

Dr. Vaughn M. Bryant Jr.



Dr. Vaughn M. Bryant Jr., anthropology department head, keeps fit on a "caveman diet" of raw oatmeal, produce and cactus leaves.

A&M department head more active than most

By Margaret Claughton
The Battalion

Dr. Vaughn M. Bryant Jr., head of the Texas A&M anthropology department, looks to be your average professor. His office is lined with framed degrees, pictures of his family and thriving ivy plants.

But Bryant is a great bit more active than most department heads. In addition to his professorship, Bryant has discovered ancient eating habits, investigated unsolved crimes using plant pollen and amended his modern diet to replicate that of our ancient ancestors.

Dizzy? Well, 55-year-old Bryant doesn't lose a step. His tan skin wrinkle-free and his brain and body move at 90 miles a minute.

"His workload is phenomenal," said co-worker Eri Weinstein. "It's amazing what he gets done, combining his administrative work and his duties as a professor. I could never do what he does."

Weinstein, who has worked with

Bryant for over 10 years, said although Bryant is a hard worker, he always has time for his students and student workers.

Bryant attributes much of his health and energy to his strict eating habits. He has put himself permanently on what he calls a "caveman diet."

Bryant eats raw oatmeal, fresh produce and an occasional cactus leaf, among other things.

"Since going on it," Bryant said, "I have lost 30 pounds. I feel much healthier and I have more energy."

Not only is the diet successful, but Bryant said he enjoys it as well. But this healthy and enjoyable diet is not new. In fact, Bryant said it has been around for millions of years.

Bryant has studied prehistoric man for 15 years. And in the process, he has been able to determine the diets of our ancestors.

Bryant said prehistoric man ate a diet that was very low in fat.

"Fat was maybe 10 percent or less of the total calories," he said. "You never hear about a fat caveman do

you? Because there weren't any."

Bryant and a group of his students began imitating the diet of early man as a scientific experiment. But after discovering all the benefits of eating prehistorically, Bryant said he decided to quit eating "poisoned" modern food and has remained on the caveman diet.



Coprolite - fossilized feces

During his years of research, Bryant has used coprolites — fossilized feces — to help discover what prehistoric man ingested. In his department, Bryant has over 2,000 specimens of coprolites. This massive collection had Texas Monthly dubbing Texas A&M the "Crap Capital

of Texas."

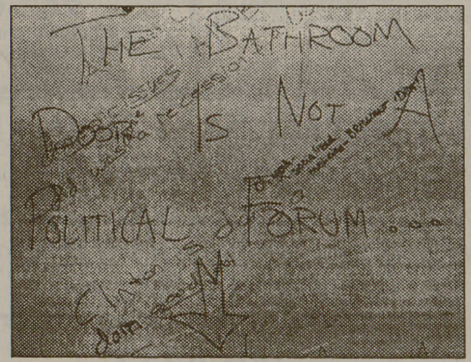
Though he said they aren't the most pleasant specimens to work with, Bryant said coprolites give anthropologists indisputable information on ancient eating habits.

"We can look at ancient campsites or weapons and stuff, but all of those can be affected by the environment over time," Bryant said. "We might find evidence of food there and think that is what might have been eaten, but can't be sure. In coprolites, we know for sure what went through a human's digestive system, so we definitely know it was eaten."

In the coprolites Bryant studied, he found that ancient man relied more on vegetation for sustenance than meat.

"Ancient man probably expended more calories trying to kill game than he gained from eating the meat," he said. "People always talk about 'Man the Hunter,' but it was really 'Man the Gatherer.'"

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A stall door in the women's restroom in the Reed McDonald building.

OR IS IT?

Graffiti-covered walls — an outlet of expression

By Margaret Claughton
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Graffiti is a tradition in America. It can be found anywhere from the subway tunnels of New York City to the lecture hall bathrooms of Texas A&M.

Much of the graffiti on the A&M campus consists of opinionated dialogues debating timely issues. But some may question whether a bathroom door is the best place for public expression.

Many students said they think people choose bathrooms because they are high-traffic areas.

"They know that people go in there every hour and a lot of people will see what they wrote," said Alison Galbreath, a junior journalism major.

Lt. Bert Kretzschmar of the University Police Department agrees.

"So many people go in and out of bathrooms and so many people will read what that person has written," Kretzschmar said. "It's like a public forum."

Craig Blessing, a sophomore general studies major, said those who write graffiti choose bathrooms because people have no choice but to read it.

"It's kind of a captive audience," Blessing said. "I mean, you're sitting there, and there is nothing else you can do but read the walls."

Both Blessing and Galbreath think graffiti does, in fact, affect the average reader.

"I think when they put something on the walls that is actually informed and makes sense, it's food for thought," Blessing said.

Galbreath said she thinks the politics on the walls are some people's only information source.

"Some people don't pick up a paper or watch the news," she said. "So, the graffiti is their only source of political information."

In numerous studies done on graffiti, fundamental differences have been discovered between men's graffiti and women's graffiti.

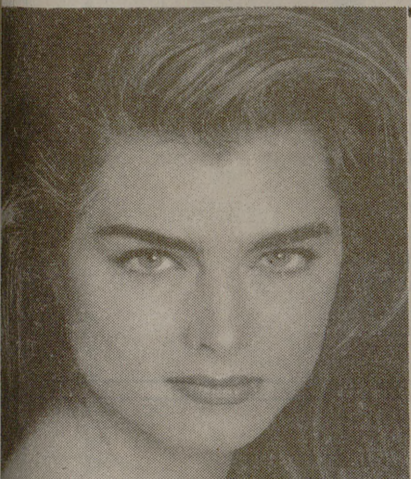
Experts said men's graffiti is, on the surface, more competitive, egocentric and derogatory. Men also write more dirty language.

Women's graffiti tends to be more advice-oriented and less derogatory. It is more likely to be hostile, sexual and issue-related.

Women's graffiti also contains more romantic graffiti such as, "I love so and so's."

Men make more erotic drawings and write more sexual graffiti than women do. Their

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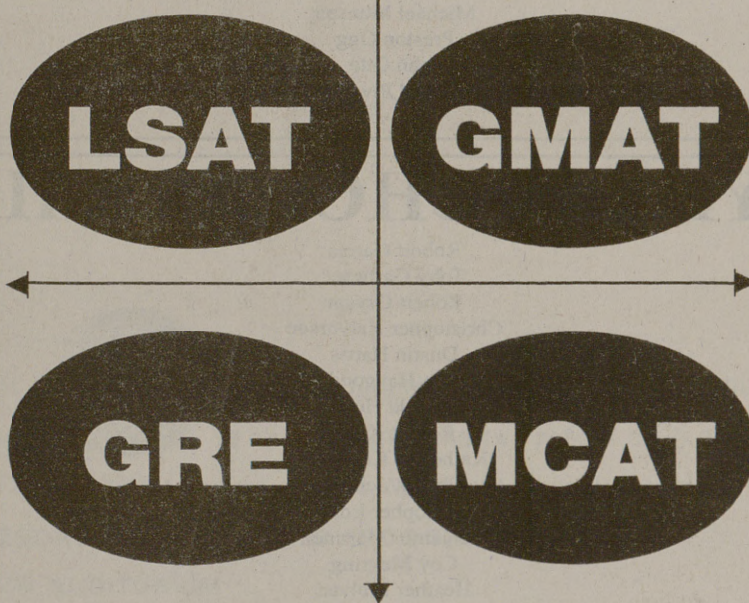
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