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Warming causes ice shelf to collapse

(AP) — An enormous floating ice shelf in Antarctica that has existed since the last Ice Age 12,000 years ago collapsed this month with staggering speed during one of the warmest summers on record there, scientists say.

Scientists stopped short of blaming the collapse on global warming caused by human activity. But they noted that the ice shelf had persisted through previous climate changes well before civilization began altering the environment.

"It's a profound event," said geologist Christina Hulbe of Portland State University. "This ice shelf has endured many climate oscillations over many thousands of years. Now it's gone."

Satellite images show that a piece of the Larsen Ice Shelf collapsed during a five-week period

that ended March 7. It splintered into a plume of drifting icebergs.

The piece of ice that broke off was designated Larsen B, and was 650 feet thick and with a surface area of 1,250 square miles, or about the size of Rhode Island.

The Ice Shelf is on the Antarctic Peninsula and extends about 1,000 miles closer to the tip of South America than the rest of the Antarctic continent.

In recent months, with the polar summer just beginning, temperatures were already creeping above freezing in the peninsula region.

Scientists said there has also been a 50-year warming trend in the peninsula, which is considered a sensitive, early indicator of global climate change.

"We're seeing a very rapid and profound response by the ice

sheet to a warming that's been around for just a few decades," said Ted Scambos of the National Snow and Ice Data Center at the University of Colorado.

Scambos was one of three U.S. researchers monitoring the Larsen Ice Sheet by satellite.

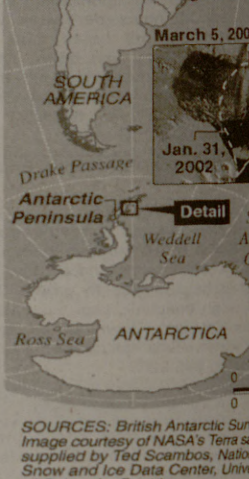
"We can use this as sort of a guide for what's going to happen if the rest of the Antarctic should begin to warm because of climate change," he said.

The Larsen Ice Shelf has been under careful observation since 1995, when its northernmost sector, known as Larsen A, collapsed in a similar event.

"We knew what was left would collapse eventually, but the speed of it is staggering," said David Vaughan, a glaciologist at the British Antarctic Survey. "Hard to believe that 500 million

Ice collapse

A large ice shelf on the Antarctic Peninsula has collapsed into small icebergs and fragments. It had been retracting since 1995.



SOURCES: British Antarctic Survey, image courtesy of NASA's Terra satellite, supplied by Ted Scambos, National Snow and Ice Data Center, University of Colorado, Boulder.

billions of tons of ice sheet has disintegrated in less than a month."

Previous measurements showed the Antarctic Peninsula has warmed an average of more than 4 degrees Fahrenheit during the past half-century.

Injured

Continued from page 1

and has asked about his senior boots.

"He knows us and we haven't pushed him hard on what happened," Mauch Jr. said. "He may never know. We're making great head-way, he was sat up today, doctors checked his reflexes and, though he's still real weak, he was able to take a couple steps."

While Mauch's family waits to bring him back to Texas, friends and other Corps members are collecting donations to defray travel and medical expenses.

"I started to take up money to help out the fam-

ily," Oglesby said. "Other outfits, K1 and D2 for example, have started raising money before I could even mention it to them. They just took it upon themselves."

Though doctors are unsure of when Mauch will be released, the family said they have been treated well in New Orleans.

"They've been really nice down here," Mauch Jr. said. "All the nurses and doctors have been really great and helpful. The former president of the New Orleans Aggie Club came by to visit as well as a few members from the Class of 1950. We don't know how much longer we'll be here, but we want to get back to Texas as soon as we can; we are very anxious to come home."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Beutal Health Center closed


The A.P. Beutal Health Center will be closed today due to a staff in-service workshop with Student Counseling Services. Dial-A-Nurse will resume at 3:30 p.m. today and EMS services will be available by calling 9-911. Student Health Services will re-open Thursday at 8 a.m.

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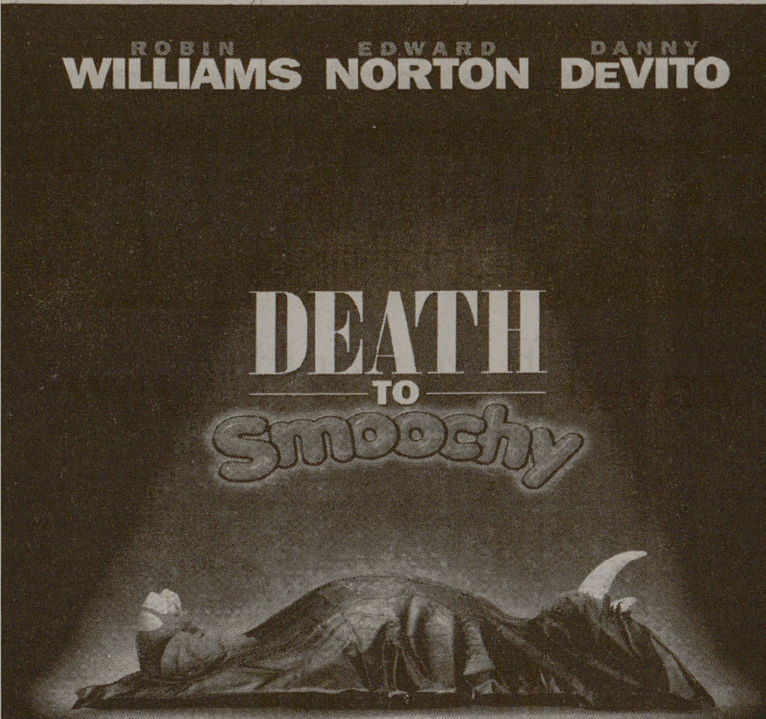
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In response to B
March 19 article

Exposing thos objectionable d acceptable. Ho one's affiliatio involv organizati y nothing to do offense, the nam nation should backed onto the recent articles t on sex/pornogr and both times felt it necessar offenders' affil Corps of Cadets fashion. The Co organization tha producing sold end knightly ge Granted, not within the Corp the Corps has tics, but a large members do. leaders that this offer come out Cadets. The ac not necessarily of a whole.