Iceberg Makes Good Retreat

A slow boat to China is one way to spend a summer, but floating on an ice island in the Arctic can be more interesting—and rewarding—according to an oceanography graduate student.

Scientific research takes oceanographers to the ends of the earth and for John W. Cooper, physical oceanographer, a five-month "voyage" on the U. S. Navy's Arlis II has provided him with a wealth of material for his master's thesis.

Search for the new Arctic Research Laboratory Ice Station was begun by the Navy in May and it was formally located and "occupied" on May 23, 1961. Cooper, who began his graduate work here in 1960, joined Washington University's "Project Husky" and was landed on the island June 10, 1961.

Arlis II at that time was 3.5 miles long and 1.5 miles wide, about 80 feet thick, and located about 150 miles north of Point Barrow, Alaska.

Ice islands are scarce and hard to come by, so to speak. The famous Air Force "T-3"—Fletcher's Ice Island—publicized several years ago went aground off Point Barrow after traveling several thousands of miles from north of Greenland to its present site.

What makes Arlis II unique in the endless white fastness of the Arctic is its range of rock-covered hillocks—some of which were called the Hallelujah Hills by the scientists aboard the island.

Glacial in origin, the island probably acquired the boulders when the ice scraped down a fjord in centuries past.

"It's easy to understand why early Arctic explorers thought they were on a land island," Cooper said. "The boulders on the island were on ice hills as high as 40 feet. Lichens grew in the gravel and mud of little streams that came from melting ice in the summer months."

As the ice station continued its clock-wise drifting around the North Pole (in five months it moved from six o'clock to eight o'clock) it traveled from 172 degrees west to 180 degrees west. During this time the nine scientists and four support men kept a busy routine of making scientific observations.

Cooper's job as general oceanographer first involved digging a hole through the ice to take samples from the ocean.

"It took us three weeks to dig a hole four feet wide and 20 feet deep near the edge of the island," Cooper recalls. He took daily temperature readings and salinity samples from the ocean water as well as core samples of the ocean floor.

"We used a Phleger Corer, which worked similar to a cable-tool rig, to punch a one-inch tube five feet into the floor," he said. "What it brought up was a grayish clay substance that will be analyzed for content. Through the same hole, a marine biologist dragged the bottom of the Arctic for samples."

Was fishing any good? Cooper noted that during the entire time he was on the island, the biologist caught one live fish with a net. Others tried trawling off the ice island that moved as fast as one knot an hour (1.2 mph).

Lack of fishing luck for the scientists didn't mean they didn't have wild life to observe. Polar bears traversed the ice pack to the island that also attracted seal and occasionally an Arctic fox—one even became a pet. They also found musk ox horns.

As the summer months continued with 24 hours of daylight, temperatures ranged from 20 degrees to as high as 45 degrees Fahrenheit.

It was during this time the scientists found the August "heat" somewhat perilous. The island developed a big crack and then broke in half, leaving the scientists' camp but the Hallelujah Hills floated away. This left Arlis an island about 1.5 miles square.

Toward the end of Cooper's tour on Arlis II, the island had drifted to a point 600 miles northwest of Point Barrow and some 150 miles north of Russia's Wrangell Island.

"When the U.S.S.R. set off its 70 megaton hydrogen bomb, we were approximately 1,200 miles north of each other across the Pole," Cooper recalls. "Because our geophones were in the ice, when the blast went off, we were able to hear the Arctic Ocean ring for two-and-a-half hours."

Cooper departed Arlis II in November and returned to A&M to continue his studies toward an M.S. degree in physical oceanography.

Cooper served in the Navy four years before earning a B.S. degree in physics from the College of William and Mary in 1956.

He is the son of Vice-Adm. and Mrs. George R. Cooper (U.S.N., Ret.), Charles Town, W. Va.

Aggieland To Accept Pics

Editors of The Aggieland, '62, will be accepting snapshots and other picture material for the yearbook at a meeting Thursday night from 7-10 in the Aggieland Office in the basement on the YMCA Building.

According to Editor Raleigh Coppedge, activity pictures, especially of the Sophomore Ball, are needed for the Aggieland.

Pictures need be only of good quality, with no size requirements.

A&M Engineers Set Spring Fete Friday

The Student Engineering Council will holds its annual Spring Awards Banquet Friday night at 7 in the Triangle Restaurant.

Speaker for the banquet will be R. L. Hunt, director of the Century Council. Included in the awards program is the Outstanding Faculty Member Award presentation, an award for the outstanding student article in the A&M Engineer.

Membership keys will also be presented to student Engineering Council members at the banquet.

The call of the marine toad, a deep, booming trill, is sometimes mistaken for a far-off tractor.

EVEN IN JAPAN

Montoyas Gone, Memory Lingers

By TOMMY HOLBEIN
Battalion Managing Editor

By now, Mr. and Mrs. Carlos Montoya are in London, England, starting a series of concert tours throughout Europe. But the two performances that Montoya rendered before a packed Guion Hall last Thursday and Friday nights will be remembered for a long time.

Several student flamenco enthusiasts will remember Montoya's visit to A&M for another, more personal reason than his performances; during their stay at the Memorial Student Center, the Montoya's door was almost constantly open to students interested in flamenco guitar.

"Perhaps some of the more classical artists wouldn't feel the same way, but among the student people we seem to have a tremendous following; for this reason, we prefer the students," said Mrs. Montoya.

With the phone constantly ringing, as students sought arrangements for an appointment with the flemenco artist, the Montoyas found their stay "fun but hectic."

But it was not nearly as hectic as a recent tour of the four major cities in Japan. The couple was amazed at the number of Japanese flamenco societies that had planned their spare time for them.

"They almost managed to fill every waking moment, and it was marvelous to see the response from those people," said Montoya. "They gave us tea parties, arranged radio and television interviews, and presented us with a grand reception everywhere."

Mrs. Montoya added, "I remember one situation where we were presented with a large fan; the names of all the members of that particular flamenco society were written on it, and there were flowery, presentation speeches in Japanese. These were translated for me into English, and I translated them into Spanish for Carlos.

"Then, his response was in Spanish — I translated it into English and it was then translated back into Japanese," she said.