# PLEISTOCENE COALITION NEWS

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Inside



# Ardi: How to create a science myth

**By John Feliks**

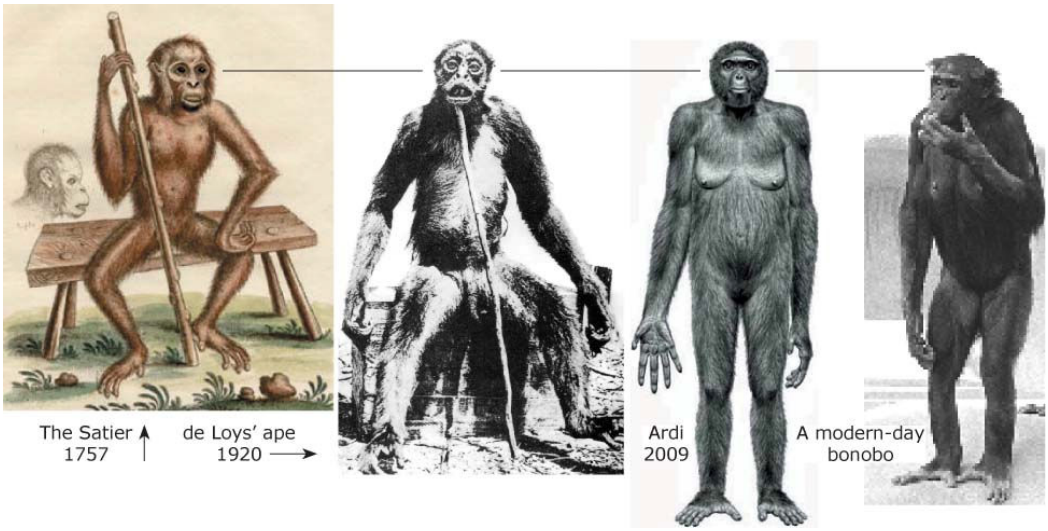


Fig. 1. "The Satier" or "Man of the woods," illustration by George Edwards; South American "ape," photograph by Francois de Loys; "Ardi," illustration by J. H. Matternes; "Bonobo," photograph by Frans de Waal.

**"To some researchers' surprise, the female skeleton** [that of the recently unveiled 4.4 million-year old *Ardipithecus* fossil known as Ardi] **doesn't look much like a chimpanzee, gorilla, or any of our closest living primate relatives."** -Ann Gibbons

It is quite interesting that comments such as this one from the October issue of *Science* no longer raise a question mark in the public's mind despite what anyone can see with their own eyes.

But this was par for the course in 2009, the 200th birthday celebration of Charles Darwin. It was the year in which Darwinian anthropology made its most concerted effort ever to promote an ideology rather than simply report the facts.

The "great discovery," as it was called, was, in reality, a carefully-manufactured mythological being. And the idea, of course, was the usual evolution-by-natural-selection in which all species come about from one another through infinitesimal changes over time. The idea has always been plagued with factual and mathematical problems, but has reached a pinnacle in Ardi.

Still, Ardi's debut came through a flood of media hype and full uncritical support of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). This prompts the question, is it good science to so boldly promote an idea which can never be tested in real time?

In this article, I will answer that question: Firstly, I will explain the humanization of apes by science. Secondly, I will examine the 'coelacanth problem' or why it was necessary to downplay Ardi's obvious similarity to the bonobo, and lastly, I will show how the tenacity of Darwinian thinking has finally backed itself into a factual and mathematical corner.

## The humanization of apes

Ape humanization is much easier to accomplish with an artistic rendition, such as that of Ardi or the Satier than with a photograph, as the above four strikingly similar images attest (Fig.1).

Yet, Swiss geologist Dr Francois de Loys' South American ape (or spider monkey as some assert) represented by an actual photograph is the only one of these images of which its detractors have gone so far as to call an ape-man hoax and declare Dr. de Loys a fraud.


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# Ardi (contd.)

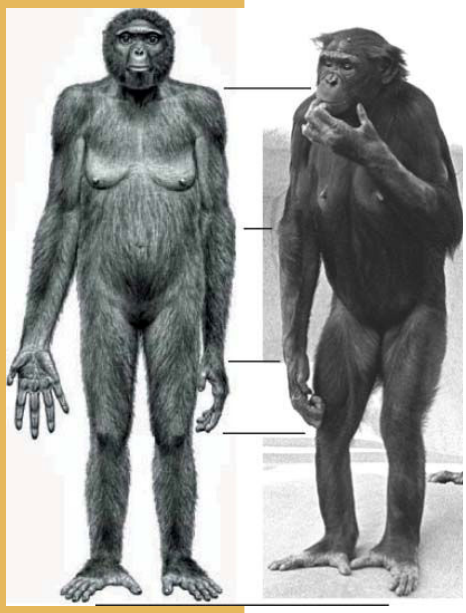


Fig. 2. Ardi illustration, J. H. Matternes; Bonobo photograph, Frans de Waal.

**"Bonobos are not on their way to becoming human any more than we are on our way to becoming like them."**

-primatologist, Frans de Waal, *Bonobo: The Forgotten Ape*

Ironically, the title of de Loys' 1929 report sounds uncannily similar to Ardi titles published in *Science* and elsewhere in 2009: "A gap filled in the pedigree of man?... A new and strangely human species of the anthropoid apes."

Claims such as these are regularly produced in anthropology and are usually later backed-down from, retracted, or disproved.

Of the four images in Figs. 1 & 2, the only one which is completely free from the possibility of being false is the photograph of the modern-day bonobo taken by esteemed primatologist, Frans de Waal (image cropped with permission).

Even though artistic renditions such as Ardi are only interpretations, often the idea of an interpretation falls by the wayside due to faith in a paradigm; and soon an impressionable audience is given a full-fleshed Ardi complete with human features and presented as "scientific fact."

The way Ardi was presented gave the impression that human features just fell into place based on the physical evidence.

To the contrary, I suggest that Ardi's image was entirely driven by a collective desire in the scientific community to promote her as a transitional bipedal link, unique in time, rather than simply as an ape.

Proponents of Ardi and sceptics alike have called the resulting creature, with its odd mixture of ape and human traits, "bizarre." Yet few question it. Why?

Unlike Ardi, de Waal's bonobo photograph (Fig.2) is completely objective. Though it resembles Ardi, no one calls it "bizarre," as de Waal is not attempting to pull more out of the bonobo than is actually there. De Waal's photograph shows beyond doubt that Ardi is not unique. So, rather than add human features that make Ardi look "bizarre," truly objective science would let her remain an ape.

But here is the problem. If the Ardi scientists admit Ardi's similarity to the bonobo it would go straight against the very reason she was hyped in the first place. This is because Ardi is not simply a fossil being objectively presented to the public as one would expect from other scientific fields; she is an "image" created to promote an ideology.

With evidence as unambiguous as Dr. de Waal's bonobo photograph, no scientist would attempt to convince the world that bonobos have fully-human posture or that they can walk in a near-human fashion. Nor would they suggest that such creatures will eventually evolve into humans as de Waal himself points out: "Bonobos are not on their way to becoming human any more than we are on our way to becoming like them."

But attempting to convince is exactly what the Ardi team has done. Working to convince rather than prove is quite common in evolutionary anthropology where evidence can never be tested in real time but where the stakes of public interest are high.

## Avoid the bonobo as if it were a coelacanth

"Whereas the chief anthropologist on the Ardi team goes by the bonobo-like name of Owen Lovejoy, he focuses all of this attention on the chimpanzee...Since chimps are violent and Ardi probably wasn't, he argues that we have a totally unique creature on our hands." -Frans de Waal, primatologist

As the coelacanth taught us early in the 20th century, it is difficult to use a fossil as a transitional evolutionary link if a living example happens to one day show up. So, in the case of Ardi now is apparently just not the time to look at the bonobo. It is an example of how science, when it gets involved in promoting ideologies instead of discoveries tends to downplay certain kinds of evidence or even block it from being published (behaviours in science which, incidentally, inspired the formation of the Pleistocene Coalition).

To admit the obvious similarity between Ardi and the bonobo would undermine Ardi's use as a transitional link and show her to simply be an ape hardly changed in 4.4 million years.

In fact, the only differences between Ardi and the bonobo which can be seen in Fig.2 are added human traits, none of which are deducible from the fossils.

> Conclusion on page 3

# Ardi (contd.)

**"The only thing detracting from the tidy picture in the film's depiction is that troublesome grasping toe."**

-John Hawks, evolutionary anthropologist

## Selling ape-man bipedality at all costs

"The papers describing *Ardipithecus* do not come to the conclusion that Ardi had anything like a human pattern of bipedality. Nor, I would add, do the data support that conclusion. Yet here [in the Discovery Channel's *Discovering Ardi* program], they spent most of the whole hour leading up to the conclusion that Ardi was an obligate biped... The only thing detracting from the tidy picture in the film's depiction is that troublesome grasping toe." -John Hawks, evolutionary anthropologist

So, has an accurate image of *Ardipithecus* been presented to the public? Definitely not.

But this is not unusual in evolutionary anthropology. Although the whole idea of bipedal apes has reached its apex with Ardi, it received its biggest boost during the late Seventies when scientists commandeered for *Australopithecus*, another early ape (e.g., "Lucy"), the essentially modern-type Laetoli footprints (3.6—3.8 million years old) despite no direct association between them. Circumstantial claims such as this would never be accepted in sciences where rigor is the rule.

Yet the scientific community has unabashedly perpetuated the myth that australopithecines had modern feet ever since. It simply added 'australopithecine bipedality' to a bank of "facts" which have, similar to many others in the Darwinian system, never been proven as facts to begin with.

The problem with doing science this way is that future researchers tend to build on prior-established facts. Building on facts that are not facts at all is not the best way to go.

## The 'ape-foot to 'human-foot' timeline

The figure below (Fig.3) shows the time-frame defaulted to by the Ardi team during which ape feet are supposed to have changed into human feet by the slow process of natural selection. When species overlap in time, it is difficult to imagine one as an ancestor of the other. The real problem is made clear when scientific opinions on the nature of feet and footprints are compared with the numbers.

Back when Ardi team co-leader, Tim White, was promoting *Australopithecus* as a bipedal human ancestor, he had this to say about the Laetoli footprints:

"Make no mistake about it. They are like modern human footprints" -Tim White, *Lucy: The Beginnings of Humankind*.

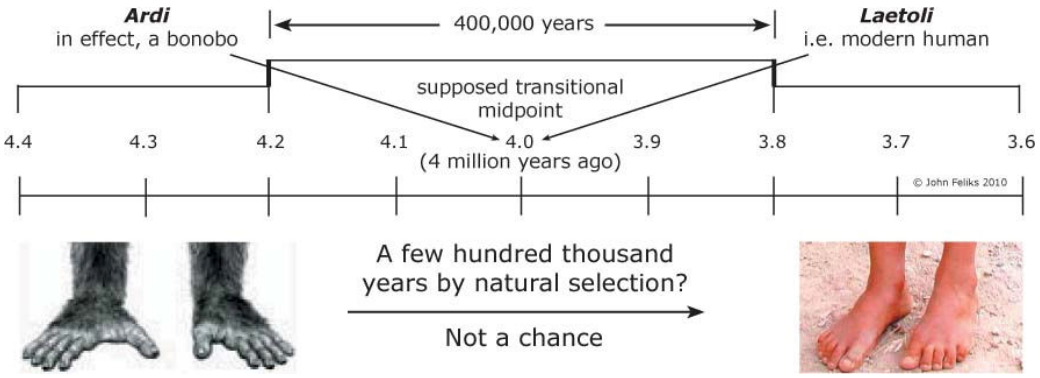
As to how long it took for such 'modern feet' to become modern, the Ardi team's bipedality expert, Owen Lovejoy, said that the Laetoli footprints are what one would expect in "a biped that had been that way for a very long period of time." -Owen Lovejoy, *NOVA: In Search of Human Origins*

So, these opinions bring up a reasonable question. How long is a "very long period of time"?

According to footprint expert, Louise Robbins, of the original Laetoli team (along with Mary Leakey who regarded Laetoli as representing humans rather than apes), the Laetoli hominid-type had been walking erect for "at least a million years" (*Lucy: The Beginnings of Humankind*). If we give Robbins' and Leakey's expertise any credence, then this certainly creates a problem as it would mean that humans were here 4.8 million years ago, that is, 400,000 years before Ardi… our supposed ancestor.

Even if we took Lovejoy's comment to mean something more on the order of only several hundred thousand years, then feet of a modern type were around virtually at the same time as Ardi (4.2 to 4.4 million yrs ago). That wouldn't even leave any natural-selection tweaking time between Ardi and Laetoli.

In other words, modern human feet and those like Ardi or bonobos have clearly remained unchanged, side-by-side, for over four million years.



# Gloria Farley debate replies

## Let the review stand

**By Carl L. Johannessen**

I have read a bit more of Gloria Farley's book, *In Plain Sight*, and I find that I am, in many regards, in agreement with Peter Faris and his notes on the way Gloria took Barry Fell hook, line, and sinker. I found that Barry had falsified a translation, claiming it was Hindi. I showed it was Old Spanish (Carl L. Johannessen et al. 1987. The Tihosuco Inscription Retranslated as Spanish. *Epigraphic Society Occasional Papers* Vol. 16:142-145).

Barry saw the error of his translation and claimed it was just the result of too many successive Xerox copies, when in fact he had changed the direction of the marks. He agreed to publish a report with the proper interpretation of the epigraphy at Tihosuco, Yucatan in his own journal, with me as co-operator and him as co-author. That removed all doubt everywhere as to the correctness of the retraction.

Barry added material at the end just to salve his ego, but his data were in it. Without more serious checking on the origins of some of her inscriptions, I think it may be better to just let the review stand.

Carl L. Johannessen, Emeritus Professor of Biogeography, University of Oregon and co-author of *World Trade and Biological Exchanges Before 1492*.

## Ocean transport going back for millennia

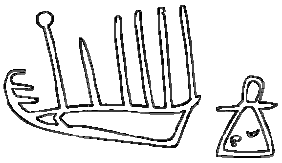
**By Virginia Steen-McIntyre**

I recommended Gloria Farley's book *In Plain Sight* in Issue 1 of this Newsletter, along with the 2009 book *World Trade and Biological Exchanges before 1492* (Sorenson and Johannessen) because they complement one another.

How can one find evidence of New World plants and parasites in Old World archaeological sites unless there had been some form of ocean transport going on for millennia? (Example: Tobacco leaves in the body cavity of Pharaoh Rameses II's mummy, as mentioned in the preface to Farley's book.)

Peter, you are not happy with the mishmash of scripts and languages that sometimes appear on the same rock face. I see a semi-literate, polyglot crew of homesick sailors and explorers leaving their marks on a sheltered rock face in an unknown, hostile land, especially prayers to their various deities for protection and safe trip home.

*Gloria Farley's Tanit blessing a typical Mediterranean-style boat of the time, with high, multi-lobed stem at the stern and a high bow which served as a kind of foc'sle for the crew. The vertical elements are oars and the stern-most oar, with the circle, is the steering blade.*



## Occam's razor has spoken!

**By Ishtar**

Barry Fell notwithstanding, I was disappointed to see Peter Faris trundle out Occam's razor yet again to impart the Wisdom of Solomon. Why is it that whenever Occam's razor is cited, suddenly ... the debate is over?

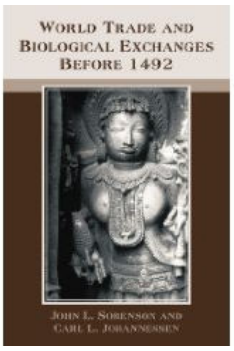
Occam's razor is not the Delphic Oracle, and the assertion that when all else is equal, the simplest solution is probably the correct one, is not scientific. Nature uses many solutions from the simplest to the most complex. For instance, no molecular biologist would describe the single cell as 'simple'. Some have described it as more complex than a galaxy.

But more importantly, our decision about what is the simplest solution is based on a value judgment which is, in turn, the product of a premise constructed from our own limited experience. In other words, it is an opinion. I think the late geographer George Carter put it very well in his Introduction to *In Plain Sight* when he said, referring to the Old World figures that Gloria recognized:

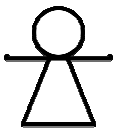
"These things had been seen, but not comprehended by most rock art specialists, for the eye can really see only what it is prepared to see. Without a background in Old World forms, a drawing of a woman on horseback is simply a post-contact figure. It takes an informed eye to see an Old World goddess. This was again shown in Gloria's discovery of the figure of the Carthaginian goddess Tanit.

"In all of this, Gloria has far exceeded most professionals in petroglyph studies, for most of them are woefully uninformed in Old World cultural studies pertinent to American rock art. Actually the case is much worse, for the majority of rock art specialists have maintained a firmly closed mind to such comparisons as are richly presented in this volume…

"The professional is blinded by that which is known as the 'Anthropological Monroe Doctrine.' This states that there was no meaningful Old World, pre-Columbian influences in the New World. So when solid evidence is presented about ships, or horses, or deities, or readable inscriptions, an Americanist, whether anthropologist, ethnologist, or historian, will generally conclude that the material is meaningless, fraudulent, or post contact." **Ishtar of Ishtar's Gate.**

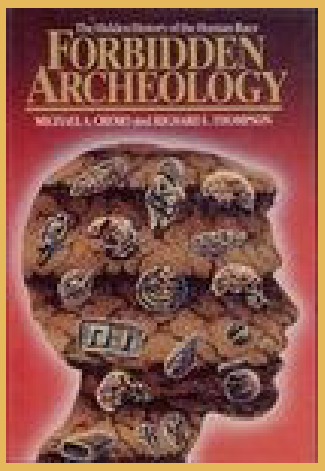



**If you would like to submit a letter or article for publication, please e-mail the editor or Virginia Steen-McIntyre.**



*Schematic of the Tanit symbol as seen in the "Tanit blessing" in Gloria Farley's book,* In Plain Sight*. -from Wikimedia Commons*

# Further reading




***Forbidden Archaeology.*** By Michael A. Cremo and Richard L. Thompson. 1993.

**"a rigorously objective scientific approach was distinctly lacking from the archaeology surrounding the early key finds of palaeoanthropology"**

## Forbidden Archaeology

**by Ishtar**

**In re-reading *Forbidden Archaeology* by Michael A. Cremo and Richard L. Thompson (1993), I find that I'm reaching a new understanding.**

Since first being astounded by the sheer volume of outstanding research from what must be hundreds of archaeological reports that the authors uncovered, (which had been dismissed in favour of a Darwinian agenda), I've now had first-hand experience of how this suppression works. I have been ridiculed on internet forums; my points have been ignored and trampled underfoot in vicious personal attacks; and sleight-of-hand dirty tricks have been used to undermine my credibility. I have endured it all, naively assuming that this type of behaviour was due simply to the ignorance of the individual posters. But there was still one underlying factor that was eluding me … until picking up *Forbidden Archaeology* again.

And that was the money factor.

We often hear the phrase: "Follow the money." This time, I could see the money trail going straight into the story that science is being used to manufacture "truth" for our Sunday night television viewing.

I'm using the word 'story' deliberately, because according to *Forbidden Archaeology*, a rigorously objective scientific approach was distinctly lacking from the archaeology surrounding the early key finds of palaeoanthropology, such as Java Man and Peking Man.

Its original discoverer, Eugene Dubois, spent the last years of his life disowning Java Man as *Homo erectus*, despite G.H.R. von Koenigswald's later finds (of which the provenance was highly suspicious, provided to him as they were by poor local villagers who turned up with bits of bone from who knows where in exchange for money. Even the famous femur turned out to be from a modern human, and the original skull cap was that of a baboon. Dubois died insisting that Java Man was actually a giant gibbon. But no one would listen to him in the excitement of the discovery of Peking Man, another story covered in murkiness and unexplained lacunae.

Tellingly, Cremo and Thompson show that a key man in both those discoveries (as well as the debunked Piltdown Man) was the Jesuit priest Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. Teilhard de Chardin acted as a funnel mechanism for funding monies to support these digs and associated research on behalf of the Rockefeller Foundation and the Carnegie Institute. Both these organizations were, and still are, proponents of Darwinism and 'the survival of the fittest' as a justification for capitalism.

The latest example in this embarrassing parade is Ardi. But as shocking as it may seem, the abuse of science for political ends is not just the result of a 150-year-old Darwinian agenda. It has been going on since antiquity. At least as far back as the ancient Greeks, it seems that those in power have managed to hold on to it by using trophy fossils to provide man with a mythology about who he was and where he came from.

According to Adrienne Mayor in *Fossils in Native American Lands: Whose Bones, Whose Story*:

"In ancient Greece and Rome, enormous fossil bones were transported long distances at great expense for political gain and to enrich temples and imperial museums. In antiquity, the huge bones, teeth, and tusks of mastodons, mammoths, and other large extinct animals were identified as the relics of giant beings from mythology.

"These remarkable remains were collected and placed in temples, where the Greeks and Romans revered the objects as the relics of giant heroes and ancestors. The fossils were considered sacred treasures and they were invested with cultural pride and national identity…

"According to the Greek historian Herodotus, the city of Sparta stole a giant skeleton they identified as the giant hero Orestes. The skeleton (most likely that of a mastodon or mammoth) had been discovered in Tegea, a town that Sparta sought to dominate. Spartan soldiers absconded with the skeleton and enshrined the bones in their own city. Possession of Orestes' remains was a brilliant propaganda move and the power that Sparta reaped from the fossil coup eventually led to the Peloponnesian War.

"The city of Athens responded to Sparta's move by searching for an impressive fossil that they could claim as Athens' own culture hero. The Athenians sailed to the island of Skyros to

> Contd on page 6

# Forbidden Archaeology (contd.)

**Contd from page 5**

look for the bones of their hero Theseus. The Athenian general Kimon captured Skyros and ordered his men to dig up an enormous skeleton that was seen poking out of a mound … Kimon shipped the heroic bones back to Athens, where they were placed in a magnificent tomb near the Acropolis.

"Meanwhile, the town of Tegea, which had been looted earlier by Sparta, discovered another legendary fossil. In their temple the Tegeans displayed an immense mammoth tusk, which they believed came from the gigantic Caledonian Boar of Greek myth. In 31 BC, the Roman Emperor Augustus occupied Greece. He plundered the great tusk from the temple at Tegea, and took the trophy fossil to Rome for his own display in the world's first paleontological museum."

There is a saying: "He who pays the piper plays the tune." When we read through the prodigious and painstaking research of Cremo and Thompson, we gradually realize that there is no point in trying to persuade a piper to play a tune that his political masters are not paying him to play. And so instead, The Pleistocene Coalition has set up its own tent to put on its own musical performance. But if it wasn't for *Forbidden Archaeology* banging the drum, in the first place, I doubt that we'd have much of an audience.

**Michael Cremo will be writing in a future issue of the* Pleistocene Coalition News *about how* Forbidden Archaeology *is being received these days*.

**Adrienne Mayor is a member of The Pleistocene Coalition.*

# The artistic impulse as seen through prehistory

# Beads

**By Richard Dullum**

**"beads… are hard evidence and rarely mistaken."**

**A striking change is occurring in our view of the cognition of early man.** Recent finds at a Neanderthal site in Spain shows that they wore decorated shells and would paint their faces, a sign of artistic and symbolic thinking. Other recent assemblages found, dating from that epoch, have included beads: from the Lower to the Upper Palaeolithic and spread across sites in Africa, the Near East, Europe, Asia and India.

110,000 years old perforated *Nassarius* shell bead, Grotte des Pigeons at Taforalt, Morocco. http://www.physorg.com/news160756591.html

Beads and pendants, as personal adornments, were made and worn by people of this era, and were fashioned from stone, coral, ivory, seashells and ostrich shells. The technology required, as well as the symbolic aspect, is generally thought to be capacities of modern humans only.

It is becoming clear however that bead-making predates the time period which those adhering to the mainstream scenario regard as that of our ancestors' earliest capacity for artistic expression. Neanderthals, living in Europe, are known to have used beads and worn pendants throughout their occupation of Europe, the Near East and North Africa, roughly from 200kyr-20kyr.

One reason that beads are a favourable tracking device for following the trail of human cognition backwards in time is because they are hard evidence and rarely mistaken. But, as Robert Binary points out, the vast majority of beads will never be found, as they were perishable, and they undoubtedly followed other forms of human ornamentation, such as painting, pinning, coiffure, and others, which tells us that a human frame of mind preceded beads by an unknown gulf of time.

> **Contd on page 7**

# Beads (contd.)

Also, we must keep in mind that before beads, there was string, and knot-tying.

Organization of occupational skills and cooperative social interactions, including language and abstraction, also had to have taken root in human groups by that time, and indeed we see that ratio concepts were understood and used in the Acheulian era (Lower Palaeolithic), from the work of John Feliks and others. We learn that the concepts of ratio and proportion were present in the naturally observable world at that time, in the form of fossils. The perfect Acheulian hand axe with a fossilized scallop shell centered in the middle, allows us to presume art in the mind of man, at this time.

28–38,000-year old beads from Sungir, Russia. Photo by Randall White. Editor's note: Prof. White discovered the interlocking nature of the beads after stringing and shaking an unwieldy strand (White 1993. "Technological and Social Dimensions of 'Aurignacian-Age' Body Ornaments across Europe," in *Before Lascaux*).

So, bead-making dates in the Palaeolithic really provide us with a *terminus ante quem* for the appearance of modern cognitive abilities, and to a beginning of cognitive expansion beyond survival mode. A trail of beads only leads so far.

The study of beads in Palaeolithic portable art collections, recent and past, from a global perspective, offers the chance of detecting human patterns of occupation of the earth. Assembling this evidence will involve going into existing past and present collections and sites, using proper techniques of excavation to find beads and fragments.

Randy White of NYU has criticized past excavations for the meagre, if any, planning directed towards finding items of personal ornamentation or their fragments. And very little importance is attached to these found ornaments in the overall consideration of the site. Worse, often results from ornamentation finds are either discarded or ignored, along with the conundrums they represent to the researchers' theoretical predispositions, which have been quite Eurocentric since the inception of the discipline.

The biggest puzzle, when studying the use of beads and ornamentation, is that there is a significant gap in the archaeological record that occurred around 75,000 years ago, and beads are not found again until about 40,000 years ago.

During this time period, few cultural or skeletal remains are found to indicate what people were doing, or where they were going. The only major clue we have is that around 74,000 years ago, the Indonesian super volcano, Toba, erupted in spectacular fashion with a magnitude 8 on the Volcanic Explosivity Index. The eruption exacerbated an Ice Age already underway, dumped ash nine meters thick over Malaysia, and covered the entire Indian subcontinent with 15 centimetres of volcanic ash. Genomic studies indicate that the breeding population of humans at the time may have shrunk to as little as 1,000-10,000 pairs, from whom the entire human population of today is descended. This explosion could go a long way towards explaining the dearth of human finds after Toba and before the onset of the Aurignacian.

This explanation is not without detractors, however. The research of Mike Petraglia in India indicates that despite the colossal ash fall on the subcontinent then, identical Middle Palaeolithic stone tool assemblages are found below and above the ash layer from Toba, confirming that humans there survived. Finds in the Jerreru Valley in Andhra Pradesh are upsetting to the genetic bottleneck hypothesis, which, it turns out, has a whole lot of 'wiggle room'.

The search for the broken trail of beads then needs to be refined, reworked and re-appraised. Known sites need to be fine-mesh wet-sieved to catch the beads and fragments of their industry. Caves situated to give shelter then need to be identified and examined. Underwater sites, specifically caves that would have been above the water line then, need to be examined, as the population of that time had about 2.5 million more hectares of land available. A fresh look at man in this era will undoubtedly lead to new theories as to the antiquity and development of the artistic impulse.

*In the next issue of* Pleistocene Coalition News*, Richard Dullum plans to explore the use of shells and make-up.*

**"...we must keep in mind that before beads, there was string, and knot-tying."**

# Lake Manix

**by Tom Baldwin**

The dried lake bed of the Pleistocene-age Lake Manix, California. Photograph by Tom Baldwin

**"The lithic industry that lies around the shoreline of ancient Lake Manix is very hard to explain for those who hold to a late arrival for humans in the Americas."**

**Last November, I was in the Barstow, California area for the general meeting of The Friends of Calico, which was held at the Calico Early Man Site.**

Having arrived a day early, I spent the afternoon exploring the area, and passed my first night camping at Basset Point which overlooks the dried lake bed of the Pleistocene Lake Manix. The lithic industry that lies around the shoreline of ancient Lake Manix is very hard to explain for those who hold to a late arrival for humans in the Americas. Above the old lake's shoreline there are spots where survey teams have found that the ground is literally covered by the products of workshops — cores, flakes and tools of all sorts (except points; there are no spear tips or arrowheads).

An occasional tool might have found its way into the lake, but for the most part they are located above the old shoreline. The problem for those believing the Clovis First theory, which holds that mankind arrived in the Americas ten to twelve thousand years ago, is that Lake Manix broke through the natural barrier that contained it about 24,000 years ago. At that time it drained and never refilled.

If man had arrived after the draining of the lake, there would have been no reason for him to have limited his activities to just the areas above the old shoreline. The fact that he did so indicates he was here and very active before the lake drained. That puts humans on this continent at least twelve thousand years before Clovis man, and very probably more.

# The next decade

## What do you think will happen?

By Alan Cannell

**It's the beginning of a new decade. So what better time for making a few predictions about what we think may happen in the field of archaeology, anthropology and genetics over the next ten years?**

If you'd like to write in with your predictions, we'll run them over the next few issues. For instance, do you think that the missing link will be found? Or the Yeti? Will Darwin's idea that we descend from an ape-like ancestor at last be vindicated? Or will Out of Africa be superseded by Out of Asia?

It will be interesting to see whether any sort of general consensus emerges or whether our views are as diverse as the areas we specialize in.

So if you'd like to contribute a few predictions of your own, please email Alan Cannell

In the meantime, I'm going to kick us off with a few, just to get us in the mood.

1. The Chinese will produce a tooth or fragment that is claimed to be from *Homo erectus* and dates to 2.4 million years ago. They will then claim that *HE* evolved initially in Asia and spread out from this ancient ape homeland.

2. Genetic scientists will admit that the six million years ago 'split' of the *Homo* line from chimps and bonobos (as based upon the 'molecular clock') COULD be closer to a range of around nine million years ago. (They already admit to seven million years ago).

3. The 'dry' route to the Americas, across the land bridge, will begin to lose prestige in favour of the island hopping route when sea levels were much lower. The latest wave of 'native' American migration from the Altai Mountains will turn out to be more recent than imagined.

4. An *erectus* /archaic calotte will be found and dated in Karst formations in the Americas. Considering the stable nature of the geology, the vast expanses of Karst and the lack of any systematic excavations, the strongest candidate for this is Brazil.

5. More attention will be paid to the isolated (and safer) mountain environments in the formation of the major proto-linguistic groups 20-30 thousand years ago.

# Deep roots of aesthetic design

## Winklepickers and Phi

By Alan Cannell

**The *Deep Roots of Aesthetic Design* slideshow makes the case for believing that many of our 'modern' tastes in design reflect an appreciation of the Golden Ratio or Phi (1.618).** And that, in addition — depending on the outcome of on-going research — these same formats were probably being deliberately sought in hand axe design in the Middle Paleolithic. Examples in art and architecture are usually shown to illustrate the point. However, I felt there was a lack of something more personal and universal to illustrate our deep fascination with certain aspects of Phi; something similar in size and shape to an Acheulian hand axe…. Something like pointed-toed shoes… or Winklepickers, as some of us may remember calling them.

The author can confirm that the taste for Winklepickers is universal and they are an object of desire (at least for women) in the Americas, the Far East, the Middle East, Africa and South Asia. Fashions may change, but pointed-toed shoes have been around for centuries (see Fig1, a Gillray print from 200 years ago). Uncomfortable and unanatomically sound they may be; but they are chosen purely on the basis of design and format.

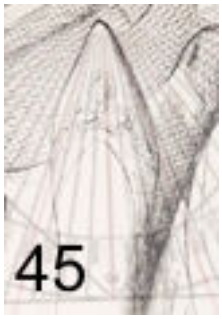
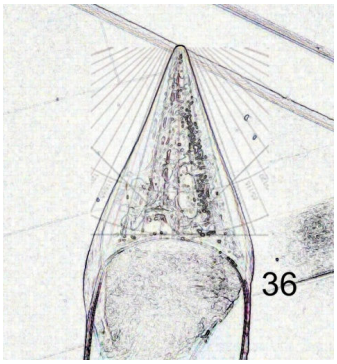
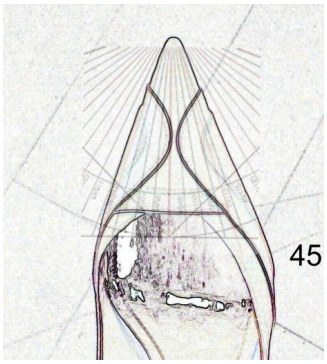



Fig 1. Shoe by James Gillray: Print from the late 18th Century.

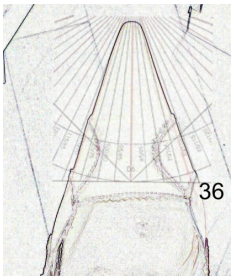
To test what shapes are actually chosen without cherry-picking the data, photographs were taken of all the models on show at a Brazilian store. These were then run through a contour analysis program and the angle of the 'point' determined and noted. Some typical thumbnails are shown in Figures 2-5, along with the Gray's Inn Axe from the British Museum collection (circa 350,000 years old).

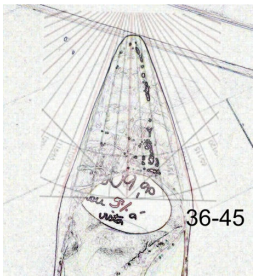
The samples were all grouped around three distinct angles:




Figs 2 and 3




Figs 4 and 5


Fig 6 Gray's Inn biface (350ka)

36°, 40° and 45°. Slight variations on 36° (up to 38°) were included as part of the first group. No angles 'sharper' than 36° were recorded.

A statistical analysis showed a marked preference for a 36° point, with over 60 per cent of all shoes falling into this category. In some cases, such as in figure 5, the angle changed from one shape to another, thus both angles were computed in the statistics.

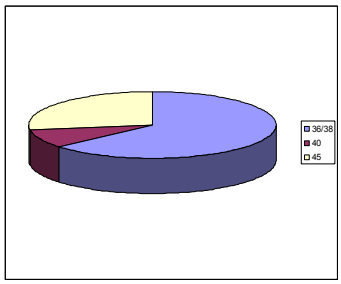



Fig 7: Blue, 36/38°; Red, 40°; Yellow, 45°

The 45° point — as used in the 200 year-old example — is not related to Phi, but as a bisected right angle it is nevertheless geometrically pleasing. Even so, as is shown in Figure 3, in most cases the angle on the left was close to 18°.

To refresh the memory: an angle of 36° is formed at the point of a pentagram which is composed of sections all based on Phi, and it is very common in hand axe illustrations and photographs. *Homo sapiens* like this so much that we, as a species, are willing to stuff our feet into the same shape, no matter the discomfort!

**If you would like to submit a letter or article for publication in *Pleistocene Coalition News*, please e-mail the editor or Virginia Steen-McIntyre**

In their own words

# Caltrans site

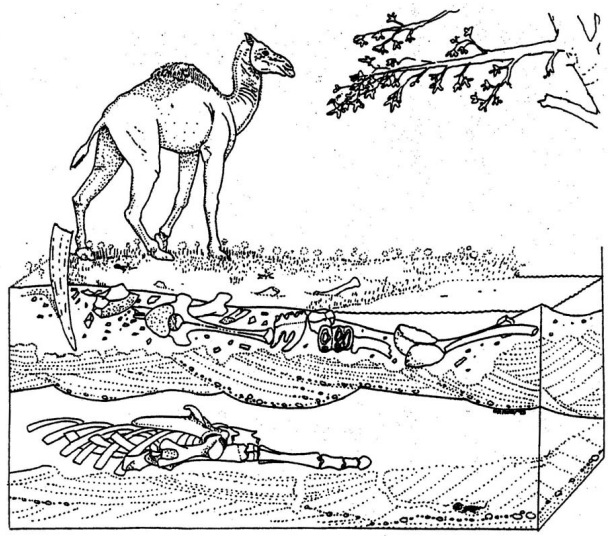
By Virginia Steen-McIntyre

**"Scientists describe an apparent mastodon butchering site some 300,000 years old, uncovered during highway improvement work in San Diego County."**

**Following are quotes from an open-file report dated July 28, 1995, prepared for Caltrans** (California Department of Transportation) **District 11 and titled "State Route 54, Paleontological Mitigation Program, Final Report."** In the report, scientists describe an apparent mastodon butchering site some 300,000 years old, uncovered during highway improvement work in San Diego County. Bones had originally been modified and moved around, rock cobbles had been split to form tools, and one tusk had been thrust vertically deep into the fine-grained sediment, apparently to mark the site.

I obtained copies of the report shortly after it was published (minus the full set of appendixes) from two late colleagues, George Carter and Charles Repenning. We agreed to wait and say nothing about it until the researchers and their colleagues made this exciting discovery public. That was fifteen years ago. If an announcement was made to the media, the media have ignored it. A classic example of how data on an important but controversial archaeological site can get buried.

On page 51 of the copy sent to me by Charles Repenning is a hand-written note from him giving subsequent information about the site. I've reproduced it also, below.



## Page 1, Executive Summary

. . . "The fragmentary skeletal remains of a single individual of the American Mastodon, *Mammut americanum* was collected from a quarry excavation. This quarry produced interesting and puzzling taphonomic results. Radiometric dating of ivory and soil carbonate from the quarry yielded dates of 335+/-35Ka (thousands of years before present) and 196+/-15Ka respectively, late Pleistocene, Rancholabrean NALMA (North American Land Mammal Age). Other fossil mammals salvaged from the Pleistocene stream deposits included ground sloth, shrews, rodents, rabbits, wolf, camel, deer, and mammoth. Overall, the collecting localities and their contained fossil remains represent the most significant Pleistocene paleontological discoveries yet known from coastal San Diego County."

## Pages 22, 32, Collecting Localities

### . . . . Mastodon Quarry

". . . . The mastodon material collected from bed E consists of the right and left tusks, two molars, three vertebrae, 10 ribs, portions of both femurs, at least two phalanges, and numerous large and small bone fragments. The bone is moderately well-preserved with many elements found encased in calcium carbonate (caliche) nodules. . . Many bones were fragmentary and displayed distinct types of breakage. . . Of special note was the discovery of both isolated femur heads side-by-side, one with its articular surface up (#252) and one with its articular surface down (#258).

Adjacent to the femur heads lay fragments of ribs, one of which (#253) was found lying directly on a plutonic cobble (#254). Also found in

> Contd on page 11

# In their own words (contd.)

**"In Unit B2 the distal 70 cm of a tusk (#56) was found distal end down in an upright orientation."**

**Contd from p. 10**

this concentration was a large piece of a long bone shaft displaying distinct spiral fracturing. In units J4 and K4 a large, sharply fractured piece of long bone (#340) was found with a distinct impact scar on its internal surface. . . . In Unit B2 the distal 70 cm of a tusk (#56) was found distal end down in an upright orientation (62°-64° dip), concave portion of curvature to the south. The proximal end of the tusk had been removed by the backhoe at the level of Bed E . . . . The tusk extended from Bed E through Bed D, reaching 65 cm into Bed C . . . . Coarse sand from Bed D was found as an infilling alongside the tusk some 40 cm into Bed C."

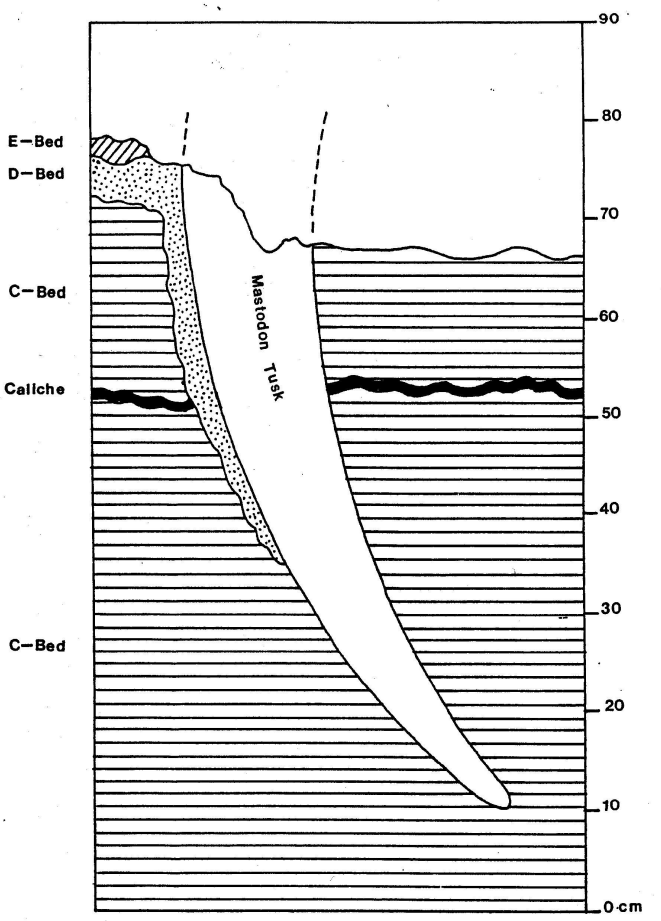



Figure 4.9 - Cross section showing near vertical orientation of tusk in Unit B2, Mastodon Quarry. Microstratigraphy annotated along left margin, scale (in cm) along right margin.

## Page 49, Conclusions

"The paleontological resource mitigation program conducted for SR 54 was successful in terms of the quantity and quality of recovered fossil remains. Prior to this project our knowledge of the Pleistocene vertebrates of coastal San Diego County was extremely limited.

The discovery and documentation of 32 fossil collecting localities and recovery of hundreds of vertebrate and invertebrate fossil specimens represents a tremendous resource for future research projects including studies of systematics, paleoenvironments, biostratigraphy, and local sea level history. In addition, the fossils from SR54 represent an important educational resource in terms of their exhibition and academic value."

***NOTE: There wasn't ONE mention of the mastodon site in the Conclusions!***

**Hand-written note from palaeontologist Charles Repenning, on page 51 of my copy of the report:**

"Note 1. About 60 pages of appendices have been omitted in this copy. Many mammal fossil specimens found.

Note 2. Subsequent to this report three items of interest have happened.

A. I examined the fossil rodents -- all microtines were correctly identified: a *Microtus californicus* (Irving) but one. It was an extinct species.

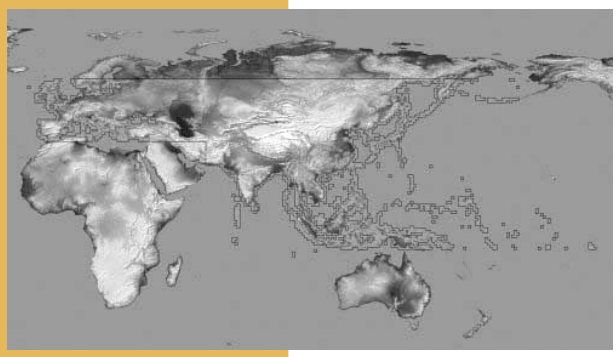
B. C14 ages became available -- all infinite. [i.e. too old to measure by that method.]

C. Fragmented boulders (to make butchering tools) were fitted together to make complete boulders that SOMEBODY had carried to the site for that purpose."

# Out of Africa revisited

By Jim Harrod

**In 2006, I was invited to write a paper for the prehistory of language journal *Mother Tongue* with the task of answering the question of when *Homo sapiens sapiens* left Africa to travel the 'Southern Route' along the coast of Asia eventually arriving in Australia and to do so based on the archaeology.**



Africa, lower left; Asia, center; Australia, lower right, Bering Strait, upper right (image courtesy of NASA)

**"Rather than just look myopically at *Homo sapiens sapiens* out-of-Africa, I considered 13 distinct archaeological epochs from 3 million years ago..."**

Like the sorcerer's apprentice—and not being an archaeologist—I read 527 archaeological studies covering 551 archaeological sites in Africa, Southwest Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, Australia and East Asia and produced more than 190 pages of tables and references in a set of databases for each region.

Rather than just look myopically at *Homo sapiens sapiens* out-of-Africa, I considered 13 distinct archaeological epochs from 3 million years ago to track multiple waves of technological innovation and I also highlighted evidence, if any, for art and symbol at the 551 sites.

A prepress version of the paper and all the databases are posted at

http://www.originsnet.org/publications.html

That review confirmed the emergent new paradigm for 'out-of-Africa'.

First a major wave of migration or diffusion occurred in the Oldowan period carried by *Homo habilis* or one of his relatives.

The next major wave was during the Middle Acheulian time period, around 500,000 to 1 million years ago, which is generally associated with *Homo erectus*.

Finally in the third major wave – if not a case of multi-regional convergent evolution – *Homo sapiens sapiens* carried a Mid-Middle Paleolithic toolkit and Middle Paleolithic art and symbolizing traditions out-of-Africa or out-of-South-west-Asia-into-Africa during the last interglacial around 110 to 140 thousand years ago and from there into India and beyond.


Evolution of stone tools: Oldowan, Acheulian, Mousterian, and Upper Palaeolithic

This is well before the short chronologies proposed by those who advocate the so-called 'recent out-of-Africa model' (ROM) which puts the date somewhere between 50 or 80 thousand years ago. These short chronologies are refuted by the archaeological dates across the Southern Route, including the arrival of *Homo sapiens sapiens* to Australia carrying Middle Paleolithic technologies and art by 55,000 years ago.

In my *Mother Tongue* review, I did not consider Europe or Siberia, the 'Northern Routes', so to speak. I'd like now to add a review of Central Asia/Siberian archaeology, which may be of special interest with respect to questions of the peopling of the Americas. It will also provide another test case for the ROM model. This might be a case of knocking down the straw man once again, but until we double-check the data, who knows?

To build a Central Asia/Siberia database I reviewed 34 archaeological studies, reviews and single site reports for the region and placed over 84 sites into a comprehensive database, which I have posted at

http://www.originsnet.org/publications.html

This new review shows that the second great wave of hominin dispersal during the Middle Acheulian time period (500 ka to 1 Ma), generally associated with *Homo erectus*, had no problem reaching to the NE Siberian site of

**> Contd on page 13**

# Out of Africa (contd.)

***"The most likely hypothesis is that there were multiple waves of migration across Beringia well prior to that of the Holocene, suggested by Calico and other sites in the Americas."***

**Contd from p. 12**

Diring-Yuriakh (~270-370 ka) and apparently a half-dozen other sites across the Altai. During this period Siberia evidences a persistent Developed Oldowan or chopper-chopping tool technology, possibly implying occurrence of an earlier dispersal of Oldowan hominins occurred in the region.

Subsequently, archaic *Homo sapiens* (comparable to Neanderthals) dispersed from Uzbekistan to the Altai.

Next comes the mid-MP time period dispersal from Africa or Southwest Asia of *Homo sapiens sapiens* carrying a Middle Paleolithic technology by a coastal route into East Asia, including a Narmada River crossing of South Asia, and ultimately to Australia.

Again taking Siberia as a test case, it offers at least one site, Kara-Bom, Level 9, at around 62,000 years ago. This appears to support the overall paradigm and suggests that the mid-MP diffusion reaches into Siberia as well as across the Southern Route to Australia.

Finally, with respect to the Upper Paleolithic time period, Initial or Early Upper Paleolithic industries and art are in evidence across arctic Siberia, from western Siberia (Baigara, Irtysh, >40.3 ka or >48.1 ka) to northeast Siberia (Yana River, ~30 ka). Contrary to the model of Upper Paleolithic Aurignacian coming out of the Levant into Eurasia, it rather appears that the Aurignacian itself is a Central Asia innovation, building on its indigenous Middle Paleolithic base.


The Bering Land Bridge c. 18-10,000 yrs ago. Also believed present before 35,000 yrs ago (USGS)

Thus, Central Asia/Siberia archaeology seems to support the emergent new paradigm for hominid cultural innovation, one that involves three major waves of dispersal which occur prior to what actually appears to be a multiregional innovation of so-called Upper Palaeolithic stone tool industries and symbolic behaviour.

Lower left center: the Bering Strait, where early peoples are thought to have crossed from Asia into the Americas (NASA)

A corollary of this conclusion is that given the dispersal of *Homo erectus* into NE Siberia using a Developed Oldowan pebble tool industry, archaic *Homo sapiens* into southern Siberia using a similar industry, and *Homo sapiens sapiens* into southern Siberia using a Middle Paleolithic industry around 60,000 years ago, the most likely hypothesis is that there were multiple waves of migration across Beringia well prior to that of the Holocene, suggested by Calico and other sites in the Americas.

To read the whole paper, *Knocking down the straw man once again: Out-of-Africa in the Middle Paleolithic and Siberia as a test case*, go to

http://www.originsnet.org/publications.html

# Pleistocene Coalition

**To join us, please contact the webmaster of the Pleistocene Coalition**

- Learn the real story of your Palaeolithic ancestors, a story about highly-intelligent and innovative people, a story quite unlike that promoted by mainstream science.
- Explore and regain confidence in your own ability to think for yourself regarding human ancestry as a broader range of evidence becomes available to you.
- Join a community not afraid to challenge the status quo. Question any paradigm promoted as "scientific" that is so delicate as to require withholding conflicting data in order to appear unchallenged.

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Special thanks goes to Ishtar for birthing the *Pleistocene Coalition News* and for producing its first two Issues.

Sudden illness in the family made it impossible for her to continue the Newsletter in addition to her own websites, day job, and new responsibilities.

We thank you, Ishtar, for bringing to the Newsletter your wonderful skills and vision, and for your patience as an editor when confronted with such a wide range of articles from our members and contributors.

You have played a great part in helping to establish the Pleistocene Coalition.