

# Research & Collections Newsletter



September 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

### History, Conservation

#### *Victory at Pebble Beach!*

On Sunday, August 15, the Museum's 1908 Pierce Great Arrow automobile was entered into the famed Pebble Beach *Concours d'Elegance* as an invited entrant, with costs of transportation to and from the event covered by the organizers. We are proud to announce that she won the 1st Prize in the Prewar Preservation Class (L-1) and also picked up the Chairman's Trophy (judged as the best car in show by the event Chairman). The car was able to be exhibited thanks to an extraordinary effort by Beth



Werling, with help from the

Conservation and History departments to prepare the vehicle for show and get it up and running again. The win signifies that we have one of the world's best early Pierce Great Arrows in original unrestored condition. It also reinforces our approach to keeping vehicles preserved with their 'cultural DNA' intact as reference specimens for future generations.



*Above: NHM's 1908 Pierce Great Arrow in the Winners Circle at Pebble Beach, Aug 15th 2010. Left: John Long and Beth Werling with trophies in the winner's circle with the NHM 1908 Pierce Great Arrow, Pebble Beach, August 15th 2010.*

Collecting the trophies was not without incident. After the Museum team was told they had won “something,” the car had to be started up and was driven to the line to wait for presentation. Museum VP for Research John Long went up as the passenger in the car with Tired Ironwork’s Chris Kidd as the driver. Kept in a holding pattern for 45 minutes, she eventually overheated and had to be pushed to the spot where the trophies were distributed. With a quick push downhill she roared to life again, and was driven to the winner’s circle (above right) for all to admire. The crew included Werling, Julia Rivera, John Long and his wife Heather, driver Chris Kidd and mechanic Bruce from Tired Iron Works in Monrovia. The Museum has been collecting cars since 1929. The Gardena facility houses approximately 63 historic cars and motorcycles dating from 1900 through 1984. The 1908 Pierce Great Arrow was one of the first American luxury cars. Ours was originally owned by the wife of the editor of the *San Francisco Examiner*. It was donated to us in 1937 by the widow of a gentleman who had displayed it in his private auto museum in San Jose. Our Pierce is the only one in original condition, unheard of for a car of its age and type. This is the first County car to win at Pebble Beach.

## Vertebrate Paleontology



Five placoderm fish skulls and armors from the Middle-Late Devonian of Morocco were purchased from a fossil dealer for NHM collections by Mark Pankowski of Washington, D.C. Most represent new species or genera and will be described and named by Dr. Long and colleagues. The specimens are 3-dimensionally preserved and will be acid prepared out of the rock just like the Gogo fishes Dr Long has been working on in Australia.

*A new genus of brachythoracid arthrodire (placoderm fish) from Morocco, around 380-390 million years old.*

## Vertebrate Paleontology



The Museum’s new Age of Mammals Hall opened to the public opening on 11 July 2010. Following the opening, certain skeletons that had been used in the previous hall but not in the new hall were crated and moved into warehouse storage. Sam McLeod and Vanessa Rhue (pictured here packing a horse skeleton) were primarily responsible for this.



## Ichthyology

Margaret Neighbors and Rick Feeney met with Algalita Marine Research Foundation biologists to help with the identification of fish collected in the Western Atlantic Ocean. The specimens’ stomachs were then examined for plastic debris. Algalita is helping investigate the effects of plastics on ecosystems in the open ocean.

## Research Library

Research Library services, including interlibrary loan, research assistance, books and journals processing and cataloging, are all operational out of the temporary location (Room 323). Please drop by to see the recently received journals and other publications between the hours of 10:00 am and 4:00 pm.

## Rancho La Brea

It has been a busy summer in the collections at Rancho La Brea. Blaine Schubert and Steven Wallace from East Tennessee State University and Larissa DeSantis from Vanderbilt University visited for one week in May, with graduate students Elizabeth Schmitt and Sharon Holte. Their main focus was to make molds of sabertoothed cat, dire wolf and American lion teeth. By examining the microscopic scratches and pits on the carnassials of these extinct carnivores one can infer the diet of the animal by comparing the microwear patterns to those of extant carnivores.

Jim Mead, also from ETSU and Marci Hollenshead from Cal Poly, Pomona came in May to work with Chris Shaw on describing the reptile material from a Pleistocene site in El Golfo, Sonora, Mexico.

In June, Virginia Naples and Chris Hubbard from Northern Illinois University visited with graduate students Lindsey Koper and Burcu Carlonto. Lindsey is studying locomotion in dire wolves and Burcu is studying felid limb muscle morphology. Virginia used the opportunity to take photos of skeletal elements for the vertebrate anatomy class she teaches as well as gathering more data for her ground sloth research.

In August Mairin Balisi from the University of Michigan visited for two weeks and also worked on making molds of carnivore teeth to examine microwear patterns. Her Ph.D. study encompasses sabertoothed cat, dire wolf, American lion, short-faced bear, cougar, bobcat, gray wolf, coyote, American badger, and the striped skunk.



*L to R: Larissa DeSantis, Sharon Holte, Blaine Schubert and Elizabeth Schmitt.*



*Jim Mead examining reptile fossils from El Golfo.*



*Virginia Naples photographing femora.*



*Mairin Balisi making molds of sabertoothed cat molars.*

## William S. Hart Museum

Ayesha Saletore, William S. Hart Museum administrator, reports on recent work to the Ranch House and the Hart Mansion that improves the care of the Material Culture collection.

Thanks to grant funding made possible through the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development and the collaboration of the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County with the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, capital improvements to the Hart Ranch House have been completed this summer in order to better protect the artifacts housed and displayed inside. Originally, the grant allowed for the installation of a new heating, ventilation and air conditioning system to provide a better environment within the Ranch House building for Hart Museum artifacts. With the new system completed under budget, Museum and Park staff created an additional scope of work that would adhere to the original project's purpose. This included the application of window film that will protect the artifacts from ultraviolet rays, installation of window security measures and window repair work, termite investigation and treatment, and the replacement of the two non-historic doors with more secure and historically accurate doors. All aspects of the project contribute to the health and security of the Hart artifacts, which include film props, personal furnishings, and Hart's saddle and tack collection.



The Hart Mansion's tile roof will be replaced this season. Due to the nature of this project, the Museum's mansion will be closed for the duration of the construction. Beginning on July 26, 2010, Museum Staff have been packing and securing artifacts from the mansion's second floor so that they can be safely moved to the mansion's first floor during the roof renovations. In addition to the Museum re-roofing project, work will also be completed on doors, windows and balconies of the mansion as well as other buildings surrounding the Museum in Hart Park. After the completion of this project, the Hart Museum will be better equipped to protect its building and artifacts. This project is made possible by the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation with the cooperation of the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. During the renovations, the Park grounds, Animal Barnyard, and experience the Ranch House are still accessible to visitors.

## Marine Invertebrate Group and Invertebrate Paleontology



In the first half of the year, the Marine Invertebrate Group (Crustacea, Echinoderms, Malacology, Polychaetes, and the Marine Biodiversity Center, along with Invertebrate Paleontology) cooperatively developed a common specimen database schema. The NSF-supported "Specify" system was selected as the platform (<http://specifysoftware.org>). In June, Dean Pentcheff traveled to meet for two days with the Specify staff in Lawrence, Kansas to begin developing the customizations to Specify that will be needed to accommodate our database design.

# Field Work

## Dinosaur Institute

The Dinosaur Institute recently returned from the Holland Dinosaur Expedition Utah 2010, a month long field expedition to the Late Jurassic Morrison Formation in Southeastern Utah. The crew included staff, students, and volunteers of the DI, as well as staff from Marketing, and colleagues and students from George Washington University, the Universidad Autonoma of Madrid, Spain, and the Museo Carmen Funes of Argentina. Work focused on a site that last year produced 13 articulated



caudal vertebrae of a camarasaur sauropod. This year further work at this site produced a wealth of additional material of the same dinosaur, including limb bones, many more vertebrae, as well as pelvic and shoulder bones. The specimen appears to be largely complete and work will resume next year. These fossils add an important specimen to the rather small collection of sauropods (long-necked dinosaurs) of the Dinosaur Institute. The team was

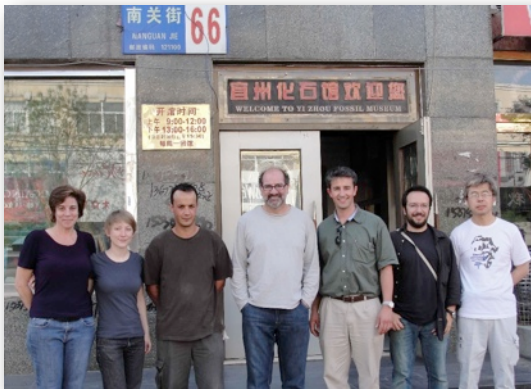
joined in the field by two film crews — one shooting producing footage for Dinosaur Mysteries, and the other creating a documentary for the BBC. We are all thrilled at the success of this year's expedition!





This past spring, the Dinosaur Institute conducted a week long field expedition to the Petrified Forest National Park in Arizona. The exposures within the park are mostly of the Late Triassic Chinle Formation and contain fossils of giant amphibians called metoposaurs, archosaurian reptiles such as phytosaurs and aetosaurs, as well as fish, invertebrates, and plants. For the past 3 years the Dinosaur Institute has been working with the park paleontologists, who are conducting the first biostratigraphic survey of the park, by working within specific areas of the

park and reporting all of our findings. During this expedition we found and collected several important specimens from an area where very little previous work had been done, including a partial phytosaur skull and portion of the armor of the aetosaur *Typosuchus*. This is only the third specimen of this aetosaur to be found in this unit and it will go on display in Dinosaur Mysteries. We also conducted collections research to aid in a reconstruction of the paleoenvironment of the Chinle Formation for an area of Dinosaur Mysteries that will be focused on Mesozoic environments. Overall the trip was very successful and we are excited to continue our work there in the future!



In May, the Dinosaur Institute returned to Liaoning, northeastern China, to support ongoing research on Mesozoic birds. Curator Dr. Luis Chiappe and Fulbright Scholar Dr. Jesus Marugan-Lobon collected data for current morphometric research on the 125 to 120 million-year-old confuciusornithids, a group of primitive beaked birds. The trip began with 10 days of preparation by DI preparator Maureen Walsh and photography by DI illustrator/photographer Stephanie Abramowicz at the Dalian Natural History Museum. Then the team

traveled north to the Paleontology Research Institute at Shenyang Normal University to organize for a 5 day expedition into rural Liaoning intending to discover and document as many fossil birds from this region as possible. Working tirelessly, the group added more than 40 specimens from the Shihetun Fossil Bird Park of Beipiao (Yixian Formation, ~125 Mya), the Shangheshon Bird Fossil Geology Park of Chaoyang (Jiufutang Fm, ~120 Mya) and the Yizhou Fossil and Geology Park in Jinzhou City. The team also had the opportunity to interact with a great number of people, including lunch at the home of Mr. Lee (discoverer of *Sinosauropteryx prima* – the first feathered dinosaur) and hot pot and billiards with the director of China's first green museum, Dr. Damien Leloup. The DI's second China trip for the 2010 field season was a great success.





## Malacology

On June 16th Lindsey Groves (Malacology) and Harry Filkorn (IP) assisted visiting graduate student Kristen Jenkins (University of Chicago) in collecting bulk fossil invertebrate samples from several late Pleistocene localities around the Palos Verdes Peninsula. Kristen is studying community changes in Recent and Pleistocene faunas of southern California and visited NHMLAC to examine IP and Malacology holdings and to collect bulk samples for analysis.

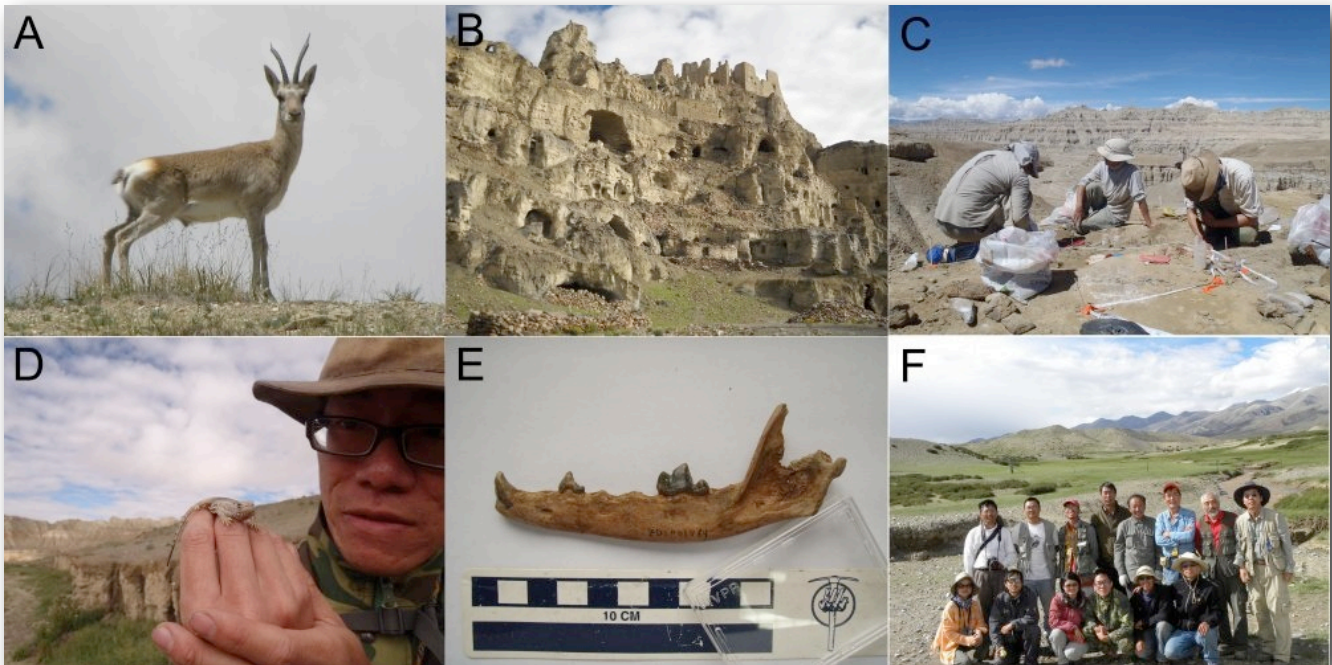
*Kristen Jenkins (Univ. Chicago) collecting late Pleistocene invertebrates at LACMIP loc. 126o8 [Gaffey Terrace, ~120,000 year old strata]. (image by L. Groves).*



## Vertebrate Paleontology

This summer's Tibetan Plateau expedition report comes from Xiaoming Wang in the field.

Vertebrate Paleontology Curator Xiaoming Wang, Curatorial Assistant Gary Takeuchi, and graduate student Jack Tseng worked on the Tibetan Plateau from 24 July to 30 August, 2010. They spent one week in Qinghai Province, collecting fossils at a new locality near Tuosu Nor (central Tsaidam Basin), amidst rich swarms of mosquitoes. The rest of the time was spent working in Zhada Basin in western Tibet, with the largest team yet to explore the area (see photo F). Within the first few days, a new and taxonomically rich fossil bonebed was discovered in Zhada by Juan Liu



A, Tibetan gazelle, *Procopra picticaudata*; B, cave dwellings in Piyang Village, Zhada Basin; C, excavation crew members (from left) Qiang Li, Gary Takeuchi, and Jack Tseng working in the ZD1001 bonebed; D, Jack Tseng holding an unknown lizard, with a shovel-shaped snout unlike the typical sand lizard seen in previous years; E, the new, unusual fossil fox jaw from ZD1001; F, the 2010 Tibet Expedition team.

(University of Alberta), and an excavation crew worked in that locality (photo C), extracting more than 100 specimens of large mammals (and hundreds of additional specimens belonging to small mammals such as pikas and rodents). In all, at least 16 different vertebrate taxa were preserved in a pocket of fossil concentration 3 feet by 3 feet in area.

Among the most outstanding finds were the first fossil squirrel remains in Tibet (belonging to the extinct genus *Aepyosciurus*) and the first ancestral “zokor” remains from Tibet (in the genus *Prosiphneus*), the latter being sort a fossorial animal between a rat and a mole in its ecology. The first fox (photo E), weasel, and badger remains from Tibet were also found during the field season, doubling the number of fossil carnivores known from western Tibet. In addition, we excavated more than a dozen jaws of three different bovids, the family that included gazelles, goats, and their relatives. The rarest find was a carpometacarpus of a fossil bird; its identification is awaiting preparation and study. Observations were also made on the living mammals, including the ubiquitous Tibetan gazelle *Procapra picticaudata* (photo A) and the kiang *Equus kiang*. Sightings were also made of the songbird *Serinus pusillus*, the Himalayan marmot *Marmota himalayana*, and the woolly hare *Lepus oiostolus*.

Approximately sixty of the specimens collected from this field season are being lent to our Museum and will be transported back to Los Angeles by Xiaoming, Gary, and Jack. They will be prepared, cleaned, and photographed for several proposed research studies, including description of the new occurrences of the aforementioned vertebrates, as well as the taphonomy of the bonebed. This field season was a much-appreciated success for the LACM team after a two-year hiatus from Tibet because of denied fieldwork permits. Jack will remain in Beijing until the end of September to unwrap, curate, and measure the Tibetan specimens once they arrive back at the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology along with the field vehicles.

# Meetings, Workshops, and Presentations

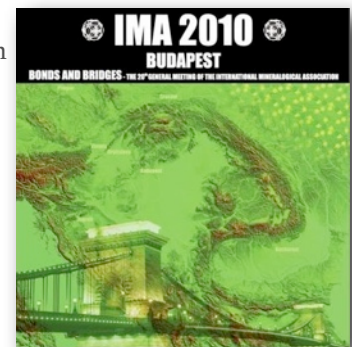
## Mammalogy

Jim Dines attended the American Society of Mammalogists annual conference held in June in Laramie, Wyoming. Dines presented a poster reporting on a shift in the distribution of the two common dolphin species that occur off southern California. He was also re-appointed chair of the Society’s Marine Mammals Committee.

## Mineral Sciences

At the 20th General Meeting of the International Mineralogical Association, 21-27 August, in Budapest, Hungary, Tony Kampf presented the keynote paper for the session on mineral museums and historical mineralogy. The paper titled *CSI Mineralogy: Fakes, Frauds and Shoddy Science* stressed that it is the responsibility of museum curators to uncover mineral fakery, fraud and shoddy scientific practice in order to maintain the integrity, authenticity and scientific reliability of their collections.

Tony also presented an invited paper for the session on new minerals, nomenclature and classification. This paper, titled *Heteropolymolybdates: structural relationships, nomenclature scheme and new species*, provided the results of a detailed and ongoing investigation of a heretofore little understood group of minerals.



In addition to his scientific presentations, Tony was a chairperson for the session on new minerals, nomenclature and classification and participated in several meetings of the Commission on New Minerals, Nomenclature and Classification as U.S. delegate to that Commission.

## Malacology

Lindsey Groves and Jim McLean attended the combined meeting of the Western Society of Malacologists and the American Malacological Society at the Aztec Conference Center at San Diego State University, 26-30 June, 2010. Lindsey chaired the session *Molluscan Paleontology 2010: Contributed Papers in Honor of LouElla R. Saul*, and gave three presentations and a tribute paper to LouElla Saul. LouElla, who is a Research Associate in Invertebrate Paleontology, was honored for her 50+ years of contributions to molluscan paleontology. Presentations by Lindsey included: *Cypraeidae (Mollusca: Gastropoda) from the lower Miocene Cantaure Formation of Northern Venezuela* [with Bernard Landau, Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal]; *New species of Paleogene cypraeideans (Mollusca: Gastropoda) from the Pacific Slope of western North America*; and *A new species of Late Cretaceous cypraeid from the Santa Ana Mountains, Orange County, California* [with Harry Filkorn (IP) and John Alderson (IP Associate)]. Jim presented *Revision of Recent and fossil Liotiidae (Gastropoda: Vetigastropoda)*, updating his current research, which has expanded to more than 500 worldwide species. Additional NHMLAC Research Associates also in attendance included Hans Bertsch, Pat LaFollette, Lance Gilbertson, George Kennedy, Richard Squires, and Ángel Valdés.



Participants of the WSM/AMS Molluscan Paleontology 2010 (L to R): John Alderson (IP Res.Assoc.), Richard Squires (CSUN), Ed Petuch (Fla. Atl. Univ.), LouElla Saul (IP Res. Assoc.), Christy Visaggi (Univ. No. Carolina), Lindsey Groves (Malacology), and Carole Hickman (UC Berkeley, Museum of Paleontology).

## Dinosaur Institute



Dr. Luis Chiappe was invited to give the opening plenary lecture at the 25th International Ornithological Congress in Sao Paulo, Brazil, on August 22nd. His talk featured the recent advances in avian paleontology and their bearing on the dinosaurian origin of birds; the latter is a view that is today widely accepted within the ornithological community. Dinosaur Institute Ph.D. student Alyssa Bell also delivered a paper on her work on a new statistical approach for understanding the ecological niches occupied by birds during the Mesozoic Era.

## Polychaete Worms

In August, Leslie Harris (Polychaetes) was invited to speak by Desert Divers, the oldest dive club in California, which meets in the middle of the arid Antelope Valley. Leslie's topic was *Plastic (Not So) Fantastic*, a broad overview of the problems and challenges arising from plastic debris in the marine environment.

## Marine Biodiversity Center

Dr. Regina Wetzer presented at the 7th International Crustacean Congress, June 20-25, which was hosted by the Chinese Crustacean Society and co-sponsored by The Crustacean Society and The Carcinological Society of Japan. The Congress was held in Qingdao, China. Carcinologists from all corners of the world attended the program's parallel sessions covering topics as diverse as Taxonomy and Phylogeny, Biogeography, Biodiversity and Population





Genetics, Ecology, Behavior, Invasive Crustacea, Crustacean Response to Global Climate Change, Effect of Human Exploitation on Decapod Resources, Larval Biology, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Disease Control of Aquatic Crustacea, and more. Wetzer with her co-authors, Marcos Pérez-Losada, Niel L. Bruce, presented *Phylogenetic Relationship of the Superfamily Sphaeromatoidea (Crustacea: Peracarida: Isopoda)*.



USC Undergraduate Adam Wall presented at “Evolution 2010,” the joint annual meeting of the Society for the Study of Evolution (SSE), the Society of Systematic Biologists (SSB), and the American Society of Naturalists (ASN), on June 25-29, 2010, at the Oregon

Convention Center, Portland. This was Adam’s first presentation at a professional scientific meeting, and we are proud of his fine contribution: *Rare, old and precious: Discriminating pillbugs from Alaska to San Diego*.

Evolution 2010 was the largest Evolution conference ever with ~1,950 registrants and more than 1,500 presentations! For more about Adam, visit <http://isopods.nhm.org/people/wall>

## Crustacea, Marine Biodiversity Center, and Rancho La Brea

Dean Pentcheff (Crustacea), Regina Wetzer (MBC), and Andrea Thomer (Rancho La Brea) attended “iEvoBio” (the Informatics for Phylogenetics, Evolution, and Biodiversity Conference) in Portland, Oregon on June 29-30. The meeting’s themes centered around the use of networking and informatics approaches to improve phylogenetic and biodiversity research. Dean presented a “lightning talk” on *Copyrights and digitizing the systematic literature: the horror... the horror...* summarizing some of the present and future options available for making copyrighted systematic publications more accessible than they are today.

# External Funding

## Mammalogy

Mammalogy staff received a contract to process, curate and archive marine mammal specimens for NOAA’s Southwest Fisheries Science Center. In addition to documenting the life history of marine mammal species that occur in the eastern tropical Pacific, work performed under this contract examines how these species are impacted by human activities such as commercial fisheries.

## Dinosaur Institute

The Dinosaur Institute recently received a donation of books worth approximately \$10,000 from Professor John Fleagle of the State University of New York (Stony Brook). These books, largely on Patagonian paleontology, will be incorporated into the DI’s Henkin Library, located on the 4th floor.

## Vertebrate Paleontology

Staff of Vertebrate Paleontology and employees of the Age of Mammals Hall Project helped host Museum Trustees, Fellows, and donors at receptions during the week prior to the public opening of the hall. Shown here (at right) are primary Curator of the exhibit John Harris and Board President Paul Haaga.



# Public Outreach

## Mammalogy

In late May, more than 100 first grade students from Longfellow Elementary School (Long Beach) received a behind-the-scenes tour of the Mammalogy collections during their visit to the Museum. Jim Dines participated in Career Day at Colin Powell Academy (also in Long Beach) in June. Later in the summer, Dines helped a Boy Scout troop from West LA earn their merit badges in “Mammal Study” by showing them how mammal specimens are prepared, catalogued and used in research. Finally, Mammalogy staff participated in Adventures in Nature programming, giving collections tours and presenting short talks to our day campers all summer.



*Margaret Hardin and Chris Coleman at July's Curator's Cupboard presenting a selection of What on Earth? objects from the Anthropology collections.*

## Anthropology

The theme for the Curator's Cupboard on July 30th was created in celebration of the opening of the Rotunda's *What on Earth?* exhibit. As in the exhibit, visitors were presented with several unfamiliar objects, prompting them to ask “What is that?”, and in response Margaret Hardin, Chris Coleman and KT Hajeian would try to lead them to the answer by having them guess and ask more questions. Chris Coleman selected an interesting array of “mystery” objects from both the Archaeology and Ethnology collections including a polished obsidian mirror from Pre-Columbian Mexico, a wooden pillow from Africa, and a Polynesian stick chart that islanders used to map ocean swells and currents.

## Ornithology

Ornithology Collections Manager Kimball Garrett gave a “Curatorial Cupboard” presentation on 21 August about flightlessness in birds, tying in with the *What On Earth?* case that features those big moa femurs.

## Herpetology

Nefty Camacho opened the Herpetology Collection for Scavenger Safari, giving several tours to members in August.

## Ichthyology

Research Associate Dr. Javier Gago brought his Marine Biology classes from Glendale College for tours of the Fish Collection in June. Bob Grove visited in July with his students from the Pasadena Art Center College of Design. We talked about flyingfishes, anglerfishes, hagfishes and sharks. Jeff Seigel participated in the Adventures in Nature Program and gave a tour of the Fish Collection.

## Polychaete Worms and AIN

Leslie Harris (Polychaetes) upheld the honor of the Worms in the *Great Debate* held for AIN in August against Lindsey Groves (Mollusks), Kimball Garrett (Birds), Jim Dines (Marine Mammals), and Shannon DeVaney (Fishes). She also presented 3 “wormly” received slide shows and collection tours for grades 2-3, 4-5, and 6-7.

## Seaver Center

In August, Seaver Center staff conducted two tours for museum supporters, providing a close look at movie memorabilia, rare maps and other documents. Among the items shown was a rare 6 ½ feet panoramic of Universal Studios' opening day in March, 1915.



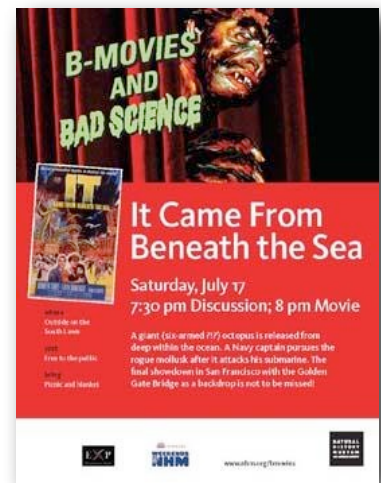
## B-Movies and Bad Science

R&C curators and collection managers participated in the third season of this popular public program series. Hosted by History Collections Manager Beth Werling, each evening started with a discussion led by NHM science experts and included displays of specimens as well as artifacts from the Natural History Museum's collection of B-movie memorabilia, including lobby cards, posters, and movie props.

This year, due to building construction, the films were moved outdoors. From June through August, NHM screen movies on the South Lawn of the Natural History Museum or in Hancock Park, the grounds surrounding the Page Museum. The result was an instant increase in attendance at screenings held both at the Page Museum and at NHM. Also, this year two of the filmmakers saw the advertisements for their films, contacted NHM, and appeared on stage with hostess Medusa; Shawn Schepps the screenwriter for *Encino Man* and Carl Gottlieb, the director and co-screenwriter for *Caveman*. Also, a BIG thank you to colleagues in R & C and Living Collections who also joined in discussions, displays, and surrounding mayhem:

*Encino Man* Trevor Valle and Eric Scott  
*It Came From Beneath the Sea* Lindsey Groves  
*The Killer Shrews* Jim Dines  
*Gorilla at Large* Claire Dean  
*Gamera* Richard Hulser and Leslie Gordon  
*Caveman* John Harris

Thanks to R&C, we have already been invited back for a fourth season!



## Malacology and Invert Paleo

Lindsey Groves led two *Fossil Hunting in Silverado Canyon* family field trips with Mary Stecheson (IP). The second trip was added as the result of overwhelming demand for an additional Spring excursion. Seventy-five participants on the two trips collected Turonian (Late Cretaceous) [-90 mya] fossils from the Baker Canyon and Holz Shale members of the Ladd Formation, most of which were mollusks. Many thanks to Briana Burrows, Karen Ewald, and Kim Kessler for on-site logistics. Former NHMLAC staff Christy Evans (Burbank) and George Davis (Glendale) volunteered with on-site duties and photography.



Participants of Fossil Hunting in Silverado Canyon on outcrop of the Holz Shale Member of the Ladd Formation.

NHMLAC Staff and volunteers at Silverado Canyon (L to R): George Davis (CSUN), Mary Stecheson (IP), Lindsey Groves (Malacology), Briana Burrows (E&E), Christyann Evans (Burbank, CA), and Kim Kessler (E&E).



## Crustacea

On August 19-20, Dean Pentcheff traveled to Washington, D.C. to work with staff of the Integrated Taxonomic Information System (<http://www.itis.gov>). The ITIS system serves as the taxonomic backbone for numerous U.S. and international biodiversity initiatives. The goal of this visit was to begin bringing the taxonomic structure of the Decapoda in ITIS up to the modern taxonomy published in 2009 (coauthored by NHMLAC Crustacea staff).

## Vertebrate Paleontology

The new Age of Mammals exhibit hall opened to the public on 11 July 2010, and this was accompanied by several receptions and public relations activities that resulted in aired interviews and newspaper articles.

Curator Lawrence Barnes worked with Edgar Chamarro in producing a film about sperm whale evolution that is tied to our new Age of Mammals Hall and can be accessed through the Museum's web site. Among specimens in the film is the very significant fossil brain of a sperm whale (pictured here) that was lent to us by Robert Macgillivray and his family for evaluation.



## Malacology and More

NHMLAC staff and Fellows gathered on Saturday, June 8th for *Explorers of the Sea* on the *R/V Challenger* (Long Beach). Trawls and dredges yielded a wide variety of invertebrates (echinoderms, mollusks, and shrimp) and fish (guitar fish, bat rays, halibut, and midshipman) all indicative of a nearshore environment, for examination. Afterwards everyone met at Marine Park Beach north of the marina for a box lunch. R&C staff included Rick Feeney (Ichthyology), Harry Filkorn (IP), Cathy Groves (Echinoderms), and Lindsey Groves (Malacology).



*Left: Cathy Groves (Echinoderms) showing and discussing echinoderms with Fellows participants of Explorers of the Sea, Long Beach Outer Harbor.*

*Below: Rick Feeney (Ichthyology) trading fish stories with Fellows, participants of Explorers of the Sea, in Long Beach Outer Harbor.*



*NHMLAC Explorers of the Sea staff (L to R): Desiree Ocampo (Membership), Jane Pisano (Director and President), Harry Filkorn (IP), Rick Feeney (Ichthyology), Lindsey Groves (Malacology), Danielle Brown (Annual Giving), Tom Jacobson (Advancement), Erin Romo (Membership), Cathy Groves (Echinoderms), and Robin Savoian (Fellows Manager).*



On July 17th Lindsey Groves participated in B-Movies and Bad Science with Beth Werling (History) (see above). The B-Movie *It Came From Beneath the Sea* (1955) featured a giant radiation-altered octopus, which terrorized cargo ships, the Golden Gate Bridge, and the San Francisco Embarcadero. The movie featured state-of-the-art special effects (for 1955) known as stop-motion model animation produced by Ray Harryhausen.

For Adventures in Nature Lindsey Groves teamed up with Jim Dines (Mammalogy), Kimball Garrett (Ornithology), Leslie Harris (Polychaetes), and Shannon DeVaney (Ichthyology) on August 3rd for a good-natured session entitled *The Great Debate*. Each participant was given time to extol the virtues of their group to convince the students whose animals were the coolest. On August 5th Lindsey and Mary Stecheson (IP) gave mini-tours for another AIN session on the variability of Recent and fossil Mollusks.

Lindsey also participated in the second summer session of Curators Cupboard on Saturday, August 21st, for which specimens from the *What on Earth?* were featured. On exhibit were several specimens of carrier shells (Family Xenophoridae), which attach dead shells, corals, barnacles, bottle caps, keys and other items to their own shell for protection and strengthening strategies.

## Mineral Sciences

In June, Tony Kampf led a Gem and Mineral Council field trip to the Stewart Mine (formally Stewart-Lithia mine) in the Pala pegmatite district in San Diego County. Twenty members participated in the event which included collecting and an extensive tour of the mine tunnels from owner Blue Sheppard.



At the turn of the last century the Stewart mine was the largest lithium mine in the U.S. Since the late 1960s it has predominantly been a gem mine, known for vivid pink elbaite (tourmaline) as well as the lithium-rich purple mica called lepidolite.

*Field trip participants dig through the Stewart mine tailings in search of tourmaline crystals.*



*Mine owner Blue Sheppard explains his methods (in great detail) for locating gem pockets in pegmatite.*

## Invertebrate Paleontology

Mary Stecheson participated in the July 31 *What On Earth?* Curator's Cupboard. Mary showed and discussed mysterious trace fossils, which are fossils that show evidence of past biological activity, although the organism that left the evidence is not present. Some of the trace fossils exhibited were a Pliocene (?) cat footprint (thanks to Vertebrate Paleontology), Cambrian trilobite feeding tracks and a Cretaceous ammonite with bite marks, probably from a mosasaur (below).

*Placenticerias sp., Late Cretaceous, Pierre Shale Formation (?), South Dakota. Arrows point to probable bite marks.*



## Rancho La Brea

Trevor Valle presented his latest findings about the Herpetofauna of Project 23 to the Page Museum Docents at their end of academic year meeting. He discussed the large amount of reptile and amphibian material being recovered from the new excavation, including a number of *Clemmys marmorata* (Western Pond Turtle) individuals. The talk was very well received as we continue to inform the docents of the latest findings in the lab.

*Chris Shaw talking to an AIN class about large cats.*



## Rancho La Brea and AIN

Rancho La Brea lab and excavation staff were involved with at least 12 different class activities for Adventures In Nature over a two week period in July. They lead tours of the Fishbowl Lab and excavations, gave presentations about Pleistocene flora and fauna and were involved in helping with the student-made films.

*Gallery Interpreter Sophie Hunter leads a class of Junior Scientists to the Curator's Cupboard table.*

## Curator's Cupboard & Junior Scientist at Rancho La Brea

Aisling Farrell, Chris Shaw, and Trevor Valle brought some the Rancho La Brea collections to the public areas in May for Curator's Cupboard. Focusing on comparative anatomy, Chris and Aisling provided examples from the collection and explained how paleontologists identify fossils. Trevor set up a live microfossil sorting station and a Herpetofauna display, showing how the smaller animal remains are found, while explaining that the majority of the reptile life is extant, and can be studied for comparison.

## Rancho La Brea

### *Megafauna Awareness Day*

Megafauna Awareness Day was held at the Page Museum as part of Public Programs Art & Science Day. R&C lab staff set up a Curator's Cupboard style table with a focus on the megafauna found at Rancho La Brea. The whole day, as the name suggests was organized



*Eric Scott and John Long discussing megafauna extinctions at an evening lecture on Megafauna Awareness Day.*

around discussions and demonstrations about megafauna. There were scheduled shows with the puppeteers and a debut of a baby sabertoothed cat marionette. A free illustrated map and guide of megafauna in southern California was produced in collaboration with local artists and wildlife institutions in the area. Illustrator William Stout came to discuss his paleo artwork and sign his new book. In the evening there were lectures given by Dr. John Long and Eric Scott of San Bernardino County Museum on megafauna extinctions.



*Baby Smilodon marionette show on Megafauna Awareness Day.*



# Student Mentoring and Research

## Vertebrate Paleontology

Nick Barton, a student at San Marino High School, worked in the Department from 5-13 August 2010, assisting us with curation of the Indiana mastodon skeleton (pictured here), and preparation of a fossil leatherback turtle.

Meredith (Staley) Rivin this summer completed her Masters Thesis at California State University Fullerton, describing earliest Miocene cetaceans from Irvine, California.



## Anthropology

The Anthropology Department hosted a short internship with aspiring Collections Manager Judith Martinez from Biola University. Judith just began her senior year and also interned at the Bowers Museum in Santa Ana. While here, she worked with Chris Coleman to re-house many of our larger Hohokam ceramic vessels and helped KT Hajeian to make custom boxes for fragile items from a contemporary Native American collection.

## Marine Biodiversity Center

The Marine Biodiversity Center hosted three Summer Youth Program students for eight weeks this summer. The program, funded via the Ahmanson Foundation in partnership with the Weingart Foundation, enabled local students – Maricela Zurita, Miles Beal-Ampah, and Tyvaey Lott – to obtain meaningful employment in Research and Collections. Maricela, a Sophomore at Cal State Bakersfield, Miles, a Sophomore at the University of Houston, and Tyvaey, a Senior at Palisades Charter High School helped with curation projects in

Invertebrate Paleontology and with topping off and curating the MBC's wet collections. Although all three were familiar with the Museum from previous experiences as visitors, they became intimate with some of our fabulous marine invertebrates and the diversity of our collections. More information about our students can be found at <http://collections.nhm.org/people/students.html>



# Volunteers and Research Associates

## Ornithology

Ornithology Research Associate Kevin J. Zimmer spent 23-25 August conducting research in the collections for his forthcoming field guide to the birds of Brazil and continuing his work on cryptic species of Amazonian birds (this time focusing on the little known furnariid known as the Rufous-tailed Xenops (*Microxenops milleri*)).

We learned in May of the passing on April 28, 2010 of Research Associate Nicholas E. Collias, Emeritus Professor of Biology at UCLA. Dr. Collias and his late wife Elsie, who was also a NHM Research Associate, were renowned experts on many aspects of avian ethology, most notably nest-building behavior.

## Ichthyology

Dr. Margaret Neighbors (right), Research Associate, attended the annual meeting of the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists in Providence, Rhode Island, in July. Margaret works on deep-sea fishes in the section on a regular basis.



## Herpetology

Dr. Stephen Goldberg (left), research associate and professor at Whittier College, continues to work regularly in the Herpetology Collection on the biology of lizards. Dr. Goldberg has published numerous papers in both Herpetology and Ichthyology, two of which are listed in the Recent Publications section of this newsletter.

## Seaver Center

Seaver Center benefited from the work of Princeton University summer intern Sarah Pease-Kerr. Utilizing her Spanish language expertise and with the help of an electronic magnifier, Sarah transcribed and translated a five-page, handwritten document by Antonio F. Coronel, the first Mexican mayor of Los Angeles during the American era.

## Research Library

Graduate Interns and Volunteers in Research Library. While the Research Library is temporarily operating out of Room 323, a few graduate student interns and volunteers have been helping chief librarian Richard Hulser get a backlog of journals and books organized and cataloged and have a list of these items available on the internal portal to Museum staff. The interns include: Rachel Barnes, UCLA, who is now working at the Hart; Colin Delaney, UCLA; Alison Leonard (at right), San Jose State University; and Jun Pan, UCLA. In addition, Snowdy Dodson (at left), recently retired librarian from CSU Northridge, volunteers her time focused on cataloging.





# Distinguished Visitors

## Malacology

Author Ann Vileisis (Portland, OR) visited Malacology to discuss Recent abalone with Jim McLean and examined fossil abalone with Mary Stecheson. Graduate student Kristen Jenkins (University of Chicago) visited Malacology to study near-shore mollusk assemblages. She also spent time in Invertebrate Paleontology and a day in the field collecting Pleistocene samples on the Palos Verdes Peninsula with Lindsey Groves, Harry Filkorn, and Kaustuv Roy (University of San Diego). [see also under field work]. Kaustuv also spent a day in the Recent mollusk collection examining southern California gastropods. Doug Eernisse (California State University at Fullerton) visited the mollusk collection with grad student Candice Aguirre and book dealer Hermann Strack to examine the Malacology holdings of lottiid limpets and chitons. Edward Petuch of Florida Atlantic University visited the malacology collection in June to examine the cypraeid and olivid holdings for research purposes. Land snail specialist Lance Gilbertson (Newport Beach, CA) continues working with the Malacology holdings of helicid gastropods. Celia Churchill (University of Michigan) visited the collection with Research Associate Ángel Valdés to examine nudibranch specimens for research purposes. Invertebrate Paleontology Research Associate Bob Stanton visited malacology to compare fossil spondylid bivalves with their living counterparts.

## Entomology

### *Shandong Province Forest Entomologists visit Entomology*

Eight forest entomologists from Shandong Province, China (plus a translator and a driver) visited the Entomology Section on 12 August (all present in the photograph at right: Wensheng Yao, Hongjing Li, Dongjun Li, Ms. Huarong Qu, Ms. Yonghong Li, Jiafu Wang, Yingfu Niu, and Chuanxi Zhang). Retired lepidopterist Julian Donahue showed them our collection of this moth and shared many publications with them (which Weiping Xie graciously copied for them). Los Angeles was their first stop on an 18-day tour of the United States to study the Fall Webworm (*Hyphantria cunea*), one of the few



North American tiger-moths considered to be a pest, particularly when the larvae feed on ornamental trees. Curiously, the Fall Webworm doesn't occur in southern California (it is much more abundant in the East), but the lure of LACM was too much to resist.



For many years the Fall Webworm has been a pest in Europe (for once we have *exported* a pest to another continent!), but recently it has become a pest in Shandong Province, and the visitors were here to become familiar with the biology and ecology of the moth in its native land.

The entomologists represented the Shandong Forest Pest Control and Quarantine Station, the Shandong Wildlife Protection Station, and five different municipalities in Shandong Province.

## Ornithology

Dr. John Fitzpatrick, Director of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, visited on 19 May and gave a special R&C seminar on the role of citizen science in bird conservation. He also did some research on specimens of Island Scrub-Jays and met with several E&E and R&C staff about potential collaborations between Cornell's Citizen Science programs and NHM's North Campus and Nature Lab planning.

## Vertebrate Paleontology

Julia Frazier (right), representing a geologic consulting firm in Colorado, visited on 26 July 2010. She was one of the collectors of the Simi Valley Mastodon, which is currently on display in the new Age of Mammals Hall.

Brian P. Kraatz, Department of Anatomy at the College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific Western University of Health Sciences in Pomona, visited to study Paleogene rabbits and other mammals.



On 26 May 2010, Evan Martin (left) of the San Diego Museum of Natural History visited to study fossil great white sharks.

Eric Scott of the San Bernardino County Museum visited on 9 August 2010 to study and help arrange our collection of late Pleistocene material from the famous Tule Springs site in Nevada.



## Ichthyology

Dr. Mário de Pinna (right), the Curator of Fishes at the Museu de Zoologia Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil, visited Ichthyology in June to look at our trichomycterid catfishes from South America.

Dr. Milton Love (left) from the University of California Santa Barbara visited Ichthyology and examined stomach contents of some local species to confirm their feeding habits for a revision of one of his books.



Dr. Ross Robertson from the Smithsonian Tropical Research

Institute in Panama visited Ichthyology in August to photograph our shark and ray jaws (right) and other fishes, as part of his work on the biogeography of the shorefishes of the neotropics.



Short-tail stingray jaws (*Dasyatis brevicaudata*).



## Polychaete Worms

Dr. Patricia Salazar-Silva (Ciencias del Mar, Nayarit, Mexico) enjoyed a 2-week visit in the Polychaete Collection in July. She is reviewing the scaleworms (family Polynoidae) of the Mexican Pacific. Among our numerous specimens Paty has found several new species which she will describe in a series of upcoming papers. In August Dr. Milton Love (UCSB), AKA Dr. Rockfish, dropped by the Polychaete Section for a chat with collections manager Leslie Harris. He and various colleagues at NOAA have been sending Leslie worms taken from deep-sea corals & their environs for identification. Among the most recent shipment was an undescribed species of spaghetti worm (family Terebellidae) with a novel method of food gathering. Called “Radio Tower Worms” by the NOAA personnel who collected it, this uses sand grains & glass sponge spicules to build tubes with a framework of projecting rays then attaches mucus webbing to the rays to catch drifting particles of food. Other animals like ophiuroids take advantage of these tubes to climb above the sea floor & possibly to steal food from the worms. Leslie is describing the worm with her Brazilian colleague Dr. Joao Nogueira (Universidade Sao Paulo).



*Radio Tower Worm field, 500 meters deep,  
off the California Channel Islands.*

## Recent Publications

- Barnes, L. G.**, T. Kimura, and **S. J. Godfrey**. 2010. Chapter 23. The evolutionary history and phylogenetic relationships of the superfamily Platanistoidea; pp.445-488, in M. RuizGarcia and J. M. Shostell (eds.), *Biology, evolution, and conservation of river dolphins within South America and Asia; unknown dolphins in danger*, Nova Science Publishers, Inc., Hauppauge, New York.
- Delgado-Blas, V.H., Diaz-Diaz, O. 2010. Description of two new species of *Malacoceros* and *Rhynchospio* spionids (Polychaeta: Spionidae) from the Grand Caribbean region. *Revista Chilena de Historia Natural* 83: 249-257.
- Garrett, K. L.** 2010. Ornithology and the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. Pp. 65-92 in *Contributions to the History of North American Ornithology*, v. III (W. E. Davis, Jr. and J. A. Jackson, eds.). *Memoirs of the Nuttall Ornithological Club*, No. 17.
- Goldberg, S.R.** and C. R. Bursey. 2010. Helminth biodiversity of Costa Rican anurans. *Journal of Natural History* 44 (29-32):1755-1788.
- Goldberg, S.R.** and C. R. Bursey. 2010. Helminths from eight species of African skinks (*Trachylepis*: Scincidae). *Comparative Parasitology* 77(2):244-249.
- Kampf, A. R.**, Housley, R. M., Mills, S. J., Marty, J., and Thorne, B. (2010) Lead-tellurium oxysalts from Otto Mountain near Baker, California: I. Ottoite,  $Pb_2TeO_5$ , a new mineral with chains of tellurate octahedra. *American Mineralogist* 95, 1329-1336.
- Kampf, A. R.**, Marty, J., and Thorne, B. (2010) Lead-tellurium oxysalts from Otto Mountain near Baker, California: II. Housleyite,  $Pb_6CuTe_4O_{18}(OH)_2$ , a new mineral with Cu-Te octahedral sheets. *American Mineralogist* 95, 1337-1342.

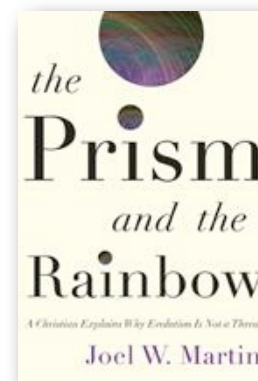
**Kampf, A. R.**, Mills, S. J., and Rumsey, M. S. (2010) Heteropolymolybdates: structural relationships, nomenclature scheme and new species. (Invited paper for session GM75: New minerals, nomenclature and classification at the 20th General Meeting of the International Mineralogical Association, 21-27 August, 2010). Acta Mineralogica-Petrographica Abstract Series 6, 490.

**Kampf, A. R.** (2010) CSI Mineralogy: Fakes, Frauds and Shoddy Science. (Keynote paper for session MHG110: Mineral museums and historical mineralogy at the 20th General Meeting of the International Mineralogical Association, 21-27 August, 2010). Acta Mineralogica-Petrographica Abstract Series 6, 764.

Kolitsch, U., Atencio, D., Chukanov, N. V., Zubkova, N., Menezes, L. A. D., Coutinho, J. M. V., Birch, W. D., Schlüter, J., Pohl, D., **Kampf, A. R.**, Steele, I. M., Favreau, G., Nasdala, L., Giester, G., and Pushcharovsky, D. Y. (2010) Bendadaite, a new iron arsenate mineral of the arthurite group. Mineralogical Magazine 74, 469-486.

Lucas, S. G., **S. A. McLeod, L. G. Barnes**, G. E. Alvarado, R. García, and E. Espinosa. 2009. A baleen whale from the Pliocene of Nicaragua. [Ballena de barbas del Plioceno de Nicaragua.] Revista Geológica de América Central, 41:17-24.

**Martin, J. W.** 2010. The Prism and the Rainbow: A Christian Explains Why Evolution is Not a Threat. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press. 170 pp.  
*Published in late May, this popular (lay) book is aimed primarily at teenagers and young adults. It attempts to explain the basics of evolutionary theory, and of science in general, and in particular addresses why science poses no threat to persons of faith.*



Mills, S. J., Birch, W. D., **Kampf, A. R.**, Christy, A. G., Pluth, J. J., Pring, A., Raudsepp, M. and Chen, Y. (2010) Kapundaite,  $(\text{Na,Ca})_2\text{Fe}^{3+}_4(\text{PO}_4)_4(\text{OH})_3 \cdot 5\text{H}_2\text{O}$ , a new phosphate species from Toms quarry, South Australia: description and structural relationship to mélonjosephite. American Mineralogist 95, 754-760.

Mills, S. J., **Kampf, A. R.**, Pasero, M., and Merlino, S. (2010) Discreditation of 'orthobrochantite' (IMA 78-064) as the  $\text{MDO}_1$  polytype of brochantite. European Journal of Mineralogy 22, 453-458.

Mills, S. J., **Kampf, A. R.**, Kolitsch, U., Housley, R. M., and Raudsepp, M. (2010) The crystal chemistry and crystal structure of kuksite,  $\text{Pb}_3\text{Zn}_3\text{Te}^{6+}\text{P}_2\text{O}_{14}$ , and a note on the crystal structure of yafsoanite,  $(\text{Ca,Pb})_3\text{Zn}(\text{TeO}_6)_2$ . American Mineralogist 95, 933-938.

Mills, S. J., Kolitsch, U., Miyawaki, R., Hatert, F., Porier, G., **Kampf, A. R.**, Matsubara, S., and Tillmanns, E. (2010)  $\text{Pb}_3\text{Fe}^{3+}_2(\text{PO}_4)_4(\text{H}_2\text{O})$ , a new octahedral-tetrahedral framework structure with double-strand chains. European Journal of Mineralogy 22, 595-604.

Mills, S. J., Kartashov, P. M., **Kampf, A. R.**, and Raudsepp, M. (2010) Arsenoflorencite-(La), a new mineral from the Komi Republic, Russian Federation: description and crystal structure. European Journal of Mineralogy 22, 613-621.

**Molina, K. C.** et al. 2010. Status review and conservation recommendations for the Gull-billed Tern (*Gelochelidon nilotica*) in North America. U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Biological Technical Publication BTP-R1013-2010. *Ornithology Research Associate Kathy Molina recently published the above status review of a tern species she has been studying at the Salton Sea and elsewhere since 1990. Based largely on the information in this review, the USFWS has just published a finding that may lead to Threatened or Endangered species listing for the southern California/western Mexico subspecies (G. n. vanrossemi).*



Ng, N. K., and **J. W. Martin**. 2010. Two new species of grapsoid crabs of the genus *Euchirograpsus* (Decapoda: Brachyura: Grapsoidea: Plagusiidae) from The Philippines and the Hawaiian Islands. Pp. 229-249 In: P. Castro, P. J. F. Davie, P. K. L. Ng, and B. Richer de Forges (editors), *Studies on Brachyura: An homage to Danièle Guinot*. Leiden, Brill: Crustaceana Monographs 11.



*Grapsoid crabs are, for the most part, shallow water or semi-terrestrial “shore crabs.” The genus Euchirograpsus is unusual in inhabiting the deep sea. The new species from Hawaii was caught in a deep water lobster trap in 2006. Photo by J. W. Martin.*

Nogueira, J.M.M., **Fitzhugh, K.**, Rossi, M.C.S. 2010. A new genus and new species of fan worms (Polychaeta: Sabellidae) from Atlantic and Pacific Oceans — the formal treatment of taxon names as explanatory hypotheses. *Zootaxa* 2603: 1-52.

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Lindgren J, M. W. Caldwell, T. Konishi, and **L. M. Chiappe**. 2010. Convergent evolution in aquatic tetrapods: Insights from an exceptional fossil mosasaur. *PLoS ONE* 5 (8): e11998. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0011998

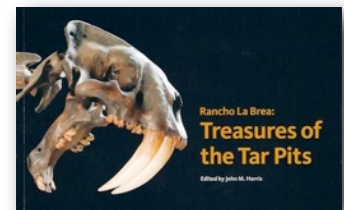


*In August, the scientific journal PLoS One published a paper on convergent evolution in aquatic tetrapods examining a specimen of the Late Cretaceous mosasaur Platecarpus, housed at the Dinosaur Institute. The roughly 85 million-year-old specimen is thought to be the best preserved mosasaur found to date, as it preserves extensive impressions of soft tissue (see UV photo of skin, at right) and displays exceptional articulation. The study brings to light new information about the morphology of Platecarpus (and mosasaurs in general), and provides insight into convergent evolution among marine reptiles. The specimen will be featured in Dinosaur Mysteries.*

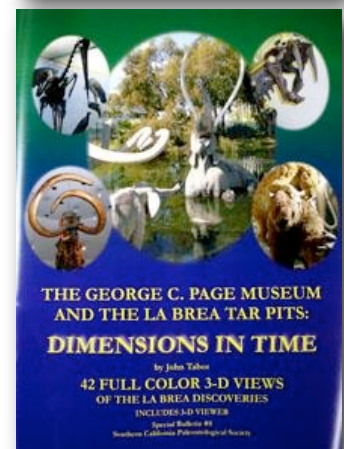


#### Rancho La Brea Revised

*The popular reading account of the flora and fauna of Rancho La Brea, which is also a high ranking seller at the gift store, called Treasures of the Tar Pits was revised and published this summer with lots of new images and additional sections on Project 23 and Education.*



The Southern California Paleontological Society, which holds its meetings at the Page Museum, published a special bulletin of 3-D images of Rancho La Brea called *Dimensions in Time*. The book comes with viewing glasses and is full of great images of the park, current excavations, prep work in the lab, collections spaces and exhibits.



# Staff Departures and New Staff

## Staff Departures

### *Vertebrate Paleontology*

Daniel Gabai, Debora Lee, Kathleen Gonzalez, Talin Nazarian, Vanessa Rhue, Meredith (Staley) Rivin, Ted Seto, Gary Takeuchi, Maureen Walsh, Michael J. Williams, and Jacqueline Windus worked with us for several years on the Age of Mammals Hall. This was a fantastic team, and we thank them heartily for all their dedicated service and creative contributions to this project, which came to a conclusion in July.



### *Ichthyology*

Dawn Roje left Ichthyology in June to pursue a doctorate degree at the American Museum of Natural History in New York. Dawn is interested in the study of pleuronectiform systematics using molecular, morphological and ontogenetic characters. Good luck Dawn!

Dr. Shannon DeVaney, post-doctorate in Ichthyology, has left us in August to accept a new position as a Biology professor in the Life Science Department at Pierce College in Woodland Hills, California. Shannon, an expert in stomatioid fishes, collected hundreds of rare deep-sea fishes in the North Atlantic Ocean as part of her research and for our collection over the past two years. She promised to bring her students back here to visit our collections in the future. Congratulations Shannon!

*Dawn Roje (left) and Shannon DeVaney (right) with Herpetology Collection Manager, Nefti Camacho.*

### *Mineral Sciences*

Gem & Mineral Council Coordinator Jean Brandt (right) retired in August. Jean came to work at the Museum more than 25 years ago in the then Data Management Office, where she processed Museum Membership records. An avid birder, Jean also spent time volunteering for Dr. Ralph Schreiber in Ornithology. As part of her job in Data Management, Jean handled the membership records for the Museum's original three support councils: The Bird Council, The Automobile Council and The Gem & Minerals Council. In the process, Jean caught the gem and mineral bug. After leaving the Museum to take a job in film distribution at MGM, Jean continued on as a member of the board of directors of The Gem & Mineral Council, including service as its president. After retiring from MGM in 1997, Jean assumed the newly created role of Gem & Mineral Council Coordinator at the Museum. Through her many years of service, Jean has employed her organizational skills, enthusiasm and delightful personality to great





advantage in keeping The Gem & Mineral Council operating on an even keel, as it effectively supports the Museum's Mineral Sciences Department. The Council owes much of its success to Jean. She will be greatly missed as Council Coordinator; however, she will continue to provide her guidance as an honorary member of the Council's board of directors.

## New Staff



Gary Takeuchi (left) is currently working with Xiaoming Wang on grant-supported projects in China and Tibet.



Vanessa Rhue (left) has been newly hired as a Curatorial Assistant to work with the Vertebrate Paleontology Department collections.



Daniel N. Gabai (right) has been hired as a photographer and artist to work in Vertebrate Paleontology on images for publication and for the Museum's web site.

# Miscellaneous



## Awards and Recognitions: Research Library

During the June 2010 international conference of the Special Libraries Association in New Orleans, chief librarian Richard Hulser (right) was given the 2010 SLA Member Achievement Award. This award was granted to Richard for his work this past year on the SLA Alignment project raising visibility, awareness, and appreciation of the value librarians bring to their organizations as well as to the library profession.

A short video about Richard's work can be found at: <http://www.slatv.org/media.cfm?c=759&m=3418&s=120>

## Mineral Sciences

This past spring was the 25th anniversary of the Gem and Mineral Council. Members celebrated 25 years of Council field trips, lectures and successful fundraising! The evening began with cocktails and dinner in the North American Mammal Hall followed by remarks from Dr. Jane Pisano and a special

presentation by mineral dealer Bill Larson. His talk was part travelogue and part history of the gem and mineral world entitled “How the industry has changed in 25 years.”

## Polychaete Worms

Leslie Harris (Collection Manager, Polychaetes) was invited to join the editorial staff of WoRMS, the World Register of Marine Species (<http://marinespecies.org>). This is the largest and most authoritative database of marine species on the web, used as the taxonomic backbone for OBIS (Ocean Biogeographic Information System), GBIF (Global Biodiversity Information Facility), EoL (Encyclopedia of Life), MarBEF (EU-Marine Biodiversity of Ecosystem Functioning), Species 2000, and many smaller databases. She is now the editor for the polychaete families Syllidae, Hesionidae, Capitellidae, and a major contributor for the North American Pacific coast polychaete fauna. Another new position for Leslie is Museum Sponsor for the Los Angeles Black Underwater Society (LABUE). They meet on the second Tuesday of every month at 7:00pm in the Times Mirror Room. LABUE is currently involved in a very exciting project assisting the National Park Service search for remains of the Spanish slave ship Guerrero which was sunk by a British warship off Florida in 1827. In other news Leslie welcomed the arrival of her latest “godchildren” *Rhynchospio harrisae* Delgado-Blas & Diaz-Diaz, 2010, and *Sabellomma harrisae* Nogueira, Fitzhugh, & Rossi 2010. Both species were described from specimens she collected during NHMLAC-sponsored fieldwork and brought to the attention of their describers.

*Rhynchospio harrisae* from the Caribbean (left) and *Sabellomma harrisae*, Northwest Hawaiian Islands cruise (right), photographed live in the field.



## Rancho La Brea

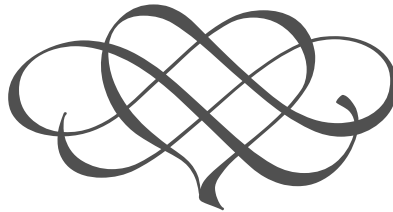


In June, National Geographic filmed for three days at the Page Museum for a new show called *When Continents Collide*. They interviewed Xiaoming Wang of Vertebrate Paleontology about canids, Graham Slater from UCLA about sabertoothed cats, Alex Bryk from Penn State about ground sloths and Collections Manager Chris Shaw about the faunal interchange between North and South America.

Xiaoming Wang being interviewed by National Geographic.

## History

Early this summer a team from the BBC came to NHM to film the History Department’s collection of Lon Chaney artifacts as well as props from Universal Studios’ horror films *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*, *The Mummy*, and *The Bride of Frankenstein* for part one of a three part series on the History of Horror films. History Department Collections Manager Beth Werling also served as an on-camera spokesperson for the collection.



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>