

around the continent

SOUTH POLE

El Dorm moves

By Katie Hess

South Pole correspondent

On the evening of Dec. 12, the building formerly known as the Elevated Dorm, El Dorm, El Doumo, Beaker Box or the Blue Box, was dragged from its home since 1991 next to the Hypertats across the skiway to the Dark Sector. It took three bulldozers pulling with a fourth steering from behind to move it. Martin Lewis coordinated the historic move and operators of the night included Megan Whitmore, Jennifer Teague, Bob Spatz and Dave Watson — with support from Amber Neuman.

The El Dorm now resides just past the Martin A. Pomerantz Observatory (MAPO) under the new identity of the Counting House where it will be used as a laboratory by the IceCube researchers. Iron workers prepared the building over the three weeks leading up to the relocation by removing the interior and reinforcing it from the inside with 23 cables. The panel crew jacked the building and slid two skis beneath the bottom frame. When the iron workers welded the skis on, the building became ready for the big move.

Residents of South Pole showed off their artistic sides on Sunday at the Art Show held in the new dining facility. Artwork included everything from furniture to jewelry, to photography to a stamp and philately collection. It made for a very entertaining but relaxed, social way to spend the afternoon.

A four-person, private expedition of skiers was dropped off by Adventure Logistics and Expeditions (AL&E) last week at 89 degrees South. They skied “the last degree” to the Geographic South Pole arriving early Monday morning. Skiers hailed primarily from the U.K. and left soon after arriving at the South Pole.

‘Tis the season at South Pole to get a little festive. Behind the Ceremonial Pole marker, blocks of firn (the snow atop the glacial ice) await more South Pole cre-



Photo by Mark Eisinger / Special to *The Antarctic Sun*

Martin Lewis directs three bulldozers moving the El Dorm to a new location and a new purpose. The dorm will become laboratories for the IceCube science project.

ativity. Ambitious sculptors are encouraged to have their masterpieces ready for the annual competition held Sunday.

Sick calls are double the average for South Pole. Since summer season began, there has been an average of 80 patient visits per week, equivalent to a third of the station population. The report stated that about 25 percent of the station population has been infected with an upper respiratory “cold” virus. A report noted that a virus is causing similar symptoms at McMurdo, but has not been as prevalent there, and perhaps is more prevalent at Pole because of the close quarters.

PALMER

Bahia Paraiso

By Kerry Kells

Palmer correspondent

This past week was a busy one for station activities but scientists were limited

by the sea ice, which has again encroached upon the station and limited boating possibilities. The polar oceans research group made it out to a few of the local islands at the beginning of the week.

On Wednesday we had a special science lecture: video footage of the *Bahia Paraiso*, the Argentinian supply vessel for Esperanza Station, as it struck an underwater pinnacle off of Palmer Station on January 28, 1989. The *Bahia* carried 114 crew and 81 tourists.

The footage was taken by a tourist. After the tour of station, the video recorded the departure of the *Bahia* between Delaca and Litchfield Islands.

When the 130m long ship ran aground and tore a 9m gash in the hull, he kept the video camera rolling and captured the passengers as they boarded the life rafts and paddled, or were towed, towards Palmer Station.

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the week in weather

McMurdo Station

High: 41F / 5C

Low: 23F / -5C

Max. sustained wind: 23mph / 37kph

Windchill: 1F / -17C

Palmer Station

High: 46F / 8C

Low: 24F / -4C

Max. sustained wind: 18mph / 30kph

Precipitation: 4mm

South Pole Station

High: -25 F / -31C

Low: -31F / -35C

Peak wind: 25 mph / 40kph

Max. Physio-altitude: 3120m