July 4
Morrill Hall & Mueller Planetarium
Closed

July 11
Free Thursday Night
4:30 - 8:00 p.m.

July 13
Investigate: Second Saturday Science Lab
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

July 18
Free Thursday Night
4:30 - 8:00 p.m.

July 20
Mission Moon at Morrill Hall with Smithsonian Channel
screening “The Day We Walked On The Moon”

July 21
Smithsonian Channel
screening The Day We Walked On The Moon

July 25
Free Thursday Night
4:30 - 8:00 p.m.

August 1
Pop In Storytime
4:00 - 4:30 p.m.

August 10
Investigate: Second Saturday Science Lab
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
We can only be said to be alive in those moments when our hearts are conscious of our treasures

-- Thornton Wilder, American Playwright

These days, we are feeling extremely alive at Morrill Hall because of Cherish Nebraska, a true treasure for our visitors. Every day we hear their wonderment as they tour the fourth floor renovation made possible by the generosity of our project donors. I cannot do justice to the ‘oohs’ and ‘aahs’ – but the excitement, wonder, and kind words are affirmation that all the hard work by museum personnel, by more than 50 subject experts, and museum consultants has resulted in a world class set of exhibits, worthy of our Smithsonian affiliation. Much thanks to our tireless University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) project manager Joe Goodwater, and the teams of Kenneth Hahn Architects, Gallagher & Associates, Northern Lights Productions and Pacific Studios.

While tempting to rest on these laurels, you will see in this Mammoth that we have used the momentum of Cherish Nebraska as a springboard – research collections, public programs and K12 curriculum offerings.

‘Project Oreodont’ is in full swing and just recently, the first fossil lemur is being prepared in the Visible Lab. Plants, parasites, insects and other animals are prepared weekly by collection staff and new county specimen records are found. As one visitor exclaimed, “We’re seeing science discovery in action.”

Cherish Nebraska prompted additional research projects on Nebraska’s natural history. An inventory of native bees is a collaboration of the Entomology division and pollinator research in the UNL Bee Lab. Thanks to Entomology graduate student theses, our native bee fauna will become more widely published and available for prairie conservation assessments in the future.

We continue to cultivate impactful community partnerships like Dinosaurs and Disasters, Science Café, Sunday with a Scientist and Investigate: Second Saturday Science Lab. These public programs exist thanks to the UNL and Lincoln scientific community who partner with us. With scientist partners, we plan to host future citizen scientist workshops in the new fourth floor Science Exploration Zone; interested public can assist scientists with their work. Watch for these opportunities in forthcoming Museum Happenings emails.

As we explore new opportunities for the Museum, we must also pause and thank those who work day-in and day-out to make all these wonderful projects possible. This spring we toasted to two dedicated education professionals, Kathy French and Ann Cuisck as they move into retirement. Their hard work in the Museum’s education department has helped us get to this exciting point. Please help me in thanking Kathy for her 25 years of service and Ann for her 32 years. In lieu of gifts, both requested individuals consider a donation to the Museum’s Discovery Center Fund for the upkeep of hands-on activity areas. I would invite you to help us congratulate these two with a gift in honor of them using the giving envelope found in this publication.

I hope you will visit us again soon to experience the programs and the wonder of Cherish Nebraska. And a big thanks to you, because your membership helps the museum grow to serve our community in more and better ways.

— Dr. Susan Weller, Director
University of Nebraska State Museum

A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR
CHERISH NEBRASKA BENEFACTORS:

The Hubbard Foundations
Ruth and Bill Scott
Donald F. and Mildred Topp Othmer Endowment
Nebraska Environmental Trust
Larry and Sue Wood
The Dillon Foundation
Sunderland Foundation
Dr. Mark B. and Diann S. Sorensen
Ron and Lynn Tanner
Karen Amen & Jim Goeke
Dr. Arthur and Christine Zygielbaum
Kimmel Foundation
Friends of the State Museum

Dr. Weller makes a toast to the hard work of museum personnel, by more than 50 subject experts, and museum consultants during the Member’s fourth floor opening preview breakfast on February 16, 2019.
As a biological sciences faculty member at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, I used campus museums as teaching resources for decades, and in addition was fortunate to have access to the Museum’s research collections in Nebraska Hall (NH). During a recent visit to NH, I was reminded by one of the curators that it has been quite a while since Museum curators and curatorial staff members hosted a Friends open house. The Friends Board includes some new members who are enthusiastic about expanding the audience that understands how research not only contributes to exhibits, but also provides tangible evidence for what the natural world is really like. Board discussions this spring have concerned this open house so I ask you to Save the Date of Friday, September 20 for this revitalized event! More information and registration information will soon be made available via the Museum’s website (museum.unl.edu).

Speaking of funds, the Friends history reveals a long record of providing support that has allowed the Museum to deliver science education to thousands of visitors, from schoolchildren to senior citizens, in many different ways. For this year’s Give to Lincoln Day, the Friends concentrated on raising funds for the museum’s Virtual Field Trip program. This program virtually links Museum educators and University of Nebraska-Lincoln scientists with K12 school students throughout the state. Thanks to generous community members, over $6,800 was raised providing nearly seventy virtual programs to classrooms who under normal circumstances are unable to travel to Morrill Hall.

Finally, whenever I talk with acquaintances about the Friends and the Museum, I always get asked about my favorite exhibits. Rather than answer that question in a Mammoth column, I’d encourage all of you to not only decide which of the four floors of Morrill Hall, or the two floors of Nebraska Hall (if you’ve been fortunate enough to gain entrance there), are your favorite parts of the Museum, but also to tell why these particular exhibits or collections are your favorite. In other words, our personal engagements with the Museum are a critical part of our ongoing efforts to remain scientifically literate citizens, but our reasons for sustaining those engagements may be what another person needs to hear.

— John Janovy, Jr., President
Friends of the State Museum

As most of you know from reading your local papers and online sources over the past few months, in February, the University of Nebraska State Museum opened its stunning new fourth floor exhibits, with the theme of Cherish Nebraska.

Four evenings of celebration accompanied this opening, with donors, Friends and Members honored and introduced to Barbourofelis fricki, whose image graces Museum t-shirts and whose sabre-like fangs greet those entering the exhibits through the stairway doors. Nothing tests the talents, patience, and skills of museum staff, curators, fundraisers, and consultants quite like an exhibits endeavor of this magnitude. I believe I can speak for all who have made it through Cherish Nebraska in thanking everyone who worked on this project, as well as all the donors who supported it and the University of Nebraska Foundation personnel who were so instrumental in finding those donors, few of whom, I suspect, needed much convincing in order to buy into this adventure.

During one of those evenings in February, someone, reading the name Barbourofelis fricki and knowing that an “i” on a species name often signifies an honor, asked me who was “frick” and why he or she had an extinct cat named after him or her. Well, a little library sleuthing turned up the original description of this fossil species, by C. Bertrand Schultz, Marian R. Schultz, and Larry D. Martin (Bulletin of the University of Nebraska State Museum, 1970, volume 9, number 1), with the note that fricki was in honor of Childs Frick, vertebrate paleontologist, benefactor and trustee of the American Museum of Natural History, and long time collaborator with Bertrand Schultz. That answer is a reminder that donor generosity is a major factor in the development of natural history museums, including Nebraska’s, providing meaningful experiences for generations of visitors. Scientists also know that once an honorific name is published, it’s embedded in the primary literature for centuries, almost like a metaphorical fossil, thus the constant reminder of an honor and the reason for that honor.
On May 19, 2019, the Museum offered its first Sensory Friendly Sunday. Children and adults with special needs and their families had the opportunity to experience the new fourth floor and participate in activities in a more quiet, supportive environment for two hours before the Museum opened to the general public.

Admission was free thanks to the Claire M. Hubbard Foundation. A free planetarium experience was also offered, as well as several activity stations, a yoga room, and an information table from the Autism Society of Nebraska.

There was a great response to this event, and 130 visitors attended. One parent commented, “This was an amazing and much appreciated event! We have attempted trips over this past year but they don’t end well. The kids want to be able to enjoy it, but it gets too overwhelming. So this event was perfect for us; they stayed for two hours!” The Museum is looking forward to holding this event again on September 8, 2019.

In an effort to be more accessible every day for individuals with special needs, the Museum has developed sensory kits that can be checked out at the front desk.

Each kit includes different fidgets, ear plugs, and noise-dampening headphones. In addition, a social story will soon be available on the Museum’s website (museum.unl.edu) to help children and adults prepare for their visit.

— Jen Ruyle, Museum Education Associate
University of Nebraska State Museum

**SAVE THE DATE!**
**Fall Sensory Friendly Sunday**
September 8 | 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
NEW BOOK FOCUSES ON INTRIGUING PARROT BEHAVIOR

Watch for a new book by UNL Professor Emeritus, Alan Bond, and University of Nebraska State Museum professor and curator, Judy Diamond. Published by the University of Chicago Press, Thinking Like A Parrot: Perspectives from the Wild, has already received accolades from bird researchers and writers from around the world.

According to Jennifer Ackerman, author of The Genius of Birds, “this fascinating book takes us into their universe to discover not just how these birds live, but how they think, ‘talk,’ and feel. You’ll be amazed by the surprises—the slang of kākās, the playful gangs of galahs, the ingenious adaptability of rose-ringed parakeets.” Nathan J. Emery, author of Bird Brain: An Exploration of Avian Intelligence, says, “In Thinking like a Parrot, Bond and Diamond have looked behind the curtain to reveal that parrots possess minds and behavior as complex and intriguing as any creatures in the animal kingdom. This is an exceptional guide for anyone who wants to discover more about how this stunning group of birds think about the world.”

In their book, Bond and Diamond look beyond much of the standard work on captive parrots to the mischievous, inquisitive, and astonishingly vocal parrots of the wild. Focusing on the psychology and ecology of wild parrots, Bond and Diamond document their distinctive social behavior, sophisticated cognition, and extraordinary vocal abilities.

Join the authors for a book signing at Francie and Finch (130 S 13th St, Lincoln, Nebraska) August 2, 2019 from 5:30-7:30 p.m.

ZOOOLOGY EXPERT ANSWERS YOUR WILDEST QUESTIONS

Do fish feel pain? Why don’t deer noses freeze in the winter? These and other quizzical thoughts are answered in The Three Minute Outdoorsman Returns: From Mammoth on the Menu to the Benefits of Moose Drool by museum curator and professor Dr. Robert Zink.

Follow-up to his The Three-Minute Outdoorsman: Wild Science from Magnetic Deer to Mumbling Carp (2014, Univ. of Minnesota Press), Dr. Zink presents over seventy three-minute essays in which he responds to the questions that have yet to cross your mind.

Publisher’s Weekly notes, “...[this book] takes readers on an eclectic tour through various aspects of nature. [He] delves into dense scientific studies on sometimes obscure topics and, in a series of brief essays, translates their insights into layperson’s language”.

Drawing on his zoological background, Zink condenses the latest scientific discoveries and delivers useful, entertaining information on the great outdoors.

Both of Dr. Zink’s The Three Minute Outdoorsman books are available in Morrill Hall’s Discovery Gift Shop.
NASA EXHIBITION IN NEBRASKA, FIRST STOP MORRILL HALL

The Museum, in partnership with the Nebraska Center for Materials and Nanoscience (NCMN), were awarded the opportunity to host the new NASA exhibit “Sun, Earth, Universe”.

The exhibition, “Sun, Earth, Universe”, was developed by the Science Museum of Minnesota in collaboration with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Fifty two exhibitions were developed and distributed nationwide by the National Informal STEM Education Network (NISE Network).

The exhibit is designed to engage audiences in the awe-inspiring fields of earth and space science. This fun and compelling exhibit is for visitors of all ages.

Packed with engaging, hands-on interactive exhibits and dazzling imagery, this 600-square-foot exhibition connects visitors with current NASA science research and launch them on a journey to explore the universe!

Visitors can follow the design-build-test cycle of engineering and build a model spacecraft for their own mission to space. Spin a tumbler of 10,000 beads, representing all of the stars we can see from earth to search for the unique one that represents our sun. Reveal hidden images using the same tools NASA scientists employ to explore the otherwise invisible forces and energy of the universe. Take a break in the seating area and play the “Your Mission to Space” board game, or help younger visitors pilot rovers across the Mars landscape play table.

These fun exhibit experiences introduce visitors to ongoing NASA research in the fields of materials science, heliophysics, Earth science, planetary science, and astrophysics, and encourage them to imagine what the future of Earth and space science might hold.

In addition NCMN, Nebraska Nanoscale Facility, and the University of Nebraska State Museum will support the exhibit’s travel to six other Nebraska museums: The Children’s Museum of Central Nebraska – Hastings; Edgerton Explorit Center – Aurora; Kearney Area Children’s Museum; Eleanor Barbour Cook Museum; Chadron State College; Wayne State College A. Jewell Schock Museum of Natural History and the Fred G. Dale Planetarium; and the Strategic Air & Space Museum – Ashland.
The Mammoth

Ralph Mueller, Planetarium coordinator, Zach Thompson, is selected as a NASA Solar System Ambassador in 2019.

The Solar System Ambassadors program is a public engagement effort that works with motivated volunteers across the nation to communicate the science and excitement of NASA’s space exploration missions and discoveries to the people in their communities.

As a government-funded agency, the public has a vested interest in what steps are being taken to continue our quest for knowledge. Solar System Ambassadors share these efforts in a variety of ways: public presentation, demonstration, star parties, and much more. With year-round training opportunities directly from NASA – either as webinar sessions or in-person workshops – Ambassadors have an immediate link to the very latest in NASA science and exploration.

In the past several months alone, NASA has sent a new lander to Mars to explore the Red Planet’s inner workings; deployed a craft to an asteroid with the hope of returning sample material back to Earth; and actively explored an object more than four billion miles away, making it the farthest exploration of our solar system to date. With all these achievements, the public can’t miss out on what incredible breakthroughs are being made! Instead of trying to sift through this information alone, an Ambassador compiles it all into a comprehensive show-and-tell for audiences.

Utilizing a planetarium provides a unique way to share new discoveries with visualization software and fulldome video. As is practice, most presentations at Mueller Planetarium are accompanied by a brief update on current NASA missions, especially those that relate to a publicly offered fulldome show. Visitors can expect the same attention to detail, now with more frequent updates from NASA. There will likely be more pop-up displays in or around the planetarium thanks to material available through the Solar System Ambassadors program, including take-home activities for the public.

Dr. Judy Diamond receives Science Education Award

Each year, the National Science Education Leadership Association (NSELA) awards one administrator who exhibits exceptional enthusiasm, support, and dedication for science education, outreach, and exploration.

The NSELA Outstanding Administrative Support Award is presented to those who contribute significantly towards science education through grant writing, curriculum implementation, or performing research. Dr. Judy Diamond, Curator of Informal Science Education at the University of Nebraska State Museum, has done all of that and more and is the recipient of the NSELA Outstanding Administrative Support Award for 2019.

Dr. Judy Diamond, who has been a part of Morrill Hall since 1990, has supported the museum, students, and science instructors through her research-oriented approach to education ever since. Specifically, Diamond has written grants for the University of Nebraska State Museum to bring in continual funding from 1992-2018 that totals to millions of dollars. These grants have come from numerous institutions including the National Science Fund, The National Institute of Health, and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. This funding has helped the museum gain resources to grow, collaborate, and gain national notoriety through exhibits like the Mesozoic Gallery and Explore Evolution.

Dr. Judy Diamond also began Wonderwise Women in Science, which introduces students and experts alike to women who have made science their profession.

“I am grateful to James Blake, science curriculum coordinator at the Lincoln Public Schools for nominating me. The prize gives me an opportunity to help support one of my favorite projects, the Academy for Native Highschool Students, held at UNL each summer” says Diamond. This program gives native students the opportunity to explore hands-on, creative building exercises and retreats promoting informal science education.

Through research, Dr. Diamond has uncovered key insights on how to educate the public on topics such as evolution, vaccinations, and infectious disease through museum exhibits, interactive media, and comic books. Diamond believes that the University of Nebraska State Museum is a “gateway and mediator” in making science accessible to the public.

Dr. Diamond recognizes the collaborative potential between museums and schools and is committed to the work cut out for all educational institutions in promoting diversity, innovation in learning and technology, and engaging the public to be interested in, trust, and understand science in their everyday lives.
MUSEUM AWARDED $25,000 SMITHSONIAN PROGRAM GRANT

Smithsonian Affiliate

Through a National Science Foundation subaward, the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History and Twin Cities Public Television have awarded the University of Nebraska State Museum $25,000 - one of three institutions chosen nation-wide - to enhance family programming, support professional development on science content and informal learning techniques through the Lineage Outreach Program for Smithsonian Affiliates.

Bringing the Smithsonian to your backyard, right here in Nebraska, is what being a Smithsonian Affiliate is all about. The Museum was awarded its status in 2014 after an application and review process. Affiliate organizations are selected for their record of scholarship, professionalism, high quality exhibits and effective museum education programs. The Smithsonian considers affiliate proposals from institutions whose missions are parallel to the Smithsonian’s and who demonstrate a strong commitment to serving their communities.

Since the designation, the Museum has facilitated the mission of the Affiliates in many ways including bringing the temporary exhibition Titanoboa: Monster Snake to Morrill Hall, hosting lectures and workshops like the recent ‘Saving Family Heirlooms’ disaster response workshops, plus providing the Smithsonian Affiliate membership program for museum members. The relationship extends further in providing opportunities to enhance museum programming and opportunities for visitors and staff alike including the newly awarded program grant.

In addition to monetary funding, the award also includes in-person training at the Smithsonian on best practices in facilitation and implementation of family-based learning programs. The museum will gain access to fossil-based visitor activities, including 3D printed fossils from the Smithsonian’s collection, plus a copy of the new Smithsonian Channel film “When Whales Walked: Journeys in Deep Time” that can be screened for visitors. The film traces the epic origin stories of some of the world’s most spectacular creatures. From Abu Dhabi to Argentina, Kenya to China, the program takes viewers on a global adventure as top scientists investigate clues from the fossil record and use 21st-century technology to unlock the evolutionary secrets of crocodiles, birds, whales and elephants.

The Museum will send educators Jen Ruyle (Morrill Hall) and Daniel George (Ashfall Fossil Beds) as part of the in-person professional development training this summer in Washington, D.C. The training will provide an opportunity to better focus adult and child interactive learning encouraging the two age groups to feel empowered to work together as scientists to explore paleontology. In addition, the Museum has been provided the fossil-based activities, “Whale Evolution”, “Elephant Evolution”, and “Ecosystem Recreation”.

With the knowledge obtained from the professional development training and the new fossil kits, the Museum will present two special projects this fall around the “Lineage”. Save the date to attend the special edition of Sunday with a Scientist at Morrill Hall on Sunday, September 22 from 12:30-4:30pm. The Museum will offer the new activities, plus other hands-on experiences. The event will also include a screening of the “When Whales Walked” film and connecting with sister museum Ashfall Fossil Beds State Historical Park via virtual field trip technology. The second event, that will be held at Ashfall Fossil Beds State Historical Park, will be October 5, 2019. The event at Ashfall near Royal, Nebraska will mirror the September Sunday with a Scientist event in providing activities for families to explore paleontology together at the Ashfall site.

Through this award, the Museum is able to build capacity in professional development for its educators, engage local families in learning about paleontology and evolution through the fossil record, and to extend its reach into the community, specifically to those in central Nebraska.

— Mandy Haase-Thomas, Chief Communications Officer, University of Nebraska State Museum
Each April during National Volunteer Month, the Museum honors special volunteers who have dedicated an exceptional amount of their time and talent. This year, the Museum honored a volunteer who helps in collections, one who assists the education department, and a student group who provided a special Investigate: Second Saturday Science program. Each were awarded certificates of appreciation during a private lunch with director Dr. Susan Weller and volunteer and adult programs coordinator Sarah Feit.

Rachel Gibson, Nebraska Hall Volunteer of the Year

Rachel volunteers in the C.E. Bessey Herbarium botany research division and was nominated to be volunteer of the year for collections by botany collections manager Thomas Labedz. Rachel came to the State Museum with a skill set uniquely suited to assist with a significant project for the division. Her experience in digitizing collections and interest in computer systems were a great fit to assist in bringing our paleobotanical collection information into the 21st Century. Rachel helped digitize nearly 8,000 records helping to make specimen information available in an online searchable format! With Rachel’s assistance, the Museum has made great strides in protecting and making available the information from a long underutilized portion of the research collection.

Sue Schuerman, Morrill Hall Volunteer of the Year

Sue Schuerman is the Morrill Hall Volunteer of the Year for 2019. She has been a volunteer at the Museum and in the anthropology research collection division in Nebraska Hall. Education staff members Kathy French and Annie Mumgaard nominated Sue for her role as a soil cart volunteer. Sue manages the hands-on station sharing information on the soils of Nebraska in a fun interactive format to visitors. No matter if she is talking with a group of school children, a family, or a single visitor, Sue conveys a sense of excitement about science. Sue is a valuable presence at Morrill Hall that embodies the excitement we want people to feel when interacting with the natural world.

SPIE, Group Volunteer of the Year

UNL’s International Society of Optics and Photonics (SPIE) is the Group Volunteer of the Year. SPIE came together to plan and lead our February “Investigate: Second Saturday Science Lab” family program. SPIE took the time to plan numerous activities and brought over equipment from their lab for children to experience. They worked together to come up with fun and creative ways to talk with visitors about light, lasers, and optics. Seven group members volunteered and the event was highly attended.

To volunteer at the Museum contact Sarah Feit at sfeit2@unl.edu or 402-472-4075.
The University of Nebraska State Museum has housed the Marx Discovery Center inside Morrill Hall for nearly 40 years. Opening its doors in 1980, then called the Encounter Center, aimed to excite young minds in science and hands-on learning.

While many exhibits in Morrill Hall, and museums around the world, urge visitors not to touch specimens due to the emphasis of preservation, the Marx Science Discovery Center does the opposite. To promote an interest in scientific discovery, Morrill Hall’s Discovery Center presents guests with interactive activities that visitors can explore for themselves.

The original Encounter Center opened in June of 1980 in collaboration with the Junior League of Lincoln. The League provided funding for much of the audio-visual equipment, books and scientific equipment. The group’s members volunteered their time to operate the room during public hours. The Museum’s Sunday with a Scientist program began in the Encounter Center as well as the 2nd and 5th grades programming contract with Lincoln Public Schools.

The goal of the center has always been to maintain a learning center in which individuals will find discovering science as an enjoyable and interactive activity. In 1988-89 the center was moved to its present location on the first floor.

Thanks to generous contributions from Dr. Paul and Betty Marx in 2003, a renovation added a re-creation dig site of our sister museum Ashfall Fossil Beds State Historical Park for visitors to uncover fossil skeletons of ancient rhinoceros. Other activity additions included a scientific illustration station, a new smell bottle table and prairie investigation wall. The name of the Encounter Center was formally changed to the Dr. Paul and Betty Marx Science Discovery Center in recognition of their endowment support.

Kathy French, Morrill Hall’s education coordinator, has been involved with the Marx Discovery Center since she was hired in 1994. “Many people have been able to experience all that the Marx Discovery Center has to offer in its many years at Morrill Hall. Grandparents will bring their grandchildren into the Marx Center and remember when they participated in activities there years ago,” says French.

That is why the Marx Center is being updated once again; so even more museum visitors can enjoy it for years to come. Thanks to the Richard Thompson family, the prairie corner will have a new display of prairie animals in his memory. Mr. Thompson brought his daughters to the museum when they were young. This prairie corner and additional updates funded by the Marx endowment will be finished by Fall 2019. French says this renovation will “bring new life to a center that is well loved.”

Museum visitors should expect the Center to be closed on select dates in early summer 2019 but look forward to the area serving as a complementary learning space to the new fourth floor Cherish Nebraska exhibits that opened in February of 2019.

— Haley Wineman, Public Relations Student Intern
University of Nebraska State Museum
FLEAS, MITES AND TICKS FIND HOME IN MANTER LAB

Since its establishment in 1971, the Harold W. Manter Laboratory of Parasitology (HWML) has trained over 126 graduate students and researchers and regularly loans specimens, data, images, and host scholars on site, with researchers spending a combined time of about 2,000 hours in the collection each year.

The collection continues to double in size about every 15 years and acquire increasing numbers of unique specimens from retired or soon-to-retire researchers, orphaned collections, and specimen-based field surveys.

If you had walked into the Manter Laboratory during one of the several Nebraska Science Teacher workshops that have been held in the lab in the past few years you would have sensed excitement! Some teachers were working with tapeworm specimens on the digital video microscopes while others were dissecting specimens that have been stored in the freezers for several years.

These and other science teachers from around the state are being recruited to work with museum curators Dr. Scott Gardner and Dr. Judy Diamond, co-principal investigators on a new $500,000 National Science Foundation (NSF) Grant from the Collections in Support of Biological Research program. The grant is designed to upgrade to the highest level, the collections in the parasite division and to assist with developing a new way of helping science educators teach about ecological interrelationships.

Parasites are the perfect hook to get people interested in ecology. Because the ecological interactions among the species of parasites and their hosts are many times extremely complex, some are also very accessible, making ecological parasitology teachable to students and non-students alike. Many people own pets, for example, and parasites are the scourge of all sorts -- ranging from mites living in the lungs or feathers of pet parakeets.

Some new ectoparasites, organisms living primarily on the surface of the host, are increasing their geographic ranges as the earth’s climate warms, and the Lab is ready to help understand the distributions speciation, evolution, and ecology of ectoparasites and their parasitic associates by assembling a very large collection of fleas, ticks, mites, lice, and protistans. Integrating new parasite collections into the Manter Laboratory is part of why the Lab has been able to secure NSF grants. Because the incoming collections are so large, it is not possible for the permanent staff of two to integrate the specimens into the databases very quickly. That is where the NSF comes in and paired with the current grants, the HWML is able to quickly input the data from newly donated collections.

Valuable collections have been recently donated to the HWML including the Hopla flea collection, a systematically deep collection of fleas (representing over 300 species and over 100 genera on more than 40,000 microscope slides), and the Gettinger collection of ectoparasites from Paraguay. The collection includes host-parasite data from several thousand individual mammals. The need for integrating these collections is urgent: specimens from the Gettinger collection are beginning to dry, making them unusable for most scientific purposes, and Gettinger, who is retiring soon, is needed for his background in Acarology (the study of mites and ticks) to direct the sorting and re-housing of specimens. The Hopla collection is of world-class importance, representing a snapshot in time of the biodiversity of Siphonaptera (fleas) in North America.

Another collection donation, thanks to the foresight of the director of the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS), is the extremely important Hargis trematode (parasitic flatworms, known as flukes) and monogene (only one of its kind) collections. One other notable collection that has been added is the Sam Telford hemoprotozoa collection. Those specimens have been integrated into specimen cases and are being put online for researcher access.

These specimens and associated data are irreplaceable; as many of the habitats and mammals are gone from the areas they were collected. To address this urgent need, the NSF funded project will digitally capture specimen-record data and images of representatives into the HWML catalog.

The data will be uploaded into the multi-institutional database Arctos. Once the data has been recorded, the specimens will be transferred into permanent-secure physical storage. The funding also allows for the installation and transfer of specimens into a new ultra-low (-150o C) freezer in the Parasite Genome Research Facility (PGRF). The PGRF - which holds the largest frozen tissue collection of parasites from wild animals anywhere – will continue to function at the highest quality level. (Image 4) Funding for this work will permit the processing and long-term conservation of these important biodiversity parasite survey collections, which will be made broadly accessible.

— Scott Gardner, Curator
University of Nebraska State Museum
The extinct Mesozoic marine reptile plesiosaur has a wide and round body, short tail, long neck that spans round 20 feet long, and a head about two feet long.

These ancient reptiles have historically been identified and named by the dimensions and number of the vertebrae that make up their long necks and their skulls have been avoided. But what if the delicate skull bones could tell researchers and paleontologists more about this species? Elliott Armour Smith, a graduate student from Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia came to the University of Nebraska State Museum – Morrill Hall to find out.

Smith has spent his career as a student devoted to studying plesiosaurs from the Western Interior Seaway researching the makeup of the reptile’s specialized skeleton and what purpose its unique dimensions serve.

In the Mesozoic Gallery on the second floor, Morrill Hall houses an intact fossil of a plesiosaur (Thalassomedon hanningtoni) from the Western Interior Seaway. The Seaway covered most of Nebraska during the mid-Cretaceous Period and was home to many ancient plankton and mollusks as well as the Plesiosaur. The fish-eating marine reptile roamed this area from nearly 70 to 90 million years ago. This is one of six plesiosaur skeletons found in Nebraska; it was found near Valparaiso in 1963 and collected in 1964.

While many fossils of plesiosaur have been identified, uncovered, and studied outside Nebraska, Smith is performing updated research to describe these reptiles focusing on the skull. He is aiming to determine if focusing on this skeletal structure will support current identifications and descriptions of the plesiosaur or uncover a need for revisions.

Through careful lighting placement in the Mesozoic Gallery above the long-necked fossil which is embedded in the floor of the Museum, Smith strives to capture high quality, detailed images of the plesiosaur’s delicate skull. Through these images, Smith can observe key differences and outline bone contacts among Morrill Hall’s specimen and others that he has studied. These differences include specific curvatures and hollow areas near the back of the specimen’s skull and suggest that there was a considerable amount of ‘open-air’ within the skull of this ancient reptile.

The plesiosaur fossil that Smith studied, as well as more aquatic and land roaming reptiles, toothed birds, and mammals are open for viewing in the University of Nebraska State Museum’s Mesozoic Gallery.

Haley Wineman, Public Relations Intern
University of Nebraska State Museum
Closed to the public for more than fifty years, Morrill Hall’s fourth floor is now home to seven new galleries celebrating Nebraska’s natural heritage – the diversity of life that has been shaped over the millennia by Nebraska’s changing environments.

Visitors can journey from Nebraska’s landscapes through time and space, and learn how our state’s natural heritage – our birds, plants and animals - is shaped by geological changes and human-impacts as part of an all new floor of exhibits, Cherish Nebraska.

With a variety of digital and mechanical interactives, crawl through spaces and hundreds of specimens and objects, visitors can investigate on their own. The new floor provides over 11,000 square feet of new learning space in Morrill Hall.

Visitors can become engaged in the joy and excitement of scientific discovery as they learn about University of Nebraska research, talk with University scientists in the Visible Lab, and investigate their own research questions in the Science Exploration Zone.

Like other areas of the Museum, the new exhibit spaces have become a platform for distance learning, using two-way videoconferencing technology to help take the museum into classrooms, libraries, and community centers across the nation. Most recently, parasitologist Dr. John Janovy connected with Nebraska schools from the new State Museum Science gallery to help students discover the microscopic lives of parasites using exhibit components.

The Museum wishes to thank all those who made the Cherish Nebraska project a reality. Hundreds of individuals provided their expertise, time, talent and treasure to ensure this new floor and its exhibits was developed and accessible for all those interested in the natural world, specifically Nebraska’s natural and cultural heritage.
VISIBLE LAB
Modeled after Smithsonian working lab exhibits, this space is used to prepare fossils and other scientific specimens by staff scientists and volunteers. See first-hand how specimens are prepared for scientific research and preservation.

TRANSFORMING PRAIRIES
Learn the story of Nebraska from the arrival of the Paleoindians to present-day urban and agricultural land-use. Through the lens of how people changed the prairie, this gallery asks the visitor to ponder the value of water and other natural resources, as well as how small changes in how we live can have a big impact on sustaining natural resources for future generations.

SUSTAINABLE EARTH
A state-of-the-art digital exhibit featuring a five-foot diameter projection globe. Visitors will learn about Earth’s interrelated weather and climate processes and their relationship to Nebraska and the Midwest region. Custom globe programs run continually for the visitors in an intimate, theater like setting.

NEBRASKA LANDSCAPES THROUGH TIME
Visitors are greeted by the iconic ambush predator Barbouroufels and the extinct Giant Bison when they arrive! Based on museum collections, this gallery tells the story of great animal migrations of prehistoric bears, cats and elephants, the evolution of the grasslands to the modern prairie, and the extinction of those animals that could not adapt as the climate dried and cooled over time.

NEBRASKA MODERN LANDSCAPES
Navigate the major ecological regions (ecoregions) and water systems of Nebraska and the Great Plains to understand how they tie together. Visitors can contemplate the Platte River system, play in a virtual watershed and explore why there is hidden water in the Ogallala Aquifer. Visitors will marvel at the complexity of prairies, including the Sandhills, the largest sand dune region in the western hemisphere. The plants, animals, and complex geology that creates these environments are featured in videos, and crawl-through exhibit spaces.
A lemur fossil is emerging this summer at the University of Nebraska State Museum’s new Visible Lab. The lemur — named “Kirby” — is a 50 million-year-old fossil recovered from the Bridger Basin in southwestern Wyoming. Kirby represents the first fossil primate skeleton for the University of Nebraska State Museum collections.

Using specially designed tools, Rob Skolnick, a preparator with the museum, is working in the lab space on Tuesdays, slowly removing sediment from around the fossil lemur. The lab — part of the museum’s “Cherish Nebraska” fourth-floor exhibition — is modeled after working lab exhibits in the Smithsonian museums. The space allows the public to watch the fossil extraction process and interact directly with scientists, preparators and volunteers.

According to Ross Secord, associate professor of earth and atmospheric sciences, Kirby the lemur (Smilodectes gracilis) lived when temperatures were the warmest of the last 70 million years at mid-latitudes — an area that included Wyoming and Nebraska. The tropical climate would have featured palm trees around Lake Gosiute, a giant lake in Wyoming. The shoreline of the lake advanced and retreated over time and Kirby most likely lived within a few miles of the water.

At least two types of lemurs and various very small primates thrived across North America during this time period. Kirby was similar to lemurs living in Madagascar today, and possibly closely related to them. More details about Kirby will be discovered as the fossils are removed and studied by university researchers.
MUSEUM CELEBRATES FRENCH & CUSICK RETIREMENTS

In April 2019, the Museum celebrated with a reception toasting the hard work and dedication of museum educators Kathleen French and Ann Cusick upon their retirements.

French has worked at the museum for 25 years directing informal science education programming for students of all ages. Her career has included developing curriculum-aligned education programs for Nebraska’s schoolchildren, public family science programs like Dinosaurs and Disasters and science experiences for museum visitors.

Among her many contributions to the museum, French oversaw multiple enhancement projects to the Marx Discovery Center, initiated the nationally recognized Virtual Field Trip program and was part of the Core Design Team that brought to life the museum’s newly renovated fourth floor Cherish Nebraska.

Cusick has served Morrill Hall for 32 years. She began her journey as a tour leader for the Jurassic Dinosaur Gallery, and as museum gallery programming evolved over time, Cusick helped design and deliver a variety of gallery programs complete with interactive hands-on components.

During her time at the museum, Cusick also helped to expand outreach programming by bringing it off-campus to community events and other learning centers. She worked diligently to ensure visitors were enjoying their time at the Museum and learning new concepts about the natural world.

The Museum will miss their talent, but wishes both the best in their new chapters.

STUDENT INTERNS ASSIST WITH CHERISH NEBRASKA

The Claire M. Hubbard Environmental Science Communication Internship program celebrates its third year with another remarkable team!

This annual program gives undergraduate students the opportunity to learn and practice science communication with experienced Museum educators. During the one-year program, the interns spend around 10 hours per week at Morrill Hall learning new skills to communicate scientific content to the public. As part of their time as interns, the students create an interactive science activity they can present to visitors. This opportunity not only allows the students to gain skills, but also helps to enhance the visitor experience.

The 2018-2019 class had two returning ‘senior’ interns and six first year interns, spanning science majors from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences and the School of Natural Resources.

This was a special year for the students as they witnessed the opening of the 4th floor! They became a part of the planning and creating phases of Cherish Nebraska’s Science Exploration Zone specimen drawers as well as developing new activities for the interactive station carts as part of fourth floor.

In addition to general visitor interaction, the interns also help Museum educators with the Lincoln Public School’s classes in gallery programs, staff the Science Explore Zone, represent the museum at many outreach events, and assist with all of the museum events and education projects. These talented students are an important part of the education team.

The Claire M. Hubbard Environmental Science Communication interns pose with the Museum’s Cottonwood Log model as part of Cherish Nebraska. Top from left: Ally Beard and Holly White; Middle back from left: Riley Tenopir, Cody Willnerd; Front from left: Kelsie Alling, Kelly Huddleston, Celeste Kenworthy, Hannah Botten. Image courtesy: Kathy French

The Museum looks forward to welcoming the 2019-2020 class in early fall.

— Kathleen French, Education Coordinator
University of Nebraska State Museum
A group of computer science and engineering students are bringing parasites to life — without any of the negative side effects. Their versions of the pesky organisms are contained within augmented reality.

For their senior design project, the Huskers collaborated with the University of Nebraska State Museum at Morrill Hall to create a smartphone app that showcases four parasites in augmented reality, in which users see virtual images through their smartphone as part of their real-world surroundings.

Using the students’ app, visitors to the museum’s new fourth floor exhibit, "Cherish Nebraska," can scan a trigger item for a certain parasite. The app recognizes the trigger, and then shows a 3-D rendering of the parasite through the camera's screen as though it was right in front of the user. The app can also show renderings of the host and the effects of the parasite, as well as interactive games, puzzles and videos. It's modeled after a similar Smithsonian app, with the intention of targeting the 14- to 18-year-old age demographic of museum visitors.

Matthew Martin, one of the students involved on the project, never expected to be doing something like this for his senior design class.

Martin said the creation of the Morrill Hall app was much more experimental than past course projects, and pushed his group to learn new skills, like making 3-D animations.

Not only did the group need to create the entire app, they also needed it to be accurate. Knowing that the museum couldn't have anything scientifically incorrect or even misleading, the team reached out to museum experts Susan Weller, director; Joel Nielsen, project coordinator; Thomas Labedz, collections manager; and Robert Zink, professor and conservation biologist in the School of Natural Resources, for scientific guidance.

While the end goal of the project is to educate visitors to the museum, the assignment also stretched and educated its developers. The team worked up to 10 hours a week outside of class, and had to meet monthly release schedules that showed their progress.

"I don't think I've ever had a class that has demanded this big of a time commitment," Martin said.

The team, which consists of Martin, Brandon Hueftner, Shaun Ban, Sasha Tenhumberg and Ziyuan Ye, is currently finishing up their fourth parasite for the app, and they hope to wrap it up before the end of the semester. Depending on sponsor funding, the project may continue next year with another senior design group taking the reins.

— Annie Albin, Associate Copy Writer
University Communication
NEW “BUZZZZZ” IN THE BUILDING

Morrill Hall welcomes new inhabitants to the Science Exploration Zone as part of Cherish Nebraska.

The Morrill Hall bee hive was provided by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Bee Lab as part of their mission to educate people about honey bees and other insect pollinators. The Bee Lab is monitoring the hive health and helping us care for them.

In the hive, you will be able to find the queen bee (the largest bee) busy laying eggs and being attended to by her daughter worker bees. There are roughly 30,000 to 60,000 worker bees in a hive and they efficiently divide up tasks to meet colony needs. Some care for the brood (bee larvae), some create wax cells to store brood, pollen and honey, and others are foragers who leave the hive in search of flowering plants. A few drones (male bees with large eyes and no stingers) are produced each summer to go out and mate with virgin queens produced by nearby hives. Learn more about the life stages and see if you can locate all three types of bees – the queen, the worker bees and the drones.

Worker bees forage for water, nectar and pollen. Pollen is a protein source and is consumed by nurse bees to stimulate the production of glandular secretions that is then fed to developing larvae (also known as brood food). Pollen can vary greatly in color from white, yellow, red, and even blue depending on the plants, therefore, the color variation in pollen is an indicator of how diverse the surrounding plant community is. Nectar is a source of carbohydrates or energy for bees. To create honey, bees have to process the nectar by adding their saliva (rich in enzymes to transform the sugars) and they evaporate off the water in the nectar by fanning it with their wings. The water content in nectar varies greatly depending on the plant, however, the water content of honey must be below 18%. The low moisture and natural acidity of honey inhibits the growth of bacteria and other organisms and is why honey never spoils. It takes about 2 million flower visits to produce 1 pound of honey. And the average worker bee will only make 1/12th of a teaspoon of honey in her lifetime but a healthy colony requires at least 100 lbs of honey stored by fall to make it through a Nebraska winter.

Support our bees and the UNL Bee Lab by purchasing UNL Bee Lab honey in the Museum’s Discovery Gift Shop. Proceeds go to help bees and other pollinators!
We have become entangled in a study of beetles — taxonomy, biology, ecology, phylogeny — a good part of infinity in short.

— modified from a quote by Lt. George Foulk, U.S. Naval Attaché to Korea, 1884

The goals of taxonomy are to discover and describe Earth’s species, classify them, and make what is known about them accessible through Linnaean (rank-based) classification and names. The extrinsic and intrinsic scientific value of natural history museums is well known. Museum collections provide the historical basis for taxonomy and systematics in all fields of the life sciences and paleontology, particularly concerning long-term conservation and maintenance of specimens and their data. Museum specimens are paramount to our understanding of biodiversity, in supporting conservation efforts, monitoring past and present global biodiversity, and in educating and serving younger generations of students and the public alike.

As part of our continuing research to discover and document biodiversity in our areas of specialty (scarab and stag beetles), we routinely describe species new to science every year. What follows are the 14 new species discovered and described by us in 2018. The specimens of these new species reside in research collections at Nebraska and elsewhere and are a legacy of past work and a basis for future investigations. Species and genus names in entomology conventionally include the author of the new name and that indicates which of us is commenting on each species in the treatments below.

Ancognatha uncinata Paucar-Cabrera and Ratcliffe
The genus Ancognatha is comprised of 23 species that are found from Arizona and New Mexico to northern Argentina. Although they are classified as rhinoceros beetles, none have horns. Ancognatha uncinata occurs in Ecuador, and the adjectival epithet uncinata is from the Latin uncus, meaning a hook, barb, or angle in reference to one of its structural characters, a hook-like flange.

Ganganomala saltini Ratcliffe, Jameson, and Zorn
The leaf chafer tribe Anomalini, with over 2,000 species, includes one of the largest animal genera, Anomala. Ganganomala is known from Nepal and Bangladesh in the greater Ganges River drainage in the Indian subcontinent, and its name reflects the Ganges River combined with the generic name Anomala. The species name saltini is to acknowledge a German colleague who initially provided us with specimens.

Gymnetis amazona Ratcliffe
Gymnetis is a genus of colorful flower chafers that occur from the southern USA to Argentina. Adults of the 56 species in the genus are diurnal and attracted to fruit traps. Gymnetis amazona occurs in Amazonian Brazil and Peru, hence its descriptive name.

Gymnetis aurantivittae Ratcliffe
This beautiful species is found in Brazil, Peru, and French Guiana. Its scientific name is a compound adjective with a prefix from the New Latin aurantium meaning orange in color and the Latin suffix vittae signifying bands or stripes, both combined to refer to the prominent orange stripes on the pronotum and elytra.

Gymnetis drogoni Ratcliffe
This species in named to commemorate Drogon, the largest of the three dragons in the HBO television series, Game of Thrones that is based on George Martin’s fantasy novels, A Song of Ice and Fire. The other two dragons, Rhaegal and Viserion, are named below.

Gymnetis merops Ratcliffe
This pretty Peruvian species was found around beehives, where some of the beetles had invaded the honey combs where they sought out water, sweet juices, mineral salts, and pollen. Merops is an ancient Greek word for “bee-eater” and here used as a noun in apposition to reflect that the adult beetles raid bee hives.

Gymnetis puertoricensis Ratcliffe
Adults have been collected while feeding on the nectar in flowers of a rare and endemic asclepiadaceous plant, Marsdenia woodburyana Acevedo-Rodriguez, a native vine of dry forest ecosystems in Puerto Rico. This species is known only from Puerto Rico, and the species name is derived from the geographical region where it occurs.

Gymnetis thula Ratcliffe
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Gymnetis rhaegali Ratcliffe
Specimens of this new species were collected in French Guiana in northern South America. This species is named to commemorate Rhaegal, one of the three dragons in the HBO television series, Game of Thrones that is based on George Martin’s fantasy novels, A Song of Ice and Fire. The other two dragons, Drogon and Viserion, are named elsewhere in this article.

Gymnetis thula Ratcliffe
Adults have been taken feeding on ripe fruit, syrup and fruit traps, occasionally at lights, and at sap flows.
on false willow in southern Texas, Louisiana, Florida, and northern Mexico where it is locally abundant. This *Gymnetis* species never had a correct name assigned to it and technically remained unnamed until now. The specific epithet is adjectival from the Latin *Thule* (feminine) that signifies “the farthest north” or a symbolic reference to a “far-off land” in direct reference to this, the northernmost occurring species of *Gymnetis*.

**Gymnetis viserioni** Ratcliffe
Occurring in Panama and Colombia, this species is named to commemorate Viserion, one of the three dragons in the HBO television series, *Game of Thrones* that is based on George Martin’s fantasy novels, *A Song of Ice and Fire*. The other two dragons, Drogon and Rhaegal, are named elsewhere in this article.

**Nigidius gravelyi** Paulsen
This species of stag beetle is found on the island of Borneo. It is named in honor of F. H. Gravely who described another valid species in this genus in 1915.

**Stenocrates lissothorax** Ratcliffe and Figueroa
*Stenocrates lissothorax* is known only from Amazonian Peru where adults are attracted to lights. It is also classified as a rhinoceros beetle even though it has no horns. The epithet is derived from the Greek *lissos* meaning smooth or polished and the Greek *thorax* referring to a breastplate (or thorax). The specific epithet is used as a noun in apposition and means “the smooth thorax” in reference to the completely smooth pronotum of this species.

**Trogellus trajectus** Paulsen
*Trogellus* is a genus of small stag beetles from Central America. This species is found farther south than any of the other ten species and only a few kilometers from Colombia. The name is a Latin adjective meaning ‘crossing over’, and so this species is likely to be discovered in South America in the future.

**Zelenkaesalus pazuzus** Paulsen
This genus contains tiny stag beetles that have leg-shaped pits on their underside in which to completely hide their legs, which may be an adaptation to avoid predation by ants. This is the first known member of this group from the Philippines.

— Brett C. Ratcliffe, Curator  
M. J. Paulsen, Collections Manager  
University of Nebraska State Museum

*Specimen images not shown to scale.*
When homes are damaged and lives are upended, treasured keepsakes such as artwork, photos, personal papers, and other family heirlooms become more cherished. Even in the aftermath of a disaster, these treasures may be salvageable.

The Smithsonian staff demonstrated a variety of techniques showing how to handle, dry, and clean damaged objects.

The Smithsonian Institution is part of the Heritage Emergency National Task Force (HENTF), a partnership of more than 40 national service organizations and federal agencies whose mission is to protect cultural heritage in our nation’s states, tribes, territories, and local communities from the damaging effects of natural disasters and other emergencies.

Workshop instructor Rebecca Kennedy demonstrates a technique to dry textiles. Using a small piece of foam roll, she drapes a piece of rinsed handkerchief over the foam.

The Museum, a Smithsonian Affiliate, partnered with the Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative and the Nebraska History Museum to offer two workshops on how to preserve damaged personal heirlooms. The workshops were held in response to the devastating winter flooding in the Great Plains. Individuals were able to attend a workshop in-person at Morrill Hall or via a video conferencing session.

Smithsonian staff provided the public with information on salvaging and stabilizing treasured possessions. They demonstrated how to handle, dry, and clean damaged objects and attendees were provided information on personal safety, setting priorities, and other preservation options.

Smithsonian Institution

The Smithsonian team traveled to Nebraska in March 2019 to offer workshops on preserving family heirlooms as part of disaster relief efforts from winter flooding in the Great Plains. From left: Nana Kaneko, Rebecca Kennedy, Corine Wegener, Katelynn Averyt.
MEET THE 2019 TEAM, ASHFALL FOSSIL BEDS

Daniel George, Virtual Field Trip/On-site Programs Educator
Before becoming an educator for Ashfall, Daniel interned at the Mammoth Site in Hot Springs, South Dakota. Now at Ashfall, he provides on-site and virtual field trips, plus assists with other interpretive duties. Originally from Rockford, Illinois, Daniel attended Beloit College and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in Geology.

Nikoleta Dubjelova, David B. Jones Sponsored Intern
Nikoleta is a University of Nebraska-Lincoln Robitschek’s Scholarship exchange student from Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic. Her work at the Masaryk University includes excavations of Quaternary mammals in local caves. She is spending her exchange year in the United States traveling across the country discovering palaeontological gems. She has volunteered with the State Museum’s research collections and now interns at Ashfall.

Sam Wright, David B. Jones Sponsored Intern
Sam is a University of Nebraska-Lincoln student pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree with a biological sciences major and minor in geology. During the school year she volunteers with the State Museum’s vertebrate paleontology research collection and in Morrill Hall’s new Visible Lab.

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Destiny Jacobsen, Admissions and Store Assistant
Destiny graduated from Creighton High School (Creighton, Nebraska) in 2018. In the fall she will attend the University of South Dakota majoring in wildlife and fisheries science.

William Otte, Admissions and Store Assistant
The 2019 season is William’s first at Ashfall. In the fall, he will be a junior at St. Mary’s High School in O’Neill, Nebraska. After graduation, William is considering a career in the medical field.

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Nick Thurber, David B. Jones Sponsored Intern
Nick is originally from Omaha, Nebraska. He completed a Bachelor of Science in Geology at the University of Kansas. He is now pursuing a Master of Science degree in Physical Sciences at Emporia State University. Nick’s passion for palaeontology led to a trip to Ashfall in 2012 where he excavated, among many things, the tip of a mammoth tusk. “The rest,” as he says, “is history”.

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Jacob Twibell, Admissions and Store Assistant
Jacob has been working for Ashfall in the summer for the past six years! He is from Brunswick, Nebraska studying at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to become a science teacher.
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DID YOU KNOW?
A group of wrens (family of small birds) is called a herd;  
While a group of camels is called a flock.

Thank you for voting Morrill Hall “Best Museum” 
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