

State and Local

A&M Ph.D. candidate prepares for 70-day antarctic expedition

By Rodney Rather
Staff Writer

He doesn't have a weather-beaten face and can often be seen sporting glasses. Austin Mardon, a Texas A&M doctoral candidate in geography, doesn't look like a tough, adventure-seeking explorer embarking on an expedition to Antarctica. But he talks like one.

"Geographers are not laboratory mps," says Mardon, a native of Texas. He is the youngest of a six-member team of scientists departing Nov. 20 on a 70-day search for meteorites in Antarctica. Like Indiana Jones, geographers tend to exotic places and delve into dangerous, dangerous work, Mardon says.

On this expedition, funded by the National Science Foundation at a cost of about \$2 million, the scientists are going meteorite hunting, he says.



Austin Mardon

"The exact whereabouts of them (meteorites) are unknown, so they're essentially found randomly," Mardon says.

The team will find meteorites by driving snowmobiles across 620 miles of frozen ground, looking for dark spots in the snow, he says — a method that often is dangerous.

"You can be going along and just disappear because you can't see the crevasses," he says.

The crevasses he referred to are large cracks in the upper surface of glaciers, which are often covered by snow.

Mardon's main objective on the trip is to take photographs of each meteorite and its surrounding area, which will provide a general field orientation for future research, he says.

"The primary work I'm doing this year will be used as the basic interpretation key to interpret aerial photographs that will be taken in one or two years," Mardon says.

The trip also will test the performance of camera equipment in frigid conditions, he says.

During his trek to the world's undermost continent, Mardon will weather chilling winds of up to 80 mph and Fahrenheit temperatures as low as 30 degrees below zero, he says.

Because it will be summer, the team will bask in 24-hour sunlight.

Mardon says the extreme cold, absence of bathing facilities and cramped housing — small, two-man tents — don't bother him because toughness runs in his family, as do voyages to Antarctica.

"In my family, the idea that you're supposed to do important things is important," Mardon says.

Police Beat

The following were reported to the University Police Department through Monday:

MISDEMEANOR THEFT:
• Seven bicycles were stolen.

• Two vacuum cleaners were stolen from the new Engineering and Physics building.

BURGLARY OF A BUILDING:

• Several rings of master keys were stolen from an office in the basement of the Zachry Engineering Center.

CRIMINAL TRESPASS:

• Two juveniles were reported throwing rocks at pedestrians from the roof of Langford Architecture Center. Two officers reported they were unable to find the juveniles when they went up on the roof, but another officer on the ground saw two juveniles and detained them. Both juveniles were given criminal trespass warnings and held until their guardians picked them up, the report said.

DRIVING WHILE INTOXICATED:

• Police reported pulling over a driver for speeding. The report said the officer noticed a strong odor of alcohol on the man's breath. When the man stepped out of his car, the officer said, he was unsteady on his feet and was unable to pass a field sobriety test. The man was arrested for driving while intoxicated and was taken to the Brazos County Jail where he failed a breath test. He was then taken to a friend's home.

PUBLIC INTOXICATION:

• Officers reported they saw a white male disappear into a ditch as he was walking toward the married student housing area. The officers said the man was trying to crawl out of the ditch into the married student housing area. As he crawled out of the ditch, officers said, the man began kicking his legs and waving his arms. The officers said they questioned the man, but he refused to give any answers. He then was arrested and taken to the Brazos County Jail and incarcerated for public intoxication.

Corrections

Articles in Friday's *At Ease* listed incorrect dates for the upcoming Dana Davis concert at Rumours. The Best Bets column said the concert begins at 8 p.m. Friday and an article on the artist said she would give a preview of a few of her songs at noon Sept. 17 at the Rudder Fountain. Actually, both the noon concert preview and the 8 p.m. concert will be held this Thursday.

Also, a story on dormitory renovations in Friday's issue of *The Battalion* incorrectly stated that a proposed project to renovate the Corps-style dorms, if approved, would begin in May 1986. Such a project actually would not begin until May 1987.

The *Battalion* regrets the errors.

Banks post more Hunt property in foreclosure

DALLAS (AP) — Banks targeted in a multi-billion dollar lawsuit filed by the Hunt brothers have posted more of the family's property for foreclosure, an attorney says.

Steve Gordon, the Hunt brothers' attorney, said the posted property includes a 48-acre tract of land in Collin County owned by the personal trust funds of Bunker, William Herbert and Lamar Hunt. The three brothers are suing 23 banks for \$14 billion.

Banks have also posted the Mont Belvieu, Texas, processing plant owned by Placid Refining Co., Gordon said.

Banks, including Bankers Trust Co. and RepublicBank Dallas, seek payment on more than \$1.5 billion in loans to Placid Oil Co. and Penrod Drilling Co., energy companies owned by the brothers' trust funds.

Bunker, Herbert and Lamar Hunt have three weeks to rework the loans or seek an injunction, under Texas foreclosure laws. If no agreement is reached, the property will be auctioned off at the Dallas County Courthouse.

Last month, Placid Oil and Herbert Hunt's personal trust filed for protection under Chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code.

Approved on voice vote and sent to the House a resolution that would establish a task force to recommend to the 1987 Legislature what role the state should play in combating alcohol and drug abuse.

Approved a bill that would allow the State Preservation Board to extend the operation of a Capitol gift shop through 1988. Royalties from operation of the shop would go to the Capitol Restoration Fund. The measure was sent to the House 30-0.

Senate OKs bill giving governor more budget authority

AUSTIN (AP) — The Senate approved a bill Tuesday to hold up or shift budget funds while the Legislature is not in session, prompting an opponent to say it would allow the governor and a few legislators to substitute their will for the will of the majority.

The shift of a single vote would have blocked the measure, which was sent to the House on a 20-10 vote after a key vote, also 20-10, allowed the bill to be debated.

A two-thirds vote was needed to bring the bill before the Senate.

The bill would allow the governor, if he found an emergency existed, to propose that certain funds be impounded or that funds be shifted among agencies or within an agency in the budget approved by the Legislature. The Legislative Budget Board could approve, reject or modify the governor's proposal.

The governor could approve or reject any modification by the 10-member board.

Sen. Carl Parker, D-Port Arthur, said, "What you're doing now is giving a blank proxy to a governor who may or may not have the same feelings toward your constituencies that you have. What you're going to do is allow governors — if one gets elected like some we've had — to march us in lockstep backwards, and we will be 49th and 50th instead of 48th in mental health and things like that."

He argued that the bill would allow the governor and six members on budget board — or a majority — "to substitute their feelings about priorities in this state for those of the collective will and wisdom of the Legislature."

"What you are doing, you are placing some handcuffs on your wrists when it comes to exercising your discretion and your responsibility as a voting member of the Senate, and you're handing the handcuffs to the governor and the key to the budget board," Parker said.

"If you want to do that fine, but this will be another one of those things where in a few years I'll be around to some of you to tell you, once again, 'I told you so,'" Parker said.

Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby was asked about Parker's complaints, and Hobby said, "Budget execution is something that has been around a long time. It's certainly needed since we have biennial sessions. To avoid special sessions of the Legislature, it's certainly needed, and I think the procedure that Sen. (Grant) Jones (D-Temple, the bill's sponsor) has . . . is as good a procedure as can be devised."

In other action, the Senate:

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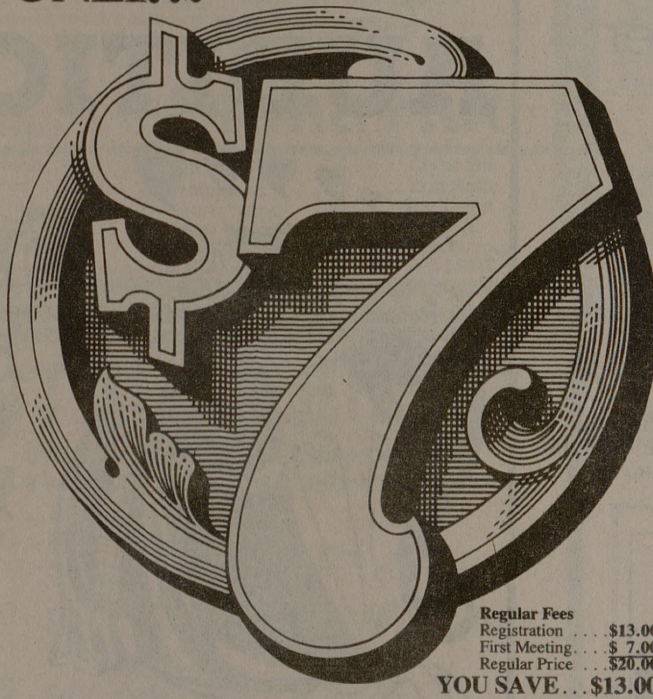
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