

Museum
CHRONICLE

**UA MUSEUMS STUDENT MEMBERS
GAIN EXPERIENCE IN THE PALEONTOLOGY
COLLECTIONS** *pg. 5*

BEHIND THE CLOSED DOORS OF NATURAL HISTORY COLLECTIONS

A NEW LIFE FOR AN OLD SWORD • WILLIAM GORGAS AND THE FEVER OF WAR EXHIBIT

HOW ONE STUDENT IS USING TECHNOLOGY TO WRITE ALABAMA'S HISTORY

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA MUSEUMS • SPRING 2017 • NO. 56

*Alabama Museum of Natural History • Discovering Alabama • Moundville Archaeological Park • Office of Archaeological Research
Gorgas House • Museum Research and Collections • Mildred Westervelt Warner Transportation Museum*

Museum CHRONICLE

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The UA Museums family consists of the following:



On the cover: UA Museums student member, Jensen Brown, works to identify microfossils in matrix from Trussell Creek. (Photo by Kelli Harris)

Spring 2017 EVENTS CALENDAR

february

3 Friday

GROWING UP WILD PRESCHOOL FRIDAY

\$2 for preschoolers and their caregivers, preschool aged children, 10 a.m. – noon

6 Monday

MUSEUM MONDAY

\$8 per participant, Kindergarten-2nd grade, 3:30 p.m. – 5 p.m., Registration required

11 Saturday

FAMILY NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

free, all ages, 5:00 – 8:00 p.m.

25 Saturday

LAST DAY TO VIEW EXHIBIT

“The Modernization of Tuscaloosa’s Built Environment: The Architecture of Don Buel Schuyler, 1937 – 1964”



Guest Curator Gene Ford speaks during the opening reception of the Don Buel Schuyler exhibit at the Warner Transportation Museum November 7. (Photo by Katherine Edge)

march

3 Friday

GROWING UP WILD PRESCHOOL FRIDAY

\$2 for preschoolers and their caregivers, preschool aged children, 10 a.m. – noon

4 Saturday

EXHIBIT OPENING

“William Gorgas and the Fever of War”

6 Monday

MUSEUM MONDAY

\$8 per participant, Kindergarten-2nd grade, 3:30 p.m. – 5 p.m., Registration required

25 Saturday

LIVING HISTORY FESTIVAL

free, all ages, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.



The first annual Bioblitz will focus on documenting and learning about biodiversity (plants, animals, fungi, lichens ect.) at Moundville Archaeological Park. (Photo by John and Kendra Abbott/ Abbott Nature Photography)

april

1 Saturday

JCC SANDERS LECTURE SERIES

free, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

3 Monday

MUSEUM MONDAY

\$8 per participant, Kindergarten-2nd grade, 3:30 p.m. – 5 p.m., Registration required

4 Tuesday

EXHIBIT OPENING

“Requiem for Steam: The Railroad Photographs of David Plowden”

7 Friday

GROWING UP WILD PRESCHOOL FRIDAY

\$2 for preschoolers and their caregivers, preschool aged children, 10 a.m. – noon

22 Friday

UA MUSEUMS BIOBLITZ

free, all ages, 10:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.

may

1 Monday

MUSEUM MONDAY

\$8 per participant, Kindergarten-2nd grade, 3:30 p.m. – 5 p.m., Registration required

5 Friday

GROWING UP WILD PRESCHOOL FRIDAY

\$2 for preschoolers and their caregivers, preschool aged children, 10 a.m. – noon

Location Key:

 Bryant Conference Center

 Alabama Museum of Natural History
(205) 348-7550

 Transportation Museum
(205) 248-4931

 Gorgas House
(205) 348-5906

from the **DIRECTOR**

Over the years, scores of graduate students have utilized our paleontological and archaeological collections for their Masters and Doctoral research. Many more undergraduates have participated in the annual archaeological field school at Moundville, taking advantage of the rare opportunity to participate in an excavation at one of the nation's most significant archaeological sites. The University of Alabama Museums have always provided valuable resources for UA students, but this year we kicked it up a notch and found new and exciting ways to connect with this important museum constituency.

Our staff has made a concerted effort to reach out and engage the student body at large, from a wide range of backgrounds and fields of study, in new and exciting ways. For the first time ever, we have offered free UA Museums membership to UA students and 380 have joined! Our staff has enjoyed interacting with our new student members at a pizza social/museum information fair, a student tailgate at the Gorgas House Museum, and a movie night under the Basilosaurus at the Alabama Museum of Natural History.

We have also increased student involvement in collections and museum-based research. In this issue of the *Museum Chronicle* you will read how a team of UA College of Engineering students are using photogrammetry to produce a replica of an early 18th-century British sword using the brass hilt from our museum collections recovered from a Creek Native American site by UA archaeologists in 1962.

In addition, while you might assume that undergraduate student volunteers who work in our paleontology collections are biology or geology majors, you will read in this issue how students from all sorts of disciplines, including the humanities, enjoy working with fossils.

We appreciate your support of the University of Alabama Museums, and the role you play in helping us expose our students to all that their museums have to offer.



William F. Bomar, Ph.D.



Dr. Bill Bomar
(Photo by Alice Wilson)

STUDENT VOLUNTEERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE PALEONTOLOGY COLLECTIONS

BY DANA EHRET

The UA Museums Curator of Paleontology must wear many different hats: curator and collections manager, fossil preparator, land manager for Harrell Station Paleontological Research Site, editor of the Bulletin of the Alabama Museum of Natural History, and professor. All of these duties means that time has to be divided up wisely and each job cannot be given full attention. Luckily, the University of Alabama supplies the museums with an almost unlimited supply of student volunteers. Without the help, dedication, and enthusiasm of these students, the collections would not be what they are today.

In the last four years the paleontology collections has benefited from more than 30 student volunteers. Students have assisted in every aspect of the collections including: rehousing, data collection, preparation work, field collecting and outreach. The importance of the hard work of the students has improved UA Museums' collections and significantly increased holdings. Please read this issue's story on page 26 to learn more about one of our current paleontology volunteers, Anna Slaughter.

Students benefit greatly from volunteering in collections. Many of the volunteers are interested in paleontology and museum jobs after they graduate. The opportunity to work in the collections and learn how collections operate gives them a set of skills not available to most people.

Rachel Miller was an Anthropology major and lab volunteer from 2013-2014 working in the prep lab, repairing a fossil turtle shell that was collected in pieces. Rachel knew she wanted to go to graduate school and used her experience in the prep lab as

“Students have assisted in every aspect of the collections including: rehousing, data collection, preparation work, field collecting, and outreach. The importance of the hard work of the students has improved our collections and significantly increased our holdings.”



Anna Slaughter rehousing invertebrate fossils in a paleo lab at Mary Harmon Bryant Hall. (Photo by Dana Ehret)

an example of her commitment to research in her graduate applications. She is now in the graduate program at Auburn University focusing on science and sustainability and corporate social responsibility in the apparel sector

because of its wide outreach and potential implications for our future.

Megan Crawford was another Anthropology major who volunteered in the paleontology collections

in 2015. Megan's interest was zooarchaeology, the study of animal remains found in archaeological sites. To receive practical experience and to help the collections, Megan sorted out boxes and boxes of animal bones that are used for a comparative skeletal collection. When isolated fossil bones are found, it is helpful to have modern skeletons with which to compare the specimens. With this experience, Megan applied to graduate school and is now in the Anthropology department at George Washington University working on her Master's degree.

Carissa Clay was a Biology major who volunteered with the paleontology lab from 2014-2016. During her time volunteering with the collections, Carissa learned all about the 3D printing labs on the UA campus and took the initiative to scan and print fossils from our collections. During her time volunteering, Carissa taught a paleontology class about 3D printing and she also co-taught a webinar on 3D printing fossils for outreach for iDigBio, the National Resource for Advancing Digitization of Biodiversity Collections (ADBC) funded by the National Science Foundation. All of Carissa's time and effort were important for helping digitize our paleontology collections. She is now applying to the University of South Alabama's graduate Marine Biology program.

Student volunteers are critical to our museums to help us maintain and improve the collections. In return, students learn specialized skills that can help them as they apply to graduate school and seek out jobs. UA Museums is grateful for all of the help these wonderful students have provided. ■



Rachel Miller teaching visitors about fossil preparation at National Fossil Day



Volunteer T.J. Parks taking a break from fossil prep to pose with Paleo Barbie



Ryan Wolpert preparing fossil shark vertebrae with an air scribe

LaBethany Bradford entering data on incoming fossils



UA MUSEUMS INVITES STUDENTS TO JOIN MEMBERSHIP

BY KELLI HARRIS

In an effort to better serve University of Alabama students, UA Museums recently opened its membership to all UA students free of charge. The free membership affords UA students all the benefits of the *Alabama River* level membership, plus many free activities that are offered exclusively for them. Additionally, student members will be linked to volunteer opportunities. The purpose of the free student membership is to help students understand the relevancy of UA Museums to them, both academically and personally, and to build a group of future museum advocates. In the first three months of offering free memberships, about 400 students took advantage of the program, currently equal to existing paid members. Bill Bomar, UA Museums Executive Director, remarked, "I am thrilled at the response we have had to the new UA Museums student membership program. Many of our students love the Museums and appreciate how they add to campus life at The University of Alabama. We hear about museums across the country striving to become gathering places for community members. For us, students are at the center of our campus community, and we are happy that they enjoy coming together in a museum setting." ■



UA Museums student member, Jensen Brown, volunteers in UA Museums Collections by cleaning the matrix from a clam from Antarctica. (Photo by Kelli Harris)



Allie Sorlie tells two UA Students about UA Museums Membership at Get On Board Day. (Photo by Kelli Harris)

SCIENCE FAMILY NIGHT AT DISCOVERING ALABAMA'S MODEL SCHOOL

BY PAM SLOAN

Community and family involvement in schools has always been important, but what can schools do to entice participation at PTA Meetings?

Discovering Alabama's Model School at Woodland Forrest Elementary had more than 400 families come together to enjoy a PTA pizza dinner, tour the Discovery Lab, admire the gardens, walk the nature trails and experience science through experiments set up in the gym. Dr. Terri North-Byrts, Principal of Woodland Forrest, welcomed families and introduced PTA President Roberta Womer who shared in organizing, publicizing, and setting up the event. Dr. Byrts thanked the Woodland Forrest teachers and families for their dedication and support. She then welcomed Dr. Lisa Fowler, Clinical Associate Professor of Elementary Education from The University of Alabama College of Education, who worked with Elementary Education Science Methods students to demonstrate science experiments for the event. Marilyn Stephens, a National Board Certified Science Teacher, PhD candidate, and National Science Foundation UA-Noyce Scholars Program Project Coordinator, teaches students from one of those science methods classes. Her students chose physical science topics and designed experiments using equipment that was easy to obtain and fun for the children to use as they learned scientific principles.

Faculty, students, and staff from The University of Alabama College of Education have been involved with the Discovering Alabama Model School Program at Woodland Forrest Elementary for many endeavors. Dr. Stephanie Livers, Assistant Professor of Mathematics, worked with teachers



Family Science Night at Woodland Forrest Elementary, Discovering Alabama's Model School. (Photo by Pam Sloan)

“Balloons, foam, lemons, bubbles, and smoke created an exciting atmosphere in the gymnasium where these college juniors had set up learning stations to demonstrate and explain scientific concepts while helping children learn to do hands-on experiments.

to incorporate mathematics activities. Diana Marchant, science resource teacher in Woodland Forrest’s Discovery Lab, has incorporated many of these activities into mathematics centers along the school’s nature trails. Undergraduate Elementary Education majors are also invited to work with the youngsters to help them understand scientific and mathematical concepts. In past years they have targeted one or two grade levels but this year was different. About 68 Elementary Education majors prepared experiments to demonstrate scientific principles to children at every age level.



Children make observations of fog from dry ice at Woodland Forrest Elementary with College of Education Science Methods student. (Photo by Pam Sloan)

Balloons, foam, lemons, bubbles, and smoke created an exciting atmosphere in the gymnasium where these college juniors had set up learning stations to demonstrate and explain scientific concepts while helping children learn to do hands-on experiments. Parents learned that they can use inexpensive household materials in experiments to help their children understand scientific concepts. Whether creating clouds in jars, making elephant toothpaste, building volcanoes using lemons, exploring the action of dry ice, or discovering tornados in bottles, families learned a lot about science.

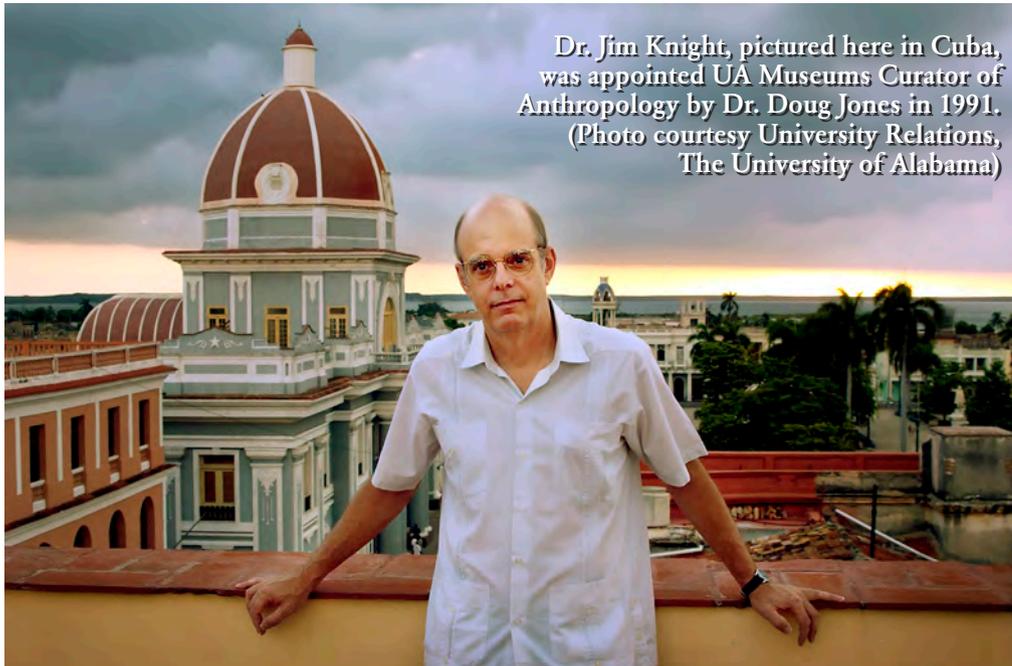
“Family Science Night” offered families a delightful educational evening to discover how children experience learning at Woodland Forrest Elementary School. These families were actively engaged in the “hands-on/minds-on/hearts-in” activities and they began to appreciate the innovative methods being used to teach their children. Teachers continue to use nature as a basis for every subject in this Discovering Alabama Model School. This legacy began with Discovering Alabama’s creator, Dr. Doug Phillips. He challenges teachers to observe how children can achieve at



University College of Education Methods Students demonstrate science principles to children at Discovering Alabama’s Model School – Woodland Forrest Elementary (Photo by Pam Sloan)

higher levels when inspired by nature and when lessons connect to local, relevant issues. These teachers are then empowered to build a curricular foundation that enhances learning in all disciplines. Children are able to explore the natural world and develop leadership skills through meaningful experiences. After experiencing these innovative teaching methods, children begin to value their rich natural heritage and understand how important their own contributions will be in the future. ■

UA MUSEUMS CURATOR EMERITUS WINS LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



Dr. Jim Knight, pictured here in Cuba, was appointed UA Museums Curator of Anthropology by Dr. Doug Jones in 1991. (Photo courtesy University Relations, The University of Alabama)

Dr. Jim Knight, a professor emeritus of anthropology at The University of Alabama, and his wife, Dr. Judith Knight, a longtime editor at UA Press, were each awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Southeastern Archaeological Conference for their decades of groundbreaking work in the field of archaeology in the South.

Dr. Gregory Waselkov, a professor of anthropology at the University of South Alabama and past president of the Southeastern Archaeological Conference, had the honor of presenting the conference's highest award to the Knights.

He said the 12-year-old award is bestowed upon retired members of the conference who have greatly impacted archaeology in the Southeast in some way.

"The conference has 1,100 members, and a lot of them have worked in the Southeast their entire careers, so we have many members who are deserving of this award," Waselkov said. "I was really pleased that Jim and Judith both received awards."

Jim Knight spent 26 years as an anthropology professor at UA before

retiring in 2014. In that time, he authored, edited and co-edited nearly a dozen books and published about 50 articles, Waselkov said.

Most of his work concentrated on the former Native America city and burial ground known today as Moundville.

"The degree of Jim Knight's influence on our interpretation of the Moundville site cannot be overstated," said Dr. William Bomar, executive director of University Museums. "As a Faculty Curator, he was always readily available to provide guidance on how aspects of Moundville culture could be interpreted to the public. Many details throughout the museum exhibits at Moundville are the direct result of his research on the iconography, belief system and social order of the ancient Moundville people."

Jim Knight said receiving a Lifetime Achievement Award is an enormous and unexpected honor.

"It was very unexpected, and I'm quite pleased," he said. ■

"The degree of Jim Knight's influence on our interpretation of the Moundville site cannot be overstated," said Dr. William Bomar, executive director of University Museums. "As a Faculty Curator, he was always readily available to provide guidance on how aspects of Moundville culture could be interpreted to the public."

MILDRED WESTERVELT WARNER TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM WELCOMES TRAIN EXHIBIT, *REQUIEM FOR STEAM*

BY KATHERINE EDGE AND JOSHUA BUCKNER

TTrains have always held a particular interest for many people. When watching a passing train, it's always fun to try to guess where it is going and what or whom it could be carrying. The next special exhibit at the Mildred Westervelt Warner Transportation Museum investigates the fascination of trains and travel. The museum is happy to announce our featured spring exhibit, *Requiem for Steam: The Railroad Photographs of David Plowden*.

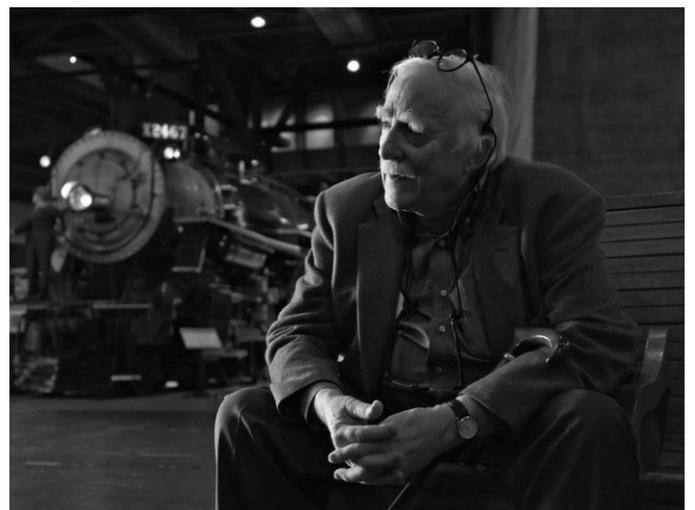
Beginning April 4, the museum will host the exhibit on loan from the Center for Railroad Photography and Art in Madison, Wisconsin. *Requiem for Steam: The Railroad Photographs of David Plowden* features 30 meticulously crafted black and white prints depicting scenes of trains travelling across the nation in the 1950s and 1960s. The exhibit preserves “the living beauty of [Plowden’s] beloved locomotives while continuing to show the railroad’s presence in the ever-changing American landscape.” Through his camera lens, Plowden’s photos showcase “the power of the steam locomotive, the pride of railroad men, and the lasting imprint of steel rails across the continent.” *Requiem for Steam* will be open April 4 until June 24, 2017.

General admission and admission to the exhibit is free. Guided tours of the museum are available for a small fee. The museum is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 - 4:30. For additional information, call 205-248-4931 or visit us online at www.warnertransportationmuseum.com ■



The cover photo of *Requiem* shows Central Vermont trains meeting in 1954. (Photo copyright David Plowden)

Photographer David Plowden at the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento. (Photograph by Scott Lothes)



MOUNDVILLE ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK BIOBLITZ

BY JOHN ABBOTT

Building on the tremendous success of *MothFest!*, the first annual BioBlitz at Moundville Archaeological Park will be April 22, 2017. The focus will be documenting and learning about biodiversity (plants, animals, fungi, lichens, etc.) at the park. The goal is to document what we can, while learning from local experts. There will be activities for all ages throughout the day

and into the night. Museum Student Members will have the opportunity to assist with this fun and exciting new event. More details will follow, be sure to mark your calendar. ■

(All Photos by John and Kendra Abbott/Abbott Nature Photography)



Eastern Garter Snake



Red Salamander



East Texas Toad



Carolina Mantid



Nut and Acorn Weevils

MUSEUM STUDIES PROGRAM



Mary Beth Prondzinski discusses the Chermock Butterfly Collection with a Museum Studies class. (Photo by Kelli Harris)



Dr. Dana Ehret discusses specimens from the Natural History Collections with Dr. Bomar's Museum Studies class. (Photo by Kelli Harris)



Students from Dr. Bomar's Museum Studies Class get an inside look at Natural History Collections in Mary Harmon Bryant Hall. (Photo by Kelli Harris)

BEHIND THE CLOSED DOORS OF NATURAL HISTORY COLLECTIONS

BY MARY BETH PRONDZINSKI

The University of Alabama Museums Natural History Collections storage area is a mysterious place, full of old boxes and oddities and hidden secrets waiting to reveal themselves if one looks deep enough.

It is a collections manager's job to get to the source of what UA Museums' holdings entail, and then advocate and care for them. Rummaging through unmarked boxes on uppermost shelves often leads to future projects for volunteers to help sort through and create some order. And as our collections grow, the education and research potential grows exponentially as we acquire specimens that make our collections significant.

You may wonder, what is currently happening in the collections? An expanding entomology collection has prompted a consolidation to



Reorganizing the Research Library



Inventorying Curators' Files



Preparing Museum Bulletins for scanning



A Tin of Butterflies!



Uppermost Shelves Surprises



Scanning Bar-coded Dragonflies

(All pictures courtesy of Dept. of Research and Collections)

alleviate space. This consolidation involves rehousing the early Henry P. Loding beetles in Cornell drawers; organizing Schmidt boxes full of butterflies folded into paper triangles to make them accessible for research; scanning barcoded dragonflies for data capture; deconstructing overcrowded shadowbox dioramas for future exhibit specimens, and inventorying past director and curator personal files to glean important information related to the collections. All these projects will make the collections more readily available to researchers and the general public through online data sources.

At the beginning of each year, the Department of Research and Collections recruits students and adults at various outreach events such as "Get on Board Day." UA Museums attempts to connect with students in the Natural Sciences, Library Sciences, History

or Anthropology, but, ultimately, we look for volunteers who are inquisitive, detail oriented and looking for new experiences to round out their educational pursuits. Although we recruit many volunteers as the semester begins, it is usually not too late to pick up a volunteer opportunity once the semester begins.

Museum work is diverse and unusual compared to most office work. It requires a willingness to learn new skills and explore unfamiliar territories. It can be challenging but never dull. If you dare to be different, you might even find a new career path that is right up your alley! If this article has piqued your interest and working in the Natural History collections sounds like an adventure, then please don't hesitate to contact Mary Beth, UA Museums Collections Manager, at mbprondzinski@ua.edu. ■

MUSEUMS CELEBRATE HOLIDAY SEASON

BY LYDIA JOFFRAY AND ALLIE SORLIE

The Gorgas House Museum and the Alabama Museum of Natural History held holiday open houses on December 4, 2016. Volunteers and student workers decorated the Gorgas House for Christmas, and Dr. Virginia Wimberley, Museum Curator of Textiles and History and assistant professor in the Department of Clothing, Textiles and Interior Design, provided a special exhibit of dolls collected by four generations of the Paul Bryant family.

The exhibit was drawn from a collection of over 900 dolls maintained as part of the College of Human and Environmental Sciences' Carolyn Thomas Stewart Costume and Textile Collection. The collection includes dolls from as early as the late 19th century, dolls from cultures around the globe, and dolls of a variety of materials and styles from porcelain, to cloth, to wood, wire, and dolls with nutshells for heads.

“The collection includes dolls from as early as the late 19th century, dolls from cultures around the globe, and dolls of a variety of materials and styles from porcelain, to cloth, to wood, wire, and dolls with nutshells for heads.”

The collection began with a donation by Mary Harmon Moman Hilburn in 1988 and grew with additional donations from faculty and alumni.

At the Alabama Museum of Natural History holiday open house the warm glow of the lights on the fourteen foot Christmas tree washed over the lobby as visitors enjoyed refreshments and holiday themed activities. A second

special exhibit by Dr. Wimberley, this time of miniature holiday trees, added to the décor, while holiday music filled the gallery to complete the festivities. Young and old made Christmas crafts before jetting off to find items nestled near museum exhibits during a treasure hunt. Both holiday open houses were a way for museum members and the greater University and Tuscaloosa communities to visit and start a new tradition to celebrate the season by exploring exhibits, learning history and enjoying holiday food and activities. ■

Curator Virginia Wimberley installs a selection of dolls in a special holiday display at the Gorgas House Museum. The dolls are some of over 900 dolls from the College of Human Environmental Sciences Carolyn Thomas Stewart Costume and Textile Collection. (Photo by Kim Eaton)



STUDENT PROFILE: ALICIA ROSATO

BY DR. ALEXANDER V. BENITEZ

University of Alabama Anthropology student Alicia Rosato joined the admissions staff at Moundville Archaeological Park spring of 2016. Originally from Atlanta, Georgia her passion for archaeology and history has been shared with hundreds of U.S. and international tourists. While visitors appreciate her introduction to the complex story of Moundville's past, Park staff have also come to value her dedication to scholarship.

A soon-to-be third generation UA alumna, Alicia is also completing minors in Geology and Criminal Justice; after which she plans to pursue a master's degree in bioarchaeology. Although she has since earned membership into the prestigious Lambda Alpha anthropology honors society, Alicia arrived at UA with a thirst for knowledge but uncertain

about the professional path she would pursue. Her initial goal of completing a Communications degree was foiled her sophomore year when she enrolled in Dr. Ian Brown's Anthropology and Museums course. The pull toward anthropology has only increased since. Alicia has since then contributed to research directed by UA archaeologist Dr. John Blitz and, just this summer, she spent a month living in a tent in Alaska in search of the earliest evidence of human migration into the Americas. Stone tools, a mammoth bone discovery, and a cameo in an upcoming documentary on the first Alaskans...not a bad way to reassure oneself about a career choice.

Moundville Archaeological Park staff will certainly miss Alicia when she graduates this coming summer but her Zeta Tau Alpha sorority sisters and her



Alicia Rosato pictured on the UA Quad. (Photo by Kelli Harris)

connection with the Moundville site will surely keep her coming back to UA for years to come. ■

WILLIAM GORGAS AND THE FEVER OF WAR EXHIBIT

BY LYDIA JOFFRAY

In 2017, the United States will mark one hundred years since its entrance into World War I. The Gorgas House Museum plans a special exhibit to commemorate the work of William Crawford Gorgas, the oldest son of Amelia and Josiah Gorgas, who served as Surgeon General of the U.S. Army during World War I. General Gorgas first received acclaim for his sanitation efforts at the Panama Canal that helped to eradicate Yellow Fever. He traveled the world with the US Army Medical Corps, spending much of his time in tropical areas like Florida, Cuba, and Panama due to an acquired immunity to the scourge of the era—Yellow Fever. It was in the Canal that William earned his fame. He contributed greatly to the



William Crawford Gorgas served as Surgeon General of the United States Army during World War I. (Photo Courtesy Encyclopedia Britannica)

elimination of Yellow Fever and thus the completion of the Canal as chief sanitation officer.

Following his victory over the pathogen and the completion of the Canal, Gorgas was made Surgeon General of the Army in 1914. In the successive years and with the entry of the US into World War I, Gorgas headed sanitation efforts in camps and on the frontlines. The innovation of Gorgas and his peers is evidenced in the fact that the Great War was the first conflict in which more men died of combat than disease. The special exhibit will be on display beginning March 4, 2017. ■

STUDENTS COLLABORATE WITH UA MUSEUMS ON PHYSICAL WEB PROJECT

BY JOHN P. FRIEL

This past semester, UA museums teamed up with students from Brookwood Middle School in Vance, Ala. on a project to enhance existing exhibits with new Physical Web technology. The Physical Web (PhyWeb) <https://google.github.io/physical-web/> is an open-source initiative created by Google that enables quick and seamless interactions with physical objects and locations. The Physical Web has tremendous potential, and the public's interactions with this new technology will likely become commonplace in the near future.

For this collaborative project, over one hundred Brookwood Middle School (BWMS) students and their teachers visited our museums during a class trip in late September. This visit allowed them to see all our exhibits, and gather information for websites that would be linked to selected exhibits in each of four UA Museums including the Alabama Museum of Natural History, the Gorgas House Museum, Moundville Archaeological Park, and the Mildred Westervelt Warner Transportation Museum. Once the students finished developing their websites, the BWMS principal, Mr. Daniel Bray, returned to the museums to assist our staff in setting up the hardware portion of the project which would connect our exhibits to the web content developed by the BWMS students.

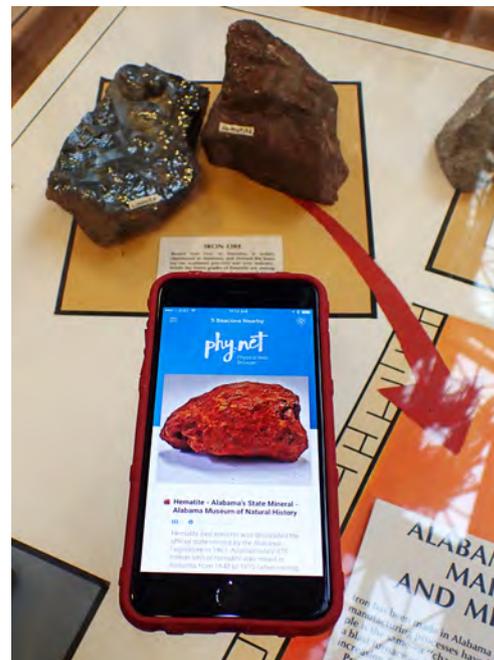
The key to the Physical Web and our collaborative project are small battery-powered devices called PhyWeb beacons that use low-energy Bluetooth signals to communicate with smart devices like cellphones and tablets that many visitors often have when visiting our museums. These PhyWeb beacons are installed in many of our exhibits, and are programmed to send out a notification and link to websites



Physical web beacon and signage about the project posted in the Grand Gallery of Smith Hall. (Photo by John Friel)

developed by the BWMS students that contains supplementary data and multimedia about particular exhibits. Thus a visitor with a smart phone can be automatically notified when they approach a museum exhibit that there is additional content online about that exhibit, and by simply clicking on the notification, that content appears on their smart device. Thus PhyWeb beacon technology allows visitors to deepen and enrich their museum experience with additional information and media through their phones and tablets based on their proximity to the exhibit.

To use this new technology, visitors just need to configure their smart devices to receive notifications from our PhyWeb beacons. This can easily be done by installing one of the free browser apps that are available for both Android and Apple iOS devices (e.g., *Physical*



Example use of Physical Web notification on smart phone for hematite on display in the Grand Gallery of Smith Hall. (Photo by John Friel)

Web or *PHY.net Physical Web Browser*), or by turning on the option “to scan for Physical Web objects” in their *Google Chrome* web browser. So next time you visit one of our museums, be sure bring along your smartphone and see firsthand what our new PhyWeb enabled exhibits have to offer. ■



Brookwood Middle School students visiting the UA Campus to tour several UA Museums for our Physical Web beacon project. (Photo by Daniel Bray)

MUSEUMS HOST SPOOKY EVENT FOR COMMUNITY

BY LYDIA JOFFRAY AND ALLIE SORLIE

The Alabama Museum of Natural History (ALMNH) and the Gorgas House Museum held the Sixth Annual Haunting at the Museum event October 25, 2016. This year's event was a huge success, with more than 600 people taking in the haunts and crafts and participating in spooky activities at both museums. Visitors also toured campus and learned a little about Tuscaloosa and University of Alabama history.

“Twenty people, many from our student membership, assisted at the Gorgas House with giving haunted tours, portraying haunts, helping with the kids’ activities, and taking ghostly portraits with Amelia Gorgas.”



Over twenty people assisted with the Haunting at the Museum at the Gorgas House Museum

The Haunting was also a huge success in terms of volunteer participation. Twenty people, many from our UA Museums student membership, assisted at the Gorgas House with giving haunted tours, portraying haunts, helping with the kids’ activities, and taking ghostly portraits with Amelia Gorgas; twenty additional volunteers helped at ALMNH with Halloween craft activities, scavenger hunts, and passing out tasty treats in the Grand Gallery. Partnerships with the National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers (NOBCCChE) and the UA Museums Department of Research and Collections gave visitors the opportunity to see mad scientist science experiments and get to know a variety of creepy crawly insects while exploring Smith Hall.

It was a night of history, mystery, and fun. ■

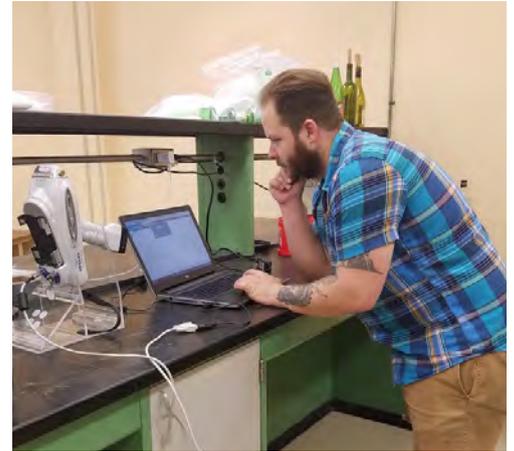
HOW ONE STUDENT IS USING TECHNOLOGY TO WRITE ALABAMA'S HISTORY

BY MATT GAGE

Rob Barlow is a non-traditional student whose first career was in drafting for the engineering and maintenance industries. In 2009, Barlow returned to school to further that career. After taking classes elsewhere, he entered The University of Alabama with the intent of studying Civil Engineering. That plan changed when he took Introduction to Archaeology in the Anthropology Department. Barlow was struck by the idea of answering anthropological questions through scientific means. The notion of giving a “voice to the voiceless” appealed to him and he shifted his focus from studying the science of modern day building materials to deciphering the raw materials of prehistoric technology.

and early 19th centuries. Dr. Blair uses XRF to try to pinpoint the chemical composition of the source materials of the glass to understand exchange networks both within and between European and North American groups.

Barlow had always seen himself as a science-focused student, but thought of archaeology as more a colloquial study of history. It wasn't until he took the introduction class that he realized the scientific applications used every day by archaeologists to explore the history of the world. Working side-by-side with Blair, Barlow is learning the techniques involved in employing XRF to help answer questions of cultural interaction and complexity.



Rob Barlow examining data gathered with the XRF (Photo by Jenna Hurtubise)

By using the XRF to investigate the chemical signatures of the copper and comparing it to those of known source areas, Barlow hopes to be able to identify and study the interconnections between cultural groups across the South. Working with staff at the Office of Archaeological Research, Barlow has been identifying copper artifacts that he will use to further his research. Lab space at OAR has been approved for use of the low level radiation emitted by the XRF and analysis is scheduled to begin spring, 2017.

“We can learn so much from the past through the material remains of these people.” Barlow stated. “By examining their use of technology and how they moved raw materials across the landscape, we can better understand their culture and society. To me, that’s what archaeology is all about, giving a voice to voiceless—those who can’t tell us their story, but can still teach us so much.” ■

“The notion of giving a “voice to the voiceless” appealed to him and he shifted his focus from studying the science of modern day building materials to deciphering the raw materials of prehistoric technology.”

In the last year, Barlow has been working with Assistant Professor Elliot Blair studying the applications of X-ray fluorescence (XRF) in identifying source areas for materials used by Native Americans. Blair, a specialist in early North American glass trade beads, came to Alabama to work on understanding the dynamics of Contact period cultures. Glass beads were a common trade item exchanged between Southeastern peoples and European merchants, particularly relating to the deer hide trade that was a major component of the economy of the Southeast between the early 17th

Barlow is currently selecting artifacts that represent the products of prehistoric technology at a time when cultural complexity was rapidly increasing in the Southeast. Copper artifacts were made during the Woodland and Mississippian Stages from approximately 2500 years ago until European contact in the 1500s. The detailed metal work employed by prehistoric artisans required cold hammering and an understanding of the malleability of the material. It also required extensive trade networks connecting peoples from as far away as the Great Lakes region to Moundville.

MUSEUM MEMBERS TAILGATE



UA Museums Members enjoyed a fun day at the best tailgate location off the Quad, at the Gorgas House Museum. The tailgate was sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. Tom Watson. (Photo by Kelli Harris)



Roberta and John Stewart attended the Museum Tailgate. Roberta is the third great granddaughter of Amelia Gorgas. (Photo by Kelli Harris)



Right to left- Andrew White, Caroline Cunningham and KC Sumner, UA Museums student members enjoying the Members Tailgate at the Gorgas House Museum. (Photo by Kelli Harris)



Left to right- Office of Archaeological Research staff member, Lindsey Gordon, UA student, LaBethany Bradford and Alabama Museum of Natural History staff member Todd Hester. (Photo by Kelli Harris)



UA Museums members, Ron and Deborah Buta enjoy an afternoon at the Gorgas House with Amelia Gorgas. (Photo by Kelli Harris)



Left to right- UA student members, Caroline Cunninham, Josh Wieter, Andrew White, Luc LeBlanc and KC Sumner enjoy the first UA Museums student members tailgate at the Gorgas House Museum. (Photo by Kelli Harris)

EXPEDITION PARTICIPANTS-WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

BY ALLIE SORLIE

Over the last 38 years, our renowned field science program, the Museum Expedition, has seen hundreds of participants from all over the country. One such participant was Ian Crawford, now the Executive Director of the Tuscaloosa County Preservation Society. Ian, then a senior in high school, came to Expedition in 2004 for Expedition 26 at Fort Toulouse and Fort Jackson. We asked Ian what one of his favorite memories was while at camp. "While working in the excavation, I discovered part of a ceramic blue and white bowl or pitcher. We were all so sure it was Andrew Jackson's personal porridge bowl!...but as we found more pieces it turned out to be early 20th century transfer-ware. It was still so exciting to take part in the expedition. We did



Ian Crawford, now Executive Director of the Tuscaloosa County Preservation Society, was an Expedition participant in 2005.

discover sections of the original fort wall during our time." We also asked if he enjoyed his time at expedition and if he thought it was an important program. "I really enjoyed my time. I often laugh at myself. I spend most of my time in opulent and grand 19th century mansions, surrounded by lovely antiques, yet few times have I been more happy or comfortable than in my tent in a field in Wetumpka in the summer. I think the Expedition is an incredible program. Working face to face with professionals and learning hands on about history, archaeology, anthropology and the outdoors is a unique and powerful opportunity for young people. I was so inspired by the people I met and worked with, and I hope the program continues to inspire young people." ■

MUSEUM STRATEGIC PLANNING

UA Museums is intensely involved in a strategic planning process to chart our future for the next 5-10 years. A number of workshops have been held to gather input from faculty, students, community

members and other stakeholders. The strategic plan should be completed by Spring 2017. The strategic planning process was underwritten by a gift from the D. R. Semmes Foundation. ■

Part of the UA Museums staff is pictured here in a strategic planning workshop led by Lord Cultural Resources. (Photo by Kelli Harris)



UA Museums director, Bill Bomar, discusses strategic planning with Moundville Archaeological Park staff member, Lisa Rasco, at one of the staff strategic planning workshops. (Photo by Kelli Harris)

ALLELE

ALABAMA LECTURES ON LIFE'S EVOLUTION THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA®

7:30 PM, Thursday
October 6th, 2016

CARL ZIMMER
SCIENCE JOURNALIST/WRITER
"Masters of Evolution"



7:30 PM, Thursday
February 23rd, 2017

MICHAEL L. ANDERSON
FRANKLIN AND MARSHALL COLLEGE
*"Neural Reuse in the Evolution and
Development of the Brain"*



7:30 PM, Thursday
November 10th, 2016

JOSEPH GRAVES, JR.
NORTH CAROLINA A&T STATE
UNIVERSITY AND UNC GREENSBORO
*"Great is Their Sin: Biological
Determinism in the Age of Genomics"*



7:30 PM, Thursday
March 30th, 2017

CASEY DUNN
BROWN UNIVERSITY
*"More Than Filling in the Holes:
Why Poorly Known Taxa are Critical to
Understanding Animal Evolution"*



7:30 PM, Thursday
January 26th, 2017

ANN REID
NATIONAL CENTER FOR
SCIENCE EDUCATION
*"Science Class is for Science, Right?
Think Again"*



7:30 PM, Thursday
April 20th, 2017

BARBARA COHEN
MARSHALL SPACE FLIGHT CENTER
*"Roving Mars: Pathfinder, Spirit,
Opportunity, Curiosity"*



Location: North Lawn Auditorium
Free and open to the public

For more information about speaking events, including location,
please refer to our website and Facebook page:

<http://evolution.ua.edu/>

<https://www.facebook.com/ALLELEseries>

Twitter: @UA_ALLELE



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Physics and Astronomy • Psychology • Religious Studies • Theater and Dance

STARS, COMETS AND ASTEROIDS—OH MY!

BY ALLIE SORLIE

Space may be the final frontier, but at Family Night at the Museum, the frontier gets a little closer to home. Now in its fifth year, Family Night at the Museum is a night filled with interactive exhibits, science experiments, art projects and exploration. Our February 11, 2017 event transports participants to space.

Family Night at the Museum is a joint program with UA's Graduate Parent Support Group, the Graduate Student Association, and the Alabama Museum of Natural History. It is a community event that showcases graduate school departments and their work to show children and families of graduate students, as well as the general

community, what their parents and loved ones do at school. This event has only grown since its inception and last year we greeted over 800 curious members of the community throughout the night.

The next Family Night at the Museum event will be the first to take a trip to



A budding entomologist learns about a hissing cockroach at Family Night at the Museum in 2015.

“The next Family Night at the Museum event will be the first to take a trip to space. Graduate departments such as Chemistry, Physics and Astronomy, English, UA’s School of Social Work and many more plan interactive activities that showcase what they do with a little space-like flair.

space. UA Arts and Sciences Graduate departments such as Chemistry, Physics and Astronomy, English, UA’s School of Social Work and many more plan interactive activities that showcase what they do with a little space-like flair. Visitors will go to “astronaut training” with Kinesiology, take a look at the cosmos with telescopes from the Physics and Astronomy Department, and journey to space with lights and sounds from the Theatre and Dance Department among many other opportunities.

Though we may feel the effects of gravity down here on Earth, Family Night at the Museum participants will be transported to a weightless, star-filled space where the imagination floats free. ■



Over 700 participants visited the Alabama Museum of Natural History for Family Night at the Museum in 2015.



Tide For Tusks teaches one young participant about elephants at Family Night at the Museum in 2015.

A NEW LIFE FOR AN OLD SWORD

BY MATT GAGE

This story draws upon the memory of Carey Oakley, Director Emeritus of The University of Alabama Museums, Office of Archaeological Research.

In the hot summer of 1962 a young, dark-haired high school student from Walker County, with hopes of one day becoming an archaeologist, was excavating a feature on the banks of the Coosa River. Intent on his work, he failed to notice the graduate advisor in charge of the project approach behind him. The student jumped at the sound of his name, spoken by the thin, blonde grad student, Ross Morrell. Morrell and he had become like brothers, living and working together for months. "Carey! Get over here and look at this." Morrell growled.

*The young men's friendship had grown close over the field season. Carey Oakley, the young high school student, had spent that time following the older Morrell from site to site, watching, joking, and learning his way around archaeological sites. For the past month they had been living in Professor David L. DeJarnette's camper van on Woods Island on the right bank of the Coosa. They had watched as the clearing crews had bulldozed trees, piled brush, and burned the island, reminding Oakley of the scene in the movie, *Gone With the Wind*, when the night sky was lit by the burning of Atlanta.*



Jeremiah Stager's 3-dimensional rendering of the sword hilt.

Oakley walked to the edge of the pit where Morrell and two other men had been digging and looked down on an unusual sight. It was an intact sword, complete with brass hilt and a blade so rusty that, upon exposure to the air, it disintegrated. But, not before it could be photographed and documented. Unlike the forged iron blade, the hilt was brass and remained in near-perfect condition.



The sword as it appeared in the excavation trench in 1962. The steel blade disintegrated upon exposure leaving only the brass hilt for researchers to study. (Photo from the collections of UA Museums)

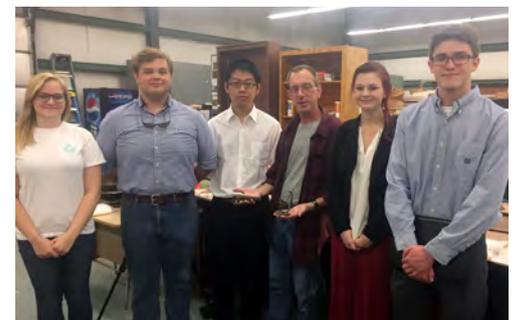
Years later, Ross Morrell would go on to become the Archaeologist for the State of Florida, and Carey Oakley would follow in Morrell's footsteps, earning a Master's degree in Anthropology and founding The University of Alabama Museums' Office of Archaeological Research.

The sword hilt was carefully packaged and returned to The University of Alabama Museums where it has remained for the last half century, being studied as part of the history of our state and founding of our nation. The sword is an early 18th century British Hanger rapier supplied to both the British Navy and infantry. It was likely traded or gifted to a member of the Creek sometime in the early to mid-1700s.

Jeremiah Stager of the Office of Archaeological Research is one of

those studying the hilt and developing a three-dimensional model that allows researchers to see the artifact's details without handling the object. In addition, Stager has tracked down a historic sword collector with an identical weapon. The information he shares about length, width and form will provide the metrics that were lost when the original blade deteriorated.

Today, five students from The University of Alabama's College of Engineering are again studying the artifact. Michael Rose, Daniel Massie, Fandi Chen, Hanna Hefley and Maggie Saylor are part of a class studying metal casting. But instead of typical casting techniques, they plan to use Stager's three-dimensional imagery developed through a technique called photogrammetry to recreate the hilt. The students are part of Professor Subhadra Gupta's Metallurgical and Materials Engineering class. The class teaches students the unique requirements of precision metallurgical casting. Having an opportunity to work with the artifact brings together the world of historic metal working, the study of archaeology, and the history of Alabama.



L-R. Maggie Saylor, Daniel Massie, Fandi Chen, William Allen (Archaeological Collections Manager), Hanna Hefley, and Michael Rose.

Just in time for Alabama's Bicentennial, the newly made sword will be used for display purposes and to highlight the story of the Creek people in Alabama. ■

GORGAS ARTIFACT PRESERVATION PROJECT AWARDED FUNDING BY THE SOCIETY OF THE ORDER OF THE SOUTHERN CROSS

BY LYDIA JOFFRAY

The Gorgas House Museum was recently awarded funding for the General Josiah Gorgas Artifact Preservation Project by the Society of the Order of the Southern Cross. The award will provide funding for the purchase of new equipment to assist with the protection and preservation of some of the most important artifacts in the Gorgas House Museum collections connected to General Josiah Gorgas, including his Confederate dress uniform jacket and the swords, rifles, and pistols issued to him during his service as Chief of Ordnance for the Confederate forces during the war. Gorgas, one of few Northern-born Confederate generals, was married to Amelia Gayle, a daughter of former Alabama Governor John Gayle, and after the war served as the eighth president of the University of Alabama.

General Gorgas' dress uniform jacket is a knee-length, double-breasted frock coat with gold buttons along the front closure which are inscribed "VIRGINIA SIC SEMPER TYRANNY." Each wing of the collar holds a wire-embroidered general's insignia plate, showing three gold stars surrounded by a wreath. The coat is in excellent condition considering its age, with very little damage sustained by moths or other insects. A separate sash of red knit silk with two acorn-topped tassels is also in pristine condition. These items would be in severe jeopardy from environmental damage if frequently exhibited, especially if not properly displayed in an archival quality case with ultraviolet-filtering glass. Through the grant through the Society of the Order of the Southern Cross, the museum will now be able to purchase its own museum quality

display case and suit form in order to display the uniform more often and appropriately.

The Gorgas House collections also contain several Civil War-era firearms, including a rifle made at the Richmond, Virginia Arsenal on the request of General Gorgas for his son, William Gorgas. The museum also recently received a donation of a Civil War-era Dickson, Nelson, & Company Rifle, a weapon which was made in Alabama and used exclusively by Alabama soldiers during the war. The additional storage equipment funded by the foundation will allow for added security and preservation for these historically important weapons. ■



The funding from the Society of the Order of the Cross will enable the Museum to purchase a case with the best preservation technology.

“These items would be in severe jeopardy from environmental damage if frequently exhibited, especially if not properly displayed in an archival quality case with ultraviolet-filtering glass. The Museum will now be able to purchase its own museum quality display case and suit form in order to display the uniform more often and appropriately.”

GIVING BACK *to* MAKE A DIFFERENCE

BY DANA EHRET

A Anna Slaughter's passion for history and historical conservation led her to UA Museums this Fall when she started volunteering in the paleontology collections. Anna is a junior at the University, majoring in history with a minor in general business. Last year, she made the decision to study abroad in Florence, Italy. This experience helped Anna realize her passion for history and allowed her to gain a fundamental understanding of historical conservation efforts. During her year abroad, Anna saw some of the world's most famous historical monuments and museums, including the Pantheon and Coliseum in Rome, the Acropolis of Athens, the ancient city of Pompeii, the Palace of Versailles, the Louvre, the Uffizi Gallery, the Hagia Sofia and Edinburgh Castle. While in Italy, she also engaged in several opportunities to gain experience in museums, including becoming a volunteer tour guide for the Florence Cathedral, Santa Maria del Fiore. Of her time abroad, Anna said, "These life-changing experiences have inspired me to become a protagonist in the research and preservation of historical artifacts, and to play a role in educating others about past events and how they have shaped the world we live in today, within the realm of public history."

In the paleontology collections, Anna is helping to rehouse the invertebrate fossil collections and transcribe the information on their labels. Many of these specimens were collected in the late 1800s and early 1900s and are still in their original containers, which range from cigar to matchstick boxes. The labels are from the same time period, and fading, insect damage and general decay have rendered them almost unintelligible. While it might



Anna Slaughter showcasing some of the original fossil storage boxes. (Photo by Dana Ehret)

seem like an odd pairing--- a history major working in paleontology---Anna is motivated to learn more about museums and how they function; specifically, how artifacts are handled and analyzed, and the various responsibilities of museum employees.

The enthusiasm and hard work that Anna contributes are not only an asset to our collections but also a benefit to her education. UA Museums benefits by having our fragile specimens and fading data rescued from destruction. Anna gains museum experience that will benefit her as she works

towards a museum career. Anna says of her appreciation for museums, "I believe that a museum is an inclusive, stimulating environment where anyone can observe and learn about the impact of history, art, society, politics, science and many other subjects on our everyday life, as well as on cultures throughout the world. It is a place that prioritizes learning and development, as well as supports creativity, self-expression and intellect for all ages." UA Museums appreciates Anna's volunteerism and the work of all our other student volunteers. ■

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA MUSEUMS MEMBERSHIP GIVING LEVELS & BENEFITS

Much of the natural beauty of Alabama is found among its many rivers. To recognize the vital role these rivers play in making our state unique, The University of Alabama Museums has designated gift membership levels with the names of some of Alabama's best-known and beloved rivers. *All membership levels are important to the Museum. We hope you will be as generous as your circumstances allow.*

Note: Each membership level receives the benefits listed plus all benefits of levels that precede it.

Alabama River (\$40–\$99)

- Unlimited admission (except for special events) to Moundville Archaeological Park, Alabama Museum of Natural History, Gorgas House and Paul W. Bryant Museum
- Membership newsletter
- Discounts on Museum programs and Summer Expedition
- Membership card and decal
- Recognition in newsletter
- Invitations to special member events

Black Warrior River (\$100–\$249)

- Discovering Alabama DVDs
- 10% discount at University of Alabama Museum Shops

Cahaba River (\$250–\$499)

- Free admission to Moundville Native American Festival
- Unlimited admission to Museums for five guests
- A one-year gift membership at Alabama River level
- Additional 10% (20% total) discount at University of Alabama Museum Shops

Coosa River (\$500–\$999)

- Unlimited admission to Museums for two additional guests (seven total)
- Reduced rental rates for Museum facilities

Sipsey River (\$1,000–\$2,499)

- Unlimited admission to Museums for three additional guests (10 total)
- Two additional one-year gift memberships (three total), all at Black Warrior level

Douglas E. Jones Society (\$2,500–\$4,999)

- Unlimited admission to Museums for two additional guests (12 total)
- Special recognition in Smith Hall Foyer
- Three one-year gift memberships upgraded to Cahaba River level

Eugene Allen Smith Society (\$5,000+)

- Book on natural history from The University of Alabama Press
- Unlimited admission to Museums for three additional guests (15 total)



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SAVE THE DATE!

Earth Day - April 22, 2017

Moundville Archaeological Park



Come celebrate Earth Day with us, and join in the fun as we discover and identify the plants and animals that inhabit Moundville Archaeological Park. UA Museums staff and scientists will be there to help identify the species we encounter, and to teach you and your family how to become citizen scientists that can contribute to our ongoing biodiversity projects. Free and fun for all ages. For complete details please email almnh@ua.edu, call 205-348-7550 or visit <https://www.facebook.com/ALMNH/events>.

