

# Research & Collections Newsletter



November 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

### Ichthyology

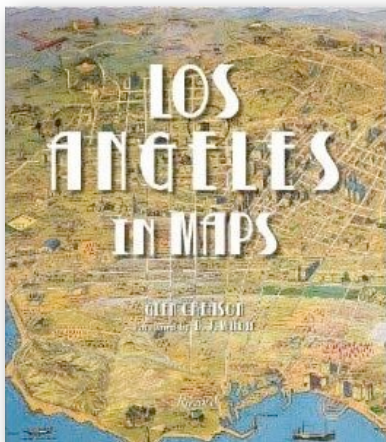
Ichthyology has a new holotype (the unique specimen upon which a description of a new species is based) of the armored searobin, *Peristedion nesium*, from Isla del Coco, Costa Rica, as designated by our research associate, William A. Bussing (Rev. Biol. Trop. vol. 58(4)). The species name *nesium* is from the Greek *nesos* meaning “islander.”



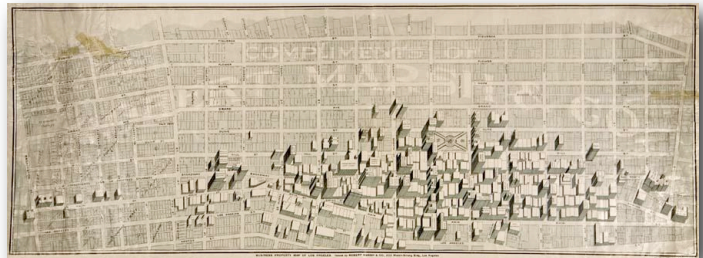
*Peristedion nesium* (holotype, LACM 32265-3).

### History

#### *Los Angeles in Maps*



Several historical maps from the collection of the Seaver Center for Western History Research are reproduced in the new publication *Los Angeles in Maps* (Rizzoli, 2010), a cartographic history of Los Angeles compiled by Los Angeles Public Library map librarian Glen Creason.



This 1913 Business Property Map of Los Angeles from the Seaver Center's General Map Collection (GC1310) is one of several reproduced in *Los Angeles in Maps*.

## Invertebrate Paleontology

Thanks to the professional photographic work of our wonderful USC work-study student Phyllis Sun, over 4,500 new images have been added to the Invertebrate Paleontology collections database at <http://ip.nhm.org>. These images offer viewers from on-site and off-site a peek into the rich research holdings of the department.

*Synphocrinus permicus Lane and Webster, 1966 (Echinodermata: Crinoidea), Early Permian Age (about 280 mya) from the Bird Spring Formation, Clark County, Nevada.*



## Field Work

### Vertebrate Paleontology



Vertebrate Paleontology staff Howell Thomas, Sam McLeod, Gary Takeuchi, Xiaoming Wang, and Vanessa Rhue, assisted by volunteers Yanping Song (Xiaoming’s wife) and Karen Kanuer, worked in the famous diatomite quarries from 19 to 24 September, collecting a fossil baleen whale skull and jaws. They encased this 10 to 12 million year old specimen in plaster jackets to ensure its safe transport back to the Museum, and it is pictured at right with Howell, Gary, and Karen. Our Museum has significant collections from this area, including fossils of fishes, birds, and marine mammals.

### Echinoderms

#### *Mass Mortality at Malibu*

On October 9th, an estimated 10,000 dead purple sea urchins washed ashore at Malibu’s Surfrider Beach – on the very same day that the site was declared the first “World Surfing Reserve.” During the event, which featured a Chumash Indian ceremony, a sunrise paddle-out, and appearances by prominent surfers, participants avoided the stranded urchins and signs that declared “Beach Closed – Avoid Water Contact.” At the time, Dr. Gordon Hendler was at Santa Catalina Island for dives in an OceanGate submersible. Since his return to Los Angeles, he has been searching for clues to explain one of the largest mass mortalities of sea urchins recorded in California. Dr. Hendler would welcome hearing from anyone who was at the beach in Malibu on October 7th or 8th and can provide a first-hand account.



*Seagulls feeding on sea urchin “leftovers” a week after the mass mortality at Malibu.*



# Meetings, Workshops, and Presentations

## Ornithology / Vertebrate Paleontology

Ken Campbell attended the X Argentine Congress of Paleontology and Biostratigraphy & VII Congress of Latin American Paleontology in La Plata, Argentina (20–24 September), where he presented two papers. This was followed by attendance at the XV Peruvian Congress of Geology (27 Sept. – 1 Oct 2010) in Cusco, Peru. One paper at each congress was part of an invited symposium (*The Plio-Pleistocene of northern Peru and southern Ecuador: vertebrate paleontology, paleoecology, and biostratigraphy*). The second paper at the Argentine conferences concerned new developments in our understanding of the timing of the Great American Faunal Interchange. Ken also spent time outside of the meetings working in museum collections.

## Ornithology

Collections Manager Kimball Garrett attended the 35th annual meeting of the Western Field Ornithologists in Palm Desert, California, 14–17 October. He coordinated a workshop on the preparation of bird specimens and the “value-added” data obtained during the preparation process, team-teaching with Research Associate Kathy Molina (representing the UCLA Dickey Bird and Mammal collection) and collections managers and curators from San Diego Natural History Museum, Museum of Southwestern Biology, and University of Alaska Museum. In addition, Garrett gave a talk on “*Onychoprion terns in western North America, with emphasis on identification and geographical variation in Bridled Tern*”, participated in the bird identification panel, and attended the annual board of directors meeting.

## Vertebrate Paleontology

The Society of Vertebrate Paleontology Annual Meeting was held in Pittsburgh from 8 through 13 October. Museum staff attending the meeting were John Long, John Harris, Xiaoming Wang, Samuel McLeod, Gary Takeuchi, and Vanessa Rhue, graduate student Jack Tseng, and associate Meredith (Staley) Rivin. Jack and Xiaoming presented a talk *Evolution of stress channeling mechanism in the skulls of hyenas: finite element analysis of key ecomorphologies*, and John Harris was co-presenter (with Kevin Uno, Thure Cerling, Meave Leakey, and Hideo Nakaya) of a talk titled *Differential diet change among East African herbivores from the late Miocene to Pliocene based on carbon isotope data from fossil enamel*. John Long delivered a talk on placoderm viviparity and copulation and how it relates to pelvic fin development that was well attended. A poster was presented by Oscar Carranza-Castañeda, Jose Aranda-Gómez, and Xiaoming Wang titled *Advances in late Tertiary Mexican paleontology: the early-late Hemphillian fauna from Juchipila Basin, State of Zacatecas, Mexico*.

John Harris (right) received the society’s Honorary Life Membership Award, for “distinguished contributions to the discipline of Vertebrate Paleontology.” He also announced at the Business Meeting that the 73rd annual meeting of the society in 2013 will take place in Los Angeles, and will be hosted by our Museum. Participants also went on a field trip to Cumberland Bone Cave, a Pleistocene trap rich in bones, which was discovered in 1912 during rock removal for a railroad cut.



# Public Outreach

## Vertebrate Paleontology

On 1 September, long-time Museum associate Dave Stevens (who discovered and collected the paleoparadoxiid skeleton in our new Age of Mammals Hall), and 14 other high school science teachers from Long Beach Unified School District, toured the Age of Mammals Hall and the Vertebrate Paleontology Department.

This year's Red Rock Canyon Museum Members fossil collecting trip was held 15–17 October. Staff from Vertebrate Paleontology included Gary Takeuchi, Debora Lee, David Whistler, Lawrence Barnes, and Xiaoming Wang, in collaboration with Education and Exhibition staff including Kim Kessler, Briana Burrows, Karen Ewald, Laurel Robinson, Ilana Turner, Jesse Daniels, Matt Morse, and Kamaron Sardar. This annual trip was as popular as ever, and we had a crowd of 63 participants. It is quite remarkable that some of the participants who started out with us as 5 or 6 year-olds have now entered college, some with the



intention of pursuing vertebrate paleontology as their career path. As a citizen science project in every sense of the word, the trip participants have discovered many fossils that would not be possible through in-house efforts alone.



The Museum's Adult Lecture series began with Lawrence Barnes' presentation on 21 October about the fossil marine mammals of the new Age of Mammals Hall, and how they relate to global stories of marine mammal evolution. The lecture was followed by a tour of the Vertebrate Paleontology Department, where Barnes and Vanessa Rhue (left) showed attendees specimens, including a skull of the strange, tusked toothed whale *Odobenocetops*.

On October 28, Xiaoming Wang (shown at right with guests) gave the second presentation in this lecture series about *Paleoenvironments and the Evolution of Carnivores*, which was attended by about 50 participants from both inside and outside of the Museum, including a large contingent from the Los Angeles Zoo and Botanic Gardens. After the lecture, the Vertebrate Paleontology staff hosted the guests on a tour of the "Age of Mammals" hall.





## Malacology and Mineralogy

On Saturday October 2, Lindsey Groves (Malacology) and Alyssa Morgan (Mineral Sciences) co-led the *2nd Annual Living on the Fault Line: A Day Along the San Andreas* with 20 participants to see fault-generated landforms along a stretch of the San Andreas Fault from Devore to Palmdale. Participants were treated to up close and personal observations of sag ponds, pressure ridges, fault scarps, shutter ponds, hogbacks, and an earthquake tree. The final stop was at the Avenue S road cut in Palmdale where spectacularly folded and faulted beds of the Pliocene Anaverde Formation can be observed within an unnamed pressure ridge. Many thanks to Briana Burrows and Kim Kessler (Education & Exhibits) for their logistical talents and for making this trip such a rewarding event.



Above right: Lindsey Groves at Lost Lake sag pond, Cajon Pass, explaining how it formed and its significance to fault location determination. Lost Lake and the San Andreas Fault are just over the rise in the background.

At left: NHMLAC staff posing on the San Andreas Fault at Palmett Creek, Valyermo, CA. (L to R): Alyssa Morgan (Mineral Sciences), Kim Kessler (Education @ Exhibits), Margi Bertram (Page Museum E&E), Kristen Hayashi (History), Briana Burrows (E&E), Jason Hammond (E&E), Leslie Harris (Polychaetes), Mary Stecheson (IP), and Lindsey Groves (Malacology).



On Thursday October 21st at 10:21 am, NHMLAC along with nearly 8 million other Californians participated in *The Great California Shakeout*, the annual state-wide earthquake drill. Lindsey Groves (Malacology) and Alyssa Morgan (Mineral Sciences) were on hand to discuss and demonstrate earthquake safety procedures, plate tectonics, liquefaction, faulting and folding, and seismic wave generation.



## Malacology and Invertebrate Paleontology

On Saturday, October 23rd Lindsey Groves (Malacology) and Mary Stecheson (IP) led *Fossil Hunting in Silverado Canyon* family field trip. Thirty-one fossil diggers 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 and Kim Kessler for on-site logistics and Cathy Groves (Echinoderms) who assisted with on-site tasks.

Below: NHMLAC staff (and friend) at Silverado Canyon. (L to R): Briana Burrows (Education @ Exhibits), Mary Stecheson (IP), Robyn Groves (niece of the Groves'), Lindsey Groves (Malacology), Cathy Groves (Echinoderms), and Kim Kessler (E&E).



## Ornithology

Kimball Garrett was the featured speaker at the 15 September celebration of the 15th anniversary of the opening of the Torrance Wild Birds Unlimited store; the event was held at the new Whites Point Interpretive Center in San Pedro. WBU proprietor Bob Shanman has generously supported NHM's "North Campus" project by providing bird feeders and seed from his store.

## Ichthyology and Herpetology

On Reptile & Amphibian Appreciation Day (Sunday October 3), Neftali Camacho, Collection Manager of Herpetology, displayed a large selection of amphibian and reptiles from our collection and led three tours. One of the tours included Dr. Peter Pritchard, world renowned turtle expert from the Chelonian Research Institute in Florida.

Neftali also became adventurer explorer Draven as he displayed and talked about a variety of cave associated reptiles and amphibians for the Haunted Museum on October 24th.

## History

Led by Collections Manager Beth Werling, the History Division kicked off the first of its monthly tours of the Automobile collection at the Gardena Warehouse on October 1st. Public interest is very high. Tours will continue each First Friday of the month.



The Seaver Center and Museum Archives participated in the *5th annual Los Angeles Archives Bazaar* at USC's Doheny Library on Saturday, October 23rd. The event brought together over 70 historical collections and libraries that offer a wealth of resources on the history of Los Angeles.



Left: Brent Riggs; Right: Betty Uyeda and John Cahoon, L.A. Archives Bazaar.





William S. Hart Museum Administrator Ayesha Saletore reports a very busy season of public programs at Hart Park, which have provided opportunities for sharing the museum's material culture collections. During the last weekend of September, thousands of people attended the *Hart of the West Native American Powwow and Craft Fair* to celebrate Native American culture through dance and music. Among the Native American artifacts displayed in the Museum's Ranch House were a pair of moccasins, a child's vest, belt, and pouch from the Eastern Sioux Nation as well as a pouch from the Eastern Woodlands Nation (left).



a child's vest, belt, and pouch from the Eastern Sioux Nation as well as a pouch from the Eastern Woodlands Nation (left). The Museum also exhibited a jacket that was made in the early 1900s which Bill Hart used in at least two known films, *Wagon Tracks* and *The Tiger Man*.



*Dog harness for Mack, William Hart's English Bulldog.*

Over 10,000 guests came out to William S. Hart Park for the annual *Bow-Wows and Meows Pet Fair*, which offered pet adoptions, a low cost vaccine clinic, free samples of pet food and supplies, as well as the extreme canine stunt dog show! Continuing Bill Hart's love for all animals, the Museum displayed animal related artifacts from the Hart Collection. Moreover, the Museum provided *Hart Trail Guides* so that guests could find key animal areas such as the Dogs' Graveyard, Fritz's Memorial, Bison Viewing Area, and Animal Barnyard.

On October 23, as part of Hart Park's third annual *Pumpkin Festival*, the Hart Museum hosted *Scared Silly*, a compilation of spooky animated favorites from the 1920s by Walt Disney and a silent film comedy, *The Haunted House*, with Buster Keaton. A special thank you to Beth Werling, Collections Manager Material Culture; Karen Ewald, Program Manager-Education and Exhibits; and Wes Oakley and Tony Robinson, Audio Visual-Operations. This contribution could only be possible with their help and expertise.

## Haunted Museum

### *Vertebrate Paleontology*

On 24 October, for part of the Haunted Museum program, Vertebrate Paleontology staff Sam McLeod, Gary Takeuchi, and Vanessa Rhue, and graduate student Jack Tseng (right), assembled a demonstration of fossil Pleistocene mammals from Gypsum Cave in the US, and from San Josecito Cave in Mexico.



### *Ornithology*

Curator Ken Campbell and Collections Manager Kimball Garrett climbed out of their caves for the Haunted Museum event on 24 October to present specimens, audio and video showing the wonders of echo-locating, cave-nesting birds (oilbirds in the monotypic family Steatornithidae and swiftlets in the genus *Aerodramus*); the nests of some species in the latter group are made of saliva and are harvested as the primary ingredient in bird's-nest soup.



Emma Freeman (aka “Dr. G. Reaper”) (left) presented a creepy display about the rare “Remipedia” to a terrified audience at this year’s Haunted Museum. A brand new class of Crustacea, “Remipedia,” was erected in 1981 for this blind, venomous, predatory and mysterious cave-dwelling crustacean (at right) discovered in 1979 by cave diver Jill Yager.



### Anthropology

For the Haunted Museum’s theme of “Caves,” the Anthropology Department brought out a selection of items from several dry cave sites in the Southwest including Desha Cave in San Juan Co., Utah, and Needle Cave in Kane Co., Utah. The unique environmental conditions of these caves allowed for exceptional preservation of organic material providing us with a more complete picture of the activities of the Ancestral Pueblo Peoples who occupied them in the past. Of the items that we brought out, probably most popular with museum visitors was this desiccated corncob on a stick. Instantly recognizable, people were thrilled to see evidence of a familiar method of eating corn being used nearly 2000 years ago!



### Echinoderms

Gordon Hendler hosted a multimedia presentation on *How Sea Stars See (in the Dark)*. He showed a Dutch Public Television program on his research on brittle stars that are “all eyes,” and gave visitors a chance to look through a microscope at brittle stars’ bones, which incorporate hundreds of tiny, optically perfect lenses that the animals use to see.

### Vertebrate Paleontology

On 28 September, VP staff provided a tour of the Vertebrate Paleontology collections and Preparation Laboratory for a group of women from the Beverly Hills Women’s Club.



# Student Mentoring and Research

## Vertebrate Paleontology

Bridgette Vandenberg, a long-time participant on the Museum's Red Rock Canyon Members' trips, became hooked on vertebrate paleontology when she discovered a nice lower jaw of a bone-crushing dog, a rare find at Red Rock Canyon. She is now a sophomore at UC Riverside and is contemplating studying either dinosaurs or fossil mammals.

Mario Ridings, a sophomore at USC, who comes to us with a background in film and art, was hired in October to assist with various projects such as web development and specimen relocation.



## Echinoderms

### *Inspired by Brittle Stars*



Dr. Gordon Hendler, Curator of Echinoderms, returned to Saint Joseph High School in Santa Maria, California, this August to advise a group of high school students who are conducting research on the biology of brittle stars. The project was initiated several years ago by the school's outstanding biology teacher, Larry Madrigal. Larry and Gordon initially worked together on a survey of coral reef echinoderms while Larry was teaching in American Samoa. Their current collaboration on the brittle stars of Shell Beach has attracted some of the high school's top students to pursue a career in scientific research.



## Marine Biodiversity Center

### *New work-study students.*

This Fall semester the Marine Biodiversity Center added two new USC work-study students: Molly Schaeffer, a sophomore (on the left), and Nicole Chang, a freshman (at right). Molly and Nicole have been helping curate the large, recently acquired Southern California Bight 2003 survey collection. We are delighted for the added help.



# Volunteers and Research Associates

## Anthropology

The Anthropology Department would like to welcome Anna Campomanes to the team! Anna moved to Los Angeles from Virginia and currently works as a Sales Associate here at NHM. She also has a background in Anthropology with a particular interest in Collection Management and, luckily for us, was looking to gain more experience through volunteering on her days off. She started working with us at the end of August and has already been of great assistance with photographing, re-housing, and digitizing data for our on-going projects. Some of the collections that she has helped us with so far include Southwestern dry cave material from the archaeology collection, a late 19th century collection from the African Congo, and the *Lost and Found Traditions* collection of contemporary Native American artifacts. She is a true pleasure to work with, both detail-oriented and versatile, and we can't thank her enough for all the help she has already provided.



Anna helping dust the exhibit cases in the Visible Vault

## Vertebrate Paleontology

Vertebrate Paleontology staff participated in the Fall Docent training programs. Xiaoming Wang spoke to the docents on 29 September about field work in Tibet, and on the 30th about paleo-climate change, and Lawrence Barnes spoke to them on 1 November about marine mammal evolution in relation to specimens in the new Age of Mammals Hall.

# Distinguished Visitors

## Vertebrate Paleontology



On 13 September, Eric Gustafson (right) from Oregon visited the department to study specimens of *Bretzia*, an extinct Pliocene and Pleistocene deer, and of *Bassariscus*, the ring-tail, of late Miocene and Pliocene age from the Columbia Plateau.

For about week in mid-October Eugeny Popov (left), from Saratov State University in Russia, visited our department to study fossil chaemerids, shark relatives that are sometimes called ratfishes.

From 25 to 29 October, Yasemin Tulu (right), a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Cape Town in South Africa, visited to study sharks and pathologic fossils, and to contemplate marine taphonomic subjects, observing our collections from Sharktooth Hill and some other well-known sites.





## Echinoderms



### *Visitor from Venezuela*

Prof. Iván Hernández-Ávila (below), a faculty member in the Departamento de Ciencias, Universidad de Oriente, Venezuela, recently studied some of the deep-sea brittle stars that are in the Museum's collections from the southwest Caribbean. Last year, Iván was at NHM for a month to complete his Masters Degree research. During September and October this year, he again collaborated with Dr. Gordon Hendler, Curator of Echinoderms at NHM, and travelled to the Smithsonian Institution and Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology to examine type specimens.

## Malacology

California State University-Fullerton graduate student Candice Aguierre visited Malacology in mid-September to further her research on California species of Fissurellidae (keyhole limpets). In early October Karen Schoenberg (San Francisco, CA) visited Malacology in search of a repository for her mother's shell collection. The Olive Schoenberg-Dole collection is a major Hawaiian collection and would make a nice addition to the Malacology holdings. USNM Research Associate Judy Terry Smith visited Malacology and Invertebrate Paleontology from 18 through 22 October. Her research focuses on the relationship of fossil mollusks of the Caribbean Basin and the proto Golfo de California, particularly those of the Baja California Peninsula and the Imperial Formation of SE California. Cal Poly Pomona graduate student Dieta Hanson visited Malacology with Research Associate Ángel Valdés to examine the opisthobranch holdings and use the SEM.



*Judy Smith at the Invertebrate Paleontology facility identifying and comparing fossil mollusk specimens*

# Recent Publications

**Campbell, K.E.** 2010. Global climate dynamics and Plio-Pleistocene paleoenvironments of northwestern Peru. X Argentine Congress of Paleontology and Biostratigraphy & VII Congress of Latin American Paleontology, Resúmenes, p. 123. Abstract.

**Campbell, K.E.** 2010. Recalibrating the Great American Faunal Interchange. X Argentine Congress of Paleontology and Biostratigraphy & VII Congress of Latin American Paleontology, Resúmenes, p. 141-142. Abstract.

**Kampf, A. R.,** Colombo, F., and González del Tánago, J. (2010) Carlhintzeite,  $\text{Ca}_2\text{AlF}_7 \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$ , from the Gigante granitic pegmatite, Córdoba province, Argentina: Description and crystal structure. *Mineralogical Magazine* 74: 623-632.

**Kampf, A. R.** and Mills, S.J. (2010) Lead citrate monohydrate,  $\text{Pb}(\text{C}_6\text{H}_6\text{O}_7) \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$ , formation during specimen cleaning: a cautionary mineralogical tale. *Mineralogical Magazine* 74: 683-690.

**Kampf, A. R.**, Housley, R. M., and Marty, J. (2010) Lead-tellurium oxysalts from Otto Mountain near Baker, California: III. Thorneite,  $Pb_6(Te_2O_{10})(CO_3)Cl_2(H_2O)$ , the first mineral with edge-sharing tellurate dimers. *American Mineralogist* 95: 1548–1553.

**Kampf, A. R.**, Mills, S. J., Housley, R. M., Marty, J., and Thorne, B. (2010) Lead-tellurium oxysalts from Otto Mountain near Baker, California: IV. Markcooperite,  $Pb_2(UO_2)TeO_6$ , the first natural uranyl tellurate. *American Mineralogist* 95: 1554–1559.

**Kampf, A. R.**, Mills, S. J., Housley, R. M., Marty, J., and Thorne, B. (2010) Lead-tellurium oxysalts from Otto Mountain near Baker, California: V. Timroseite,  $Pb_2Cu^{2+}_5(Te^{6+}O_6)_2(OH)_2$ , and paratimroseite,  $Pb_2Cu^{2+}_4(Te^{6+}O_6)_2(H_2O)_2$ , new minerals with edge-sharing Cu-Te octahedral chains. *American Mineralogist* 95: 1560–1568.

**Kampf, A. R.**, Mills, S. J., Housley, R. M., Marty, J., and Thorne, B. (2010) Lead-tellurium oxysalts from Otto Mountain near Baker, California: VI. Telluroperite,  $Pb_3Te^{4+}O_4Cl_2$ , the Te analogue of perite and nadorite. *American Mineralogist* 95: 1569–1573.

Mills, S. J., **Kampf, A. R.**, and Raudsepp, M. (2010) The crystal structure of waylandite from Wheal Remfry, Cornwall, United Kingdom. *Mineralogy and Petrology* 99: 249–253.

Rose, N. A., **D. Janiger**, E. C. M. Parsons and M. Stachowitsch. 2010. Unpublished paper to the IWC Scientific Committee. Agadir, Morocco, June 2010. (SC/62/E2) Shifting baselines in scientific publications: A case study using cetacean research.

## Staff Departures and New Staff

### Vertebrate Paleontology

Meredith (Staley) Rivin (former preparator on our Age of Mammals Hall who worked on the paleoparadoxiid) has been hired as Senior Paleontological Technician by California State University at Fullerton. She will work at Orange County's John C. Cooper Archaeology and Paleontology Curation Center, where her duties will be to establish policies and procedures, manage fossils within the repository, create public displays, and help make the Center a place where future and past discoveries in Orange County are preserved and available to the public and to researchers. Our staff have used these collections in the past, and we hope to continue doing so in the future.

### Rancho La Brea

Chris Shaw retired from the position of Collections Manager to the Rancho La Brea Department on October 22 after more than 33 years service as a County employee. While still in high school, Chris participated in the opening of the Pit 91 excavation in 1969 — a resource that has over the last forty years more than doubled the number of fossil animal and plant species known from the La Brea Tar Pits. After finishing his BS at Idaho State University, Chris assisted in the Pit 91



*Chris Shaw with the golden shovel he received at his retirement party at the Page Museum.*



excavation and with the preparation of mounted skeletons for the new Page Museum before entering County service in 1977 as Curatorial Assistant for invertebrate fossils at the Page Museum. He was promoted to Curatorial Assistant for all Rancho La Brea fossils in 1982 and then to Collections Manager in 1987. He subsequently supervised the ongoing Pit 91 excavation (and, more recently, the Project 23 excavations) while organizing the Rancho La Brea collections and making them accessible to the scientific community. He undertook research on carnivores and paleopathologies from Rancho La Brea and on the Irvingtonian fauna from El Golfo, Mexico, which was also the topic of his Master's thesis. In 2009 he received the Morris F. Skinner Award from the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology "for outstanding and sustained contributions to scientific knowledge through the making of important collections of fossil vertebrates." Chris has been appointed a Research Associate and plans to continue both his research and assisting with identifications of Rancho La Brea fossils when he returns to Los Angeles in the New Year.

## Miscellaneous

### History / Archives

Museum Archivist Cathy McNassor was invited by Renee Montgomery of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art to participate in an oral history interview of a former museum staff member, Cecil Ferguson. Mr. Ferguson began his employment at the museum in 1948 as a janitor and became one of the original Museum Helpers. After the art department became the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Mr. Ferguson was promoted to Curatorial Assistant in Modern Art. He retired from LACMA in 1985. The interview proved to be very enlightening and interesting, and additional interviews with former staff are being planned.

*And finally....*

*Happy Holidays!*

*Because this is the  
for calendar year  
staff takes this  
all of you a happy and  
bright and productive New Year.*



*last R&C Newsletter  
2010, the R&C  
opportunity to wish  
safe holiday season and a*

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>

