

# GEOLOGY MUSEUM

## 2006 Annual Report



*A workshop attendee uses a steady hand to sketch a patient snake.*

### Illustrators Drawn Together

In August, the Geology Museum hosted the annual meeting of the Guild of Natural Science Illustrators. Roughly 100 members attended the week-long conference including staff artists from the Smithsonian, the American Museum of Natural History, and the Field Museum. The meeting was a great success with many stimulating presentations and workshops. Rich Slaughter was the keynote speaker and his talk focused on prehistoric bone deposits in Midwestern caves. For one highly memorable session, a Weeks Hall lab room was turned into a reptile refuge where illustrators could sketch various species. The conference also featured field trips for exploring the natural resources (and breweries) of Wisconsin. Museum staff led a fossil collecting excursion to a local quarry and Brooke Norsted gave a geological tour of the Baraboo Hills. Additionally, museum personnel provided valuable logistical support, which included setting up a temporary cafeteria in the museum lobby and transporting a sizeable alligator.

### A Brilliant Gift

A major highlight of the past year occurred in December when Dr. Richard A. Greiner, a retired UW-professor of electrical engineering, donated his mineral collection to the museum. With 684 specimens and a nearly \$120,000 appraised value, the R.A. Greiner Mineral Collection is the most impressive set of minerals the museum has ever received. The array of colors and crystal shapes represented in this collection is staggering. It also contains especially spectacular examples of azurite, orpiment, and credite. The minerals are now in the process of being accessioned and will go on display in the fall of 2007. Carlos Peralta and Steve Harsy assisted with the transfer of this collection to the museum and their efforts are much appreciated. Dr. Greiner loved gazing at these minerals, and thanks to his generosity, thousands of others will be dazzled by their beauty as well. Thank you, Doc.



*Professor Greiner shares a story about a memorable specimen.*



A detailed view of "The Alchemist's Workbench" showing a broken pot filled with iron-tinted glass. This glass was made for the exhibit by Scott Shapiro and also was used to create krypton discharge tubes for his sculpture, "Alchemy in Flight".

## The Color of Iron

The Geology Museum and the Chazen Museum of Art collaborated to produce *The Color of Iron*, an exhibition on the range of color that iron and its compounds can produce. The exhibition, which ran from January 14th through March 19th in the Chazen's Mayer Gallery, was curated by Joe Skulan and featured ochre paintings by Sandra McPherson, iron-tinted glass sculpture by Scott Shapiro, iron-glazed ceramic pieces by John Britt, and cyanotypes (photographic prints in the iron compound Prussian blue) by Michael Ware. "The Alchemist's Workbench" was an installation piece created by Joe Skulan, Tom Simon, Scott Shapiro, and Tracy Drier that showcased rose quartz, emerald, amethyst, aquamarine and many other iron-colored minerals. *The Color of Iron* was well attended and received good reviews in the Madison press. It was especially popular among school groups touring the Chazen. The show was the first formal collaboration between the two most popular museums on the UW-Madison campus, and is one of a series of Geology Museum sponsored events aimed at bridging the gap between science and art.

## Out for the Count in 2006

- Number of people who received guided tours: **13,858**
- Number of countries with registered visitors: **46**
- Combined length of lamps in fluorescent mineral display: **48 feet**

## Pterrific Open House

Flying reptiles was the theme of this year's open annual event, and the two previous open houses were held house, which attracted roughly 500 people to the museum on a Sunday afternoon in April. This was the first time in three years that it did not snow on the day of this event. Dr. Martin Lockley, a geology professor at the University of Colorado – Denver and an expert on fossil footprints, was this year's invited speaker. He talked about pterosaur trackways and even donated several casts of such to the museum.



Student volunteers Colman Sutter and Kat Bevington referee the trilobite beanbag toss.

After a two year hiatus, and just in time for the open house, a life-size model *Pteranodon* skeleton was once again put on display in the museum's vertebrate hall. This model was crafted by Chris Ott, a former museum assistant, who now is pursuing his doctorate in geology at the University of Manchester in England. Open house revelers also tried their hand at making origami pterosaurs, in addition to partaking in the usual activities of geology bingo, the trilobite toss, and fishing for fossils with the Pirates of the Paleozoic.

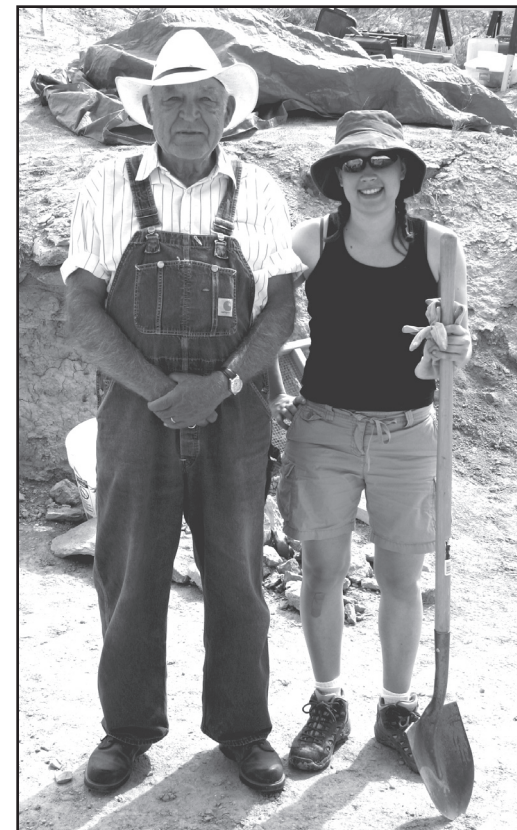
## Field Notes

In June, the museum conducted its fourth season of fossil collecting in the Late Jurassic Morrison Formation of Wyoming. Our efforts once more focused on the Westphal Quarry, which thanks to a backhoe and many hours of hard labor, is now among the largest active excavations in the dinosaur-rich Morrison Formation.

The quarry again yielded hundreds of skeletal elements such as a complete jaw and several limb bones from a rare hypsilophodont dinosaur. Other notable finds of 2006 include two chisel-shaped *Camarasaurus* teeth and multiple turtle shell pieces. Prospecting trips into the surrounding area were also fruitful and resulted in the discovery of a Cretaceous trace fossil site and a source of complete ammonite shells.



Stacy Schaapveld adds newly uncovered fossils to the Westphal Quarry map.



Hillary Cummings takes a break from excavating to chat with Pinky Warren.

The field crews, which consisted mainly of undergraduates, also included teachers from Monroe High School, New Holstein High School, and the Wisconsin Division of Juvenile Corrections. Their hard work and willingness to dine on nearly expired military meatloaf is appreciated.



A complete femur from a chicken-sized hypsilophodont dinosaur.

As in previous years, our field program received crucial assistance from the Bureau of Land Management and the Wyoming Department of Parks and Cultural Resources. We especially want to thank Pinky Warren, a retired science teacher and local resident, who stores much of our field gear between seasons, rescues us after rain storms, provides us with delicious elk steaks, and keeps an eye out for fossil poachers while we are away.