Miss Mie, the Museum’s Japanese friendship doll, is surrounded by the nine American friendship dolls that survived in Mie Prefecture after World War II. Read more about Miss Mie’s adventures on pages 8-9.
Congratulations! to Scott Gardner for 15 years of service to the University. Scott’s name was mistakenly omitted from the service article in the August Mammoth.

Elephant Hall Wedding

On July 18th, 2009, a wedding took place in Morrill Hall. That statement alone might not seem out of the ordinary since Morrill Hall can be rented for various events. What was special about this event were the participants, Emily Thaden and Puni Jeyasingh. Those of us in Nebraska Hall became acquainted with Emily as she worked and volunteered in the Zoology Division for a number of years during her undergraduate degree program at UNL.

Emily’s association with the State Museum goes back even further. Her lifelong fascination with the natural world led her parents to enroll pre-teen Emily in the Junior Curator program at Morrill Hall in 1992. Being a Lincoln resident, she knew the Museum, and her parents thought this a good opportunity to pursue her interests. In the fall of that year, Emily became perhaps the youngest person to prepare a scientific specimen for the research collection in Nebraska Hall. UNSM ZM-18894, a Deer Mouse collected in 1991, was prepared by Emily and is still in the collections.

Remembering that Junior Curator experience, Emily joined the Zoology Division shortly after arriving on campus her freshman year. During her tenure at the Museum, Emily prepared well over 200 scientific specimens for the collections, mostly birds. After UNL, Emily attended graduate school at the University of Oklahoma, where she was associated with, and prepared many bird specimens for, the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History in Norman. While at OU, Emily and Puni met. Puni finished his PhD there in 2007, Emily her Masters in 2008.

When Emily and Puni decided to get married and needed a place for the event, Emily’s mother suggested Morrill Hall. It was perfect! You see, Puni’s family has interest in museums, too; his father is a retired paleobotany professor in India. I’ve already described how the Museum influenced Emily’s life. And so it happened — on July 18th, 2009, with Archie’s immense skeleton as a backdrop, Emily and Puni were joined in matrimony.

Emily and Puni are now at Oklahoma State University; Emily is pursuing a PhD in the Veterinary Pathobiology Department and Puni is on faculty in the Zoology Department. We wish them well.

— Thomas Labedz, Division of Zoology
Visiting the Museum

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**Fun Fact**

The University of Nebraska’s Inventory Department tracks big-ticket items, such as fancy computers and microscopes as well as machinery and vehicles, with metal tags with inventory numbers that are permanently attached to the item by its purchaser immediately after receipt. This fall, such a tag was sent to the Museum’s Division of Parasitology after they purchased a Toyota Landcruiser for their Mongolian expedition. The only problem is that the vehicle is parked off campus — in Mongolia!
As you will see in this issue, your State Museum engaged in major international outreach this summer! Our faculty and staff regularly conduct international collaborative research activities, such as field expeditions, writing joint research papers (e-mail is a great help in keeping in touch with those far-flung international correspondents!), exchanging ideas and publications, loaning specimens, and presenting papers at scholarly meetings. Today’s natural history research museums around the world are linked in a common effort to understand, care for, and conserve the precious specimens and records of the natural world that have been carefully collected and preserved in museums over decades and centuries, as well as those that are collected today on expeditions using the very latest technology. In addition, our Museum is currently engaged in a very important international cultural outreach project centered on our historic Japanese Friendship doll, Miss Mie, who has been cared for in the Anthropology Division of the Museum since her arrival in Lincoln in 1927.

In September I had the opportunity to go on a Darwin Heritage field trip organized in connection with the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology meetings in Bristol, England, that Greg Brown describes elsewhere in this issue. The year 2009 is the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin and the 800th anniversary of the founding of the University of Cambridge (yes, that’s 1209!). The leader and organizer of our trip was the dinosaur paleontologist David Norman, Director of the Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences at Cambridge. We stayed at Christ’s College and saw the rooms where Darwin lived as a student. In addition to the principal Darwin sites in Cambridge, the Darwin House in Kent, and the Oxford University Museum of Natural History, David also showed us the new exhibit “Darwin the Geologist” that he has installed in the Sedgwick Museum. To my delight, David’s exhibit features the exciting new ideas of Robert Hazen at the Carnegie Institution in Washington. Bob is fascinated by the origin of minerals and the origin of life, and he has developed a new way of thinking about mineralogy that he calls “mineral evolution” – a concept in which mineral species increase in number and diversity over geological history, with some types of minerals only appearing on Earth after the emergence of life. (Read more at http://hazen.ciw.edu/research/mineral_evolution)

My husband, Ed Grew, co-authored with Bob a poster at the Geological Society of America annual meeting in Portland, Oregon, in October on the evolution of beryllium minerals. The exhibit at the Sedgwick is, to my knowledge, the first in the world to highlight this new mineral evolution concept for visitors, and I expect it won’t be the last. I hope that it will be an invigorating force for advancing the discipline of mineralogy. David’s exhibit was particularly fitting because Darwin was an outstanding pioneering geologist and I think he would have loved the idea that Earth’s minerals have evolved along with life!

You have probably seen in the news that the University of Nebraska and the University of Nebraska Foundation have launched a major new Capital Campaign. We are very excited about the State Museum’s role in this multi-year effort and the opportunity for working closely with the Friends and the Foundation in developing additional resources to strengthen the Museum for future generations. We were delighted that Ron and Lynn Tanner from Alexandria, Virginia, were able to visit the Museum in connection with the Campaign kick-off. I took them on a tour of Morrill Hall to show them the fossil exhibits that are closely associated with Ron’s father Lloyd Tanner, who was Curator and Collections Coordinator. His memory is honored in the family’s generous gift of the Tanner Plaza at the Morrill Hall entrance, where Archie stands today.

Priscilla Grew, Director

“Archie” salutes Lynn and Ron Tanner on their October 16 visit to the Lloyd Tanner Plaza and Morrill Hall. Photo by Mark Harris.
Cheerio!

In September, I traveled to England to attend the 69th Annual Meeting of the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology (SVP). Hosted by the University of Bristol, this was the first time the annual meeting has been held outside of North America. The Wills Memorial Building [left], an icon on the campus, was one of the principal venues for the meeting. The wonderful Bristol City Museum [in the foreground] houses everything from fossils to old masters and provided a great respite from the bustling meetings.

The meetings were attended by professionals from around the world. I attended the Preparators Technical Session and gave three presentations for a special consolidants and adhesives workshop.

I also visited the British Museum (Natural History) in London [below] for a tour of the Paleontological Conservation Unit. The tour was hosted by Chris Collins (head of the conservation unit), who estimated that, with current resources, there is a 5,000-year backlog of conservation work to be done on their collections!

This incredible building, designed by Alfred Waterhouse, is a London landmark. Elaborate sculptures of plants and animals on the interior and exterior represent biological diversity; those on the west wing are of living forms, while those on the east side show extinct creatures. The Museum opened to the public in 1881. The architecture of the building is nearly as impressive as the incredible collections which include the historic Mary Anning ichthyosaurs and plesiosaurs.

Four and one-half million people per year visit the Natural History Museum!

Greg Brown
Chief Preparator
Vertebrate Paleontology
Gobi Worms and More

Once again this summer, the education department worked with the parasitology division to teach ‘worm’ classes. We taught another section of *The Worms Crawl In and the Worms Crawl Out* and added a new class this year called *Gobi Worms*. We partnered with the Lincoln Community Centers to have students from Dawes and Goodrich Middle Schools participate.

*Gobi Worms* was part of Dr. Scott Gardner’s NSF Mongolian Vertebrate Parasitology Project that is documenting species and the biodiversity in the Gurvonsoikhon National Park. The distance between Lincoln and the Gobi is 6,317 miles, but modern technology made that distance fade away. Using Skype on the computer, we had daily conversations with the researchers out in the field. Although they were tired since it was 11:00 p.m. their time, they reported on the day’s work and answered questions from our students. We sometimes lost the signal as the satellites crossed mountains, but only had to wait and redial! This daily communication was enhanced with more technology. No more turning the globe searching for foreign lands. One click of the mouse and Google Earth zaps us into cyberspace, hovering over Mongolia. We soar above the mountain tops, zoom down into the canyons, roads, and open pastures. We can actually see the areas the researchers were talking about!

The class learned about the Mongolian culture through images sent by the researchers and reading the *Gobi Gazette*, our daily field report. Here the students discovered gers, oyoos, wildlife, and even the descriptions of food as well as Mongolian lifestyles.

Biodiversity was the theme of *Gobi Worms*. Students investigated and counted species on campus and the grasslands of Spring Creek Prairie, comparing them to Mongolia.

Kathy French
Education Coordinator
The Nebraska Association of Teachers of Science (NATS) has an annual fall conference. Normally, the Museum presents sessions and booths; however, this year our presentation was right here in the two buildings. This was a special session for the kick-off of NATS. The 16 teachers who were on board vans last summer touring Nebraska and learning about its geology came to the Museum for an all-day workshop. Their day was split between the two facilities. While at Morrill Hall, they explored kits and resources, and viewed gallery programs and clips from a variety of shows in the planetarium. The vertebrate paleo division in Nebraska Hall gave the teachers an opportunity to prep fossils and pour plaster casts, as well as create a mold to take back to their classrooms. The teachers were impressed with the vast research collection and learned quickly that one needs a great amount of patience to work on fossils! They left with their arms filled with resources, casts, molds, and a better understanding of the Museum programming and staffing plus the vast wealth of information it holds. We will meet with this group one more time in April for a weekend to explore the eastern geology. Continued workshops gives teachers time to digest the information, create and share lesson plans with one another, and ask content questions for clarification.

Kathy French
Education Coordinator
Miss Mie Travels to Japan

At the end of July, I escorted Miss Mie, the Museum’s Japanese Friendship doll, back to her homeland for conservation work and exhibition. In 1927, Miss Mie was one of 58 “goodwill ambassador” dolls sent as a gift to the children of the United States from the children of Japan. These dolls were sent in response to a similar gift of “blue-eyed” dolls given to the children of Japan by American schoolchildren the previous year. The exchange of dolls was intended to carry a message of goodwill and friendship between the children of the two countries during a period of increasing political tensions. After being exhibited in several cities throughout the United States, Miss Mie came to her permanent home at the Museum in 1928.

Overseeing our doll’s conservation is The Committee for Miss Mie Homecoming in Tsu City, Japan. The committee was formed by a group of citizens in Mie Prefecture to help preserve Miss Mie and promote the ideals of the original friendship exchange. The committee raised the funds necessary to cover the expenses of transporting Miss Mie and me to Japan in 2009, providing for her conservation, exhibiting her and her accessories at several sites throughout Mie Prefecture, and returning her to the Museum in 2010.

Four members of the committee visited the Museum during the summer of 2008 to arrange for the loan of Miss Mie, her accessories, and the approximately 150 letters written by Japanese schoolchildren in 1927 to accompany Miss Mie. We loaned the letters to the committee at that time so they could translate the letters into English and try to locate the letter writers or their families.

Miss Mie and her accessories were packed in custom-made cases for the trip to Japan. Miss Mie traveled in her own seat on the airplane, and I carried a photocopy of her official passport to show to the amused security agents and flight attendants. The cases for her accessories were built to fit into the overhead compartment, so I could keep an eye on these fragile lacquered objects.

I arrived late in the evening on July 31st and was met at the airport by an enthusiastic welcome committee. The next day, I met with Mr. Masaru Aoki, a doll conservator, so he could assess Miss Mie’s condition and confirm that she was stable enough to be exhibited before the conservation work was performed. Mr. Aoki works for Yoshitoku Company in Toyko, which has been manufacturing these high-quality dolls since 1711. Mr. Aoki was pleased with the doll’s condition and complimented the Museum on the professional care we had provided to Miss Mie and her accessories over the years. After giving his approval for Miss Mie to be exhibited, Mr. Aoki straightened her kimono and re-tied her obi sash. This created a lot of excitement among the members of the committee. They were eager to see what fabrics had been used to create the multiple layers of her kimono and were impressed by the detail of her costume. There are many different ways to tie an obi and there was a lengthy discussion regarding the appropriate way Miss Mie’s obi should be tied.
Once Miss Mie was safely in the care of the conservator, I was escorted to the many activities planned to celebrate Miss Mie’s arrival. The first event was a symposium on friendship dolls, where I delivered greetings from the Museum. Next there was a private reception and viewing of Miss Mie for all the people who had donated funds for her conservation. At this reception, a group of schoolchildren from Tsu City sang a song that was commissioned to welcome Miss Mie home. This song complimented the one that a student wrote in 1927 and was sung at her farewell party. Although the songs were in Japanese, it was obvious the importance that Miss Mie held for everyone there. We were also treated to a reading of one of the 1927 letters by the original letter writer.

The first public exhibit of Miss Mie was held in the Tsu Matsubishi department store. This store has a dedicated gallery for community exhibits and Miss Mie was accompanied by her accessories and the few remaining American friendship dolls still in existence. The opening ceremony for the exhibit was televised and attended by over 200 people.

During my stay in Tsu City, I visited Shinmati elementary school. Of the 44 American friendship dolls sent to Mie Prefecture in 1926, Shinmati school received one doll that they named Mary. The children loved the doll and were fascinated by her Western dress. However, during World War II the Japanese military ordered all the American dolls destroyed. Fortunately, one of the teachers at Shinmati school recognized the importance of their friendship doll and hid her away. She was not found again until the 1970s. The school administrators had a new dress made to replace her worn-out one and she was placed in an exhibit case in the school. Last year, the schoolchildren learned the story of the friendship doll exchange and made a video of the story of “Miss Mie in Nebraska.” Even though school was out for the summer, almost all the children came back to the school to welcome me and show me the video they had made. We displayed Miss Mie and their American doll together and the children were able to view both of the dolls they had been studying.

One of the most striking aspects of my trip was the support and generosity of the citizens of Mie Prefecture. Many people stopped me on the street to tell me how grateful they are that the Museum has preserved Miss Mie, her accessories, and the children’s letters.

In September, Miss Mie was delivered to Mr. Aoki at the Yoshitoku Company in Tokyo where she will be conserved. Then she will again be exhibited at various locations in Mie Prefecture before returning to the Museum in May 2010. Following Miss Mie’s return, a group of visitors from Mie will visit Lincoln for a cultural exchange with Nebraska. We are excited to have the opportunity to show them Morrill Hall and share some of the exciting venues Nebraska has to offer. The Committee for Miss Mie Homecoming has done a fantastic job of providing the resources needed to preserve our friendship doll and to continue the tradition of goodwill started in 1926. We appreciate all their hard work and look forward to building our new friendships.

Susan Curtis
Anthropology Division
Parasitology Field Expedition to Mongolia

During the summer of 2009, members of the Parasitology Division worked for two months in Mongolia to collect vertebrate animals and their parasites. While preparation for this expedition had started several years ago, this was the first year of full-scale research in Mongolia. The three-year research project is funded by the National Science Foundation and focuses on exploring the biodiversity of vertebrate animals living in the Mongolian mountain ranges and investigates the evolutionary history of parasites in these unique biotopes.

Preparation for this large-scale expedition started in late 2007 by assembling the extensive amount of field equipment necessary for our work. Traps and nets to catch animals, microscopes, slides, vials and tools to process the collected material, camping equipment for the crew — all had to be shipped to Mongolia. Eight pallets with all these materials were loaded into a container and shipped out to Mongolia on April 1st, 2008. Unfortunately, the earthquake in China interfered with our plans: shipments through China were delayed and that included our field equipment. Furthering our headaches, civil unrest and a volatile political situation squashed our hopes to start the field work in 2008. Finally, in the late spring of 2009, we arrived in Mongolia with plans covering every minuscule detail and possibility. This was truly a large-scale effort to research the animals of our target area. Ornithologists, mammalogists, herpetologists, and parasitologists worked together helping each other and sharing their resources to collect high-quality materials and data on the Mongolian fauna. Researchers from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the National University of Mongolia, Hokkaido University, the University of New Mexico, Portland State University, and the University of Kansas came together to do a thorough survey. From the Museum, the Parasitology Division was represented by Scott L. Gardner (curator), David Tinnin, Gábor Rác, Terry Haverkost, and by a former member of our lab, Agustín Jiménez.

In Mongolia, the crew of the expedition grew with our local collaborator (professor Batsaikhan), and graduate and undergraduate students from the National University of Mongolia also joined us to learn field work techniques and to assist our research. Our expedition counted 19 members at its most populous time.

During the summer, our research focused on an area in the Central-Southern part of Mongolia. The area is known as Gobi Gurvan Saikhan National Park. The name of the area (The Three Beauties of the Gobi) refers to the three mountain ranges in the park. The area has also some unique geological features, such as the sand dunes of Khongorin Els (Singing Dunes) and the permanent ice sheet of Yolin Am. The mountain ranges of this area represent the southern tip of the Gobi Altai mountain chain. The flora and fauna on the isolated peaks with their colder climate are quite distinct from the animals and plants in the surrounding desert, semi-desert plains. While jerboas and gerbils are the typical small animals of the desert and dry grassland, we caught small hamsters and voles at the higher elevation. We camped out at four different sites, collecting in the three local mountain ranges. We also explored the driest region in the area where migrating sand dunes dominate the landscape.

For the unfamiliar, it is hard to imagine the vast remoteness of Mongolia. Its area is 603,909 square miles – similar in size to Alaska, and three times larger than

Sand dunes at Hongorin Els, at one of our collecting sites.

For the unfamiliar, it is hard to imagine the vast remoteness of Mongolia. Its area is 603,909 square miles – similar in size to Alaska, and three times larger than

Jerboa, a typical desert-dwelling small rodent; it has a different evolutionary origin, but it is very similar in appearance to North American kangaroo rats.

Expedition group photo with Ikh Bogd Mountain in the background.

Our laboratory tent. Expedition members formed a line to process the collected materials.
Texas – inhabited by only 2.5 million people. In the southern part of Mongolia, in the outer Gobi desert, population density is less than one person per square mile. The majority of Mongolians still adhere to their centuries-old semi-nomadic lifestyle. They live in felt tents – yurts, or gers as they call them – and raise livestock for a living. In the country there are an estimated 50 million head of livestock (horses, cattle, yaks, camels, goats, and sheep).

Our expedition relied on three vehicles: an old Russian military truck, another Russian military van, and a Toyota Landcruiser (many cars in Mongolia were second-hand cars imported from Japan and Korea). All of our vehicles were four-wheel drive, a must-have while traveling in Mongolia. At present, Mongolia has approximately 500 kilometers of paved road. Main “roads” are just mile-wide swaths of tracks cut into the grass by vehicles. In other cases, local drivers just aim at a particular landmark, such as a mountain in the distance, and drive straight across the hard packed ground of the desert. Signs for travelers are rare, and we had to ask for directions from the locals. Of course, occasionally this caused problems: a path might be passable by horse or motorcycle but not by our vehicles. Often we had to turn back and try a different route to our destination. Many of our collecting sites were inaccessible by vehicles, and we either had to haul in our trapping equipment on our backs or we had to rent horses from the locals to transport the gear.

The weather also was challenging. In early June, the Gobi desert was hot during the day and freezing during the night. In addition, strong and persistent winds were battering our tents day and night. One of our laboratory tents did not last 10 days in the strong winds. We realized the advantage of the round yurts made from wood and heavy felt: they held steady in the wind and they stayed cool during the day, but warm at night. Mongolians are very friendly and welcoming: locals always invite the travelers into their yurt, and they offer food and a shelter to rest for those who need it.

While we shipped most of our research and camping equipment to Mongolia, we had to buy food locally and adapt to the local cuisine. Feeding 19 people was a full-time job, so we hired a local Mongolian to take care of the kitchen inventory and to cook for the research members. We could not complain, we never went hungry, but it took us some time to get used to local meals. The lack of refrigeration in the nomadic lifestyle is a major constraint on how food can be stored and processed. Dried meat and milk products are major components of the Mongolian staple. We bought sheep and goat meat butchered locally from herders. Also, dried cheese served as snacks for shorter hikes and trips. Beside these main items, flour, dried pasta, potatoes, and rice are available at local food stores. As a result, Mongolian meals are heavy and energy rich. Luckily we were burning all the energy that we consumed while carrying the traps.

We are glad to report that our expedition was a successful one: we collected over 800 mammals, 180 birds, and the same amount of reptiles and amphibians. We examined all of these animals for both ecto- (ticks, fleas, mites, etc.) and for endoparasites (tapeworms, pinworms, whipworms, liverflukes, etc.). In the coming months we will be working on processing, organizing, and identifying the collected material. We are also excited about the continuation of our expedition and, richer and wiser with this past summer’s experience, are starting to prepare for the next summer of 2010.

— Gábor Rácz, Collection Manager in Parasitology

Photos by David Tinnin, Gábor Rácz, Agustín Jiménez, and Luis Ruedas.
Rachel Short, a recent graduate of Illinois Wesleyan University, prepared a well-preserved rhino skull salvaged in the summer of 2008 during excavation preparing for construction of the Hubbard Rhino Barn.

Intern Jason Carr assembled the skull and feet of an oreodont (*Ustatochoerus*) that was recovered in dozens of small pieces near the Niobrara River. The specimen was donated by amateur paleontologists Tom and Sandy Sawyer of Bassett, NE. Jason is a student at the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology.

Keila Bredehoeft identified more than 30 species of rodents, insectivores, rabbits, snakes, and salamanders while working in the prep lab this summer. Keila has a master’s degree in paleontology from East Tennessee University.

Stephanie Chorkawciw, a student at South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, carefully works through a portion of the ashbed that was unsheltered prior to construction of the Hubbard Rhino Barn. Stephanie assisted with the excavation of three new rhino skeletons this season – the first skeletons revealed in the ashbed since 2000.

Student Paleontologists Back to Work with Opening of Hubbard Rhino Barn

Lani Manion (left) and Keila Bredehoeft are rapt with attention as they get pointers on excavation technique in the Rhino Barn from Greg Brown, chief preparator at the UNSM fossil lab. Lani was a student at Minnesota State University, but has transferred to the University of Nebraska for the current school year.

Jason’s, Rachel’s, and Lani’s internships were funded by a generous grant from the David B. Jones Foundation. Stephanie’s internship was partially funded by a generous grant from the David B. Jones Foundation. Keila’s internship was funded by a generous grant in memory of Morris Skinner by Alan and Virginia Overcash.
This 2009 season seemed to fly by; I can’t believe it is already mid-October. In a couple of weeks, we will be closing for the season. This year was busy and we had good visitation and sales, considering the economy. Since we are located in Fort Robinson State Park, we have tourists come in as they participate in all the activities available here at the Fort. This is my favorite time of the year as my summer help is gone and I meet the visitors and have the opportunity to tell them about the “Fighting Mammoths.” I also enjoy visiting with them and telling them the story of our “Fighting Mammoths” and also some of the history of Fort Robinson. Visitors from almost every state and six foreign countries have been here this year. I have had visitors come back every few years, and I enjoy seeing them and hearing the news of their families.

With school starting, I have been busy with school groups. There have been six schools already this fall. The largest was Scottsbluff Middle School. There were two groups of 50 students each on September 29th and 30th. I have a “Scavenger Hunt” for the students to do. It is a list of 14 questions to which they have to find the answers. There is a prize for the first one, or team, who finds all the answers. It has worked very well, as it encourages the students to read.

I guess that pretty much sums up the fall season. This is my 19th year here at the Trailside. I can’t believe it has been that long or that I am getting that old. I am looking forward to starting my 20th year next spring.

Susan Veskerna
Trailside

These pictures are from the Scottsbluff Middle School’s recent visit to Trailside.
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NOVEMBER 2009

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