SVP Newsletter

SPRING 2016

Hello everyone! We are pleased to bring you another version of the newsletter. Now that we have gotten our feet under us we plan to give you four newsletters per year.

Our editions will come out on the following approximate schedule:

- **March 31**
- **June 30**
- **September 30**
- **December 31** (or just after the New Year ≈ January 3)

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If you want something in the newsletter, please get it to us no later than the 15th of the month that it comes out.

**What we need from you:** posts about new job openings, committee updates (*people really seem to want this – so take note committee chairs*), updates from field programs, whatever else you want to tell us! Remember, if you want to see it in the newsletter, you have to send it to us.

Please make sure to check your posts for grammar and spelling! Obituaries or memorials should include a picture of the individual who has passed.

In order to fit everything into a nice bite size package please keep your posts to approximately ½ of a page (not including pictures). Posts longer than that will be truncated and edited by our newsletter staff (and you probably don’t want that)!

Send us your stuff at [Vertpaleo.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:Vertpaleo.newsletter@gmail.com)! Any photos should be sent as separate high resolution images, if possible.

--Your newsletter staff, Julie Meachen, Susy Cote and Shawn Zack
Important Announcements:

NSF CSBR Hiatus
On March 16, NSF placed the Collections in Support of Biological Research (CSBR) program on hiatus for fiscal year 2017 (https://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=503651) in order to evaluate its long-term funding needs and its priority within the Biological Sciences Directorate. While on hiatus, NSF is actively soliciting comments about this program (https://dbinsfblog.wordpress.com/2016/03/16/csbr-fy17/). SVP is already working on an official response from the society to the NSF, and we encourage our members and their institutions to write NSF as well. SVP will send a talking-points memo to all members shortly, which will explain what CSBR funds and offer suggestions for writing individual and institutional letters.

Recent or Upcoming Publications:

From Andrew Rozefelds:
A new Queensland Museum Discovery Guide, In Search of Ancient Queensland, celebrates the remarkable geological and natural heritage of the state and showcases the outstanding fossil collections and research of the Queensland Museum. This beautifully illustrated book charts the complex evolution of life over the past 250 million years, set against a backdrop of momentous geological events and dramatic environmental change. The book relates landscape to the underlying geology but also has extensive images of the fossil plants and animals recorded from Queensland. If you would like to know more about the general geology of this part of Australia this is the book for you!
Postage to the USA is about A$20 (sea mail) and A$30 (air mail). Cost of the book is $39.95 Australian. Please go to http://www.shop.qm.qld.gov.au/ to purchase this book or for more information.

From Sinje Weber, Managing Editor Palaeobiodiversity and Palaeoenvironments:
Dear colleagues,
We are pleased to tell you, that Springer offers free access to the special issue "Contributions in Honour of Zbyněk Roček“ Jim D. Gardner, and Tomáš Přikryl (Eds) published in our journal "Palaeobiodiversity and Palaeoenvironments" (http://www.springer.com/palaeo) till 30th of April 2016!
Please see https://link.springer.com/journal/12549/96/1/page/1

Current issue March 2016: Palaeobio Palæoenv 96(1): 1-220
The current issue presents nine contributions in honour of the Czech herpetologist and palaoentologist Zbyněk Roček. In keeping with Zbyněk’s diverse interests, these contributions deal with the fossil record, systematics, palaeobiogeography, and developmental biology of amphibians and other vertebrates.
Please forward this information to interested colleagues, thank you! If you are interested in receiving the table of contents (TOC-alert) of every new issue published in Palaeobiodiversity and Palaeoenvironments, just submit your E-Mail address on the journal website.

Special edition memoir from Alain Blieck:

Upcoming Meetings of Interest:
From ReBecca Hunt-Foster:
2016 Annual Meeting of the Utah Friends of Paleontology
April 1 – 3, 2016 Moab, Utah
Utah Friends of Paleontology Gastonia Chapter and the Museum of Moab are proud to host the 2016 Annual Meeting of Utah Friends of Paleontology.
The meeting will feature paleontology talks, a poster session, a banquet with a keynote speaker, and field trips. Abstracts are closed, but for further details please visit http://utahpaleo.org/annual-meetings.html for additional details.

Institutional News:
Vertebrate Paleontology at the University of Kansas:
Many things have changed for Vertebrate Paleontology at the University of Kansas in recent years. Administratively, we are part of the Biodiversity Institute even though we occupy the same space on the third floor of the Natural History Museum; the Biodiversity Institute includes the research and teaching collections but not the public exhibits. Our address remains the same, too. The VP collections are currently housed in Dyche Hall, the museum building (fossil mammals and Pleistocene fossils), in the Lippincott Annex next to the museum (fossil amphibians and most fossil reptiles) and on west campus (fossil fish, Natural Trap Cave collections, large dinosaur bones). With regard to collection matters, you should contact Desui Miao. He is helped by a volunteer, Wendy Biens, who manages the electronic database of the collections (SPECIFY). We also have a BLM-sponsored collections intern, Megan Sims, who is currently working on a project aimed at improving how our collections from public lands are housed and managed using SPECIFY.

Big changes have occurred in the research direction of vertebrate paleontology at
KU. Larry Martin, our former curator of vertebrate paleontology, passed away on March 9, 2013 after a long sickness at the age of 69 (obituaries have been published in Trans. Kansas Acad. Sci. 116 (1-2): 59-62, 2013; The Auk 130 (4); 804-806, 2013; and Vertebrata Palasiatica 52(1): 1-2, Jan. 2014). Larry’s untimely death left some of his graduate students in limbo, although Amanda Falk (bird tracks and *Confuciusornis* plumage) and Joshua Schmerge (Miocene burrowing beavers) both graduated under David Burnham and Steve Hasiotis (KU Geology). Amanda Falk now teaches at Centre College in Danville, Kentucky. Josh Schmerge teaches at the University of Saint Mary in Leavenworth KS, and Johnson County Community College, Overland Park. Josh can still be reached at KU.

As part of KU’s major initiative to hire twelve new Foundation Distinguished Professors, the university recruited Chris Beard away from the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in early 2014. Much of the VP space in Dyche Hall was renovated for the first time in decades. Chris recruited two postdoctoral scholars to join him at KU. Pauline Coster, who had worked with Chris previously at the Carnegie Museum and in the field in Libya and Wyoming, remains at KU as of this writing, although she is planning to return to Europe soon. Alexis Licht, who collaborated with Chris and Jean-Jacques Jaeger in the Eocene Pondaung Formation of Myanmar, joined the KU team as a postdoc for much of 2015, but he subsequently accepted a Marie Curie postdoctoral fellowship from the European Union and is currently working in Potsdam, Germany. Alexis will begin a tenure-track position at the University of Washington next autumn. Chris has also been busy recruiting new graduate students to the KU VP program. Spencer Mattingly enrolled as a Ph.D. student last year, and new students will enroll for the next cycle.

In terms of research, Chris Beard and his colleagues are continuing some long-term projects and starting some new ones. These include Chris’s longstanding project in the Paleocene of southern Wyoming as well as Chris’s joint project with Jean-Jacques Jaeger and Mustafa Salem on the Paleogene of Libya. Several papers have appeared since Chris arrived at KU on these subjects. More recently, Chris and his former postdoc Gregoire Metais (Museum national d’Histoire naturelle, Paris), KU geologist Mike Taylor, Turkish geologist Faruk Ocakoğlu, and other colleagues have initiated a project focusing on Paleogene geology and paleontology in Turkey. They hope to have interesting news to report on this subject in the future.

Dave Burnham co-chairs committees of students interested in vertebrate paleontology (Matt Jones in bat ichnology; Tabatha Gabay in Smilodon brain evolution). He excavates each year a *Tyrannosaurus rex* locality out in Montana and assisted Chris in the field searching for Paleocene mammals in Wyoming. The laboratory remains active and has a new micromammal workstation.

Hans-Peter Schultz is still around, every morning in the museum. He published together with his wife Gloria Arratia and two other editors (H. Tischlinger and Günter Viohl) a two volume opus on Solnhofen (40 authors) last fall. He has still one graduate student, Sarah Gibson, who lives now with her husband in St. Cloud, Wisconsin. Kathryn Mickle graduated in 2012 and received the Argersinger prize for the best PhD thesis in science the same year. She teaches now at Philadelphia University.

Gloria Arratia switches in her research between fossil and recent actinopterygian fishes. Currently, she concentrates her efforts in the preparation of the second
From Alain Blieck:
The University of Lille (northern France) is being re-united! Originally re-created at end of 19th Century, the Public or State University of Lille was subdivided into three separate universities in the sixties (of the preceding century). They are merging altogether in a long, slow administrative and political process (see history here in English: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Lille; and here in French: https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Université_de_Lille). So, partly for communication reasons, the merged institution has to be (again) called « Université de Lille » (corresponding to the previous « Université Lille 1 Sciences et technologies », « Université Lille 2 Droit et santé » and « Université Lille 3 Sciences humaines et sociales »). However I am still a CNRS (French National Centre for Scientific Research) staff member, being working in a research unit called « Evolution-Ecology-Paleontology » or Evo-Eco-Paleo or even EEP … that is located on the Villeneuve d’Ascq (Annappes) campus of the University of Lille (or ULille).

All details are posted here:
http://univ-lille1.academia.edu/AlainBlieck
http://www.researchgate.net/profile/Alain_Blieck/

In Memory:

Passing of Elwyn Simons

NY Times obit -
Duke obit -
http://today.duke.edu/2016/03/simonselwyn
Passing of Bill Amaral

Earlier this year, the paleontology community lost an outstanding colleague. A friend and mentor to many, Bill Amaral's career has deeply enriched our discipline. Bill received his early training in fossil preparation at the University of Texas under the late Bob Rainey, and joined expeditions to Big Bend National Park in the early 1970s. He spent the majority of his career at Harvard University, where he earned a reputation for highly skilled and meticulous fossil preparation. Bill was also an active collector, working in, among other localities, the Cretaceous of West Texas, the Northern Arizona Kayenta Formation, the Devonian of Ellesmere Island, the Triassic of Greenland, and in the last several years the Chinle Formation at Petrified Forest National Park. In 2002 he was honored with the Morris F. Skinner award by the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology for his efforts building museum collections, and Dinnebitodon amarali was named in recognition of its discoverer.

Bill also played a major role in the professionalization of fossil preparation within the larger paleontological community. He presented the first talk at the first SVP preparators’ symposium in 1978 at the Carnegie Museum, and through the years helped to shepherd the meeting into the widely attended session that it remains today. He mentored many notable preparators who have carried on his legacy through museums around the country. In 1998, Bill originated and administrated the Preplist mailing list until his retirement from Harvard. Exchanges of correspondence with Wann Langston shortly after Bill left Austin are testimony to the longevity of Bill's perpetual drive to advance techniques in paleontology; seeking new materials, new methods, and new avenues for sharing this information with the community.

To recognize this remarkable life's work, the Association of Materials and Methods in Paleontology wished to honor Bill, and those who follow in his footsteps, and were privileged to be able to present him with the first William W. Amaral Legacy Award. We thank his wife Paula, Amy Davidson, and Peter Burns for their help in presenting the award to him.

--Matt Brown, UT Austin, March 4, 2015

The relevant AMMP website is: http://paleomethods.org/awards.html
Passing of Peter Lawrence Forey

Dr. Peter Lawrence Forey had a brilliant career as a fish palaeontologist, as a theorist and practitioner of phylogenetic systematics, as well as being an accomplished watercolour artist and draftsman. Having started his career in Canada in 1972, he went on to spend the rest of his professional life as a researcher at the Natural History Museum in London. Sadly, he passed away on the 21st January after a two-year battle with cancer and having only reached his 70th birthday. This is a tribute to him as a dear colleague and friend, who will be sorely missed.

(photograph by Dick Vane Wright)

Peter Forey was Prof Brian G. Gardiner's first PhD student at Queen Elizabeth College, University of London. His thesis on elopiform fishes was published in 1973 in the Bulletin of the British Museum (Natural History) (Geology supplement 10). He went on to write more than 120 papers and books listed below. Teleosts and coelacanth fishes were the main focus of his research. He helped develop phylogenetics as the modern, mainstream scientific methodology employed to resolve the interrelationships between taxa both recent and extinct, and applied this with great success to his own studies on fossil fishes. He was one of the 'Gang of Four', whose most influential publication was entitled ‘Lungfishes, Tetrapods, Palaeontology and Plesiomorphy’ (Rosen, Forey, Patterson & Gardiner, 1981). The main theoretical conclusion of the paper, difficult to accept for most palaeontologists of that time, was that the relationships of major extant groups are better understood first by using the cladistic methodology and second by comparative analysis of extant forms only, rather than by conducting ‘futile paleontological searches for ancestors’ (Rosen et al., 1981). This was a highly controversial work that served to reinvigorate research on tetrapod evolution, at first via a series of papers written specifically to challenge the unorthodox views of the ‘Gang of Four’, but since then, encompassing a range of new fossil discoveries, new techniques including CT- and synchrotron scanning, phylogenetic techniques, as well as a focus on developmental aspects of tetrapod evolution (for example, the transition from the fish fin to the tetrapod limb). ‘Lungfishes, Tetrapods, Palaeontology and Plesiomorphy’ provided the spark for this research revolution.

Eric Hilton remembers meeting Peter in the USA: ‘Peter was my introduction to Cladistics, through the short course he taught at University of Massachusetts while I was a student, around 1997, just in time to be incorporated into the second edition of Cladistics (Kitching et al., 1998). Nothing like learning from the master, and one involved so closely with the cladistics revolution! Mostly, though, it was the intangibles, I guess, that I remember most fondly: sitting out back with him on his patio during my visits having a gin and tonic, having our dessert cheese and port, just talking
about art, fishes, history, the history of fishes (of the fishes themselves, but our involvement with them and of ichthyology in general), and whatever else came to mind. Chatting with Peter was always so easy and pleasant’.

Indeed, Peter did not like formalities, never possessed a suit, and his preferred ‘tie’ was a ‘boot’ lace tie (Texan style).

Peter spent his retirement years since 2005 as a Scientific Associate of the Museum and continued to write influential papers. He was honoured with a GSL Special Publication (Cavin et al., 2008) (http://sp.lyellcollection.org/content/295/1/7.full), with his achievements outlined in publication entitled ‘Peter Forey’ by Gardiner and Longbottom. http://sp.lyellcollection.org/content/295/1/1.full.pdf ). His very last paper will be published as a chapter in the book honoring Arthur Smith Woodward (GSL Special Publication). He wrote in a recent Christmas card that he was looking forward to reading the Smith Woodward volume (http://sp.lyellcollection.org/content/430/1/115.abstract ); we are very sad this wasn't to be.

Peter was a multitalented scholar, who was as able to describe fossils with great accuracy and to provide much inspiration for his readers through the genuine excitement he drew from being a palaeontologist. Here is an example of his writings: “Have you ever wondered what it would be like to stumble across a living dinosaur lurking somewhere in a remote canyon? After initial panic the experience might be exhilarating and certainly unforgettable. The opportunity to see a dinosaur run, walk and shake its head; the chance to smell and hear a creature that had been known only as bones petrified in rock would be beyond the wildest dreams of anyone remotely interested in Natural History. (…) But it has happened in the fishy world”. (Excerpt from Coelacanth: Portrait of a Living Fossil by Peter Forey).

Peter was, of course, talking about Latimeria chalumnae, the first living coelacanth that was discovered off the coast of Africa in 1938. Among Peter's many line-drawings and watercolor paintings produced to illustrate his publications is this reconstruction of the Cretaceous coelacanth Macropoma lewisiensis Mantell, 1822. This painting was published in black and white in his book ‘Coelacanth: Portrait of a Living Fossil (reproduced here in original colours with permission from Pam Forey).

This is how Peter described himself:“I am a self-taught artist who retired from The Natural History Museum a few years ago. As a palaeontologist I was used to drawing old bones, so progression to painting was natural and only a matter of time. I enjoy painting the English countryside and coastlines. Based in Hampshire there are plenty of old barns, farms and wonderful vistas to record in all seasons.
Excursions to Devon and Cornwall provide additional material. Most of my paintings are of the pure watercolour style but I also like to use egg tempera because of its ability to reflect depth of colour as well as texture. I have been actively involved in several local art societies for about 20 years and have exhibited paintings locally as well as in London. (http://www.peterforey.co.uk/Profile.htm). "I am a self-taught artist who retired from The Natural History Museum a few years ago. As a palaeontologist I was used to drawing old bones, so progression to painting was natural and only a matter of time. I enjoy painting the English countryside and coastlines. Based in Hampshire there are plenty of old barns, farms and wonderful vistas to record in all seasons. Excursions to Devon and Cornwall provide additional material. Most of my paintings are of the pure watercolour style but I also like to use egg tempera because of its ability to reflect depth of colour as well as texture. I have been actively involved in several local art societies for about 20 years and have exhibited paintings locally as well as in London." (http://www.peterforey.co.uk/Profile.htm).

Peter undertook fieldwork during the Nova Scotia excursion after the Early Vertebrate meeting in Miguasha. Hans Peter Schultze remembers that while all others were searching fossil palaeoniscoids, Peter made some sketches, his talent as an artist taking precedence on that occasion!

Philippe Janvier, a close friend and scientific collaborator describes the wide range of Peter's interests: Peter was renowned as an outstanding expert on the anatomy and phylogeny of bony fishes, in particular the coelacanths, but since the 1980s he also became interested in the Palaeozoic armoured jawless fishes classically referred to as ‘ostracoderms’, firstly because of the phylogenetic questions related to the relationships of the cyclostomes and the possible position of the ‘ostracoderms’ as either stem cyclostomes or stem gnathostomes (Forey 1984), and, second, because he had to tidy up a number of notes, manuscripts and specimens left by Errol I. White after his death in 1985. At that time, he says, 'I was frequently visiting the famous osteostracan collections of the NHM, and Peter and I had long discussions about ‘ostracoderms’ in general. This resulted in a joint review article in Nature (Forey and Janvier 1993), which provided arguments for ‘ostracoderm’ paraphyly and was further developed by means of computerized character analysis, to which Peter also contributed (Donoghue et al. 2000). Peter also happened to revise and re-describe some particular ‘ostracoderm’ taxa, such as his work on the peculiar osteostracan Sclerodus (Forey 1984), and he confessed that, as an artist, he liked in some way the odd morphology of ‘ostracoderms’!

Peter visited Melbourne, Australia, in 1983 (in conjunction with the Early Vertebrate Meeting held in Canberra) and stayed with John Long's family. John took him and Moya Smith up to the Mt Howitt fossil site for a few days where he collected some specimens for the museum collections. John remembers that at the time Peter had a fondness for roast pork and western movies, “so we indulged him with both at our place”. He was amongst the first fossil fish specialists John met outside Australia on his trip to the UK in 1982, where he spent 6 weeks working at the NHM collections, having lunch with Peter, Colin Patterson and Brian Gardiner every day. They were all a
strong influence on John's approach to working on fossil fishes.

Jerry Hooker remembers Peter as an esteemed colleague at the Natural History Museum: “Peter was always helpful in answering my questions about phylogenetic methodology and his ideas on coding multistate characters have considerably influenced my work. My retirement present of a beautiful painting by him of the cliffs of the Isle of Sheppey, where I led a departmental field trip, was an unexpected delight and provides me with a lasting memory of him.”

Peter used to send his colleagues and friends Christmas cards featuring his art. Snowy landscapes were one of his favourites and his cards captured the soft, ethereal colours of this time of the year. With permission of the Forey family, we would like to share with you one of his watercolour paintings.

‘Winter Light’ was painted in Hampshire, England, in 2013. Through the eyes of Peter the artist we can see the beauty of the British countryside that he loved to reflect. His painting and scientific drawings, along with his scientific writing are inspirational masterpieces, whose importance will only grow as time passes by.

![Winter Light](photo supplied by Frozen Image)

We would like to finish this tribute to Peter with a thought shared with us by John Maisey: 'Peter will be greatly missed. If there is a heaven, he must be going crazy meeting ancestral taxa!'

Contributors to this tribute:

A complete bibliography of Peter’s work will be posted on the SVP website soon.

**New Award:**
The Board of Directors of the Association for Materials and Methods in Paleontology hereby establishes a lifetime achievement award in recognition of significant and lasting contribution to the field of paleontology through advancement of the objectives of the Association. First presented at the 8th
Annual Meeting in Raleigh, NC, this award is named after its inaugural recipient, William W. Amaral. Throughout his career, Bill has demonstrated a commitment to the principles of our profession. Bill is a teacher, an advocate, an innovator, and a skilled practitioner. Working within the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology, he raised standards and expectations about what a fossil preparator is and does, helping to build a community by championing the very idea of profession. He participated in fieldwork for more than 40 years, and worked to improve or develop techniques for collecting and preparing fossils even into retirement.

Recipients of the William W. Amaral Legacy Award will embody the traits that Bill personifies, and that he spent his career working to instill in others—patience, vigilance, collegiality, and above all, a drive to advance techniques in paleontology.

--Steve Jabo and Matthew Smith, Co-Chairs of the Preparators’ Committee

Other:

Designed by SVP participant & presenter, Ariel Marcy’s educational game, Go Extinct! is like Go Fish evolved and an excellent way to introduce students or friends to evolutionary trees. In the game, you are a scientist competing to collect clades of closely related animals — like lions and horses, snakes and lizards, or stegosaurus and apatosauruses. Using an evolutionary tree, you ask other players for specific animal cards or for entire clades in order to complete and declare your sets. By playing this strategically engaging yet familiar-in-style card game, players learn how to read evolutionary trees and a lot of natural history along the way! Fun for all humans aged 8 and up. Best with 3 to 6 players. Game includes 54 beautifully illustrated cards, a rule set, and a large game board with a stylized yet accurate evolutionary tree used for reference during play.

You can order Go Extinct! (https://shop.trycelery.com/page/goextinct), or pick up an 8-set educator pack (https://shop.trycelery.com/page/edugoextinct) - all purchases support the free print and play version made available to educators everywhere, (http://www.steamgalaxy.com/for-educators/).

**Contact Information**

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**About SVP**

For more details go to vertpaleo.org