From The Director
by Dr. Kenneth Carpenter

As I write this, the Utahraptor mounted skeleton is taking shape for its December 23rd unveiling. The new pose is similar to the statue on 100 North, except that the tail points up so as to not hit the ceiling. The skeleton will greet visitors coming in from the parking lot and replaces the Karen Templeton mobile “The Whisperers” in the lobby. That art-piece will be refurbished and displayed in the open space at the Jennifer Leavitt Student Center on campus where it can be viewed better. The new skeleton incorporates a lot of new information since it was originally reconstructed almost two decades ago, so does look very different. It has involved a lot of hard work by John Bird, Casey Dooms and me, aided by volunteers Ralph Escamilla, & Barb Benson. The base and signage is by Lloyd Logan.

The first annual Museum Member’s dinner on December 9 was a great success. I gave a summary of what the museum staff accomplished during the past year, as well as a brief peek at what is planned in the new museum. Several weeks previously, I represented the Museum and USU-Eastern at the opening ceremony for the new Natural History Museum of Utah on the University of Utah campus. The new exhibits gave me ideas for some renovations we can undertake next year. So by all means, come back and visit often, because your museum is undergoing changes. These changes are made possible through your membership and financial support.

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Ribs and More Ribs
(but no BBQ sauce)
By John Bird

Working on the new mount of the Utahraptor has been a real team effort. I have assembled the back and neck. The vertebrae needed a few alterations and I added the missing parts and mounted them to the metal armature.

Then came the ribs. The new mount is an action pose so the ribs on the left side are close together while the ribs on the right are spread a little. And as Ken pointed out, ribs don’t attach at right angles to the vertebra, they are angled a little back so the animal can breathe.

The cervicals are much thinner and straighter than the dorsal verts. The shaping process was a bit time consuming. I roughed out the ribs and attached them, adding the final details with the ribs in place. This gives a custom fit for each bone.

Ken, who has been doing the work on the skull, has also supplied numerous photos of fossils so the mount can be as accurate as we can get it at this time.

Barb Benson helped with the cervical ribs until she left on her annual Christmas trip.
Gift Shop
Memberships

We would like to thank Greg and Barb Benson and Mike and Connie Leschin for their Allosaurus Memberships. Their support of the museum at this level is greatly appreciated. These names can be seen on the donor plaque located in the museum lobby by the admissions counter.

The First Annual Member’s Appreciation Dinner was a great success. There were 34 in attendance and the meal and atmosphere were so wonderful. It was a great opportunity for the members to become familiar with the staff, and the staff to get to know the members. A short presentation by Dr. Carpenter gave a look at the past year and what has been done at the museum and a look to the future and the direction the museum is heading. This was the first of many annual Member’s Appreciation dinners to come! Thanks to all who attended.

Membership is a great way to support your museum. Membership also benefits the member with special invitations, discounts on events and a discount on gift shop purchases. It also enables the cardholder to gain access to the museum year round during regular business hours at no cost. Membership offers a lot of bang for your buck, get your membership today.

For memberships please contact Christine K. Trease at (435) 613-5757 or email christine.trease@usu.edu or visit our website museum.ceu.edu and click on the members link for details and applications.

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The Cretaceous Christmas celebration was held on December 10th this year and it was a great success!

The Carbon High School Choir performed live Christmas music at 2:00 pm. The sound of the choir echoed through the museum with such loveliness. One thing about the museum is that it has great acoustics!

The Lasslow Band performed from 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm with live music and singing for the public.

They even got the public involved in a sing-a-long of Jingle Bells!

Santa Claus was scheduled from 3:00 pm to 4:00 pm, but there were so many children eager to talk to him, that he stayed past 4:30! Santa is always a hit at Cretaceous Christmas, and this year was no exception. Each child left with a candy cane and wonderful memories of their visit with Santa.

Dr. Carpenter was on-hand to oversee the festivities.

Every child took their rightful seat on Santa’s lap
There was also a sale in the gift shop for the entire day. 10% off every purchase. This is just one way that the gift shop could give back to the public for their support of the museum through gift shop purchases. Additionally, there was FREE admission from 2:00 pm until closing.

The little ones even found out how to get a penny squished in memory of the occasion.
If you haven’t been by the museum lately, you need to stop by in the near future. We have had a busy fall and the winter shows no signs of slacking up.

One of the major highlights of the fall season was a joint exhibit of fine art, of the Fremont peoples and their lifestyle, by Joseph Venus (Painter of our Ice Age mural) and the spectacular rock art photography of Francois Gohier. These exhibits coincided with a reception at the museum by the Utah Rock Art Research Association.

In the gallery now is a fine art exhibit entitled Community Voices – not a large show, but it has a number of media represented – stop by and see it when you are in town. This show was open to all amateur and professional artists in Utah, east of the Wasatch Front.

The big exhibit news of the season is the impending rededication of the Utahraptor skeleton in a new and more dynamic pose, in his new home in the lobby of the Prehistoric Museum. This exhibit is set to open December 23, 2011. This skeleton has been overhauled and refurbished by Ken Carpenter, John Bird, Casey Dooms, B2 (AKA Barb Benson) and last, but by no means least, volunteer Ralph Escamilla who loaned not only his body and time, but also his welding machine to the task of putting Utahraptor back together again. And yes, the Utahraptor looked a lot like Humpty Dumpty after his great fall with pieces spread out all over the viewing lab in the museum.

After Utahraptor has found his new home, the remounting of the Cleveland-Lloyd dinosaurs in the pit will be the next major project. Be sure to stop by and see the process in action, it is really fascinating. If you are so inclined, we can always use a few more volunteers around the museum.

Another major change, in the visual appeal of the museum, is the reorganization and repositioning of the exhibit cases along the wall. This small change gained us not only a more appealing visual appearance in the exhibit halls, but also gave us some additional storage space.

In recent weeks, a number of children have celebrated their birthdays with parties here at the museum. Many of these parties take place on Friday afternoons and a highlight of the party is the children coming downstairs to the alligator tank to watch the weekly feeding at 4:00 PM. Nearly all children are fascinated by the feeding activities of the alligator, soft-shelled turtle and monitor lizards – moms not so much!

As always, visit the museum often and let us know how you like the changes. We know we can’t please everyone, but we are trying to make your museum an entertaining and educational place to visit. Please help us out by giving us some feedback on our activities.
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http://museum.ceu.edu

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