

North Pole lures 3 on photo-taking expedition

By Loraine McClish
staff writer

An Observer & Eccentric columnist, a children's dentist and an electron microscopist are in the last throes of preparation for a picture-shooting expedition in the Arctic Circle.

The trip will hike through the Pangnirtung Pass from the town of Auyittuq, which means "the land that never melts."

National Geographic magazine has described the pass as "the most uninhabitable place in the world."

The goal of Monte Nagler, Dr. C.J. Elfont and his wife, Dr. Edna Elfont, is to bring back a body of photographic work that to their knowledge has never been attempted before.

Nagler owns and operates Midas Muffler in Farmington, writes, teaches and lectures on photography and has

served as a photographic adviser. His photos have been published and shown nationwide.

Elfont's credits also extend nationwide. The dentist is also a photographic contest judge, teaches in Photo Art Center in Livonia and is a contributing or assignment photographer for numerous publications.

Edna Elfont is the writer of the photographer-and-author husband and wife team whose most recent joint effort will be published in the July issue of Michigan Natural Resources. Technical writing is also a part of her job at Sinai Hospital.

THE THREE have spent the past year in research and planning for the trip to the North Pole that is hoped to yield artistic work of a little-explored area of the world.

"If anyone has ever done a major work of Baffin Island, capturing the

mood of the place, such as Ansel Adams did of Yosemite or Death Valley, we can't find it," Nagler said.

"We've found a few postcards. But even an old article in National Geographic had more words than pictures and those weren't much," Elfont said. "What we're after is making a photographic statement of a place that has kept humans from inhabiting it."

Reading of the life of the Inuit, the native Indian-Eskimo of the village of Auyittuq, plus the history and the geology of the polar regions, Mrs. Elfont said the best word she could find to describe it would be "otherworldly."

Her reading, she said, "conjured up thoughts of the supernatural, with almost eerie, sometimes awesome feelings."

Nagler and Elfont echoed her statement. Both used words such as "mystic" or "spiritual" in describing their feelings as they gathered up as much

information as possible before beginning their journey.

"And that is what we want to capture on film," Elfont said.

FOOD, ALONG with some equipment, has already arrived in the Canadian National Park in readiness for the July 30 to Aug. 18 hike through Pangnirtung Pass.

This had to be done during the winter, when the ice could carry the filled motorized sleds, driven by the Inuits. But the hikers will each be carrying 50-pound backpacks after they enter the pass from a fjord by canoe.

"We're all in pretty good physical shape," Elfont said.

Even so, Nagler can be seen now jogging around his West Bloomfield neighborhood with 50 pounds of lead shot on his back in training.

"There's no nice trail waiting for us," Mrs. Elfont said. "It will be as

summer. The photographers and journalist leave July 30 to take pictures of an un-peopled portion of the North Pole.

much scaling and climbing for us as walking. Only a very few people have even been there since Eric the Red landed on the North American continent in 982."

Climate for the hikers will range from 30-55 degrees and they will have sun 24 hours a day traversing rugged icy terrain and glacial streams with their ski poles.

They will be hauling their own gas for heat because the land yields no trees, flares, and "back-up gear for almost everything, especially the camera equipment," Nagler said. "That will be our most precious cargo."

THE TRIO expects to trek about 8-10 miles a day while photographing mountains that were all named after the Norse Gods, glacier lakes and moraines.

A photographic high point, they believe, will be Mt. Thor, Mt. Odin and

the Penny Ice Caps, permanent terrestrial ice that is the remains of the Ice Age.

Their guide will be Greg DuChaine, a Canadian friend who has back-packed the pass and returned to tell stories of the un-peopled expanse which was the beginnings of their lure to the North Pole.

Nagler and Elfont have worked together before, shooting the same subject from different points of view, and look upon the trip as an opportunity to do something that has never been done before.

"We're both pretty well known in photographic circles," Nagler said. "We're both past the point of just wanting to take pictures. Artistically we say something and now we have the chance to say something new and different."

Elfont adds, "Who knows? This might be the first of many trips to unexplored areas."



JOHN STANO/staff photographer

Reaching for roots

The Caplans bring about international reunion

By Shirlee Iden
staff writer

Talk about extended families; there's one in Oakland County that's at the center of an upcoming international happening.

If your name were Caplan, you'd know all about it. It's about 106 descendants of Samuel and Han-

nah Caplan getting together, and it's a first.

Two years in the planning, the first international reunion of the Caplan Family will take place June 19-21 at the Michigan Inn in Southfield. Relatives from all over the states as well as England and Canada will attend.

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Reka Goldstein and Ettie Handelman (above), both Caplans through their mothers, have been working on the family reunion for two years. Last May, 14 families merged efforts in a garage sale to raise funds for researching and printing family histories and family trees. Shown at the garage sale (seated at the table) is Kitty Wallace, 84-year-old surviving daughter of the Caplan couple who came out of Russia a century ago.