

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 7, 2008

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## Walking among the Emperor Penguins

The Arizona Natural History Association is pleased to sponsor the multimedia presentation of "Artist in Antarctica: Walking among the Emperor Penguins" by award-winning artist and naturalist Sharon K. Schafer. Schafer recently served as artist in residence for the prestigious Polar Arts Program sponsored by Quark Expeditions and Theme Exhibitions. During her stay on the Antarctic ice, Schafer observed, photographed, and sketched Emperor Penguins and other Antarctic wildlife such as Weddell seals, and Adélie, Chinstrap, and Gentoo penguins.

The presentation "Artist in Antarctica: Walking among the Emperor Penguins" will be FREE to the public on Wednesday, May 21 in Flagstaff at the Coconino National Forest Supervisor's Office, 1824 S. Thompson Street from 6:00 – 7:00 PM and on Thursday, May 22 in Sedona at the Keep Sedona Beautiful Building, 360 Brewer Road from 6:00 – 7:00 PM. For more information, contact 928-814-8288.

Schafer's journey began in South America, where she traveled by Russian icebreaker, the Kapitan Khlebnikov, to Snow Hill Island off the Antarctic Peninsula. From there she took a helicopter inland, and hiked two miles over sea ice to a remote rookery, or breeding colony, where 4,000 pairs of Emperor Penguins are known to reside.

Schafer has inspired and enlightened many with her Mojave Desert-themed fine art and educational material. After years of revealing the inaccessible beauty of the Mojave, Schafer set her sites on one of the most remote desert regions on Earth. Antarctica is the world's largest desert: it receives the least amount of precipitation of any continent. In addition, it is the coldest and windiest place on the planet.

On an emotional level, little prepared her for a first glimpse of the Antarctica sight that can't help but dazzle. "I am truly enchanted by Antarctica and its wild inhabitants and honored to contribute to the human experience of the Polar environment." Schafer says.

Schafer also notes the profound responsibility she feels to bring awareness for the amazing Antarctic inhabitants to those who may never visit the region in person. "By opening windows to the Antarctic and all wild places through art, these species become real to people who may have never before considered them, their plight, or what they can do to help protect our global natural treasures." Schafer reflects.

Schafer is committed to scientific accuracy in her work, not only in the anatomy of her subjects but also in depicting their behavior and habitat. Her Antarctic photographic series has captured many finer points of Emperor Penguin behavior, from dancing chicks (yes, they really do have happy feet!), to feeding, mate recognition, and other types of interactions. This information will be preserved within Schafer's paintings of Antarctic species.

The Polar Arts Program is a global project that includes artists from many nations, dedicated to the experience and expression of the unsurpassed wilderness of the Earth's Polar Regions. It provides a rare opportunity for artists to sketch, paint, and record media focused on the most remote, beautiful, and truly wild places on our planet: the Arctic and Antarctic Polar Regions. A major theme of the program is: "Science gives us an understanding of the natural environment; the arts allow us to see."

Schafer owns and operates Skydance Studio in Boulder City, Nevada. Her beautifully artistic and scientifically accurate images appeal to the art collector and the environmental educator alike. Fittingly, Skydance Studio demonstrates and encourages value, protection, and conservation of the natural world in its products and operation. Learn more about Schafer's art and upcoming exhibitions and find links to important conservation efforts at: [www.skydancestudio.com](http://www.skydancestudio.com)

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***The Arizona Natural History Association is a public lands interpretive association dedicated to encouraging the informed and sensitive use of public lands and resources of the Southwest.***