

Research & Collections News

The Occasional Newsletter of the Research and Collections Staff
Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County

re•search (rī-sûrch', rē'sûrch) *n.* **1.** Scholarly or scientific investigation or inquiry. See synonyms at **inquiry**. **2.** Close, careful study. **3.** When performed on collections, the *raison d'être* of all great natural history museums.

May, 2009

(covering the months of March and April, 2009)

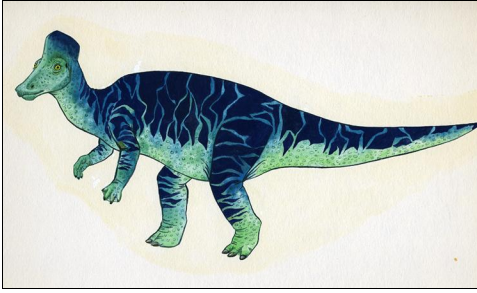
Collection News

Marine Invertebrates

The benefits of many hands... Since August 2008 the Marine Invertebrate Group and their vast collections have greatly benefited from the tremendous effort of a team of fabulous USC work-study students. In a 7 month period, 23,356 lots were curated and another 1,790 were databased. This is an 87% increase in productivity over a similar period during which only two permanent staff were tackling the vast curatorial needs. As the academic year comes to an end, we thank Cynthia Godfrey, Kristan Culbert, Ashley Avery, and Jeanette Carpenter (below, left to right) for their hard work. Special kudos go to Kathy Omura and Kris Netchy for their incredible organizational and scheduling skills.

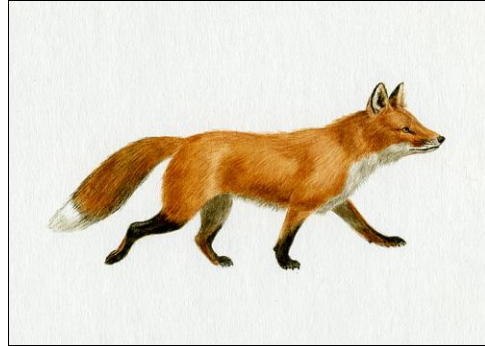


History



The Museum Archives recently acquired a significant collection of original illustrations from the Education Division, thanks to the help of Christy Ann Evans. The artwork is predominately the work of the museum's talented graphic artist, Mary Butler, who also painted the Tikal Mural in the former Precolumbian Hall. Mary was born in Colorado and moved to Los Angeles, where she studied art

at the Chouinard School of Art. She was employed at the museum from 1961 until her retirement in 1992, and her work graced many exhibits and publications during her long career here. Among the illustrations that are now in the Museum Archives are the whimsical paintings of dinosaurs and mammals that Mary did for velcro boards used by the Movable Museum project in the 1980's.



Invertebrate Paleontology and Malacology

As a result of a donation from a very generous donor, several new specimen cases were purchased to house some of the IP collections in a room that is now shared between Malacology and IP. The new cases allow our IP staff to work more often in the main Museum building rather than at the South Grand warehouse, a development about which we are extremely grateful.

Rancho La Brea



We have finally been able to determine that we have 37 of the 38 ribs belonging to Zed. Using "Jenny" the Asian elephant, on loan from Jim Dines in Mammalogy, we were also able to identify each of the ribs. Interestingly, two of the ribs are permineralized, the first record of this type of preservation from Rancho La Brea. Both of these specimens were found isolated in the most northerly part of the quarry. All of the ribs have now been cleaned, repaired, and cataloged.

At left, Shelley Cox compares Zed's ribs to those of Jenny, the Asian elephant. Zed had 38 ribs, 37 of which have been recovered, cleaned and cataloged. Perhaps the last one will turn up in another plaster jacket!

Mammalogy

On April 10 we received word of a dead fin whale floating in LA Harbor. Port personnel pulled the whale onto an unused berth so that Dave Janiger (seen here measuring the 62 feet long cetacean) and Jim Dines, with support from biologists and enforcement officers from the local NMFS office, could conduct a post-mortem exam. In addition to collecting samples important for ongoing research, we were able to document that the whale died as a result of being struck by a ship. The fin whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*) is the second largest animal in size after the blue whale. Fin whales are protected under the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act.



Conservation



Above, Herman Miller DKX Chair designed by Charles Eames, after treatment.

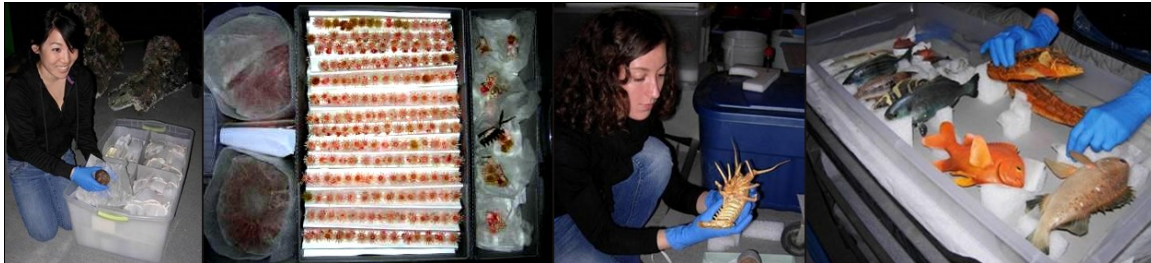
Right, LA Star Newspaper Sign, before treatment.

Assistant Conservator Liz Homberger continues to treat key artifacts for the forthcoming exhibition, *Under the Sun*. Some of the treatments include: the cleaning and stabilization of the upholstery on chair by Charles Eames (pictured below); the consolidation of flaking paint on the LA Star Newspaper Sign (also pictured below); cleaning and consolidation of a wooden water pipe; and the degreasing and waxing of an iron spur from the Coronel collection.



Conservation and Office of the Registrar

Tania Collas, Kristen Hayashi and Liz Homberger spent much of April assisting Tim Bovard and Robert Reid with the deinstallation of the Marine Hall dioramas. Each specimen and model was carefully packed using archival materials in order to provide protection while remaining easily accessible.



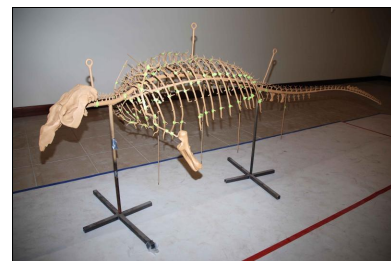
Vertebrate Paleontology

Our skeleton of a new species of herbivorous marine mammals known as desmostylians has now been fully prepared, and on 29 April it was shipped to the studios of Research Casting International in Toronto, Canada, for mounting as the centerpiece in the entrance onto the Mezzanine in our new Cenozoic/Age of Mammals Hall. The work of removing and restoring this skeleton was done by Gary Takeuchi, Maureen Walsh, Vanessa Rhue, and Meredith Staley.



An impressive, new, and quite large skull and partial skeleton of a Pleistocene mastodon (left) was acquired by our Museum. The specimen was originally collected in Indiana, sent to Paso Robles, California, and given to the Avila Beach Marine Institute in San Luis Obispo County. It was subsequently generously offered to our Museum by Mr. Steve Gregory, the President of the Avila Beach Marine Institute. Howell Thomas, Gary Takeuchi (right front) and Research Associate Richard Huddleston (left rear) transported the specimen to the Museum on 31 March 2009.

Research Casting International has recently delivered to us our newly-mounted skeleton of the 10 to 12 million-year-old adult sea cow, *Dusisiren jordani*, from Santa Cruz, California. This skeleton is slated for prominent display in the new Cenozoic/Age of Mammals Hall. The photo shows the armature for this skeleton which holds the bones without modifying or drilling them.



Field Work

Vertebrate Paleontology

By popular demand, we will post field blogs, again hosted by Jack Tseng (<http://lacmvp.blogspot.com>), on expeditions to Inner Mongolia and the Tibetan Plateau led by Xiaoming Wang. Our Inner Mongolia trip will be from June 16 through July 2, and our Tibet field trip will be in mid August to mid September. Mark your calendar now!

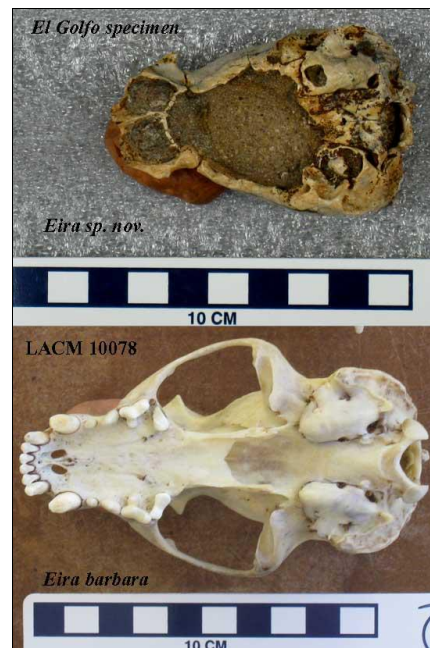
Howell Thomas, Vertebrate Paleontology Laboratory Supervisor, made a trip to Santa Cruz Island, as the guest of The Nature Conservancy, to investigate a fossil discovery. First reported in the press as a Pleistocene pygmy mammoth, the fossil turned out to be the mandible and other parts of fossil Miocene baleen whales. These are significant new discoveries from an area that previously had not produced such fossils. The field crew was made up of, from left to right, Howell Thomas, Clay Downing, and Will and Eliza Ginn.



Rancho La Brea

Chris Shaw returned to El Golfo in early April with colleagues from San Bernardino County Museum and Arizona Western College and collected over 200 microfossils from a previously known site as well as discovering a new microsite. In recent examinations of an unusual skull collected in El Golfo in 2005, Chris and Josh Samuels (UCLA) have recognized the similarity of the fossil to the living Tayra (Mammalia, Mustelidae, *Eira barbara*). This early Pleistocene specimen possibly represents a new species of *Eira*. The current distribution of the Tayra is predominantly in Central America, but it does extend as far north as the Mexican state of Sinaloa and as far south as Peru.

At right: the skull of the new un-named El Golfo species compared to *Eira barbara* (at bottom).



Dinosaur Institute



From March 30 through April 21, the Dinosaur Institute conducted work in San Juan County, southeastern Utah, where they have been working in the Morrison Formation (Late Jurassic) exposures since 2007. The field team of Dinosaur Institute staff were joined by colleagues from Spain, Argentina, and the AMNH as well as the NHM's own Kristin Friedrich from Marketing, Dinosaur Mysteries project manager and assistant Jon Evans and Jessica Lally, and the Dinosaur Mysteries design team from Evidence Design. This visit

will allow the design team to use their experience to incorporate more into the exhibit about the fieldwork we conduct at NHM.

The team revisited one of two quarries opened up in 2008, and an abundance of new bones were uncovered. From this quarry the team collected a series of seven articulated sauropod vertebrae, as well as other isolated vertebrae, chevrons, and a potential skull element. In addition to this quarry the team discovered a new site containing many articulated caudal vertebrae of a different kind of sauropod that may be part of a more complete specimen. 13 vertebrae were collected, and the site will be excavated further next year.

Overall it was a very successful trip and, despite the freezing temperatures, we had a lot of fun and we are looking forward to returning to these extremely productive sites next year!

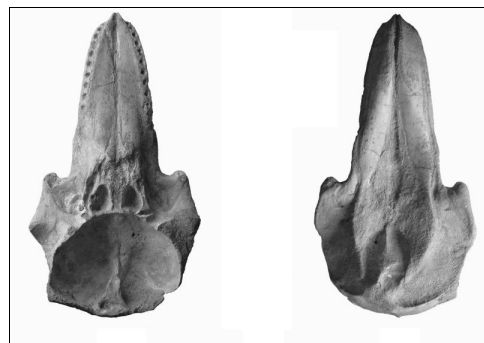
Meetings, Workshops, and Presentations

History

On March 4 and 5, 2009, History Curator Sojin Kim served on a panel reviewing planning and implementation grants for the Heritage Philadelphia Program, a program of the Pew Center for Arts and Heritage in Pennsylvania.

Vertebrate Paleontology

Gabriel Aguirre-Fernández, who recently completed his Masters Thesis about fossil dolphins of the Gulf of California under the supervision of Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology Lawrence Barnes and Research Associate Dr. Francisco J. Aranda-Manteca, gave a presentation



on the same subject at the February meeting of the Sociedad Mexicana de Paleontología. The society met this year in Juriquilla, Mexico. Gabriel's presentation, co-authored with Barnes and Aranda, included the description of a new genus and species of extinct dolphin that appears to be related to Pilot Whales. The holotype skull of this new animal (above) was discovered on Isla San Jose, Mexico, by Dr. John Harris, Barnes, and others on a Museum Members' Travel Program cruise in the Gulf of California.

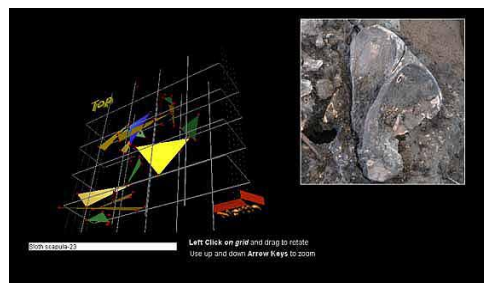
Mammalogy

Jim Dines attended the annual meeting of the California Marine Mammal Stranding Network held in March at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. Dines gave a talk summarizing last year's stranding activity in our region and a second talk reporting on stranding trends over the past decade in southern California.

Rancho La Brea

Excavator Andrea Thomer, along with Education's Michael Wilson and long time museum volunteer Tara Thara, presented their work on "Excavation and 3-Dimensional Data Visualization at the La Brea Tar Pits" at the Computer Applications and Quantitative Methods in Archaeology Conference (CAA) in Williamsburg in March. The computer modeling program allows one to enter the positional data that the excavators take for each bone. For the Project 23 boxes each one is divided into 1m x 1m x 25cm grids. X-y-z coordinates are taken of three anatomical points for each complete fossil within the context of the grid. These three points are used to create a "fossil" triangle utilizing Adobe Director's Shockwave 3D engine. This application gives the excavators a way to visualize fossil assemblages in 3D space and in real time. If certain bones are associated with the same individual animal, this knowledge will facilitate better decision making during the excavation planning process. This excellent visualization aid and positional data will both help researchers in taphonomic studies and has great exhibit/web-based potential to enhance our visitors understanding of our excavations.

This image shows a screenshot of the 3D visualization program using data from a giant ground sloth discovered in box 1. Within the program the user can manipulate the grid as well as mousing over a "fossil" triangle to see a photo of the bone as it was lying in the ground.



Conservation

Tania Collas and Liz Homberger will attend the annual meeting of the American Institute for Conservation (AIC) in Los Angeles from May 19-22, 2009. Liz will present a paper on the conservation of contemporary art titled: "Kiss and Tell: The Conservation of Lipstick-Based Work by Rachel Lachowicz" this May. This June, Liz will attend a week-

long workshop on the conservation of plastics in Omaha, Nebraska organized by AIC and the Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center.

Conservation, Registrar, and a small group of R&C and Operations staff will have the opportunity to attend a workshop on the recovery of wet paper-based artifacts in the event of a disaster affecting collections. The workshop, to be held on May 8th, 2009, will be taught by instructors from the Balboa Art Conservation Center. The training provided in the workshop will contribute towards the strategic objective of developing and implementing the Collections Emergency Response Plan.

External Funding

Vertebrate Paleontology

Xiaoming Wang received a grant of \$36,721 from the National Science Foundation to co-sponsor an international workshop on Asian Neogene Biostratigraphy and Geochronology to be held in Beijing in June 2009. This grant will enable approximately 20 specialists from various countries to participate in this workshop, and it provides partial funding for a symposium volume to be published by Columbia University Press.

Crustacea

The Encyclopedia of Life (EOL), an ambitious initiative to eventually create web pages for all described species, funded a synthesis meeting on the peracarid crustaceans April 3-6, 2009. The meeting took place on beautiful Santa Catalina Island, California, at the USC Wrigley Marine



Science Institute. The meeting was organized by Gary Poore, Regina Wetzer, and Dean Pentcheff and was co-sponsored by the EOL Biodiversity Synthesis Group and the Species Pages Group. Peracarids are a large and diverse group of crustaceans (~22,000 described species in 9 orders) that range from marine to freshwater and terrestrial habitats. They include the major sub-groups Amphipoda, Isopoda, Mysidacea and other lesser known groups.

The 16 participants came from the Argentina, Australia, Canada, Italy, Norway, Poland, and the U.S. Specialist foci ranged from molecular systematics to alpha taxonomy to host-parasite symbioses. Taxonomic specialists covered all orders within the Peracarida.

History

The Seaver Center for Western History Research received an Archival Grant from the John Randolph Haynes and Dora Haynes Foundation to continue the processing and digitization of the 50,000 Carroll Photo Service Collection negatives. For this next phase, Project Database Manager Brent Riggs and his UCLA Information Science student interns will be selecting negatives to scan and place on Flickr as a means for communicating with photographic archives, historians, and various subject enthusiasts to gather additional identifying and contextual information for the cataloging process.



Above right: from the Carroll Photo Service Collection, opening ceremonies for the 1928 National Air Races at Mines Field (now LAX).

Public Outreach

Mineral Sciences



On March 28, Mineral Sciences participated in the weekend program “Art and Science: Gems and Minerals,” part of a series of events celebrating how art is inspired by science. The Gem and Mineral Council and the curatorial staff worked with Public Programs and Education to create fun activities for children and adults. Gemologists (Council member volunteers) brought in equipment including refractometers, UV lights, gem microscopes and a wide selection of gemstones to demonstrate the basic principles behind gemology, gem identification, and gem cutting. Members of the public were encouraged to bring in their own jewelry to be identified! Children participated in a treasure hunt through the mineral hall, gem ID games, and jewelry making activities.

Above left: Members of the Gem and Mineral Council use a display of gemstones to help illustrate optical properties such as index of refraction and dispersion.

Right: Museum patrons enjoy a very challenging Gem Identification game.



Dinosaur Institute

The Dinosaur Institute is working with Public Programs and Education to re-design the Thomas Lab exhibit. Thomas is scheduled to be completed by the end of May, at which time all of the remaining bones of Thomas will be shipped to Phil Fraley Studios in New Jersey for mounting for Dinosaur Mysteries. Renovation of the lab will take place in mid-June. The DI preparation team will continue to work in the new “Dino Lab,” which will serve as a preparation lab for many of the other specimens we are working on for Dinosaur Mysteries, including the reconstruction work for a two year old *T. rex*.



Mammalogy

In March staff from Mammalogy gave a presentation and collection tour for a Marine Mammals class from Cal State Long Beach. On April 25 Jim Dines gave an invited presentation about the Museum’s Marine Mammal Program at Rancho Los Cerritos in Long Beach.

Ichthyology/Mammalogy/Vertebrate Paleontology

Staff from these three departments (Jeff Seigel, Jim Dines & Gary Takeuchi) gave behind-the-scenes tours of their respective collections to a Vertebrate Zoology class from Cal State Long Beach that visited the museum on April 17th.

Invertebrates at the Dino Ball (April 25)

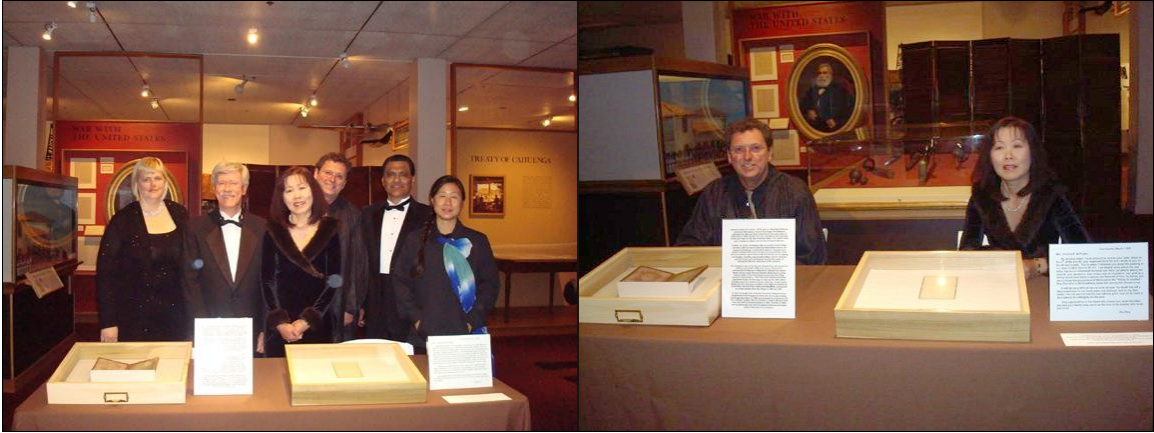
R & C staff from Echinoderms, Polychaete Worms, Crustaceans, and Insects all offered behind-the-scenes glimpses of their labs and specimens. Spiffed up and polished staff (Drs. Gordon Hendler, Kirk Fitzhugh, Regina Wetzer, and Brian Brown) and their specimens looked fabulous for the guests of the Dinosaur Ball.

History at the Dino Ball

History Division staff participated in the 2009 Dino Ball open house by displaying collections representing the illustrious and diverse achievements of Pío and Andrés Pico, Charlie Chaplin, Jean Harlow, and Amelia Earhart.

Right: Seaver Center Collections Managers John Cahoon and Betty Uyeda prepare display boards for the open house.





Above left: History Division staff in the Lando Hall of California History.

Above right: Brent Riggs and Betty Uyeda with a daguerreotype of Andrés Pico and a letter by Pío Pico.



Left: Beth Werling with Charlie Chaplin's "Little Tramp" costume.

Above: John Cahoon with photographs and a flight log written by Amelia Earhart.

Vertebrate Paleontology

Also as part of this year's Dinosaur Ball, Vertebrate Paleontology employees hosted the attendee's open house tours in the Laboratory, including demonstrating and interpreting several of our significant mammal fossils. Participating were Lawrence Barnes, Debora Lee, Vanessa Rhue, Howell Thomas, Gary Takeuchi, Maureen Walsh, Xiaoming Wang, Michael Williams, and Jacqueline Windus. In addition to the open collections, we exhibited specimens of early bears, primitive dolphins, and items that will be exhibited in the Cenozoic/Age of Mammals Hall: the skeleton of our young fossil sperm whale and the new species of paleoparadoxiid (an extinct marine herbivorous mammal).



Malacology

Cathy Groves (Echinoderms) and Lindsey Groves (Malacology) teamed up for the *Magnificent Marine Invertebrates* Family Field Trip to Abalone Cove, Palos Verdes Peninsula, on Saturday, March 7. Thirty participants were treated to beautiful weather, spectacular tide pool faunas, and an informative lecture on what causes the daily tidal cycle, tide pool ecology, and how and why tides affect our everyday lives. Observed invertebrates included *Strongylocentrotus purpuratus* (Purple Sea Urchin), *Pisaster ochraceus* (Ochre Seastar), *Megathura crenulata* (Giant Keyhole limpet), and *Aplysia californica* (Sea Hare). Many thanks to Robin Savoian and Christyann Evans (Education), Mary Stecheson (Invert. Paleo.), and Ángel Valdés (Cal. Poly. Pomona) for field assistance.

Right: 2009 NHMLAC Tidepool Staff (L to R): Robin Savoian (Education), Cathy Groves (Echinoderms), Lindsey Groves (Malacology), and Christyann Evans (Education).



History

On April 24, 2009, 40 students from Locke High School in Watts were hosted by History Curator William Estrada, who coordinated a “behind-the-scenes” tour that involved the collaboration of staff from Education and several R&C



Divisions. Christy Evans and Rosa Mazon provided much of the details in planning, while Jim Dines, Ken Campbell, Richard Feeney, Tim Bovard, Betty Uyeda, John Cahoon, Brent Riggs, and Beth Werling provided students with an up-close understanding of scientific and historical research and collecting and the variety of museum professions. Thanks also to Dan Kroupa for sending great docents Susan Coltrin, Helena Bowman, and Steve Simon to co-lead the tour.

Above right: Locke High School students with their teacher, Javier Sandoval, and chaperones.

Below: Rick Feeney (Ichthyology) and Jim Dines (Mammology) present specimens from their collections.



Anthropology



As part of the Dino Ball’s “behind-the-scenes” theme, the Anthropology team (Margaret Hardin, Chris Coleman, KT Hajeian, and Jennifer Saracino) presented a golden staff (c. 1100-1400 A.D.) from the Chimu culture of northern Peru. Though this staff was on display in the Ancient Latin American Hall for many years, it was a treat for the Dino Ball attendees to get a chance to see it up close because the true beauty of this piece is in its detailed construction. Masterfully constructed with pressed sheets of gold held to a wooden core with copper rivets, the staff not only conveys spiritual and political power but also demonstrates the advanced level of pre-Inca metalworking technology.

Vertebrate Paleontology

On the evening of 17 April, Dr. Lawrence Barnes, Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology, gave a lecture for a family program that was held in our Museum by the Young President's Organization. The subject of the lecture was Rancho La Brea and the recent Art Museum parking lot salvage collecting project.



On 22 April, Barnes gave a public lecture at the San Bernardino County Museum about the discovery of a new species of strange, primitive fossil dolphin that was found in Cajon Pass. This dolphin is represented by an unusually complete skeleton, a rarity among cetacean fossils, and it is shown here laid out for Barnes by San Bernardino County Museum

employees. The new species will be named by Barnes and Research Associate Robert L. Reynolds, who was involved in its original discovery.

The National Geographic TV program "Prehistoric Predators: Monster Shark" aired on television on 29 April. It includes scenes showing Museum staff and specimens that were photographed in the Vertebrate Paleontology Preparation Laboratory.

Student Mentoring and Research

Vertebrate Paleontology

Graduate student-in-resident Jack Tseng was awarded the Patterson Memorial Grant from the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology for his proposal entitled "Excavation and mapping of the first late Miocene bone beds in central Inner Mongolia." The aim of the \$2,700 grant is to encourage graduate students to take an active part in the exploration and study of new and important fossil localities during their training. Jack will use the grant to fund his fieldwork in Inner Mongolia this coming June. A brand new jackhammer and generator have already been purchased for the project. While the actual grant money will already be available for Jack's fieldwork in June, the award will be formally presented in September at the annual meeting of the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology in Bristol, U.K.

Jack is still in Beijing studying at the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology. In addition to his research on carnivores, Jack has also been organizing and identifying other mammal fossils collected from the Tibetan Plateau during the past decade. Among the collection of hoofed mammals are a few teeth of some of the earliest three-toed horses in the genus *Hipparion* in China (see figure); these horses have been preliminarily identified as *Hipparion cf. H. chiai*, a basal Chinese species with resemblance to earlier three-toed horses found in North America.



Above: The cheek teeth of *Hipparion cf. H. chiai* from the Tsaidam Basin, northern Tibetan Plateau. The upper row shows the occlusal view, the lower shows the labial view of two upper (CD0776) and two lower (CD0860 & CD08121) teeth.

Volunteers and Research Associates

Anthropology



The Anthropology team would like to welcome volunteer Becky Sroka to the team! Becky's arrival coincides with the decision to add approximately thirty more objects from the Archaeology storeroom to the Visible Vault. These objects come from the countries of Costa Rica, Panama, and Nicaragua in Central America.

The addition also includes a few outstanding Peruvian pieces from a recent generous donation made by Merlyn Paine. Becky has been helping us collect background data for the pieces from the Registrar's office. She has also been assisting the team in the storeroom as we make new archival-quality mounts for the objects.

Soon we will also be adding new labels for the more prominent pieces in the exhibit including the Tarascan coyote god, the Aztec feathered serpent, and various Veracruz figures in the Aztec case.



Above left: Becky Sroka, Volunteer for Anthropology
Right: Peruvian vessel from the Paine donation

Vertebrate Paleontology

A new volunteer in the Vertebrate Paleontology Department is Laura Banashek, an undergraduate student at UCLA, who is interested in archaeological aspects of human anatomy. One of her first tasks in our lab is to produce an artificial cranial endocast of an important holotype of an early fossil whale.



Rancho La Brea

Project 23 is a salvage of (excuse the pun) “mammoth” proportions. If it wasn’t for a large crew of dedicated volunteers (more in the next newsletter), the work could never be completed in a reasonable amount of time. Some of the Page Lab volunteers are as unique as the site itself.

Clockwise from top left: Meena Madan is a student at UCI who enjoys baking (much to her mother’s dismay) and has a love of citrus fruits. Greg Agyan is currently our youngest volunteer, as well as winner of the unofficial “Commutes from an Incredible Distance” Award... as he dedicates his Saturdays driving out from Escondido, CA, to give his 8 hours every week. Walker McLeod originally hails from South Carolina (and is a true Southern Gentleman) and is a travelling Surgeon’s Technician currently working at the Kaiser complex on Sunset. His current project is a saber-toothed cat skull he lovingly named “Conan.” Meganne Macias works in the financial markets here in Los Angeles, and knows more about LA Kings hockey and NFL football than anyone else in the Lab, as well as enjoying aerial acrobatics and trapeze as a hobby. The Project 23 flag was designed and printed by one of our young volunteers, Jacob Solorio. Herb Schiff has been a longtime docent at the LA Zoo, as well as a docent and volunteer preparator Emeritus at NHM. He joins us in order to help fulfill his quest of being able to volunteer in every aspect known to mankind. Justy Koch is an archaeology student at Biola University. Not only does she have her own mammoth site to work at on the grounds of the university, she also comes in every Friday to help us out with “Zed.”



Distinguished Visitors

Crustacea

Dr. Gary Poore, Museum of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia, visited the Crustacea Lab 20-22 March to work on the final agenda details of the Encyclopedia of Life funded Biosynthesis Meeting with collaborators Regina Wetzler and Dean Pentcheff. While here Gary also gave generously of his time to USC student Adam Wall. Adam is honing his digital line-drawing skills of isopod appendages as he works with Regina on a series of new species descriptions. It was a real treat for Adam to be able to draw on Gary's more than 35 years of experience studying marine crustaceans.



Ph.D. student JC Mendoza from the National University of Singapore slaved 2.5 weeks over the incredibly abundant and diverse xanthid crabs in the Crustacea collections. JC's dissertation focuses on the taxonomy and systematics of Pacific "euxanthine" xanthids. The Xanthidae is the most abundant taxon of crabs in the tropics. Everyone agrees he picked extremely beautiful crabs to work



on, albeit their diversity and sometimes small size can be daunting.

In late April, Dr. Jill Yager, discoverer of an entire class of crustaceans called "remipedes" that live deep within caves connected to the sea, visited the Crustacea Lab to donate specimens and to discuss her contribution to a book being co-edited by Curator of Crustacea Jody Martin.

History

In April 2009, History Curator William Estrada and the Seaver Center for Western History Research hosted visiting scholar Dr. Jacinto Barrera Bassols from the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México*. Dr. Bassols is completing research on the role of Los Angeles's exile community during the 1910s for a book commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Mexican Revolution in 2010.

Anthropology

This month, the Anthropology Department had two distinguished guests that some of your pre-teen sons and daughters might recognize from the Disney sitcom “The Suite Life of Zack & Cody.” Though the identical twins Dylan (Zack) and Cole (Cody) Sprouse are already quite a successful enterprise unto themselves, they still have to go to school like everyone else, so it was their Studio Teacher, Laura Torrance, who thought a trip to the museum would provide a worthwhile educational experience. Since Ms. Torrance also happens to be KT Hajeian’s mother, KT was more than happy to give the group a tour of the storerooms for the Anthropology and Archaeology collections, which the down-to-earth and always interested boys really enjoyed.

Cole (left), Ms. Torrance, and Dylan (right) are seen here having fun in their classroom at Hollywood Center Studios where “The Suite Life” is filmed.



Malacology

Doug Eernisse (Calif. St. Univ., Fullerton) visited in March to examine the Malacology holdings of Panamic chitons for research purposes.

Recent Publications

(Names in **bold** are Staff, Research Associates, or Students)

- Aguirre-Fernández, G., F. J. Aranda-Manteca, L. G. Barnes,** and J. R. Fernández-Rivera. 2009. Los Delphinidae (Cetacea: Odontoceti) del Plioceno del Golfo de California; implicaciones sobre la evolución de la familia. *Sociedad Mexicana de Paleontología, Resúmenes del XI Congreso Nacional de Paleontología, Juriquilla, Querétaro, México*, February 2009, p. 4.
- Martin, J. W.,** R. B. Moffitt, and P. A. McLaughlin. 2009. Additions to the decapod crustacean fauna of the Hawaiian Islands, II. First records of the unusual hermit crab genera *Porcellanopagurus* Filhol, 1885, and *Solitariopagurus* Türkay, 1986 (Decapoda, Anomura, Paguridae). *Zootaxa* 2057: 53-62.
- Tseng, Z. J.** 2009. Cranial function in a late Miocene *Dinocrocuta gigantea* (Mammalia: Carnivora) revealed by comparative finite element analysis. *Biological Journal of the Linnean Society* 96:51-67.

Staff Departures and New Staff

Vertebrate Paleontology

Jacqueline Windus (right) joins Vertebrate Paleontology as a curatorial assistant to coordinate our new Cenozoic Hall exhibit project. She has a bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies from the Florida State University. Welcome Jackie!



Talin Nazarian (left) has joined the Museum as a Paleontological Preparator, working on the Cenozoic/Age of Mammals Project, and her duties will include readying skeletons for exhibit in our new hall. She comes to us with a Bachelor's degree in Cultural Anthropology from UC Santa Barbara.

Miscellaneous

March of Dimes

The annual March of Dimes walk took place on Saturday, April 25, in Exposition Park. Lindsey Groves (Malacology) and Cathy Groves (Echinoderms) raised over \$1400 in contributions in spite of the dismal economy. Walkers included the Groves, Christyann Evans, Jim Gilson, Sharon Takeshita and fiancée Dan Brown, Terri Togiai and granddaughters Mia & Tera, Maria Ponce and husband Peter and nieces Alex and Abby and nephew Joshua.

Right: 2009 NHMLAC March of Dimes participants (L to R): Lindsey Groves (Malacology, Terri Togiai (R&C Office), granddaughters Mia and Tera, Cathy Groves (Echinoderms), Sharon Takeshita (Guest Relations), Christyann Evans (Education), Dan Brown (Sharon's fiancée), and Jim Gilson (Legal Affairs). Maria Ponce (R&C office), husband Peter and nieces Alex and Abby and nephew Joshua participated but are not in the picture.



The R & C Newsletter is issued 5 times per year, in January, March, May, September, and November, by the Research and Collections staff of the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. Currently the Newsletter is compiled and edited by Dr. Joel W. Martin, Curator of Crustacea and Chief of the Division of Invertebrate Studies. All issues of the Newsletter can be found on the web at: <http://collections.nhm.org/newsletters>

