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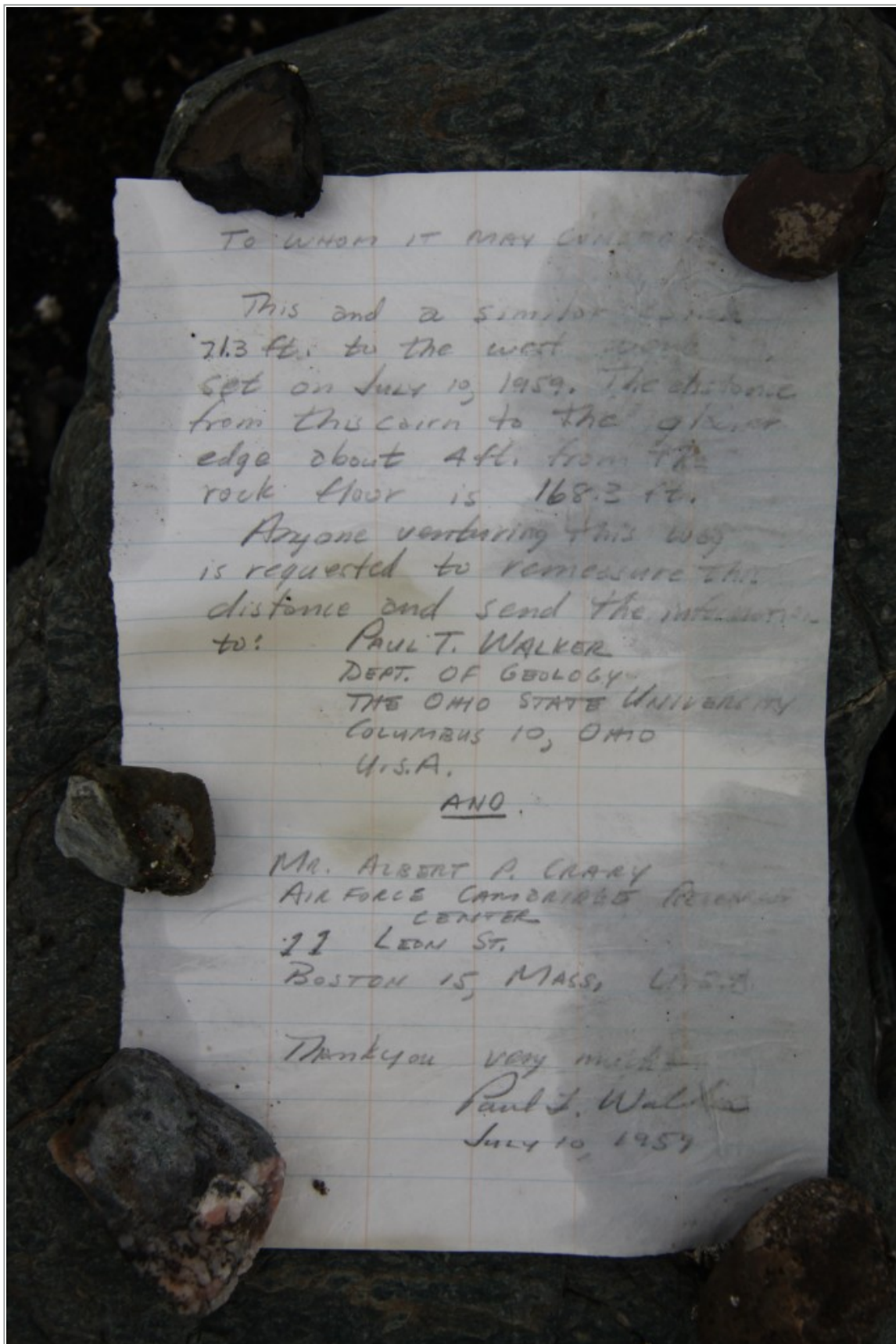
Message in a bottle reveals fact about glacier

Letter written in 1959 and buried in Arctic cairn tells distance to glacier and asks anyone finding it to re-measure; researchers discover 233-foot retreat

December 18, 2013 by David Strege (<http://www.grindtv.com/author/david-strege/?rel=author>)

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Message in a bottle from 1959 found in a cairn built in Arctic; photo by Denis Sarrazin, CEN/ArcticNet, used with permission

Researchers in a remote locale in the Arctic discovered the most unusual message in a bottle, one that wasn't "tossed into the ocean many years ago." In fact, it wasn't tossed in the ocean at all.

No, this message in a bottle was placed under a pile of rocks, a cairn, near the edge of a glacier in 1959 and contained an incredible message about global warming.

The letter from American geologist Paul T. Walker revealed that the cairn was built 168.3 feet from the edge of the glacier and asked anyone who found the message to re-measure the distance and send the information back to him and colleague Albert Crary.



Dr. Warwick Vincent, a Laval University (Quebec City) biologist who made the discovery with Denis Sarrazin on Ward Hunt Island off the northern coast of Ellesmere Island over the summer, told GrindTV Outdoor in an email that the distance is now 401 feet, indicating the glacier had retreated 233 feet.

Vincent revealed the find last week at ArcticNet's annual scientific meeting in Halifax, Nova Scotia. It was first reported publicly a few days ago by The Chronicle Herald (<http://thechronicleherald.ca/canada/1173466-54-year-old-message-in-bottle-helps-chronicle-death-of-glacier>) in Halifax.

"It's a story about climate change, but it is also a story about the incredibly brave and strong men who worked in this extreme high Arctic environment in the 1950s—back before GPS and sat phone technology," Vincent told Grind. "If you got into trouble then, you were *really* in trouble!

"This is the most remote part of North America, and the coldest coastal zone (average temperature -18C). This also makes the evidence of substantial glacial retreat of great interest."

Vincent told The Chronicle Herald that having a point of comparison from so long ago is extremely valuable, and rare in such an isolated place. He also said it was a sign of the brilliance of the scientist that he even wrote the letter, “that he thought to do that, to leave this message for the future, because in the '50s, it was unthinkable that this would melt.”

As it turned out, Walker, who was in his 20s at the time, died the same year he left the message in a bottle, having had a medical emergency on Ward Hunt Island and having been evacuated.

“This is one of his last communications,” Vincent told The Chronicle Herald. “It’s another incredible thing.

“For me, it was an incredible thing to hold this in my hands, because these two people [Walker and Crary], these are very famous names.”

Surprisingly, Vincent and Sarrazin didn’t keep the letter. After anchoring it down with rocks for a photo (at top), it was reinserted into the bottle, along with a new message asking the

person who finds it to re-measure the distance to the glacier and report back to the research team.



Team member taking samples near the glacier where the message in a bottle was found; photo by Warwick Vincent, CEN/ArcticNet, used with permission



The hidden valley where the message in a bottle was found, along with a member of the team taking a sample (this photo the one above); Dr. Warwick Vincent told The Chronicle Herald: "Suddenly our camera caught this open water, we think for the first time in thousands of years; the changes are extraordinary, particularly the last 10 years, and especially the last two years."; photos by Warwick Vincent, CEN/ArcticNet, used with permission

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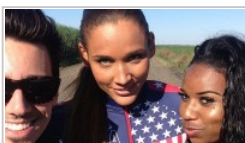
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