Hubbard Rhino Barn
Dedicated

June 19, 2009, marked the beginning of a new era at the Ashfall Fossil Beds with the dedication of the completed Hubbard Rhino Barn. This huge building (eight times larger than the original Rhino Barn) protects a substantial portion of the fossil site. The hundreds of Ashfall supporters in attendance at the dedication ceremony were in awe at the size of the new Barn and were thrilled at the prospect of the dozens of seasons of excavation to come. The excitement of the crowd was palpable as it realized the potential for an ever-enlarging spectacle of three-dimensional preserved fossil animals excavated by paleontologists as visitors watch and share in the discoveries.

It was the generosity of the Theodore F. and Claire M. Hubbard Family Foundation of Omaha and other donors who made this all possible. The Hubbards have a long history of supporting wildlife conservation and wildlife education projects at the Henry Doorly Zoo. This interest connected them with the history of exotic wildlife in Nebraska and led them to a desire to help conserve the extraordinary remains of that prehistoric wildlife at Ashfall Park.

(continued on page 10)
Wildlife and Nature Photo Contest

Get out your cameras! The University of Nebraska State Museum is sponsoring a Wildlife and Nature Photo Contest. This contest is open to amateur photographers who are age 18 and older. We are looking for striking images of nature taken anywhere in the world. These images may show animal behavior, portraits of wildlife in natural habitat, plant life, natural landscapes, or people interacting with nature. Photo categories are: Mammals, Birds, Other Wildlife, Nature and People, Landscapes and Skyscapes, and Plant Life. The grand prize photo and all first place photos will be featured on the Museum’s web site. All entries will be on exhibit in Morrill Hall from November 2, 2009, through February 28, 2010.

Deadline for entry is 4:30 pm, September 30, 2009.

Additional details and the required entry form are available on the Museum’s web site at www.museum.unl.edu/
A great bell that once called the students to class at the University, beginning in 1871, for years hung in University Hall, the first building on the campus. For numerous years, the bell was stored in the Anthropology Division of the Museum after being rescued from a local garbage heap behind a fraternity house. It was turned over to the Alumni Association in 1982 and is now proudly displayed in the courtyard of the Wick Alumni Center. In the early 1970s, there was a plan to display it on 5th floor Nebraska Hall at the entrance to the Museum’s research collections where it could be viewed through the great picture window in the elevator lobby. There were no Museum funds to follow through on the project.
FROM THE DIRECTOR’S DESK

Are you ready for school to start? This summer has flown by, seems amazing it is already time to begin another academic year! The Museum has been busy this summer and our attendance is up. As you will see in this issue, we were involved in educational outreach activities across Nebraska, and we celebrated the historic dedication of the wonderful new Hubbard Rhino Barn at Ashfall.

Ross Secord, our new Vertebrate Paleontology Curator, has submitted a major new proposal to the Biological Research Collections program in the National Science Foundation. Ross has been continuing his field work in Wyoming this summer on the fossil record of the Paleocene-Eocene Thermal Maximum (“PETM”) that he discussed in his talk to the Friends in January. We will keep our fingers crossed and hope for funding!

Scott Gardner and his team had a successful summer field season in Mongolia—as you may recall, last year’s fieldwork had to be deferred to 2009 due to the aftermath of the tragic earthquake in China that disrupted logistics. The project has two more summer seasons coming up. The field party consisted of about 18 persons including the support staff. They are working in Govi Gurvan Saikhan National Park on the parasites of small vertebrates. Scott also represented UNL at the 10th International Mammalogical Congress in Mendoza, Argentina in August.

Meanwhile, Brett Ratcliffe is spending August continuing his entomology research as a visiting scientist at the Natural History Museum in London. In the Anthropology Division, Alan Osborn has continued his archaeological surveys in Nebraska, and Susan Curtis was invited by Mie Prefecture to escort our Friendship Doll Miss Mie back to Japan for a special tour.

Our worldwide outreach is continuing with the recently-released video clips by Richard Dawkins (Emeritus Professor, University of Oxford) that are now available as six “Nebraska Vignettes” both on YouTube and on his website at http://richarddawkins.net/rdftv. Prof. Dawkins visited Morrill Hall in March, toured the Museum with Judy Diamond and George Corner, and recorded these 3-minute explanatory talks about the Explore Evolution exhibit.

On July 23, I was invited to lead a field trip in Morrill Hall for the Wachiska Audubon Society (Southeast Nebraska). We took a “Walk Through Time” focusing on our Museum’s dinosaur and bird fossils. One of the most important features of the fantastic fossil preservation at Ashfall Fossil Beds is that very delicate bird bones are preserved so that paleontologists can study features that normally are completely lost in the fossilization process. In this new Ashfall painting by Mark Marcuson, we see the amazing “Secretarybird Mimic” that lived in Nebraska 12 million years ago. Scientists know this was a hawk because of its toe bones! Had they not been so perfectly preserved in ash, this bird with long legs might easily have been mistaken for a relative of the modern secretary bird that lives in Africa. This is an example of convergence in evolution, in which unrelated animals become anatomically similar as they adapt to similar environments, in this case the savanna environment that existed in the Miocene at Ashfall.

Priscilla Grew
Director
M U S E U M   N E W S

This fascinating story about our famous mammoth, Archie, was hand-delivered by Nora Kaye Clark, daughter of the late Walter Linnemeyer who died in 2007. These are Mr. Linnemeyer’s childhood recollections about Archie’s discovery and unusual journey throughout Nebraska. Much of this story was a great surprise to all of us at the State Museum. We are looking for a volunteer who might attempt to verify certain parts of this story by researching State Archives. If that interests you, please contact Mark Harris at 402-472-6699.

Mammoth Bones & Bootleg Whiskey
As Told by: Walter Linnemeyer
Along with: Marlin Nutt (Nephew)

When I was about six years old, Henry Kariger, who lived about seven miles from my family in Curtis, Nebraska, dug up a prehistoric Mammoth skeleton.

For a long time, Mr. Kariger’s chickens would scratch in a spot on his property. He didn’t think too much about it until one day his horse tripped on something in this same spot. When he looked closer, he could see a bone sticking out of the ground. When he started digging it out, he discovered huge bones buried there. When the job got too much for him to handle himself, he called on neighbors to help.

They used a team of horses to pull the bones out of the hole – one at a time. The skull was so big it took two teams of horses to get it out. Henry got a hold of my Dad (Henry Linnemeyer) to make boxes to hold the bones. These boxes were made especially to fit on the back of his truck used to carry the bones from the burial site.

Eventually, he thought they had found all the bones except for one tusk. He finally had to give up searching and wait until spring in hopes that the remains would wash away more of the soil and expose the missing tusk. It did and by the following summer (1921), Mr. Kariger had a complete Mammoth skeleton.

I remember the day Mom decided she wanted to go see Mr. Kariger’s pile of bones. Slim, who was about ten years old, got bucked off a horse and landed on a metal bucket. He was knocked out and didn’t come to until we got to the Kariger place.

Word spread about the discovery of a prehistoric Mammoth skeleton and people from around Nebraska would contact Mr. Kariger and ask him to display his bones at their county fairs. He took his tent and set up his display in the boxes that Dad made for him. Then he charged people an entry fee to look at his giant skeleton.

This went on for about a year when a representative from Lincoln contacted him and asked if he could bring his exhibit to the Nebraska State Fair in Lincoln. This was quite an honor, so off to Lincoln Henry went – once again, setting up his tent and display. However, Mr. Kariger didn’t tell the whole story. Besides charging people to see his bones, he was also selling bootleg whiskey out behind his tent. When the revenuers found out about his side business, they confiscated his illegal whiskey and his prehistoric dinosaur bones.

**Today, the huge mammoth skeleton, known as “Archie,” is on display in Elephant Hall of the University of Nebraska State Museum (Morrill Hall). The front limbs were placed on display in their former museum in 1925 and for several years served as the entrance to the fossil exhibits as visitors would walk between the front legs. The finished complete mount in Morrill Hall was dedicated in the winter of 1953 and he still stands there today. The mount measures 14 feet high at the shoulder – and was still growing when he died. He is estimated to have weighed nearly fifteen tons. He has always been claimed by UNSM as one of the world’s largest mammoths.

It has been estimated that the remains of no fewer than ten mammoths lie buried in an average square mile of Nebraska landscape. The University of Nebraska State Museum has the remains of mammoths and mastodons from at least 84 of Nebraska’s 93 counties.

**Information from the University of Nebraska State Museum, Lincoln, Nebraska

Note: The Museum credits Henry Kariger as the man who found the skeleton, but they don’t tell how it ended up in their possession.
Miss Mie's Story Continues

Miss Mie has returned, temporarily, to her “birth place” on the island of Honshu in Japan. Miss Mie was among the 58 Friendship Dolls that Japanese school children sent to the United States in 1927. Our Museum is home for Miss Mie, as well as all of her accessories and more than 150 friendship letters. Miss Mie will be restored by the Yoshitoku Doll Company in Tokyo. Following her restoration, Miss Mie will tour within Mie Prefecture during the spring of 2010 and then return to Nebraska. Miss Mie’s arrival at the Museum will be marked by a public celebration to honor a new and growing friendship with the citizens of Mie Prefecture and the people of Japan.

Dr. Priscilla Grew received the following letter from Sadao Ito, whose mother was one of the children who wrote letters that accompanied the Friendship Dolls that Japanese school children sent to school children in the United States. The mother’s letter is also shown below; it was written 82 years ago when she was 11 years old.

23rd Apr. 2009

Dear Ms. Grew

I can’t tell you how grateful and surprised I was to receive a letter which was written by my mother more than 80 years ago. You have preserved the thank-you letters from little Japanese girls for such a long time. And you are kind enough to send them back to their own home after more than 80 years later. I never could have imagined such a warm story would take place in my life.

I had never known about my mother’s letter and it seemed to have slipped from even her own memory, in the confusion of the war. So, I was surprised as well as excited to read her letter. She passed away 23 years ago after raising 3 children. But this is her letter, no doubt about it. According to her letter, the doll presented from your country was named “Mary.” And she was so cute that Japanese children took very good care of her. They willingly taught her Japanese words in turns. We can imagine how much they were enjoying the time with “Mary.” And in her letter she was trying so hard to tell your country not to worry about “Mary,” of course, in a child’s way. Japanese survey said that “Mary” had been burnt by Japanese military in the middle of the war. It’s another tragedy of the war. I can imagine how very sad my mother must have been to lose “Mary.”

In Japan, every house has a family Buddhist altar to show respect to their ancestors. I made offerings of her letter with incense sticks to our altar. In front of the altar, after reading her letter again and again, I found out that it had come back to teach her son something. It must be “the preciousness of peace.” This is a valuable remembrance of my mother and we will keep it as a family treasure forever.

Thank you once again for keeping and sending this letter to me. And I’m highly honored to write to you in America about such kind of thank-you letters from not only my mother but also from me.

Yours sincerely,

Sadao Ito
Inabe City, Mie Prefecture, Japan
The summer season of 2009 is in full swing at the Trailside. This is my first year working at the Museum. I’ve met so many interesting people. It’s hard to imagine that this Museum in such an out-of-the-way place would attract such a diverse group of people from all parts of the world. So far this season, we have received visitors from Scotland, England, the Netherlands, Germany, and Australia. From the United States, visitors have come from the East coast, the West coast, Florida to Alaska, and everywhere in between.

It has been very enjoyable to greet our visitors and watch how they react and interact with the Museum. There is the wide-eyed excitement of the children as they come up the stairs and get their first look at our mammoth. There are families that come in and are amazed that the mammoths were found locally and use this as an opportunity to teach their children about a topic that never crossed their minds when they started out on their summer vacation. It makes you wonder just how many future scientists this visit may create. Then there are the “arm-chair” paleontologists – these folks are extremely knowledgeable and they take this topic very seriously. The questions they ask are quite technical in nature and their visit to the Trailside Museum is part of a scientifically-oriented vacation.

We are all having a great time out here this summer. It isn’t too late to come on out to the Trailside for a visit. Hope to see you before the season ends. — Marcia Kelly, Trailside Associate

Destination: Western Nebraska!

On June 23rd Maria Manning, Brandon Earnest, and I set out on a four-day trip to see western Nebraska! We were headed to the Trailside Museum of Natural History located in Crawford, Nebraska, on the Fort Robinson State Park grounds. Officially, our goal was to help Susan Veskerna in the gift shop, but we were also really excited to see the Museum! Even though I’ve worked at Morrill Hall for nearly 7 years, Brandon for nearly 5, and Maria for nearly 4, none of us had ever been out to see Trailside.

We made the most of our trip, stopping along the way to see Chimney Rock in Bayard and Carhenge in Alliance. Finally, after traveling through the plains and then the sandhills, we began to see a side of Nebraska that we had never seen before or even knew existed. The scenery as we drove toward Fort Robinson State Park was amazing. Forests, huge rock formations, and mountainous areas called the “buttes.” After driving all day, we arrived around 7 pm and spent the rest of the evening seeing the sights of the fort and playing cards on the balcony of the lodge.

The next 2 days were spent helping Susan redesign the store. We worked hard to rearrange, reorganize, and reprice, as well as making orders for new merchandise. The Trailside Museum is small in size, but packed with a huge amount of information, including the famous “Clash of the Mammoths” exhibit.

After the Museum closed for the day, we had plenty of time to do some exploring! We took a guided jeep ride up into the Buttes, where we got a great view of the 22,000 acres of the fort, which is Nebraska’s largest state park. We tubed down the White River, which was so fun and would be a great ride for people of all ages. Finally, we went on a scenic drive to see the location of the Cheyenne Outbreak. There was so much to choose from, and if we would have had more time we would have gone horseback riding or gone to the playhouse for a musical production.

The history there is unreal! There is just too much to try and describe – you just have to visit it for yourself. There are so many places to stay, from a small room in the lodge, which was perfect for us, to cabins and houses for entire families....if you have a big group, rent the Comanche House, it sleeps 60! The food was great too, the lodge has a restaurant, or you can go on into Crawford; for such a small town they really did have lots of choices.

We all hope to go back very soon and really want to let all of you know how lucky we are to have this amazing place in our state. Please go visit Trailside and then experience all that Fort Robinson has to offer. We promise you won’t regret it! — Leah, Maria, and Brandon
Teachers ‘Rock’ at the Earth Science Institute

Summer vacation for 16 teachers began with a bang! No sitting around relaxing with your feet up! Instead they piled into vans for a week in June and charted 2,000 miles. This outstanding group hiked long trails, climbed up hillsides, identified rock formations, visited Trailside and Ashfall museums, and experienced Scottsbluff National Monument, Chimney Rock, Agate Fossil Beds, and the Mammoth Site in Hot Springs. We got rained on every day and they never complained. The teachers journaled, laughed, and photographed all the way!

The Museum partnered with the Nebraska Department of Education and the KICKS (Keep Improving Content, Knowledge, and Skills) Science grant. KICKS is funded through Title II, Part B of the Math/Science Partnerships grant, a component of NCLB (No Child Left Behind) legislation. This ‘Earth Science Institute’ was available for intermediate and middle school teachers throughout the state.

Shane Tucker, Highway Salvage Paleontologist, was the lead instructor for the trip. He did an outstanding job of sharing Nebraska’s geologic and fossil record. Kathy French, Education Coordinator, and Jim Woodland, Science Director from the Department of Education, were also along to assist with teaching and sharing the Museum’s educational resources.

The teachers learned earth science content and developed science process skills through this week of hands-on experiences. They all agreed that they would never drive across Nebraska again like they had in the past. They have a new knowledge base with which to look at the rocks, understand the geologic formations, and be able to share this all with their students in the fall. Many have already adapted their curriculum to include this newly acquired knowledge.

Shane and Kathy will host a day at the Museum for this group in the fall. The teachers will continue their quest for more resources from the Museum as well as spending time in the research division. A reunion is planned for spring. We will meet at Mahoney State Park for a weekend to continue the
expansion of Nebraska’s eastern geology and paleontology. This will complete the Earth Science Institute for 2009-2010.

Kathy French, Education Coordinator

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**EDUCATION**

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exploration of Nebraska’s eastern geology and paleontology. This will complete the Earth Science Institute for 2009-2010.

Kathy French, Education Coordinator

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**OLLI Visits Ashfall**

The OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute) ‘More than Elephants’ class wanted to take a field trip to Ashfall. We did! The OLLI office offered this one-day excursion to its members and filled the bus with 55 people (double the class size). Kathy French, Education Coordinator, went along to facilitate the trip. Everyone enjoyed the new rhino barn, the unbelievable fossil record, and a wonderful lunch at the Green Gables!

Kathy French, Education Coordinator
Several hundred people attended the dedication ceremony. Keynote speaker, Harold Andersen (former chair of the Nebraska Game and Parks Foundation) reminisced about the expeditious decision-making and planning of the Ashfall Park in the 1980s. UN-L Chancellor, Harvey Perlman, and Game and Parks Commissioner, Rex Amack, celebrated the cooperation between the University of Nebraska State Museum and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission that makes up the unique nature of Ashfall Park, and noted the developments and improvements that have taken place since the park opened in 1991. Clarence Castner, president of the University of Nebraska Foundation, expressed appreciation for the Hubbard’s gift, which was donated to the Foundation. Acknowledged at the event were representatives of the Hubbard family – Claire, Anne, Ted, and Colleen – as well as others who made significant donations to the new rhino barn including Mark and Diann Sorensen, Loren Toohey, and the Ashfall Chapter of the Friends of the State Museum.

While there were some first-time visitors at the dedication, most were supporters and well-wishers who have visited the park on a regular basis over the past eighteen years. Many commented on the impressive size of the new building and the wonderful new exhibits, such as the panels explaining the volcanic activity that created Ashfall, and the new posters depicting the animals that inhabited the great North American savanna 12 million years ago. Everyone marveled at the possibilities that lay ahead, as they watched the Ashfall interns working a new area of the fossil bed that had been previously outside of the original barn. All conversation was abuzz with excitement over this much-needed phase of development coming to fruition after several years of anticipation and patient waiting.

It would be difficult to overstate the importance of the support of those individuals, whether part of a larger foundation or not, who recognize the value of preserving Nebraska’s fossil heritage and the Ashfall Park’s roll in educating the public about our prehistoric past. The dedication of the new Hubbard Rhino Barn was an opportunity to celebrate both the gifts and the givers who have made it possible to continue the mission of the Ashfall Fossil Beds and to look to the future with much anticipation and hope for years of scientific discovery and education.

— Sandy Mosel, Ashfall
A S H F A L L

It Comes Full Circle

When the Ashfall Fossil Beds State Historical Park opened in June 1991, thousands of people visited to get a first glimpse at the newly-exposed fossils in the Rhino Barn. One of those visitors was three-year-old Ben Brogie from Creighton, Nebraska. Evidently that first visit made an impression on young Ben, who found himself helping excavate the foundation for the new Hubbard Rhino Barn some seventeen years later. As part of the summer staff at Ashfall during the summers of 2007 and 2008, Ben was able to excavate for the same kinds of fossils that he first saw as a preschooler all those years before.

Ben is currently a student at the University of South Dakota, just completing his junior year majoring in biology. He accepted a position as a summer intern with the National Park Service, and has been working this year at Devil’s Tower National Monument in Wyoming. Ben is the son of Mark and Ellen Brogie of Creighton, Nebraska.

Sandy Mosel
Ashfall

Ellen Brogie points out details on fossil skeletons to her three-year-old son, Ben, as Greg Brown excavates in the original Rhino Barn in 1991, the first summer of operation at the Ashfall Fossil Beds.

As an employee of the Ashfall Fossil Beds State Historical Park during the summer of 2008, Ben Brogie helped to excavate the site where the foundation would be set for the new Hubbard Rhino Barn that opened this season. He is pictured here with fossils cast for removal from the construction site last summer.
Sand Hills Discovery Experience

In July, the Museum assisted with the annual Sand Hills Discovery Experience in Ainsworth, Nebraska. This three-day conference includes tours, workshops, and presentations on regionally-related topics and research. This year’s conference included talks about Mari Sandoz, 19th century medicine, early fossil expeditions to Nebraska, Native American use of prairie plants, and overall stability of the grasslands covering the sand dunes.

Kathy French, Museum Education Coordinator, presented a ‘hands-on’ session to learn more about the four Nebraska Native American tribes living here today. Twenty-four participants discovered tribal history and customs through activities from the Museum’s Encounter Kits. The Winnebago, Omaha, Santee Sioux, and Ponca tribes have worked with the Museum to produce their own kits. Each is a voice of their tribe and they vary in scope. The conference participants enjoyed creating star quilt designs, touching the buffalo, and learning more about pow wows and native dance. They had many questions and left with a heightened interest in Nebraska’s Native Americans.

As an affiliated tour, conference attendees could help paleontologists with their excavation at the Rick Irwin Site. The quarry, named for the Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) employee who discovered the locality, is a great setting to discuss the importance of salvaging fossils from highway construction projects and emphasize the cooperation between the Museum and NDOR. More than 40 children and adults excavated, screened, and sorted gravel from this six-million-year-old stream channel. Everyone found a fossil and all specimens will be incorporated into the Museum’s research collection.

Next year’s Sand Hills Discovery Experience will be July 7-9, 2010. Pencil it in on your calendars and come delve into an exciting learning adventure in your own backyard! More information about the conference is available at www.sandhillsdiscovery.org.

—Shane Tucker, Highway Salvage Paleontologist

Participants dig through sand and gravel hoping to find the next discovery. Turtle shell fragments, three-toed horse remains, and tooth enamel pieces are commonly found while trowelling through these sands.

‘Touching the Buffalo’ activity from the Ponca kit. Photo courtesy Ainsworth Star-Journal.

Investigating moccasins, shawls, beads, and ribbon shirts from the Omaha kit. Photo courtesy Ainsworth Star-Journal.
After excavation, the sand and gravel are placed on a screen table. As it dries, the sand falls through the mesh leaving behind gravel, bones, and teeth. Gravel larger than 1/4” is sorted in the field; the finer gravel is bagged and picked in the prep lab in Lincoln.

Participants sort through the gravel picking out teeth and bones. A 30-pound bag of gravel can take more than 12 hours to process in the lab.

This year’s finds included fish, amphibian, turtle, three-toed horse, beaver, horned rodent, mouse, rabbit, and mole remains.
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Your membership in the Friends of the University of Nebraska State Museum helps to support Museum development, exhibits, and programs both at the Museum and around the State. Membership benefits (memberships and donations are tax-deductible):

- Unlimited free admission to Morrill Hall, Trailside Museum of Natural History, and Ashfall Fossil Beds

  (Note: Each visit to Ashfall requires a park entry permit: $4 one-time / $20 annual.)

- Free subscription to The Mammoth, the Museum’s quarterly newsletter

- 10% discount on purchases from our gift shop

- Discounted Planetarium admission (adults $2.50, kids $2)

- 10% discount on Museum birthday parties

- Invitations to our annual meeting, Friends events, receptions, and new exhibit openings

- Voting rights at the annual meeting

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- Free or reduced admission and/or discounts at thousands of museums belonging to the Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC) “Passport” program. Visit: www.astc.org for list. Many museums belonging to American Association of Museums (AAM) also offer discounts. Look for “accredited museums” at: www.aam-us.org.

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◊ Mammoth Circle – donations between $1,000+

◊ Fossil Funder – donations between $100 and $249

◊ Scarab Society – donations between $500 and $999

Note: Incentives are included at each level; details on web site.

Add membership with the Ashfall Fossil Beds Friends chapter: $10 per year
For more information, call the Friends Office at 402-472-3779. Or email the Friends at: info@friendsofthemuseum.org. Visit the Friends website at www.friendsofthemuseum.org. Remit dues to: Friends of the State Museum, 307 Morrill Hall, Lincoln, NE 68588-0357.
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For all the details: www.museum.unl.edu/birthdays/
University of Nebraska State Museum – Morrill Hall