

# Oceanographers from A&M lead study of large underwater plateau

By Jerry Bolz  
Reporter

Texas A&M researchers are leading a team of scientists in a study of the world's largest underwater plateau. A team of about 50 scientists, nearly 25 of them from A&M, are spending two months studying the Kerguelen Plateau in the Indian Ocean, said Dr. Philip Rabinowitz, ODP director and oceanographer. The other 25 scientists are from around the world, he said. The 2,500 kilometer-long plateau is part of the Ocean Drilling Program's (ODP) worldwide research. The team is taking and researching core samples of the area to try to discover its origin. Three theories of

the plateau's formation are being investigated by the team. The oldest theory holds that the Kerguelen is a land mass sheared off Antarctica. Another theory claims the plateau is the product of spreading of the Southeast Indian Ridge. The third hypothesis holds that the Kerguelen is the result of tremendous volcanic activity, possibly related to a hot spot in the earth's mantle. Rabinowitz said the plateau's existence might be a result of a combination of the three theories. Rabinowitz said he has no real expectations of a big discovery for the cruise. "This requires research in painstaking detail that may take years to come to fruition," he said. "We're trying to see how earth has evolved

through time to be able to predict such things as earthquakes, volcanoes, location of mineral resources and sites for nuclear waste." The JOIDES Resolution, a 470-foot long drillship used on the cruise is equipped to reach the 1,000- to 2,000-meter depths necessary to sample the Kerguelen. Aboard the ship is a seven-story, 12,000-square-foot laboratory stack, containing 12 separate labs. "There probably aren't many universities that have this kind of equipment," Rabinowitz said. The JOIDES Resolution was used for oil and gas drilling before conversion to a scientific drilling vessel. It houses the 50 scientists and also the near-60 crew members. Drilling near Antarctica presents

the problem of icebergs interfering with movement of JOIDES Resolution. To combat this problem, ODP has employed the use of the Maersk Master, an ice-support vessel rented at about \$900,000 for two to three weeks, Rabinowitz said. Maersk Master circles the drillship searching for ice, and is able to tow icebergs if necessary. "It moved one iceberg larger than Kyle Field," Rabinowitz said. "I'm sure it was the largest object ever moved by man." In about a year, the findings of ODP research of the Kerguelen will be published, Rabinowitz said. "Our goal is to learn about earth and how it ticks, to utilize it," he said.

# Market in Dallas revives business through programs

DALLAS (AP) — Sales at the Dallas Market Center softened with the Texas economy a few years ago, forcing officials to find new ways to attract buyers, and the marketing strategies they started began paying off. The Market Center, a 150-acre complex of wholesale showrooms contained in eight buildings, typically draws 500,000 buyers a year. The center handles about \$6.5 billion worth of wholesale orders annually. Last year, the number of buyers was down, but the number of stores represented was up. "We look at two things when we're talking about the number of buyers: quality and quantity," said Michael Parks, president of the center's Hardgoods Division, which includes furniture, floor covering, lighting, jewelry and bath-bed-linen industries. "In 1987, we had the healthiest year we've had in four years (in the Hardgoods Division). We held our own in the Southwest. Our growth came out of the other regions of the country. We have done a lot of marketing to those other regions."

Buyer attendance dropped 10 percent last year in the Softgoods division, which includes men's, women's and children's apparel and related merchandise. However, the number of stores represented, a crucial denominator, increased 11 percent, said division president Donna Knox. "Fortunately, a number of years ago, we redefined our strategy on attracting retailers to Dallas," said Lucy Crow Billingsley, chief executive officer of the Dallas Market Center. "Not only do we want to be what we've always been — the best specialty store market in the country — but we also want to expand geographically and reach much further than the 10-state area next to us. And we've done that." Independent chains and small home-owned retailers have been the traditional base of the Dallas Market Center's buyers. By implementing a new retail buyer development program, complete with travel incentives, the center outside the Southwest and large department-store chains have become more aware of the Dallas Market Center.

# Marshall welcomes financially troubled Dallas Ballet

MARSHALL (AP) — The Dallas Ballet danced to sizable and enthusiastic audiences in Marshall this weekend but officials said the performances may be the last for the financially strapped company. Ballet officials last month canceled the final two productions of the 1987-88 season and set March 15 as the deadline to raise \$450,000

to meet immediate expenses and restructure their \$1.8 million debts. Civic and arts leaders in Marshall extended an invitation to the company to rehearse and perform after the remainder of its season was canceled. The Dallas Ballet was expected to make between \$25,000 and \$35,000 from the two performances, which

were sponsored by the Marshall Regional Arts Council, the Greater Marshall Chamber of Commerce and the city of Marshall. The company was the opening program for the Marshall Theater at the Civic Center in 1984, said Rock Kershaw, executive director of the Marshall Regional Arts Council. "We feel welcome," said Flem-

ing Flindt, the ballet's artistic director. "We did our first big 'Nutcracker' here (in 1984) and the reception was wonderful. We feel very welcome here." The Marshall performances represented a big lift to the dancers' spirits and provided two weeks of pay.

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