

# Kids' KOrner

## Digging turns up clues to early Southeast Asia man

WASHINGTON — Archeologists know that when they reach what they think is the bottom of a site they are excavating, it is a good idea to dig just to see what turns up.

Douglas D. Anderson, chairman of the anthropology department at Brown University, did that in a cave in southwestern Thailand where he was working last summer, and what turned up was a major surprise: a layer of dirt containing evidence that man had been present in the cave some 27,000 years ago.

That date, far older than any other layer indicating human presence in the cave, was provided by the radiocarbon dating process. It is one of the oldest confirmed radiocarbon dates for cultural artifacts ever found on the southeast Asian mainland, and may be the oldest.

### Tools, Bones, and Charcoal

The artifacts discovered at the 27,000-year-old level include flakes from stone tools, the remains of animals, and charcoal. The date has significance because experts in southeast Asian prehistory have called this time period, the beginning of the Upper Pleistocene, "very much a blank."

Anderson was not even looking for evidence of early man when he began digging in Tham Lang Rongrien (School Rock Shelter) last summer. He had found the cave, one of many in a series of limestone cliffs in Thailand's Krabi Province, during preliminary trips looking for sites where he could study the early development of cities and Asian trade routes about 2,500 years ago.

Arriving in Thailand last August with financial support from the National Geographic Society, Anderson and his co-workers, including Pornchai Suchatta, a lecturer in anthropology at Thailand's Silpakorn University, began to dig, hoping to find pottery, burial sites, and anything else that would shed light on those questions. They did.

"We could see that sometime in the remote past this whole area had been dug up before, and there had been burials," Anderson remembers. "We found four burials altogether; two were intact, and two just had traces of scattered bones."

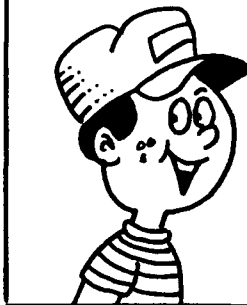
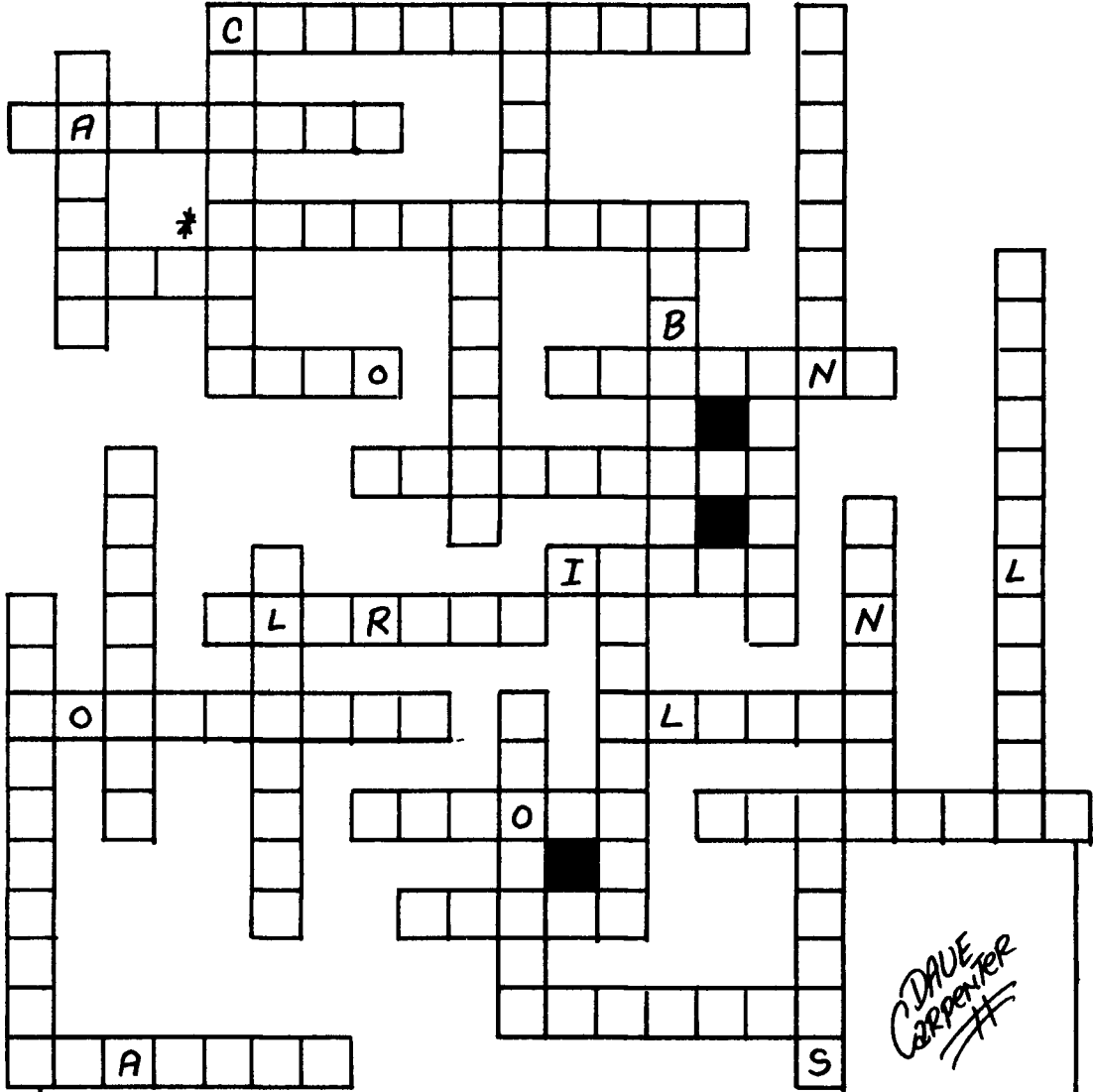
### Buried with Possessions

Burials are important, Anderson says, because in early southeast Asian societies, people often were buried with some of their possessions. Therefore, archeologists have a chance to find objects that were culturally significant.

"We found a fair number of pots, in a style that was very widespread in the Far East from around 4,000 years ago," he says. "These were complete clay pots, about 8 to 10 inches in diameter, with round bottoms and about 5 to 6 inches high. Some had been decorated by impressing a twisted corn into the wet clay to make a design."

Eventually, the excavation team hit a layer of limestone rock that seemed to be the bottom of the site. They kept digging a little more. Because the rock was "rotten," they could use their picks without much trouble.

"To our surprise, when we got down about 3 feet, we started



THE NAMES OF 31 STATES CAN BE FORMED IN THE BOXES ABOVE. WE'VE GIVEN YOU A FEW KEY LETTERS TO HELP YOU OUT. **GOOD LUCK !!!**

\* IS A TWO WORD STATE

(Turn to Page B12)

See answers on page 23

## COLOR THIS!

- |           |               |
|-----------|---------------|
| 1. BLACK  | 6. LT. GREY   |
| 2. RED    | 7. GREEN      |
| 3. YELLOW | 8. LT. BROWN  |
| 4. BLUE   | 9. LT. BLUE   |
| 5. BROWN  | 10. LT. GREEN |

THE BOBWHITE IS CALLED A QUAIL IN NORTH ERN AND EASTERN U.S. AND IN CANADA, BUT PEOPLE IN THE SOUTH CALL IT A PARTRIDGE. THE BOBWHITE GETS ITS NAME FROM ITS CLEVER WHISTLING CALL WHICH SOUNDS LIKE "AH BOB WHITE." THEY BUILD THEIR NESTS ON THE GROUND AND LIVE IN GRASSY AREAS.

