

Sam Noble Museum

Annual Report **2010** University of Oklahoma, Norman



- 04 FROM THE DIRECTOR06 EXHIBITS10 EDUCATION14 EVENTS
- **18** RESEARCH AND COLLECTIONS
- 28 FINANCIALS VOLUNTEERS & DONORS
 - CURATOR PUBLICATIONS



Sam Noble Museum

10 YEARS AND COUNTING

Annual Report 2010

The University of Oklahoma, Norman

FROM THE DIRECTOR

2010



Dr. Michael A. Mares Director

MARKED A VERY IMPORTANT YEAR

FOR THE SAM NOBLE MUSEUM.

May 1, 2000, was the day we opened the doors of this facility and on May 28, 2010, we held a very big tenth birthday party. More than 1,800 guests came through the front doors in less than two hours. It was an evening of free flowing chocolate, music, balloons, and party hats as hundreds enjoyed themselves. Most of us old timers still refer to the building as the "new building", but perhaps that was because we were in our old buildings for more than half a century. I think our present facility will always be the "new building" to me.

Museum attendance was up 14.5 percent from 2009, with a 28 percent increase in visitation in the summer of 2010 compared with summer 2009. In fact, it was the highest summer attendance since 2006. The special exhibition *Chocolate*, from The Field Museum in Chicago, and our participation in the Blue Star Museums Program, brought more than 80,000 visitors into Norman's No. 1 tourist attraction through the summer of 2010.

The museum's educational programs continued to be extremely successful. More than 24,617 school children participated in a variety of classes and programs in 2010.

172,600 visitors experienced Oklahoma natural history at the museum during 2010. Schools across the state are feeling the economic crunch, and many are cutting back on field trips. However, the museum's Fossil Fuel Fund assisted 31 schools by covering the cost of field trips, allowing 3,417 students to visit the museum this year who otherwise would not have been able to do so. Fund-raising efforts are ongoing to keep this unique program growing.

Our outstanding science education program, The Whitten-Newman ExplorOlogy® Program, continued to grow with more than 5,194 students participating in a variety of in-depth science programs related to museum research, both in the classroom and in the field. Funded by the Whitten-Newman Foundation, ExplorOlogy® has provided young people with life-changing experiences leading to new or renewed interest in science and the role it can play in their future.

Our Department of Native Languages hosted its eighth annual Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Fair in April. The two-day event had 1,508 attending. It is the only language fair of its kind in the world. I am particularly proud of this annual event to encourage younger generations to speak their native language. The museum is proud to be a vital partner with so many Native American tribes in helping preserve their languages. In addition to providing world-class in-house exhibits, our museum continued to be on the leading edge of best practices in collections care. We received a prestigious Museums for America grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to allow us to begin the long process of cataloging the half million specimens in our invertebrates collection. When this process is complete, we will be the first museum in the nation whose invertebrates are fully cataloged.

I am pleased to announce the museum's collections reached ten million objects and specimens in 2010 through active collecting by curators and collections staff, as well as through donations. We continue to be a leading facility for the preservation and study of the millions of objects that belong to the people of Oklahoma. Our curators and collections staff published 36 scientific papers and presented 78 lectures at scientific meetings and other venues during 2010. Their cutting edge research continues to be a most important part of the museum's activities.

M. Maas



This Persian bit

(1400–700 bce) and nearly 100 other objects from the museum's permanent collection were exhibited in *Mediterranean Treasures*.



EXHIBITS



COLLECTIONS IN 2010.

Stories in Fiber and Clay, Feb. 6 through May 2, featured a selection of baskets and ceramics produced by Native Americans from the Southwest region. The exhibit featured historical works from the Sam Noble Museum's collection, plus several contemporary works from the collection of the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, which were temporarily stored at our museum during construction of the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art's new Stuart wing.

Exhibits staff designed new case furniture to display and light ancient coins and pottery in the museum's *Mediterranean Treasures* exhibit.



Stories in Fiber and Clay

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opened February 6, 2010, and featured work by ancient artists as well as contemporary potters and basket makers. **In the fall,** a second in-house exhibition was created: *Mediterranean Treasures: Selections from the Classics Collection*. The exhibit featured nearly 100 objects from classical Greece, Rome, Egypt and the Middle East dating from between the 21st century BCE and the 3rd century CE. Objects in this exhibit ranged from blown-glass vessels for perfume or oil to weapons, coins and stone carvings. The exhibit was on view from Oct. 2 through April 17.

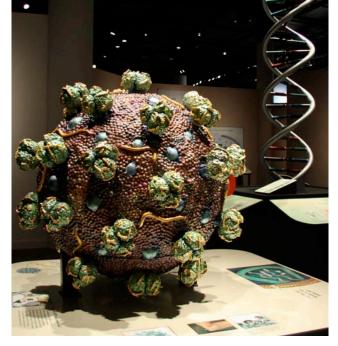


This large exhibit filled both the Brown Special Exhibition Gallery and the World Cultures Gallery. It traced the history of chocolate from its origins as a tree growing in the South American rainforest through its use as a sacred drink by the Maya and Aztecs to its introduction to Europe and subsequent path to becoming a global commodity. During its four-month run, *Chocolate* attracted more than 80,000 visitors to the museum, a 28% increase over the same period in 2009.



10 years in our current facility was cause for celebration throughout 2010, from the opening of *Chocolate* early in May to free days and an anniversary celebration over Memorial Day weekend, to the Top 10 themed Members Night held in October.

8



In the fall of 2010, the exhibits staff removed the *Explore Evolution* exhibit from the museum's second floor Hall of Natural Wonders in preparation for construction of the new Black Mesa permanent exhibit, to begin in February. *Explore Evolution* now enters a second life as a traveling exhibition, beginning at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh early in 2011. A large model of the HIV virus was a focal point of the *Explore Evolution* exhibit.

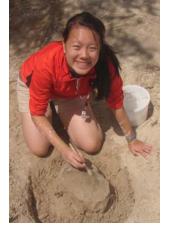


Chocolate drew **80,000 visitors** to the museum during the four months it was exhibited.





Nancy Ha, Muskogee, Paleo Expedition 2010 participant, excavates a fossil.



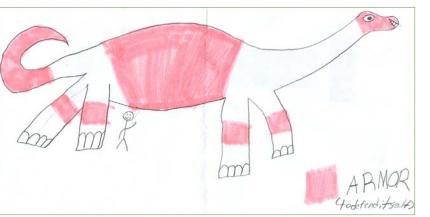
Through innovative and creative informal science education programming, The Sam Noble Museum's education department is expanding the museum's community impact and taking great strides in becoming a national model for both natural history and university-based museums. In 2010, the education department served more than 119,000 participants.

OVER **68,000** MUSEUM GUESTS VISITED OUR INTERACTIVE ANDREE FAMILY DISCOVERY ROOM

where they discovered dinosaur bones in the popular Dino Dig; watched as the resident tiger salamanders, red eared sliders and king snake were fed and learned about cultural holidays from around the world.

Susan Fanning, Woodward Paleo Expedition 2010 participant, examines an exposed rock face for fossils with University of Nebraska State Museum curator emeritus Mike Voorhees.

EDUCATION



483 Oklahoma teachers participated in education workshops conducted at the museum in 2010.

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The museum hosted over 24,000 school field trip visitors, 8,025 of which participated in a classroom program such as Bison Hunters, Clues to the Past and Scientific I.D.

Spring Break Escape, a weeklong event that included collection chats by museum staff, craft projects, a Native American dance performance and bird shows by the Sutton Avian Research Center drew a crowd of over 6,203 visitors while other children's programs such as Summer Explorers, Spike's Club, Discovery RoomTime and scout workshops served an additional 5,000 visitors.

The Whitten-Newman ExplorOlogy® Program, consisting of Paleo Expedition, ScienceEscape, Science Institute, Oklahoma Science Adventure and ExplorOlogy® in Motion reached 5,194 Oklahomans.

The department also participated in two grant-funded outof-school time outreach programs. The museum was one of ten sites chosen nationally to host the SciGirls project, an after school program aimed at girls, and 25 girls participated in the program in 2010. The Trees and Ponds Project, funded by the National Science Foundation and coordinated through the Education Development Center in Boston, MA, maintained 10 boys and girls.

Loan kits were utilized by 1,823 students and teachers.

Adult and family programs reached 390 participants, Sooner Museum Quest brought 352 underserved participants to the

12



museum and teacher workshops brought informal science education to 483 Oklahoma teachers.

Finally, close to 140 adult volunteers and 24 teen volunteers generously gave the museum almost 19,000 hours of volunteer service in museum galleries, museum collections and special events.

Connor Keith, Ada, helps chip fossils out of their rocky matrix during Paleo Expedition 2010.





119,000 youth and adults participated in the museum's education programs in 2010!



24,000 school field trip participants visited the museum in 2010.



A barbershop quartet

entertained guests as they arrived for the museum's 10th anniversary celebration.



EVENTS

THE YEAR 2010 MARKED THE SAM NOBLE MUSEUM'S TO THE YEAR IN ITS "NEW" BUILDING.

To mark the occasion, the museum offered free admission for the first weekend of May, and produced a slide presentation of our museum through the decades as well as a collection of short podcasts featuring selected vignettes from our history. To cap off the celebration, the museum hosted a huge public birthday party on May 28 in conjunction with the special exhibition *Chocolate*. The festivities featured free admission and free chocolate treats by local caterers and vendors, and a barbershop quartet that sang for guests as they arrived through the front rotunda. Even the bison and mammoth sculptures got dressed up for the event! More than 1,800 people attended.

Even the bison sculpture donned festive wear at the museum's 10th anniversary celebration!

EVENINGS WITH A CURATOR

Throughout 2010, the museum featured a series of free public presentations by curators titled "An Evening With a Curator." During these family-friendly talks, curators showcased their research and careers, and museum visitors learned more about the museum's research and collections. Dan Swan, curator of ethnology; Laurie Vitt, curator of herpetology; Edie Marsh-Matthews, curator of fishes; and Nick Czaplewski, curator of vertebrate paleontology, all participated in this year's showcase.

NEUROETHOLOGY PRESIDENTIAL DREAM COURSE LECTURE SERIES

In partnership with the University of Oklahoma Cellular and Behavioral Neurobiology Graduate Program, the museum hosted a series of six well-attended lectures by visiting scientists on the subject of Neuroethology in the fall of 2010. Guest lecturers included Eve Marder, Brandeis University; John G.

Hildebrand, University of Arizona; Masakazu (Mark)
 ^α Konishi, Caltech; Joseph R. Fetcho, Cornell University;

- William B. Kristan, Jr., University of California, San Diego;
 and Larry J. Young, Emory University.
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Visitors line up to sample fruits, chocolates featuring the museum's new logo, and other treats at the 10th anniversary celebration.



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WINE AND CHOCOLATE SEMINAR

To complement the *Chocolate* exhibition, the museum worked with The Spirit Shop of Norman and the 42nd Street Candy Company of Oklahoma City to produce the museum's first wine and chocolate tasting seminar on Aug. 26. The event gave participants an opportunity view the special exhibition and to sample six different chocolates paired with six different wines. The event was so popular that it filled to its 100-seat capacity and had a waiting list of more than 90 people.

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100 people indulged in wine, cheese, and olives at a tasting seminar held in conjunction with the museum's *Mediterranean Treasures* exhibit.





Skull of a 10-million-year-old rodent with horns, found in western Oklahoma in 1959 by the late former SNOMNH curator of vertebrate paleontology, David B. Kitts.



RESEARCH & COLLECTIONS

THE ARCHAEOLOGY DEPARTMENT RECEIVED COOPERATIVE GRANTS TOTALING APPROXIMATELY AND THE TULSA AND THE TULSA

curation and perform analysis on those organizations' collections. The BoR project included the reanalysis of the Pruitt site MR 12 in the Lake of the Arbuckles area, which was conducted by MA student Justin Moe, as well as upgraded curation and analysis of site 34 GR 4 at Lake Altus, which was conducted by MA student Shelby Bartlett. The department also entered into a cooperative project with the Caddo Nation on a NAGPRA grant to study and document burials and pottery in the museum's collection that are relevant to Caddo heritage.

Mounted bird specimens

await placement in the new Black Mesa exhibit.



Ethnology acquired 146 objects in 2010, including 45 pieces of Native American art.

Archaeology curator Don Wyckoff has been analyzing a collection of approximately 6,000 pieces of chipped stone from a 9,000-year-old site in Love County. He and his students have completed profiles, received radiocarbon dates and recorded information on a 4,000- to 5,000year-old buried soil site in Nowata County, which the students are now preparing to publish.

The collection received confirmation from Larry Banks of Paradise, TX, that the SNM will receive half of his extensive collection of knappable stone

- from the Southern Plains, upon which he
- ο based his 1990 major monograph. The
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 $\cup \vdash BIRDS$

Curator Gary Schnell was heavily involved
 in the development of the new Black Mesa
 exhibit, which opened in March 2011. This

included an expedition to Black Mesa during which he collected 61 specimens of birds and mammals for the exhibit, in addition to 46 birds collected for the project in 2009.

In 2010, the department acquired 251 birds for exhibits, research collection or teaching collection including 51 frozen birds from North Carolina State Museum.

In addition to his work for the birds department, Schnell imported some 600 specimens of bats that were collected in Colima, Mexico by Schnell and his students at that site over several years. He conducted his final Colima field expedition in January of 2010, which yielded approximately 250 mammals, half of which will be deposited in the mammal collection of the SNM.

ETHNOLOGY

Ethnology curator Dan Swan and collection manager Kate Barr developed two special exhibitions



Gary Schnell, curator of birds, examines the mounted specimens he collected for the Black Mesa exhibit.





Greek, Roman, and Byzantine coins exhibited in *Mediterranean Treasures* highlighted shared technologies and customs in the ancient world.

from the ethnology collection in 2010. *Stories in Fiber and Clay* featured more than 80 baskets and pots from the permanent collections of the Sam Noble Museum with additional materials on loan from the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art. *Mediterranean Treasures: Selections from the Classics Collection* was curated by Kate Barr and featured nearly 100 objects from classical Greek, Rome, Egypt and the Middle East. The department purchased 7 new ethnology objects and 26 works of art for the Native American Art collection. Swan maintains a blog that features individual objects from the ethnology collection on a regular basis.

GENOMICS

The genomics collection added 1,374 samples in 2010, including specimens from the herpetology, ornithology and mammal departments. The collection currently contains samples from 279 genera and 495 species of animals.



1,374 samples were added to the museum's genomics collection in 2010.



HERPETOLOGY

Herpetology curators Laurie Vitt and Janalee Caldwell have been conducting ongoing collections of reptiles, amphibians, insects and small mammals at a site in southeastern Oklahoma. The work has yielded hundreds of specimens for

the herpetology collection, as well as 232 mammals, some of which represent first

- records of the species for this part of the
 state; as well as 5 birds and more than 500
 insects for other collections. They also have
 completed a multi-year grant project to
 conduct surveys at several Wildlife
 Management Areas in Oklahoma.
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Edie Marsh-Matthews

and graduate student Judith Barkstedt work in a stream on Tinker Air Force Base.

ICHTHYOLOGY

Curator Edie Marsh-Matthews, in collaboration with OU endocrinologist Rosemary Knapp, has been continuing research to examine the effects of stress hormones on mosquito fish. Marsh-Matthews also has continued work on a long-term survey studying the effects of urbanization on streams around Tinker Air Force Base.

The lchthyology department also has collaborated with the Texas Memorial Museum on two major projects: the first of these, Fishes of Texas, is an online searchable database of all the Texas collections of fishes.

The second project, the Great Plains Landscape Conservation Cooperative, is funded by a grant from the United States Geological Survey. The project involves gathering all the data that currently exists in collections about certain ecoregions of the Great Plains for fish, soil, rainfall



Dr. Janalee Caldwell and colleagues constructing drift fences, low plastic fences with traps used to collect a variety of amphibians and reptiles.



Brenda Smith-Patten, collection manager, moves a case of riffle beetles in the recent invertebrates collection.

and other variables. Scientists can then use the data to help them make predictions about likely fish populations in areas in which no collections have been made.

INVERTEBRATE PALEONTOLOGY

During 2010, curator Steve Westrop and PhD students Jesse Carlucci and Rob Swisher completed their second field season of a three-year grant from the National Science Foundation. They are comparing trilobite communities in Oklahoma to those in Missouri, Virginia and Tennessee to study the effects on these communities of large scale environmental changes caused by the formation of the Appalachian mountain range.

Collection manager Roger Burkhalter continues the multi-year project of computerizing the collection's catalogs, another NSF funded project that also involves the museum's Paleobotany and Micropaleontology collection.



73,567 modern invertebrate specimens catalogued to date!



12 new species of Argentinian mammals have now been identified by curators Mares and Braun.

Akodon viridescens,

a new species of grass mouse discovered by museum curators.



Curator Michael Mares assumed the office of President of the American Society of Mammalogists, a 3,000 member scientific society. He also serves on the Board of Directors of the International Federation of Mammalogists, the world's largest organization of mammal societies. Mares received a special recognition from the National Science Foundation for his 5 ½-year term, 2 years as chair, on the Advisory Committee for the Biological Sciences (BIO-AC).

Curators Michael Mares and Janet Braun, in collaboration with colleagues and students at Oklahoma State University, have begun a study of genetic variation in Ord's kangaroo rat, the most widely distributed kangaroo rat in North America. The study will provide new information about the process of geographic isolation and the importance of different types of geographic barriers. The same research group is examining the



population genetics of introduced species of rats (*Rattus*) across the United States, as well as their propensity to spread diseases.

Mares and Braun described a new species of grass mouse from an area of isolated grasslands in central Argentina. *Akodon viridescens* is the 12th new species of mammal from Argentina discovered by these curators. The species name *viridescens*—is a reference to the greenish coloration of the hair.

Collection Managers Marcia Revelez (Mammalogy) and Liz Leith (Archaeology) mentored an intern in museum studies. The project – to create a web page for museum best practice resources – was funded by a partnership with the Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections (SPNHC) and CollectionsWeb, an NSF-sponsored program to build a national community of natural history collections.

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More than 800 students participated in the 2010 Native American Youth Language Fair.

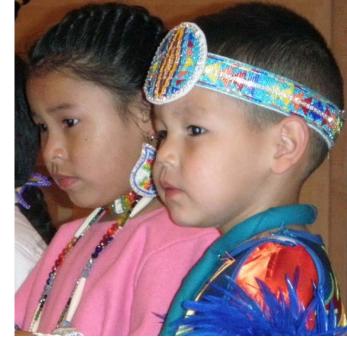


Young participants in the eighth annual Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Fair. Below: Oklahoma Breath of Life workshop participants.

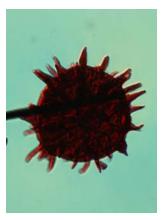
NATIVE AMERICAN LANGUAGES

The Native American Languages collection began processing the Carolyn Quintero Collection of Osage language materials and began its partnership with the Osage Language Program to digitize these documents and audio recordings and make them available to Osage language instructors and students.

The department hosted the eighth annual Oklahoma Native American Language Fair, which drew more than 800 participants. In addition, the department hosted the first Oklahoma Breath of Life: Silent No More workshop, a program designed for Native communities that no longer have any fluent speakers. Linn designed the curriculum for the program, including information on finding and using archival material, linguistics (phonetics, morphology, syntax), and community language and cultural renewal. The workshop was funded by the NSF Oklahoma Digitization and Access grant.









Palynomorphs from Permian rocks (~275-300 million years old) in Kay Co., Oklahoma, including a new pollen genus (top).

PALEOBOTANY

Curator Rick Lupia embarked on a new research project that focuses on the Permian palynology of north central Oklahoma. He is looking at how vegetation across the Pennsylvanian / Permian boundary (about 300 million years ago) changed in response to climate and sea level changes. The work is based in part on 400 meters of rock cores from Kay County stored in the Geological Survey core library.

> Collection manager Margaret Landis wrapped up the final year of a multi-year NSF grant project for digitizing the collec-

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^{**T**} – **RECENT INVERTEBRATES**

The Recent Invertebrates department re ceived a prestigious Museums for America
 grant from the Institute of Museum and
 Library Services to initiate the inventory,

cataloging, and digitization of the collection. Over the next three years, about 50 percent of the collection—approximately 250,000 specimens—will be catalogued and georeferenced. The data will be made available to the scientific community and to the general public. The grant provided for the hiring of one full-time collection assistant and one part-time student assistant. To date, about 15,000 records for about 36,000 individuals have been digitized. When this project is complete, the SNM will be one of the first museums in the nation to have catalogued its recent invertebrates collection.

VERTEBRATE PALEONTOLOGY

Fossil preparator Kyle Davies began preparing the nearly 300 bone casts required for the fully mounted juvenile *Apatosaurus* to go on display in the Hall of Ancient Life in summer 2011. He is sculpting missing bones or parts of bones from

300

Nearly 300 bone casts are under construction to complete a life-sized juvenile *Apatosaurus* which will go on display in 2011.

the collections from clay, as well as working with the OU College of Industrial Engineering to produce models of juvenile-sized bones based on laser scans of adult apatosaur bones.

Volunteers working on unmarked field jackets from the 1950s found the wellpreserved skeleton of a horned mammal that may be previously undescribed. Curator Nick Czaplewski plans on doing additional research to determine if the find is truly a new species.

The addition of a new software program in the VP laboratory enabled curators and graduate students to obtain a three-dimensional look at specimens from the collection by creating composites of CT scans. The composites contain all the data of the original CT scans, but can be manipulated in new ways, allowing detailed study of the bones without damage to the original fossils.

Two scientists from Italy visited the collection this year to compare bones they have found with our specimens. The scientists believe they may have discovered bones of a *Cotylorhynchus* at an island off the coast of Italy. The pair plans to return in the fall of 2011 to study some of Oklahoma's Permian trackways with curator Rich Cifelli.

> Kyle Davies uses clay to sculpt missing pieces of a juvenile *Apatosaurus* hip bone.

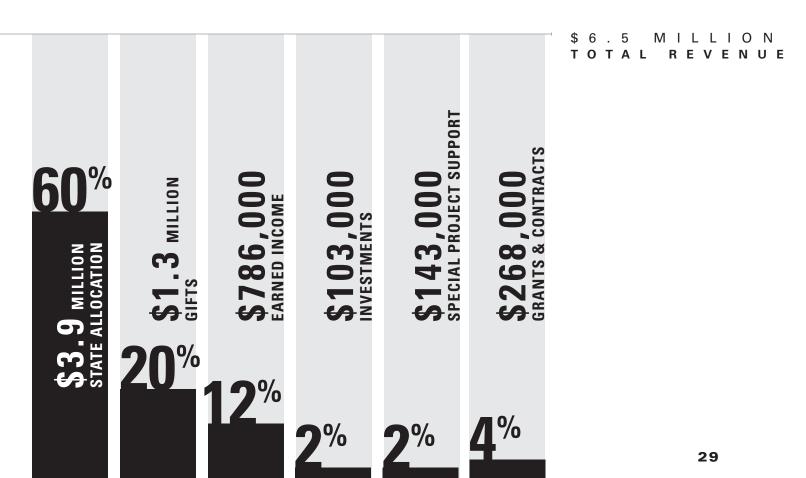




ANNUAL BUDGET, 2010

\$6.5 MILLION TOTAL EXPENSES

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NUMBERS. <u>O</u> U R

1,305 E-NEWS SUBSCRIBERS

383 FOLLOWERS ON TWITTER

PRESS RELEASES STORIES IN 84 NEWSPAPERS TEEN VOLUNTEERS



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EXPLOROLOGY® PARTICIPANTS

ADULT PROGRAM 1,216 MUSEUM PARTICIPANTS 1,216 MEMBERS

VOLUNTEERS



Ruthe Blalock Jones (Delaware-Shawnee-Peoria) painting acquired by Ethnology in 2010.

Linda Agee Mitzi Aldrich John Allen Kevin Anderson Kathleen Arch Joe Baalke Paula Baker Mervin Barnes Donald Batchelor Leonard Beevers Alice Bentin Nick Bentin Charlotte Bert Alyssa Boutelle Elizabeth Branam Betty Braun **Evelyn Brown Rvan Bulmer** Jordan Buswell Dan Bye Ann Callahan John Campbell, Sr. John Carnuccio Meg Carr Jacob Carson **Catherine Carter**

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DONORS



Balloons greeted guests attending the museum's 10th anniversary party in May, 2010.

SAM NOBLE CIRCLE MEMBERS

\$25,000 and up

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Museum volunteer Bill Miller uses a laser pointer to highlight details in an exhibit to one of the museum's teen volunteers.

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Jim McAuley

Dr. Michael A. Mares

Not pictured: William "Bill" Cameron; John Hargrave; Lou C. Kerr; Reggie Whitten

2010 CURATOR PUBLICATIONS

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Mares, M. A. 2010. Foreword. *CLS Journal of Museum Studies*, 4 (1): 1-7.

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78

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Leah Gray, Broken Arrow, examines a fossil she found in the field during Paleo Expedition 2010. **10,000,000 objects** and specimens make up the Sam Noble Museum's collection, as of 2010.





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