

## **WORKING ADVENTURE AT THE SOUTH POLE**

Bill Riley is a plumber by trade who grew up in Council Bluffs. He dreamed about the South Pole as a kid and finally he had an opportunity to go there. Riley spoke to Club members about his four month tour of work at the South Pole. He found on an Internet posting a need for plumbers to work on a South Pole construction project. The Raytheon Polar Services Company is building a new research facility for the U.S. there. Riley was chosen to join the work crew as a contract employee for the summer work season of 2003-2004, which was during the winter season here. Because of the severe and continuous cold conditions, Riley explained, it takes three times longer to get work done. Furthermore, it takes the effort of ten people to support one research scientist working there. Also, because of cold temperatures, tools don't perform as expected. Riley stated the construction project was on the ice at an elevation of about 10,000 ft above sea level and the ice under them was about 9,000 ft thick over bedrock. The continent of Antarctica is larger than the U.S. even during the summer season, Riley noted, and the atmosphere is very dry. It has continuous sunshine for 6 months when much of the work there can be done, and it has the cleanest air on earth. It is ideal for astronomy and environmental research and earthquake monitoring. There are thirteen nations that have a presence in work at the South Pole. Riley said he would go back again, except for the long duration of being away from family.