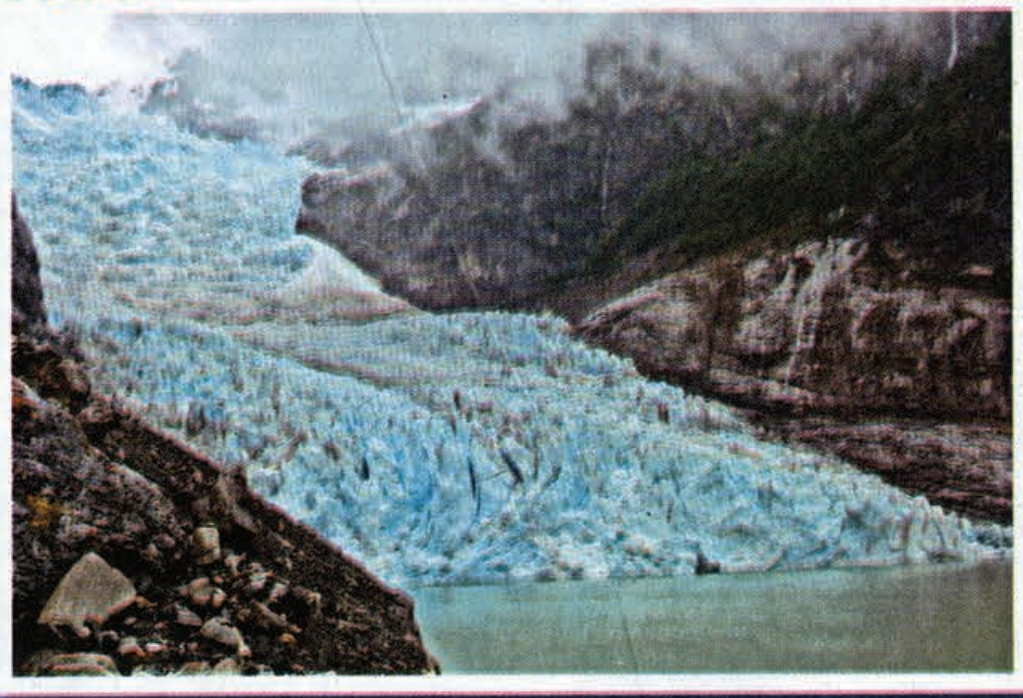


HERE'S A THOUGHT:

"I am content to define history as the past events of which we have knowledge and refrain from worrying about those of which we have none — until, that is, some archaeologist digs them up."
— Barbara W. Tuchman, American historian (1912-1989)

TRAVEL



PHOTOS BY BETH PARKS

Speckled with gray rock debris scoured from the terrain over which it has passed, blue ice from the Serrano Glacier (above) in Bernardo O'Higgins National Park in Chile spills into a lagoon at the glacier's base. Elsewhere in Patagonia, like sentinels beneath a cloud-filled sky, the Horns of Paine, or Los Cuernos del Paine (below), present a magnificent backdrop for the multihued waters of Lago Nordenskjöld in Torres Del Paine National Park.

Unparalleled peaks, parks, glaciers and grottoes give this loosely defined region at the southern tip of the Americas a mighty allure for the wanderlust-afflicted

BY BETH PARKS
SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

Maybe you've heard the saying: "It's not the end of the earth, but you can see it from there." Some people say that about Maine, but I'll do you one better: It's a place called Patagonia, and it sits at the very southern tip of South America.

Frankly, I knew zilch about Patagonia before learning it would be our departure point for Antarctica. Our expedition to Antarctica was to leave from Punta Arenas, Patagonia's oldest settlement and the capital of Chile's Magallanes region. Because Punta Arenas is notorious for its brutal winds, we were advised to arrive a day or two early rather than take a chance on our plane from Santiago not being able to land as scheduled.

I phoned a guide in Patagonia who arranges local tours and asked him the best way to spend an extra couple of days. "It's rugged, wild country," he said. "Do you want to hike or ride horses? Climb a mountain peak? Spend a night in an ice cave? Take a boat ride up a fjord and trek on a glacier?"

Yikes! My imagination swirled with possibilities. I thanked the guide and told him I'd do a bit of research before making a decision.

Patagonia itself turned out to be a bit of a mystery. I quickly learned that people vigorously disagree about its boundaries, square mileage, population numbers, and just about everything else. About all you can say for certain is that the smaller portion rests in Chile and the larger part in Argentina, and that Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid moved there in the early 1900s.

Patagonia is not an official region, and trying to describe it is as tricky as trying to define the American Southwest. It is a



Loosely defined, Patagonia spans a region about twice the size of France across the S. American countries of Chile and Argentina.

waffle-cone-shaped territory that roughly extends south from the Rio Colorado in Argentina and includes land from the Pacific to the Atlantic oceans. It covers an area about twice the size of France, supports a population of perhaps 1.7 million souls, and is considered by many to be one of the great remaining wilderness regions in the world.

One of the most attractive things about Patagonia is its obscurity. For the most part, only the most seasoned travelers venture to make the trip. Wanderlust has its rewards though. Patagonia spreads before the adventurer as a paradise of vast steppes, chiseled mountain peaks, crystalline glaciers, turquoise lakes and vibrant wildflowers. Some areas are so pristine that access is limited to hiking, boats and horseback.

Myth holds that giants once lived in Patagonia. In fact, the area probably derives its name from "patagon," a word thought to mean big-footed.
See Patagonia, Page C10

Patagonia

Where towers meet the sea



Patagonia

Continued from Page C7

Magellan supposedly used the term to describe the Tehuelche (*ta* WAYL *chay*) Indians who left large tracks in the snow and sand. While these native people were taller than the early explorers, the only real giants in Patagonia were probably the region's mountains and glaciers. Two of the best places to view those today are Torres del Paine (*tor* race del *PIE* *nay*) and Bernardo O'Higgins National Parks.

Torres del Paine is one of the most stunning parks on the planet, and it lies wholly within the country of Chile. Located in the heart of Patagonia and covering an area of about 930 square miles, its terrain varies from nearly sea level to around 9,000 feet. UNESCO designated the park as a biosphere reserve in 1978.

Torres, meaning towers, refers to the stark and forbidding granite towers that dominate the medium-high mountains of the Paine Massif. While actually part of the Andes, the massif is an independent mountain formation some 12 million years old. It consists of a granite core capped by a mantle of sedimentary rock that was pushed up from the valley's floor by immense geological forces. Eons of scouring by ice, wind and rain have weathered away the sediment and exposed the granite.

Paine is thought by some to derive its name from a Tehuelche Indian word for blue. If so, the moniker is well-deserved. Name any shade of blue you can imagine from azure to ultramarine and you'll find it in the park's lakes, rivers, glaciers and cascading waterfalls.

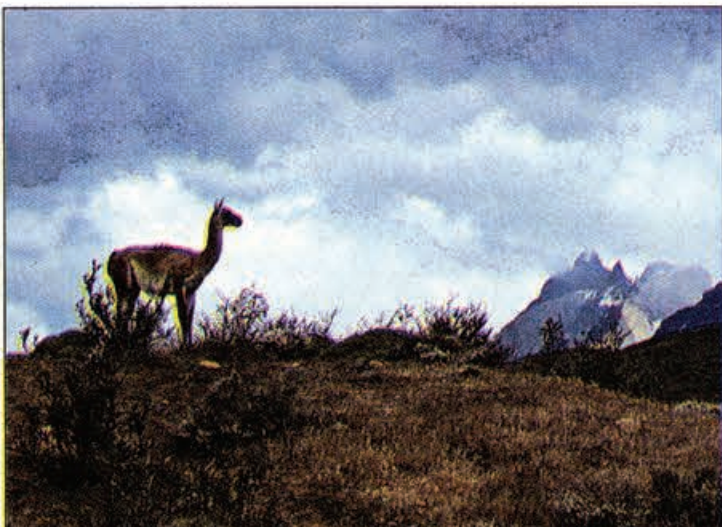
I got my first real taste of the blue shades at Grey Glacier on the western side of the park. Grey Glacier is an icy finger that stretches out like a frozen river from the south end of the Southern Patagonia Ice Field. Getting to it and its meltwater, Lago (Lake) Grey is a breathless struggle against the biting wind. It is worth the hike, however, to get a close-up look at the multihued icebergs bobbing and drifting in the choppy, mineral-laden waters.

Grey Glacier is just an appetizer for the spectacular sight of Los Cuernos del Paine, or the Horns of Paine. These chiseled granite peaks project upward some 6,500 feet above the plain and present a dramatic grayish-brown backdrop for the turquoise waters of Lago Pehoe and Lago Nordenskjöld. Often shrouded in clouds, the horns glow with a mystical quality that sends shivers through your imagination.

Torres del Paine, in addition to being the name of the park itself, also refers to the three Towers of Paine. These relatively young granite monoliths shoot skyward to about 9,600 feet and are among the most recognizable peaks in the world. Their vertical walls brace themselves against the relentless wind and beckon to obsessed climbers who enjoy conquering the world's most challenging mountains.

Even if you have no desire to climb, you may enjoy looking for wildlife as you travel through the park and surrounding areas. You'll probably see guanacos, camelid animals related to llamas and alpacas. Guanacos roam the plains in groups, and each dominant male has his own harem of females. These stream-lined animals can run up to 35 mph, a good defense against the pumas that prey on them. Pumas, commonly called cougars or mountain lions in North America, are the guanacos' only predators on the open, treeless steppes.

In addition to guanacos, you may also see rheas in the Torres del Paine area. These flightless



BETH PARKS PHOTO

A lone guanaco gazes at the Horns of Paine from its outpost on the Patagonian steppe. A camelid animal related to llamas and alpacas, the guanaco's only significant predator is the puma.

ostrichlike birds, which grow to about 5 feet tall, are unusual in that the male builds a nest in which he coaxes several females to lay eggs. Only the male incubates the eggs and tends the babies. It's a hoot watching a father rhea pick his way through clumps of grass as a couple of dozen striped chicks scatter in waves around him.

Do yourself a favor and allow plenty of time to explore Torres del Paine National Park. It's a fantastic setting for trekkers, campers, climbers, photographers and fly fishermen. It takes more than a week to hike the full set of well-marked trails, but there is much you can see and do in a single day. Accommodations range from campsites and lodges to an upscale hotel near the park. Check online to see what matches your needs, or ask your travel agent to do it for you.

My base for visiting Torres del Paine was Puerto Natales, located about 71 miles south of the park and 155 miles north of Punta Arenas. This sleepy little port city of weather-beaten wooden and corrugated tin houses features a few shops and some surprisingly decent restaurants. Puerto Natales is multicultural, despite its remote location, having attracted German, Yugoslav and British immigrants to its local sheep and cattle industries. Its main focus now is tourism, with the high season ranging through the warmer months of October to May.

You might want to stop by Milodon Cave if you're in Puerto Natales area. Situated 15 miles northwest of town on Benitez Hill, the cave was once home to a now-extinct giant slothlike herbivore that resembled a bear with a kangaroo's tail. A contemporary of dwarf horses and saber-tooth tigers, the milodon likely sat on its haunches and pulled down tree branches to gain access to the succulent leaves. A milodon's skin and excrement were discovered in the cave in the late 1800s, and a life-size replica of the critter now towers over visitors to the grotto.

Puerto Natales is also the hub for traveling to such other places as Bernardo O'Higgins National Park, my next destination. This 13,600-square-mile protected area was named for General Bernardo O'Higgins, the Republic of Chile's first head of state and son of a Chilean mother and Irish father. The park is so rugged and remote that you can only reach it by boat or by helicopter. The usual and most inexpensive way is a four-hour cruise up Seno Última Esperanza (Last Hope Sound), named in the 16th century by a frustrated explorer seeking a west exit from the Strait of Magellan.

The ride up the fjord is spectacular in itself. Waterfalls cascade from twisted-layer cliffs that rise dramatically from the frigid water, and you'll have plenty of chances to see wildlife from inside the boat or from out on the deck. My personal favorites on the day I made the trip were sea lions and condors, and I got my first really close look at Andean condors in flight. These New World black vultures with a collar of white neck

feathers weigh as much as 33 pounds and have wingspans of up to 10 feet.

Glaciers are probably Bernardo O'Higgins National Park's greatest tourist draw. Pio XI is the largest glacier in the southern hemisphere outside of Antarctica and has a face that stands about 30 stories high. The ferry will take you up to the Balmaceda hanging glacier, which dumps huge chunks of ice directly into the fjord. And if you don't mind taking a short hike through a seemingly primeval forest, you can walk to the base of Serrano Glacier. You can also hire a zodiac to take you among the icebergs that calve from the glacier and float in the quiet waters of the lagoon.

A word of caution: If you go Bernardo O'Higgins or Torres del Paine National Parks, be sure to bring your best wind and rain gear. The weather changes often and abruptly, and it can send a bitter chill through the unprepared traveler. You might also want carry some rechargeable or disposable hand warmers to help keep you comfortable.

One of the most surprising things about Patagonia, at least to me, was the abundance of water in the region. I recall my fourth-grade geography book, and the southern tip of South America looked pretty solid on the map. In reality, it isn't. The area seems a lot more like water punctuated by land than the other way around.

I became increasingly aware of the importance of water on my return trip to Punta Arenas, which overlooks the Strait of Magellan. Between its discovery in 1520 and the completion of the Panama Canal in 1914, the strait tended to be the fastest and safest route for ships moving between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Although narrow and famous for its notoriously bad weather, the strait provided an inland waterway for captains not wanting to ply the ferocious Drake Passage between South America's Cape Horn and Antarctica.

Punta Arenas enjoys a population of about 120,000 and derives its name from the Spanish words meaning "sandy point." The city is both modern and responsive to tourists, and local shops can outfit you for most of your trekking needs. You'll find people of many nationalities living and doing business there, as it was once a significant transoceanic port.

Although Punta Arenas bills itself as the southernmost city in the world, two other places claim that the title actually belongs to them. Ushuaia in Argentina's Tierra del Fuego province lies farther south, but its population is only about 58,000. And then there's Chile's Puerto Williams. Situated on the opposite side of the Beagle Channel from Ushuaia and a little more than 20 miles southeast, this town of 2,400 is home to naval personnel and civilians. You decide for yourself which location best deserves the title.

Beth Parks lives in the Hancock County village of Corea. You can reach her at bparks@maine.edu.

Engagements

Karen Downs & Bill Greateorex, August 2008

Lindsay Duplisa & Kenneth White Jr., August 2008
Sheridan Littlefield & William Gove Jr., August 2008
Christina A. McDonald & Brent R. Paul, June 2008

Engagements



Karen Downs
Bill Greateorex



Sheridan S. Littlefield
William B. Gove Jr.



Christina A. McDonald
Brent R. Paul

MONROE — Mr. and Mrs. Dale Moody of Monroe are pleased to announce the engagement of their daughter Karen Downs to Bill Greateorex, son of Robert Greateorex of Charleston and the late Alberta Greateorex. The couple resides in Monroe.

An Aug. 2, 2008, wedding is planned at the family cottage on Swan Lake in Swanville.

FREEPORT — Dr. Blaine A. and Mrs. Vicki-Lynn M. Littlefield are proud to announce the engagement of their daughter Sheridan Syrene Littlefield to William Byron Gove Jr. of Auburn. William is the son of Mr. William B. and Mrs. Denise L. Gove.

Sheridan graduated from Catherine McAuley High School in 2000. After dancing with Carnival Cruise Lines for 2 years she returned home and attended the University of Maine. There she earned her B.S. degree in 2007 with a major in biology and minor in psychology. She was inducted into the All Maine Women Honor society and is presently thinking about graduate school.

William is a graduate of Edward Little High School, Class of 2001. He is a 2005 graduate of the University of Maine where he earned a B.S. degree in information systems engineering and was inducted to the Skulls Honor Fraternity. He is presently working on his masters degree in Spatial Information Science and Engineering at the University of Maine and is thinking also about further graduate school studies.

A "fun" Maine wedding is planned for August of 2008.

SOUTH PORTLAND — Victoria L. Paul, formerly of South Portland, is proud to announce the engagement of her son and grandson of Capt. G. A. and Linda Cummings of Penobscot, Brent R. Paul of Gloucester Township, N.J., to Christina A. McDonald of Washington Township, N.J., daughter of David and Michelle McDonald of Rummenee, N.J., and granddaughter of James and Janet Alardi of Rummenee, N.J. and granddaughter of Barry Veronica McDonald of Blackwood, N.J.

Wedding to be held in Saint Lucia, in June 2008. Celebration to be held at Valleybrook County Club in Blackwood, N.J.

Brent is also the son of Raymond C. Paul Jr., who resides in Florida.

Notice

To place your engagement, baby anniversary, reunion or wedding announcement, call the Bangor Daily News Classified Department (207) 990-8020, or in-state, 1-800-432-7964, ext. 8020 or go online at www.bangorailynews.com/album

TV briefs

Joel Surnow, a co-creator of "24," is leaving the show to pursue other projects. Surnow had been thinking about leaving the Fox show for a while, and during the writers strike he came to a firm decision. His departure is effective immediately, meaning he won't be filmed for the 16 episodes yet to be part of the show's seventh season, the showbiz trade papers report. Elsewhere, ABC's "Ugly Betty" and "Women's Murder Club" have let some of their executive producers go as well.

Marco Pennette and James Hayman have been dropped from "Betty," while co-creators Sarah Fain and Elizabeth Craft and executive producer R. Scott Gemmill have been axed at "Women's Murder Club." The latter show's post-strike fate remains uncertain, while "Ugly Betty" is likely to produce some new episodes this spring under creator Silvio Horta. As for Surnow, he's leaving "24" a couple months before his contract at 20th Century Fox TV expires. The parting was amicable — the studio praises Surnow for "creat[ing] one of the landmark series of this decade." Surnow's departure won't affect the day-to-day running of the show, which executive producer Howard Gordon has been handling since last season. Co-creator Robert Cochran remains with the series as well. The seventh season of "24" is expected to resume

filming in the coming weeks, but it likely won't return to the air until 2009. (Zap2it.com)

"Saturday Night Live" was last on the air just after Halloween, but with the writers strike ending, its off time is just about over. NBC confirms that the show, which has been off the air since the start of the strike, will return Feb. 23. The show, in its 33rd season, aired just four episodes before the onset of the strike in early November. A host and musical guest for the return episode haven't been announced yet. Most of network television's late-night shows returned to the air in early January — although only CBS' "Late Show" and "Late Late Show," which struck interim deals with the Writers Guild, had their writing staffs. "Saturday Night Live," though, writes fresh sketches for each week's episode and thus shut down completely. Its cast members and writers were active during the strike, with head writer and "Weekend Update" anchor Seth Meyers a frequent interviewee on newscasts and Amy Poehler organizing a benefit for the show's out-of-work crew. (Zap2it.com)

Maine Life

The State section, daily
Bangor Daily News



Lindsay Duplisa
Kenneth White Jr.

HERMON — Dale and Sandra Duplisa of Hermon are pleased to announce the engagement of their daughter Lindsay Duplisa to Kenneth White Jr., son of Kenneth and Cheryl White of Bucksport.

Lindsay is a 2001 graduate of Hermon High School and a 2006 graduate of Husson College with a Master of Science degree in physical therapy and a Doctorate degree in physical therapy. She is employed as a physical therapist at Absolute Physical Therapy in Bangor.

Kenneth is a 1999 graduate of Bucksport High School and a 2003 graduate of Maine Maritime Academy with a bachelor's degree in Marine Engineering. He is employed as a marine engineer for J. Ray McDermott Inc.

An Aug. 23, 2008, wedding is planned at the Lucerne Inn.