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STATE & LOCAL

Monday, October 16, 1989

Archaeological duo brings glimpse of Neanderthal way of life to A&M

By Andrea Warrenburg

Of The Battalion Staff

Most of us have seen "Raiders of the Lost Ark," with the Hollywood version of the life of an archeologist filled with danger, excitement and glory.

But Ralph and Rose Solecki, anthropological archeologists and Fulbright Scholars at Texas A&M, don't look for adventure.

Their names emblazoned forever in textbooks for their discovery of the skeletal remains of nine Neanderthals in the Shanidar cave in Northern Iraq, the Soleckis are at A&M to continue their research of the people of the past.

The Soleckis recently retired from Columbia University in New York after 30 years of teaching. They were looking for a university in a better climate to continue their research and with a growing anthropology department. They arrived at A&M in September.

Solecki was also a consultant for the Time-Life Books series' The Emergence of Man book, "The Neanderthals."

Their work in Iraq began in 1951 with Solecki, then a 34-year-old Smithsonian archeologist, and a team setting out to find ancient stone tools. Nine years, thousands of miles and 40 caves later, he had unearthed one of the largest Neanderthal skeletal collections found in one place.

Neanderthals inhabited the earth during the Pleistocene Age for about 150,000 years and became extinct about 40,000 years ago.

They were characterized by a heavy brow ridge, elongated skull and sloping mandible, but had the

same cranial capacity as modern humans. On the average, they stood a muscular 5 feet 6 inches tall, looking much like modern humans below the neck.

"They were built like piano movers," Solecki said. "They were muscular, not flabby."

Anthropological archeologists study not only the artifacts themselves but what they say about the cultures of the extinct people.

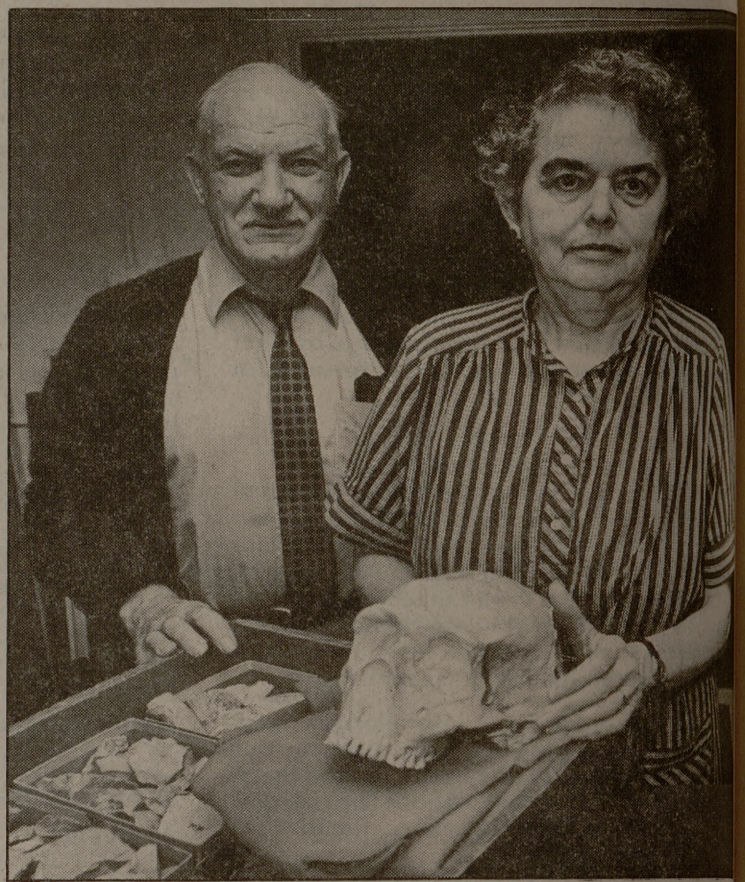
"The fascination of the study is not just the artifacts, but everything that was aligned with them," Solecki said.

The discoveries at Shanidar are important because they gave the anthropological community insight into the humanity of the Neanderthals.

Remnants of bouquets of flowers strewn over the remains of one of the skeletons indicates they practiced some sort of special burial. The remains of another Neanderthal showed he was blind in one eye, partially paralyzed on the right side and had arthritis. His handicaps paired with his age show that the individual must have been cared for by others.

"We have a better understanding of the life and times of the Neanderthals who are under the shadow of their brute characteristics," Solecki said. "They are eventually more sensitive than given credit for."

Although they have unearthed 45 feet of remains at the Shanidar Cave, Solecki said they have only scratched the surface. Fighting between the locals and the government in Iraq have made it impossible to continue excavation. The area is under control by the military, and when the Soleckis returned to the cave for a day in 1978, soldiers escorted them out of the area for their



Dr. Ralph and Rose Solecki with a skull they recovered from Shanidar cave in Northern Iraq.

own safety.

The Soleckis were allowed to take some artifacts from Shanidar out of Iraq with them, but the collection of skeletal remains stayed. It is the artifacts they brought back that will be

studied at their A&M lab.

"We are like detectives. Each piece of evidence we treat carefully," Solecki said. "You can carry your work wherever you go."

Aggies take part in Big Brothers, Sisters program

By Julie Myers

Of The Battalion Staff

About 90 Texas A&M students will visit Oakwood Middle School next week to have lunch with their little brothers and sisters.

They are participating in the Big Brothers and Big Sisters program to provide young students with positive role models and encourage them to stay in school.

"Big Brothers and Big Sisters are people they can talk to and relate to when they need help," program coordinator and senior business major Jennifer Lee said. "When you're at that age, you can't always talk to your parents or teachers about some of your curiosities, and your friends

don't know."

Lee said any A&M student interested in being a big brother or sister must take their little brother or sister to the library once a month, eat lunch with them in the school cafeteria once a week and submit a letter of recommendation from a faculty member. After attending an orientation and receiving the parents' permission, both students can get together.

"That's the minimum, but most people are wanting to do a lot more with their little brothers and sisters than that," Lee said. "They're totally gung-ho about it."

Off-Campus Aggies are planning a pizza party and T-shirt painting party to acquaint the junior high stu-

dents with their big brothers and sisters. Sororities, fraternities, the psychology club and the Aggie Men's Club are planning similar activities, Lee said.

Although the initial response was positive, the program still needs about 50 more big brothers and big sisters, especially minorities. Lee said minority students have the greatest need for role models; someone they can look up to and feel they can accomplish similar same goals.

"Many minorities think that higher education is not in their future," Lee said. "Some parents only stress graduating from high school so they (students) can work."

All students have the ability to go to college, Lee said. They only need an incentive; having a big brother or

sister provides this incentive. High students must maintain an average, have good conduct grades and stay out of legal trouble to participate in the program.

"There are strict rules, and they follow them," Lee said. "This is a reward for them and they work hard."

Teachers recommend their high students for the program because they foresee the child having difficulty, Lee said, and believe it would be a good little brother or little sister candidate.

"Most kids have some kind of problem, whether it be emotional, social or academic," Lee said. "We have learning disabilities."

For more information on the program, contact Oakwood Middle School at 764-5530.

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\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50
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\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50
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\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50

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