From The Director
by Dr. Kenneth Carpenter

It’s hard to believe that I have been at the Prehistoric Museum for half a year! So much has happened in that short time. The biggest news is that the merger of the College of Eastern Utah and Utah State University has also meant positive changes for the museum. Most important of these, is that Chancellor Peterson and I meet biweekly. This has led to closer ties between the museum and the college because I am able to update the Chancellor about the activities of the museum, as well discuss problems. As a result, many long neglected infrastructure problems in the museum are finally being taken care of by the college.

We have completed the transfer of most of the books and many journals from the museum’s library to the campus library. This makes available to students and faculty a large, underutilized resource. Some of this material will be useful for students in the museum studies class, and others by students in archaeology and paleontology classes. This transfer opened much needed office space, which is now occupied by Christine Trease, our Marketing and PR Director. Lloyd Logan, our Exhibits and Education Director, has moved to the old exhibits department office vacated by Christine. This musical chairs means that if you come looking for either Christine or Lloyd, that they may not be where you remember them to be. But these changes mean that both have offices more suited for their respective jobs.

I have been working closely with the local chapter of the Utah Friends of Paleontology. The Raptor Chapter will be hosting the state convention of UFOP next year (April 15-16). Unlike past conferences, this one is structured around a theme: fossil deposits of unusual preservation. I hope to see you at there.

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Well, we got in a few extra trips out to our Suarez Sisters quarry site south-east of Green River around mid fall. Eventually the days got too short and cold to make playing in the dirt fun. So with a heavy heart and a heavy pack full of fossil bones, we closed down the quarry for the winter, made the long drive back to Price and moved into the warmth of the bone lab to pursue our other day job.

We have lots to do this winter. In addition to our regular cold weather task of cleaning, stabilizing and preservation of the fossil material that we have collected, we have begun a comprehensive inventory of our complete collection and continue the process of consolidation of fossil material, building new shelving and acquiring new storage cabinets to better utilize the space we have. We have big plans for the future.

The rather lengthy project of fossil preparation on the 27 articulated vertebrae from the Gooseneck quarry site is coming to a close. The final results are proving to be every bit as spectacular as hoped. It’s been a lot of work, but it does look wonderful. Because of all the projects and changes going on over at the museum, it is unlikely that this set will be put on exhibit at this time. You are, however, invited to stop by the Bone Lab to take a look. It will be a little while before it goes down into Collections. We are always pleased to have visitors.

We have always been proud of the fact that 3 of our four central mounts have a high percentage of real bone (the camptosaur is all cast). So when you next visit our museum, take a look and see if you can pick out the “real thing”. What we are finding is that removing 40 year old paint from fossil bone is a slow, laborious process, so don’t expect the completed results any time soon. But the process has begun and the results, to date, look really cool. Here's what to look for. The four dinos in the sand pit all came from the Cleveland Lloyd Quarry, as such, the fossil bone, when all cleaned up, is a beautiful shiny black. The epoxy used to stabilize this material is either white, pink or pale blue. Also the real bone when stripped of the old paint has some really fine bone texture, that when the light is good, should show up very nicely. Any bone that remains a flat, uniform black is either replica material or has yet to be cleaned. Stay tuned as we plug ahead on this project.

A new project started here a couple of weeks ago, taking the real fossil bone material out of the pit and stripping off the black paint applied back in the 1960’s. It was apparently the fashion back then to create a mount of a dinosaur combining real bone with replica material and then painting the whole thing black, giving it a consistent, uniform appearance. Since one of the most commonly asked questions by our museum visitors concerns whether our mounts contain any real bone, our new museum Director and Curator, Dr. Ken Carpenter, decided that we could better serve our mission if there was no mystery surrounding which bones are real and which are replicas.

A final note on this ambitious undertaking – at this time all this restoration on these three dinos is taking place at our Bone Lab on campus. Very shortly the old lab at the museum that sports a large observation window will be made operational again and we will move this program there so that our visitors can watch the progress and procedures and be able to talk with the preparators doing the work. Contrary to mean spirited rumors, most preparators can actually construct a sentence. Stay warm, Bill
GIFT SHOP
CHRISTINE K. TREASE-MANAGER

Rocks

We have a full case and more dedicated to some pretty spectacular rock specimens. Stop by and check out the selection. We also have rock necklaces, hand crafted jewelry and other items made from rocks. If you are a rock-hound you will love our rocks!

Books, Movies and Music

We have a nice selection of books. We carry educational books for children and adults and a nice selection of storybooks for children of all ages. We have instructional books and history books. We also carry an nice variety of music and movies. Stop by and check out our stock today!

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Our kits offer a hands on experience that children will delight in. They are loads of fun with a fabulous educational value. Kids learn as they play and have a keepsake when they are done. Check out our selection of kits and hands on educational toys. You and your child will be glad that you did.

Brand New Item!

Triops are prehistoric monsters also known as dinosaur shrimp that millions of kids have brought to life simply by adding water to eggs that are in suspended animation! Get your Triops at the museum gift shop today!

Gift Shop Purchases are a great way to support the museum. Remember the museum gift shop for all of your gift giving needs.
What’s Happening in Archaeology Collections by K. Renee Barlow PhD

We are mostly involved with important museum “housekeeping” tasks these days, including completing the inventory of special collections in the museum, identifying artifacts that need conservation, upgrading labels and packaging to meet current archival standards, and updating the catalog records. We are also labeling artifacts from Range Creek, and starting a ceramic conservation lab.

I am also updating the NAGPRA inventory, preparing Curation Agreements for 2011, working with several researchers, helping to plan archaeology exhibits in the new museum, and working with collections staff to determine what cataloging software we will use in collections for the next several decades.

New archaeology volunteers Jim Huffaker, Dave Cassidy, Robyn Hedegaard and Cliff Green are helping with the archaeology collections, and labeling and conserving artifacts under the watchful eye of our new archaeology collections manager: Yvonne Wilson. She has also been labeling artifacts with CEU student Paul Inyo Hong.

Yvonne hails from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where she was a scientific preparator at the Carnegie Museum, and where she also met her husband, former Denver Museum of Nature & Science Paleontologist, our own Ken Carpenter. Look for Yvonne’s article in the next issue of Raptor Review!

We are in the process of calling and recruiting ten additional archaeology volunteers to help with artifact conservation, and will be cleaning, stabilizing and reconstructing prehistoric Fremont and Puebloan jars and bowls, photographing them for the catalog records, and making stable, archival bases for exhibit and storage of these artifacts.

Please call the museum collections if you are interested in volunteering!
We have started planning the new museum. Lloyd, Renee Barlow, John Bird, and I have been meeting weekly to discuss the new exhibits. One big difference will be integrating paleontology and archaeology to tell a unified story of eastern Utah, rather than two separate ones as is currently the case.

Switching hats to my role as Curator of Paleontology, in September I was invited to give a lecture on ankylosaurs (armor-plated dinosaurs), at the Museum of the Desert in Saltillo, Mexico. My host, dinosaur paleontologist Hector Sylva, took me to see one of his field research areas. Unlike the extensive dinosaur beds exposed around here, the exposures there are small, patchy and widely scattered. I greatly admire the tremendous amount of work needed to find specimens! The result of my visit is a joint manuscript currently in development describing the ankylosaurs of Mexico. John Bird and I attended the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology meeting in Pittsburgh. I presented a poster summarizing my work on the bone accumulation at Dinosaur National Monument. John attended a lot of talks, whereas I could hardly get to any. We have begun planning for our field work next year. Chief of these is targeted collecting of specimens from different time periods for the new museum.

Finally, please join me in extending your condolences to Tyler Isaacson, the museum’s custodian. Tyler has had several deaths in his family this year.

Kenneth Carpenter, Ph.D.

It is with great sadness that we bid farewell to an amazing co-worker and a fond friend. Chanel Atwood is moving from the area at the end of January. Words cannot express how greatly she will be missed.

Chanel worked for the museum as a volunteer and paid employee off and on through the years until she was hired as a full-time Information Specialist for CCRIC, the Castle Country Regional Information Center, housed in the museum lobby.

Chanel was with the museum when the Huntington Mammoth was discovered and she was able to participate in that and many other excavations. She worked in the collections of the museum as a cataloguer and is very informed about archaeology as well as paleontology.

When Chanel was hired as a CCRIC employee, she brought a passion and knowledge of the area than enabled her to inspire others to want to discover us as well.

The information center provides promotion of local businesses as well. Chanel is great at letting visitors know their options for local dining, sleeping and shopping opportunities.

Chanel will be missed by the museum and by the entire community. She has become the epitome of information. We wish her the best.

From the Director Continued

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Happy Holidays

Recent activities in the education area have included a number of preschool tours. It is always a delight (and a challenge) to conduct these tours and see the expressions of wonder as these youngsters are exposed to the world of the Prehistoric Museum. When asked what the Huntington Mammoth is, the most common answer is “A dinosaur with big horns.” Their eyes light up when they discover that the mammoth is a mammal similar to an elephant and that the “horns” are really very big teeth. On with the tour, we discover other Ice Age mammals including the saber-tooth cat. They (and accompanying parents) always amazed to find out that camels once lived in the wild in Utah, and still live here as domestic animals – llamas, guarding flocks of sheep from coyotes and feral dogs.

I usually have time to tell a story or two, Ute of course, while we sit in the Ute teepee and learn how information was shared and passed along before the days of paper and pencil among the Native Americans.

Then it is on to the Hall of Dinosaurs where they are greeted by “AL”, the Allosaurus and they learn how to tell the difference between “Al” and a Tyrannosaurus rex by counting toes on the front foot – three for “Al” and two for T. rex. The Utahraptor is always a hit as are the dinosaur tracks from the local coal mines.

Then it is on to one of the highlights of any child’s trip to the museum, the live alligator and soft-shelled turtle and then on around the corner to the discovery area and the sand pit – an hour really goes fast with twenty or so inquiring young minds with short attention spans!

The haunted museum was cancelled because of lack of volunteers as well as numerous conflicting activities in the local community. It was good to start this activity in the community to give the young people something constructive to do on Halloween. Now the surrounding community has taken the reins and organized several activities for young people at this time of year. Perhaps it is time we stepped out of the picture and got back to the real mission of the museum.

Work progresses, although more slowly than we would like, on several projects in the exhibits area. The first of these is the move of the live animals to a new home near the children’s area. This area is nearing completion and the move will likely take place early in January.

Work also continues on the planned renovation of the mammoth base. We have found out that the hoped for Bison latifrons skeleton donation is not going to happen, but we continue to work modifying the artificial plant material to vegetate the base and make it look like a meadow and marsh similar to what the mammoth may have been trapped in at the time of its death. We are currently looking for donations to allow us to have a skeletal Paleo-Indian hunter with atlatl and dart hunting the mammoth.

Recent volunteers who have helped with the modification of artificial plants for this exhibit include Ralph Escamilla and Melissa Hurlbut of UFOP (Utah Friends of Paleontology), and USU/CEU students Lana Erickson, Morgan Ottoway, George Anderson, and Todd LeMmon.

The community art show, Beginnings, with twenty-six pieces of art in a wide variety of media, will be open through the third week of January, 2011. If you haven’t seen it, you should stop by and take a look at the work of your friends and neighbors.

Have a great holiday season and many thanks to all the volunteers and members who help us make this a truly great museum to visit.

Lloyd Logan
KIDS ONLY

CAMBRIAN

500 MILLION YEARS AGO, LATER IN THE CAMBRIAN. (1) AGNOSTUS, A TRILOBITE; (2) PIKAIA, A PRIMITIVE CHORDATE; (3) VAUXIA, SPONGE; (4) AYSHEIA, AN ONYCHOPHORE; (5) CHITON, AND (6) SCENELLA, MOLLUSKS; (7) BATHTNOTUS, TRILOBITE; (8) MACKENZIA, AN ANEMONE-LIKE ANIMAL; (9) CANADIA, A SPINY WORM; AND (10) ILLAENURUS, TRILOBITE.
USU/CEU Prehistoric Museum
451 East 400 North
Price, Utah 84501
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