

OCCURRENCES

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DIGGING IN

Will OCC students who sign up for Field Topics in Geology at the Highland Lakes Campus this summer be digging for buried treasure? Yes and no. Although gold and silver are not exactly what they have in mind, students-with shovels and buckets in hand-will be searching for mastodon bones that could be more than 10,000 years old.

On June 24, 1982, fifty-five students successfully completed the reconstruction of a mastodon skeleton from bones that were donated to the college. Affectionately nicknamed "Elmer," the Groleau-White Lake Mastodon which is on permanent display in Levinson Hall at the Highland Lakes Campus represents the second reconstruction of its kind in Michigan.

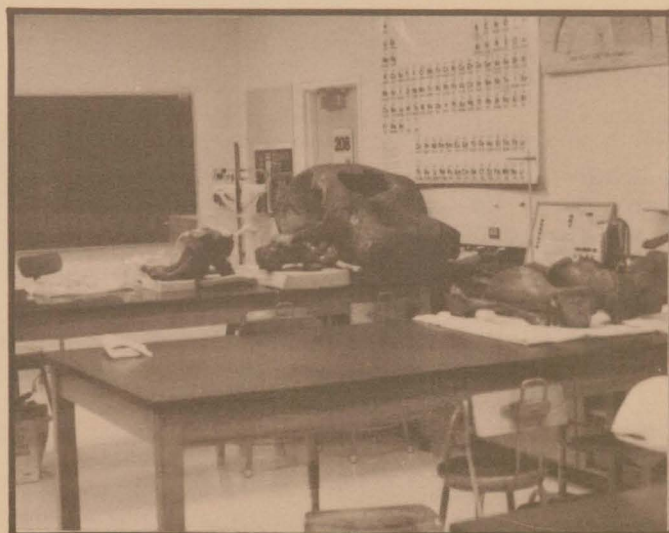
Intrigued by the original mastodon project and by the possibility of developing another, students began searching for an opportunity to become involved in an archaeological excavation. Within one year, their quest led them to property in Brandon Township where mastodon skull material had been discovered in the fall of 1977. Through a consortium consisting of the Cranbrook Institute of Science, Wayne State University, and OCC, arrangements have been made to conduct an archaeological excavation of the site.

Each of the three institutions is offering classes in which students will learn excavation strategies and methods while getting actual hands-on experience. OCC's classes (GSC 240) will meet for the first time on Friday, July 1. One, two, three, and four credit class options are available. Jeheskel (Hezy) Shoshani, who directed both the mastodon reconstruction at the Highland Lakes Campus and the Asian elephant dissection project at WSU, will teach the course and serve as principal investigator.

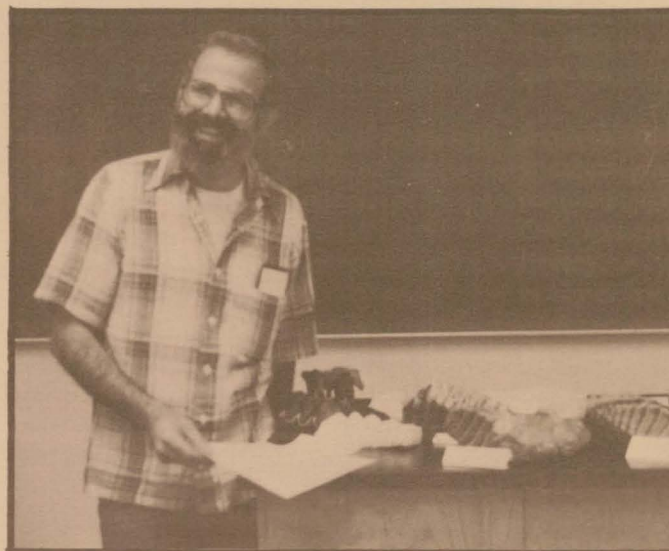
"Teams of students working in shifts over a 3-week period will do basic site layout, excavation, and preparation of all materials uncovered," according to Shoshani. Preliminary lectures will focus on fossils,

the geological and ecological history of Michigan, and methods of preparation for the excavation.

For more information about the project, contact Charles Nelson at 360-3174.



A scene from the mastodon reconstruction class



Jheskel (Hezy) Shoshani, mastodon excavation instructor