

Archeological Society of Virginia Massanutten Chapter

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April 2011



POINTS



Dem Bones, Dem Bones!

Submitted by Tom Hester

In July 2008 I travelled to my hometown of Milwaukee, Wisconsin to enjoy my annual family visit. Shortly after my arrival, I learned that the Hebior Mammoth exhibit had just opened at the Milwaukee Public Museum. What Luck!



Knowing that the discovery of the Hebior Mammoth, no more than 30 miles from Milwaukee, had stirred much interest in the archeological community, I headed to the museum armed with my trusty camera to see what the excitement was about. There it was. The Hebior Mammoth or more precisely a fiberglass cast of its skeleton, looking rather lonely and forlorn, was standing by itself on a platform in an exhibition hall. It is big, over 14 feet tall and 23 feet long from its tail to the tip of its tusks. But its sheer size was not the source of its significance.

Continued on Page 2

Inside this issue:

<i>Dem Bones, Dem Bones</i>	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
<i>Archeology On The Web</i>	2
<i>April Birthdays</i>	4
<i>Whatizit?</i>	6
<i>Certification Programs Opportunities</i>	7
<i>April 6 MCASV Meeting Agenda</i>	7
<i>In The Next Points</i>	7
<i>Upcoming Events</i>	8
<i>Archeology in Periodicals</i>	8

Dem Bones Continued

The Hebior Mammoth is significant for several reasons. First it is the most complete mammoth skeleton found in North America. Over 85% complete, the skeleton lacks only a rib and a few bones in the tail and feet.

Second, the presence of collagen in its bone allowed precise carbon dating placing its death to 14,500 years ago.

Third, the evidence of human butchering of the Hebior Mammoth 14,500 year ago challenged the “Clovis first theory.” This theory asserts that no human lived in North America before the people of the Clovis culture who go back no more than 13,000 years. In fact, Clovis lithics dating to about 13,000 years ago have been found in areas near the Hebior site.



The Historical Society of Iowa website, www.iowahistory.org, provides the following description of evidence regarding human butchering of the Hebior Mammoth:

“The bones of the Hebior mammoth were discovered in two adjacent areas. The main cluster occupied the bottom of the ancient pond. A second cluster, of butchered bones of the right foreleg, were a short distance away, up the pond bank. Chipped-stone tools made of chert were found around and under the mammoth's bones. These along with cut marks on the bones of the right leg indicated butchering activities. One stone knife was found next to a pile of ribs and vertebrae. A

second stone knife was located in another cluster of bones. A flake was found under the pelvis, and a dolomite chopper was nearby. As the mammoth lay on its left side, the right foreleg was removed and transported up the side of the depression. Here it was skinned, disarticulated, and the meat removed. The foot would have been of special interest because of its meaty pad. Chipped-stone tools left marks on the bone as they cut through joints and removed meat. The shaft of the humerus and several toe bones also show marks characteristic of cutting.”

Continued on Page 3

Archeology On The Web

Submitted by Carole Nash

Actually, a blog on archaeological collections from the National Park Service's Northeast Museum Services Center:

<http://nmscarcheologylab.wordpress.com/>

Very fun -- see entry on the history of matches!

Dem Bones Continued

Center for the Study of the First Americans



This photo of tools associated with the Hebior Mammoth were found on the Center for the Study of First American website,

<http://centerfirstamerican.com>.



As I looked at the Hebior Mammoth skeleton in the exhibit hall I was not able to locate the cut marks on the bones so I enlisted the help of one of the museum's curatorial staff.

Continued on Page 4

Dem Bones Continued

Other displays at the Milwaukee Museum illustrate the Hebior Mammoth butchering



Here is a small diorama showing how prehistoric people may have butchered a mammoth.



Heibor Mammoth bone with cut marks visible

Continued on Page 5

April Birthdays

April 8 Phyllis Showalter

April 28 Jeanne Tysinger

Please complete the MCASV Membership Application and submit to the MCASV Treasurer, so we have your birthdates for the newsletter.



DISCOVER

Science, Technology, and The Future

The story about how the Hebior Mammoth made its way to the Milwaukee Public Museum is quite interesting. In June 2001 Discover magazine reported, “John Hebior, a 76-year-old retired farmer in Kenosha, -Wisconsin, leads a pretty normal life. Except in the basement of his farmhouse he has a mammoth skeleton that he’s looking to sell. “It’s all crated up, but it still takes up a lot of room—about a 12-by-12-foot square,” he says.

Back in 1976, Hebior’s son stumbled over a peculiarly large bone in the middle of a cornfield. The family wondered about it for a bit and then forgot about it until 1993, when archaeologists led by David Overstreet of Marquette University were excavating a mammoth skeleton on a neighbor’s land. Hebior showed the bone to the neighbor, who showed it to Overstreet, who began excavating Hebior’s land. Overstreet never found the rest of that mammoth, but he did turn up another—one of the largest and most complete mammoth skeletons ever found.

After spending years in study and archaeological storage, the Hebior mammoth is now back in the hands of its rightful owner—and up for [sale to the highest bidder](#). “I have four grandkids who are ready for college,” says Hebior. “It’s hard to know how much they’re worth—I’ve heard anywhere from \$100,000 to \$500,000, though, and I have the tools also.” Hebior is already entertaining a bid from a nearby museum but says, “I might try eBay if that doesn’t work.”

It turns out that John Hebior didn’t have to use eBay. Two benefactors, John J. Brander and Christine Rundblad, bought the fossils in 2007 and donated them to the museum. John Hebior says they paid more than \$100,000. Whatever the actual cost, my visit to see the Hebior mammoth at the Milwaukee Public Museum was priceless.

Whatizit?

Submitted by Tom Hester,

In last month's Points, the Archeology On The Web article featured the "What in the World" 1950's TV show available on the Internet Archive. Inspired by this show, Points now begins its own version, "Whatizit?" where readers will be challenged to identify mysterious artifacts.

This artifact was found at the Ralph Sampson Site. Answer will appear in next month's edition of Points. If you wish to submit an artifact photo for "Whatizit?", please email a photo to me at: twhester1782@yahoo.com.



Certification Program Opportunities

Submitted by Carole Nash

The following is information on upcoming certification opportunities:

Historic and Prehistoric Lab Work: Artifact processing and analysis from several 19th century historic home sites and prehistoric base camps. M, W, F schedule -- set your time! Contact Carole (432-6864 or nashcl@jmu.edu) for parking information and directions to her new JMU lab space.

Department of Historic Resources (DHR) Volunteer Program

Volunteer days can be arranged during the week for anyone interested. Prehistoric and historic artifact processing, cataloguing, data entry, documentary research, and outreach activities are some examples of what work is available. Please contact Chief Curator Dee DeRoche at dee.deroche@dhr.virginia.gov or (804) 367-2323 x134 for an application and to set up day(s) to volunteer if you are interested.

MCASV April 6, 2011 Meeting Agenda

The MCASV monthly meeting will commence at 7:00 p.m. at the Bridgewater Town Hall.

- I. Call to Order
- II. Welcome to Guests
- III. Program: Janice Biller "The Use of Buttons to Date Archaeological Contexts"
- IV. Secretary's Report
- V. Treasurer's Report
- VI. Newsletter Editor's Report
- VII. Primitive Technology Day Report
- VIII. New Business
- IX. Certification Program Report
- X. Morris Pottery Kiln
- XI. Announcements
- XII. Adjournment

In The Next Points

The May edition of Points will feature another MCASV Member Profile.

Upcoming Events

- Apr. 6, 2011 7:00 p.m. Arey Hall in the Bridgewater Municipal Building.
Program: Janice Biller "The Use of Buttons to Date Archaeological Contexts"
- May 4, 2011 7:00 p.m. Arey Hall in the Bridgewater Municipal Building.
Program: TBA
- Jun. 1, 2011 7:00 p.m. Arey Hall in the Bridgewater Municipal Building.
Program: TBA
- Jul. 6, 2011 7:00 p.m. Arey Hall in the Bridgewater Municipal Building.
Program: TBA
- Aug. 3, 2011 7:00 p.m. Arey Hall in the Bridgewater Municipal Building.
Program: TBA

Archeology In Periodicals

Submitted by Jeff Good,

The March 4 issue of *Science* that reported on archeological evidence that Paleo-Indians on the Santa Rosa and San Miguel islands off the coast of California had a sea-base economy. A large number of projectile points were found in association with "the remains of shellfish, seals, geese, cormorants, and fish." The stemmed points found were much different than the fluted Clovis and Folsom points suggesting that the people living on this islands over 11,000 years ago were distinct from Clovis culture. The stemmed points are "broadly similar to stemmed points found at early sites around the Pacific Rim, from Japan To South America."



Also found were the interesting crescent points pictured here that were believed to be used as transverse projectiles to hunt for birds.

For a good summary check out Science Daily at www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/03/110303141540.htm



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We're on the web
www.mcasv.org

We Need Your Help in Contributing Articles!

Your article could be here!
Please help by contributing
articles each month.

The deadline for any informa-
tion to be included in the
newsletter will be the
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articles or concerns.

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