



Patagonia

Papers

Journeys Where the Sun Dances

**By Warren Watson
&
Albie Fine**

2020

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Preface

Entering the far reaches of the South American continent, a person is drawn to a desolate place full of wonder and stunning natural beauty. It was the world of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid¹, an escape, a faraway place, full of glaciers, mountain peaks and penguins. Even to those not fleeing from the law, it is the place to peregrinate.

The main character, Albie Fine, would not want to discourage anyone from going to Patagonia because of a lack of Spanish. It did not stop him from having a great peregrination, and for some reason, it made him scan the “P” section of the dictionary. Perhaps the reason was the alliterative title.

In the following *Patagonia Papers*, Albie recounts his journey through Southern Chile and Argentina. A story about an epic journey would likely attract more readers, but the word epic is missing because Albie is not heroic like Beowulf, Odysseus, Achilles, Gilgamesh, King Arthur or Marco Polo. He was out to prove that anybody could travel.

King Arthur as depicted in *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*² was more Albie’s speed. There must be humour. He did not identify with the King or one of the brave knights because quite frankly he did not want the responsibility and stress of those jobs. Patsy would be more of a kindred spirit with Albie. This was King Arthur’s squire who banged two coconut shell halves together to make clippety-clop sounds. He was the percussionist in this band of travelling nobles. Albie did not yet know his mode of transportation, but he was prepared for even coconuts. He did like onomatopoeia when the sounds of the phrase mimics the sound depicted.

Albie woke up one morning and looked out over Eastern Montréal from his twelfth-floor apartment. No, it was not the second floor. In the elevator, when he was asked which floor he wanted, his douzième apparently sounded like deuxième and the person pressed two, all the while thinking why does he not walk? Walking up the stairs to the twelfth floor is better training for hiking in Patagonia than riding an

¹ Goldman, William (writer), George Roy Hill (Director), *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, Starring Paul Newman (Butch), Robert Redford (Sundance) and Katharine Ross (Etta Place), Twentieth Century Fox, 1969, USA, DVD.

² Jones, Terry, and Terry Gilliam, directors. Graham Chapman, John Cleese, Eric Idle, Terry Gilliam, Terry Jones, and Michael Palin, Writers and Stars, *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. EMI Films, The UK, 1975.

elevator with a stop at the second floor. Is Albie a person who should travel where English is not spoken?

Not only that, Albie lived on the floor directly below the fourteenth floor. The building did not have a thirteenth floor except it really was the twelfth floor. Should a person, living on the thirteenth floor, travel?

Or was the floor directly above the twelfth floor really the thirteenth floor? Could the designer of the building have been afraid of the number thirteen, or was he just unable to count? Albie often laid awake at night wondering about these conundrums. It was time to get away.

As Albie looked out over the Big Owe (Olympic stadium) and the sunrise, he scratched his head. Not only did he want to get away, but he also wanted to write a book that was a story and a guide at the same time. It would be an impetus for travel. Being not musically inclined, a writer would be a better vocation than a drummer. It is probably not fair to Don Henley or Phil Collins to say the drummer is the least talented position, but Albie would be best suited to be in the audience.

If the title *Patagonia Papers* has a familiar ring, that is no coincidence. *Pickwick Papers* by Chuck Dickens is a favourite of Albie. It is the most upbeat Dickensian novel he has read. With titles like *Hard Times* and *Bleak House*, that is not saying much. Samuel Pickwick ends up in a debtors' prison in London. However, he has a servant and throws a party, so it is still upbeat. Albie does not recommend this novel for the bus because the reader will laugh out loud, and his sanity may be questioned. Unless a cell phone can be held to his ear while he reads, he had better save the book for home.

Dickens released his books serially. In that spirit, this book is loosely based on the e-mail transmissions that Albie Fine made during his journey in Patagonia. In 1997, E-mail was relatively new to Albie Fine, and Facebook was not yet available.

Well, it was so new that Albie sent his first transmission into outer space. Nobody he contacted by phone to say "I'll be Fine" saw the first email. At least the pigs in space or even Jim Henson³ had something to read. Well, maybe not ... Albie forgot that those ungulates of the family Suidea can only read pig Latin. Perhaps Albie could learn some in Latin America?

³ Jim Henson (1936-1990) was the creator of the Muppets, Retrieved March 25, 2020 from <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0001345/>

Well, look at that. The second version was already that much better than the lost transmission. That should be evident from the opening joke alone. Either a joke of his was good, or he was told to get lost. Albie had no problem either way.

However, Albie thought it was not accidental that the first e-mail he sent got lost because the penguin conspiracy is huge. It likely involves watched e-mail transmissions at the very least. Is it true that paranoia is just a natural reaction to a conspiracy world? In spite of lost (or stolen) transmissions, Albie would eventually proselytize the reader to an awareness of the deception.

Albie wrote his story of Patagonia over several transmissions. That way if the penguins got one, Albie did not have much to rewrite. His stories were in English, but his thoughts were in Spanish in case anybody asked.

Warning (Advertencia): This Patagonia guidebook/storybook has silly bits which will hopefully make the reader laugh out loud.



Eastern Montreal from Studio 1206, 5:45 am



The Big Owe, Olympic Stadium and Eastern Montreal, 5:22 am

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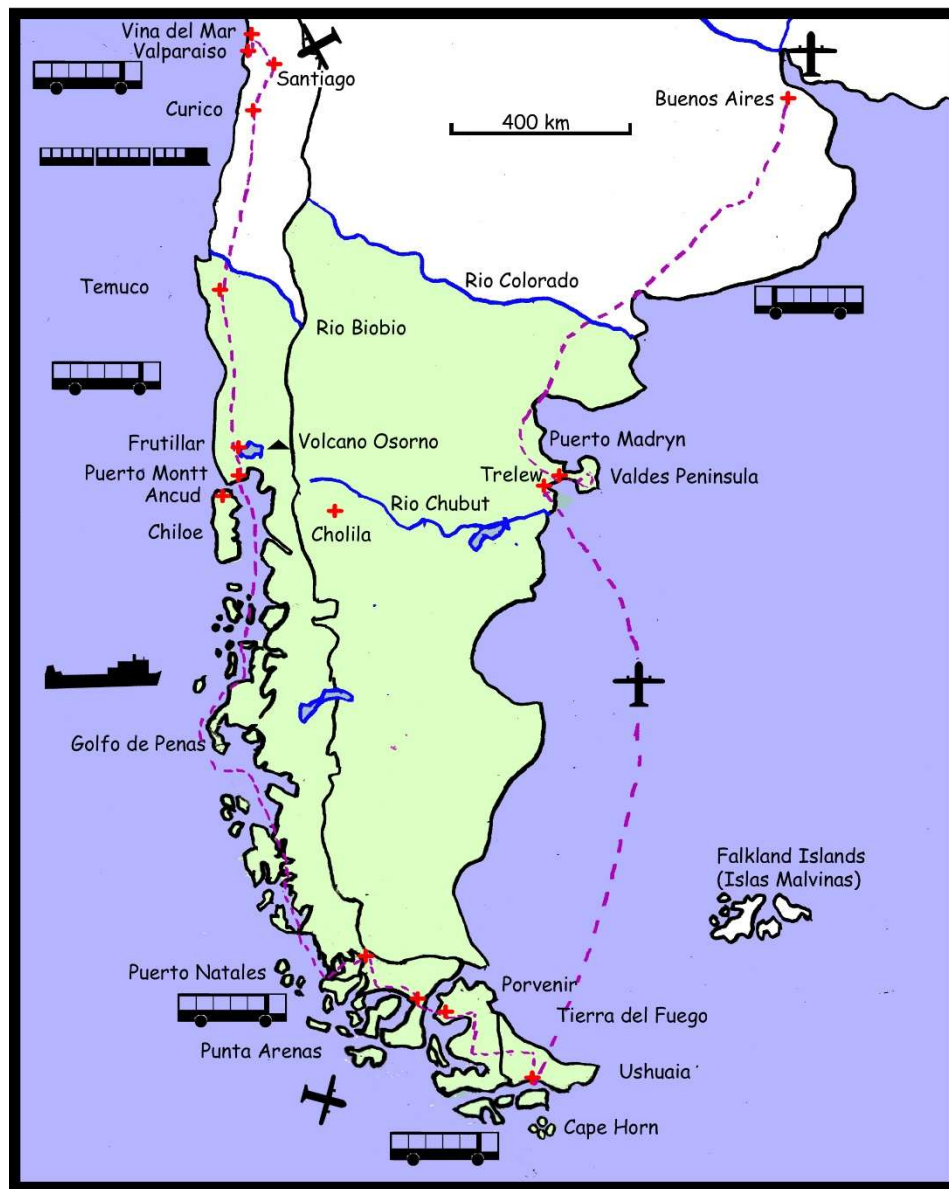
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Map of Patagonia

Patagonia Trip Summary

Domingo	Lunes	Martes	Miércoles	Jueves	Viernes	Sábado
						Day 1: Dec 20, 97 Dorval to JFK Laguardía to Miami Miami to Santiago
Day 2: Dec 21, 97 Mary Statue & Funicular Navimag Office	Day 3: Dec 22, 97 The Two Hills and a Walk About	Day 4: Dec 23, 97 Viña del Mar & Valparaíso	Day 5: Dec 24, 97 To Curico Nativity Scenes Fireworks	Day 6: Dec 25, 97 To Molina and hiking with the bugs Fútbol with the Corveleyns Midnight Train to Temuco	Day 7: Dec 26, 97 Bus to Puerto Montt	Day 8: Dec 27, 97 Day trip to Chiloe Castro (stilt houses) Ancud
Day 9: Dec 28, 97 Confirmed Ferry Day trip to Frutillar Vomit then take two Cipro antibiotics and take the ferry in the afternoon	Day 10: Dec 29, 97 The ferry left the dock at 4:45 pm t = 0 hrs	Day 11: Dec 30, 97 Whales Open Pacific	Day 12: Dec 31, 97 Golfo de Penas Messier Channel Porto Eden English Narrows Southern ice field & ice bergs New Year t=55hrs	Day 13: Jan 1, 98 Sea lions & the Kirke Pass Puerto Natales t = 66 hrs PN Torres del Paine	Day 14: Jan 2, 98 Pampas Guanacos Hiking in the rain Chileno Refugio	Day 15: Jan 3, 98 Los Torres Puerto Natales Lucky connection to Punta Arenas
Day 16: Jan 4, 98 Penguins at Seno Otway No flights to Ushuaia	Day 17: Jan 5, 98 Flight Across the Straits of Magellan to Porvenir Señor Tres	Day 18: Jan 6, 98 Rio Grande The tourist trail stops everywhere	Day 19: Jan 7, 98 Ushuaia Parque Nacional Tierra Fuego Tenting	Day 20: Jan 8, 98 Lago Verde Bahia Lapataia Castorera Laguna Negra Tenting	Day 21: Jan 9, 98 Martial Glacier Great view from the Hospedaje Torres al Sur	Day 22: Jan 10, 98 Flight to Trelew Puerto Madryn
Day 23: Jan 11, 98 Puerto Piramide	Day 24: Jan 12, 98 Tour bus to the Peninsula Elephant seals, penguins, sea lions Salinas Chica and Grande	Day 25: Jan 13, 98 ¡¡Frantic!! Albie lost his Travel Log Double decker Night Bus to Buenos Aires	Day 26: Jan 14, 98 Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes	Day 27: Jan 15, 98 Teatro Colon Photo shoot near Aeroparque Jorge Newbery Palermo	Day 28: Jan 16, 98 Museo de la Casa Rosada Plaza de Mayo San Telmo La Boca	Day 29: Jan 17, 98 Recoleta, Buenos Aires Night Flight to JFK, NYC
Day 30: Jan 18, 98 JFK to Montréal						

1. Meet Albie Fine

“Go far away, and when you come back, you will appreciate what you have.” That was what Albie Fine had been told. He remembered the phrase but had forgotten where he had heard it or even where he had to go. That was not so important, yet the phrase is no secret to any traveller.

Albie Fine is the hero of this story, but he is not heroic. Albie did not even want to be semi heroic. Heroism was for stories, mythology, the military, or the stars of the screen. However, people want heroism. That is why they read books and go to the movies.

This is real life, so it tends to be boring. Albie Fine, for that purpose, traveled to escape his day to day routine. Albie Fine was not normal, but he tried to be. The more he tried, the more he seemed abnormal. The more he stuck out. That is not heroic, just different.

In grade school, Albie looked up to his teachers and did what he was told. He, in actual fact, did what he was told very well. He was a math whizz who read books and wrote stories. Clearly, he was cut out for university and continued to do what he was told.

In university, there were not a lot of Math majors with a minor in Literature and in Biology. Therefore, he went into Engineering (logical choice?), and did what he was told really well. He looked up to his professors, and they told him he needed more university. Five years prepared him for a Masters’ degree. School seems to prepare a student for more school. There was no conflict of interest there.

As an engineer sitting at a desk, he was tired of being normal. He lived in Montréal, a beautiful city in which to live and to explore. He did what he was told. He did it well. He still wanted something better. He did what he was told even when he was told to get lost. Perhaps, it was time to get lost very well, but where?

2. ¿Where to Go?

Albie did not want to go to a spot full of pampered tourists. He wanted to go where the adventuresome tourists went. He wanted to live out of a backpack, not a suitcase. He also desired to be immersed in a foreign language and not rely on English.

It made sense to go somewhere French because Albie had studied French for many years and even put his years of study into practice in Montréal. However, when he spoke French in Montréal, the listener often switched to English. As a result, he had to go somewhere French where a switch was unlikely to be made.

The French parts of the Americas are Québec, French Guyana, Guadeloupe, Haïti and Martinique. The reference⁴ used for this section seemed to forget about Acadia and Louisiana. Regardless, all of these are either not off the beaten path or too confined.

There are many French speaking countries in Africa, and Albie had already been to one of them. Morocco was a nice place to visit once. Albie had taken the ferry from Spain (Algeciras) to Tangiers and the bus to Fes. The smell of sewage in the streets of Tangiers remains strong in his memory. Was it nice enough to visit twice? Probably not with so many new places waiting to be explored for the first time.

He knew that if he went back to Morocco, he would be pestered until he took a guide. He then would be taken to shops where the guide could get a commission. Albie had to be on his own, and his health had to be less at risk. Nevertheless, a tourist can safely travel to Morocco, say Casablanca, by staying at ritzy hotels, but that is for someone with a suitcase not a backpack.

Europe has French speaking countries like France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Monaco and Switzerland, but they are not off the beaten path enough. French is spoken in French Polynesia, New Caledonia and Vanuatu. They are far enough off the beaten path, but they are small and not linked by buses or trains.

It occurred to Albie that he was focusing on the wrong language. Albie grew up in Trail, BC which is Italian, but Italy is not off the beaten path. It is hard to get more on the beaten path than Italy. Paris was in the same boat.

⁴ Countries and Languages, What language is spoken in this country? Retrieved March 4, 2020 from https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/countries_by_languages.htm

However, Spanish opened up much more travel possibilities. Equatorial Guinea was out because of similar reasons for Morocco, but Latin America has many possibilities.

No one speaks Latin in Latin America, but Spanish is prevalent. To be sure he was off the beaten path, with a little overkill, mind you, Albie decided to go as far South as possible in South America. He was often told to get lost, but no one ever told him to go to Patagonia⁵. Nobody he knew went there. Even his hero in the movies, Paul Newman, never went there. Butch and Sundance went to Patagonia⁶ in real life. They ran a ranch near Cholila, south of the Rio Chubut and east of the Andes. They were killed in Bolivia as depicted in the movie, but it ignored the Patagonian portion of the outlaws' lives. Even Hollywood did not figuratively go to Patagonia. The movie was filmed in California, Utah, Colorado, and Mexico⁷.

Patagonia is Chile South of the Rio Biobio and Argentina South of the Rio Colorado. Patagonia has the following⁸.

- The Andes (Los Andes)
- Icefields (campos de hielos)
- The plains of Argentina (pampas)
- Rugged coastlines of Chile (costas escarpadas)
- Cape Horn (Cabo de Hornos)
- Enough wildlife to fill several arcs of Noah.

Patagonia has a homogeneous feel even though the Andes divide it into two. The border between Chile and Argentina is the Andes. The highest point of ice and the highest point of rock lead to slight discrepancies, but anybody crossing the border from one country into the other would be oblivious to this. However, the beauty of Patagonia on either side shortly becomes apparent to any traveller. Albie decided on

⁵ Encyclopaedia Britannica, Map of Patagonia, Retrieved March 5, 2020 from <https://www.britannica.com/place/Patagonia-region-Argentina>

⁶ Epstein, Jack, Butch Cassidy, Sundance Kid Found a Haven in Argentina, *The Christian Science Monitor*, January 27, 1998. Retrieved March 3, 2020 from <https://www.csmonitor.com/1998/0127/012798.intl.intl.2.html> Albie originally read the article in the Toronto Globe and Mail around the same time.

⁷ Butch Cassidy And The Sundance Kid, 1969, Movie Locations, Retrieved May 25, 2025 from <https://movie-locations.com/movies/b/Butch-Cassidy-And-The-Sundance-Kid.php>

⁸ Google Translate is a good translator because it has audio, Retrieved March 23, 2020 from <https://translate.google.com/> This site was used for most translations in this book. It will not be marked every time this site was used.

the where. He would arrive in Santiago, Chile, travel through Patagonia and leave from Buenos Aires, Argentina.

3. The "Y"

3.1 Cows and a Passing Train

The name, Patagonia Papers, is really appropriate because of the plastic bags Albie carried full of his travel log notes. When Albie was on the move, he had a large pack on his back and a small pack of camera equipment (an SLR, two lenses, a collapsible tripod, batteries and a lead bag containing rolls of film) on his front. Travel is easier currently than it was back then because nowadays, a pretty nice camera can fit into a pocket.

Albie had plastic grocery bags in one hand and an "it's LONELY when you are lost on this PLANET" guide in the other. That guide is the best one around and actually keeps a traveller from being lost and lonely.

In Puerto Natales, a Brit came out and actually took a picture of Albie fully loaded as described above. Albie would have liked to have seen his own expression as he was staring at him and asking himself, "Can you believe that? He's taking a picture of me, I cannot look funny, can I?"

Albie's backpack was stuffed to the limit, and towered above his head. It also had a slight tilt. The internal frame of the stuff sack backpack was not high enough. Albie was comfortable, and the forty-five pounds of backpack looked more cumbersome than it actually was. Albie looked at the fellow tourist "uncomprehendingly like cows at a passing train." Those words, sung by singer and Eagles drummer Don Henley in *If Dirt were Dollars*⁹, rang true.

Anyways, those plastic bags had other uses. They kept his clothes dry, and they worked as leak proof barf bags. The reusable cloth grocery bag was not so robust.

So, why did Albie pick Patagonia? Well the abundance of luxury hotels and hot water was not the reason. Was it the penguin conspiracy? Not entirely. Was it Saint-Exupéry's night flight? Partially. Warm weather and being that far south in the Southern Hemisphere were also factors in addition to it just being off the beaten path.

⁹ Henley, Donald Hugh, Danny Kortchmar, John David Southard (1989), *If Dirt were Dollars* (recorded by Don Henley) *The End of the Innocence*, The Geffen Label.

3.2 The Penguin Conspiracy

Albie was too young to worry about Watergate but was not born too late to report the penguin conspiracy (conspiración de pingüinos). Who would go to all that trouble to fake a bird that cannot fly? Albie did not know, but he had to find out. They have to be mechanical. That water is just too cold.

What animal in their right mind dives into Antarctic waters? The whale is also suspect and could be the subject of a future study. However, whale does not start with the letter “P.” Penguins mechanically walk around on ice and then plunge with apparent relish (hold the mustard) into the icy abyss.

Further proof of being man-made is the penguin’s inability to fly. Mankind often struggles to duplicate Mother Nature’s exceptional ability to get birds airborne. Man can obviously get objects to fly with a powerful engine or a large enough wingspan, but no attempt has been successful with these portly tuxedoed mechanical birds.

Without adding wing span or a propeller, it would take a jet engine to get a penguin robot off the ground. Penguins would walk even more oddly with a Pratt & Whitney JT9D¹⁰ jet pack on their backs.

Albie did not remember hearing of these birds in the Arctic, though his investigations are still in progress. Albie knew he would see them down South. In fact, they were planted as far North as a latitude of forty-two degrees south. Next there will be penguins in Rupert. Oops! Albie forgot, that is impossible because even penguins would rust in “sunny” Prince Rupert, BC. At a latitude of 54.3 degrees north¹¹, Rupert gets one hundred inches of rain a year¹².

Nevertheless, Abie wondered why these tuxedoed robots were given a P word. The nastiest P word of them all is politics, and there are some other bad ones, plagiarism, paranoia, phony, pretentious, Philistine, petroleum to name a few.

¹⁰ The Pratt & Whitney JT9D, Pratt & Whitney Dependable Engines-Go Beyond, Retrieved March 18, 2020 from <https://pw.utc.com/en/products-and-services/products/commercial-engines/jt9d>

¹¹ Prince Rupert, BC, Canada, LatLong.net, Retrieved May 25, 2025 from <https://www.latlong.net/place/prince-rupert-bc-canada-2109.html>

¹² Climate Data, Prince Rupert Climate, Retrieved March 9, 2020 from <https://en.climate-data.org/north-america/canada/british-columbia/prince-rupert-10632/>

When Johnny Cash sung¹³ that a person should not “go mixing politics with the folk songs of our land,” he actually meant not mixing politics with anything. While some may be aware that politics should certainly not be mixed with schools, science, the media, energy or friendships, nobody is really aware that politics stop people from talking about the real threat to our very existence, another P word, the penguin.

Penguins, at this moment, are massing at the southern reaches of our planet in such numbers that they will eventually take over the world. They have carefully chosen their location to be outside media coverage and human scrutiny.

Sure, there are a few intrepid travellers who know the truth because they have travelled to all seven continents, but nobody believes them when they say that the threat to our existence is not carbon but penguins. People who have never travelled to the far reaches of the planet figure that the people speaking out about penguins just have mental problems created from all that exposure to cold and desolation.

In the distant past, intrepid explorers such as Ferdinand Magellan used to be treated the same way because they said the world was not flat and went out to prove it. Will human nature ever change?

Penguins are really nefarious and perhaps a little bitter that they cannot fly except on CIBC Adventura travel rewards commercials¹⁴. Why else would they only exist where the waters are extremely not inviting?

Does anybody ever wonder why Canadians escape the cold by flocking to the beaches of Florida and Mexico, and penguins do not? Cabo San Lucas should be inundated by penguins, not English-speaking tourists. However, the penguin inundation will soon come unless people stop talking about politics and start talking about those tuxedoed funny looking creatures instead. Penguins should not get the last laugh.

By the way, no one ever wrote a song that humour should not be mixed with anything. All humour aside, what do you think will happen when the penguins take over?

¹³ Clement, Jack (1965), The One on the Right is on the Left (recorded by Johnny Cash) on *Everybody Loves a Nut*, The Columbia label (November 29, 1965), Retrieved June 20, 2019 from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDSN1F72QU4>

¹⁴ CIBC Adventura travel rewards commercial, Retrieved March 25, 2020 from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZwxm6T3j_8

First of all, everybody will have to wear tuxedos all the time, even the women. Penguins will ban dry cleaners and insist all that tuxedos are cleaned with ice water.

Secondly, people will be eating formal all the time. Sure, people will still eat, but not a bird ever again. Turkeys and chickens will be freed, and bands of these wild birds will wreak havoc on every countryside making up for past captivity. Chickens will finally have time to hone their flying skills, and when in the air, they will be as vindictive as the worst that can be imagined. A person does not need to see a Far Side cartoon¹⁵ by Gary Larson to know that flying birds see targets on human heads.

Furthermore, people will have to eat fish all the time. Perhaps they will be able to supplement their diets with wild cow, but only when the authorities are not looking. People may think the authorities are bad now, but an incapable politician, winning on popularity, will be a far sight better than the penguin. The Nazis had a funny walk, and so do the penguins.

Thirdly, animal rights will be prioritized, and testing will be done on humans not animals. There will be no more mice with split ends because they tested the wrong conditioning shampoo.

Things will be bad with the penguins in charge, but how will it happen? Gradually or all of a sudden? Historians will know. Penguins may already be among us. Next time you see someone in a tuxedo like a doorman, an orchestra conductor, or an usher in a wedding party; anybody with their nose in the air; or anybody who really likes fish, look twice and you may see a penguin.

¹⁵ Larson, Gary, Far Side Cartoon, How Birds See the World, Retrieved March 18, 2020 from <https://www.pinterest.ca/pin/302374562463319071/>