



A little bit country. Singer-songwriter Garth Brooks donated several items to the American History Museum on Dec. 4, including his first gold record and one of his trademark black cowboy hats. Curator Dwight Bowers, left, and MAH Director Brent Glass flank Brooks at the donation ceremony. (Photo by Hugh Talman)

Solving the mystery of the boy in the iron coffin

BY AMY ROGERS NAZAROV
Special to The Torch

Were he alive today, the boy buried in an iron coffin in northwest Washington, D.C., before the Civil War would probably be astonished to know how many people have become fascinated by his life story.

From tracing his family tree to developing theories about what caused his death a century and a half ago, several Smithsonian staff have be-

come deeply involved in the brief life of William Taylor White (1837-1852). The iron coffin was discovered at a construction site off Columbia Road in April 2005. The mystery surrounding the remains—preserved nearly intact—launched a slew of anthro-

logical, genealogical, radiographic and biomedical research projects by scientists at the Museum of Natural History, a cadre of interns from George Washington University and numerous volunteers. “Many people have provided their time and expertise to help in this research,” says Deborah Hull-Walski, Anthropology Collections manager and historical archaeologist at MNH. “Everyone wanted to help identify this boy.”

White, from Accomack, Va., had been a student at a preparatory school near the site where the coffin was found. Additional genealogical research helped track down the living relatives of these three candidates.

Among those people was Linda Dwyer of Lancaster, Penn. “My son answered the phone one day,” recalls Dwyer. “He told me it was someone from the Smithsonian.”

The caller was Hull-Walski, asking if Dwyer, thought to be a descendant of William White’s sister, Sally, would be willing to provide a DNA sample via a cheek swab.

Three previous DNA samples had been obtained from other possible lineal descendants, but none provided the link that would match them to DNA obtained from the boy’s remains. The team’s hopes were cautiously pinned on Dwyer, though they braced themselves for another negative.

However, the result was a match. Dwyer was William White’s great-great-great-great niece.

“To actually identify her as a lineal descendant of William’s was exhilarating for all of us,” says David Hunt, physical anthropologist and collections manager of the Physical Anthropology division at MNH. Hunt also serves as a forensic anthropologist for local law enforcement agencies and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

Doug Owsley, physical anthropology curator at Natural History, helped oversee the examination of

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David Hunt, left, and Deborah Hull-Walski examine the iron coffin that held the remains of William White. (Photo by Randal Scott)

Through painstaking research of death certificates, school records, orphan bonds and other primary sources, Hull-Walski’s team winnowed the number of possible identities for the boy in the coffin down to three, including White. William

White, from Accomack, Va., had been a student at a preparatory school near the site where the coffin was found. Additional genealogical research helped track down the living relatives of these three candidates.

Beyond Bob Marley: ‘Discovering Rastafari’ at MNH

BY VIRGINIA MYERS
Special to The Torch

“Discovering Rastafari!,” a new exhibition at the Natural History Museum, is entered through an archway resplendent with the warm red, yellow and green of the Ethiopian flag. This fascinating exhibition sheds light on what has been a little-understood footnote in modern culture—a movement set to the beat of reggae music, adorned with dreadlocks, scented with “ganja” and reminiscent of the back-to-Africa movement of the 1960s.

However, Rastafari, as one quickly learns, is so much more than these stereotypes. And, according to Curator Jake Homiak, the exhibition on display at MNH through Nov. 8 only begins to tell the larger story.

Most people think of Rastafarian culture as exclusively Jamaican, but historical photographs of Ras Tafari Makonnen, prince regent of Ethiopia, make clear Rastafari’s African roots.

When Ras Tafari became Emperor Hailie Selassie I of Ethiopia in 1930, he was already an accomplished diplomat with strong ties to Europe. He brought Ethiopia into an international sphere of influence as a member of the League of Nations and later, the United Nations. At Selassie’s coronation—with royal crown, robes, scepter and sword—both Europeans and Africans bowed before him. The significance of a black man lifted to the height of power and re-

spect fulfilled what Rastafaris consider a prophecy voiced by Jamaican-born black nationalist Marcus Garvey. Garvey predicted a black king would rise up out of Africa to lead people in the West.

Selassie, known for his passion for humanitarian and social justice is-



When Emperor Haile Selassie I was crowned, he received the titles King of Kings, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah and Light of the World. Preachers in Jamaica saw the coronation as the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy. (Photo detail courtesy of the Library of Congress)

sues, spoke eloquently of world unity that would transcend race and ethnicity. Visitors to the exhibition may hear an echo of reggae king Bob Marley’s lyrics as they read Selassie’s words: “Until the color of a man’s skin is of no more significance than

See ‘Rastafari,’ Page 3



Just chillin’. Giant panda Tai Shan spent some time hanging around his enclosure at the National Zoo and enjoying the season’s first snowfall last month. (Photo by Jessie Cohen)

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NEWS & NOTES

Grammy nominations

The National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences has announced the nominees for the 50th annual Grammy Awards. The Smithsonian Chamber Music Society's recording of Gustav Mahler's "Das Lied von der Erde" was nominated in the category of "Best Small Ensemble." This is the first Grammy nomination for the Chamber Music Society.

Two Smithsonian Folkways recordings also were nominated in the "Best Traditional World Music Album (Vocal or Instrumental)" category. The nominated recordings are: "When the Soul is Settled: Music of Iraq," Rahim Al Haj with Souhail Kaspar, and "Singing for Life: Songs of Hope, Healing and HIV/AIDS in Uganda," various artists, produced by Gregory Barz.

The Grammy Awards will be broadcast on Feb. 10 on CBS at 8 p.m.

Shriver portrait

A portrait of Eunice Kennedy Shriver, founder of the Special Olympics, has been commissioned by the Portrait Gallery from artist David Lenz, win-

ner of NPG's Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition in 2006. The painting, expected to be presented to NPG later this year, will be added to the gallery's permanent collection.

The Portrait Gallery commissions a portrait for the collection from the winner of the Boochever Competition, which is held every three years. Shriver is a good choice of subject for Lenz; his son, Sam, has Down syndrome and is an active and enthusiastic Special Olympics athlete. Lenz is an admirer of Shriver because of the international role she has assumed as the founder of Special Olympics.

"This project is extremely meaningful to me because Mrs. Shriver has tirelessly advocated for people like Sam," Lenz says.

The Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition is made possible by the generosity of Virginia Outwin Boochever, whose gift fosters the acquisition of contemporary portraiture for the Portrait Gallery.

Postal Museum

The Smithsonian will continue to

showcase the history of the nation's mail service until at least 2032, thanks to a renewed agreement with the U.S. Postal Service to operate the National Postal Museum.

The agreement, ratified Nov. 1, 2007, extends SI's current stewardship of the museum in the City Post Office Building near Union Station in Washington, D.C., for 10 years beyond the 2022 expiration date of the last agreement, signed in 2002. Options for both parties to extend the agreement for two consecutive five-year periods are also included in the agreement.

NPM has been devoted to the history of the nation's mail service since it was established Nov. 6, 1990, through a joint agreement between SI and the Postal Service. Opened in July 1993, NPM maintains and exhibits one of the largest and most comprehensive collections of stamps and philatelic material in the world.

Henry Papers award

The staff who worked on *The Papers of Joseph Henry*, volumes 1 through 11, were recently awarded the 2007



Founding Director of the American Indian Museum W. Richard "Rick" West, center, was presented with an American flag by the Smithsonian Color Guard at his retirement ceremony in November. (Photo by Ken Rahaim)

Eugene S. Ferguson Prize for Outstanding Reference Works by the Society for the History of Technology.

The Ferguson Prize Committee's citation reads: "From the very first volume, the project has consistently met superior standards for documentary history...The editions have illuminating introductory essays, a careful selection of documents and extensive annotations. The project will, of course, serve as an enduring, indispensable guide for exploring the life and work of Joseph Henry and the earliest days of the Smithsonian Institution...."

The citation concludes with the observation that "The staff of the Henry Papers deserves high praise and congratulations for their well researched and superbly organized editions."

Latino agreement

The Latino Center has signed a memorandum of understanding with Fundación Carso, the philanthropic arm of Grupo Carso, which operates the Museo Soumaya, a nonprofit cultural institution located in Mexico City whose mission is to collect, research, preserve and exhibit Latin American, Mexican and European art.

The Latino Center and Fundación Carso will develop a series of exhibitions, public programs, educational materials and other activities to highlight Latino culture and heritage.

This collaboration is the first of its kind between Fundación Carso and a cultural institution in the United States.

West gallery

The gallery on the third floor of the American Indian Museum's building on the Mall has been officially named the W. Richard West Contemporary Arts Gallery in honor of W. Richard "Rick" West, NMAI's founding director. The Board of Regents and NMAI's Board of Trustees announced the naming in "grateful recognition" of West's distinguished service. West served as director, ambassador, advocate and fundraiser for the museum since 1990. He retired in November 2007.

Sound Sessions

"Sound Sessions" from Smithsonian Folkways is a new radio program featuring the eclectic and sometimes eccentric music from the extensive archives of Smithsonian Folkways Recordings.

The show will air monthly on Washington, D.C.'s WAMU 88.5 FM and can be heard online at the Web site www.folkways.si.edu. Host Sam Litzinger, an award-winning broadcasting veteran with 30 years of experience, and Folkways Archivist Jeff Place have searched the Folkways archives to find interesting music, rare outtakes, performer interviews, never-before-heard recordings and fascinating stories. Newly digitized audio and interviews with Folkways staff will give the show a fresh behind-the-scenes perspective. ■



Assembled for the signing of the Latino Center's new agreement with Fundación Carso are: seated, from left, Richard Kurin, Acting Under Secretary for History and Culture; Latino Center Director Pilar O'Leary; Carlos Slim, president of the board of directors of Fundación Carso; and Smithsonian National Latino Advisory Council member Columba Bush. Standing, from left, Guillermo Gutierrez, George Washington University; Gloria Rodriguez, vice chair of the Smithsonian Latino Board; Juan Garcia de Oteyza, executive director, Mexican Cultural Institute; Museo Samayo Director Alfonso Miranda Márquez; Latino Center Core Programs Director Joanne Flores and Noralisa Leo, Latino Center deputy director and external affairs officer. (Ken Rahaim photo)



Sitting Bull. Ernie LaPointe, left, great-grandson of the Hunkpapa Lakota Sioux leader Sitting Bull, shakes hands with Paul Risser, Acting Director of the Natural History Museum, as Bill Billeck, director of the Repatriation Office at MNH, looks on. After Sitting Bull was killed in 1890, his body was in the temporary custody of a U.S. Army doctor who obtained a lock of hair and the wool leggings Sitting Bull wore. The items were sent to the Smithsonian in 1896 and were repatriated to LaPointe last month. (Photo by Chip Clark)

OBITUARIES

Silvio Bedini

Silvio A. Bedini, historian emeritus and an expert on timekeeping and the history of early American scientific instruments, died of pneumonia Nov. 14 at Suburban Hospital in Bethesda, Md.

Mr. Bedini came to the Smithsonian in 1961. He was assistant director and deputy director of what was then the National Museum of History and Technology. He wrote more than 20 books, beginning with *Early American Scientific Instruments and Their Makers* (1964) and most recently, *With Compass and Chain: Early American Surveyors and Their Instruments* (2001).

In 1978, Mr. Bedini became the keeper of rare books at SI's Dibner Library of the History of Science and Technology. He retired in 1978 but continued work as historian emeritus until his death.

Mr. Bedini was born in Ridgefield, Conn., and attended Columbia University before joining the Army Air Forces during World War II. He served in Army intelligence at a top-secret interrogation center for German prisoners of war.

After the war, he returned to Connecticut to run his family's contracting and landscaping business. In his spare time, he researched and wrote articles about science and technology for schools, encyclopedias and a hobby magazine before joining SI.

He received the Abbott Payson Usher Prize in 1962 and the Leonardo da Vinci Medal in 2000 from the Society for the History of Technology.

Survivors include his wife of 56 years, Gale Bedini, of Silver Spring, Md., and two children, Leandra Bedini of Hillsborough, N.C., and Peter Bedini, of Silver Spring. ■



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Prism: See "Staff Information"

FROM THE SECRETARY *Nurturing a new generation of scholars*

The scientists, scholars, artists and researchers who become leaders in their fields share one defining characteristic: they are passionately committed to their work. But that passion doesn't simply appear out of nowhere—it must be inspired and nurtured.

For generations, the Smithsonian has played a critical role in training the next generation of scholars by offering internships, short-term visiting appointments and fellowships at the predoctoral and postdoctoral levels. Funding comes from many sources, including endowments, grants and contracts, federal funds and gifts. All together, SI invests close to \$10 million each year in this training.

Postdoctoral Fellow Kris Helgen first came to SI as a college intern with the Museum of Natural History's Research Training Program. His work with MNH mammalogist Don Wilson led him to the West Indies, Borneo and the Andes, and on research visits to more than 40 natural history museums. He is currently working with SI's mammal collection—the world's largest with 600,000 specimens—to describe new

species he has discovered.

At 27, Kris is already making an outstanding contribution to his field, having published 50 papers, most recently in the journal *Science*.

In September 2007, he explained to the Smithsonian National Board how the Smithsonian has both inspired his passion and nurtured his talent:

"The Smithsonian gave me the privilege and pleasure of setting foot in a true community of scholars focused on the intellectual path I dreamed of walking down. By returning as an intern, a visiting scientist and now a postdoctoral fellow, I have worked with scientists who are giants in their field and with world-class collections. The Smithsonian has been the single most important refrain in my training, development and aspirations."

According to SI's Office of Research Training and Services, during fiscal year 2007, the Smithsonian hosted 1,014 interns; of these, only about 300 received a stipend—the rest were unpaid. Competitive fellowships were awarded to 210 fellows and 100 more received direct funding from sources

outside SI. In addition, 270 short-term visiting scholars and fellows conducted research at SI, including 50 at the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory in Cambridge, Mass.

My belief in the value of the fellowship programs at SI is reflected in my decision earlier this year to allocate an additional \$500,000 to our central Fellowship Program from funds donated by the Smithsonian National Board.

Last fall, I met with a group of graduate school deans from leading American colleges and universities. They were interested in the many fellowship opportunities at SI in the sciences, history and the arts. I urged them to think about their role in creating the pipeline of scholars who apply for our fellowships. The candidate pool needs to be both broader and deeper, with more candidates—particularly underrepresented minorities and women—interested in more fields of study.

Some SI units, such as the Environmental Research Center in Edgewater, Md., have focused considerable energy on raising funds and

Fine fellows

Recently, two postdoctoral fellows at SAO received national recognition for their achievements. Gaspar Bakos was named one of the nation's "Brilliant Ten" by Popular Science magazine for his work creating a network of robotic telescopes to search for planets orbiting distant stars.

Lisa Kaltenecker was honored in the Smithsonian magazine article "America's Young Innovators in the Arts and Sciences: 37 Under 36." She was recognized for her research modeling the atmospheres of distant exoplanets to determine what signs of life we may be able to detect. ■



Lisa Kaltenecker peers through the eyepiece of a telescope at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics in Cambridge, Mass. (Photo by Christine Pulliam)

attracting minority candidates. Approximately 20 fellows and 43 interns worked alongside SERC scientists in 2007 on coastal ecosystems.

Over the last 35 years, SERC's internship program has trained more than 1,000 undergraduates, 30 percent of whom are minorities. Today, about one-third of SERC interns are supported by funding from the National Science Foundation; the others are funded through a variety of grants, including contributions from the SI Women's Committee.

Some of our fellowship programs have influenced the development of an entire discipline. For example, the residential program at the American Art Museum has enriched the field of American art history for more than three decades, serving more than 340 scholars since its founding in 1970. Graduates of this highly competitive program teach at leading private and public universities and are curators at museums around the world.

Cynthia Mills, a former fellow and now academic programs coordinator at SAAM's Research and Scholars Center, explained the impact of the program to the National Board at the Board's September meeting: "Our fellows report their experience here to be life-changing—an opportunity to immerse themselves in dissertation and book projects amid a wealth of resources. A number have gone on

to be luminaries of the field. The program alumni are a testimonial to the Smithsonian's central—I should say essential—place in the study of American art and artists."

In my own travels around the globe, I often meet outstanding leaders who tell me they were once SI interns or fellows, and that the Smithsonian proved to be the transforming experience in their careers.

Ira Rubinoff, Under Secretary for Science, emphasized SI's role in creating the next generation of global leaders at the meeting of the National Board. He explained, "Our staff members learn from fellows, and these young people, in turn, become the professors at universities who send their best students to us."

"Fellowships create a multigenerational network as skills and knowledge are transferred from one generation to the next," Rubinoff continued. "The more fellows and graduate students we train, the more vibrant and forward-looking our intellectual community will be, and the stronger the Smithsonian will become."

We must continue to train the next generation, providing young scholars like Kris Helgen with the best the Smithsonian can offer and helping to create the next generation of leaders. I can think of no better way to invest in our future. ■ —Cristian Samper



Hi Mom! The Air and Space Museum's Udvar-Hazy Center welcomed its five millionth visitor, Quinn Neibergall, Dec. 8. Quinn, his parents and grandparents received a personal tour of the museum and a number of gifts. Quinn's dad, Gordon Neibergall, is a U.S. Air Force F-16 pilot assigned to the Pentagon. (Mark Avino photo)

Rastafari

(Continued from Page 1)

the color of his eyes...the dream of world citizenship will be but a fleeting illusion to be pursued but never attained."

Marley and other reggae artists popularized the concept of racial unity and helped make Rastafari culture more visible, but most people have only a nodding acquaintance with the movement's concepts.

True Rastafari believe that Selassie is descended from the biblical King Solomon and Queen of Sheba and is the Messiah, come to redeem not only black people, but all people seeking justice and truth.

"Rastafari exists around the world today against all odds," says Homiak, an anthropologist who is director of the Anthropology Collection and Archives Program at the Museum Support Center in Suitland, Md. "The small group of those who actually embraced this vision in the early 1930s were either jailed or sent to the

lunatic asylum." Heralding a black god was just too much for colonial authorities.

The movement persisted, however. According to Homiak, "Discovering Rastafari!" is the first exhibition that examines Rastafari both as a religion and as a way of life. Until now, few researchers took the time to see the movement on its own terms, Homiak says. He has studied Rastafari for 28 years, lived with its adherents in Jamaica and traveled extensively to better understand the culture. "Long ago I stopped saying that I was studying people," Homiak says. "I'm working with these people. The work is producing a particular kind of knowledge which is a collaborative effort."

The exhibition includes a 20-minute video featuring interviews with a range of Rastafari believers—from male elders who greeted Selassie when he visited Jamaica in 1966 to young professional women.

The exhibition features artifacts and ephemera, such as posters, buttons, costumes and drums, that tell the story of how Rastafari grew and spread not only to Jamaica but around the world, evolving into different "houses" or denominations, and highlighting the repatriated black Westerners who have formed a Rastafarian community in Ethiopia.

"I am smitten by this culture," Homiak says. In the course of studying Rastafari, he continues, "You become an advocate for the Rastafari. You find that they have a message for the world."

Homiak hopes visitors to the exhibition leave with an understanding that Rastafari is more substantive than dreadlocks and reggae. "There's some depth behind this," he says. "There's both resolve and piety to it."

He hopes people will hear the "resonance of faith and commitment and dignity" of the Rastafari who speak in

the video, and see the eloquence and prescience of Hailie Selassie's words. In the little gallery at the back of the African Voices Hall at MNH, he

hopes that a whisper of what Rastafari means will be heard above the noisy voices of the modern world. ■



Jake Homiak, left, greets Sister Melanie Wright, from Hartford, Ct., at the opening of "Discovering Rastafari." In the background are Ma-Yana, left, and Ras Maurice, who joined the movement in the 1950s. (Harold Dorwin photo)

SPOTLIGHT ON PEOPLE

Pamela West: Someone to watch over NMAI

From her vantage point in the control room of the American Indian Museum, Cpl. Pamela Nash West, a museum protection officer with the Office of Facilities Engineering and Operations, keeps a close watch over the museum she has served since the day it opened to the public.

Among other duties, she is responsible for monitoring the security alarms and the nine closed-circuit television screens that help her and the rest of the NMAI security team make sure that staff, visitors and collections are protected 24 hours a day.

But West, who joined SI in 1998, doesn't spend all her time in the control room. If the gallery floors are short of officers, she is quick to help out and frequently assumes

other duties without being asked. She also has earned praise for her diligence in organizing security for the frequent special events held at the museum.

"Cpl. West acts as a role model, displaying a positive and professional image at all times," Assistant Security Manager Teresita Marcano says, explaining why she and other managers nominated West for a Smithsonian "Unsung Hero" award presented in September 2007.

"She consistently receives praise from visitors and staff for her outstanding customer service skills," Marcano continues. "She is committed to providing a welcoming, positive and supportive work environment."

West is modest about her accom-

plishments and is quick to credit the rest of the security team. "We all help each other out because we are all dedicated to the security of the museum. I think our team is so successful because the managers and officers all get along so well," she says.

Marcano agrees, but gives West more credit. "Her friendly disposition brings out the best in each individual, recognizing the potential in every person. She is always developing new approaches to improve the way we serve our visitors."

West's team-building skills will no doubt stand her in good stead as she works toward her career goals at SI. "By the time I retire, I hope to be a manager," she says. ■

—Sarah Heffern



Pamela West in the control room at the American Indian Museum. Security cameras are monitored around the clock. (Photo by Harold Dorwin)



Tony Barthel outside the sloth bear enclosure at the National Zoo. Merlin can be glimpsed in the background. (Photo by Jessie Cohen)

Tony Barthel knows even bears need buddies

Merlin, the National Zoo's adult male sloth bear, has a wonderful new home in the recently opened Asia Trail featuring large rocks to climb and caves and waterfalls to explore—but no one to share it with.

His former companion, Hana, is busy raising their cub, Bala, in the adjacent enclosure. Staff have noticed that Merlin is exhibiting certain behaviors that can indicate increased stress. So how can the Zoo help a lonely sloth bear?

This is just one of the many issues Curator Tony Barthel deals with on a daily basis. He oversees a staff of 17 and a collection of 33 animals representing 11 species.

Barthel manages Asia Trail, the Cheetah Conservation Station and the soon-to-be-renovated Elephant House, which, when completed in

2011 as Elephant Trails, will be one of the Zoo's largest and most state-of-the-art exhibits.

But right now, Barthel is concerned with locating a companion for Merlin. Finding the right fit isn't always easy. "It's like a giant puzzle," he says. "We have to consider genetics, social history, medical history, space requirements and at the same time, we're competing with all the other zoos in the Sloth Bear Species Survival Program."

A match was finally made with Khali, a female sloth bear at the Woodland Park Zoo in Seattle who, like Merlin, is not recommended for breeding and also needs a companion.

After a long process of paperwork, vet exams and a ride on a Federal Express cargo plane, Khali arrived in

late November. Barthel was there the evening she was introduced to the indoor enclosure of the sloth bear exhibit.

"She was very nervous," Barthel recalls. "She immediately climbed up the 10-foot-high mesh fencing of her exhibit and clung there for a while."

Barthel and his staff are working with Khali to train her in different behaviors that help Zoo staff monitor her health and well-being, as well as provide enrichment for her. Last month, she and Merlin were introduced and are slowly getting to know each other.

"We hope that she'll have a positive effect on his behavior," Barthel says. "Typically, sloth bears are solitary animals, but Merlin has always enjoyed interacting with other bears." ■

—Sarah Taylor

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Nancy Bechtol, director of the Office of Facilities Management and Reliability, appeared on the cover of Building Operating Management magazine. Bechtol was selected for the profile because her "emphasis on training and teamwork has created a world-class facilities organization."

VIARC

Amy Lemon, coordinator of the Behind-the-Scenes Volunteer Program wrote an article about background checks for volunteers for the American Association for Museum Volunteers newsletter.

Air and Space

Curator of Space History **Valerie Neal**, Exhibit Design Specialist **Stephanie Markgraf** and Photographer **Eric Long** traveled to Florida for the launch of NASA's Space Shuttle STS-120. Neal received a crew guest invitation from Commander Pam Melroy.

Space History Curators **Roger Lauenius** and **Mike Neufeld** appeared on an episode of the Public Broadcasting Service's television series "Nova." The program, "Sputnik Declassified," documents the history of the famous satellite and the early space race. In addition, excerpts from Neufeld's book about rocket engineer Werner Von Braun are featured on the Nova

Web site in a section called "A Tainted Legacy."

Tropical Research Institute

The governor of the Chiriquí province of Panama presented **Stanley Heckadon-Moreno**, director of the Office of Communications and Public Programs, with a certificate and medal to recognize him as a "meritorious son to the Chiriquí province," for his achievements in Panamanian literature. Heckadon-Moreno, who was born in Alanje, Chiriquí province, has written 17 books.

Natural History

Paleobiologist **Brian Huber** was quoted in a Nov. 8 Time magazine article "Dino Conspiracy Theory." He was interviewed as a proponent of the theory that the mass extinction of the dinosaurs occurred 65 million years ago when an asteroid struck the Earth and filled the air with sun-blocking dust.

Betty Meggers, director of the Latin American Archaeology Program, received an honorary doctoral degree from the Universidade Federal de Rondônia (Unir) in Porto Velho, Rondônia, Brazil. This is Meggers' sixth honorary degree from a South American university.

Kristofer Helgen, researcher in the

Department of Mammals, and **Adrienne Kaeppler**, curator in the Department of Anthropology, were interviewed live for a WTTG-TV "Fox 5 Morning News" feature. The pro-

gram highlighted the Museum Support Center as the principal off-site conservation and collections storage facility for the Natural History Museum. Located in Suitland, Md., the

state-of-the-art facility houses more than 31 million objects, including very large specimens, such as meteorites and animals. ■ —Mara Jonas

POINT OF VIEW

What's your favorite con



Joel Lemp
Horticulturist
Facilities Engineering, Operations

Salt-cured Virginia country ham—something for the holidays.



Yvette Henderson
Museum Protection Officer
South Quad

There's nothing better than homemade beef stew. I use my grandma's recipe.



Mark Crooks
Visual Presentation Supervisor
Smithsonian Business Ventures

Mom's Sunday dinner—roasted chicken, roasted potatoes and vegetables.

PROFILE

Making history: NASM's Don Lopez is an icon of aviation

BY KATHLEEN HANSER
NASM Staff Writer

The Air and Space Museum seeks to tell the story of flight through its collection of historically significant aviation artifacts. But history truly comes to life in the stories of those who helped to shape it.

One such icon of aviation history is NASM Deputy Director Don Lopez, 84, whose legendary status was recently acknowledged at the 2007 Gathering of Mustangs and Legends at Rickenbacker International Airport in Columbus, Ohio.

During World War II, Lopez was a fighter pilot in the 75th Fighter Squadron, the Tiger Sharks, of the U.S. Army's 23rd Fighter Group in China. He flew Curtiss P-40s and North American P-51 Mustangs under famous war heroes Col. Tex Hill and Gen. Claire Chennault.

Lopez was only 19 when he shipped off to China in 1943, but he looked much younger. In his memoir of his experiences, *Into the Teeth of the Tiger* (Bantam, 1986), he refers to his youthful appearance by writing, "I needed to shave only every other month or so."

Squadron leader Tex Hill thought he had lied about his age. "He looked like he was about 16 years old when he arrived," Hill recalls in the book. "But he became one of the great fighter pilots of World War II."

During his two years in China, Lopez flew 101 missions and qualified as an "ace."

Gen. Jack Dailey, NASM's director, observes, "Don flew in the most demanding arena and excelled. Being called an ace is validation that a pilot has the courage and the skills to be the best. It is the most prestigious recognition for a pilot."

Lopez wanted to be a fighter pilot since he was a young boy growing up in Brooklyn, N.Y. At age 3, he went with his family to see Charles Lindbergh in a parade through the streets of Brooklyn.

When Lopez was a teenager and his family was living in Tampa, Fla., he spent many hours watching P-39s fly in and out of Drew Air Force Base. In college at the University of Tampa,



Don Lopez recreates a photo taken of him when he was a young fighter pilot during World War II, left, by posing with a historic Curtiss P-40 at the Udvar-Hazy Center, right. (Photo on right by Carolyn Russo)

Lopez signed up for the civilian pilot training program, which was training pilots in case of war. Once war was declared in 1942, Lopez immediately joined up.

"Back then, everyone was pretty eager to fight," Lopez says. "I think everybody wanted to be a fighter pilot, and when you were selected, you were just overjoyed."

Lopez left China in March 1945 and spent the next six years testing fighters at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida. Lopez says it was an exciting era to be a test pilot. "I got to fly everything there was. I flew not only the fighters, but also the bombers and transports. It was the beginning of the jet age—fighter pilot heaven."

While in Florida, Lopez met his wife, Glindell. "The only thing I would change in my life is that I would meet my wife sooner," Lopez says. They now have two grown children—a son, Don, who is one of the world's leading experts on Tibetan Buddhism, and a daughter, Joy, who is an executive assistant to the head of a clinical economics and genetic research center. Lopez and his wife also have one granddaughter.

After his test pilot days, Lopez completed a short combat tour flying North American F-86s in Korea. Following a tour of duty at the Pentagon, he earned a bachelor's degree in aeronautical engineering at the Air Force



Institute of Technology and a master's degree in aeronautics from the California Institute of Technology. Apollo X astronaut Frank Borman was one of Lopez's classmates.

"He never lost his calm sense of humor—even at Cal Tech," Borman says. "The academic load was difficult

for everyone—most of us were climbing the walls, but he was always completely calm. He is technically very brilliant."

Lopez spent the next five years helping establish the aeronautics program at the new U.S. Air Force Academy as an associate professor of aeronautics and chief of academic counseling. After his retirement from the Air Force in 1964, Lopez worked as a systems engineer on the Apollo-Saturn Launch Vehicle and the Skylab Orbital Workshop.

Lopez came to the Smithsonian as assistant director of the Aeronautics Division in 1972. He was part of the team led by Apollo astronaut and then-museum director Michael Collins responsible for planning the new Air and Space Museum. Lopez was instrumental in developing the exhibits that welcomed visitors at the museum's opening on July 1, 1976. Since that day, NASM has been the most visited museum in the world.

"Don is the creator of this museum from the aeronautics standpoint," Dailey says. "Because of his vast knowledge, he was able to select the

right artifacts to tell the story of aviation."

Lopez became deputy director in 1983, a position he held until 1990. He served as senior advisor to the director before retiring in 1993. From 1993 to 1996, Lopez served as senior advisor emeritus. He was again appointed deputy director in 1996.

When pressed, Lopez says that one of his greatest achievements at NASM is the Pioneers of Flight Gallery. "Originally, it was supposed to be a temporary exhibit, but I filled it with such great airplanes it hasn't been changed all this time," he says.

"I've been fortunate," Lopez continues. "I've gotten to do lots of good things in my life. I saw the beginning of the jet age, helped establish the aeronautics program at the Air Force Academy, worked for eight years on the space program and helped found this museum."

People who know Lopez say they are the fortunate ones. As Dailey points out, "I have never heard anything about him that wasn't complimentary. He is universally loved by everyone." ■

ON THE JOB *Extending a warm welcome*

When Anyi Cruz accepted a job checking coats at Cooper-Hewitt in New York in 2002, she assumed the job would be temporary—and she was right. It wasn't long before Cruz's talent for customer service was recognized and she was offered a full-time position on the Admissions staff. Last July, Cruz was promoted to visitor services manager, and she now leads the Admissions team in their effort to ensure that all museum visitors have a memorable and pleasant experience.

Before coming to C-H, Cruz spent several years working in sales at high-end retail establishments, such as Saks Fifth Avenue. This background prepared her well for the one-on-one interactions with the public that are part of her daily routine. She also is fluent in Spanish, a skill that has come in handy on many occasions when Spanish-speaking tour groups have visited Cooper-Hewitt.

Recently, Cruz took some time out of her busy day to talk with writer Katie Vagnino about what makes her job both challenging and rewarding.

Q. Describe a typical day.

A. I supervise the welcoming of visitors to the museum and I make sure that all public spaces look polished and professional. My other duties include overseeing ticket sales, operation reports and cash deposits.

I am fortunate to work in an extremely positive environment with a focused day-to-day agenda. I'm grateful for how cooperative the Admissions staff are—they are a great group to lead.

Q. What do you hope visitors get out of a visit to Cooper-Hewitt?

A. My aim is for visitors to get energized about design, and to create new fans in the design community. This mission is achievable; we are a wonderful design museum and we're fortunate to be housed in the beautiful former home of Andrew Carnegie.

In an effort to engage visitors, we often provide explanatory booklets and other materials to accompany exhibitions. We also distribute post-

cards advertising upcoming programs and shows. We try to present these materials attractively so that visitors will take them and refer to them—another way of incorporating good design into our presentation.

Q. What is the most difficult part of your job?

A. Sometimes, visitors have complaints or are unhappy about some-

ing with visitor complaints?

A. I listen carefully and try to address what it is that they are upset about. If they are angry or confused about museum rules or policies, I explain the reasoning behind these rules and policies. Usually, I ask them to fill out a complaint form and I often offer a guest pass as a way to show we are responsive to their concerns.



Anyi Cruz makes sure each visitor to C-H wants to return. (Jill Bloomer photo)

thing. They may not like an exhibition or they object to the cost of admission, since SI museums in Washington, D.C., are free. General admission to the Cooper-Hewitt is \$15; there are discounts for seniors and students and children under age 12 are admitted free.

One woman left an angry message on my voice mail, complaining about the garden being closed during the winter and demanding that there be benches on the grass, as opposed to around the perimeter of the garden.

The challenge is addressing these matters calmly and courteously.

Q. What is your strategy for deal-

Q. What are your goals as visitor services manager?

A. Above all, I want visitors to have a positive experience. Customer service is paramount—the Admissions staff conducts all personal interactions with a healthy dose of approachability, patience, good manners and smiles. If we do our job well, people will want to keep coming back to see our exhibitions and maybe even become members of C-H. It's also important for us to emphasize that we are the National Design Museum. I want visitors to be inspired by that as much as by the quality of our exhibitions and programs. ■

Comfort food for cold winter days?



Elizabeth Bridgeforth
Marketing Assistant
Freer/Sackler

Homemade vegetable soup. I use my mother's recipe. It's nice and hearty on a chilly day.



Merrell Smith
Museum Protection Officer
Natural History

A grilled cheese sandwich and a nice hot cup of cocoa are perfect on a cold day.

BOOK SPOTLIGHT *SERC casts a wider net with Mobile Ecology Lab*

BY MARA JONAS
OPA Staff Writer

Laughter erupts as Karen McDonald, outreach coordinator for the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center in Edgewater, Md., imitates a molting blue crab, pretending to suck in water and expand to break through an imaginary exoskeleton. She is leading the popular “Blue Crab Lab” program for a class of special needs high-school students at Pathways School in Pasadena, Md.

This and other SERC education programs, once offered on-site only, now are being offered at area schools, thanks to the new Smithsonian Mobile Ecology Lab—a cherry-red, 6-by-12-foot trailer that has been fashioned into a mobile laboratory, affectionately known as MEL. It is equipped with a generator to run aquarium pumps and filters, a stainless steel countertop, special foam-lined cabinets for transporting microscopes, and hooks for hanging waders and seining nets.

With MEL, “we can bring activities normally done on SERC’s docks

right into the classroom,” McDonald says. MEL will be especially useful for bringing environmental science education to special needs students, such as those at Pathways School.

“We have always included classroom outreach at some level,” Director of Education Mark Haddon says. According to McDonald, this outreach has usually been in the form of school assembly programs.

Over the years, SERC has seen an increase in requests for classroom-based programs, Haddon says, and MEL is a self-contained way to bring SERC to schools.

Last year, 6,000 schoolchildren attended on-site educational programs at SERC. Education Specialist Jane Holly says that the programs are often completely booked a year in advance.

“Because of our very full schedule, it can be difficult for teachers to make reservations for our on-site programs. MEL provides a viable alternative,” Haddon says.

“We also can use MEL as a complement to our on-site programs,” Holly says. Haddon adds that he would like

to “extend the field trip experience” by taking MEL to a school both before and after a class visits SERC in Edgewater, thus providing a continual and more effective learning experience.

“The possibilities are endless,” McDonald says, citing participation in area festivals and community events and field-based research as other uses for MEL. The MEL program was made possible by a grant from the Smithsonian Women’s Committee, which not only allowed for the purchase of the brightly colored trailer, but also the scientific equipment it carries.

Since the mobile ecology lab program began last fall, MEL has traveled to some 15 schools, where McDonald has led educational presentations and workshops, such as “Bay in a Box,” “Baylian Invaders,” “Introduction to Microscopes” and, of course, “Blue Crab Lab.”

McDonald leads education programs for children and adults of all ages, including teacher training seminars. Programs are structured around Maryland state curriculum guidelines and are based on current SERC research on subjects ranging from invasive species to plankton.

Though the teaching materials are the same—crab shells, worksheets, 3-D models, giant green tongs and a live crab or two for the “Blue Crab Lab”—McDonald says that each workshop experience is unique and that she has “to be ready for anything and adapt to the audience.”

Her presentations are interactive and she challenges students, posing thought-provoking questions about the environment and the role that students can play in protecting it.

McDonald, who has a master’s degree in biology and has been an edu-



Karen McDonald holds a male blue crab during a “Blue Crab Lab” she conducted for students at the Pathways School. (Photo by Mara Jonas)



SERC’s new Mobile Ecology Lab is supported by funds from the Smithsonian Women’s Committee. (Photo by Mara Jonas)

lator for seven years, is especially skilled at making science accessible to all audiences.

During her presentation at Pathways School, she compared the Chesapeake Bay to the drain in a kitchen sink, explaining that “everything ends up in the bay.” She then suggested simple ways—such as reusing a lunch bag—that students can help protect our waterways.

“The Mobile Ecology Lab and the other programs we run at SERC are an integral part of environmental education for children in our area,” McDonald says. “SERC educators act as guides to help students understand the greater picture of what’s going on in our world and the impact they can have as responsible stewards of the land.” ■

STAFF ON THE MOVE

Amy Pearce is the new production specialist for the Office of Contributing Membership. She was formerly the membership coordinator for the Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C.

Cooper-Hewitt

Laurie Olivieri has been promoted to senior public relations manager and will continue to focus on exhibition and institutional publicity. Due to her efforts, press coverage of the 2006 Design Triennial reached an audience of over 100 million, a 45 percent increase over the 2003 Triennial.

American History

New Media Program Specialist **Kate**



Amy Pearce

Morton has left SI to accept a position as webmaster/content management system analyst at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va.

National Zoo

Lainie Contreras has joined the communications team as a public affairs specialist. Most recently, she was public relations manager for The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore.

Air and Space

After more than 25 years as a federal employee, **Phouy Sengsourinh** has retired. He served as chief of the Information Technology Division at NASM for the last eight years.

Karen Courington in the new explainer program coordinator for the museum. Prior to joining SI, Courington served six years’ active duty in the U.S. Air Force as a C-17 pilot.

After 35 years in education, both as a school teacher and a museum educator, Explainer Program Coordinator **Terry Nixon** has retired. He plans to volunteer at NASM and the Maryland Science Center in Baltimore.

After seven years with the Collections Division, **Doug Dammann** has accepted the position of curator of the Kenosha Civil War Museum, scheduled to open in Kenosha, Wis., in June.

Tropical Research Institute

Helene Muller-Landau is the new lead scientist for the Center for Tropical Forest Science Carbon Dynamics Program. She has been associated with STRI since 2002 through fellowships.



Helene Muller-Landau

Archives of American Art

Charles Duncan is the new collections specialist for the New York region. He was a senior consultant with Hollis Taggart Galleries and Francis Naumann Fine Art and previously owned and operated Digital Fine Arts Inc., a presentation and archiving firm.

Jessica Theaman has joined AAA as the development associate for membership. She previously was as-

O’Leary to leave Latino Center

Pilar O’Leary, director of the Smithsonian Latino Center since August 2005, has resigned, effective Feb. 8. She plans to become a consultant for foundations, corporations and nonprofit organizations, building on her longstanding interest in cultural and educational issues affecting the Latino community.

O’Leary has enhanced the public outreach and visibility of the Center. She has brought together leaders from the academic, foundation, government and corporate sectors to support the Center’s work and has developed partnerships with scores of organizations in the United States and across the hemisphere, including, most recently, the Fundación Carso (See related story on Page 2.) She enhanced the Center’s Latino Museum Studies Program, established the Young Ambassadors program to engage high school seniors in museum work, improved the quality of the Center’s award-winning Web site, and developed important resources for teachers.

Assistant manager of the Conservators Membership Program at the New York Public Library, and prior to that, a development assistant at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

Suzanne Bybee is the new administrative officer. She held a similar position in the Office of the Under Secretary for Art.

Carolina Furukrona is the new director of development and membership. She was the development officer and director of the Young Benefactors of The Smithsonian Associates.

Helia Moore-Sepulveda is the new staff assistant to the director of Development and Membership. She

held a similar position with TSA and also provided support to the development office. ■ —Mara Jonas

Correction

The November issue of *The Torch* reported that **Joyce Lancaster**, a technical writer in the Customer Support Services Division of the Office of the Chief Information Officer, had retired after 15 years with the Smithsonian. She retired after 25 years with SI and a total of 32 years of government service. We regret the error.

Fire safety is a burning issue for SI's rejuvenated fire shop

BY RITA ZEIDNER
Special to The Torch

Perhaps no other institution is as sensitive to the threat of fire as the Smithsonian. Several early collections—including the papers of James Smithson—were lost when fire destroyed the central portion of the Castle in 1865. The idea of a fire in one of SI's buildings today is appalling: in addition to the threat to staff and visitors, an uncontrolled blaze could reduce priceless and irreplaceable national treasures to ashes.

Fortunately, SI's fire safety shop is better prepared than ever to make sure this nightmarish scenario never happens.

Himanshu Patel, chief of the electrical services division of the Office of Facilities Engineering and Operations' system engineering division, concedes that SI's fire safety program has had to overcome some challenges in recent years. Weakened by staff attrition and struggling to meet fire safety codes in SI's aging buildings, the division—responsible for inspecting, testing and repairing more than 11,000 sprinklers, smoke detectors and other safety devices—turned to a private contractor for help in 2004.

But thanks to a change in management strategy, Patel says, the division is surging back stronger than ever. In response to a challenge from Nancy Bechtol, director of the Office of Facilities Management and Reliability,

Patel has rebuilt the fire safety program and hired the staff he needs to handle the job in-house. Last year, for the first time since 2004, fire safety maintenance in nearly all SI facilities was overseen by Smithsonian employees.

In one year, the change has saved nearly \$2 million in contractor costs, Patel says. For example, transferring responsibility for fire safety at the Arts and Industries building to SI staff has saved some \$40,000.

Additional savings are anticipated during the next two years as the division fills several new positions and terminates the remaining fire safety maintenance contracts.

Kendra Gastright, SI's associate director for systems engineering, says contractors played an important role in helping get the in-house fire shop back on its feet. But once key controls were in place, the decision to bring fire safety maintenance back in-house was an obvious one to make.

But doing so took strategic planning. "There is great demand for trained fire safety specialists in the Washington, D.C., area," she explains, "and it was important to promote the Smithsonian as an employer of choice. My first goal was to devise a career ladder that would allow employees to advance within SI."

Once she and Patel could demonstrate the benefits of a career at the Smithsonian, the rest of the pieces fell into place. In addition to the talented SI staff already in place—Electronic



From left, Patrick Cerone, Himanshu Patel, Ed Chanson, Nick Ludtke, Jason Sawyer, Richard Miller, John Boyd and Soung Rim. (Harold Dorwin photo)

Integrated Mechanic Leader Edward Chanson and Electronic Technician Soung Rim—she and Patel asked some former contractors to join SI's team, which now includes Electronic Integrated Fire Technician Nick Ludtke and Electronic Technicians Patrick Cerone, Jason Sawyer, John Boyd and Richard Miller.

The new employees take great pride in being part of the Smithsonian, Gastright says. "The fact that we attracted these highly qualified technicians speaks volumes about the Smithsonian brand.

"These workers were excellent from the start—that's why we hired them as contractors originally," she contin-

ues. "But now that they are Smithsonian employees, their pride of ownership is obvious. We now have a perfect mix of new employees and staff with institutional memory."

A combination of good maintenance practices, vigilance and a little luck have prevented major fires at SI for many years. The most recent incident, a minor mulch fire at the National Zoo last summer, was quickly extinguished and no people or animals were harmed. To prevent further incidents, the Zoo has banned smoking throughout the park.

The Castle is a lot safer, too, now that staff no longer work by candlelight or use wood stoves for heat. ■

MESSAGE CENTER

Lost: At the SI holiday party on Dec. 13. Silver pin, Art Deco-style lilly with slender stem, about 2 inches long. Has great sentimental value. Call Rachel at (202) 633-0870.

Free: Vintage, 1950s-era Tappan gas stove with four burners, oven, broiler and storage compartments. Current working condition unknown, as gas line has been capped. Must pick up in Baltimore. Call Kathleen at (410) 444-1944 for more information.

Scrabble group: SI staff and volunteers are invited to join a fun, casual group to play Scrabble after work. Group meets weeknights twice a month at great restaurants within walking distance of major Metro stops. For details, e-mail Michael at michaelimpiani@yahoo.com.

Wanted: Male SI intern from France seeks shared housing January through June. Must be near public transportation. Contact Fabien Potier at fabpott@orange.fr.

Wanted: Discerning, intelligent, mid-size canine seeks home with suitable human and canine companionship. Affable, personable, able to teach old dogs new tricks, but cannot suffer fools, munchkins, cats. Call (410) 535-9567 or (410) 257-4908 and ask about Taylor.

For sale: Table-top pool table. Three feet by 20 inches; 10 inches high. Good condition. Can arrange for buyer to pick it up in Washington, D.C. \$100 or best offer. For more information, call J. Edwards at (301) 475-6913.

For sale: Rare fiction and nonfiction books about American Indians; 48 glass magic-lantern slides, by Roland Reed, with original envelopes and box, dated about 1904; two original, signed Works Progress Administration photographs of Seminole Indians by Florence Randal. For more information, call Sandra Starr at (703) 801-7281 or (703) 942-6328.

For sale: Classic car, 1973 Dodge Coronet custom 4-door sedan, 79,200 miles. Dark-green body with black vinyl roof and green vinyl interior. Single owner, garaged, very good running condition. Complete ownership and maintenance history available. \$2,000 or best offer. Call 703-533-7776. ■

SPARE TIME

Edward Tyson is a coach for all seasons

The holidays may be a time for giving, but for Edward Tyson, assistant building manager at the Air and Space Museum, giving back to the community is always in season.

For the last 10 years, Tyson has worked as a volunteer football and basketball coach in Prince George's County. The Capital Beltway League, for which Tyson coached most recently, was formed to help combat juvenile delinquency by organizing, establishing, promoting and supporting team sports for young children.

Tyson's commitment to this mission and the families it serves is evident from the many hours he has devoted to the leagues. After a full day of work, there are practices, games, coaches' meetings and fundraising activities to attend.

A Washington, D.C., native, Tyson now lives in Fort Washington, Md., with his wife, Michelle, whom he met through coaching. They have four children—Kevin Jackson Jr., LaShel Jackson, Edward Tyson Jr. and Chere Tyson—all of whom have played youth sports.

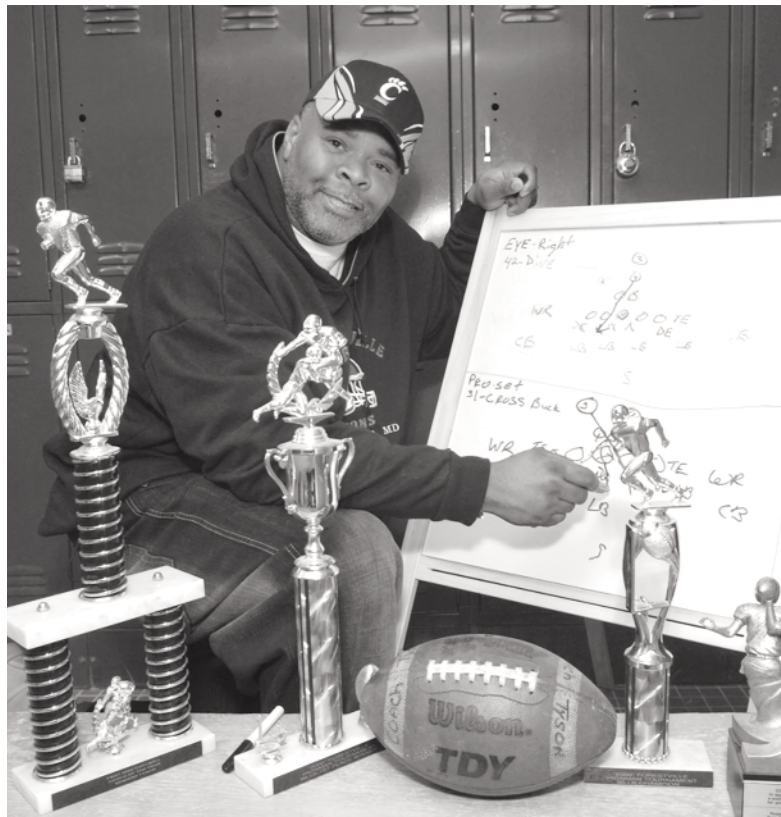
His warm smile and jovial laugh make it hard to envision Tyson's stern side, a side he says he often shows as a coach. "I do a lot of yelling on the field," Tyson says. "I'm very tough, but loving, too."

As a coach, Tyson is not only teaching kids to become athletes, but also serving as a father figure for team members. Tyson knows first-hand what it's like for children growing up without a father, and he remembers his high school football coach was a positive male role model.

"Through the games of football

and basketball, I teach discipline, respect and loyalty," Tyson adds. He also stresses the importance of education and family by making participation in games contingent upon doing

lived college football career at the University of the District of Columbia, where he studied electronic engineering until he injured his knee and lost his football scholarship.



Edward Tyson believes it "takes a village to raise a child." He tries to be a role model for the young players on the football teams he coaches and encourages families to get involved as well. (Photo by Harold Dorwin)

well both at school and at home.

The life lessons that Tyson teaches extend to his team members' parents, as well. "I encourage parents to come to games and practices," he says. Tyson's mother often came to see him coach during his first years with the league. She also was there for his high school football games and his short-

Tyson then went to a trade school, became a technician for high-volume cooling and heating systems and came to the Smithsonian in 1984.

Tyson's football career never took him to the National Football League, yet he takes pride in having helped train a number of college and professional football players as a youth

coach.

The Prince George's County Boys and Girls League, for which Tyson's team played before moving to the Capital Beltway League, has produced its share of star athletes, including Marcus Barnett, wide receiver for the University of Cincinnati and Shawne Merriman, linebacker for the San Diego Chargers.

While Tyson is proud to say that he once coached Merriman, his passion for football is never more apparent than when he talks about coaching his own children. He vividly recalls the last year his two younger sons played on the team he coached.

For the last game of the season, his team—then part of the Forestville Boys and Girls Club league—faced its biggest rival, Oxon Hill. "Both teams were 7 and 0—it was win or go home, and we lost" Tyson says.

The loss was so emotional that Coach Tyson, normally tough as nails, actually shed tears right there on the field. "I'm still upset about it," he admits.

Of course, winning isn't everything. "Making progress is my winning," Tyson says. "Even though I was upset about the loss, I still had something positive to say to the kids."

The ability to turn the negative into positive is just another life lesson that Tyson tries to instill in his team. He wholeheartedly believes in the old African proverb, "it takes a village to raise a child." This philosophy, combined with his love of sports, motivates him to volunteer as a youth coach. ■

—Mara Jonas

GOT A MESSAGE?

Smithsonian staff and volunteers may place ads in "Message Center." Send specifics, your name and telephone number to The Torch, SIB 354, MRC 033; by e-mail to torch@si.edu; or by fax to (202) 786-2377. Send before Jan. 10 for listing in the February Torch. Office phone numbers and e-mail addresses may be used for car-pool and work-related ads. Home or other non-SI phone numbers or e-mail addresses will be used in all other ads. No business advertising permitted. We reserve the right to edit all copy.

ABOUT EXHIBITIONS

Opening This Month

There are no exhibition openings this month.

Closing Next Month

“Over the Top: American Posters From World War I,” American Art, closing Feb. 3, features 45 war bond posters. These persuasive images, with bold graphics and concise commands, encouraged citizens to support the troops, contribute to the Red Cross and buy bonds to finance America’s participation in the war.

“Legendary Coins & Currency,” Castle, Schermer Hall, closing Feb. 4, exhibits rare coins from the American History Museum’s National Numismatic Collection. Highlights include the 1913 Liberty Head nickel and the unique 1849 Double Eagle.

“Legacy: Spain and the United States in the Age of Independence, 1763-1848,” Portrait Gallery, closing Feb. 10, through portraits and compelling authentic documents, ex-

plores Spain’s key role in the Revolutionary War and the founding of the United States.

“Worthy of the Nation: Planning America’s Capital,” Ripley Center, closing Feb. 14, presents more than 75 photographs and illustrations that depict the challenges associated with planning Washington, D.C., throughout its history, including the Metro-rail system, the addition of memorials and museums, the revitalization of Pennsylvania Avenue and more.

“Mexican Cycles: Festival Images by George O. Jackson de Llano,” Natural History, closing Feb. 15, features 135 color photographs of the religious festivals of 30 indigenous communities from across Mexico taken by the Mexican American photographer between 1990 and 2001.

“The Potter’s Mark: Identity and Tea Ceramics,” Freer, closing Feb. 24, showcases a dozen Japanese ceramics that feature impressed or incised marks relating to their makers. The

objects highlight the evolution of this practice, from “seals of approval” impressed by patrons who commissioned tea wares during the late 16th century to a means by which artists identified their products by the mid-17th century.

“Japanese Arts of the Edo Period, 1615-1868,” Freer, closing Feb. 24, features paintings, lacquerware and ceramics of the Edo period from the Freer’s permanent collection.

“The Presidency and the Cold War,” Portrait Gallery, closing Feb. 24, explores how U.S. presidents shaped or reacted to the events of the Cold War, beginning at Yalta when Roosevelt met with Stalin and Churchill and ending with the collapse of the Berlin Wall.

“Wine, Worship and Sacrifice: The Golden Graves of Ancient Vani,” Sackler, closing Feb. 24, presents more than 100 objects: gold, silver and ceramic vessels; jewelry; Greek bronze sculpture; Greek and



This photograph of a 1993 Carnival celebration in Huautla, Hidalgo, Mexico, is part of the exhibition “Mexican Cycles: Festival Images by George O. Jackson de Llano” on view at Natural History through Feb. 15.

Colchian coins; and Greek glassware that together provide a rich and informative view of the ancient land of Colchis and its principal city, Vani.

Upcoming

In March, Air and Space will present a photographic exhibition that reveals the “simple beauty” of aircraft design. ■ —Eddie Séjour-Gonzalez

Mystery

(Continued from Page 1)

White’s remains, beginning in the summer of 2005. He and colleagues, including Karin Bruwelheide, a museum specialist in the Physical Anthropology division, have examined remains buried in similar iron coffins over the years. “But we had wanted for quite some time to find [remains] that were more completely preserved...” akin to “an American mummy, if you will,” he says.

Unlike Egyptian mummies, for which salt and other preservative compounds were used to slow decomposition, the body of the 19th-century teenager had been preserved in a sealed container which protected it from agents of natural decay, Hunt explains.

Though vandals had broken the glass face plate on the coffin before it was received by MNH, the body, as

well as the burial shroud and clothing was largely intact. The preservation allowed Owsley, Hunt and the rest of the team to glean specific details about the boy’s physical health. Autopsy and laboratory analysis pointed to a lung infection and a congenital heart defect as the probable causes for White’s death at age 15.

For the genealogical side of the research, Hull-Walski and scientist

Randal Scott, formerly of the Natural History Museum, were assisted by more than two dozen volunteers in creating family trees for William White and his five siblings.

It was discouraging when many of the promising early leads turned cold, Hull-Walski recalls. But team members encouraged one another to persevere. “We hated the thought that if we failed, this young boy would never

have an identity,” she says. “And Doug Owsley never gave up. He’d say to us, ‘We want a good ending for this story.’”

After nearly two years of research, “we now know more about William White than he probably knew about himself,” Owsley says. “That is his legacy to us.” ■

Not all rain forests are the same—and neither are the species that inhabit them

BY ALAN CUTLER
Special to The Torch

Rain forests are the world’s treasure houses of biodiversity, but not all rain forests are alike. The number of different species that exist in forests in different parts of the world may vary widely. Biodiversity may be more evenly distributed in some forests than in others and, therefore, may require different management and preservation strategies. That is one of the conclusions of a large-scale Smithsonian study of a lowland rain forest in New Guinea, recently published in the journal *Nature*.

Most previous research has focused on diversity “hot spots,” such as upland rain forests in the foothills of the Andes, where dramatic variations in elevation, temperature, rainfall and other environmental factors boost diversity by creating a number of different habitats in a relatively small area. Such variation in a region’s indigenous species is called beta diversity.

A large proportion of the world’s remaining rain forests are lowland forests in New Guinea, Borneo and the Congo and Amazon Basins. Many researchers speculated that these lowland rain forests would have high beta diversity, but their theories had not been tested. Little data exists on the distribution of species in these vast forests, particularly for insects, which account for a large share of the world’s biodiversity.

An international group of entomologists and botanists, including Smithsonian researchers, recently assembled distribution data for 500 species of caterpillars, ambrosia beetles and fruit flies that live in the undisturbed lowland rain forest of the Sepik and Ramu river basins in Papua New Guinea.

The team collected insects and

Scott Miller and Karolyn Darrow from the Museum of Natural History and Yves Basset from the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama, along with MNH research associates Vojtech Novotny (Czech Academy of Sciences) and George Weiblen (University of Minnesota).

They collected data for more than three years and built on data from a



A youngster holds a Hercules moth caterpillar—one of 500 species of caterpillars, ambrosia beetles and fruit flies studied by Smithsonian scientists in Papua New Guinea. (Photo by Milan Janda)

plants from eight study sites across 75,000 square kilometers of contiguous forest—an area the size of South Carolina—and noted the variation in species makeup from site to site.

The researchers included scientists

decade of fieldwork in New Guinea.

One key to the project’s success has been local researchers. “We have a group of Papua New Guinean scientists and parataxonomists working with us who are basically on the

ground all the time and are really good biologists,” Miller says. Parataxonomists are locally-recruited field researchers specifically trained to collect and identify species from their particular region.

The data the team collected showed surprisingly low beta diversity across the study area for all three groups of insects, as well as for plants. This indicates that species tend to be widespread throughout the lowland rain forest and there are few variations in the species even across large distances. The widespread distribution of insect species was a surprise, given the sedentary lifestyles of many of the species collected.

“Some insects spend their entire lives on a single plant, even though they have wings. They may not want to fly, but they can if they need to,” says Miller, an author of the *Nature* paper. The insects also showed limited specialization in the plant species they feed upon, in contrast to the assumption that tropical insects tend to be highly specialized.

The study found that sites as far as 500 kilometers apart shared the same communities of insect species. The characteristics of fruit fly species collected in the study remained virtually unchanged for distances up to 950 kilometers.

In contrast, upland rain forests sites at different elevations may share less than 20 percent of their insect species—even if the plants on which the insects live appear at all elevations.

The low beta diversity seen in this study has implications for biological conservation. The fact that the same insect species appear throughout lowland forests suggests that the total diversity of species in tropical rain forests globally may be lower than previously thought.

The study’s results also may help shape strategies for preserving rain forest species. “There are some philosophical questions that our data should help address,” Miller says. “Is it better to preserve forests over a large area as a single forest or is diversity better served if several smaller forests are preserved?”

Strategies for preserving high- and low-beta diversity forests might not be the same. “Our data from the New Guinea lowland forest suggests that bigger is better,” Scott continues. “In this kind of relatively uniform habitat, you’re not losing a lot of beta diversity that otherwise would have to be represented by several smaller sites. But the opposite might be true in forests with steep elevation or climate gradients.”

However, there is still much to learn—collecting species diversity data is a very time-consuming and laborious process. “We haven’t solved the conservation management question by any means,” Miller says. He notes that similar studies need to be conducted in other lowland rain forests in the Amazon Basin and the Congo Basin to see if the low beta diversity pattern remains consistent. ■