

# SOCIETY OF VERTEBRATE PALEONTOLOGY NEWS BULLETIN

Number 199 • Fall 2010

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## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Dear SVP Members,

Few things have changed as rapidly over the last several years as the way we communicate. We have all seen an exponential increase in the speed and volume of information exchanges in our lives. As part of this zeitgeist, the SVP Web site is carrying more and more of the Society's news at an ever-quicker pace, resulting in a duplication of information formerly carried exclusively by the *SVP News Bulletin*. Given this, the Executive Committee has reevaluated the best use of resources in delivering SVP news, and as part of this, has decided to retire the current form of the *SVP News Bulletin*.

As stated earlier, most of the information carried in the *News Bulletin* (Awardees, Annual Business Meeting Minutes, and Letters from the President) are now, or will soon be, carried on the SVP Web site. New Member listings will be discontinued to protect the privacy of members (although members will still be able to access the Online Member Directory in the Members' Only area of the SVP Web site). This leaves the actual "News" area. Over the coming year, SVP will evaluate what news our members wish to see, and develop a Web-based news delivery plan. We will report to membership when we have developed a good, sustainable plan.

Now, saving the most important part for last: we all express a most sincere thank you to the dedicated and sustained efforts of the *News Bulletin* Editor, David S Berman, and Managing Editor, Mary Ann Schmidt. Mary Ann actually remembers compiling information for the *News Bulletin* on her front porch before the days of computers. They have collectively given 40 years to SVP. We are all deeply grateful to you both!

In closing, please understand that it is our every intention to honor the spirit of the *SVP News Bulletin* by continuing to preserve important SVP and vertebrate paleontological news as we move into the future.

Sincerely,  
Blaire Van Valkenburgh

## **JOIN US IN PITTSBURGH FOR THE SVP 70<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY MEETING IN PITTSBURGH, PA, USA**

Dear members and colleagues,

I encourage you to join us at the SVP 70th Anniversary Meeting of the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology (SVP), to be held in Pittsburgh, PA, USA, October 10–13, 2010! Our host is Carnegie Museum of Natural History, with the Host Committee headed by co-chairs Zhe-Xi Luo and Chris Beard. It is going to be an action-packed meeting as always and here are some of the highlights:

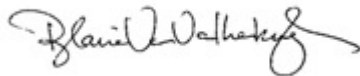
- Field trips: Late Devonian Vertebrates from the Catskill Formation in north-central Pennsylvania, Classic Quaternary Cave Sites in Maryland and Pennsylvania, Phil Fraley Productions

- C. Owen Lovejoy will speak on “Lucy, Ardi, and the Evolution of Human Walking—New Perspectives from Old Evidence”
- A Welcome Reception at Carnegie Museum of Natural History
- Oral presentations and poster presentations
- Special presentations on: DETELON\*, Integrative and Multidisciplinary Research in Paleobiology and the PRPA\*\*
- Workshops on Effective Poster Design, Paleontological Illustration: Digital Imaging Techniques, and Publication Guidelines for the *JVP*, Children’s Workshops on Dinosaur and Animation, Educators’ Workshops on Teaching Evolution
- Not to mention the: Student Reprint Exchange and Roundtable Discussion, Auction, Awards Ceremony, and After- Hours Party!

In a continuing effort to bring greater value to our members and attendees while also cutting costs and reducing our carbon footprint, SVP will be providing a *free online Itinerary Builder* to all registered meeting attendees this year. The Itinerary Builder will enable registered attendees to create a customized PDF schedule of meeting events they wish to attend. The Itinerary Builder is being offered in addition to the electronic SVP Program and Abstract book and electronic Meeting Circular.

Yet another improvement this year is *the ability to order a paper copy of the electronic SVP Program and Abstract book* for direct shipment to the address of your choice. The Abstract book will be available for an additional cost, through [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com) starting late this summer. Of course, all meeting registration packets will continue to include a schedule-at-a-glance and a full listing of presentations.

We hope to see you in October!



\*DETELON—Deep Time Earth-Life Observatory Networks

\*\*PRPA—Paleontological Resource Preservation Act

## — NEW MEMBERS —

---

Alday, Gene  
Field Discovery Ltd.  
P. O. Box 7311  
Woodland Park CO 80863

Anduza, Danny  
157 Greenwood Drive  
Pleasant Hill CA 94523

Atwater, Amy  
University of Oregon  
Geological Sciences  
3290 Harris  
Eugene OR 97405

Bai, Bin  
IVPP, Chinese Academy of  
Sciences  
142 Xizhimenwai Street  
Beijing 100044  
Peoples Republic of China

Baikina, Eugenia  
Moscow State University  
Leninskie gory 1, zona V,  
room 1813  
Moscow 119234  
Russia

Barron-Ortiz, Christian  
University of Calgary  
405 - 327 4 Avenue NE  
Calgary AB T2E 0J4  
Canada

Berger, Lee  
Institute for Human Evolution,  
University of the  
Witwatersrand  
Private Bag 3  
Wits  
Johannesburg 2050  
South Africa

Bibi, Faysal  
Institut de Paléoprimateologie  
et Paléontologie  
IPHEP UMR 6046  
40 av Recteur Pineau  
Poitiers 86000  
France

Bomberger, Carisa  
270 Ashley Drive  
Vernal UT 84078

Bourke, Jason  
Ohio University  
Department of Biological  
Sciences  
Irvine Hall  
Athens OH 45701

Breeden, Benjamin Thomas  
10201 Baltimore Avenue, Apt  
5102  
College Park MD 20740

Breitenstine, Erik  
112 Ohio Avenue  
Blackwood NJ 08012

Cambra-Moo, Oscar  
Universidad Nacional de  
Educación a Distancia  
C/ Gimnialcon, n.1, Portal 11,  
1ªA  
Colmenar Viejo 28770  
Spain

Carter, Bradley  
4307 Cranbrook Drive  
Arlington TX 76016

Chapman, Jordan  
The George Washington  
University  
35 Hanover Place  
Washington DC 20001

Chen, Meng  
Department of Biology  
University of Washington  
Box 351800  
Seattle WA 98195-1800

Christoforetti, Russell  
110 Sheffield Lane  
McMurray PA 15317

Cleland, James  
485 Alisal Road, Apt. 120  
Solvang CA 93463

Clemens, Matthew  
174 Mile Slip Road  
Milford NH 03055

Cramb, Jonathan  
Queensland Museum  
160 Old Gympie Road  
Kallangur QLD 4503  
Australia

Crane, Cynthia Danielle  
2235 H Locksley Woods  
Drive  
Greenville NC 27858

Curtis, Neil  
University of Hull  
69 Blenheim Street  
Hull HU53PR  
United Kingdom

De Bruijn, Hans  
Utrecht University  
Budapestlaan 4  
Utrecht 3584CD  
The Netherlands

DeBee, Aj  
1408 Tuffit Lane  
Austin TX 78753

Dececchi, Alexander  
McGill University  
Redpath Museum  
859 Sherbrooke Street W  
Montreal QC H3A 2K6  
Canada

DePalma, Robert A.  
3508 W. 24th Street  
Lawrence KS 66047

Donohue, Shelly  
University of Washington  
27025 7th Place S  
Des Moines WA 98198

Drake, Abby  
College of the Holy Cross  
1 College Street  
Worcester MA 01060

Drew, Nicholas  
Yale University Peabody  
Museum  
75 Cynthia Lane  
Middletown CT 06457

Drewicz, Amanda  
Temple University  
210 Clubhouse Circle  
Gilbertsville PA 19525

Duffey, Patricia  
Department of Geosciences  
600 Park Street  
Hays KS 67601

Dunn, Regan  
University of Washington  
Department of Biology  
24 Kincaid Box 351800  
Seattle WA 98195

Dunsworth, Holly  
Northeastern Illinois  
University  
Department of Anthropology  
5500 N. Saint Louis Avenue  
Chicago IL 60625

Eal, Trystan  
Harmony Global  
2848 Wildwood Drive  
Clearwater FL 33761

Engelman, Russell  
15505 Hemlock Point Road  
Chagrin Falls OH 44022

Faith, John  
The George Washington  
University  
2615 42nd Street NW, Apt.  
203  
Washington DC 20007

Field, Daniel  
University of British Columbia  
6123 Belvedere Road SW  
Calgary AB T2V 2E2  
Canada

Fillmore, David  
Kutztown University  
4471 Maria Drive  
Bethlehem PA 18020

Frischauf, Christine  
Universität Wien  
Schöpfstrasse 49  
Innsbruck 6020  
Austria

Furio, Marc  
Institut Català de  
Paleontologia  
Edifici ICP  
Campus UAB  
Cerdanyola del Vallès 08193  
Spain

Gallant, Monique  
College of the Holy Cross  
1 College Street  
Worcester MA 01610

Garofalo, Ian  
132 Monterrey Road  
Weatherford TX 76088

Gilbert, William  
California State University,  
East Bay  
3095 Meiklejohn Hall  
CSUEB  
Hayward CA 94542

Greco, Marcelo  
Universidade Federal de  
Minas Gerais  
Rua Tome de Souza,  
432/102  
Belo Horizonte MG 30140130  
Brazil

Green, Thomas  
1600 Callaway Drive  
Plano TX 75075

Grohé, Camille  
IPHEP (UMR 6046), UFR  
SFA  
Université de Poitiers  
40 avenue du Recteur Pineau  
Poitiers 86022  
France

Gusey, Aili  
3480 McKenna Drive, Apt. 5  
Eugene OR 97401

Hakala, Sarah  
University of Georgia  
250A Baldwin Hall  
Jackson St.  
Athens GA 30602-1619

Halenar, Lauren  
247 E. 94th Street, Apt. 2S  
New York NY 10128

Hartstone-Rose, Adam  
Penn State Altoona  
3000 Ivyside Park  
Altoona PA 16601

Hautier, Lionel  
Museum of Zoology  
Downing Street  
Cambridge CB2 3EJ  
United Kingdom

Hayes, Tracie  
3027 Idlewood Circle  
Charlotte NC 28209

Heimberger, Gail Lopacki  
638 E Manoa Road  
Havertown PA 19083

Hensley-Marschand, Blaire  
Indiana University  
1731 S. Highland Avenue  
Bloomington IN 47401

Hoch, Kevin  
2704 Genoa Avenue, Apt.  
DD3  
Lubbock TX 79407

Hopkins, Brooke  
Louisiana State University  
4155 Essen Lane, Apt. # 117  
Baton Rouge LA 70809

Hsiang, Allison  
Yale University  
245 Whitney Avenue, Apt. 3A  
New Haven CT 06511

Hughes, Martin  
University of Bath  
Rm 1.07 4 South  
University of Bath  
Claverton  
Bath BA2 7AY  
United Kingdom

Iudica, Carlos  
Susquehanna University  
Department of Biology  
514 University Avenue  
Selinsgrove PA 17870

Jenkins, Kirsten  
Department of Anthropology  
University of Minnesota  
4747 Colfax Avenue N  
Minneapolis MN 55430

Jia, Liantao  
Institute of Vertebrate and  
Paleontology and  
Paleoanthropology  
Xizhimenwai Street, 142  
Beijing 100044  
Peoples Republic of China

Jimenez Huidobro, Paulina  
Universidad de Chile  
Las Palmeras 3425 Ñuñoa  
Santa Elisa 685 La Cisterna  
Santiago 00000  
Chile

Johnson, William  
3556 Ainsworth Drive  
Dallas TX 75229

Kerner, Andreas  
728 SW Bluff Drive  
Fort White FL 32038

Knauss, Mathew  
420 Perry Street  
P. O. Box 222  
Pemberville OH 43450

Krigbaum, John  
University of Florida  
619 NE 10th Avenue  
Gainesville FL 32601-4433

Kullander, Sven  
Swedish Museum of Natural  
History  
P. O. Box 50007  
Frescativägen 40  
Stockholm SE-104 05  
Sweden

Lacey, Elizabeth  
1726 Forest Parkway  
Denver CO 80220

Laecy, Michael  
1726 Forest Parkway  
Denver CO 80220

Lepelstat, Amanda  
90 Bannister Lane  
Lawrence NY 11559

Liu, Jun  
The University of Hong Kong  
Room307, James Lee  
Building  
Pokfulam Road  
Hong Kong 00000  
Hong Kong

Lukens, William  
Temple University  
518 Silverbrook Drive  
Birdsboro PA 19508

MacDougall, Mark Joseph  
Cape Breton University  
114 Fraser Avenue  
Sydney Mines NS B1V 2C5  
Canada

MacKenzie, Kristen  
P. O. Box 298  
Paisley OR 97636

Marini, Brandon  
1200 Estes Park Court, Apt.  
307  
Rapid City SD 57701

Martin, Evan  
9937 Delia Lane  
Santee CA 92071

McCoy, Megan  
Montana State University  
115 S. 20th Avenue  
Bozeman MT 59718

Medwid, Tiffany  
College of the Holy Cross  
1 College Street  
Worcester MA 01610

Mico, Lindsay  
Demeter Design  
27950 Ridge View Way  
Nehalem OR 97131

Miller, Ian  
Department of Earth  
Sciences  
Denver Museum of Nature  
and Science  
2001 Colorado Boulevard  
Denver CO 80205

Mitas, Vanessa  
1514 N 3500 W  
Vernal UT 84078

Moon, Benjamin  
33 Jubilee Road  
Southsea  
Portsmouth P04 OJD  
United Kingdom

Morris, Zachary  
Museum of Paleontology  
University of California at  
Berkeley  
79 Alm Bluffs Drive  
Chico CA 95928

Morse, Paul  
University of Florida  
1710 NW 7th Street, Apt. 303  
Gainesville FL 32609

Moscato, David  
East Tennessee State  
University  
2903 Bayview Avenue  
Wantagh NY 11792

Mowry, Beth  
Brooklyn School for  
Collaborative Studies  
570 Westminster Road, D-24  
Brooklyn NY 11230

Neufeld, Berney  
3700 S. Westport Avenue,  
Apt. 1087  
Sioux Falls SD 57106

Nishioka, Yuichiro  
Primate Research Institute  
41-2, Kanrin  
Inuyama City, Aichi Pref. 484-  
8506  
Japan

O'Connor, Anne  
Department of Biology and  
Biochemistry  
University of Bath  
Room1.07 4 South  
Bath BA2 7AY  
United Kingdom

O'Leary, Ruth  
American Museum of Natural  
History  
1009 Willow Avenue, Apt. 2R  
Hoboken NJ 07030

Oakley, Fredericka  
Yolo County, California  
Room B-05  
625 Court Street  
Woodland CA 95695

Ortiz, Daniela  
Sam Houston State  
University  
7469 Enchanted Stream  
Drive  
Conroe TX 77304

Osborne, Jason  
Paleo Quest  
14243 Murphy Terrace  
Gainesville VA 20155

Palmer, Colin  
University of Bristol  
7 Palmerston Road  
Bristol BS6 7RH  
United Kingdom

Pei, Rui  
American Museum of Natural  
History  
Central Park West at 79th  
Street  
New York NY 10024

Pilbro, Clayton  
Anthropology Department  
University of New Mexico  
5600 Gibson Boulevard SE,  
Apt. 472  
Albuquerque NM 87108

Potvin-Leduc, Daniel  
Université du Québec à  
Rimouski  
392 Boulevard Jessop  
Rimouski QC G5L 1M8  
Canada

Pruitt, Jesse  
1398 Shipp Avenue  
Idaho Falls ID 83402

Radich, Andrew  
114 Buckingham Road  
Easley SC 29640

Revell, Jamie  
281 Castle Road  
Chatham, Kent ME4 5JA  
United Kingdom

Rincon Burbano, Aldo  
Fernando  
Florida Museum of Natural  
History  
University of Florida  
224 Dickinson Hall  
Museum Road and Newell  
Drive  
Gainesville FL 32611

Romando, Theresa  
2149 N. Kirsdoiff Avenue  
Melrose Park IL 60164

Rounds, Carolyn  
University of Massachusetts  
Amherst  
52 Ste 1 Old Indian Road  
Milton NY 12547

Sawchak, Cathy  
Carnegie Museum of Natural  
History  
3834 Sunview Drive  
Pittsburgh PA 15227

Sawchak, Joseph  
Carnegie Museum of Natural  
History  
3834 Sunview Drive  
Pittsburgh PA 15227

Schmitt, Elizabeth  
1185 W. Mountain View  
Road, Apt. 1521  
Johnson City TN 37604

Schnatterly, Lance  
167 Carlton Avenue  
Marlton NJ 08053

Schottstaedt, William  
712 Central Avenue  
Menlo Park CA 94025-2503

Seeley, Sarah  
1549 N 2040 W  
Provo UT 84604

Shirley, Meghan  
Temple University  
1360 Ridgeview Circle  
Downingtown PA 19335

Smith, Gregory  
The Pennsylvania State  
University  
85 Spruce Street  
Mountain Top PA 18707

Stegner, M. Allison  
Stanford University  
5 Claremont Place  
Menlo Park CA 94025

Switek, Brian  
2806 Ravens Crest Drive  
Plainsboro NJ 08536

Takechi, Masaki  
Riken CDB  
2-2-3 Minatojima-  
minamimachi  
Chuo-ku  
Kobe 650-0047  
Japan

Tana, David  
5610 35th Avenue  
Hyattsville MD 20782

Tempelmeyer, Reginald  
1020 Liveoak Drive  
Norman OK 73072

Thasod, Yupa  
Research Institute of  
Petrifiedwood and Mineral  
Resources, NRRU  
184 Moo. 7, T. Suranaree,  
Mueang Nakhon Ratchasima  
Nakhon Ratchasima 30000  
Thailand

Thies, Monte  
Department of Biological  
Sciences  
Sam Houston State  
University  
Box 2116  
Huntsville TX 77341

Valenzuela Toro, Ana  
Universidad de Chile  
Baldomero Lillo #856. Padre  
Hurtado

Santiago 00000  
Chile

van Vliet, Hendrik Jan  
Abel Tasmanstraat 41  
Utrecht 3531 GS  
The Netherlands

VanBuren, Collin  
Western Illinois University  
70 Mary Senica Avenue  
La Salle IL 61301

Voegele, Kristyn  
5049 River Crest Road  
Grand Forks ND 58201

Whiteman, Shawn  
Department of Biology  
University of New Mexico  
1029 Vassar Drive NE  
Albuquerque NM 87106

Wilson, Sian  
University of Calgary  
2912 Underhill Drive NW  
Calgary AB T2N 4E3  
Canada

Zhao, Wen-Jin  
IVPP, Chinese Academy of  
Sciences  
P. O. Box 643  
Beijing 100044  
Peoples Republic of China

## — NEWS FROM MEMBERS —

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**CANADA** (Kevin Seymour, Canada Editor, [kevins@rom.on.ca](mailto:kevins@rom.on.ca))

### ***Cape Breton University, Nova Scotia***

Sean Modesto is currently enjoying his first sabbatical. Two weeks of fieldwork in September were spent in the South African districts of Bethulie and Rouxville with Dr. Jennifer Botha-Brink of the National Museum. Museum work in Bloemfontein focused on the description of a *Erythrosuchus africanus* skeleton that was collected two years previously. Papers describing the new procolophonid reptile *Phonodus dutoitorum* (co-authored with Jennifer, Diane Scott, and Robert Reisz) and a burrow cast containing *Lystrosaurus* skeletal remains (co-authored with Jennifer), appeared earlier this year in *JVP* and *Palaios*, respectively. A paper on the postcranial skeleton of the Early Permian parareptile *Mesosaurus tenuidens* should appear shortly in *JVP*.

Student Amy Lamb continues her research on type-series material of the Early Permian captorhinid *Captorhinikos valensis* from Texas. Former CBU student Mark MacDougall is now immersed in graduate studies at the University of Toronto. (Sean Modesto)

### **Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Ontario**

David Evans is currently working on several pachycephalosaur projects, and is preparing his work on hadrosaurid biostratigraphy from Dinosaur Provincial Park for submission. He has three fieldwork projects focusing on Late Cretaceous dinosaur-bearing deposits planned for 2010: southern Alberta, Uruguay, and Mongolia. It was an unusually wet year in southern Alberta, where David's crew, including Ian Morrison, missed more days to rain in the last three weeks than they have missed in total in the last six years. Work continued at the ceratopsian and hadrosaur bonebeds that were worked in 2009. One of the highlights of the season was that the team relocated the site where C. M. Sternberg collected his excellent *Myledaphus* and *Eodelphis* specimens in 1937. Fieldwork in Uruguay at the end of July will focus on the Ascencio Formation, and David will continue work with Michael Ryan at the Dragon's Tomb *Saurolophus* locality in Mongolia in August.

Together with David Eberth, David is co-convening a major symposium on the evolution and paleobiology of hadrosaurs to be held at the Royal Tyrrell Museum in September 2011. If you are interested in attending or contributing to the symposium, please contact David by e-mail. Abstracts will be due in late spring of next year.

David currently supervises four graduate students. Nicolas Campione passed his PhD candidacy exam this past spring, and is continuing his work on the relationships between limb dimensions and body mass in living forms and limb scaling in both dinosaurs and extant species. Ryan Schott is working hard to finish his MSc on the Belly River Group pachycephalosaur diversity; he is planning on defending in September. Caleb Brown is finishing off several papers on ornithischian dinosaurs that stem from his MSc work, and making progress on his PhD thesis on variation in centrosaurine ceratopsids from the Belly River Group. Christopher McGarrity spent the summer working at the Royal Tyrrell Museum while studying their specimens of *Prosaurolophus maximus* for his MSc. Derek Larson is an incoming member of the ROM/University of Toronto palaeontology group. He will be starting his PhD with David on varanid dentition and ecomorphology as a model for reconstructing the evolution of diet in theropods and basal synapsids.

We now have Brian Iwama working full time in the vertebrate collections with Kevin Seymour instead of just part time, and he has completed several long-overdue upgrades. He has been making support jackets for many of the oversized dinosaur specimens, both to protect them and to make them safer to move for study. In addition he has put wheels on all the heavy specimens that sit on the floor, again making access much easier. His final chore recently has been to upgrade the storage for the type collection, in particular the dinosaur material; this work is ongoing. Our summer student Lana Tran is working with Kevin Seymour to complete the inventory and databasing of the non-dinosaurian reptiles. Soon, all that will remain to be databased will be the fossil fishes.

Kevin Seymour will attend the VII Latinamerican Paleontological Congress in La Plata, Argentina, this fall and report on the Talara, Peru, and Corralito, Ecuador, Late Pleistocene faunas stored at the ROM (over 30,000 specimens in total). At the same time he will complete a study trip to Buenos Aires, La Plata, and Montevideo to examine fossil and recent cats. (David Evans and Kevin Seymour)



**INTERNATIONAL** (Michel Laurin, International Editor, [michel.laurin@upmc.fr](mailto:michel.laurin@upmc.fr))  
No news submitted

## **UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**Northeast Region** (Margaret Lewis, Regional Editor, [lewism@stockton.edu](mailto:lewism@stockton.edu))  
No news submitted

**Southeast Region** (Mary Ann Schmidt, Temp. Regional Editor, [maryanns@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:maryanns@andrew.cmu.edu))  
No news submitted

**Midwest Region** (Mary Ann Schmidt, Temp. Regional Editor, [maryanns@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:maryanns@andrew.cmu.edu))  
No news submitted

**Southwest Region** (Mary Ann Schmidt, Temp. Regional Ed.; [maryanns@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:maryanns@andrew.cmu.edu))  
No news submitted

**Rocky Mountain Region** (Mary Ann Schmidt, Temp. Regional Ed.,  
[maryanns@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:maryanns@andrew.cmu.edu))  
No news submitted

**Pacific Coast Region** (John M. Harris, Regional Editor, [jharris@nhm.org](mailto:jharris@nhm.org))

### ***Colorado Desert District Stout Research Center***

The Colorado Desert District will be hiring a new District Paleontologist (DP) later this year. Because keeping the paleontology program viable and affecting a smooth “change of guard” are of primary concern, the present DP, George Jefferson will remain “on duty” at the District Stout Research Center (DSRC) through the transition. George has been threatening to retire for a couple of years now, and refuses to undergo the embarrassment of a third annual retirement party.

Candidates for the position (see related advertisement under Positions Available) must take a qualifying examination (Qualifications Assessment) for Environmental Scientist (the state does not have an examination specifically for paleontology). The examination is presently on-line. In order for potential candidates to be ranked on a list of available applicants, *it is critical to take the examination as soon as possible* (i.e., before the position is posted for hiring).

The position is being filled under the job classification of Environmental Scientist (Recruitment #097500-00100762-9PB01). This is a general classification designed to test candidates in the natural sciences for a wide variety of applications in different government departments, not only state parks. You will see the terms *natural resources* and *environment* or *environmental* used through the examination. For our purposes, fossil remains are considered natural resources, and, as paleontologists, paleoenvironment is a valid subset of environmental studies.

An application form, as well as the Qualifications Assessment (examination) may be obtained through <http://jobs.ca.gov/CASPB/sup/BulPreview.asp?R1=097500&R2=00100762&R3=9PB01>.

You may preview the questions before beginning the examination by clicking on a link. All of the details are explained on the site. *You must have taken the examination prior to when the position is posted.* Posting is anticipated within about a month but could happen earlier. Your examination score will place you on a ranked list from which candidates are invited for interviews once the position has been posted.

The University of Chicago collection of ca. 10,000 invertebrate fossils from the mid-Miocene marine Imperial Group sequence, has been unpacked and organized. This was a first step in reorganizing the entire DSRC paleontology holdings from oldest to youngest by geological formation. Presently the collection is separated in sections by institutional origins, IVCM, LACM, and ABDSP. Our on-going data verification and correction project with the paleontology database has shifted into high gear with an attempt to print specimen box cards for the collection once reorganized by formation name.

Five students completed the Paleontology Certification Training Program this season. The 165-hour lecture-laboratory-field class is designed to train volunteers for resource survey, conservation, and collection work for the park. However, field and laboratory work has essentially shut down for the summer and will resume again in October.

With the discovery of new specimens of *Smilodon gracilis* from the El Casco site in Riverside County, George Jefferson and Bob Reynolds of LSA have decided to work up a short paper on the remains of the taxon from the southwestern US. This will include the reported but largely undescribed materials from the Ocotillo and Hueso Formations of Anza-Borrego.

Senior Park Aide (SPA) Arnie Mroz continues geological/stratigraphic mapping and intensive survey work in the Truckhaven Rocks, expanding the area to include an additional ca. 10 km<sup>2</sup> of badlands exposures on the eastern flank of the Santa Rosa Mountains. This state-funded project has been extended through June of 2011. SPA Scott Musick is madly wrapping up his work on the Freeman Properties, a large addition to the northeastern corner of the Park, in preparation to moving to a new paleontological survey job with URS Corporation. Scott will be working with J. D. Stewart on projects in southern California. We wish Scott all the best in his new full-time position.

And, for a look at our program and activities, visit the Paleontology Society's Web site at <http://www.anzaborregopaleo.org>. (G. T. Jefferson)

### ***University of Washington***

The University of Washington will introduce a new undergraduate minor in paleobiology for the 2010–11 academic year. Classes for the minor span three departments: anthropology, biology, and geology. More details can be found at: <http://depts.washington.edu/paleobio/Welcome.html>.

The UW's Burke Museum recently wrapped up a very successful temporary exhibit, "Cruisin' the Fossil Freeway," which was based on a book of the same name by

paleobotanist Kirk Johnson and artist Ray Troll. The exhibit paired selections of Ray's art with fossils from the Burke's collections. The exhibit is now on tour and booked through early 2013. Also at the Burke Museum, a major FEMA-sponsored renovation of the paleontology collections is scheduled to be completed by the end of summer (2010). New compactors, cabinets, and shelving for oversized fossils are designed to protect the collection (and its researchers) in the event of an earthquake. Finally, a database of publications citing Burke fossil vertebrates is now online (<http://www.washington.edu/burkemuseum/collections/publications/>). Any errors or omissions should be reported to Christian Sidor ([casidor@uw.edu](mailto:casidor@uw.edu)).

Lauren Berg and Meng Chen both passed their general exam and have now advanced to PhD candidacy. Dave DeMar, Jr., who started in the Biology Graduate Program in the fall of 2009, began his research on the amphibians and squamates of the Hell Creek and Tullock formations of northeastern Montana. Jonathan Calede, who received his Master's degree from the University of Oregon, will enter the Biology Graduate Program in the fall of 2010. Greg Wilson will again lead a field crew in collecting in the Hell Creek and Tullock formations of northeastern Montana. They will finish off the summer with the inaugural "D.I.G. Field School" for local teachers. This three-day event will be led by Wilson and Berg and will have six teacher participants from Garfield and nearby counties in northeastern Montana.

Rachel Simon, a former UW undergraduate, preparator at the Burke, and coordinator for Greg Wilson's lab, will be leaving Seattle this summer. She's off to the Master's program in the Jackson School for Geoscience at the University of Texas, Austin. We all wish her the best!

For the first time in several years, Christian Sidor will not be doing fieldwork in Africa this summer. However, the Ruhuhu Basin project continues to produce papers (including two in *JVP* in 2010) and NSF has funded a post-doc position for Dr. Sterling Nesbitt to join Sidor's lab in the fall. Nesbitt and Sidor will be working up some of the archosaur material from the Manda Beds collected in 2007 and 2008. In addition, Sidor's new grad student, Brandon Peacock (arriving fall 2010), will likely work with Nesbitt on archosaur fossils collected from the Luangwa Basin of Zambia in 2009.

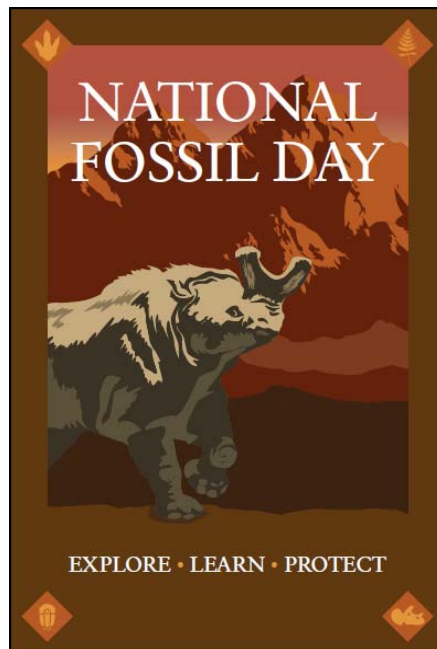
After completing several manuscripts on therocephalians and synapsid histology (in press for 2011) Adam Huttenlocker is continuing collaborative projects with Jennifer Botha-Brink at the National Museum in Bloemfontein, South Africa. He returned to South Africa in August for the Palaeontological Society of Southern Africa's biennial meeting, and will be heading to the SVP annual meeting in Pittsburgh to present on preliminary thin-sectioning of therocephalian therapsid bone with Jennifer. In the coming winter, Adam will be joining Chris Sidor in Antarctica with the hopes of finding new Antarctic therocephalians and cynodonts.

The Prep Lab at the Burke has been slowly working through the material brought back from the Bridger Formation last summer. With help from numerous volunteers, Bruce Crowley prepared the brontothere skull he discovered last summer. It is in excellent, undistorted condition. The surprise came when it was determined that it represents *Palaeosyops robustus* rather than the smaller, more common *P. paludosus*. No described skull of *P. robustus* is as well preserved as this one, which was discovered stratigraphically low in the range of the species in Bridger C deposits.

The skull of a *Thinocyon* skeleton found by John Alexander last year has been prepared. This small creodont was removed from the same stratigraphic level and about 50 meters from the discovery site of the as yet undescribed Bridger raptor skeleton. It is fairly complete but shows very curious damage. The pattern of breakage and element displacement indicates that the specimen may very well have been the victim of raptor predation. Deep punctures in the mandible and right orbit are consistent with the incision of talons. Damage to the basicranium suggests that the tongue and brain may have been extracted. Paired sets of grooves on the sagittal crest appear to be marks left by a sharp beak. It is further evidence of a significant predatory component to the Bridger avifauna. (Christian A. Sidor)

## – BULLETIN BOARD –

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### **NATIONAL FOSSIL DAY, 13 OCTOBER 2010**

Attention, paleontologists! Would you like to promote the work you do and explain why it is important? Would you like to teach students about fossils? If yes, then get ready to celebrate National Fossil Day, arriving this October.

The National Park Service and the American Geological Institute are partnering to host the first National Fossil Day on 13 October 2010 during Earth Science Week ([www.earthsciweek.org](http://www.earthsciweek.org)). National Fossil Day is a celebration organized to promote public awareness and stewardship of fossils, as well as to foster a greater appreciation of their scientific and educational value.

More than 228 parks managed by the National Park Service contain fossil resources. Fossils discovered on the nation's public lands preserve ancient life from all major eras of Earth's history, and from every major group of animal or plant. In the national parks,

for example, fossils range from Precambrian algae found high in the mountains of Glacier National Park, Montana, to the remains of ice-age animals found in caves at Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona.

Learn more about outreach activities or becoming a National Fossil Day partner at <http://nature.nps.gov/geology/nationalfossilday/>. Join in the celebration today! (Vincent Santucci)

### **VISIT THE PALEONTOLOGY PORTAL**

The Paleontology Portal continues to be updated and enhanced. A visit to <http://www.paleoportal.org> will reveal a modified home page that allows us to better highlight new features, four new interviews in the PaleoPeople section (with more on the way), the addition of The Mammoth Site of Hot Springs, South Dakota, and Joggins Fossil Cliffs to the Famous Flora & Fauna section (also with more to come), and a new AMNH in-depth module on Fossil Preparation.

And remember that it's easy to contribute website links, images, and calendar items to the site -- just click on the green "add links or images" button at the top of any page. (Judy Scotchmoor)

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## **— POSITIONS AVAILABLE —**

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### **COLORADO DESERT DISTRICT (CDD) PALEONTOLOGIST**

#### **California Department of Parks and Recreation**

The Paleontology Society of the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park is assisting in the recruitment of the District Paleontologist (DP). We anticipate that this position, currently held by George Jefferson, will be filled in late 2010. The DP leads a well-established, ongoing program charged with protecting and preserving CDD's paleontology resources. The program includes field surveying, fossil recovery, preparation, and curation, as well as maintaining the CDD's existing fossil collection of ca. 35,000 specimens. The DP conducts research, and supports research at the CDD by outside scientists. The DP currently supervises four part-time, paid field staff, and over 40 active volunteers (hourly input equivalent to ca. four full-time employees). The DP oversees CDD's highly respected program for training paleontology volunteers, and supports educational and interpretive programs for the CDD.

Candidates should have a degree in geology or biology, and have an established research history with a focus on the Neogene of North American vertebrate paleontology. An advanced degree is desirable. Candidates should be collaborative, accustomed to working both as a leader and in supporting roles. Experience within a government system is desirable.

The CDD includes six state parks in southeastern California. Anza-Borrego Desert State Park alone has over 100,000 acres of sedimentary deposits, both marine and terrestrial, spanning a period from ten million to less than 10,000 years ago. The most significant and abundant fossil remains are from the late Miocene through mid Pleistocene. The

paleontology resources are located on the margins of the Salton Trough, an active plate boundary.

The job is based at the CDD Stout Research Center, which houses the conservation laboratory and collections facilities. It is located in the desert community of Borrego Springs, a town of ca. 3,000 (with an additional 4,000 winter residents).

Potential applicants should contact George Jefferson at [gjefferson@parks.ca.gov](mailto:gjefferson@parks.ca.gov) for more information.

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## THE SOCIETY OF VERTEBRATE PALEONTOLOGY BY-LAW ON ETHICS

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<http://www.vertpaleo.org/society/memberethics.cfm>

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Thomas R. Holtz for “Dinosaurs: The Most Complete Up-To-Date Encyclopedia for Dinosaur Lovers of All Ages. Illustrated by Luis Rey.”

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