

Potosi natives study in the deep freeze



Deb David, seated on the right, enjoys a wonderful sunny northern Canadian day while studying polar bears.

Inspired by them, David gets chance to study polar bears

BY ELYSSA VONDRA

In a place where milk costs \$14 per gallon and doors are left unlocked for wandering polar bears, Platteville resident and Potosi native Deb David had a life-changing journey, learning about global warming and the world at large.

Because of her affinity for polar bears, David decided to take a "learning vacation" to the Churchill Northern Studies Centre in Canada.

With self-described "empty nest syndrome" after her grown children moved out and she separated from her husband, David said the courage of mother polar bears inspired her; they raise their cubs and let them go, plodding along even when alone.

of our existence," said David.

When she heard about the opportunity to visit Churchill, she jumped on the chance to finally see polar bears up-close and personal.

What David got out of the trip was much more.

"I went to see the bears, but got so much more. I learned about their environment, climate change, cultures - understanding more about the huge world we live in and how we are all connected," said David.

As a full time employee in the dementia unit of Park Place Assisted Living, David saw parallels between her work life and her experience in Canada.

"We're in their world"; that's the

Bault studies ice cores in Antarctica

BY ELYSSA VONDRA

Despite climate change, studies done with the help of a former Platteville Middle School math teacher and Potosi graduate point to an expansion of sea ice in the antarctic region.

This year, Jennifer Bault was selected as one of just 10 PolarTREC researchers to take an arctic voyage to collect scientific data.

During her second attempt at applying, Bault was selected out of over 1000 applicants as one of three PolarTREC team members to go south. Each year, PolarTREC takes teachers from around the nation to polar regions of the globe for scientific expeditions.

Bault's mission was to measure the ice in the Ross Sea of Antarctica.

From Oct. 21- Nov. 28, Bault was in the coldest continent on the planet in 24/7 sunlight, merely feet away from penguins and seals, studying the thickness, pH levels, solidity, and chemical composition of polar ice.

"We took ice core measurements out on the Ross Sea ... this project has been going on for years," said Bault.

The ice is about two meters thick, she said. She and her team drilled the ice out, taking measurements and testing the chemical components in different layers. They also ventured out on Rosetta Ice Pods to measure the ice and sea floor.

The results were surprising.

"The extent of the ice is growing," said Bault.

This raises the question: "Why is it growing now?" Ice is shrinking elsewhere and the global temperature is rising, Bault said.

Since there currently isn't much data on the amount of ice in the polar regions for lack of research-



Cutting some ice core samples, Jennifer Bault spent almost a recently studying the effects of the weather on Antarctica.

trips to get a baseline set of information so the effects of climate change on ice levels can be measured to allow for positive change on policy and to teach students about polar science.

During her trip, Bault said, "We were very busy, start to finish."

Throughout the first weeks of the voyage, Bault said she and her team went on expeditions. They later spent time in a "cold room" at -21 degrees Fahrenheit, cutting up samples of ice to look at its structure, pH level, and solidity.

Bault said the cold room was difficult to endure; the fan circulates air constantly.

"It's blowing right at your face," said Bault.

Although Antarctica is the "coldest

planet," Bault said it didn't frigid as Wisconsin winters since sun was shining constantly and wasn't as much dampness in the air.

Bault said Antarctic [weather] can change on a dime. One second, it could be completely clear and the next, there could be a blizzard.

Despite the constantly fluctuating environment, Bault said another aspect of the trip was being able to come face-to-face with arctic wildlife.

Following "Antarctica" explorers can't confront penguins and seals, Bault said, but they are allowed to observe animals from a distance. Since there



Bault

FROM PAGE 1A

natural predators for penguins in the region, they're very curious and have been known to walk within feet of passerby, Bault said, which is why she was, at one point, just two meters away from a penguin during her adventure.

Bault highly recommends the PolarTREC experience. She said she'd return to Antarctica "in a heartbeat. I would go tomorrow."

Although she said the application is "not for the sane of heart" since it's "a very long process," she said, "I couldn't have dreamed a better experience ... I loved every part of it."

She hopes to spread the message that "there are people needed [in Antarctica]."

Bault said 60 percent of

Jennifer Bault enjoyed her time studying in the Antarctic, which included catching a glimpse of the wildlife there.

the continent's inhabitants are working to support scientists - maintaining their machinery, cooking, cleaning, and doing other odd jobs, so traveling to Antarctica to work is an excellent opportunity for students seeking to support their college tuition.

Working with PolarTREC, Bault has tried to spread this message to her students.

Since one of the goals of PolarTREC is to teach k-12 students about polar science, Bault said that through a one-way screen, she used Skype to connect with her students while experimenting so they had the opportunity to type questions to her.

Now that she's back to work as a teacher of Advanced Placement biology and AP environmental science in Glendale, her trip still comes up in class every day.

Although Bault won't be able to return to Antarctica unless her former teammates write her into a grant, as a permanent member of the PolarTREC team, Bault will have funding to travel to recount her experience to others. She will speak at Potosi School District Jan. 15.

Kids from Wisconsin seeking new members for 50th anniversary season

The Kids from Wisconsin - the performance troupe that has had several members from southwest Wisconsin, is seeking members for its 50th anniversary.

The Kids from Wisconsin was formed in 1969 to showcase the best faces and talent of Wisconsin's youth ages 15-20. They have remained true to their mission and today are one of the most iconic and beloved performing troupes

throughout Wisconsin, performing in nearly 65 shows each summer to over 120,000 terrific fans. This wholesome group of performers showcase the best of the best in musical talent.

The KIDS performance opportunity gives an exceptional, real life experience to those interested in a future with the performing arts through the production of the full Broadway style performance, the rigorous

tour in completely different cities all summer, the delight of enthusiastic audiences and putting on the live performance night after night.

Over 80 percent of KIDS troupe members go on to either perform professionally, become instructors, managers, writers and so much more within the performing arts industry. The alumni will come together this summer at the 50th reunion on August

3-5, 2018 and are scheduled to sing the National Anthem at the Brewers game on August 5th.

Instrumentalists and vocalists/dancers should apply online: <https://www.kidsfromwisconsin.org/> info for a spot at the annual February auditions to be held February 16th in Eau Claire and February 23rd-25th in Milwaukee.