From The Director
By Dr. Kenneth Carpenter

So much has happened at the museum this past year. The cleaned-up skeleton of “Al”, the Allosaurus, is on display mounted so as to look like it is attacking the Camptosaurus. The real bones of the skeleton can be seen as different from the uniform gray of the replica parts. On the archaeology side, the “What is Archaeology?” exhibit was unveiled during Prehistoric Week in May. That exhibit was followed by “Ice Age Utah” and the science of the Huntington Mammoth, which were unveiled in August at the 25th anniversary celebration of the discovery of the Huntington Mammoth. New signage was also added to the Joe Venus Mural-Pleistocene mammal skeleton display. We are now in the development stage of the “What is Paleontology?” exhibit. I hope we can have that finished in about three months. We have also been kicking around some ideas for the Archaic Indian exhibits centered near the Barrier Canyon mural. We’ll start on that project once the “What Is Paleontology?” exhibit has been finished. The Fremont Pithouse renovation is almost done. I started that side project about a year ago and have worked on it off-and-on since. Once the voice recording of the Fremont couple is installed and the Fremont basket replica is finished, then we will work on the graphic and text panels.

Our newest staff is Carrie Herbel Greenwald, who joined us as the Chief Preparator. Carrie earned a Master’s degree from the University of Nebraska, and has worked several decades at the University of Nebraska Museum and the South Dakota School of Mines Museum. She is currently working to assemble the Stegosaurus skeleton, which will join the other dinosaurs in the Dino Pit. Come by and watch her and TyRee Olson work.

Another big development is the pit-house in the kids Discovery Area. It has been very popular since its opening around Thanksgiving. This and many other exhibits completed this year were made possible through your membership. I thank each of you for your ongoing support.

Ken
The cold weather is upon us and the museum halls no longer ring with the voices of visitors from near and far. We remain busy with research, behind the scenes curatorial work, and exhibit design in the Hall of Archaeology.

I was introduced to a very nice archaeological site near East Carbon. This site consists of an intact pit structure and associated rubble pile that may be a collapsed aboveground roomblock. The late start in the year limited the project to mapping and some initial surface survey. The surface of this site has numerous ceramic sherds and lithic flakes across the entire ridge top. The intact architectural features and artifact density on the surface suggest that this site has seen minimal looting or collecting over the years, despite its proximity to East Carbon. Plans for the spring include completely mapping the surface manifestation and an initial test excavation to evaluate both the pit structure and the rubble pile for intact sub-surface deposits. While a great deal of attention has been paid to the Fremont sites within the Tavaputs Plateau (Nine Mile Canyon, Range Creek Canyon), we know much less about the abundant archaeology along the foot of this massive cliff system. Hopefully this excavation project will expand our knowledge of the Fremont occupation along the Price River and its tributaries. There will be abundant volunteer opportunities for this project in the late spring, so let me know if you might be interested in helping out in the field or lab.

Following up on the recent research on the bighorn headdress highlighted in last spring’s newsletter, we have modified the exhibit to provide visitors with a better visual experience as well as the new dates. As you can see in the picture, the headdress has been mounted on an archival quality head to better reflect how the headdress was probably worn. This elevated view also allows the visitor to clearly see how the horn sheaths were modified and re-attached to the skull, making the headdress much lighter. The backdrop of the case has been modified to provide another view of bighorn headdresses, taken from the famous Great Hunt petroglyph panel in Nine Mile Canyon. Come by and enjoy the small improvements we continue to make throughout the museum.

One area that continues to undergo renovation is the Fremont Pithouse diorama, which is based on John Gillen’s excavations of Valley Village in Nine Mile Canyon. We have added many small details of daily life to the diorama, with the goal of creating a common human connection between the Fremont household and our museum visitors. We are in the final phases of this improvement, which should be wrapped up early in 2014. We are awaiting the completion of a modern replica of a Fremont rod-and-bundle coiled basket before we add signage and labeled photos highlighting the details of the exhibit.

The pithouse exhibit will also become interactive in the New Year. Two members of the Hopi tribe, Leland Dennis and Dee Setalla, recently recorded a dialogue that will play in the pithouse. This dialogue will help create the illusion that we are stepping into the daily lives of a Fremont family, further humanizing the diorama. Thanks to museum members Robert and Cheryl Marzec and their non-profit organization, Sumi Nungwa, for their help in this endeavor. We would also like to thank Andy Urbanik, a member of the museum advisory board, and Castle Country Radio for their help in making the recording.

I am wrapping up my first semester teaching at USU Eastern. I have enjoyed teaching Introduction to Cultural Anthropology to 25 students scattered across the state, but I am really looking forward to teaching Principles of Archaeology this spring semester. I already have several museum members enrolled and several more planning on auditing the course.
Memberships

On December 13th, museum members attended the third annual Members Appreciation Dinner at the Tuscan Restaurant in Price, UT. Members enjoyed a delicious dinner while hearing about the museum’s accomplishments of the past year as well as its future goals, where the focus will shift to exhibit renovation. Three long-time museum volunteers were also presented the Prehistoric Museum Exceptional Service Award during the dinner, in recognition of their thousands of combined volunteer hours over the years.

Memberships have allowed the museum to do so much this year: renovate the Fremont Pithouse diorama in the Hall of Archaeology to look lived-in, create an exhibit on Ice Age Utah, build a pithouse for children to explore in the Discovery Area, give free tours to school groups about prehistoric life in eastern Utah, and so much more. We appreciate all that members do for the museum!

Members still have the fantastic benefit of free admission to the Museum of Moab through a reciprocal membership partnership. Simply show your valid Prehistoric Museum membership card to enter the Museum of Moab for no charge. What a wonderful way to explore the exciting history of eastern Utah!

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns about your membership, please do not hesitate to contact Claire Bennett by phone at 435-613-5755, email at claire.bennett@usu.edu, or in person.

Claire

Gift Shop

On behalf of the gift shop, I thank everyone who remembered to purchase from the gift shop through the holiday season. Purchases made at the gift shop help support the museum and your patronage is greatly appreciated.

Continuing on with the gift shop remodel, I have been reassessing the items carried in the shop. We have added many new items that have a great entertainment and educational value to them.

Many kits have been added to the selections making the gift shop even more appealing.

Live the experience of being a real geologist and look for fascinating treasures. With the help of the given special hammer and chisel, digging up the geodes hidden in the gypsum brick will be easy and exciting. Then, kids will break open and examine the inner wonder of each geode that they have found, and learn more with the colorful leaflet.

A complete kit to be a real paleontologist. The box contains a cardboard panel with three authentic fossils belonging to different prehistoric ammonite species, a plastic stand to hold the panel, and a magnifying lens to investigate and discover each ammonite’s peculiarities. It also contains a gypsum brick hiding an ammonite replica in 1:1 scale, a complete set of tools to take the replica out from the brick clearly and accurately, and a booklet about ammonites to help with the specimens identification.

Young paleontologists will love this scientifically detailed replica of *Utahraptor*.

Thank you once again for your support of the museum through gift shop purchases and please remember us for your future gift giving needs.

Christine K. Trease
Since I started on November 11, 2013, let me introduce myself. My name is Carrie Herbel and I am the new Chief Preparator at the Prehistoric Museum. I am very excited to be a part of the Museum’s team. Already, I am involved in something I’ve only dreamed about – mounting a dinosaur, Stegosaurus. Previously, I have worked on casts of two dinosaur skeletal mounts - a Chasmosaurus (University of Nebraska State Museum) and an Allosaurus at the Journey Museum (associated with the Museum of Geology at the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology). Other skeletal mounts were quite small (fossil mammals) or unique (e.g. a 25-foot long plesiosaur neck in a floor exhibit). I have done repair work on other mounts, but this Stegosaurus is my first dinosaur with some real bone, not just cast material, and it won’t be my last! Learning from an expert, Dr. Ken Carpenter, Museum Director, is an absolute honor due to his extensive experience in mounting dinosaurs and other fossil skeletons. After the Stegosaurus, I will work on a Camarasaurus followed by Diplodocus skeleton. While this work will take much of my time, I will also be doing some fieldwork in the Uinta Basin (hopefully in search of fossil mammals!) and other miscellaneous preparation, exhibit and outreach activities.

I started my paleontology career in the late 1980’s as a graduate student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), doing research at Ashfall Fossil Beds site (original quarry name was Poison Ivy Quarry for obvious reasons), which is now a Nebraska State Historical Park. This is considered one of the top fossil sites in the US since it contains a large fossil assemblage preserved in a ten million year old ash in much the same way as Pompeii but containing actual bones and cartilage of birds, rhinos, camels, several types of horses, and much more! My research/thesis didn’t focus on the animals in the ash, I studied the geology and animals within the deposits directly beneath the ash. A fascinating study that uncovered a partial gomphothere (early relative to modern elephants) and a large camel, both mammals were NOT found within the ash deposit directly above. So how did these critters escape the ash? Great questions that I attempted to answer in my thesis. It also shows how common it is to uncover something completely unexpected when doing fieldwork. Exciting for me since I love doing fieldwork!

Along with my Master’s degree from UNL, I have additional post-graduate coursework under my belt from the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology (SDSMT), University of Pennsylvania, Bryn Mawr College, and two courses on Conservation of Geological Materials through the International Projects of London. All of my education, training, and hands-on experience, including teaching both undergraduate and graduate students while at the SDSMT, have prepared me for the work I’m doing at the Museum.

Working with dinosaurs is quite exciting, but my first love is fossil mammals. It started when I decided to make a career change while majoring in Civil Engineering and I had to take a natural science elective. I enrolled in “Elephants of the Great Plains.” While taking this course, I realized that I could have a career in geology, focusing on vertebrate paleontology, and that there were real jobs for paleontologists. My interests in rocks and bone began while growing up in Nebraska. I found many historic (and maybe prehistoric) bison bones close to home. These bones, along with the rocks, always intrigued me. Thank goodness my mother never complained of the rocks and bits of bone that I brought home after exploring nearby fields and creeks. I hope to be a big part of expanding the Prehistoric Museum’s collection and future exhibits with Utah’s fossil mammals. Mammalian fossils can further expand the Museum visitor’s knowledge of Utah’s wealth of all types of fossils, not just dinosaurs (although these large beasts are amazing!). I look forward to doing great things for the Museum and I hope to meet many of you over the next year. Let me know if you want to become a part of my projects in the field and/or the lab. I would love to share my exciting projects with you.

Carrie Herbel
Greetings from the Prehistoric Museum. It hardly seems possible that by the time you get this, Christmas will have come and gone – time has really flown by this year.

The Fremont Pit House in the children’s area is now ready for play, thanks in a large part to the volunteer efforts of Ralph Escamilla, who spent many hours helping me fabricate and paint our newest children’s attraction.

“The Other Side of Utah 2013-14”, our annual community art and photography show, opened to the public on November 9th in our temporary exhibits gallery. Media represented in this show of 27 entries include pencil, colored pencil, mixed media, acrylics, oils, spray paint, ceramics, and wood/antler carving. This show will run through February 2014 so you have plenty of time to stop by and see it before it closes.

Running concurrently with “The Other Side of Utah” is a forty-four piece photography show sponsored by the USU Eastern Wildlife Club. Categories include wildlife, flora, macro (close-up), birds, and scenic. This is a very nice photography show that we are proud to host – after all, the Prehistoric Museum is a part of USU Eastern and USU Eastern is certainly part of our community.

We are planning many new exhibits or exhibit revisions in the near future. In preparation for that activity, I recently completed making a “fitter case” to do actual-size mock-ups of new exhibits. It is adjustable for our different case sizes. No more paper or cardboard boxes taped to the walls.
This will make layout and design of new exhibits much easier and faster.

We have already started planning for our next new exhibit, “What is Paleontology?” It will be a sister (brother?) exhibit similar to the recently completed exhibit, “What is Archaeology?”

Another ongoing exhibit project is to remove the sand in the bottom of many of our exhibit cases. While it looks natural, the possibility is always there for our exhibit items to be damaged by the abrasive sand due to vibrations from traffic, etc. Since all of our exhibit objects are really one-of-a-kind, it makes sense to protect them every way we can.

As always, thanks for your support. Please stop by your museum, look at our progress and let us know what you think – we really do appreciate your input.

Lloyd E Logan
WHERE IS THIS IN THE MUSEUM?

Stop by the museum and see if you can discover what this is.