

Lubbock pollen gives ancient data

Texas A&M University graduate students and researchers are helping pinpoint what the environment around Lubbock was like as many as 12,500 years ago.

Dr. Vaughn Bryant Jr., recently led a sample-gathering expedition to the Lubbock Lake Project site. The lake site is one of the most important sites of early man in Texas and was discovered in the 1930s during dredging of a reservoir channel created for the fire department.

From material gathered at the site, predominately pollen samples, researchers will analyze and try to reconstruct the surroundings and climate.

Texas A&M's people were asked to step in by the Lubbock Lake Site Development Corp., a nonprofit organization created to further research and development of interpretive facilities there.

Several aspects of the site make it not only regionally significant, notes Bryant, but nationally outstanding as well. Few sites in North America have as complete a cultural sequence from the Clovis area (12,000 years ago) to the relatively recent historic past of Spanish explorers on the Llano Estacado, or Staked Plain.

Analyses of the pollen samples may help reconstruct a picture of climate and vegetation in the area for the several different eras.

Need shown for maritime officers

Texas Maritime Academy cadets headed out to sea Sunday with the cry of a critical need for highly trained officers ringing in their ears.

"Today's maritime industry is rapidly moving into areas of automation that have become commonplace in other industries," Robert J. Blackwell, assistant secretary of commerce for marine affairs, said at the traditional breakfast before the "Texas Clipper" sails on its summer training cruise. "As our merchant marine moves in this direction, the need for highly trained officers becomes critical."

Blackwell called the merchant fleet "more productive than it's ever been" and declared "all signs point to continued improvements in its competitive position."

New generations of fast, efficient liner vessels are reinforcing our leadership in intermodel shipping on our foreign trade routes, he pointed out.

"There has also been a re-entry of American-flag service in our foreign bulk trades," Blackwell continued. "New liner and tank vessels have been introduced into our domestic ocean trades. And, concurrently, there has been an upsurge of vessel construction for our Great Lakes and inland waterways operations."

The federal official looked back to the American merchant marine decline with clear perspective.

"Whereas more than half of the nation's foreign tonnage in 1947 was transported in American-flag ships, by 1969 our fleet was carrying a minuscule 4.5 percent," Blackwell noted.

To halt the downward trend and to put new life into a "moribund industry," Congress and the Administration, in an unprecedented bipartisan effort, formulated progressive maritime policies embodied in the Merchant Marine Act of 1970, Blackwell reviewed.

The "Clipper" departed after 4 p.m. with 200 students aboard on a two-month, island-hopping cruise around the Gulf and the Caribbean. Half of those aboard are TMA cadets with other participants enrolled in Texas A&M University's "Summer School at Sea."

Upperclass students who operate the ship on the cruise are supervised by licensed merchant marine officers and maritime academy staff members. Participants in the "Summer School at Sea" earn up to six hours credit in English, history, geography and mathematics.

The training ship docks first at Mayport, Fla. From there, the ship will sail to Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic; Caracas, Venezuela; St. Nicholas, Aruba; Kingston, Jamaica, back to Miami, and on to Houston and Galveston.



This is the stinger of a female honey bee shown in a picture taken with an electron microscope by Dr. Nick Norton at the Texas A&M University Electron Microscopy Center. Because of its barb-like structure, the stinger will remain within the skin of the victim resulting in the death of the honey bee. The two spherical objects are pollen grains attached to the bee's abdominal hairs.

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