

Research & Collections Newsletter



May 2010

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.

Collection News

Mineral Sciences

The Margie and Robert E. Petersen Collection of gold nuggets recently was donated. This impressive collection, numbering 132 pieces with a total weight in gold of more than 1660 troy ounces, has actually been on loan to the Museum and on display in the Hall of Gems and Minerals for more than two decades. The most important specimen in the collection is the 156 ounce Mojave Nugget — the largest currently known gold nugget from California (right). It was found in 1977 by prospector Ty Paulsen using a metal detector in the Stringer district near Randsburg, California.

History

The Art of Hollywood Costume Design

Over a dozen costumes, accessories, and sketches from the History division's Hollywood collections are on loan to the Oklahoma City Museum of Art for their exhibition *Sketch to Screen: The Art of Hollywood Costume Design*, which explores the vital artistic contribution of costume design throughout the history of the American motion picture industry. The exhibition runs from May 6 to August 15, 2010.



Mojave Nugget

156 troy oz.

Vertebrate Paleontology

The new *Age of Mammals* exhibit hall is in the final weeks of installation. John Harris, Xiaoming Wang, Sam McLeod, Lawrence Barnes, Jackie Windus, Daniel Gabai, and Vanessa Rhue were busy with last minute details of the labels, illustrations, and the various audio/visual productions for the hall. Emily Harrington visited from Montana when she began her creation of scenes depicting past environments of southern California.

Howell Thomas, Debora Lee, Ted Seto, Talin Nazarian, Vanessa Rhue, Gary Takeuchi, and Mike Williams have been overseeing specimen mount making, casting and touching up specimens, and photo-documenting the progress of the installation. During March and April,



Research Casting International of Toronto, Canada, completed their installation of the skeletons, including the hanging of the marine mammals from the ceiling of the gallery, and Cinnabar of Glendale, California, are finishing the case and base installation.

Our new hall will have several interactive audio/visual modules, one of them dealing with the new paleoparadoxiid skeleton from Orange County, California. On 25 March, the collectors of this specimen, Marilyn



Morgan, Diana Weir, and David and Juanita Stevens, all formerly of the environmental mitigation firm RMW PaleoAssociates, visited the Museum and were recorded as they recounted their collecting of the specimen. This digital media will be incorporated into the A/V program.

Registration and Conservation

Theresa Manalo, Tania Collas, and Liz Homberger just completed the installation of the *What on Earth* exhibit in the Rotunda, working with Josh Beckman of Exhibits, ELY (mounts), Cinnabar (graphics), as well as collections staff from Anthropology, Entomology, History, Ichthyology / Herpetology, Invertebrate Paleontology, Malacology, Mammalogy, Marine Biodiversity Center, Ornithology, and Vertebrate Paleontology. It was a real pleasure to work with so many different collections.



Field Work

Ichthyology

Dr. Shannon DeVaney participated in a two-week research cruise on the *CCGS Teleost* to the Sable Gully Marine Protected Area off Nova Scotia. This meso- and bathypelagic trawl cruise was sponsored by the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Bedford Institute of Oceanography (BIO) to survey the deepwater biodiversity of the underwater canyon and to identify likely prey species for the MPA's high concentration of northern bottlenose whales. Shannon was invited to participate as the fish taxonomist and preserved a variety of fish specimens for the



Dr. DeVaney with the R/V Teleost in background.



LACM Fish Collection, including anglerfishes, dragonfishes, lanternfishes, swallowers, whalefishes, and eels.

Ceratioid anglerfish (Gigantactis sp.) from off Nova Scotia. Photo taken by Megan Best (BIO).

Meetings, Workshops, and Presentations

Vertebrate Paleontology / R & C Administration

John Long visited Australia in April and was able to meet with colleagues at the Australian National University (Canberra) and at the Western Australian Museum (Perth) for planning new research projects.

Vertebrate Paleontology

Tetsuya “Ted” Seto, Paleontological Preparator working on the new *Age of Mammals* exhibit hall project, attended the *Third Annual Fossil Preparation & Collections Symposium* that was held 29 April to 1 May at the Field Museum in Chicago.

In early March, Xiaoming Wang organized and chaired the second National Science Foundation-sponsored workshop about *Asian Biostratigraphy and Geochronology* held in Beijing, China. The aim of this workshop was to standardize an Asian land mammal age system that can be a potential chronological basis to be applied to continent-wide correlations. One product of this workshop will be a book on Asian land mammal age systems, to be co-edited by Xiaoming Wang, Larry Flynn (Harvard University), and Mikael Fortelius (University of Helsinki).

Xiaoming Wang participated in the *24th Annual Desert Symposium* in Zzyzx, California, on 23 April, and there he presented a talk entitled *The drying of Tibet – what paleontology has to say*.

The Desert Studies Center at Zzyzx, California, is located along the shores of the dry Soda Lake, near Baker. Operated jointly by several campuses of the California State University system, the Zzyzx facility offers unique opportunities to study desert environments of past and present.



Mammalogy

Jim Dines attended the *2010 National Marine Animal Stranding Network Conference* held in West Virginia.

More than 250 people involved in marine animal stranding response attended the conference, which included workshops, symposia and technical sessions. At one of those technical sessions Dines presented on a shift in the distribution and abundance of the two species of common dolphin that occur off southern California.

History

Through a generous scholarship provided by the Getty Foundation, History Curatorial Assistant Kristen Hayashi attended the *California Association of Museums’ Annual Conference* in San Jose from March 3-5. Workshops and sessions centered on the conference’s theme, *Reflect on Tech*, will help inform the creative incorporation of technology into the Under the Sun exhibition.

Seaver Center Project Database Manager Brent Riggs traveled to Seattle to attend the 2010 regional archival meeting of the Society of California Archivists, the Society of Northwest Archivists, the Council of Inter-mountain Archivists and the Society of Rocky Mountain Archivists April 28-May 1, 2010. The regional meetings are held every five years. Sessions included granting agency representatives discussing submission guidelines; fundraising strategies; digitization strategies and increased public access to collections through “more product, less process;” and using open source software to create online exhibits.

Public Outreach

Polychaete Worms



Trip participants overlooking the mudflats and sandbar.

In April, Leslie Harris (Collection Manager, Polychaetes) organized a 3-day trip to Morro Bay, central California, for colleagues in Education & Exhibits and R&C. Their assignment was to assess the area's potential for an interdisciplinary field trip that may be offered to the museum's membership in 2011. No site in Southern California is comparable to Morro Bay for diversity of coastal habitats within a few short miles. For the marine folks there are rocky intertidal areas covered with lush algae, mud flats, sandy beaches, pickleweed flats, estuaries, and a sand bar all adjacent to the State Park campgrounds and town. The

terrestrial-minded can explore riparian woodlands, a unique elfin forest with pygmy oaks, volcanic outcroppings, or a grove of 500-800 year old oaks, and check out relics of the local Chumash culture. 250 local & migratory bird species keep birders entertained while mammal fans go ga-ga over sea elephants and sea otters. Our intrepid crew (from left to right in the picture) consisted of Briana Burrows, Su Oh, Dan Keefe, and Karen Ewald of E&E; Emma Freeman (Marine Biodiversity Center); Kristina Yu (Director-Living Programs, San Francisco Exploratorium); and local naturalist Jean Osterman. Leslie was behind the camera as usual. We stayed at the State Park campground directly across from the mud flats to check out its suitability for the members' field trip. Su and Kristina turned out to be virtuoso campground chefs.



Juvenile elephant seal, mid-molt.



800-year-old oak and elfin forest pygmy oak, with Su Oh for scale.

History

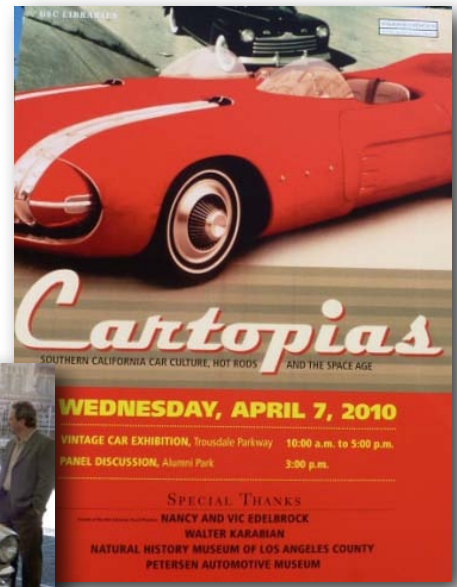
William S. Hart stamp unveiled

The United States Postal Service released a set of four stamps entitled *Cowboys of the Silver Screen* and featuring William S. Hart, Gene Autry, Roy Rogers, and Tom Mix. A special ceremony was held at the William S. Hart Park and Museum on April 17, 2010 to unveil the William S. Hart stamp. Hart Museum Administrator Ayesha Saletore and her team organized a series of activities in conjunction with the ceremony, and Material Culture Collections Manager Beth Werling organized a display of costumes and props from *Tumbleweeds*, Hart's final film.



Cartopias

The History Division participated in the University of Southern California's public program *Southern California Car Culture, Hot Rods and the Space Age* on April 7. The program included a display of historic automobiles, including the Material Culture collection's 1953 Cadillac Eldorado and 1961 Cadillac Sedan DeVille. Collections Manager Beth Werling participated in a panel discussion with Petersen Automotive Museum curator Leslie Kendall and Dr. Denise Sandoval, Professor of Chicana/o Studies at California State University, Northridge, that explored automotive design and youth car-mod subcultures in the 1950s and 60s.



Special Exhibit: Wyatt Earp

In April, the City of Santa Clarita, in conjunction with the Friends of Hart Park, presented two events at the Hart Museum as part of their annual Cowboy Festival. One of the events was a special performance of a two person play, *Mr. and Mrs. Wyatt Earp*. Hart Museum was an appropriate venue for this play since William S. Hart and Wyatt Earp were very good friends. Thanks to coordination with the Seaver Center for Western History Research, the Hart Museum exhibited a special display for the event consisting of letters written by Wyatt Earp to Bill Hart. Other artifacts within the Hart Collection and pertaining to the Hart-Earp connection include: a riding crop given to Hart by Earp and a signed photograph of the famed lawman himself.

Vertebrate Zoology

Dr. David Huckaby, Professor of Biology at Cal State Long Beach, brought his Vertebrate Biology class to the Museum in late April for an up-close look at our vertebrate collections. Collection tours and presentations were given by Nefti Camacho (Herpetology), Rick Feeney (Ichthyology), Jim Dines (Mammalogy) and Vanessa Rhue (Vertebrate Paleontology).

Mammalogy

Jim Dines gave two separate collection tours to Professor Paul Stapp's Mammalogy class from Cal State Fullerton. The class visited in March for a tour of the terrestrial mammal collections and had such a great time that they returned in April for a second visit focusing on marine mammals.

First Fridays

Collection tours are very popular with the First Fridays crowd, and they usually reflect the subject matter of the guest speaker. Tectonics expert Tanya Atwater (UCSB) was the speaker for the April 2nd event, but tectonic features are difficult to keep in a collection. Therefore, Lindsey Groves (Malacology) and Alyssa Morgan (Mineralogy) each presented *Earthquakes, faults, and tectonic features of California: A virtual tour* in lieu of conventional tours. Coincidentally, some of the material they covered in the virtual tours was covered in Tanya's presentation as well!

1st Annual Science Festival

Malacology, Invertebrate Paleontology, Entomology, and Ornithology

The *1st Annual Science Festival* was held at Paramount Ranch, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area on April 17th. The NHMLAC was represented by Research & Collections and Education & Exhibits. Lindsey Groves (Malacology) exhibited terrestrial and freshwater mollusks of Paramount Ranch area including native and non-native species. The invasive freshwater New Zealand mudsnail (*Potamopyrgus antipodarum*) has invaded Medea Creek, which traverses the property, and samples of these hardy snails were exhibited along with information on how to slow their relentless spread across the American southwest. Mary Stecheson (Invertebrate Paleontology)



Lindsey Groves discussing terrestrial and freshwater mollusks with attendees.



Mary Stecheson exhibiting invertebrate and vertebrate fossils.

exhibited vertebrate and invertebrate fossils found on the Paramount Ranch property and from areas surrounding the NPS property. Brian Brown, Anna Holden, Janet Kempf and Sibyle Noack (Entomology) exhibited insect and arachnid species found on and around the Paramount Ranch area. Anna Holden and Janet Kempf also led a spider survey hike. Kimball Garrett led a bird watching tour.

NHMLAC 1st Annual Science Festival participants (L to R): Kim Kessler (Education @ Exhibits), Lindsey Groves (Malacology), Ilana Turner, Jesse Daniel, and Brayden Moore (Gallery Interpreters), Briana Burrows (Education @ Exhibits), Leslie Gordon (Living Collections), Dan Keefe and Karen Ewald (Education @ Exhibits), Mary Stecheson (Invertebrate Paleontology), and Brian Brown (Entomology). NHMLAC participants not present: Kimball Garrett (Ornithology), Anna Holden and Lila Higgins (Education @ Exhibits) and Janet Kempf and Sibyle Noack (Entomology).



Malacology and Invertebrate Paleontology

Lindsey Groves presented *Late Cretaceous faunas of Silverado Canyon and environs, Santa Ana Mountains, Orange Co., CA*, for the March 11th meeting of the Southern California Paleontological Society. The club conveniently scheduled Silverado Canyon for their March field trip as well.

On March 27, Lindsey Groves (Malacology) and Mary Stecheson (Invertebrate Paleontology) participated in *Seeking Seashells* for Curator's Cupboard. Lindsey presented information on the popular Silverado Canyon fossil hunting trip and showed some of the Late Cretaceous-age mollusk specimens from the collecting site. Mary exhibited fossil and recent mollusks to compare species of different ages for *Something Old, Something New: Fossil and Recent Seashell Similarities*. This was also a Junior Scientist event, so Lindsey and Mary had the opportunity to respond to questions from the Junior Scientists. Malacology volunteer Janice Lipeles kindly assisted Mary.

On April 11th Lindsey Groves presented *Fossil and Recent Cypraeidae and Eocypraeidae: An update from the Early Cretaceous through Holocene* for the monthly meeting of the Pacific Conchological Club.

Vertebrate Paleontology



On 6 March Vertebrate Paleontology staff Lawrence Barnes, Debora Lee, Sam McLeod, Talin Nazarian, Vanessa Rhue, Gary Takeuchi, Howell Thomas, Mike Williams, and Jackie Windus hosted Museum supporters and their



families for the *VIP Family Sleepover*. During the evening, many dozens of our visitors had a chance to tour the Vertebrate Paleontology Department behind the scenes.



On April 16, Vanessa Rhue gave a tour of the Vertebrate Paleontology Department to 25 zoology students from California State University Long Beach. On 22 April, several Vertebrate Paleontology Department staff, particularly Lab Supervisor Howell Thomas, participated in the Earth Day event at the Museum, when four Junior High School students from Richard Merkin Middle School were our guests for *Bring Our Sons and Daughters to Work Day*.

Herpetology

Neftali Camacho attended a North Campus press event on April 22. Neftali brought out local lizards from the collection. The kids in attendance were given keys to identify the lizards. He helped them with the identifications and gave them tips on looking for lizards.

Anthropology

On April 10, Jennifer Saracino participated in a Q & A session with *Discovery Class en francais* (directed by French tutor/home school instructor Sophie Meager) in the *Visible Vault: Archaeological Treasures from Ancient Latin America*. The students ranged from kindergarten through 5th grade and were all bilingual in French and English. Each student asked one question about the Visible Vault, and Madame Meager graciously provided French translations of all the exhibit's label copy. *Merci!*



In honor of *Take our Daughters and Sons to Work Day* on April 22, the Anthropology Department hosted 2 students, Jonathan and Jose, from the Richard Merkin Middle School's 7th grade Life Science class. Since the boys only had about an hour to work with us, KT Hajeian showed them how to make a storage mount for an artifact like the ones that are used to house many of the objects in the Visible Vault: Archaeological Treasures from Ancient Latin America. The boys picked up on the process very quickly and had soon completed a few very well-made storage mounts that are currently being used to keep the pictured Pre-Columbian figurines from West Mexico safe in our Archaeology Storeroom.



Student Mentoring and Research

Vertebrate Paleontology

Matthew Ventimiglia, a graduate student at California State University Northridge, is now in the final stages of writing the description of a new species of fossil baleen whale from Orange County for his Masters Thesis. Matt is being supervised in this work by Lawrence Barnes.

The original and a replica of the skull of a new species of baleen whale from Orange County, the subject of Matthew Ventimiglia's thesis.



Meredith Rivin (formerly Staley, congratulations to Meredith on her recent marriage) has been working at the Museum while completing her Masters Thesis at California State University Fullerton, describing earliest Miocene cetaceans from Irvine, California. Meredith plans to defend her thesis in early June.

Meredith Rivin and Lawrence Barnes discuss characters of tooth-bearing mysticete whales from Orange County.

Amber Johnson-Carroll, an undergraduate geology major at California State University Northridge, worked on fossil rhinoceros foot bones from a high elevation (15,000 feet above sea level) locality in the Kunlun Pass Basin (Pliocene to Pleistocene in age) of Tibet for her Senior Thesis project. For about a year, Xiaoming Wang has supervised Amber in this project, and on 5 May she successfully defended her thesis. Amber has just been accepted into a Master's program in vertebrate paleontology at the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology in Rapid City.

Amber Johnson-Carroll and Xiaoming Wang discuss the intricacies of rhino foot bones.



Volunteers and Research Associates

Volunteer Recognition

Every year, the Natural History Family of Museums honors its volunteers from all three sister museums: Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County at Exposition Park, Page Museum at La Brea Tar Pits and William S. Hart Museum. This year's recognition was held at a new venue, the William S. Hart Park and Museum. Over 140 volunteers and guests came to the Hart to recognize one another's service to our museums. As part of this program, History Division staff Sojin Kim and Beth Werling presented information and an artifact display related to the upcoming exhibition *Under the Sun: Los Angeles, California and the World*, which will open in 2012.

Vertebrate Paleontology

Research Associate Dr. Carl D. Frailey visited the Museum for two weeks in April to work with Ken Campbell on fossils from the Amazon Basin. Thanks to Jim Dines and Dave Janiger for providing comparative materials from the Mammal Collections.

Rancho La Brea

The Los Angeles County 2010 Youth Volunteer of the Year was awarded to Robert Salazar for his dedicated work at Rancho La Brea. Robert travels each Saturday from Santa Barbara by public transport to volunteer in the fishbowl lab. Robert is reliable, inquisitive and creative. Along with his commitment to preparing Project 23 fossils he also brings his amazing origami skills. His mammoth and sabertoothed cat are on display in the fishbowl.



County Youth Volunteer Robert Salazar with supervisors Mark Ridley-Thomas, Michael D. Antonovich, Don Knabe, and Zev Yaroslavsky (photo courtesy Los Angeles County Workplace Programs).



This year's volunteer of the year for Rancho La Brea was awarded to Bruce Fischer. Bruce volunteers both in the fishbowl lab and at our excavation. Apart from his 300+ hours of service, Bruce is helpful, cheerful, innovative and reliable and happily completes any task that he is given. Thanks Bruce!

Volunteer of the year for Rancho La Brea, Bruce Fisher

Distinguished Visitors

Crustacea

Dr. Jørgen Olesen, Associate Professor and Curator at the University of Copenhagen's Natural History Museum of Denmark, visited the Crustacea laboratory in April to discuss plans for our recently-submitted grant proposal to the National Science Foundation to support a "Tree of Life" project for the "Pancrustacea." Thanks in part to the Icelandic volcano and its disruption of airline traffic over the North Atlantic, Jørgen's stay was unexpectedly extended by a week, allowing him to work also with curator Jody Martin on a planned morphological atlas of crustacean larvae and take in some southern California sightseeing.

Polychaete Worms

Dr. Maria Elena Garcia-Garza (Universidad Autonoma de Nuevo Leon, Monterrey, Mexico) made her third visit to the LACM Polychaete Section, 27 March to 4 April. Her specialty is a devilishly frustrating and poorly understood yet ecologically important family, the Capitellidae, of which we have numerous type and non-type specimens essential for her work. In addition to her own research, Maria Elena and Leslie Harris (Collection Manager, Polychaetes) are collaborating on a revision of the genera *Notodasus* and *Dodecasetta*. The revision will include 2 new species collected by Leslie and Jody Martin on their 2006 *Census of Marine Life* cruise to the Northwest Hawaiian Islands.



Vertebrate Paleontology

Johnathan Orcutt, of the University of Oregon, studied our collections on 16 March. Steven Jasinski, of the State Museum of Pennsylvania, visited on 24 March, and in addition to studying Late Cretaceous ankylosaurids, theropods, and turtles looked at our Paleocene reptiles. Also on 24 March, Dr. Tony Huntley, professor of marine biology at Saddleback College in Mission Viejo, California, and his student visited to look at Orange County fossil dolphins.



On 3 May, Lauren Berg, of the University of Washington, visited to study pivotal type and other complete fossil pinniped skulls with Lawrence Barnes in conjunction with her investigation of the correlation of eye size to deep diving abilities.

Also on 3 May, Kirk Johnson and Ray Troll, who later that day gave a lecture about their travels in

preparing their books about fossil discoveries, visited with Vertebrate Paleontology staff to obtain ideas about west coast fossils and fossil localities. Seen here, they are discussing California fossil fishes with Gary Takeuchi.

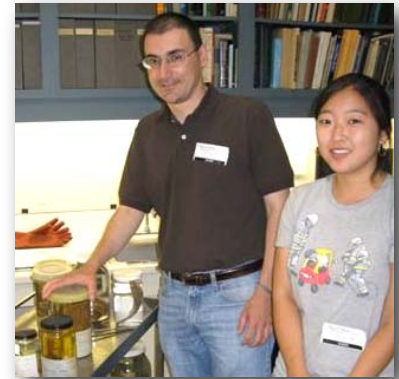


Malacology

Heather Hawke (Moss Landing Marine Lab) visited Malacology in mid-March to examine the holdings of white abalone (*Haliotis sorenseni*) and took shell samples for destructive analysis. Jann Vendetti (California State Univ., Los Angeles) visited with Malacology associate Ángel Valdés and to use the SEM. Land snail specialist Lance Gilbertson (Newport Beach, CA) continues working in the Malacology holdings of helicid gastropods. Author Janet Forsyth (Montreal, Quebec, Canada) who was visiting Mineralogy came to Malacology to discuss the stratigraphy of the Los Angeles Basin with Lindsey Groves and Mary Stecheson. Dan Muhs and Randy Schuman (USGS, Denver) continue their geochronologic work on the terrace deposits of the California Channel Islands and delivered more bulk samples for processing by Lindsey Groves. Anselmo Peñas (Madrid, Spain) visited with Malacology associate Pat LaFollette and discussed the Malacology holdings of the micromollusk family Pyramidellidae.

Ichthyology

Francesco Santini and students from UCLA visited the collection to examine and measure boxfishes (Ostraciidae) in the Fish Collection for a 3-D scanning project and phylogenetic study of the Tetraodontiformes.



Recent Publications

Campbell, K.E., D.R. Prothero, L. Romero-Pittman, F. Hertel, and N. Rivera. 2010. Amazonian magnetostratigraphy: Dating the first pulse of the Great American Faunal Interchange. *Journal of South American Earth Sciences*, 29 (2010): 619-626.

Clement, A. & **Long, J.** 2010. Air-breathing adaptation in a marine Devonian lungfish. *Biology Letters* (on-line Feb 10, 2010), 4pp.

Feeney R. F., R. J. Lavenberg and R. L. Pitman. 2010. Description of a complete *Liopropoma* larva from the Gulf of California (Mexico) and its comparison with *L. fasciatum* and *L. longilepis* (Actinopterygii: Epinephelidae). *Ciencias Marinas* 36(1): 83-89.

Holland, T.H., **Long, J.**, & Snitting, D. 2010. New information on the enigmatic tetrapodomorph fish *Marsdenichthys longiocipitus* (Long 1985). *J. Vert. Paleontol.* 30 (1): 68-77.

Long, J.A. & Trinjstic, K. 2010. The Late Devonian Gogo Formation Lagerstätte of Western Australia: Exceptional Early Vertebrate Preservation and Diversity. *Annual Reviews in Earth and Planetary Sciences* 38: 255-279.

Mills, S. J., Birch, W. D., **Kampf, A. R.**, and van Wambeke, L. (2010) Kobokoboite, $Al_6(PO_4)_4(OH)_6 \cdot 11H_2O$, a new mineral from the Kobokobo pegmatite, Democratic Republic of Congo. *European Journal of Mineralogy* 22, 305-308.

Pasero, M., **Kampf, A. R.**, Ferraris, C., Pekov, I. V., Rakovan, J. F., and White, T. J. (2010) Nomenclature of the apatite supergroup minerals. *European Journal of Mineralogy* 22, 163-179.

Pasero, M., **Kampf, A. R.**, Ferraris, C., Pekov, I. V., Rakovan, J. F., and White, T. J. (2010) Minerals Matters: New apatite nomenclature. *Elements* 6, 127.

Staff Departures and New Staff

New Chief Librarian

Research & Collections is pleased to welcome Richard P. Hulser as the new chief librarian for NHM. He comes to the museum with a varied background in academic and corporate libraries, electronic content and digital libraries development, and technology strategy planning consulting. During his academic studies, Richard was an intern in the education department at the American Museum of Natural History where he developed an audio tour of the meteorites, minerals & gems exhibit for all visitors including the visually challenged. He also conducted tours of the dinosaur halls for schools and other visiting groups.

Richard is a Fellow of SLA (Special Libraries Association) and has served on the SLA Board of Directors. He has been an invited speaker at international professional association meetings, focusing on topics such as content management and portal technologies, copyright in the digital world, and the future use of technology for content and knowledge management. He has also written many articles on topics related to technology use in libraries and information centers, some of which are discussed on his blog at <http://cybrarianviews.com>. He can also be followed on Twitter as Cybrarianviews.



Richard holds an ALA accredited M.A. in librarianship & information management from the University of Denver; M.Ed. in instructional media and instructional product development from Utah State University; and B.S. in Earth & Space Sciences from Stony Brook University. He hopes to re-energize and enhance library services to provide access to electronic resources and the library's physical collection to meet the information needs of the museum. Richard can be contacted at rhulser@nhm.org.



Vertebrate Paleontology

Kathleen Gonzales, Paleontological Preparator for the new *Age of Mammals* exhibit hall, has left our employment to focus on her family. Among other projects, Kathy worked on the new mounted skeleton of the sperm whale, *Aulophyseter morricei*, on refurbishing our previously-mounted mammal skeletons, and on mold-making for the touch specimens. She will continue her relationship with the Museum as a volunteer in Vertebrate Paleontology (Kathy is a former "Volunteer of the Year" award recipient), whereby she intends to stay involved with dolphin research.

Herpetology

Neftali Camacho became the permanent full-time Herpetology Collection Manager in April.

Rancho La Brea

In March, Kristen Brown transferred from Rancho La Brea to the Dinosaur Institute. Kristen worked at Rancho La Brea for over seven years as an excavator; five of those were summer positions in the Pit 91 excavation where she was “pit boss” for several seasons. As well as excavating, Kristen loved speaking to school groups, in addition to supervising a large number of volunteers in the pit. She is currently working towards her master’s in education and hopes to go on to full time teaching once the new dinosaur gallery is open. Trained as a geologist, Kristen was keen to broaden her paleontological experiences and one day hopes to build strong ties between the museum and the school where she teaches. She is already missed at the Page!



Excavator Kristen Brown ascending from Pit 91.



Excavator Andrea Thomer holding the recently discovered camel skull from project 23.

In April, Andrea Thomer, Senior Excavator for Project 23, left her full-time position in anticipation of her move to the University of Illinois (Urbana) this summer. She has been accepted for an MS in Library Information Sciences with a specialty in data curation. Currently she works one day a week at Rancho La Brea and full-time at a local law firm as a librarian assistant. Her blog at <http://excavatrix.blogspot.com> — The Excavatrix — has provided wonderful and positive publicity for the Project 23 operation and she will continue to update it for the foreseeable future. She also hopes to base her MS dissertation on a La Brea-related topic. We wish her all the best but her full-time presence is greatly missed!

Miscellaneous

History

History Curator William Estrada travelled to Seattle to attend the *National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies 37th Annual Conference*, where he received the organization’s 2010 book award for *The Los Angeles Plaza: Sacred and Contested Space*. From left-to-right: Dr. Nohemy Solórzano-Thompson, NACCS Chair, William, and Dr. Karleen Pendelton-Jiménez, 2010 Book Award Committee Chair.



*Those who have devoted their lives to
collections — obdurate people, odd people,
admirable people — actually make a
museum what it is and should be.*

*Richard Fortey, Dry Storeroom No. 1: The Secret
Life of the Natural History Museum, Knopf, 2008.*



The Research & Collections Newsletter is issued five 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.

Editor: Dr. Joel W. Martin, Curator of Crustacea and Chief of the Division of Invertebrate Studies.

Layout: N. Dean Pentcheff, Research Associate, Crustacea.

All issues of the newsletter may be found at:
<http://collections.nhm.org/newsletters>