

# Museum Quarterly

LSU Museum of Natural Science

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## Museum of Natural Science Curators and Directors

**Frederick H. Sheldon**  
*Director, George H. Lowery,  
Jr., Professor, and  
Curator of Genetic  
Resources*

**Christopher C. Austin**  
*Curator of  
Herpetology*

**Robb T.  
Brumfield**  
*Curator of  
Genetic Resources*

**J. Michael  
Fitzsimons**  
*Curator of Fishes*

**Mark S. Hafner**  
*Alumni Professor and  
Curator of  
Mammals*

**James V. Remsen**  
*John Stauffer McIlhenny  
Professor and  
Curator of Birds*

**Rebecca Saunders**  
*Curator of  
Archaeology*

**Judith A.  
Schiebout**  
*Curator of  
Vertebrate  
Paleontology*

**Sophie Bart Warny**  
*Director of  
Education*



## *Letter from the Director...*

Twelve years ago, when I told my staunch Yankee mother I was heading to work at Louisiana State University, she looked aghast and asked me if it was an accredited. I assured her that LSU was not only accredited, but that it was well known as a Mecca for ornithologists. I do not think she was convinced, but what I said was true. The graduate students studying birds at LSU were second to none, and the staff of ornithologists, including **Van Remsen**, **John O'Neill**, **Doug Pratt** and **Ted Parker** were world famous. What I did not know, and what I have lately come to realize, is that LSU is also a prime destination for bird-watching undergraduates from around the country. The bird collection and molecular genetics laboratory here at the Museum of Natural Science are full of smart kids who have come from as far away as Pennsylvania, New Hampshire and Wisconsin because of the ornithology program. As well as national appeal, we also attract many undergraduates from Louisiana. **Katie Faust**, an Honors College student, chose LSU over Cornell, largely because of the bird program (and the \$35,000 discount). These young ornithologists have now founded a bird club at the University. Please see to "*Love of Birds Brings University Students Together*", Pg. 3, for more information on the Louisiana State University Bird Club

**Fred Sheldon**



The Bird Club recently founded at Louisiana State University poses for a photo during their weekly meeting. Back: Devin Bosler, Fred Benham, Jacob Saucier, Justin Bosler. Front: Richard Gibbons, Katie Faust, Laura Palasz, Rachel Holbert.

# ICHTHYOLOGY CONFERENCE: BIOLOGY OF HAWAIIAN STREAMS AND ESTUARIES



Several people connected with the ichthyology section of the Museum attended a conference on the Biology of Hawaiian Streams and Estuaries in Hilo, Hawaii, during April. From left to right in the photo are **Dr. Lori Benson**, Dr. Cheryl Murphy, **Dr. Jim Parham**, **Dr. Mike Fitzsimons** (the short one), **Mark McRae** (the tall one), **Dr. Heiko Schoenfuss** (the other tall one), and **Dr. Bill Font**. **Benson, Parham, and Schoenfuss** received doctorates with Mike Fitzsimons as major professor, and McRae will complete degree requirements in the near future. Murphy recently completed Ph.D. requirements in Oceanography at LSU and has been a valuable participant in fieldwork with Museum personnel in Hawaii.

**Bill** is Professor of Biology at Southeastern Louisiana University. He is a Research Associate of the Museum, and he and his students have collaborated with researchers in the Museum's fish division for many years. The group from LSU was among about 200 plus participants in the conference and among the 32 who presented papers and prepared manuscripts for the symposium proceedings. **Mark** and **Dr. Fitzsimons** were members of the organizational board for the conference and are on the editorial committee for the publication, which will appear in a special bulletin of the Bishop Museum in Honolulu.

## ICHTHYOLOGY NEWS

Doctoral student **Mark McRae** is continuing his research on the early life history of Hawaiian amphidromous fishes, and he, **Lori Benson** (former student in the Museum; now Assistant Professor at the University of Tampa), and Curator **Mike Fitzsimons** are working together on a three-year study of the behavioral ecology of fishes in Waipi'o Valley on the island of O'ahu (photograph). Study sites are located above and below the waterfalls in the photo (Ipu'u Falls on the left, and Hi'ilawe Falls on the right). Fish of one species climb these waterfalls during a life cycle that includes a return to adult habitats in fresh water after about six months as larvae in the ocean. Hi'ilawe has a sheer drop of 1,100 feet and Ipu'u falls freely for about 800 feet.

# LOUISIANA BIRD RESOURCE CENTER HIRES COORDINATOR

The Louisiana Bird Resource Center has hired **Richard Gibbons** to Coordinate the efforts of the fledgling center.

His educational background includes a Bachelor's degree from Centenary College of Louisiana and a Master's degree in Biology from Texas A&M—Corpus Christi. For his Master's project he investigated the wintering abundance and habitat preferences of seven species of surface-diving waterbirds in a Texas estuary.

**Richard** has worked as a field biologist for the past ten years in various parts of the Americas on projects investigating avian productivity and survivorship, hawk migration, Andean hummingbirds, and Texas colonial waterbirds.

The Louisiana Bird Resource Center forms a liaison between the expertise of LSU's ornithology staff and the bird watching public, wildlife managers and other individuals and groups interested in bird's.



## LOVE OF BIRDS BRINGS UNIVERSITY STUDENTS TOGETHER

Something special has happened this semester at LSU. An official University bird club has been formed to gather avian-enthusiasts of all types. Today, over 70 million Americans take the time out of their day to admire our feathered friends, and since a 1983 survey by the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment, the popularity of bird-watching in the south has grown by 388% (Cordell and Hebert). With the ever-growing popularity of birding, most would figure it a no-brainer that there would be a bird club at LSU, but this is not the case. Possibly frightened by lack of members or lack of funding, our previous student-birders have never initiated a club focused solely on birds. Yes, it is a known fact that this hobby is very limited within the student body at LSU, but out of 35,000+ students and faculty, there had to be more than a couple birding bums skulking around campus with a hidden passion of the feathered kind. Without campus-wide advertising, the club has already located several of these individuals. The Loui-



siana State University is ranked in the top 4 among universities for its extensive bird collection. This invaluable source provides a solid backbone for the bird club.

The bird club at LSU is moving forward with hopes of great things to come. It takes time to get your name out there, become recognized, and receive funding for travel purposes. Heck, we might have to re-discover the Ivory-Billed woodpecker in Louisiana! Whatever it takes, the club is striving for a combination of fun and science while birding many locations across Louisiana and farther afield. With a mission to spread the excitement of birding among teens and young adults, the club has made it a priority to promote the conservation of birds and their habitats across Louisiana. More information will soon be available via website. Contact current bird club President, Justin Bosler, with any questions, ideas, or suggestions at [jebybo1@lsu.edu](mailto:jebybo1@lsu.edu).

## CAMPUS RESIDENCE HALL NAMED FOR GEORGE H. LOWERY, JR.



A residence hall in Louisiana State University's East Campus Apartments has been dedicated to the memory of **George H. Lowery, Jr.**

**Dr. Lowery**, a zoologist and Boyd Professor at LSU, founded the Louisiana State University Museum of Natural Science in 1936 when he collected a few study specimens in a classroom in Audubon Hall. The Museum of Natural Science has since grown to be one of the nation's largest natural history museums, with holdings of over 2.5 million specimens.



# MUSEUM GRADUATE LEADS CERULEAN WARBLER SURVEY IN HONDURAS

BY: DAVID L. ANDERSON

A male Cerulean Warbler is a real gem to look at: it has a brilliant blue back streaked with black, contrasting with snow-white belly and breast. Whoever said that North American birds were boring surely had no experience with this beautiful species.

Despite being stunningly beautiful the Cerulean Warbler is a bit of an enigma. It nests high in the canopy, and much of its basic ecology is either unknown or poorly known. Also, Cerulean populations are declining rapidly across their breeding range, more rapidly than any other of our songbirds, and the reason why is mostly mystery. Habitat changes on the breeding grounds alone do not seem to warrant its decline, and recent information from wintering grounds in northern South America don't tell us much either. As for the species' ecology during migration, this has remained a total blank other than a few specimens and sightings in northern Central America.

Last fall 2004, I was invited by Melinda Welton to help coordinate Cerulean Warbler surveys in Honduras during the first two weeks of April. Melinda is a research associate of the Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, and an authority on Ceruleans in North America. She wanted to follow up on a hypothesis of Ted Parker's, based on observations he made during a rapid ecological

assessment in Belize, regarding Cerulean Warbler migration through Central America. Ted found Ceruleans to be common in the Columbia River Forest Reserve in April 1992, leading him to speculate that the entire world population of Cerulean Warbler migrated through lower montane rain forests (600-750 m elevation) along the Caribbean slope of Honduras, Guatemala, and Belize during a 2-week span at the beginning of April. There were fewer than 10 records for Cerulean Warbler in Honduras, and planning a successful survey seemed like a long shot to say the least. However, Melinda knew Ceruleans, I knew Honduras, and it seemed to me like a paid trip hiking in Honduran forests for two weeks was a no-brainer.

After several months of planning and fund-raising, mission impossible began in earnest on 19 March with a flight to Tegucigalpa. We spent the first two weeks of the trip coordinating with Honduran biologists and setting up survey routes in four national parks: Cerro Azul Meambar, Pico Bonito, Cusuco, and Sierra de Agalta. David Medina, from the National

Autonomous University in Tegucigalpa, became our Honduran counterpart, and saved the day for this project more than once. We also held a survey methodology workshop in a fifth national park – La Tigra – for the Honduran biologists who would assist in the surveys, and anyone else interested in attending. The morning after the workshop four teams of biologists departed La Tigra to conduct simultaneous surveys in the four respective parks. The official surveys took place over two weekends, with informal searches conducted during the intervening week.

Did we find Ceruleans? You bet! Between March 24th and April 13th we found 18 male and female Cerulean Warblers in mixed species flocks of migrant and resident birds, twice the total of previous records for the country. Despite planning

our surveys around historic records, and trying to stick to Ted's hypotheses governing elevation and forest type, our findings were not exactly as we predicted. All the birds we found were below 500 m elevation in lowland forest on the lowest slopes of tall coastal mountain ranges. Inland sites where Ceruleans had been observed in the past turned up no birds. Ted's hypothesis regarding the Caribbean slope turned out to be true, and his idea re-

garding elevation may still be partly true. The historic records from Honduras occurred in the 600-750 m belt Ted proposed. Why did we find birds at a lower elevation? First, most of the forest in Honduras below 750 m is already gone. We did have transects in forest remnants at this elevation, but found no birds there. Second, the remaining forest below 750 m is mostly in the coastal mountains of the North Coast, and access to these areas is pretty slim. We located our survey transects at elevations we could get to within our limited time frame, and these lower forests were where we found the birds. How far up the mountains the species goes is a question we need to answer next time.

Honduras is a beautiful country with stunning natural scenery worth visiting, and the people are fantastic. Many Hondurans participated in this study, and they deserve due credit: Francisco Urbina, Roberto Downing, Kelvin Boddin, Johana Mejia, Luis Alberto Sorto, and Wilson Vasquez conducted Cerulean Warbler surveys. Juan Carlos Sorto, Carlos Alvarenga, Roberto Steiner, and many others helped in innumerable ways.



# NEWS FROM ROBB BRUMSFIELD'S LAB



From left to right: Zac, Michael and Thomas hard at work at the first camp along transect one.

From mid-May to mid-July 2005, graduate student **Zac Cheviron** completed his second field season in Peru, collecting important specimens for his dissertation work. Zac's research seeks to understand the nature of genetic changes that are associated with adaptation to high elevation in Andean birds. Specifically, he is interested in two main questions. First, how many and what kinds of genetic changes exist between highland and lowland populations? And second, how are these differences affected by gene flow among populations living at high, low, and mid-elevations? To address these questions, Zac studies four species, Rufous-collared Sparrow, House Wren, Many-colored Rush Tyrant, and Wren-like Rushbird. These species are unique in that they occur from sea-level to nearly 14,000ft in the Andes, making them, ideally suited for addressing his research questions.

Fieldwork in Latin America is challenging for a variety of reasons, and fortunately, Zac had quite a bit of help in the field. **Thomas Valqui**, LSUMNS graduate student and world-renowned Peruvian bird expert, provided valuable logistic support and the use of his

bird-finding dog, Aquira. Michael Brewer, University of Nevada - Las Vegas graduate student and expert on flight biomechanics collected data on wing morphology. These data will be used in a collaborative project in which he and Zac are investigating differences in wing shape between highland and lowland populations. The final two members of the team made their South American fieldwork debuts on this trip. **Fred Benham**, LSUMNS undergraduate and birding fanatic, and Christy Cheviron, Zac's better half, both provided a great deal of help performing grunt work, everything from collecting and prepping specimens to cleaning dishes.

Together, the team sampled three elevational transects from sea-level to over 13,000ft on the west slope of the Peruvian Andes. The first extended from Lima to Lake Junin, home of the endemic and flightless Junin Grebe. The second was from Pisco, home of the famous Peruvian liquor, to just outside Ayacucho. The final transect was in the extreme southern portion of the country from Tacna to near Lake Titicaca. Along each of these transects, they collected not only impressive series of Zac's focal species, but also several tinamous for Thomas' work on the evolution and biogeography of this group. The southernmost transect lies in an area that had never been visited by museum personnel, and the team also collected several specimens of poorly known species in the area. The bulk of the funding for this trip came from the generous donations made to the LSUMNS Birdathon. By all accounts, the trip was a great success and Zac will have plenty of material to keep him busy in the coming year.

Whereas most museum graduate students spend their field seasons in exotic, faraway locales such as Peru, Vanuatu, and Borneo, ornithology doctoral student **Matt Carling** spends his summers in exotic locales much closer to Baton Rouge. This past summer, Matt's research on the dynamics of the hybrid zone between Indigo (*Passerina cyanea*) and Lazuli (*Passerina amoena*) Buntings took him to the wilds of Wyoming, Montana, Colorado, New Mexico, and both Dakotas.



The Santa Eulalia River Valley along transect 1.



Bighorn National Forest in north-central Wyoming

Matt crisscrossed the western Great Plains and eastern Rocky Mountains in his trusty Toyota Tacoma searching for small blue birds. Some locations, like the Little Missouri National Grasslands in western North Dakota, provided stunning scenery and plenty of birds, others, like Thunder Basin National Grassland in eastern Wyoming, proved to be little more than 'public' grazing lands and oil fields. In and around the Black Hills National Forest in western South Dakota Matt collected the museum's first putative hybrid *Passerina* individuals. Brilliant blue with white bellies and wing bars, hybrid males have been described as looking like Mountain Bluebirds with wing bars and appear to be intermediate between the two parental species in nearly all morphological traits. Now, Matt is busy in the lab trying to tease apart the relative genetic contributions of the two parental species to these hybrids.

Returning to LSU in mid-July, Matt tallied the results of his summer vacation: ~13,500 miles driven, ~200 species of birds seen, including a few Interior Least Terns (an endangered species), four snow storms, two forest fires (don't worry, he didn't start either), one flat tire, and a bushel of buntings – all-in-all, a successful trip!

**Curt Burney** is a new doctoral candidate and member of the Brumfield lab. He arrived this fall from the United States Air Force Academy where he served three years as an instructor in the Department of Biology. Curt is a 1996 USAFA graduate and began his Air Force career in the pilot business. However, due to a fundamental incongruence in vestibular perception and reality that resulted in the use of more than a few air-sickness bags, he soon switched gears. Curt trained as a wildlife ecologist and for three years worked USAF-wide programs mitigating hazards to both human and avian flight. He furthered his education graduating with a M.S. in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from Cornell University in 2001. Curt worked under Dr. David Winkler. He studied the composition and behavioral aspects of a mixed-species swallow roost in central New York and, using the array of NEXRAD weather radar, analyzed the temporal and spatial dynamics of swallow roosts in the eastern United States. His research maps the distribution of pre-migratory roosts of mixed-species flocks in late summer, spotlights key stop-over sites for transients in fall, and concludes with distributions of predominately roosting Tree Swallows (*Tachycineta bicolor*) wintering in Florida. For his doctorate, Curt is concentrating on elucidating further the population genetics of a *Manacus* hybrid zone in Panama. Curt, his wife, Melea, and their two sons, Aidan and Collin, are glad to be back where it is warm, humid, and close to home. Curt is from Auburn, AL, and Melea has several family members (the Bardwell side) living in the Baton Rouge area, her mom is in Mobile, and her daddy Duke resides in Destin, FL.

Matt's dissertation project investigates the role interspecific hybridization plays in the speciation process. He is interested in quantifying how much genetic material is being transferred between these two species when they interbreed and his research concentrates on testing specific hypotheses regarding the relative movement of genes on different chromosomes. For example, theoretical studies predict that genes located on the sex-chromosomes, referred to as the Z and W chromosomes in birds rather than X and Y as in mammals, should move across hybrid zones (i.e. from one species to the other) at a slower rate than genes located on non sex-chromosomes, but there have been relatively few attempts to empirically test this prediction. In addition, Matt will measure various morphological traits (e.g. tail length, wing length, and various plumage traits) which will allow him to compare birds from the current hybrid zone to those collected by ornithologists who studied the *Passerina* hybrid zone in the 1950s and 1970s.

Equipped with camping and collecting supplies for two and a half months on the road, a tank full of liquid nitrogen for storing tissue samples, and plenty of gas money (courtesy of Bird-a-thon donations),



Matt weighing an Indigo x Lazuli.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NEW PARENTS!



**R**obb and Tiffany Brumfield are the proud parents of twin boys. Congratulations from all of us to Robb and his wife, as they welcome Caleb Thomas Brumfield (left) and Wyatt Thomas Brumfield (right). Caleb and Wyatt were born on June 8, 2005 at the Baton Rouge Women's Hospital.

Caleb was born at 12:27 a.m.

Wyatt was born at 12:28 a.m.

## KEEPING GIRLS INTERESTED IN SCIENCE THROUGH LEARNING



**L**PB, the Audubon Council Girl Scouts and Dragonfly TV were pleased to offer three one-week camps for Girl Scouts aged 9-12 with an interest in science.

The girls had a week full of science activities and field trips with the emphasis on weather. They watched segments of Dragonfly TV videos that focused on women with careers in various science fields.

The Girls learned about various weather instruments including rain gauges, thermometers and ultraviolet light meters. They constructed their own barometers and pollen sticks.

During the month of June, the SciGirls visited centers such as the LSU Hurricane Center and the Bluebonnet Swamp. On Tuesdays, three groups of SciGirls spent their afternoons visiting the LSU Museum of Natural Science to meet with our Education Director, **Sophie Warny**, and discuss her palynological research in Antarctica. They looked at some of the cores drilled in the Northern Basin of Antarctica, and then took a look at some of the pollen recovered from these cores. The most common species of pollen they found was the genus *Nothofagus*, an evergreen tree common today in Chile. Through this experience, they realized that pollen found in the core samples being taken today in Antarctic regions can tell us about the past vegetation that once covered the now barren Antarctic continent.

They learned that micropaleontology and the study of past vegetation is a useful tool to help you define past climatic conditions. This hands-on afternoon was concluded by a trip to the Museum to visit the new exhibit "Experience Antarctica". At the exhibit, the girls learned about differences between climate and weather. They found out how climatic conditions in Antarctic can affect our lives here in Louisiana and how climate warming and iceberg collapses are directly affecting the configuration of the Louisiana coastline and wetland loss.



# NEW VERTEBRATE PALEONTOLOGICAL SITE IN LOUISIANA

BY: DR. JUDITH A. SCHIEBOUT

A significant vertebrate fossil assemblage was found weathering out of the little-studied Pascagoula Formation (Miocene) in the Tunica Hills during June 2005. A mastodon palate, teeth, and two tusks (one nearly seven-foot-long) were initially found. Fossils were first reported to **Dr. Judith Schiebout** by Kerry Dicharry, a naturalist now living and working in New Mexico. People who find fossils can call the Museum office at 225-578-2855 to get in contact with Dr. Schiebout and get help.

Subsequent field surveys revealed additional bones, including those of *Teleoceras* (a large rhinoceros), a dwarf rhinoceros, llama-like camels, fishes, turtles, alligators, and two species of horse exposed in the area. These are the first vertebrate fossils reported from the Pascagoula. The overall fauna contained is probably younger than the 13.5 million year old Miocene site Dr. Schiebout and her students have worked on since 1994 on Fort Polk in western Louisiana, but the presence of a dwarf rhinoceros indicates an age no younger than the end of the Miocene, approximately 5 million years ago.

These new fossils from Louisiana were featured on Friday October 14 and Sunday October 16 on LPB's "Louisiana, the State We're In". LPB producer Charley Whinham and LSU Director of Public Affairs Ed Dodd were at the dig site during excavation on Fall Holiday. The Fort Polk Miocene sites of western Louisiana, and now this new site, are important because they are filling in what was a geographical gap in the central Gulf Coast in the record for the Miocene of the North American continent. Some of the fossils could be used in very exciting educational displays.



Tusk nearly ready to jacket.



Kathleen McDonald (L) and Kerry Dicharry (R) work on a mastodon palate.

Charles Sternberg developed the method of taking fossils from field to the lab in plaster jackets over 100 years ago. Field crews have included **Drs. Suyin Ting, John Wrenn, and Ray Wilhite** from LSU, LSU Geology graduate students **Mike Williams, Grant Boardman, Julie Hill**, Mark Hagge, Jay Smith, **Rebecca Tedford** and Jeff Agnew, in addition to many citizen helpers. Volunteers Kathleen MacDonald, Barry and Ellen Meyer, Cathy Lamb (daughter of long time volunteer in the Vertebrate Paleontology lab Ruth Hubert), Mike Nelson, Elizabeth McInnis, Amanda Floyd, and Bill Lee took part in the recent Fall Holiday trip. In addition to helping in fieldwork over several excavations, Kathleen MacDonald also worked in the LSU vertebrate paleontology lab, helping prepare the mastodon palate from start to finish. Citizen scientist Bill Lee has volunteered for over a decade at the Miocene Thomas Farm site in Florida at digs sponsored by the Florida State Museum of Natural History in Gainesville. Erica Simons and Tabitha Cale from Florida, experienced workers from Thomas Farm, were able to help over Fall Holiday. During the Fall Holiday dig, the LSU team worked on systematic excavation of

the site, excavating grids and checking the site for eroded bone. The grid work is done to gather taphonomic information that will result in knowledge of how the animal remains came to be where they are found, and what can be deduced about their stories. Taphonomy (the science of the laws of burial) is a special interest of Geology graduate student Julie Hill. Plum Creek Timber Company provided a lunch for all the excavators.

We greatly appreciate the kindness of lessees and landowners in the vicinity. We particularly hope to avoid "relict hunting" by amateurs at the site, because the fossils are very fragile and require special hardeners and experience to remove and prepare. We also want to avoid nuisances to the landowners. We greatly appreciate those who have helped with access and transport via all-terrain vehicles and trucks, such as Dan DeLee, Ron Ard, Mike Nelson and Curtis Yuan. Photos are by John Wrenn, Ellen Meyer, and **Mike Williams**. We hope to continue excavation and study at the Tunica Hills site for years to come.



Tusk being prepared.



# THE LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF NATURAL SCIENCE WELCOMES ITS NEW GRADUATE STUDENTS



Gustavo  
Bravo



“I consider myself very lucky for having had the opportunity to study in the LSU Museum of Natural Science. The interaction among faculty and graduate students is excellent. This cooperative atmosphere encouraged me to work on a variety of projects dealing with different questions and different vertebrate classes. By taking advantage of the many opportunities for learning in the museum, I became familiar with everything from curatorial techniques to DNA sequencing.”

- James Demastes, Ph.D.

Recent Graduate Student in Mammalogy



Curt  
Burney  
Pg. 6

Heather Hurston was originally attending the University of New Orleans pursuing her Masters degree; however with the arrival of Katrina she has experienced a change in plans, and has subsequently sought refuge at Louisiana State University. Heather is broadly interested in evolutionary biology, phylogeography, population genetics and ecology. She is currently examining how factors such as island age, area and distance to mainland have affected the genetic diversity of the Aegean Wall Lizard *Podarcis erhardii*.



Richard Gibbons:  
See Bird Coordinator  
Pg. 3



Mark Hagge was raised in Green Bay, Wisconsin. He completed his degree at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His pursuit to become a vertebrate paleontologist, along with a desire to escape the Midwest, has brought him to Baton Rouge and Louisiana State University. In his freetime, Mark enjoys running, reading, sports (especially football) and traveling.

## “EXPERIENCE ANTARCTICA” EXHIBIT NOW OPEN IN BATON ROUGE

It's the world's coldest and most mysterious continent, its many layers of ice holding secrets that only the bravest and most resourceful scientists seek to uncover.

While Antarctica may be the world's final and most inaccessible frontier, visitors to LSU can experience some of its wonder firsthand at the LSU Museum of Natural Science in Foster Hall. “Experience Antarctica” is the first new exhibit in more than 40 years at the Museum of Natural Science, and is expected to be a permanent addition to the museum. Featuring displays of rare treasures from the ice continent, “Experience Antarctica” is a glimpse into the rugged life of Antarctic researchers studying the origin and history of our planet.

“Experience Antarctica” is a highly detailed exhibit that can satisfy the curiosity of both young and old. Antarctica has a reputation for being almost uninhabitable, but at one time it boasted an environment teeming with life. Visitors are immediately drawn to the main evidence of this biological abundance through a replica of a *Cryolophosaurus* skull dominating the center of the exhibit. *Cryolophosaurus* was one of the dinosaurs which once lived in Antarctica in warmer times. There are also numerous displays of plant life and rare meteorite samples

from both the moon and Mars. Interactive video displays show LSU geology researchers conducting sea and land research in Antarctica, illustrating the difficulties involved in gathering information in the world's most hostile natural environment.



Photo courtesy of the Advocate.

“It is our hope that this new exhibit creates a spirit of enthusiasm and excitement for our museum,” said **Sophie Warny**. Warny is the education director of the MNS and she is responsible for raising the funds, designing and implementing the new exhibit. “We are very proud of the high level of quality scientific research we conduct here at LSU and our goal is to share the excitement we have for our research with the public. What better way to do so than by translating LSU research into exhibits? Hopefully, this will only be the beginning of a new generation of K-12 outreach programs to generate more interest in the world of science, particularly among our young people,” Warny said.

The exhibit is free and open to the public from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. “Experience Antarctica” is made possible through support and funding by the Louisiana Board of Regents, the Irene W. and C.B. Pennington Foundation and the National Science Foundation.

## NATION-WIDE REPERCUSSIONS OF ANTARCTICA EXHIBIT

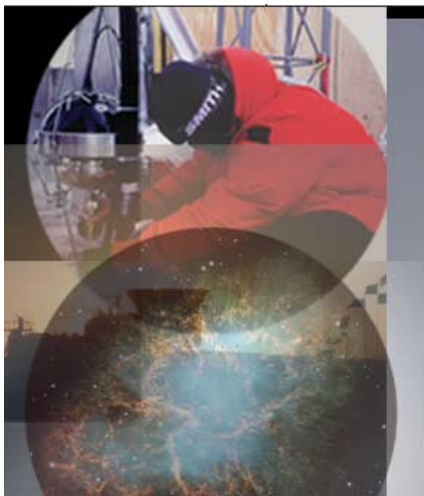


Photo courtesy of <http://icecube.wisc.edu>

**J**im Madsen, the chair of the Department of Physics for the University of Wisconsin- River Falls has announced that the IceCube project will hold its spring collaboration meeting in Baton Rouge, Louisiana with Southern University. This meeting provides an opportunity to bring science to a diverse audience, and to build momentum for 2007-2008 as the International Polar Year.

The IceCube mission to probe new frontiers using neutrinos fits with the International Polar Year celebration. The celebration marks the 100th anniversary of Amundsen and Scott reaching the South Pole and the 50th year anniversary of the International Geophysical Year. The Geophysical Year is based off the establishment of the Amundsen Scott station, the home of the IceCube project at the South Pole.

Jim Madsen will work with **Sophie Warny**, to place a temporary display about the project in the vicinity of the recently opened “Experience Antarctica” exhibit.

Ice Cube is a one-cubic-kilometer international high-energy neutrino observatory being built and installed in the clear deep ice below the South Pole Amundsen Station. Learn more about the IceCube project at <http://icecube.wisc.edu/>

# MUSEUM OF NATURAL SCIENCE EDUCATION NEWS

**D**r. **Sophie Warny** has been elected to serve as one of four Director-at-Large for the American Association of Stratigraphic Palynologists.



Dr. Warny's term as Director-at-Large began during the luncheon of the Annual Meeting in St. Louis this April, and the term will continue for approximately two years.

The ASSP was established in 1967 by a group of 32 founding members to promote the science of palynology in academia and industry. Today AASP has a world-wide membership of about 500 and is run by an elected Board of Directors and subsidiary boards and committees. The ASSP welcomes new individuals as members who are interested in the science of palynology and institutional members who wish to receive publications.

Congratulations to **Rebecca Tedford**, a Museum of Natural Science graduate student, for winning the Best Poster Award at the 38th Annual AASP meeting. The award was given at their annual conference.

**E**ntergy has awarded \$90,000 in Community Partnership grants to more than 120 schools and non-profit agencies throughout the state. The grants will help fund community programs that promote education and literacy, community enrichment, healthy families, arts and culture, and help low-income residents.



From left to right, Entergy Regional Customer Service Manager Bill Benedetto, Stacy Smith, Rhenda Hodnett, Sophie Warny, Melody Benton and Kenny Babin.

Grants ranging from \$500 to \$1,000 were awarded to 38 community projects in the Baton Rouge area at a recent luncheon at Embassy Suites. The funded projects include mentoring programs, utility assistance for low income elderly and antilitter/beautification campaign.

A grant of \$500 was awarded to **Dr. Sophie Warny** and **Rebecca Tedford** to help support the Special Saturday program at the Louisiana State University Museum of Natural Science.

## Giving Form to Support the MNS

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone - Day: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Evening: \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my gift of:  
 \$50  \$100  \$200  \$500  Other

**Make your check payable to:  
 LSU Foundation - MNS**

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**In This Issue...**

Letter from the Director.....	Page 1
Ichthyology Conference/News.....	Page 2
Bird Resource Coordinator.....	Page 3
Bird Watching Club.....	Page 3
Residence Hall.....	Page 3
Survey in Honduras.....	Page 4
New from Brumfield's Lab.....	Page 5/6
Congratulations (Births).....	Page 7
Sci Girls.....	Page 7
Paleontological Site.....	Page 8
New Graduate Students.....	Page 9
Antarctica Exhibit.....	Page 10
IceCube Project.....	Page 10
Education News.....	Page 11