



photography

Monte Nagler

Photographers journey to Land of Thunder

Monte Nagler recently returned from a photographic expedition to the Pangnirtung Pass on Baffin Island, Canadian Arctic. Here is the first of three articles. Barry Franklin's Fitness column will return Oct. 8.

THOR, THE god of thunder, is represented as a red-bearded warrior of enormous strength. He was an implacable foe of wrongdoers, yet benevolent toward mankind.

How exciting, I thought, it must be to view a mountain named after such a powerful deity. I bet myself that it would be like no other mountain I had ever seen.

While the god Thor is mythical, Mount Thor exists in all its splendor and majesty. A most worthy namesake, it is located in Auyuittuq National Park on Baffin Island in the Canadian Arctic.

Auyuittuq, in the Inuit language, means "the land that never melts." It is a land of spectacular glaciers, jagged

mountain peaks, and deeply cut river valleys.

A remote arctic landscape and one of the world's last wilderness paradises, it is a frontier of challenge and solitude. Dominating the land is the Penny Ice Cap, more than 2,000 square miles of solid ice, a remnant of the last Ice Age.

THE THOUGHT of photographing in such a locale attracted me like a magnet. The absence of trees, one of my favorite subjects, and abundance of cold weather weren't deterrents.

So when I was asked to join a photographic expedition to Auyuittuq, I jumped at the opportunity. My partners in this grand adventure were close friends, Edna and Chuck Elfont of Huntington Woods, and Greg Durcharne of Niagara Falls, Ontario.

Were we crazy? Maybe, I thought. But what an opportunity to share through our photographs a part of the world so few people get to see.

Our adventure began on July 30, when we left Windsor bound for Pang-

nirtung, with stops in Montreal and Frobisher Bay. Cameras and film, safely packed, were our most precious cargo. We made sure all our equipment was registered with U.S. Customs, and always requested visual checks at airport security to avoid potentially damaging X-ray devices.

PANGNIRTUNG (pronounced Pang-nir-tung) is an Eskimo village with a population of about 900, mainly Inuits and a scattering of French Canadians and Europeans. With one hotel and one general store, it displayed a relaxed, refreshing pace of life.

The people were friendly, and I have never seen such happy and beautiful children. We became good friends with Les Delinger, the village manager and amateur photographer, who has our gratitude for giving us shelter and full stomachs our two days in town.

During our stay in Pangnirtung, we photographed many icebergs floating up the Pangnirtung Fjord. Because of the extremely rocky bottom under the water, low tide would leave hundreds of ice floes stranded like sculpted whales until high tide came to their rescue.

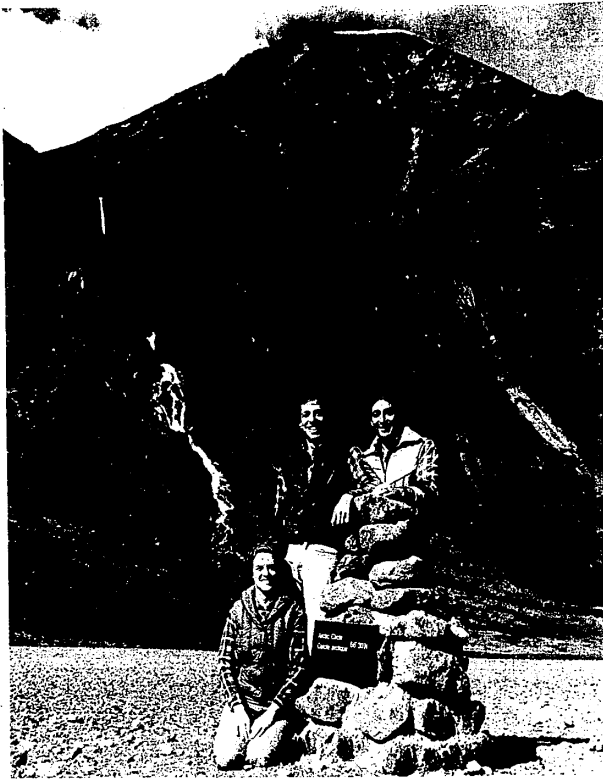
We took many exciting pictures of these shapely icebergs. Of course, we had to keep our eyes open so that high tide wouldn't "rescue" us along with the icebergs. That would have been too chilling an experience!

AFTER TWO DAYS at Pangnirtung, we were ready to begin our journey into Auyuittuq (pronounced eye-et-tuk), 27 miles to the north and accessible only by canoe. The entrance is located at the beginning of the Pangnirtung Pass, a river valley 60 miles long which carves a snakelike path through the mountains.

At night, during high tide, we departed, all camera gear and film in waterproof bags. A quiet excitement overcame me. Our adventure to an unknown wilderness was beginning. We rode in silence, each wondering what this most rugged of lands held in store for us.

I thought of Thor and wondered how the mountain named after him would welcome us.

1981, Monte Nagler. Next week, part two of "A Journey through the Land of Thunder."



Stopping for a rest at the Arctic Circle marker are Edna and Chuck Elfont and Monte Nagler. This picture was taken using the camera's self-timer device.

Short shots: classes, contests

• Monte Nagler will teach a one-day seminar Sept. 26 in Ballooning Photography at Henry Ford Community College in Dearborn. The fee of \$150 includes a ride in a hot-air balloon and a box lunch. Call HFCC's Center for New Directions at 271-2750, ext. 330, for enrollment information.

• The Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission's photo exhibit is at the Pontiac Mall until this Saturday. Photos are of park nature areas.

• "Nature Photography: Fall Color and the Close-up" is offered by the Cranbrook Institute of Science, Bloomfield Hills, on four Thursday evenings

beginning Sept. 24 followed by a Saturday field trip Oct. 11. Price is \$36 for non-members. Instructor Alan Lowy says you'll need a 35 mm single-lens reflex camera, tripod and cable release.

• "Focus on People" will be the theme of the Detroit Central Business District Association photo contest, which runs to Jan. 15. Diane Edgecomb, CBDA president, said \$3,700 in prizes will be awarded. You may submit 35 mm slides or prints. Contact the CBDA office, 1135 City National Bank Building, Detroit 48226 for an entry form.



One of many ice floes Nagler photographed in the Pangnirtung Fjord at low tide. He was intrigued by the immense distances and the clarity of the air. The entrance to Auyuittuq, in the background, is 27 miles away.

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