

## The Big Chill

Exhibit offers look at life during last Ice Age

BY AARON MEIER  
The Battalion

Once a month, Thomas Lynch is presented with a small piece of history. The executive director of the Brazos Valley Museum of Natural History said Brazos Valley residents regularly come to the museum with a fossilized tooth of animals that inhabited the area during the last ice age.

"Ice Age Beasts and Hunters," the new exhibit currently being featured by the museum, showcases both the animals and the early peoples that existed between 30,000 and 10,000 years ago.

"This exhibit is not just about the animals that lived in the United States," Lynch said, "but the human animals that hunted them."

Over the past 2 million years, there have been 20 ice ages characterized by glaciers growing in size and advancing from the poles. The most recent ice age marked the dissemination of homo sapiens across the globe across land bridges resulting from low sea levels which exposed land bridges, including the Bering land bridge that the earliest Americans crossed.

Paleontologist and artist Peter May conceived of the idea for the exhibit after constructing dinosaur exhibits for museums in New York and Tokyo. The exhibit blends new pieces including skeletons of a sabre tooth cat and a giant beaver with the museum's permanent pieces such as the 8-foot-tall mastodon that is the focal point of the museum's exhibit hall.

Exhibited along with the mastodon is a sabre tooth cat, which also existed in the Brazos Valley. The exhibit also has the skull of an Irish Elk, whose antlers span 12 feet, and a giant rhinoceros that inhabited Eurasia.

"The exhibit is about half Old World and half New World," Lynch said.

The exhibit features a zebra-like horse that lived in North America during the latest ice age. However, these horses, known as Hagerman horses, died out near the end of the Paleolithic Era. The Hagerman horses are nearly identical to modern horses except for the patterns of enamel on its teeth.

Lynch said evidence suggests that man is partially responsible for the extinction of the North American horses as well as other animals.

"The horses and the mammoth/mastodon extinction is also suspiciously close to the entry of people," Lynch said. "Probably there is a combination of that with genetic problems and climatic changes."

"Ice Age Beasts and Hunters" also features a skeleton of a giant beaver that could grow up to 8 feet long with 6-inch-long teeth. While there is no evidence of these beavers building dams or lodges, Lynch said the construction of dams is possible.

"The reason for these teeth is that they are using them heavily to cut wood," Lynch said. "And if they are cutting all that wood, chances are they are making dams, too."

The second part of the exhibit examines the role of early man during the ice age. Lynch said the exhibit documents the large technological leaps made by man 30,000 years ago. It is also at this time that the earliest skeletons of homo sapiens have been found. Lynch said these skeletons also share the racial characteristics with their modern counterparts.

"In Europe, they look like modern Europeans," Lynch said. "In Asia, they look like Asians. There is a little bit of dispute in America whether they look like American Indians or not, but the fact is these are people like us. They had language, they had ritual, they believed in an afterlife."

A piece in the exhibit recreating a burial site from Italy demonstrates this belief in an afterlife. The display shows a young man who was buried with a flint blade in his hand, a shell bracelet and various other ivory and bone adornments. The body was also colored with red ochre, a pigmentation which Lynch said symbolized blood.

The museum also has a recreation of some cave drawings which primarily depict animals.

Lynch said there is disagreement among scientists as to the purpose of the cave drawings. Marks on the animal representations have been interpreted both as spear marks meant to cast hunting magic before the hunt and as counting marks for hunting matches.

Lynch said the seclusion of the cave drawings indicates a ceremonial nature to the drawings.

"People didn't live much in caves, they lived in open rock shelters," Lynch said. "Caves were dank, dark and uncomfortable. So technically, the term 'cave man' is incorrect."



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY DISALVO AND GUY ROGERS

### Store pulls sexist shirts

PLANO, Texas (AP) — There'll be no more trash-talkin' about women at J.C. Penney.

After a feminist group complained, the department store chain announced it is pulling a line of basketball-themed T-shirts aimed at young men with lines that include: "Your game is as ugly as your girl," and "You like that move? So does your girl."

The "trash talk" line of apparel, manufactured by AND1 Basketball, is offensive to women, said the leader of the group that complained.

"It's a put-down of girls in the process of putting down a sports opponent," said Martha Burke, president of the Center for Advancement of Public Policy in Washington, D.C.

"The strong implication is that girls are the property of boys to be traded like baseball cards," she said. "It's an insulting, dehumanizing thing, and we have enough incivility in society without this gender-based stuff."

Burke said several people contacted her group to complain about the shirts, and that she later denounced the apparel in the center's newsletter, *The Washington Feminist Faxnet*, which is faxed to several thousand people around the country.

J.C. Penney Co. Inc. spokeswoman Stephanie Brown said the Plano-based retailer got enough complaints that it will no longer carry shirts that specifically target women. Other AND1 apparel will still be available.

"We put the T-shirts out thinking we wouldn't have a problem," Brown said. "But we are having some concerns coming our way, and they are valid concerns."

Burke said she welcomed Penney's decision and will target other retailers, including Footlocker and Just for Feet, that still carry the shirts.

Officials with AND1, based in Pennsylvania, were not available for comment Monday. A recorded phone message said their offices were closed for the day.

The company produces dozens of shirts with phrases such as "Turn on the disposal, your game's garbage." Most of them have nothing to do with gender.

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