



Sam Noble Museum

Tracks

Summer 2012 Newsletter, Volume 24, No. 2



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TRACKS, SUMMER 2012: VOLUME 24 NO. 2

MUSEUM INFORMATION

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OUR MISSION

The Sam Noble Museum at the University of Oklahoma inspires minds to understand the world through collection-based research, interpretation, and education.

OUR VISION

As one of the finest museums, we are at the heart of our community, collectively working to inspire understanding, appreciation, and stewardship of the earth and its peoples.

TRACKS

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ON THE COVER

Feather Fan, Kickapoo

PHOTO *Hadley Jerman*

Thanks to our Corporate Benefactors:



From the Director



Since January 1, 2012, we have welcomed 70,030 visitors to the Sam Noble Museum. This spring, 24,739 Oklahoma students made field trips this school year, including 2,882 on Fossil Fuel Fund scholarships. *Warrior Spirits: Indigenous Arts from New Guinea*, on display in the Fred E. and Enid Brown Gallery, provided thousands with a fascinating glimpse into island cultures halfway around the world, with a collaboration of objects from the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art and our ethnology collection.

We hosted our annual “Science In Action & Object I.D. Day” and joined with area middle schools to co-sponsor our first “Women In Science Day.” In April, we celebrated the 10th annual Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Fair, about which you will read more later in this newsletter.

We also said goodbye to four very dedicated board members – Lou Kerr, Lucy Smith, Ph.D., Rod Davis, and Craig Abbott, M.D. Each served three two-year terms, the maximum allowed by museum by-laws. I greatly appreciate their time, energy and dedication to move the museum forward. During their tenure, the museum accomplished so much. We welcomed new board members – Mary Beth Babcock, Kevin Easley, Taylor Hanson, Xavier Neira and Laura Ogle. Each will be featured in our fall issue.

On June 1, we opened *Chinasaurus*, a gala exhibition featuring the largest collection of authentic Chinese dinosaurs ever toured, sponsored by ConocoPhillips. China presents the broadest array of dinosaurs across time of any country in the world, and several of these bizarre and massive animals are known nowhere else on Earth. Our Exhibits staff – particularly Tom Luczycki and Kyle Davies from Vertebrate Paleontology – did an amazing job bringing the dinosaur display to life in a beautiful setting that reflects their Chinese origins. It’s a terrific display, and I hope you will have the opportunity to see it.

As a part of the University of Oklahoma, we begin a new fiscal year on July 1. Because OU has experienced some decrease in budget, along with increased costs, the museum will have a 3 percent budget reduction. This follows three years with some level of reduction. These cuts impact staffing and operations, but in the general economy of the United States, the Sam Noble Museum is much better off than many museums, some of which have had cuts in the 30 to 40 percent range. We will continue to fulfill our mission and serve Oklahoma with quality research, exhibits and programs. Our goal is to continue to be one of the finest university museums in the world. We hope you will visit us regularly to participate in our ongoing programs of science, education and just plain fun. The Sam Noble Museum is proud to serve the people of Oklahoma!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Mares".

Michael A. Mares, Ph.D.
Director

Chinasaurs Tasting

Cultural enthusiasts ages 21 and over can enjoy a glimpse into the fascinating world of Chinese dinosaurs during a cultural tasting event, scheduled from 6 to 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 28, pairing international beers with a variety of Chinese-inspired appetizers, entrees and desserts. During the event, guests may tour the exhibit, *Chinasaurs: Dinosaur Discoveries from China*. Tickets are \$25 for members, \$35 for non-members. Space is limited and pre-registration is required. To enroll, please call (405) 325-1008.

The tastings continue with a sampling of Chinese-inspired cuisine and international wines from 6 to 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, Aug. 2. Adults ages 21 and over can register for this event, being held in conjunction with *Chinasaurs, Dinosaur Discoveries from China*. Tickets are \$30 for members, \$40 for non-members. Space is limited and pre-registration is required. To enroll, please call (405) 325-1008.



Blue Star Museum

The Sam Noble Museum kicked this summer season off with a collaboration among the National Endowment of the Arts, Blue Star Families, the Department of Defense, and more than 1,500 museums across America to offer free admission to all active-duty military personnel and their families from Memorial Day through Labor Day.

This is the latest NEA program to bring quality arts programs to the military, veterans and their families. Blue Star Museums runs from Memorial Day, May 28, through Labor Day, Sept. 3. The free admission program is available to active-duty military and their immediate family members (military ID holder and five immediate family members). In addition to active duty members of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard, the program also targets active-duty National Guard and Reserve members.

The Sam Noble Museum offers discounts for veterans throughout the year. For more information on museum hours and admission prices, visit www.snomnh.ou.edu.



Chinasaurs: Dinosaur Discoveries from China

BY JEN TREGARTHEN, PUBLIC RELATIONS



Above: Visitors viewing dinosaur eggs

Huge and exotic dinosaurs from China arrived at the Sam Noble Museum for a special touring exhibition in June. From the frightening Yangchuanosaurus, the 32-foot-long king of the Asian Jurassic, to the little Jurassic Park movie-star Velociraptor, a dozen rare cast dinosaurs are featured in this Mesozoic menagerie of mysterious dinosaurs in the exhibit *Chinasaurs*.

Chinasaurs features a variety of rare and extraordinary creatures. Complementing the dinosaurs are fossil dinosaur eggs and nests, along with numerous bones of the Jurassic plant-eating *Lufengosaurus* and the Cretaceous plant-eating *Psittacosaurus*. Video presentations, maps, signage and artwork provide further details into the story of the impressive skeletal displays.

Chinasaurs is the creation of dinosaur explorer “Dino” Don Lessem, author of more than 50 books on dinosaurs for children and adults and dinosaur columnist for *Highlights Magazine for Children*.

“Dino” Don, who has been exploring and researching Chinese dinosaurs since 1988 and personally arranged the loan of the dinosaurs from Chinese paleontologists.

A free, public opening reception on June 1 allowed visitors to tour the museum for a sneak peek of the special exhibit while enjoying entertainment and activities provided by the Confucius Institute at the University of Oklahoma.

Families, friends and museum members participated in calligraphy, paper folding, Chinese chess, mahjong and more. Light refreshments were provided, including museum-themed fortune cookies. Live music was played from a traditional Chinese GuZheng, a string instrument used as early as 300 BC.

As entertainment began, visitors gathered around the stage while director Michael Mares introduced the Confucius Institute. The evening’s performances began with a traditional *Lion Dance*, a dance that has been a part of the Chinese culture for thousands of years, and performed on auspicious occasions such as weddings, store openings, and various festivals and celebrations.

Below: *Yangchuanosaurus*





Left: Tuojiangosaurus

Little Swallow, a dance performed by eight students from the Norman Chinese School, followed the *Lion Dance*. Visitors were moved by the *Red Ribbon Dance* and cheered excitedly as Matthew Merideth provided a spectacular Chinese yo-yo show for the audience.

The entertainment ended with *Little Sprouting Plant in Spring*, a solo dance performed by a Norman Chinese School student. Between each performance, representatives from the Confucius Institute provided background on each dance.

Chinasaurus is generously sponsored by ConocoPhillips. On behalf of the opening celebrations, ConocoPhillips sponsored free admission to the museum on Saturday and Sunday, June 2 and 3, to encourage the community to explore the new exhibit.

Chinasaurus is on exhibit at the Sam Noble Museum through September 16. For more information on events, programs and activities associated with *Chinasaurus*, visit www.snomnh.ou.edu.



Left: Shanshan Luo on the GuZhen



Far Left: *Little Sprouting Plant in Spring*, Solo Dance, Norman Chinese School

Left: *Red Ribbon Dance* Angela Zhu, Junior Miss Asia 2012



Left: *Lion Dance* Chinese Youth Academy

First Time on Exhibit: New Native Art from the Museum's Collection

BY JEN TREGARTHEN, PUBLIC RELATIONS

Ethnology collections provide material testament to the stories and experiences of diverse communities and their members. At the Sam Noble Museum, the Ethnology collection is global in scope but heavily anchored in Native North America. The acquisition of new items in the collection, and stewardship of the collections, is central to museum missions.

The New Native Art from the Museum's Collection showcases beautiful sterling silver Bola Ties from Zuna Pueblo, N.M., intricate goosegrass baskets from East Africa, colorful Navajo fans made from cockatoo feathers and glass beads, and many other priceless cultural objects from across the world.

Cultural items from Oklahoma are proudly displayed among the recent collections, including a stunning otter fur turban from the Kiowas of Anadarko, Okla.

Ethnology collections grow through two primary forms of acquisition. Some collecting is driven by donations, however, most growth is achieved by systematic collecting driven by research interests of curators. The Curator of Ethnology, Daniel Swan, has built the newest collections around his efforts to document the expressive culture of the Native American Church.

Recent acquisitions in ethnology at the Sam Noble Museum reflect an interest in contemporary works. Many are made in traditional media and forms, but they reflect the tastes of their modern usages and makers. Swan works with artists and other members of the communities who create and use the objects to decide what should be in the collection. This method of collecting follows current ethics for acquiring and curating ethnographic objects. *First Time on Exhibit: New Native Art from the Museum's Collection* will be on exhibit through August 19, 2012.

Right: Clay Zuni Jars,

Far Right: Beaded Bag,
Cheyenne

Opposite Page: Image of
the exhibit in
Higginbotham Gallery





“The acquisition of new items in the collection, and stewardship of the collections, is central to museum missions.”

Herpetology Outreach

BY JEN TREGARTHEN, PUBLIC RELATIONS



Above: Girl at Save the Frogs Day, Sam Noble Museum

In an effort to raise awareness of the plight of amphibians, the Sam Noble Museum hosted a free day on April 28 for Save the Frogs Day, the world's largest day of amphibian education and conservation action.

Visitors were able to view live frogs and listen to frog calls, create their own bullfrog mask and learn what bullfrogs like to eat. Games and puppet-making crafts were available as well as story time with "Frog in a Bog" by John Himmelman. Visitors also contributed to frog conservation by answering the question, "How Will You Save the Frogs?"

During the week leading up to Save the Frogs Day, Collection Manager Jessa Watters and a team of educators from the Sam Noble Museum traveled to Oklahoma City metro public schools for herpetology outreach.

At Washington and McKinley elementary schools in Norman, the team provided "Life in a Nutshell," a workshop that allowed students to take on the role of a baby frog or insect living in a Brazil nut pod trying to reach adulthood. The goal was to teach about predation and competition among animals and was based on the research of former amphibian curator, Janalee Caldwell.

As the team visited Norman's Alcott and Edmond's Sequoyah middle schools, programs advanced with "Herpetology 101" and "Call of the Wild," in which students identified common Oklahoma frog species and frog calls.

*Right: Collection Manager
Jessa Watters, during
Save the Frogs Outreach*

At Norman North High School, students participated in "Amphibian Adventures." Students explored a local lake behind the high school, attempted to catch turtles, frogs and insects and learned the format in which herpetologists take notes while doing research.

"I hope that kids gained an understanding of at least one particular aspect of amphibian biology," Watters said. "It's also important that students gain a greater understanding of the global decline of frogs and what they can do about it."

As an educational institution, the Sam Noble Museum plans to continue herpetology outreach around Save the Frogs Day. For more information on the Herpetology department, visit <http://www.snomnh.ou.edu/collections-research/herpetology.htm>.



Museum Adopts Orphaned Collection

BY JEN TREGARTHEN, PUBLIC RELATIONS

Orphaned collections are a growing concern for natural history institutions worldwide. An endangered or orphaned collection is any considerable body of material, which is or soon may be no longer regarded as of value in its present ownership. According to the American Association of Museums, every year more institutions, agencies, corporations, and individuals divest themselves of their collections. When this occurs, “orphaned” collections need to be “adopted” by an existing natural history collection.

In November of 2011, Eugene Young, a professor in the Agriculture and Life Sciences department at Northern Oklahoma College in Tonkawa, Okla. contacted the Sam Noble Museum about the possibility of adopting an orphaned collection from the A.D. Buck Museum.

Originally called the Yellow Bull Museum, the A.D. Buck Museum’s science exhibits included mounted specimens of birds and mammals. Sam Noble Museum curator Gary Schnell and collection managers Marcia Revelez and Tamaki Yuri traveled to the A.D. Buck Museum to view the specimens. Upon further inspection, the team found many specimens that had been on loan from the Sam Noble Museum.

A total of 14 specimens were loaned to A. D. Buck in 1961, including an adult grizzly bear, all still in good condition. Most of the collection’s Oklahoma birds and mammals were found in the early 1900s, such as the marsh hawk, in 1910, and a Pintail, in 1913.

Many of the specimens in the A. D. Buck collection are significant to Oklahoma’s history, such as the Spotted Skunk found in 1934 in Kay County, an area that had no previous record of having that species before the 1990s. After evaluation, a crew returned in December to pack up the collection of birds and mammals and bring them to their new home at the Sam Noble Museum.

The A. D. Buck specimens are not the first collection the museum has adopted. Recently, the museum’s Department of Mammalogy adopted approximately 26,000 mammal species from the University of Memphis Mammal Collection.

“It’s an ongoing goal for the museum to aid orphaned collections,” Revelez said.

Natural history collections play a vital role in understanding cultures, habitats, biodiversity and more. They safeguard specimens, inspire, educate, and tirelessly continue the research and study of various sciences. We welcome back our mammals and birds that have been on loan for so many decades and will always strive to maintain and preserve Oklahoma’s rich natural history.



Above: Long-eared Owl



Above Top: A.D. Buck Museum

Above: Red-tailed Hawk

Top Right: Common Mole
Middle Right: Grizzly Bear



Native American Youth Language Fair Participants, 2012.

Reflecting on a Decade of Language Revitalization

BY DR. MARY LINN, NATIVE AMERICAN LANGUAGES

Language revitalization is a slow process. It doesn't evolve from second language acquisition and communicative language teaching methodology. It begins when younger members of a community want to learn their Native language, and more importantly, they want to make it a part of their daily lives and their children's lives.

We know good teaching has a part to play in revitalization, as well as making the language relevant through modern uses, such as Facebook and smart phone applications. It also has to do with reversing a hundred years of shame associated with their language and its use. Most significantly, it has everything to do with rebuilding community, strengthening relationships between youth and elders, and finally the hard-at-work parental generation, learning together to reestablish lifestyles and belief systems. Language revitalization is cultural revitalization.

When the Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Fair began 10 years ago, I had some modest goals. I wanted to show the museum community, the greater Oklahoma community, and yes, even some Native communities that Oklahoma Native languages are living languages. They continue to be a vital part of many people's daily lives. I especially wanted to help the language teachers by providing their classes with goals to work toward. For six years, Boeing has helped make these goals possible through generous sponsorship.

The 10th year of the fair was special in several ways. Our annual announcement to all the language teachers, programs and elder judges throughout the state included a beautiful 2012 calendar. The monthly designs consisted of the grand prize artwork from the past fairs and honorable mentions picked out by the fair staff and the Exhibits Department. The months and days of the weeks are written in the language of the artist featured that month. Each page consisted of a quick language activity that can be done in the classroom or at home.

With the help of the Cyril Fund, a sponsor since 2009, the museum also created a 60-page *How to Kit: Language in the Home* booklet, which encourages families to use their Native languages at home by giving them tips and providing language games and activities. All 2,000 copies were given to attendees and visitors who came to the fair. It was quite a success, and the Chickasaw Nation Language Department chose to use it as a template for their own kits. The kit is available to download for free on our website at nal.snomnh.ou.edu/onalyf.

Each year the fair grows in some way. In 2012, it was in the record number of languages in attendance. A total of 32 Native languages were spoken, written or sung at the fair. Some, like Citizen Band Potawatomi, can no longer be heard, however, a middle school student submitted the first book in this language.

The highly celebrated poet and linguist Ofelia Zapeda was invited to help us integrate poetry. Poetry is a great way to express feelings with a few words and very little grammar. Zapeda recited her own poetry and held two poetry workshops for students and teachers.

Once the excitement of the fair died down, I began to reflect on where we are 10 years later. Is the fair just a fun field trip or has it made a difference in the lives of these youth? Has it helped to pass Native languages on to the next generations? These questions were answered in a letter from Faith Parra, a Choctaw teacher from Broken Bow High School, in which she wrote:

I took six great teenagers who were so motivated by the past Language Fair participants that you have on YouTube that they worked very hard to prepare for the fair. They took first place in their category, but it was the journey that made the win special. In preparation for the fair, they performed for the Choctaw Senior Citizens, their peers in class, and a church that has predominantly Choctaw members. Now they are asking to perform for elementary schools and others....

These kids are not fluent speakers, but have worked with elders in the community to prepare their skit. Their parents do not speak Choctaw fluently, but their grandparents do. They are eager to share what they have learned, and also to learn more! As for me, I am in the same situation, with a mother who speaks fluently, but neither my child nor I do. The fair has proved to be a tremendous encouragement and motivation for these kids. I cannot thank you and your organization enough for this opportunity! YAKOKE! Thank you!

On April 9, 2012, the Oklahoma House of Representatives read a citation to honor all the youth who are learning their Native languages, the teachers for their hard work, and the elders who have never given up the hope to hear children speaking the languages again. The citation also recognized the Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Fair for supporting their efforts. Over a hundred youth and teachers from the fair were at the Oklahoma Capitol to hear the citation read and to perform in the rotunda. It was a wonderful celebration.

Just as it takes the whole museum to put on the fair every year, it takes whole communities to come together to revitalize language. It takes the rest of us as well, to open our minds and hearts to the differences around us, and to listen to the youth.

*Kiowa poem by Kateri
Daffron, 2012 Fair*

Lola Polayi

Lola polayi dau.
Lola em gunmau.
Lola sauide dau.
Lola tauhemau.
Lola nau ivauga dau.
Lola ga feldo.

Lola Polayi (English translation)

Lola is a rabbit.
Lola dances.
Lola is fast.
Lola is hungry.
Lola is my baby.
I love Lola.

Graduate Student Honored



Above: Sara B. González-Pérez accepting award

The Southwestern Association of Naturalists announced Sara B. González-Pérez as the recipient of the 2012 Wilks Award for her presentation “Bats of Colima, Mexico: Characterizing Ecological Aspects of Distributions and Habitats.” The Wilks Award was established in 1964 and is presented to the student giving the best oral presentation at the annual meeting of the Association.

González-Pérez is a graduate student in the Department of Zoology and the Sam Noble Museum. The winning presentation investigated the relationship between geography and ecology of several species of bats in the southwestern Mexican state of Colima. Colima is a center of diversity for mammals, including many species of bats that are of conservation concern.

The Southwestern Association of Naturalists is an international association of scientists, educators and students, founded in 1953 to promote the field study of plants and animals (living and fossil) in the southwestern United States, Mexico and Central America.

May Day Activities

Each year, archives, libraries, museums, and arts and historic preservation organizations set aside May 1 to participate in May Day, an initiative created by Heritage Preservation to protect cultural heritage from disasters.

Emergency responders from five Norman fire departments, the OU police department and the OU fire marshal attended tours of the museum that highlighted the building layout, the location of priority objects in each collection and any hazardous material, such as flammable liquids, vulnerable building material or chemical storage, of which emergency responders need to be aware of.

The museum participated in daily exercises to train staff on emergency measures that safeguard the collections. Staff inventoried emergency kits, created a pocket response list (PRoP guide) detailing the chain of command and emergency response teams and participated in fire extinguisher training. The week spent revisiting the importance of historic preservations allowed staff and community leaders the opportunity to better prepare for an emergency situation at the museum.



Norman fire department, May Day, 2012

Farewell and Thank You to Four Museum Board Members

The Sam Noble Museum recently said farewell to four key members of the Board of Visitors. Stepping down are Lou Kerr, Lucy Smith, Ph.D.; and past chairs, Craig Abbott, M.D., and Rod Davis. Each began in April 2006 and served the maximum successive terms allowed by the museum's by-laws, three successive two-year terms.

Kerr is the president and chairman for the Kerr Foundation and Smith is the former superintendent of McAlester Public Schools. Abbott is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine, a former instructor at the OU Health Sciences Center, and practices dermatopathology and dermatology in Oklahoma City. Davis, a graduate of OU's Michael F. Price College of Business, retired CPA and veteran, lives in Norman, Okla. with his wife, Janene.

During their term, the board saw the implementation by OU President David L. Boren of the Fossil Fuel Fund

(FFF), a program designed to provide financial support for Oklahoma school field trip expenses. The board made fundraising for the FFF a top priority.

This program brought 2,882 of 24,739 Oklahoma students to the museum last school year.

Each of these board members also shared in the celebration of the museum's 10th anniversary in 2010, witnessed the completion of Black Mesa, the newest permanent exhibit in the Hall of Natural Wonders, in 2011; and participated in the evolution of the museum's ExplorOlogy program.

All received a lifetime membership to the museum. We are grateful for their service to the museum and wish them luck in their future endeavors!

Student Begins Internship



The newest member of the Mammalogy department, James Douglas, began his internship in March through a National Science Foundation grant. His role at the museum involves integrating the University of Memphis mammal collection into the collection at the Sam Noble Museum.

Douglas grew up in Florence, MO. and received his bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Central Missouri in 2008. He is completing his master's degree in biology at UCM and plans to pursue a career in a natural history museum working in a vertebrate collection.



Sam Noble Museum

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Coming Soon!

*Selected works from the James T. Bialac
Native American Art Collection,
on exhibit Oct. 5 through
Jan. 6, 2013.*