Excitement for the new Curiosity Center is building!

By Emily Stone, Naturalist/Education Director

“This tree is something every nature center wants,” began Peter Quinlan, Design Director from KidZibits at a meeting in November. The tree Peter was referring to is the two-story climbable tree that will be the centerpiece of the Museum’s brand-new Curiosity Center, which opens in May 2019. While every facility with a kids’ area wants a tree like this, it usually requires an unattainable budget to build. Lucky for the Museum, the enthusiasm of Museum Director Deb Nelson was contagious, and KidZibits couldn’t say no. Now they are using us as guinea pigs to figure out the perfect balance of structural integrity, realistic detail, and cost.

Of course, the tree is only one corner of our new Curiosity Center. There will also be a hawk’s nest, slide, periscope, and puppet theater. Each of the Museum’s staff members has a favorite element. Deb is looking forward to curling up with her grandkids in the bear’s den reading nook. Leslie is excited for a bouldering wall that her kids can use. The wall will be backed by a woodland scene, with hand- and foot-holds placed along stumps, logs, and rocks. Haley is anticipating new terrariums for our snakes, and Mollie hopes to fit in a few of our animal specimens. Emily can’t wait to see the flying squirrel on a zip line that kids will be able to launch from the hawk’s nest.

With all these exciting plans, the Museum’s staff, board, and volunteers are thrilled that we’ve enlisted professionals who have the expertise to build with safe and durable components. KidZibits is an exhibit design, development, and fabrication company in St. Paul, MN, that builds exhibits for small museums and nature centers all over the country and all over the world. Their team has skills from all walks of life. Shannon, their Project Manager with a theater background, joked that they “come from the island of misfit toys.” Peter got his start in cabinet making. Matt Cox, Exhibit Developer, is the odd-man out, having earned a minor in museum studies at Luther College in Decorah, IA, and a Master’s in museum studies as well.

After our meeting, Peter, Shannon, and Matt took our ideas back to their “mech wizards” to figure out the nitty-gritty mechanical details of how things will work. On a good day, Shannon calls that team their “brain trust.” When she brings them something hard and they start complaining, she refers to them as “crybabies.” She knows that they actually love a good challenge, though. They’ll be sending us prototypes of tree bark, unbreakable chickadees, and interactives throughout the winter.

This team of professionals isn’t just about making things fun. They will also make sure that all of the off-the-ground components are built with safety regulations in mind. After bombarding the KidZibits crew with questions about structural integrity, the Museum’s Board Chair, Larry Hanson, commented that “We’re spending our money wisely.”

So, the adults approve, but what about the kids themselves? KidZibits will be building our freestanding Curiosity Center at their facility in St. Paul. Before they dismantle it, load it in a semi-truck and bring it to the Museum for installation in late April, we’ll have a chance to do some “kid tests” throughout the process. Everyone will get to test it starting Saturday, May 4, at our soft opening, and you’re all invited to the grand opening on Saturday, May 25.
Museum Happenings

Calling All Artists: Summer 2019 Art Show

During the summer of 2019, the Museum will host an art show titled “Bee Inspired.” The objective is to support area artists and highlight our 2018 and 2019 exhibits featuring native bees and pollinators. The show will open the weekend of May 24, coordinated with the 2019 exhibit opening and a chance to meet the artists, and will end on August 24. Sales of the artwork will benefit CNHM, with 35% of the selling price going to support exhibit development, and the remainder to the artist.

Artists eighteen years of age or older are invited to submit two-dimensional work that creatively represents northwestern Wisconsin bees, pollinators such as hummingbirds and butterflies, or their floral landscape habitat. Guidelines and entry forms can be found on our website: www.cablemuseum.org. “Bee Inspired” will broaden the Museum experience, giving our visitors a creative view of nature, and will provide an opportunity for local artists to support our educational mission and showcase their talent. We look forward to partnering with our wonderful art community!

Families Learn Together at the Museum

Fun and learning were in the air at the Cable Natural History Museum recently, as about 100 people from more than 23 families from the Drummond Area School District participated in MuseumMobile Family Day events.

MuseumMobile is an outreach program where a Museum Naturalist visits each classroom in grades pre-K through 6 up to three times a year. The naturalist teaches lessons that explore science and nature through experiments, games, furs, skulls, and more. This program reaches more than 2,000 students in nine schools annually. This year, with the help of a generous $5,000 grant from the Xcel Energy Foundation, the Museum invited students from the Drummond Elementary School and their families to participate in festival-like Family Days. To help accommodate busy schedules, parents were given a choice between a Saturday morning or a Tuesday evening program.

Parents and students arrived together, often with younger siblings in tow. Students each received a notebook and pen made from recycled materials. Eight volunteers from the community stood ready to help families engage with aging deer jawbones, dissecting goldenrod galls, weaving a food web, feeling ermine fur, sculpting scat from brownies, listening to loon calls, and imitating frog songs. Older students had fun teaching their parents and siblings about MuseumMobile lessons they’ve already experienced. Younger students received an exciting preview of lessons they can look forward to. After learning something at each station, students each earned a BPA-free water bottle.

After a meal of pizza from Coop’s in Hayward, many families stayed to play in the Museum’s Curiosity Center and Bee Amazed exhibit.

Thanks to the Xcel Energy Foundation for sponsoring these exciting events and supporting an opportunity for parents and students to learn together!

Farewell to Theo

We were sad to say goodbye to our resident Great Horned Owl, Theo, in September.

Theo came to the Museum in 2014 after being hit by a car near Drummond, Wisconsin. A broken radius and ulna in his left wing healed improperly and left him unable to fly. Unfortunately, this injury continued to cause problems as the misalignment started to cause arthritis and affect feather growth.

Quality of life, including physical and emotional health, is always the first priority for our live collections. Through evaluations and consultations with veterinarians and other raptor experts, we concluded that humane euthanasia was Theo’s best option. He will be fondly remembered by his trainers and the visitors who met him.
“See You Later” — Goodbye to John Kudlas

By Mollie Kruth, Curator/Naturalist

“The only thing that’s certain in life is change,” muttered John Kudlas on one of our last weeks of work together. I silently agreed with our Collections Monitor. My own life has certainly evolved since becoming Curator, and the Museum has seen incredible change over the past 50 years. Our collections have grown, programs evolved, new buildings were constructed, and our dynamic staff changes, too. John has been one of those treasured staff members for the past seven years. Although it’s difficult to imagine life at the Museum without his expertise and humor, his time to retire as Collections Monitor has arrived.

John taught me many skills while we worked together—first during my summers as an intern, and again when I became Curator. He taught me to find the art in taxidermy as we created bird and mammal mounts from salvaged remains. He pushed me to become more self-sufficient. I’m much less likely now to turn to someone else to drill a hole or start up our bandsaw; I instead am proud to at least attempt the work on my own. John made our work atmosphere a better place too. His humor and wealth of life experiences have always been appreciated and inspiring, as are his numerous lunchtime show-and-tell moments. Who else would think to bring in a giant, preserved African beetle in a jar to lunch?

We’re so glad to have had John as part of our Museum community. He and his wife Donna will now be living closer to family in Florida, and volunteering at Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park. I’m certain that he will continue to inspire others there, too, as he has done in our corner of the woods.

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Member Perspective

By Mary Young

We have thoroughly enjoyed the last three years living in the Cable area. Since our move, we’ve especially appreciated both the nature and the sense of community in this area. The Cable Natural History Museum is a perfect fit for us in that respect. As a homeschooling family with young girls, perhaps you can imagine how excited I was to have such a special resource less than 20 minutes from my front door. Little did I know how much more it would be than an afternoon field trip every once in a while.

The first thing we did was check out the 2015/2016 exhibit: Lakes Alive! We had just moved to the lake and I was thrilled to show my girls all the special connections and interesting things we would look forward to experiencing. Next we attended a Talon Talk, with the live education raptors. We’ve now attended these many times over the years, and not just at the Museum. My girls LOVE to do “Raptor Shows” at home! I enjoy the way they emulate the naturalists and remember all of the important details.

Another valuable aspect of the Museum I could not have foreseen is all the wonderful women role models! Ok, yes, I’m biased. My degree from the UW Madison is in Wildlife Ecology. I’m drawn to the natural sciences. So to have my girls see women working in science fields not only as educators, but also directing, working, and volunteering at the Museum makes me happy.

Speaking of making me happy, I have gotten just as much out of the Museum as my girls. One of my very first outings was a Halloween Girls Night Out hosted by the CNHM. The numerous programs for adults I’ve participated in feed my own soul. I am learning about things that interest me and meeting people who have similar interests. I try to attend all the lectures and I look forward to taking the Master Naturalist training in the future. The Museum’s programs are not just for kids OR adults, many events are fun for all ages.

Now the girls are asking me to highlight their favorites: Junior Naturalists and all the prep for the 4th of July parade, Wayside Wanderings Natural Play Area, the Curiosity Center, and how cool it is that the exhibit changes every year.

As active members of this community we have been fortunate to contribute to new ideas and look forward to making multitudes of lasting memories here for years to come.
By Kristin Dew

Life can be so busy. Then you retire and find out what busy is all about. As I settle into the Northwoods lifestyle, it is a pleasure to give back as a thank you for this blessing. The Cable Natural History Museum is a treasure that offers many opportunities to volunteers.

We all have some time and talent to share. It can be teaching one of the many classes, assisting the naturalists with their programs, or introducing visitors to the Bee Amazed exhibit. For many years, I have volunteered for the SLEEK (Spider Lake Environmental Education for Kids) program. It is presented by the Museum’s naturalists and interns each 4th of July weekend. I get to photograph the Spider Lake kids and their parents as they learn about lakes, loons and bats, plus meet a raptor or two. I enjoy working on the decorations and set-up for the Museum’s Summer Benefit. Tying nature’s theme to our interpretation is a creative challenge.

Volunteering is a wonderful way to expand your knowledge of everything the Museum offers. It has a dedicated staff and talented naturalists working year-round to make the Museum a go-to destination. I get a personal sense of accomplishment educating children (and adults) about the natural world. Volunteering, also, enriches my life as I make new friends in the community.

Time spent in the woods or on the water is an invigorating learning adventure. Offering that opportunity to the next generations is highly rewarding. There is nothing more fun than getting mud on your boots and dragonflies in your hair, so come volunteer with me! You will be so happy that you did.

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**Did you know?**

- All proceeds from the museum gift shop go right back into the Museum for programming and education opportunities.
- Guests never pay an admission fee to shop the Museum gift shop.
- Members receive 10% off shop purchases every day.
- Our buyers seek out the uncommon nature and science gifts.
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By Mollie Kreb, Curator/Naturalist

As a Curator, I can proudly say that I have unique experiences each day at the Museum. Managing collections allows me to immerse myself in the care of each specimen from beginning to end. Many of our animal specimens begin as salvaged remains. Locals find roadkill, birds that flew into windows, or sometimes even parts of animals left over by their predators. While some opt to leave these remains to decompose, it is legal for anyone to retrieve such items and deposit them at the Museum. Our “salvage freezer” sees a steady stream of animals coming in or being taken out for preparation.

Taxidermy is perhaps the flashiest means of preserving a specimen for display. At the Museum, we have the expertise to prepare taxidermy mounts of birds and small mammals. Recent projects have included the preparation of an American purple gallinule, a savannah sparrow, a red-breasted nuthatch, and a northern flying squirrel.

Each part of the natural world that we add to our collection requires different methods of preparation before becoming an official specimen. Fungi have been preserved both as dried specimens and in jars filled with alcohol. One of these is a unique Cordyceps mushroom that parasitizes false truffles, another type of fungus. When we received a painted turtle shell, each piece was carefully fixed to another with adhesive before coating and mounting it for display.

While our specimens require continual care, my favorite step is the preparation process. I love to discover new qualities of our natural world through close inspection of each soon-to-be specimen. With proper care into the future, Museum visitors will have the opportunity to discover those wonderful qualities, too.

**The White Pine Society**

The Museum is proud to stand strong and tall like a white pine with over 50 years of letting nature bring meaning to our members, visitors. Our White Pine Society is a way to make a long-term difference for our Museum community.

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Emily’s Alaskan Adventure

By Emily Stone

Back in the spring of 2017, I received permission to pursue a four-month sabbatical to Alaska. My goals were twofold: explore The North, and gain more experience with field research. As an educator, I talk, write, and think about the cool facts scientists have discovered all day long, but I wanted to see first-hand how field science is done.

I ended up with a nice assortment of educational workshops, research projects to volunteer on, and general exploration. I set up those experiences by cold-calling professors from the University of Alaska, receiving wonderful connections through Museum members and friends, and a little bit of luck!

Here’s a synopsis:

• Early June: I developed a good foundation in Alaskan botany by taking a Wildflowers of Denali field course through Alaska Geographic. That base served me extremely well for the rest of the summer.
• Mid-June: I sat in on a week-long workshop called “Climate Change and My Community” at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Its purpose was to train public school teachers to use NASA’s GLOBE (Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment) program in their classrooms. Their students will participate in meaningful, hands-on science, and NASA will use the data to ground-truth its satellites.
• Late June: I headed back to Denali National Park to take an insect course with Alaska Geographic. The instructors had both contributed to the research that led to the discovery of a new species of bumblebee last summer!
• Late June: Through a series of connections with wonderful people, I was invited to hang out with a group of university students who were taking sediment cores from a lake on the Kenai Peninsula. Hanging out with these four amazing female scientists, and playing in the mud, was a highlight of my summer.
• Late July: I spent a couple hours on the UA-Anchorage campus with a very enthusiastic group of women who run a threespine stickleback research lab.
• Late July: I began exploring glaciers in every way I could: Hiking up to them, walking on them, paddling near them on the ocean, paddling among icebergs on a lake, and flying over them. After living in the northern Wisconsin landscape that has been shaped by ice, it was amazing to see so many active glaciers!
• Mid-August: Knut Kielland, professor at UAF, invited me to help his graduate students do research on snowshoe hares and lynx in the Brooks Range near Wiseman. We caught almost 150 hares and one lynx in a just a few days! The research being done on the population cycles of lynx and hares is fascinating!
• Late August: I spent a week driving back and forth between the Toolik Field Station on the North Slope and Prudhoe Bay and counting caribou. This opportunity appeared at the last minute, after I connected with my former college classmate in Fairbanks, who is now married to a UAF professor.

As you might imagine, I found opportunities to teach as well as learn. On more than one occasion I was able to identify flowers, talk about bogs, and relay information about Alaska that I’d only just learned.

My sabbatical was beneficial to both the Museum and to me personally. The Natural Connections articles I wrote from Alaska generated new interest in the Museum, and forced me to write things down before I forgot. You can read more about all the experiences I just listed on my Natural Connections blog/archive.

Since returning, I’ve been giving slide programs about my trip. Both “Adventures in Alaska” Dinner Lectures filled to the brim.

Continued on page 7
Mess-Free Finger Painting

Experiment with color mixing with this quick and easy craft for anyone young at heart!

**Supplies**
- Quart-sized sealable plastic bag
- 2 colors of washable paints
- Permanent marker

**Instructions**
1. Using a permanent marker, draw your favorite animal or plant on the plastic bag.
2. Pour a small amount of paint in the bag toward the bottom. Add the other paint color toward the top. Seal the bag.
3. With the bag lying flat, push the paint around the bag to fill your animal or plant outline. Mix the paint in the middle to make a new color.

Alaskan Adventure  *(Continued from page 6)*

A talk at the Namakagon Club drew a nice crowd, and a program at the Hayward Library was successful as well. This spring I will visit high school science classrooms to talk about exciting career options.

As I go about my daily tasks of exhibit planning, writing, planning programs, and talking to visitors, I feel the effects of Alaska creeping in. Wouldn't it be fun to learn about circumpolar pollinators in our next exhibit? How long can I keep writing about Alaska in my column? Are there any GLOBE protocols that our Junior Naturalists or Master Naturalists could use? Plus, I've already offered oodles of Alaskan travel advice.

Would I go back? Absolutely! Am I going to move there? Not in the foreseeable future. But my goals of experiencing field science, learning more about The North, and having a grand adventure have certainly been accomplished.

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Dryas seed head on the tundra. Photo by Emily Stone.
CABLE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM
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In addition to supporting the work of the Cable Natural History Museum, Museum members enjoy a variety of benefits, including:

- Free admission to our collections and exhibits
- Reduced rates for participation in our nature and education programs
- Receive the Museum Messenger twice a year
- 10% discounts in the Museum Shop
- Opportunities for Museum Naturalist-led programs for your special family events

To become a member of the Cable Natural History Museum visit cablemuseum.org/membership, call 715-798-3890 or complete and mail the form at the right to CNHM, P.O. Box 416, Cable, WI 54821

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- Please note that we are now sending out acknowledgement letters for memberships and donations by e-mail instead of by regular mail (unless you do not have an e-mail address) to be more environmentally conscious. Please contact the Museum if we do not have your current e-mail address on file.

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