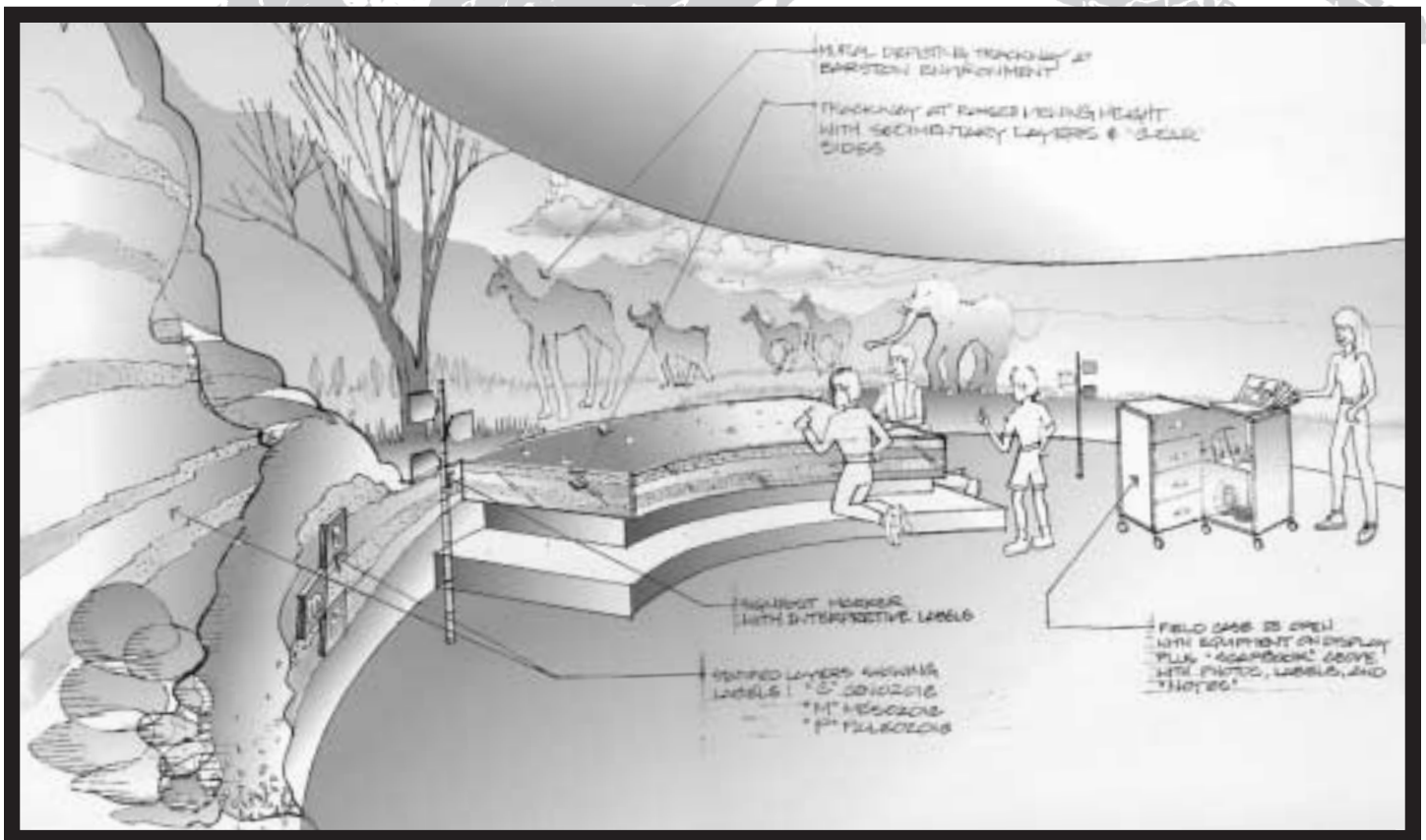


# Quest

A Newsletter for friends and supporters of The Raymond M. Alf Museum of Paleontology

## Major Renovation Planned for Hall of Footprints



The year was 1960. English teacher Lach MacDonald was on a peccary trip to Barstow with Ray Alf when he saw the marks of toes on a slope of mud. Thinking it was a recent track, he “casually struck the mud with his rock pick and instead of crumbling, it rang out the music of stone.” Ray was summoned and after a quick glance confirmed the importance of the find with an exuberant *Laudate Deum*. Digging down through the loose rock that covered the track-bearing layer, they found a series of foot-

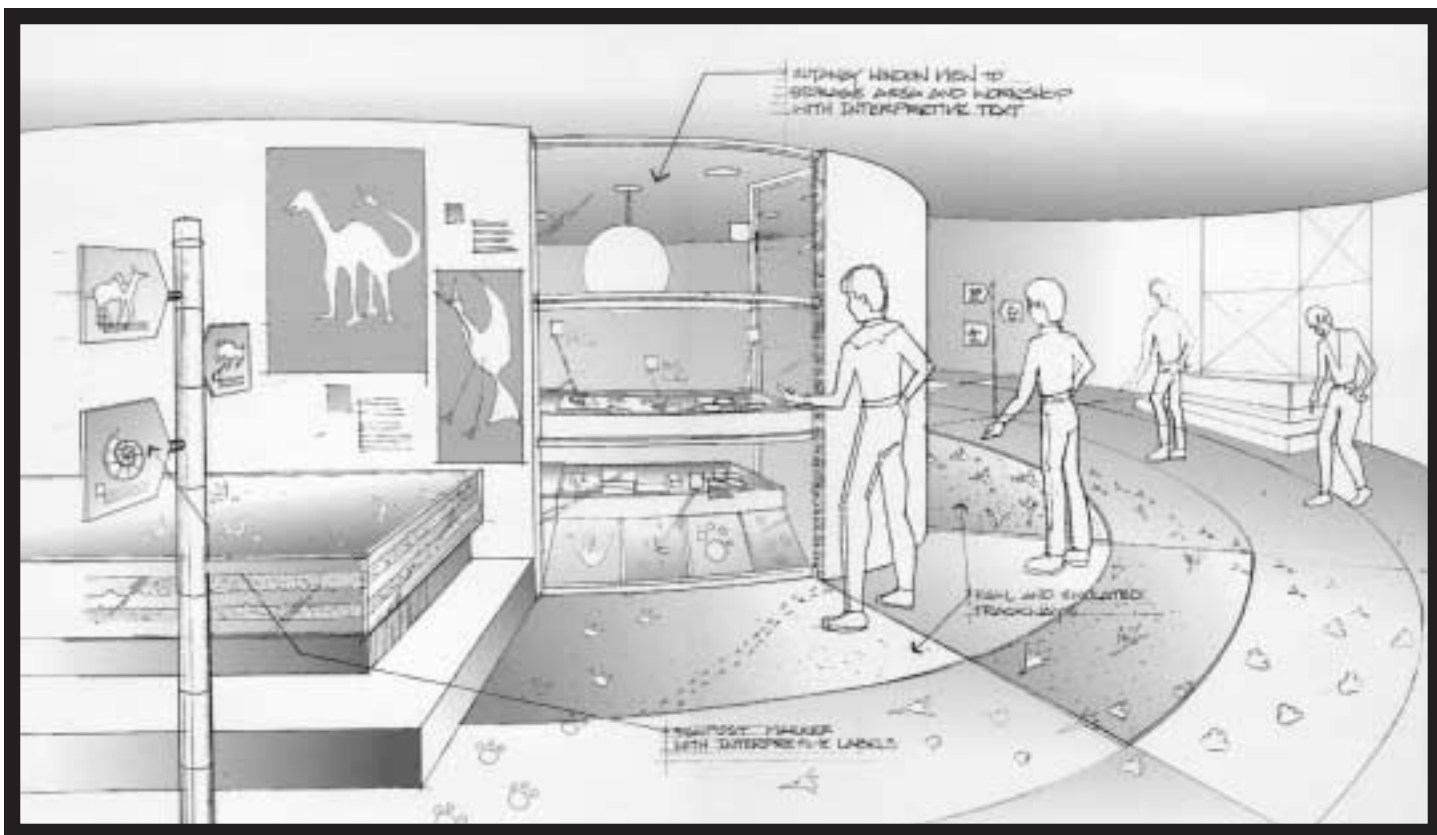
prints, later identified as those belonging to *Amphicyon*, an extinct mammalian carnivore commonly referred to as a bear-dog.

Because of their great scientific value, Alf and students undertook the difficult task of collecting the bear-dog tracks. The steps in this process can be seen in the photos that are displayed adjacent to the trackway in the Hall of Footprints. The rock layer containing the tracks had to be cut into squares, pried free from the underlying rock, and packed for transport. However, once back at Webb the specimen

**Concept sketch showing a Barstow exhibit theme with wall mural, and a cart containing field notes, site photos, and smaller specimens.**

couldn't be placed on display as the museum was located in a small space in the Thomas Jackson Library basement that was already filled with fossils. Thus, this important specimen was put in storage and did not resurface until after the current museum building was constructed in 1968. Once the building was completed, Ray Alf focused his

(continued on page 2)



## Major Renovation

(continued from page 1)

efforts on getting the upstairs exhibit area, or Hall of Life, finished so tours could begin. It wasn't until a few years later that Ray found the time to design the Hall of Footprints and build displays showing all the wonderful trackways that had been collected from Barstow, Seligman, Avawatz, Glendale, Tecopa, and other sites.

Since the early 1970's, the Hall of Footprints has remained virtually unchanged. The mounting of a bear dog skeleton in 1994 over its trackway has been the only major display improvement made since the hall was first opened. On display in the Hall of Footprints is a world-class collection of specimens collected by Ray Alf and students, but the way the specimens are displayed is not equal to their scientific and educational importance. They are badly in need of thematic organization, improved lighting with explanatory text and graphics, and other modifications.

In response to this need, staff and trustees decided that renovation of the Hall of Footprints and the adjacent

Science Lecture Hall is the museum's highest priority project for 2000-2002. Much progress has already been made as a design firm, Think Jacobson & Roth, has been retained and the vision/goal setting and exhibit concepts phases of the project have been completed (see concept sketches). The next step is design development followed by construction drawings and fabrication of exhibits. The last phase, slated to begin in March of 2002, involves building modifications and onsite installation of exhibits, graphics, and models.

The general goal of the renovation is to present exhibit content in a balanced way to appeal to diverse ages and at varied levels of activity. Exhibits would include some high-tech components to help dynamically engage viewers and there will be hands-on activities to engage younger audiences.

The proposed exhibit themes are:

1) Introduction area describing how trackways are formed and studied, how the idea of a Hall of Footprints was made into a reality, and how special this collection is in the international scientific community.

*Concept sketch showing wall cutaway for viewing behind the scenes student work and tracks mounted in floor.*

2) A series of exhibits showcasing the museum's unique trackway collection from California and other sites in the western United States. Specific exhibits would include *The Extinct Camels of California*, *Mastodons and Bear-Dogs from Barstow*, *Bird Tracks from Avawatz*, *Enigmatic Reptile Tracks from Seligman*, and others.

3) A section detailing the work of students, including how specimens are collected, transported, reassembled, and exhibited. The focus here is to facilitate the visitor's understanding that Webb students are actively involved in field research, fossil preparation, curation,

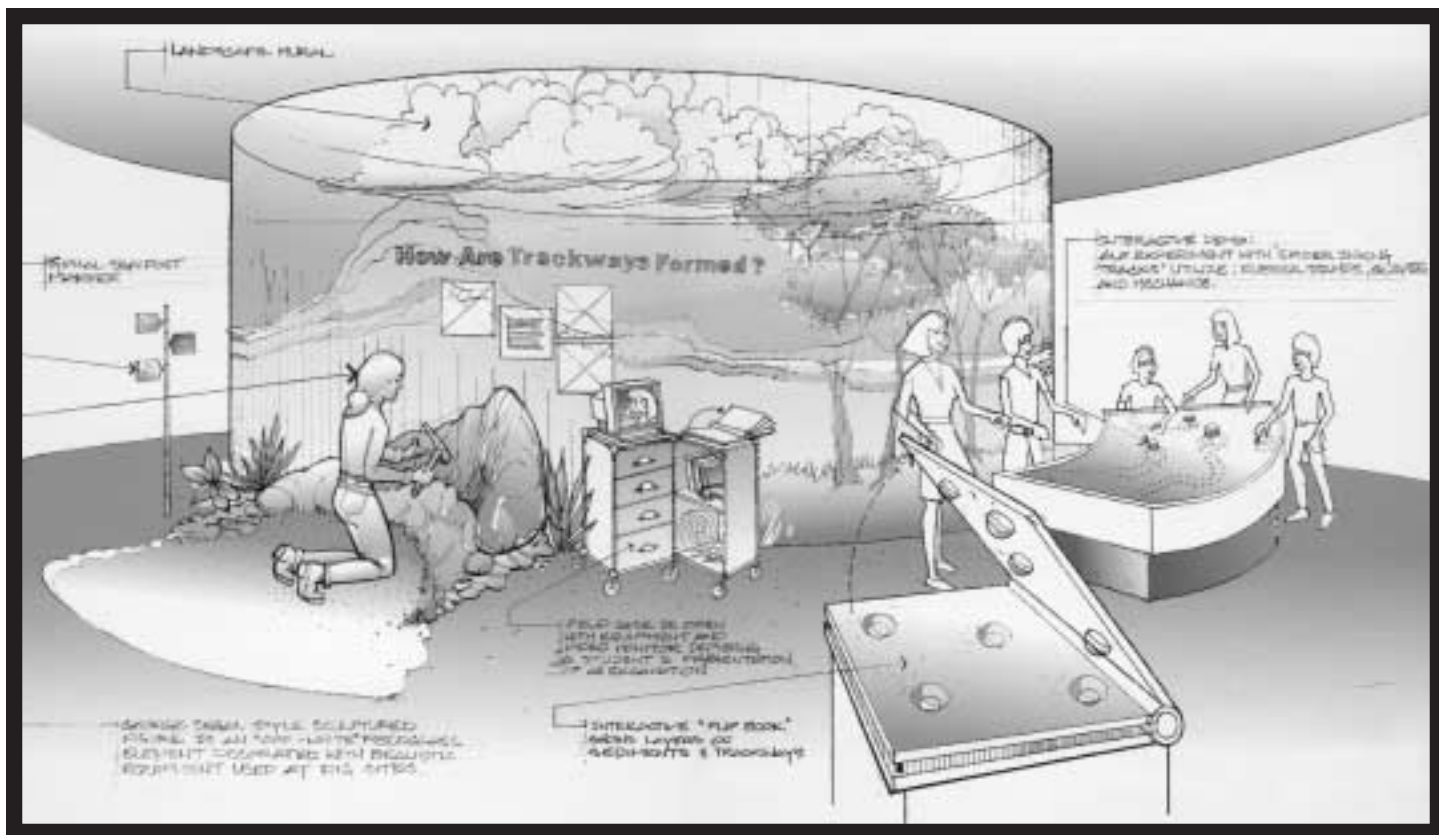
## Open House Schedule

The museum hosts Sunday open houses from 1-4 PM once a month, September to June. Activities for children and families are available and docents are present to answer questions. Dates of upcoming open houses with activities for that Sunday are:

April 1: Reconstruct-A-Rex

May 6: Dinosaur Mural

June 3: Dinosaur Stick Puppets



scientific analysis, and exhibit development. To accent this, there will be a behind-the-scenes exhibit which allows visitors to view student work via windows cut into the fossil preparation lab and a collections storage area.

4) A footprint comparison area showing how tracks are analyzed and what one can learn from them. This would include a decipher-the-footprints activity that simulates how a particular trackmaker is identified, such as using Dr. Alf's inking of spider legs to identify that it was a spider that left a particular set of footprints 250 million years ago. Also, visitors will make their own footprint impressions next to that of a dinosaur and then calculate their relative size, speed, and weight in comparison to those of the dinosaur.

5) A children's interactive area where students can apply what they learned via a simulated dig site along with other activities. This will include touch tables and portable carts that allow visitors to touch fossils, as well as view notebooks and photo albums that present field notes and excavation site photos. For children there will be a sand pit where they can dig for fossils. There also will be an Alf Expedition

Notebook activity where students are given a simplified field notebook in which they'll find a series of questions they can answer as they move through the exhibits.

The remodeling of the Science Lecture Hall is also part of the renovation project as this space is directly adjacent to the Hall of Footprints. A specific part of this will be to create a video on the museum that would complement the newly renovated exhibit hall. This would take the form of an orientation film about Dr. Alf and the discovery of the Peccary, the unique history of the museum, what paleontology is all about, and an overview of the importance of the museum's collections and programs. As well as renovating the space, the museum hopes to install technological equipment, such as high-resolution projection equipment, with DVD and CD-ROM capability, to maximize its use for a variety of learning opportunities.

In the current strategic plan of The Webb Schools, *A Time to Lead*, one goal is to "Heighten the reputation and develop the programs of The Raymond Alf Museum of Paleontology". In the next few years, to help fulfill this goal, the museum will be expanding its out-

*Concept sketch showing exhibit area where visitors are introduced to how fossil footprints are made and preserved.*

reach programs by hiring new staff (see related story) with the desire to double both annual attendance and the number of schools that visit. Renovation of the Hall of Footprints and Science Lecture Hall will greatly enhance the museum's status as a first-rate educational facility that displays world-class specimens of great scientific value. The entire Webb community would also benefit from this project as the Hall of Footprints and Science Lecture Hall are often used in delivering science curriculum, for class meetings, and for hosting special events.

With the American Association of Museums re-accreditation process slated to begin in 2006, it is critical that the museum be prepared for careful scrutiny. At present, neither the Hall of Footprints nor the Science Lecture Hall is used in a way that maximizes their educational value. But if all goes to plan, by the end of 2002 the renovation project should be completed and the museum will be well on its way to re-accreditation.

# Summer Trips of 2000--Dinosaurs and More!

The summer is a busy time for museum staff as they lead a number of fossil collecting trips throughout the western United States in search of “the documents of life.” There were two summer trips in 2000, the Summer Peccary Trip and the Summer Research Trip. On the latter trip a number of alumni and trustees were able to join in the hunt for dinosaurs in Montana. The museum is able to offer these unique educational opportunities to students because of generous donations, primarily those by Ceci and Dan Reynolds '63 through the Reynolds Peccary Endowment, and Colonel John Rogers '59 through the Raymond M. Alf Peccary Society Chair and Mary Stuart Rogers Peccary Scholars program.

The 2000 Summer Research Trip was led by Museum Director Don Lofgren and included students Andrew Raser '01, Matt Lauria '01, John Enders '01, Andrew George '00, Geoff Winssinger '00, and Mauricio Rosinol, as well as museum volunteer Duncan Everhart and Dr. Tony Runkel of the Minnesota Geological Survey. This group met up with Dr. Richard Cifelli and other paleontologists from the University of Oklahoma to collect Paleocene mammals in the North Horn Formation of central Utah. With this many people looking, dozens of excellent specimens were found which are now under study by Andrew Raser (see related story this issue).

Following their North Horn work, the Summer Research Trip met up with the Summer Peccary Trip in Vernal, Utah to partake in a joint whitewater-rafting trip on the Green River. The Summer Peccary group had been busy visiting many national parks and monuments in Utah and would now join the research group for the Montana dinosaur hunt. Museum Scientist Sadie Kingsbury and Webb faculty members



Juli James, Will Allan '94, and David Lloyd led the Summer Peccary trip, with 21 students in tow.

After the raft trip, the entire group headed to northern Wyoming and visited/camped with Taylor Crosby '67 and family at their ranch in Big Horn. As they have for years, the Crosby's always roll out the red carpet for Webb fossil hunters and Taylor cooked his usual awesome breakfast for all present.

Then it was on to eastern Montana to collect dinosaurs in the Hell Creek Formation where the museum has been working since 1992. A number of excellent museum quality specimens were found including some rare mammal jaws and part of a *Triceratops* skull.

Those on the Summer Peccary Trip left after a few days of collecting and shortly thereafter the research team was joined by a group of trustees, alumni, and staff, including Doug Myles, Alicia and Larry Ashton '70, Charles, Patricia, and James Steinmann '98, Patrick Muffler '54 and daughter Kasey Saltzman, Peter, Sue, and Simon White '98, and

*John Enders (left) and Andrew Raser (right) excavate a hadrosaur jaw found last summer in Montana.*

Assistant Curator Natalia Wideman. This group looked for museum quality dinosaur fossils and found many, including a well preserved hadrosaur fibula discovered by Charles Steinmann. The team also collected another 16 tail vertebrae from the nationally publicized Alf Museum Hadrosaur Site, first discovered in 1997, that has since yielded most of the rear half of a duck-billed dinosaur including a skin impression. This brings the total count of tail bones collected from the skeleton to 77.

This coming summer's trips will be focused on Utah. There are lots of places to collect fossils in Utah and the state abounds with national parks and monuments and wonderful places to hike and camp. It should be another great summer for the Peccary Society.

# Rogers Gift Fuels New Museum Research Efforts

Ongoing and new museum research projects in California and Utah received a tremendous boost with the creation of a Raymond M. Alf Peccary Society Chair. This was made possible by a gift of \$1.5 million from the Mary Stuart Rogers Foundation whose president is Colonel John Rogers '59. Specifically, the grant will be used to "support the museum director's work with Webb students in the field, the lab, and the classroom" and to "develop new and expanded student programs that provide Webb students with unique educational opportunities in paleontology and scientific research. Students would be recognized annually as Mary Stuart Rogers Peccary Scholars".

In this inaugural year, seniors John Enders, Matt Lauria, and Andrew Raser were recognized as the first Rogers Peccary Scholars. All three of these young men have made outstanding contributions to museum research efforts with their work in the field and laboratory. For example, Andrew Raser has been studying 64 million-year-old mammal specimens he helped collect last summer from the North Horn Formation of central Utah. As part of this project, Andrew entered the Young Naturalists Awards contest sponsored by the American Museum of Natural History. His essay described his contribution to the North Horn project and the edited version that appears here is a testament to the quality of work that these Roger Peccary Scholars are making to paleontological research.

By Andrew Raser '01

**T**he North Horn Formation of central Utah is an important, yet relatively unstudied, paleontological resource. The formation is one of only a few places that yield both Cretaceous-aged dinosaurs as well as Paleocene-aged mammal fossils. This past summer, I had the opportunity to travel to the formation to collect Paleocene mammals with Dr. Lofgren and other students. I went on this field expedition as a part of a research project that I am completing this year for the museum. This research trip produced many excellent mammal fossils, ones that I am now studying. Despite the hard work, the trip was both a rewarding and memorable experience.

Because of the past interest that I expressed in paleontology and the museum, Dr. Lofgren, in the spring of my junior year, asked me to undertake an independent research project for the museum focusing specifically on the

mammalian faunas of the North Horn Formation. Dr. Lofgren chose this project for me because he too was planning to start a long-term study of the North Horn fauna, with mammals being his specialty. In order to maintain the integrity of my research, Dr. Lofgren and I decided that I should visit the formation to help collect the fossils that I would study this year.

Dr. Lofgren and I developed two scientific goals for our trip. The main goal was to collect mammalian teeth from the Paleocene part of the North Horn Formation; teeth are very important when studying ancient mammals because each species of mammal has a distinct dentition. Secondly, we wanted to gain a more extensive knowledge of the formation's geology and geography — one based on first-hand experience as opposed to one based on published papers and field maps.

While the work on the trip was intense, the overall experience was very positive. For nine days, we camped and

collected in mostly wooded country, ranging in elevation from 8,000-10,000 feet. This high elevation translated into comfortable daytime temperatures, perfect for collecting, and the weather was mostly agreeable, as it rained only twice.

From a scientific standpoint, the trip was also a great success. First, we collected approximately 90 mammal specimens. These specimens will, in turn, expand the amount of information paleontologists know about the North Horn's mammal assemblage. Second, we explored the area. We not only located old localities but also found the quickest and safest ways to get to these sites.

This year, I am continuing my research on the mammalian faunas of the North Horn Formation. In my Independent Research class I am describing and cataloguing the dental specimens we found on the trip. Because of the incompleteness of the North Horn's mammal record, the identification of these specimens is difficult. In March, I am going to visit the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. with Dr. Lofgren and Matt Lauria. The purpose of this trip is to study specimens that earlier paleontologists found in the North Horn and compare those to the ones that we found on our trip. In this way, I will be able to more easily identify teeth that we collected as well as learn more about the paleontology of the North Horn. By the end of the year, I hope to have effectively catalogued and described every specimen that was found by our field expedition this past summer, and therefore hope to have broadened the scope of knowledge regarding the Paleocene mammal fauna of central Utah.

## Alf Museum Slated to Receive \$100,000 Weingart Grant

The Los Angeles-based Weingart Foundation has approved a conditional challenge grant of \$100,000 toward the renovation of the Hall of Footprints and Science Lecture Hall.

The Hall of Footprints, located on the lower level of the Alf Museum, is home to the largest, most diverse, display of animal footprints in the United States, a collection that is highly sought after for study by paleontologists worldwide. This exhibit hall is viewed

by more than 11,000 people annually, including 7,300 school children from the greater Los Angeles area. It also serves as a classroom for The Webb Schools. The Science Lecture Hall is a great location for special presentations, public lectures, and large group class meetings.

Once fully funded, the renovation will allow the museum to improve text and graphics for displays, to improve thematic flow by remounting and orga-

nizing by topic the specimens on exhibit, and provide introductory materials on each exhibit. In addition, the museum will depend upon future funding for upgraded technology, including the acquisition of video-conferencing and high-resolution equipment, additional computers with DVD, CD-ROM, and more.

Planning for the renovation is underway and construction is scheduled to start in March, 2002.

## Edward "Ned" Mansfield '37 Donates \$55,000 to Museum

Ned Mansfield graduated from Webb in 1937 an athlete, scholar, and gentleman. In his senior year, Ned was president of the varsity letterman organization Block W, and twice captain of the fierce intramural team, "Green Terror." But, as the editors of *El Espejo* so eloquently put it, "Let it not be thought that Mansfield takes no inter-

est in his school work, however." In fact, Ned Mansfield had (and continues to have) a great interest and love of science, fostered and encouraged by his mentor and friend, Raymond Alf.

In memory of Ray Alf and in honor of the enormous impact Ray had on his life, Ned made a gift this fall of over \$55,000 to the Alf Museum.

The funds will be used towards completion of the renovation of the Hall of Footprints. Specifically, the gift will allow for the purchase of the skeletal model of a camel and completion of a special exhibit on *The Extinct Camels of California* within the newly designed hall.

## Recent Leadership Gifts to the Museum

(July 1, 2000 to February 28, 2001)

|                                     |          |
|-------------------------------------|----------|
| Mr. & Mrs. R. Larry Ashton, Jr. '70 | \$ 1,500 |
| Dr. & Mrs. J. Paul Curry            | \$ 1,000 |
| Kenneth De Nault '61                | \$ 1,000 |
| Mr. & Mrs. Patrick Guthrie          | \$ 2,500 |
| Chen Kuo Hung                       | \$ 2,500 |
| Mr. & Mrs. F. Gard Jameson, Jr. '71 | \$ 1,000 |
| Wann Langston, Jr.                  | \$ 1,000 |
| Mr. & Mrs. Edward Mansfield '37     | \$55,000 |
| Velma McKelvey                      | \$ 1,000 |
| Dr. & Mrs. Malcolm McKenna '48      | \$ 2,000 |
| Mr. & Mrs. Douglas Myles            | \$ 5,000 |
| Mr. & Mrs. Gary Quiggle '58         | \$ 1,000 |
| Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Reynolds '63      | \$ 5,000 |
| Mr. & Mrs. Hugh Rose                | \$ 5,000 |
| Mr. & Mrs. Miles Rosedale '69       | \$ 5,000 |
| Mr. & Mrs. Arthur M. Scutro, Jr.    | \$ 3,616 |
| Florence Sutphen                    | \$ 2,000 |
| Mr. & Mrs. J. Alexander Veech '57   | \$ 1,000 |
| Dr. & Mrs. Peter White              | \$ 1,200 |

## Fundraising Figures

(July 1, 2000 to March 28, 2001)

|                     |                  |
|---------------------|------------------|
| <b>Unrestricted</b> |                  |
| Gifts               | \$100,136        |
| # of gifts          | 105              |
| <b>Restricted</b>   |                  |
| Gifts               | \$7,000          |
| # of gifts          | 2                |
| <hr/>               |                  |
| <b>Total gifts</b>  | <b>\$107,136</b> |
| <b># of gifts</b>   | <b>107</b>       |

# Students Find Rare Fossil Tortoise Shell

By Angela Scaletta '01 and Jennifer Zimbhoff '01

It was a warm, dusty day in the desert as twelve eager, amateur paleontologists scoured the canyon floor. Cries of “Look what I found!,” “You all have to see this!,” scattered the air, soon followed by disappointed grumblings of “Awww its just a rock”; “Are you sure this isn’t a fossil, Doc?”; and “How do paleontologists do this? I can’t find anything!”

This energetic group was comprised of members of the Honors Museum Studies class on their November 2000 peccary trip to the Barstow Formation where students got hands-on experience in methods of fossil collection, the use of field maps, and the creation of field notes. The trip was not only fun, but also stimulating as students were able to put many classroom concepts to practical use in the field.

Despite many moments of false excitement, students uncovered many valuable specimens, both on their own and with the direction of their fearless leader, Dr. Lofgren. Fossils were discovered by careful prospecting, diligent digging, and strategic surveying of the ground, yet one discovery in particular defied logical discovery methods.

“Hey, Jenny, look what I found!” called senior Angela Scaletta, as she set down her backpack and began excitedly chipping away at a dusty hillside. “Cool, I wonder what it is? It looks pretty big!” answered her classmate, Jenny Zimbhoff, as she joined in. The two girls diligently cleared away the surrounding dirt, only to discover that Angela’s *find* was an odd shaped rock, with a confusingly fossil-like appearance. Angela, dejected, prepared to descend the hill and look elsewhere, when Jenny inquired, “Hey Angela, what is that funny shaped thing sticking out underneath your hand?”



Seniors *Angela Scaletta (left) and Jennifer Zimbhoff (right) pose with their fossil prize, a complete tortoise shell.*

Though Angela sarcastically replied, “Probably just another rock,” the girls took a few chips and brushes to their secondary find, a hard, tan-colored fragment protruding from the ground. With amazement, the girls dug and brushed away levels after levels of sandy earth, revealing a large and fairly intact tortoise shell.

The shell was carefully excavated, brought back to the museum, and cleaned and repaired in the fossil preparation lab. A survey of the museum collections indicated that this was the most complete tortoise shell from Barstow ever collected by anyone from the Alf Museum. Thus, this very important 15 million-year-old specimen will be prominently exhibited in the museum’s Barstow display case. It just goes to show that finding great fossils is a combination of hard work and luck, but with a little of both, students can make important contributions to the science of paleontology.

## Outreach Program to Undergo Expansion

Part of the museum’s mission as an accredited institution is to serve the public by offering educational programs for groups of all ages.

To aid in this effort, the museum will be expanding its full-time staff by the addition of a new educational outreach position. The new staff member will implement a series of programs that he or she will create and develop in consultation with the director. Specific job responsibilities will be to design curriculum, teach adult and youth classes, organize and conduct teacher workshops, coordinate guest lectures, and lead field trips in conjunction with classes. This new position will augment the museum’s current outreach program of daily tours, traveling fossil presentations, and Sunday open houses.

## Museum to Host Paleontology Conference in 2002

In keeping with expansion of research efforts with the creation of the Raymond M. Alf Peccary Society Chair, the Alf Museum will be hosting the annual meeting of the Western Association of Vertebrate Paleontologists on February 15-17, 2002. Participants will be presenting the results of their current research work and approximately 100 paleontologists are expected to attend. A field trip to the Goler Formation is planned as part of the three-day program. This is the first time in the museum’s history that a regional paleontology conference has been hosted on campus and it is a great way for the museum to showcase its programs, exhibits, and collections.

# Museum Hosts 8th Peccary Dinner

**T**he museum held its annual Peccary Society Dinner on September 22, 2000 with 170 alumni and friends in attendance. After a reception in the museum, dinner was served in the Hooper Student Center, followed by a program.

Museum Director Don Lofgren started the program by describing the creation of the Raymond M. Alf Peccary Society Chair and the Rogers Peccary Scholars Program by the Mary Stuart Rogers Foundation and thanking foundation president Colonel John Rogers '59 for making it happen. Lofgren also introduced the first students to be named Rogers Peccary Scholars, seniors Matt Lauria, Andrew Raser, and John Enders, and then went on to highlight recent work by staff and students. This included the new North Horn project in Utah, as well as the ongoing Goler Project in California where the oldest known primates from western North America have been found.

Museum trustee Dr. Wann Langston then introduced keynote speaker, Dr. Catherine Forster, from the State University of New York at Stony Brook. In her speech, "Dinosaurs from Madagascar: Cretaceous Faunas and the Continental Dance", Dr. Forster described her research on 75 million



year old vertebrates from Madagascar, what animals were present and what they tell us about the positioning of continents during that part of the dinosaur era. The extinct vertebrate fauna of Madagascar was quite exotic with unique animals such as bird-like dinosaurs and herbivorous crocodiles with short stubby snouts.

*L-R Sam McClure '61, Dave Fawcett '61, Patrick Muffler '54, Bob Baum '61, Rob Leggewie '70, and Larry Ashton '70 lead those assembled in a rousing rendition of the Peccary Song.*

It was a very interesting presentation about a part of the world that few people ever visit.

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## Save The Date

**The 9th Annual Peccary Society Dinner will be held on Friday, September 28, 2001 during Alumni/Parent Weekend, September 28-29, 2001.**

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