



Friends of the Natural History Museum at the University of Louisiana at Monroe

SEPTEMBER 2007

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

October 1st- Dr.

Tristram R. Kidder- "*The Davincis of Dirt: Architecture and Engineering of Mounds in the Mississippi Valley*" ULM Alumni Center at 7:00 PM

November—TBA

December 6th-Bob

Rickett- "Northeast Louisiana Bald Eagles" ULM Student Union Building (Ballroom B) 6:00 PM

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Louisiana Archaeology Week



**Dr. T.R. Kidder to speak at
ULM for Archeology Week**

After receiving his PH.D. from Harvard in 1988, Dr. T. R. Kidder became the leading authority on mound construction techniques and engineering from Poverty Point to Cahokia Mound near St. Louis, Illinois. This Southeastern archaeologist is currently focusing his

attention on Poverty Point and speculates that the abandonment of Poverty Point could be from global climate change that caused catastrophic flooding. Come out on Monday, October 1st to hear him speak.

Archaeology Week in Monroe

Monday, October 1

Talk: *The Davincis of Dirt: Architecture and Engineering of Mounds in the Mississippi Valley* by T.R. Kidder

Time: 7 p.m., reception following presentation

Sponsor: University of Louisiana at Monroe Natural History Museum

Location: ULM Alumni Center 4400 Bon Aire Drive

Contact: Joe Saunders (318) 342-1899 or Gary L. Stringer (318) 342-1266

Note: Free admission

Friday, October 5

Talk: *Ancient Gardening by Native Americans in the Southeast* by Meta Pike

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Sponsor: Biedenham Museum and Gardens

Location: 2006 Riverside Drive

Contact: Tessa Henrix (318) 387-5281

Note: Free admission

Saturday, October 6

Program: Archaeology Day for Children Ages 5-12

Time: 1 – 3 p.m.

Sponsor: Northeast Louisiana Children's Museum

Location: 323 Walnut Street

Contact: Melissa Saye (318) 361-9611

Note: \$5 admission per person, free admission for ages 12 months and under

The northeast region possesses the best-preserved examples of earthen mound sites in Louisiana. Archaeologists have documented the emergence and elaboration of an earthen architecture tradition dating back more than 5,500 years and continuing sporadically until the arrival of the Spanish. People who constructed the large-scale earthworks at Watson Brake (ca. 5,000 years ago), Poverty Point (ca. 3,500 years ago), Marsden (ca. 2,000 years ago) and Troyville (ca. 1,500 years ago) relied on the rich and diverse environment of northeast Louisiana. They hunted, fished and gathered their food, and it was only within the past 1,000 years that people here began using agricultural plants.

Hope to see you at some of the talks and be sure to stop by the ULM Museum of Natural History for a glimpse into Louisiana's past.

Joe Saunders, Northeast Regional Archaeologist
Department of Geosciences

Photograph of the Watson Brake Model at the ULM Museum of Natural History



Massive Fish Migrations at ULM

All of the fishes have migrated (been moved) from Garrett Hall (museum and Darter World) and from Hanna Hall (saltwater fish). Dr. Neil H Douglas moved many cart loads, one cart at a time, from their former location to their new home in the Natural History Museum on the third floor of Sandel Hall. It took one year and four months, frequently working seven days a week, to move the collection that now numbers over 80,000 lots and 6 million specimens. During the move, all the jars were topped off with fresh alcohol and the hard plastic lids replaced with the more evaporation proof white flexible lids. Since there had been numerous nomenclature changes since their original organizational system, all changes have been updated on the shelves and directory to meet the current system. Of course, they will probably split out another species or two

by the time you read the article...it never ends. If you ever want to come over and lend an appreciated hand or just visit, please do. We are open on Fridays from 9:00 AM –1:00 PM and during museum sponsored events. We are coming along and it really is a fantastic feeling to have the collection all together under one roof.



The new fish range at ULM

Geologic Changes

Important progress has been made in the Geosciences Division of the museum. All of the display cabinets from Hanna Hall are now in Sandel! This includes all of the mineral display cabinets as well as all of the archeology and paleontology cabinets. All of the minerals have been replaced in their display cabinets, but work still remains for the archeology and paleontology specimens. It will be exciting to have all of the Geoscience material in Sandel. The material will join the botanical and zoological collections that are already in Sandel.

The Paleontology and Archeology preparation laboratories are scheduled to receive some much needed storage cabinets. These are the cabinets that previously housed the fish and herpetological collections. According to the administration, a professional mover will be employed to transfer the cabinets to Sandel.

Numerous groups utilized the museum and its facilities during the summer. For example, the

LaGEAR-UP Explorers program from Grambling State University brought over 100 junior high and high school students for tours and talks. This is the second year for them to visit the museum.

Individuals continue to donate valuable specimens to the museum. Lorin King, Curator of the Dinosaur Depot Museum in Canon City, Colorado and ULM graduate (MS in geology/paleontology), donated a splendid cast of the lower jaw of a Cretaceous mosasaur. These giant marine reptiles lived in the great inland ocean in the United States while Tyrannosaurus and Triceratops roamed the land. If you have specimens that you would like to donate to the museum, please contact one of the curators. We continue to be excited about the potential of the ULM Museum of Natural History, and the impact it can have on students and the public.

Gary L. Stringer, Ph.D.
Curator of Geosciences and Museum Liaison

40th Anniversary of the Herbarium



The first ever meeting of the Herbaria Curators of Louisiana

This year the Herbarium has begun plans to celebrate its 40th anniversary. From its beginnings in Garrett Hall back around 1967, through the massive expansion into multiple rooms in Stubbs Hall, the Herbarium has finally been reunited in one expansive space on the third floor of Sandel Hall. With nearly 7,500 ft² of space now, it has never been easier for researchers to utilize the collection and appreciate its significance.

When Dr. Thomas arrived at ULM in 1967 (then called Northeast Louisiana State College), the herbarium consisted of 250 specimens in three cabinets. Today, due to Dr. Thomas' lifetime commitment to field botany and exchange programs with herbaria around the world, the herbarium consists of 336 cabinets housing nearly 472,000 plant specimens and counting. Most significant is that more than 99% of Louisiana's flora is represented in the Herbarium thanks to numerous M.S. graduate students and ULM faculty who surveyed 31 Louisiana parishes, 4 Arkansas counties, the Homochitto National Forest in Mississippi, and more. In 1974, ULM was one of two Louisiana herbaria to be designated as "National Resource Collections" by the NSF Advisory Committee for Systematic Resources in Botany. These collections were described as being "of such importance for systematic study that their loss or inaccessibility would seriously impair our ability to carry on taxonomic research in the United States and the world." Today, the ULM Herbar-

ium is the 6th largest herbarium in the Southeast and larger than all the other herbaria in Louisiana combined.

Dr. Thomas personally collected 173,300 specimens for the herbarium from 1966 until his retirement in 2003. He also collected more than 600,000 duplicate specimens that have been shipped out on exchange programs or to other botanists for further study. This makes Dr. Thomas the most prolific plant collector of all time, far ahead of the second, the famed botanist Julian Steyermark, with 138,000. The Herbarium has exchanged specimens with over 200 different herbaria around the world and Dr. Thomas deposited over 50,000 specimens in the herbaria of the University of Tennessee, the Botanical Research Institute of Texas, the New York Botanical Garden, and the Missouri Botanical Garden, among others. His specialty is the Adders' tongue fern (*Ophioglossum*), of which he has collected more than everyone else in the world combined. Most of this fascinating collection remains at the ULM herbarium.

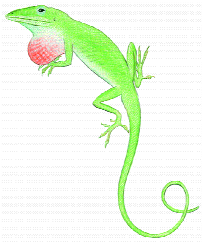
In June of this year, we called a meeting of the curators of the fourteen herbaria in the state. They met for the first time ever in a collaborative effort aimed at funding the digitization and georeferencing of the state's 1.3 million plant specimens. As we continue our year of celebration of Dr. Thomas' legacy, we hope to have news about important federal and private funding support to increase the availability of herbarium information on the World Wide Web. Soon, anyone, anywhere in the world, will be able to access this valuable plant collection! Stay tuned!

Elevator Currently Not Available

Just so everyone is aware, the elevator in Sandel Hall is currently out of order. So next time you are in the mood for a little aerobic activity, come by Sandel Hall on a Friday between 9:00 A.M. and 1:00 P.M. and climb the three flights of stairs to visit the museum. The museum is well worth the climb!



Home of the University of Louisiana at Monroe Museum of Natural History (3rd floor)



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Monroe, LA 71207**

Amphibians and Reptiles

The Zoology Division of the Museum has several developments to report. This spring, in a collaboration between the Friends of the Museum and the Friends of Black Bayou, we published a tri-fold brochure on the turtles of Black Bayou Lake National Wildlife Refuge. With respect to collections, the Herpetology collection is nearly all moved (~90%) from Hanna Hall into Sandel, with only the snakes still to arrange on the shelves. This summer we hosted a one week visit by a computer programmer from the University of Colorado who came to prepare our specimen databases for distribution through a web portal. Our herpetology database will be available soon through the HerpNet portal (www.herpnet.org), then hopefully within several months we will have the ichthyology data available on the FishNet portal (www.fishnet2.net). HerpNet is a multi-institutional collaboration to create a worldwide network of herpetological collection data available through a single website. By networking

the data from many natural history museums into a single portal, the value of all the data and specimens in participating collections is increased by ease of access and manipulation of the data available in this format. We have been busy moving and appreciate your patience. It is time you come by for a visit to check out all the changes!



The alligator snapping turtle (*Macrochelys temminckii*) is a popular attraction at the museum and Black Bayou Lake