

State and Local

Researchers seek origin of plateau

By Anita Arnold
Reporter

Texas A&M researchers are working with scientists from around the world to discover the origin of an underwater plateau that scientists think was lush forest above the sea millions of years ago.

The Texas A&M Ocean Drilling Program is performing an underwater survey to determine the origin and evolution of a 97-million-year-old plateau in the Indian Ocean.

The the Kerguelen Plateau is 2,500 kilometers in length and resembles the shape of Argentina. Scientist on the drillship JOIDES Resolution, operated and staffed by Texas A&M crew and researchers along with international scientists, took samples from the plateau to find out whether it had been another continent or a land mass fragment, Amanda Palmer, assistant research scientist, said.

"Volcanic eruptions formed the plateau, and then it evolved into a lush forest before sinking more than a half mile below the surface," Palmer said.

Samples examined on the ship show the rocks had formed either above or near sea level, which proves that the plateau existed as a separate land mass during the earliest phases of its history, OPD director Dr. Philip Rabinowitz said.

Small fragments of fossil wood found in the reddish brown soil-like silts and clays point to land conditions with a warm, moist climate, Rabinowitz said.

The region's climate began to cool significantly 36 million years ago, which allowed diatoms (microscopic marine algae) to form. These diatomic blooms and layers of rocks were carried by icebergs from Antarctica and left a record of the climatic changes during the ice ages.

By learning more about the ancient climates of the Southern Hemisphere, scientists will better understand the connection between wind patterns, ocean circulation and cycles of glaciation and their correlation with the climate history of the Northern Hemisphere, Rabinowitz said.

On this expedition, scientists will also date the track of India's movement toward the Asian continent and study the behavior of the region's climate patterns over millions of years.

ODP and its international team will finish its 18-month Indian Ocean expedition in 1988.

Review: 'Red Heat' fries with action, comic thrills

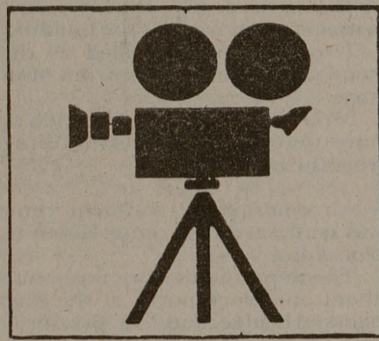
By Staci Finch
Reviewer

What has lots of blood, lots of action and lots of lots and lots and lots of guns? Nope, it's not "Rambo XX," it's "Red Heat," starring funny man Jim Belushi and that action-thriller-bang-bang-shoot-'em-up hero, Arnold Schwarzenegger.

The scene is the Soviet Union. The cops bust a drug ring, but wouldn't you know it, the ringleader gets away, heading for the border and leaving his cohorts to die. So one of the cops follows the bad guy to Chicago and teams up with a wacko American cop. The two destroy various properties and lives as they try to track down the bad guy.

Pretty predictable plot, no? In case you haven't guessed it, Arnold Schwarzenegger is the Soviet police officer, Captain Ivan Danko, and Jim Belushi is Chicago's crazy cop Detective Sergeant Arthur Ridzik. But once you know that, it doesn't matter how old and tired the scenario is, because these guys make a funny movie.

Jim Belushi was good as the obnoxious friend in "About Last Night," but he shines in this role. His dry, sarcastic humor is funny, but it's



not I'm-being-a-funny-actor-like-my-brother here. No way. Belushi is not relying on nepotism. He is funny and entertaining on his own merit. It's the way he doesn't play at being a funny cop, he just simply is. Very realistic.

A perfect foil for this crazy character is Arnold Schwarzenegger. Could it be — yes, it is . . . the man is slowly on his way to becoming an actor. OK, so he probably won't win any Oscars yet, but he's almost getting believable. Of course, the role of Captain Ivan Danko is perfect. Schwarzenegger's already got the ac-

cent, and his trademark stoicism fits right in with this character. And he's amusing. The awful puns that Schwarzenegger is famous for aren't as prevalent in this movie; instead, he's got some one-liners that actually provoke laughter instead of wince from the audience.

These two together make a good movie. And along with the humor and action, they even manage to get the message across that a lack of understanding still exists between the two cultures. For instance, there isn't an American character in the movie who doesn't call the Soviet characters 'Russians.' Wrong. Calling all Soviets Russians is like calling all citizens of the United States Texans. It just doesn't work that way.

But that's OK. This isn't a social statement movie. It's an action-thriller movie. There's plenty of killing, plenty of car chases — actually, a game of chicken with charter buses — and plenty of heroics by Schwarzenegger and Belushi. Of course, Schwarzenegger gets shot at point-blank range and escapes unscathed, and neither of them ever run out of bullets, but this is Hollywood. And there is even a little bit of human emotion thrown in this one, which all adds up to an entertaining film.

Inmate charged with murder after aiding suicide attempt

HOUSTON (AP) — A Harris County grand jury Thursday indicted a county jail inmate for murder in the suicide death of bankrupt real estate developer J.R. McConnell.

The action against Thomas Joseph Damase, 42, came three days after McConnell was found dead in his cell with an electrical cord wrapped around his leg. Prosecutors contend Damase caused the death of the former millionaire by plugging in the wire that electrocuted him.

McConnell had been jailed since November on fraud charges and had been unable to raise \$750,000 bail.

The grand jury indicted Damase, who had been jailed for violating probation, even though District Attorney John B. Holmes said McConnell wanted to die.

"If you ask me to get the gun and then you blow yourself away, that's suicide," Holmes said. "If I do it for you, that's murder."

"Even though the facts will probably show that in the past J.R. McConnell wanted to die and on another occasion attempted to take his own life, this inmate did more than merely aid him in committing the offense. He caused the death," Holmes said.

McConnell's death Monday came just 15 days before he was to stand trial on charges that he and five others took part in a title fraud scheme that netted between \$4.2 million and \$5.7 million. Authorities said he attempted to hang himself at the jail in March.

Holmes said at least one inmate who witnessed McConnell's death testified before the grand jury. The

district attorney, however, would not say how many witnesses he had and left open the possibility further charges could result from McConnell's death.

"We're not supposed to parade our evidence publicly in advance of the courtroom," Holmes said.

Other controversy has also surrounded the death of McConnell, who returned from London to Houston last Nov. 17, 10 days before he was indicted on the fraud charges.

Charles Milligan, a Key West, Fla., attorney who represented McConnell, contends officials failed to take adequate steps to protect McConnell. McConnell's wife and brother also have complained of his treatment and said they plan to file a wrongful death lawsuit.

Senate votes to spend \$156.61 million on Texas energy and water programs

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate voted Thursday to spend \$156.61 million on water and energy projects in Texas and sent the bill to President Reagan for his signature.

The package includes \$126.51 million in water construction projects and studies for the Lone Star State and another \$30.1 million for energy projects. The legislation, approved by the Senate on a 91-3 vote, also sets aside \$100 million for research and development of the multibillion-dollar super collider.

"In this tight budget year, I am pleased that we have been able to get some pretty solid funding for Texas projects," said Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, D-Texas.

Bentsen also called preservation

of funding for the super collider "a major victory in this budget cycle." The bill decrees no construction can begin on the atom-smasher but allows for detailed engineering and some capital equipment purchases.

Texas is one of seven states in the running for the super collider, a physics project which is expected to create 4,000 permanent jobs and have an annual budget of \$280 million.

Also included in the package was a \$22.8 million appropriation to continue construction of the long-awaited Cooper Lake on the South Sulphur River in Northeast Texas, and \$11.3 million to deepen Freeport Harbor in Brazoria County.

Cooper Lake backers received a

scare during the appropriations process, when the Senate initially decided to set aside \$21.8 million. They feared environmentalists would take a lawsuit challenging the project back to federal court if another \$1 million was not added to purchase land that will mitigate the effects of construction on wildlife.

The case was in court for years and the lake has been on the drawing board for decades.

"The Cooper Lake project can remain on track with the extra million we were able to get for mitigation," Bentsen said. "Cooper Lake is well on its way to being completed, and I think that it is about time."

Backers of deepening Freeport Harbor say the Brazoria County

project will play an increasingly important role in the state's economy once completed. Dredging work could begin later this year.

The energy funding includes an appropriation for the Pantex nuclear weapons plant in Amarillo, which will get \$20.5 million. Of that total, \$13 million is for a high-explosive machining facility and \$7.5 million for security enhancements.

The University of Texas at Austin received \$3 million for nuclear robotics, and Texas A&M University will get \$600,000 for hydrogen research. Additionally, the Pleasant Bayou geothermal well in Brazoria County and two Louisiana counties received \$6 million.

Additional funds were included in

What's Up

Sunday

TAMU International Folk Dancers: Will meet at 8 p.m. in the MSC, check monitor for room. They will be teaching line, couple and mixer dances from around the world. Contact Ellen 822-2415. Rudder Tower.
Brazos Valley Alzheimer's Disease Family Support Group: Will meet at 3 p.m. at St. Thomas Episcopal Church - Parish Hall. The topic is "Nutritional Requirements in the Elderly." Contact Pat Stirling 693-1680.

Items for What's Up should be submitted to The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, no later than three business days before the desired run date. We only publish the name and phone number of the contact if you ask us to do so. What's Up is a Battalion service that lists non-profit events and activities. Submissions are run on a first-come, first-served basis. There is no guarantee an entry will run. If you have questions, call the newsroom at 845-3315.

Local Briefs

Evidence: Cattle rustling increasing

The cattle rustling bonanza is increasing evidenced by the over \$2 million worth of livestock and equipment recovered by Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association field inspectors.

Jody Henderson, TSCRA head field inspector, said field and brand inspectors recovered 4,050 head of cattle, 97 horses, 19 trailers and 94 saddles during last fiscal year.

Crime has been reduced in communities adopting the TSCRA "citizen's watch program," Larry Hyorchuck, TSCRA field inspector, said.

The program involves one or two members monitoring suspicious activities and keeping in touch with a base station and local authorities through citizens band radios.

When cattle are reported sto-

len, Henderson requests a color description, identification number or brand, purebred or crossbred classification, age and sex of the animal and the owner's name, telephone and mailing address.

This information is sent immediately to auction markets in the surrounding area.

"It is vital to get information about the stolen animals to field inspectors with the TSCRA of the immediate area as quickly as possible," Henderson said. "The stolen animals often are found at an auction barn several hundred miles from the theft site or in an adjoining state."

Hyorchuck said the rustling occurs throughout the year with a slight increase during December, and has been unaffected by increasing penalties for the rustlers which vary from county to county.

New fat substitute reduces calories

A new fat substitute can reduce calories and cholesterol in dairy and oil-based products such as ice cream, salad dressing and margarine, Texas A&M researchers say.

A four-ounce serving of ice cream, for example, can be reduced from 283 to 130 calories using Simplesse instead of fat, based on a study by The NutraSweet Company.

"Ice Cream is one of the biggest markets for the substitute," Dr. David Mellor, a poultry marketing specialist with the Texas A&M Agricultural Extension Service, says.

The substitute, developed and

patented by The NutraSweet Company, is produced from albumin, a protein found in egg.

Because of the heating and blending process, microparticulation, used to produce the substitute, the tongue perceives it as fat.

If heated, the product loses its fatlike feel, so it cannot be used for cooking.

"The substitute is very safe because it is made of egg albumin which everybody agrees is a good product," Mellor says, "and consumers can expect to see products containing Simplesse in 12 to 18 months."

Equine, canine drug lab opens at A&M

Texas A&M has been designated by the state legislature to house Texas' first drug testing laboratory for the detection of drugs in horses and dogs used for racing.

The Equine and Canine Drug Testing Lab will conduct research in the Texas Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Lab until a separate facility and equipment are available.

The lab is under the supervi-

sion of the Texas A&M Board of Regents but will be independently operated and funded by the state.

Dr. Allen Ray, head of the drug testing lab, said research will be done primarily as a service to the racing guild and also will increase proficiency in drug detection.

The first samples taken from horses and dogs are expected to arrive after racetracks open in the spring.

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