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The Leakey Foundation is committed to research related to human origins behavior and survival.

# Anthro Quest



# Women Who Hunt with Fire: The Ecology of Foraging and Gender in Western Australia

Studies of hunter-gatherer societies help anthropologists reconstruct early human ways of life. By projecting modern behavior and biases onto the past, however, we risk obscuring how those patterns of behavior really emerged. Anthropologist Rebecca Bliege Bird of the University of Maine has spent several years studying two groups of subsistence foragers: the Meriam people of the northern Great Barrier Reef, and the Mardu of Western Australia's Great Sandy Desert.

Hunter-gatherers have lived in Australia for more than 40,000 years, which makes the vast continent an ideal testing ground for theories on these peoples' strategies for finding food. Exploring how men and women hunt in the same environment, Bliege Bird seeks to explain the origins of division of labor between the sexes.

"Bliege Bird represents the very best in current evolutionary anthropology, finding ways to turn important questions into falsifiable hypotheses

and then collecting and analyzing the data to test them," says Kristen Hawkes of the University of Utah and a member of the Leakey Foundation's Scientific Executive Committee. "The results have very general importance because they challenge received wisdom." On February 28, Bliege Bird discussed her Mardu research in the first spring 2002 Leakey Speaker Series lecture at the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco.

The Mardu Aborigines live in governmentprovisioned outstations, but most of them still make frequent forays into the desert to forage as they have for thousands of years.

Although much of her data from the initial two field seasons remains to be analyzed, already she has observed how the Mardu defy traditional preconceptions of male hunters providing the bulk of a family's diet, while women gather plants and raise children. Mardu men and women alike sometimes gather fruits or vegetables, but during the winter cold season (Wandajera), both genders prefer to hunt. Employing expert tracking skills, women focus on small mammals and goanna lizards, while men target medium-sized and large animals such as emus, bustards, and kangaroos. Men hunt alone, but women tend to hunt cooperatively.



Louise Leakey Visits San Francisco in April 2002



150 Years of Iberian Paleoanthropology

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# President's Message

Foundation President Kay Woods receives a

painted version of the

Altamira bison from the Mayor of Santilla del Mar Dear Members:

Since all living people are products of our long, shared evolutionary history, why does the Leakey Foundation focus especially on people who hunt and gather for a living?

The answer is simple. Modern humans who live in small kinship.

The answer is simple. Modern humans who live in small kinship communities and depend on wild foods confront resource-related problems and opportunities that are very ancient. Age and sex differences among people whose lives depend on how they deal with these problems day-by-day can be compared with age and sex differences among other living primates. The comparisons prompt

hypotheses about the extinct members of our lineage. Some were more like us; others more like other living apes; all were different from any living species.

The behavioral record combined with the anatomical and archaeological evidence of earlier populations helps determine when our distant ancestors lived and in what ways they were not like us. Field scientists like Rebecca Bliege Bird, who is featured in this issue, can help us learn why our ancestors differed and to understand more clearly what makes us who we are.

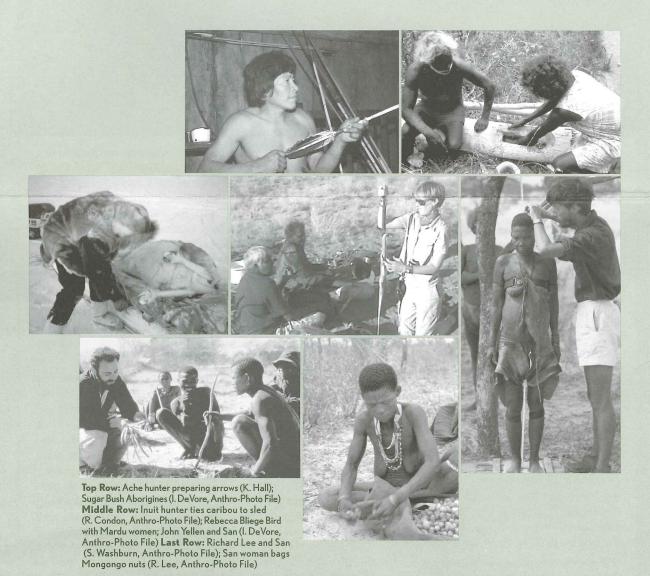
As we explore the work of contemporary ethnographers in this issue, it is with great sadness that I note the recent death of J. Desmond Clark, one of the "giants" in African prehistory and a pioneering field scientist of the highest regard. Desmond was the consummate teacher, mentor and inspiration for generations of paleoanthropologists. We admired his vivid anecdotes, his boundless collegiality and perhaps most of all, his fine company.

With thanks and best wishes,

Lay Harrigan Woods

Kay/Harrigan Woods

President



# REMEMBERING DESMOND CLARK

J. Desmond Clark, a world famous authority on African prehistory, died from pneumonia in Oakland, California, on February 14 at the age of 85. Clark was a senior member of the Leakey Foundation's Scientific Executive Committee since his election in 1980.

A professor of anthropology at the University of California at Berkeley, Clark taught many of the field's leading scholars and served as mentor and champion for several generations of archaeologists. Clark, along with the late Glynn Isaac, created at Berkeley what was widely viewed at the time as the premier training program for African prehistory. During that time, he also created a program to recruit Africans, including students from Ethiopia, Tanzania and Zambia, to pursue graduate degrees in paleoanthropology.

Clark received his Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge, England. Prior to teaching at the University of California, he spent 23 years in Zambia as Director of the National Museum and founder of the National Monuments Commission. His specialty became the prehistory of Africa with an emphasis on early human studies (especially the use of stone tools), although his breadth of experience ranged from the Early Stone Age to the transition from hunting and gathering to food production. He was one of a handful of professional archaeologists leading expeditions and building museum collections in Africa at the time, and included among his collaborators Louis and Mary Leakey. Over the course of his career, Clark's fieldwork extended to include sites in Africa, India and China.

Desmond Clark published, alone or with colleagues, twenty books on archaeology and paleoanthropology, as well as more than three hundred papers in journals and collected works. Among the books he authored, Clark released three rich monographs detailing the Kalambo Falls excavations in Zambia, the remarkable site of a long and complete prehistoric sequence he identified in 1953.

# In Tribute:

The Leakey Foundation, in collaboration with Desmond Clark's family, friends and students, honors Clark's tremendous contribution in the following ways:

 Desmond Clark's remarkable role in the development of 20th-century paleoanthropology inspired the Trustees of the Leakey Foundation to preserve his living memories through the commission of his oral history with the Regional Oral History Office of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. Thanks to a generous grant from the William H. Donner Foundation, the Clark oral history has just been completed and is available to researchers, biographers, historians and students through UC Berkeley.

Excerpts from these tapes will also soon be posted in the Audio Archive of the Leakey Foundation Website: www.leakeyfoundation.org.

- Friends, students and colleagues are invited to contribute remembrances of Desmond Clark on an e-memorial established for this purpose at www.socrates.berkeley.edu/ ~lhesjdc1/index.html.
- The Foundation will establish a J. Desmond Clark Scholarship within the Baldwin Fellowship program to recognize and support top African scholars in pursuit of graduate degrees. Gifts in memory of Desmond Clark may be made to the Leakey Foundation and are tax deductible.



Clark was legendary.

He towered above anybody else in African archaeology with his breadth and depth of knowledge about the rise and development of prehistoric culture. His death leaves an enormous void.

\_Tim White



Another difference, says Bliege Bird, is that "Men prefer to track game and women prefer to dig it up." Men risk spending several days stalking large, mobile prey with the uncertain reward of plentiful meat. Women, in contrast, track lizards and feral cats to their burrows and then club the animals with wooden digging sticks. Women's success corresponds directly with how much ground they are willing to cover.

Fire also provides a key tool in the women's arsenal as it may have for much of recent prehistory. By setting fire to patches of tall spinifex grass, the women expose their prey's hiding places. Bliege Bird notes that "It benefits women tremendously to burn if they're hunting small game," although burning does not seem to increase men's hunting productivity.

Bliege Bird's data from more than 30 days of foraging last austral winter reveals that women obtained 224,000 calories worth of lizards and other small game compared to 213,000 calories for men hunting larger game. During the previous winter, women had lower overall foraging returns than men but still provided

meat more consistently. Mardu women appear to be more efficient foragers—bringing home more calories on a more regular basis.

Men no doubt improved their foraging success over historical rates through access to one of the researchers' vehicles, which they used as a mobile hunting blind. Four wheels let men move farther, faster, so they encounter more game.

Keeping up with the high cost of vehicles and fuel proved to be an unexpected obstacle for Bliege Bird. The National Science Foundation provided seed funding for the Mardu Ecological Anthropology Project, but a crucial Leakey Foundation grant allowed the team to complete last summer's fieldwork.

Now Bliege Bird has data to begin testing established explanations for the division of labor, which portray men and women cooperating to maximize productivity in order to cope with the prolonged nutritional needs of children. A recent alternative view known as Costly Signaling Theory proposes that men make a compromise between the incompatible goals of productivity and prestige.

Rather than nobly foraging to provision their families, men may choose to pursue prey that signals individual skill and earns them social status. "The reason why sending these signals contributes to prestige is that you are building a reputation that you have some quality, and your competitors will find it in their interest to grant you some level of deference," says Bliege Bird.

She found that despite a high potential failure rate, a Meriam man could distinguish himself better by spearing an occasional fish or turtle than by collecting copious shellfish. Mardu males may likewise achieve social or political gains by targeting bigger prey. What this means for human behavior, says Bliege Bird, is that the sexual division of labor may derive from cooperation gone awry, with men enticed from provisioning by the allure of other gains obtained through demonstrating their skills tracking big game.

**Blake Edgar** is a science editor at the University of California Press and a freelance writer. He has co-authored three books on paleoanthropology, including a forthcoming book with Richard G. Klein.

# The Paleoanthropology of Iberia:



In October of 2001, Leakey Foundation Trustees and Fellows enjoyed a private tour of research sites in Northern Spain that focused on Lower Pleistocene human paleontology and Upper Paleolithic rock art. Trip highlights included visits to the famous caves and excavation sites of Altamira, El Miron, Covalanas and Atapuerca.

The trip culminated with a symposium that the Leakey Foundation organized at the University of Burgos titled "Neanderthals and Cro-Magnons in Spain: Evidence for Human Evolution." Dr. Lawrence Straus offered the introduction to the presentation series. What follows is a summary of his talk on the Paleoanthropology of the Iberian Peninsula.



Lawrence Straus and Manuel Gonzalez Morales standing before El Miron

Dr. Lawrence Straus has co-directed with Dr. Manuel Gonzalez Morales (Universidad de Cantabria) the El Miron Cave research project, which has uncovered since 1966 a complete cultural sequence spanning the period from the Bronze Age to the Mousterian (from 3,000 to 41,000 years ago) in the Cantabrian Cordillera of Northern Spain. This research has been funded in part by the Leakey Foundation.

he paleoanthropological record of the Iberian Peninsula is one of the richest, most complete and diverse in the world. But, despite its having been studied for over a century and a half, its significance has often been dismissed, minimized or ignored. That is, until recently when the sensational discoveries at Atapuerca in North-Central Spain and in the Côa Valley of Northeastern Portugal, together with a wave of other finds, have begun to change this trend. As a consequence of these new discoveries, our ideas about such subjects as the Middle-Upper Paleolithic transition, the extinction of the Neanderthals, the origins of Mesolithic and finally Neolithic lifeways in the western Mediterranean and Atlantic facade of Southwest Europe have been substantially altered.

Spectacular discoveries in the Iberian Peninsula are not new. The second hominid fossil to be recognized as a Neanderthal was found at Forbes Quarry (Gibraltar) some time before 1848. Beginning in the 1850s, discoveries of Acheulean handaxes were made on the gravel pit of San Isidro (Madrid) by Casiano del Prado. In the mid-1860s the Portuguese government commissioned a geoarchaeological study of the caves of Furninha and Casa da Moura by J.M. Nery Delgado. Marcelino Sanz de Sautuola, who had excavated in Altamira and other caves near Santander in Northern Spain, discovered the cave art of Altamira in 1879 and understood it to be of remote prehistoric age. Unfortunately his work was

rejected (and he was even accused of forgery) by almost all the scientific authorities of the time. The Mesolithic Age and the phenomenon of relatively "wealthy" early Holocene coastal societies in Europe were in great part defined by excavations of huge shell middens around the Tagus estuary near Lisbon in the 1880s. A century later, studies of the *concheiros* of Portugal still are shedding new light on the issues of adaptations to Postglacial conditions and of the expansion of the Neolithic into Atlantic Europe.

The beginning of the 20th century witnessed monumental Paleolithic discoveries by Spanish and other European researchers. Several of the sites were excavated by researchers based at the newly created Institut de Paléontologie Humaine in Paris (Fathers Breuil, Obermaier and Bouyssonie) beginning in 1910. The art of Castillo, Altamira and other Cantabrian caves became key to Breuil's construction of a general chronological scheme for Franco-Cantabrian Upper Paleolithic art that held sway for at least a half-century. However, the vast archaeological site of El Castillo, which, with its extraordinarily long and complete stratigraphic sequence (Acheulean through Bronze Age), should have become one of the key sequences for all of Europe, was never published by its excavators as a consequence of successive disasters beginning with World War I. (El Castillo was extensively studied 70 years later, then partially redug and radiometrically dated by Victoria Cabrera.) Similarly, Torralba on the high meseta of Soria, which was

# A Brief History and Perspective

Lawrence Guy Straus, Department of Anthropology, University of New Mexico

discovered and excavated by the Marqués de Cerralbo in 1909-11, was largely ignored and then forgotten until it was "rediscovered" by F. Clark Howell in association with Emiliano Aguirre, Karl Butzer and Leslie Freeman in the 1960s and 1980s.

An extraordinary collection of prehistorians came together in Spain in the period between the First World War and the Spanish Civil War. Some ended up in exile in the late 1930s (e.g., José Miguel de Barandiarán and P. Bosch Gimpera), while others became largely forgotten (e.g., Vega del Sella, J. Cabré, E. Hernández-Pacheco, A. Romaní). During the Spanish Civil War many collections were lost or destroyed and major excavations were to go unpublished or published much later, as in the case of Luis Pericot's work at the site of Parpalló in Valencia, with its full Upper Paleolithic sequence and collection of some 6000 engraved stone slabs. Spain under Franco and Portugal under Salazar maintained little contact with the foreign scientific community and limited Paleolithic research activity. Among the few exceptions were extensive excavations of numerous open-air Upper Paleolithic sites by Manuel Heleno, who, however, published none of his findings.

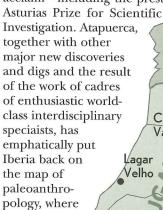
Beginning in the 1960s, things began to change with the arrival of paleoanthropologists from the University of Chicago, who developed excellent working relationships with Spanish prehistorians and geologists. Most notable has been the case of Leslie Freeman with Father Joaquín González Echegaray, who conducted seminal studies of the Mousterian and of the Middle to Upper Paleolithic transition at Cueva Morín and of the art and adaptations of Magdalenian foragers in El Juyo and Altamira. Partially as a result of the Hispano-American collaboration, a new generation of researchers emerged in the 1970s. One important result of their work (by the present author, together with Spanish and Portuguese colleagues) has been to highlight the crucial role of the Iberian Peninsula as a refugium for creative "Solutrean" humanity during the Last Glacial Maximum some 20,000 years ago. The post-Franco Constitution of Spain gave control over the cultural heritage to the respective autonomous regions, continuing in some cases a tradition of excellent paleoanthropological research under the auspices of local institutions reinforced by an invigorated university system.

This revolution in Paleolithic and Mesolithic studies also took place in Portugal in the 1980s. Of course the most important recent development in Portugal has been the discovery, validation and rescue from destruction of the open-air Upper Paleolithic rock art complex of the Côa valley. This discovery of the existence of hundreds of engravings has totally changed our perspectives on the nature and distribution (and preservation) of ice age rock art.

Building on perceptive observations by Spanish researchers Villaverde and Vega, radiometric dating by J. Bischoff and others, has revealed a 10,000 year period of coexistence of an unevolved Mousterian technology made by Neanderthals (including the recently found and dated fossils with artifacts in Zafarraya Cave in Málaga) in the

southern two-thirds of Iberia with various kinds of early Aurignacian industries as old as 40,000 B.P. in the North. These staggering findings are now being confirmed by similar ones in Central Europe (notably in Croatia) and possibly in Italy. They suggest that the Middle-Upper Paleolithic transition was a long, mosaic process – not an abrupt replacement event. A recent, spectacular – but controversial – find of a child skeleton from Lagar Velho in central Portugal has been suggested by some workers to be the product of Neanderthal–Cro –Magnon interbreeding as recently as 25,000 radiocarbon years ago.

But of course the crowning glory of current paleoanthropology in Iberia is the research in the Sierra de Atapuerca, which includes the extraordinary discoveries of possible artifacts at c.1 million years ago, an arguably new species of Homo ("antecessor") at c. 800,000 years ago, some 30 individuals of H. heidelbergensis found at the bottom of a cave shaft and dated at 300,000 years ago, along with a very old "Mousterian" of similar age. With the guidance of Professor Aguirre, the torch has been passed to new generations of Spanish researchers. Under the collective direction of Juan Luis Arsuaga, Jose María Bermúdez del Castro and Eudald Carbonell, Atapuerca and Spanish paleoanthropology have been launched into the forefront of international research and publication and have received significant public and private funding and acclaim - including the prestigious Prince of



she has always

belonged.



Richard and Judy Guggenhime, Trustee Bill Wirthlin and Lisa Wirthlin enjoy the view from El Miron



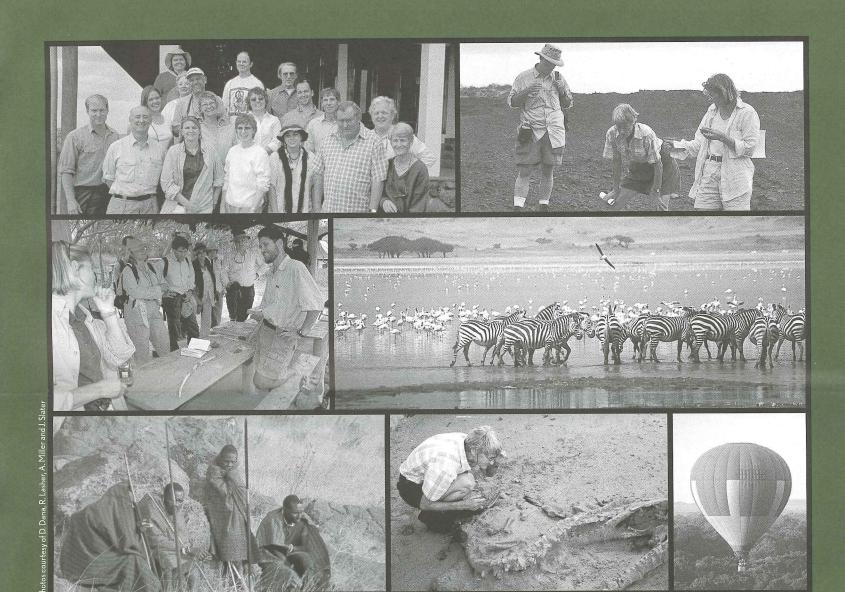
Foundation members Judy Guggenhime, Lisa Wirthlin, and Alexis Woods during the tour of the Atapuerca excavation sites



Les Freeman interprets artifacts for Foundation members at Altamira



For information on Leakey Foundation member travel opportunities visit us at www.leakeyfoundation.org/travel.



# East Africa with the Leakeys: Exploring Human Origins

Excerpts from the journal of Owen O'Donnell

In September 2001, fourteen adventurous Leakey Fellows joined Dr. Louise Leakey in exploring the paleoanthropological sites of Kenya and Tanzania. Owen O'Donnell, a trip participant and Leakey Fellow from San Francisco, California, kept a diary of his experiences. The travel program follows, highlighted by just a few of his observations.

**Saturday, September 1:** Arrive in Nairobi, Kenya. The program begins with a cocktail reception, dinner and introductions.

**Sunday, September 2:** Morning departure to Olorgesailie in the Great Rift Valley. Return in the afternoon to Nairobi to visit the National Museum of Kenya with a private tour of the paleontology collection.

"A wake up call at the crack of dawn was necessary for the early departure on our trip to Olorgesailie in the Rift Valley, lunch at Richard and Meave's weekend home at the edge of the Rift Valley and lastly on to the National Museum of Kenya."

Monday, September 3: Morning departure from Nairobi, travelling into the Great Rift Valley and finally on to the Masai Mara Game Reserve. Late afternoon game drive.

"As we climbed out of the Land Rovers we all immediately noticed a line of giraffes marching across the open plain. It was a very stately procession and in this enormous open grassland the effect was magical."

**Tuesday, September 4:** Early morning hot air balloon ride followed by a champagne breakfast and a game drive back to camp.

**Wednesday, September 5:** By private air charter, travel to Rusinga Island in Lake Victoria.

"Given that this was the first time that I had been in an area with fossils, I was really excited about what I might find as I walked up the slopes of the hills."

**Thursday, September 6:** Drive into the heart of the Rift Valley to Longonot Ranch House. Afternoon horseback riding or walking. Evening game drive in search of nocturnal wildlife species.

"Soon we drove up onto an open plain and into the midst of a large wildebeest herd numbering in the thousands. I thought that it must have been similar to the herds of buffalo observed by Native Americans before Europeans arrived. Mornings in Africa with the brilliant morning color and the vistas with exotic animals take your breath away and fill you with wonder and joy."

Friday, September 7: Morning private charter to Koobi Fora Research Center, the base from which the Leakeys have led paleontological explorations since 1968. A richly fossiliferous area, numerous important discoveries of mammal and hominids fossils have been made in its 4-1.3 million –year sediments, including the remains of Homo habilis, Homo rudolfensis, Homo erectus, and Australopithecus boisei.

Saturday, September 8: Continue visiting sites at Koobi Fora. Overnight at Koobi Fora Research

"The tour was very informative and it left me with a new impression about the process of paleoanthropology. In places like the Lake Turkana basin the issue is not finding fossils, but deciding which fossils to collect."

**Sunday, September 9:** Morning private charter to Lake Nakuru National Park. Afternoon game drive and bird viewing in this ornithologist's paradise.

Monday, September 10: Morning visit to Kariandusi and Hyrax Hill sites. Overnight stay at tented camp in Lake Nakuru National Park.

"The lake is full of pink flamingoes, numbering around 1 million individuals, which give the shallow edges of the lake a pink tint from a distance." Tuesday, September 11: Morning air charter to Kilimanjaro International Airport. Tanzania via Nairobi and transfer to Ngorongoro Crater.

Wednesday, September 12: Spend the day at Olduvai Gorge, a dramatic and picturesque canyon of eroded sedimentary deposits which was discovered by Mary and Louis Leakey in the late 1950s. Tour of the newly opened exhibit on Tanzanian prehistory.

**Thursday, September 13:** Full day of game viewing at the World Heritage Site of Ngorongoro Crater.

Friday, September 14: Return to Nairobi.

"This ended the best vacation and the best trip I have ever taken. I would turn around and fly back to Nairobi to do it all over again right after I arrived in San Francisco."



The adventure continues this year as the Leakey
Foundation returns to East Africa with a new and

expanded program. In addition to exploring breathtaking wildlife parks and pioneering fossil sites with Louise Leakey, participants will travel to Gombe Research Center and Mahale Camp to observe chimpanzees in the wild. The program takes place between August 27 and September 9, 2002, and is limited to 12 participants. For information or to reserve your space, please call us or visit

w.leakeyfoundation.org/travel

# Spring 2002 Events

The Leakey Speaker Series continues this spring with lectures in three West Coast cities by field experts Leslie Aiello and Cheryl Knott. The lectures are made possible through the generous support of national sponsor Wells Fargo Bank, as well as Abercrombie & Kent, and the Leakey Foundation Fellows. All Foundation members will receive a discount on ticket sales. Descriptions of these events follow below. For more information call us at (415) 561-4646 or visit www.leakeyfoundation.org.



### Living in the Ice Age: Neanderthals and Climatic Change

Leslie Aiello, Head of Department of Anthropology, **University College London** 

April 24, 2002 - Santa Ana, CA In partnership with the Bowers Museum of Cultural Art and the Explorers Club of Southern California

April 25, 2002 - San Francisco, CA In partnership with the California Academy of Sciences

Between 60,000 and 25,000 years ago, Neanderthals gave way to modern humans in Europe. New research suggests that modern people had developed cultural means to cope with life in areas of Europe that because of climatic variations were simply not accessible to the Neanderthals. An appreciation of the thermoregulatory limits of Neanderthals and modern humans is helping to clarify our understanding of the patterning of human occupation in ice age Europe.



# Feast, Famine and Fertility: How Orangutans Cope with an Uncertain World

Cheryl Knott, Assistant Professor, Harvard University

May 23, 2002 - San Francisco, CA In partnership with the California Academy of Sciences

The orangutan stands as one of the most unique of all primates. They are the largest arboreal mammal, have the longest inter-birth intervals, are the most solitary of all diurnal primates, and have the highest rates of forced

copulation. In this lecture, Cheryl Knott explores the evolution of these fascinating social and reproductive phenomena and how they are tied to the unique ecology of Borneo and Sumatra where orangutans are found. She also discusses how orangutan adaptations shed light on the forces that have shaped human evolution.

# **NEW!**

An Evening with Louise Leakey April 27, 2002 - San Francisco, CA



Don't miss this opportunity to meet Louise Leakey, Senior Research Scientist in the Department of Paleontology at the National Museums of Kenya, during her first visit to San Francisco since announcing the Kenyanthropus platyops hominid fossil in March 2001. Leakey will reflect on her experiences growing up in the Leakey family and discuss the implications of this most recent fossil find.

After receiving her Ph.D. from the University College, London, earlier this year, thirty-year-old Louise Leakey now leads the Koobi Fora Research Project in the Turkana Basin, Kenya. Ongoing expeditions since 1992 co-led by Louise and her mother, famed paleoanthropologist Meave Leakey, continue to recover important hominid and faunal remains that expand our understanding of early humans in Africa.

Gallery talk and reception. Proceeds will benefit the Leakey Foundation and the Koobi Fora Research Project. Tickets are limited and may be ordered at (415) 561-4646.

Clip and return to Membership Department: The Leakey Foundation, P.O. Box 29346, San Francisco, CA 94129 or sign up on the Web at www.leakeyfoundation.org/member.

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# **LEAKEY FOUNDATION 2002** alendarof EVENTS



# **April 24**

**Leakey Speaker Series** Leslie Aiello Living in the Ice Age: Neanderthals and Climatic Change Santa Ana, CA

# April 25

Leakev Speaker Series Leslie Aiello Living in the Ice Age: Neanderthals and Climatic Change San Francisco, CA

# April 26

Annual Leakey Fellows Dinner in honor of Louise Leakey In Search of Our Earliest Ancestors San Francisco, CA

### **April 26-27**

**Granting Session and Board** of Trustees Meeting San Francisco, CA

### April 27

An Evening with Louise Leakey Gallery Talk, Reception and Benefit San Francisco, CA

# **May 23**

**Leakey Speaker Series** Cheryl Knott Feast, Famine and Fertility: How Orangutans Cope with an Uncertain World San Francisco, CA

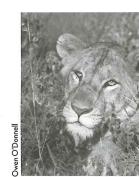


# August 27-September 9

2002 East Africa Trip: Kenya and Tanzania

# October 17-19

Annual Meeting and Symposium New Tools and Old Bones: How Technology is Revealing the Human Past University of Texas Austin, TX



# December 6-7

**Granting Session and Board** of Trustees Meeting San Francisco, CA

The Leakey Speaker Series is made possible by our national sponsors:



AND

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