatshirts/Poloshirts

TARS Northern Region has a wonderful line of T-Shirts, Sweatshirts and Polo Shirts which I saw at the AGM in May and which are available for order by TARSUS members. They come in a wide variety of colors and sizes for both juniors and adults, and at very reasonable costs. They can be ordered with the TARS logo of crossed Swallows and Amazon flags, or with the Northern Region logo, which adds the North Pole to the flags.

The current plan is to make them orderable from the TARS Stall, but we still have some details to work out with the Northern Region and with the TARS Stall. When this is sorted out, ordering information will be available on the TARS Stall web page on the AR web site, hopefully in the next several weeks. If you are interested but cannot find the information on the web site or don't have access to the web site, I will provide a copy of the order information to anyone who requests it.



Reports on the 2001 Annual General Meeting in Windermere, Cumbria

TARS membership as of January 2000 was 1,661 members (many are family memberships). There were 364 TARS at the AGM in Windermere. U.S. attendees at the 2001 AGM were: Adam, Katie, Owen and Paula Jo Bauer and Jaime Preston from Alaska; Doug Faunt from California; Salim & Keziah Furth from Massachusetts; Jone LaBombard and William, Abby, Gennie, Molly and Theo Noyce from New Hampshire; Charles and Evalyn Preston from Connecticut; and Dave Thewlis from California. There were TARS present from Canada, New Zealand, Australia, the U.S. and continental Europe, in addition to the U.K.

I not only had a wonderful time myself, but met some of the other U.S. TARS for the first time. And now I'll let them tell us about their adventures.

From Paula Jo Bauer in Alaska:

The 2000 AGM was well worth the trip from Alaska! Our thanks and admiration go to those who planned, organized and pulled it off so well. As a family we enjoyed singing and playing with the Chocolateers, sailing in many different boats, meeting friends in a place where the kids could run off to be independent like the Swallows, Amazons and D's.

The site was so well suited to all of the activities, even in the rain. The YMCA people were great fun and good help in all of the activities my kids enjoyed. All of the sailing and water events will be remembered by the Alaskan Coots for a long time to come. We loved the gigs, and we think they might be a good class of boat to use up here in our Bay. The instructors we went out with were fun, and taught us a lot. Sailing in Cocky was the highlight of the water events, followed by participating in the boat parade! the juniors thought the raft building was terrific.

I liked the art class with Mrs. Barrable so much, even without proper tools. Listening to Gabriel Woolf, and the surprise of hearing Arthur Ransome's voice, were great moments, too. Jaime and Katie thoroughly loved the dancing to traditional music. We have found that some of the dances are the same as the Contra dances at the local school and it has opened up a new family activity to us.

Our family would echo the sentiments of our Uncle Chuck and Aunt Evie Preston that the Dick Callum Cup would be more interesting and fun to watch if limited to Juniors. The Norfolk AGM mixed up teams of Juniors and asked them questions from the books at random, not from one book at a time, and it was great fun. Please consider following that format in the future, and it will be a GREAT incentive for Juniors to read and learn to love the books for themselves, insuring the future of the Society!

If the grand eventful Gathering could be held in a Ransome site every few years it would keep the spirit of play and camaraderie in the Society. Families could play together from around the world celebrating the enduring values of Ransome's stories. Many thanks, from all of us, and as always, SWALLOWS AND AMAZONS FOREVER!!!! Paula Bauer and all of the Coots in the North - Jaime Preston, Spike, Owen & Katie Bauer (and our two sailors who never get to come as well, Adam and James Bauer)

From Chuck Preston in Connecticut:

We had a great time at the AGM. The Lakeside YMCA is a very nice facility, well suited for a meeting of the size and scope of the Y2K AGM. Nice buildings, good boats and waterfront, plenty of space for a large group. The food, though institutional, was OK.

The AGM was very well planned and organized, and everything went along smoothly, so far as we could see. Mrs. Preston especially liked the informational programs for adults. We thought, however, that the Dick Callum Cup competition would be better designed for, and limited to, Juniors. That would make it more fun to watch.

The sailing program was a hit. The highlight for me was the near-swamping of "Cocky" while I was aboard. Lots of bailing was needed. The Juniors got a big charge from the raft-building contest.

We heard, and can well understand, the difficulties in annually planning and carrying out a meeting of this size, including a broad scope of activities, on a rotating basis by the TARS Regions. Nevertheless, we hope that a way can be found to have an AGM of this scope at least every couple of years, at one of the Ransome sites.

From Keziah Furth in Massachusetts, aged 14:

My brother and I departed Boston to the AGM on Thursday, May 26. It took a tiring 22 hours due to airline delays for us to fly from Logan to Brussels to London to Manchester and then take the train to Grange over Sands and get a ride to the Lakeside. We set up our tent in the rain at 9:00 on Friday night. Things looked brighter though on Saturday morning. There was actually sunlight and a big group of happy hikers was ready to climb Kanchenjunga. The hike was challenging but very fun. My brother and I were the first to reach the cairn at the top. In the afternoon, we found a few other kids and spent several hours damming the little stream that ran through South Camp.

I have to say that the attempt at an American barbeque failed miserably. However, the chocolate cake was delicious and I was totally surprised to see that the British pour cream onto their cake, which they actually call pudding.

While the grownups were taking part in the barn dance, I was outside with a crowd of about 20 kids playing football (soccer). And of course, we Americans just couldn't keep up with the elite British. Hey, next year we'll play baseball - then we'll show 'em.

Halfway through our game, I was called into the Marquee for the cake-cutting. (Don't worry, I washed my hands.) All the juniors who had traveled long distances to be at the AGM got to cut the twelve cakes representing the twelve books. They were the most elaborately decorated cakes I have ever seen! I got to cut Pigeon Post.

On Sunday morning I went topper sailing for the first time ever. There was so little wind that I had to pull my boat out into the water until it was up to my waist before the wind caught her sail. It was warm, the sun was shining, we were almost drifting, so I took off my Wellingtons(wellies) and my rain jacket(waterproof). Five minutes later, the wind came up so suddenly that my brother capsized. All of a sudden we were FLYING around the lake and then it started raining, then hailing. There was no lightening, so we kept sailing for another 20 minutes.

When we came back to the beach, my hands were so stiff that I couldn't tie the painter or pull my wellies back on. We were all soaked to the skin and freezing cold. That was when our YMCA leaders showed us to the gift from God: the Drying Room. Fortunately, we had brought plenty of extra clothes, so when the sun came out a hour later, we went outside and spent the afternoon helping out on the Big Six Detective challenge, damming more streams, and playing football/soccer until 10:30 that evening.

We slept late on Monday morning and missed our chance to go out with the Flotilla, but that gave us time to buy lots of souvenirs for the stay-at-homes. Saying good-bye to all our friends after the closing ceremony was very hard, so we took photos, exchanged name tags, and got addresses.

I had the time of my life and I'm hoping to go to the AGM in Southampton next year. Kez Furth-age 14.

From Molly Noyce in New Hampshire, aged 10:

From my family's hotel at London we took a people carrier taxi to the train station. It was a three hour train ride to Preston. From Preston it was a thirty minute ride to Grange-Over-Sands. A van took us from there to the YMCA!! We got to our lovely little cabin. We were staying at Dixon's Farm (C2.) The dinner that night was wonderful. I like the different food than what you get at home.

The Totally TARRY Games were a lot of fun. My favorite game was when we had to set sail (which was when we ran around the dance floor) and we had to find a crew. If Diane called out Amazons then you had to find a crew of two. That was because there were two Amazons. She counted five swallows. The big six was the hardest. Then you had to find six.

The breakfast that morning was rather what we Americans get when we go out for breakfast. We just have cereal or just toast. Not eggs and cereal and toast. Only when we go out to breakfast.

After that I went back to get ready for Kanchenjunga. Kanchenjunga had a few steep parts to get up it, but it was still fun. The mist seemed to clear when we got close to the top. There was a really big cairn at the top. It was too windy at the top to stop for lunch so we found a sheltered place near a lake. That's where we had lunch. All the teenagers stopped to dam up streams and such. We went a different way to get up than down. I had fun. We had to hurry back to make the all sTARS band practice. The practice I thought turned out really good. Roger said it was better than he expected. I thought it was fun even though I couldn't play all the songs.

After that I went to the drawing room. I drew lots of pictures. I didn't think I would win. Next me and my brother explored the woods behind our chalet. Then I found my sister and her group of friends and we went down to South Camp. There we waited for the barbecue. I loved the food that we got at the barbecue. I had a hamburger. The barn dance was a lot of fun. I danced almost every dance. I was really worn out. That ran way after my bed time. We left early.

I liked the different mixtures of breakfasts. It made life more interesting. I really liked the whole experience of the wilderness. I liked having the lake and a path though the woods. That morning I did the Peter Duck's treasure hunt. That was a lot of fun. My team didn't do that great but it was a lot of fun anyway. I hung around North Camp till my sailing lesson. I had a lot of fun. The instructor I had was a lot of fun. We sailed around for an hour and forty-five minutes. After that I walked down to South camp to play soccer. My team won!!!!

After that I went to the Dick Callum Cup. That was a lot of fun. I didn't know the answers to half the questions. Finally I went to the shanties. I played my clarinet good and true. I got really cold.

The next morning I rode in the Peggy Blackett during the flotilla. I hung around camp and went to the closing ceremony. My brother won the Peter Duck's treasure hunt because both my parents helped him.

I had a great time in England. I even got to miss school. Yaaaaayyyyy!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

The train rides home were really long. It was going to be hard to go to school on Wednesday.

Thank You TARS. I had a lot of fun for my first AGM!!!

A final note (from the editor): The next AGM will be June 30-July 1 in Southampton, England. This is a departure from the previous practice of having the AGM over Spring Bank Holiday weekend (our Memorial Day weekend) and it produced a fair amount of discussion both pro and con at the AGM itself, but it may make the AGM more accessible to U.S. TARS whose children are still in school until mid-June.



The Georgia TARSUS Event 2000 was a Delightful Beginning!

I didn't deliberately schedule the first Event to be held on dates that include the first day of summer. It just happened that way. The only consideration was that the Event should occur after my grandchildren were out of school for the summer. The first Event took place from Wednesday, June 21st through Saturday, June 24th. The weather cooperated nicely in that there were no rain showers though the sailing conditions were not the best. The winds were mostly 5-10 knots, but variable. Only Wednesday morning had good, sustained winds.

Two of my grandchildren, Shannon and Hannah, came out and had great adventures with old granddad (aka Capt. G. Flint, aka Capt. Foxworthy of the PuddleDucks). At the extremes, another granddaughter, Rebecca, is working part-time and has other interests as well. I have designated Rebecca as the "advisor, reader, forecaster, and sorceress" for our newly formed band of intrepid explorers, the PuddleDucks. Perhaps she will be out next time. On the other hand, Madison, the youngest granddaughter must grow a bit.

Others who came include the crew of Bruce Willis: Kevin, Ian, and Colin from Marietta GA. They brought a kayak and a Snipe sailboat. The Snipe sailed for one day then suffered a minor ding that would require some shop work before sailing again. The crew of Alan Truelove and his son Andrew, from Annandale VA , drove down and camped Wednesday and Thursday. Alan is a charter member of TARS, and he is originally from London. He told me of visiting the Steamboat Museum in the Lake District, and he has spent a good bit of time in the Ambleside area. Though Alan and Andrew brought no boat with them, they did enjoy Kevin's kayak and also sailed our canoe.

On Saturday our friend, Kathy Duggleby from Atlanta GA, came out with her Sea Snark sailboat and got out on the lake for a nice sail though winds were light and variable. Kathy is not yet a TARS member, but I would hope that she would join soon. She is presently reading the Ransome books and viewing the videos. Kathy has a rich and fertile imagination, and she has much to contribute to any event.

Those who attended mostly had their own adventures during the day: swimming, fishing, kayaking, and sailing the canoe. In the evenings we did get together to view the three videos that have been made from Ransome's books.

The PuddleDucks sailed the length of the Great Unnamed Sea: from the Great SouthWest Pole (GSWP) up to the newly discovered Great NorthEast Pole (GNEP). As we sailed to the GNEP, I sighted a submarine periscope that may have belonged to a spying vessel that was following, but the other Tarka crewmembers thought it was more likely a sunken log. Hannah had to leave early on Saturday, but Shannon and her Dad (David) had a successful treasure hunt after the last remaining pirate from a ship that sank gave them a map.

I invite you to go to the URL: <http://www.gsu.edu/~biojdsx/tarsus/tarsus.htm> to read more about the Event and to view photos of our activities.

Others who came out to visit or camp include my son Greg (Hannah's Dad) who camped on Friday night, Melanie and David (Shannon's parents) who visited on Saturday, and Sandra Garber (my wife) who camped on Saturday night. Annette Satterfield (my friend and ex-wife) came with Laura Satterfield (my 86 year old Mom) during the days on Wednesday and Thursday), and Mom camped with us on Friday night. To my delight, Jim and Julie Brawner (TARS members from Atlanta) dropped by briefly on Saturday. Oh yes, and "Charlie" my Border collie who made many contributions to the Event, was with us for three of the days.

With this first Event concluded, I've already started thinking about next year. Does Wednesday June 20th through Saturday June 23rd, 2001 sound good?? I have some ideas for changes and additional things that should make the Event better than the first. I'll post a notice on the TARBOARD and also on my web site soon after 2001 rolls around if it seems that an event will be possible.

Best wishes to all of you for a good summer of fun and adventures.

Jim Satterfield
aka Capt. G. Flint
aka Capt. Foxworthy



From our 10-Gong Contributing Editor:

In Which We . . . Capsize

Mary Wessel Walker

I'm not really sure how to begin this story. I don't want to make it sound melodramatic, nor do I want to discourage anyone from sailing (or jibing). Also, after my last article praising the merits of the *Wildcat*, this is hard to write. A lot of things went wrong, but it could have been a lot worse.

It was one of those beautiful, sunny, windy days when the wind is gusty and maybe a little too strong. We were reefed and running downwind in a narrow channel. Now, for those non-sailing TARS (I was one of your number, and not that long ago either), you may find these technical details a little hard to understand, but bear with me. When you're running downwind you have a lot of speed and your sail is way out, but it's a delicate thing because if you're not careful the wind can get behind the sail and cause the boom to come across suddenly (called an uncontrolled jibe). This is very dangerous. Review the beginning of *Swallowdale* for a better idea of what happens, straight from AR!

Daddy was at the tiller, and Mommy, Margaret, and I were putting on sun-block and our clip-on sunglasses. The hatch-covers were unlatched. Daddy said, "Ready to jibe!" which means that we're going to do a controlled jibe. We had been working on our technique, and had just done a beautiful jibe a few minutes before. Mommy put the waterproof bag that contained the wallets, car-keys, and sunglasses, unsealed under the unlatched hatch-cover. Then we jibed. Now, it happened so fast that none of us is entirely sure what precisely went wrong. Even in a controlled jibe the boom occasionally comes across with some violence, and in the past we had shipped water over the leeward gunwale without any problem, but this time we heeled and just kept on going. Maybe a gust caught the sail at a crucial moment. Maybe Daddy headed up when he shouldn't have. Maybe we didn't shift our weight quickly enough. Maybe Mommy let the sheet out too soon. Who knows? Maybe we had just gotten cocky.

How do I describe how that moment felt? I remember not being too worried about shipping water until the seat of my pants got wet. Then I was in the water and the Wildcat was on her side. Mommy was coughing and trying, unsuccessfully, to close the flapping hatch covers. She swallowed a lot of Lake Huron. Daddy was trying to right her (the boat, that is) as they show you in books, but already her hull was filling up with water through the open hatch-covers making her too heavy. Also, with the centerboard up, there's really nothing on the bottom of the boat to hold on to. The water wasn't as cold as we expected it to be, but it was cold enough. Capsizing does strange things to the mind. When I saw the things from the cockpit floating around me, I grabbed them. The stupidest things! Sun-block, one sandal, a water bottle, a cushion . . . I also grabbed the oars, which was good. I nearly grabbed a packet of tissues, but then I realized that they were sopping. Margaret did the same thing, grabbing everything that floated by her. Mommy wonders why we didn't grab the wallets or car-keys, but honestly, we never saw them. They weren't floating.

We were all wearing life jackets and were rescued. I will tell you that story in the next *Signals from TARSUS*. But for now let me leave us floating in the water; for I'll tell you, it felt as though we were there for an age. (Actually, it was only a matter of a few minutes).

About the Author: Mary Wessel Walker is wringing out her socks in Ann Arbor, Michigan. She is 15 and entering 11th grade in the fall. She and her family (including younger sister, Margaret, 13) are long time fans of Arthur Ransome, and have just disproved the hypothesis that duffers will drown. She encourages all TARS to become actively involved in TARS, and wishes everyone a terrific, SAFE summer.



So it has been quite an eventful period for TARSUS, with seventeen of us at the AGM, and a grand weekend event in Georgia. Please note that Jim Satterfield has proposed June 20-23, 2001, for the next Georgia event – so TARSUS could bundle a trip to Georgia and then to Southampton for the AGM. On a final note, I am thoroughly delighted at having so many contributions for *Signals from TARSUS*, and I look forward to contributions for the next newsletter, which will come out probably in November with the *Winter Mixed Moss*, *The Outlaw*, and *Signals*.

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