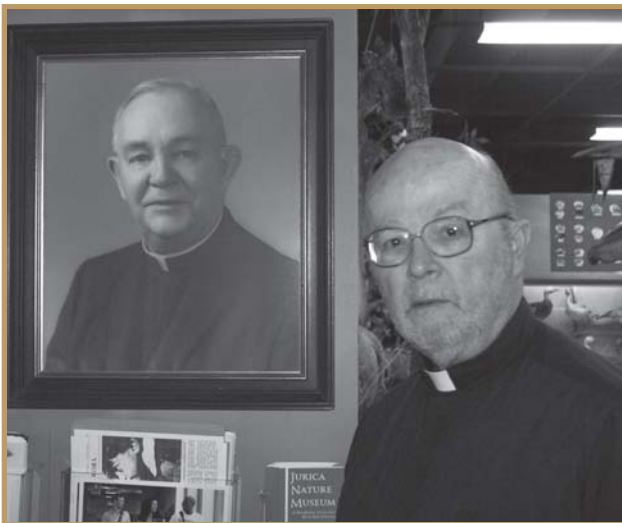


# The JURICA NATURE MUSEUM Newsletter

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## SAVE THE DATE! BIG CHANGES ARE COMING!

We hope you will join us on February 20, 2009 as we rededicate the museum and change our name! We will become the Jurica-Suchy Nature Museum in honor of the fantastic work that Fr. Ted has done with the original Jurica collection as well as the many specimens he has collected over the past 37 years. The museum has grown tremendously under his stewardship and we will celebrate his contributions with a dinner after the rededication ceremony. Invitations will follow in early January and we hope you will join us for this special occasion.



*Fr. Theodore Suchy, O.S.B. standing next to the photo of Fr. Hilary Jurica, O.S.B.*

## EDUCATION NEWS

The Jurica Museum and the Kane-DuPage Regional Museum Association's "Summer Passport" program was a huge success with more than 100 children and their parents visiting the Jurica Museum. The Benedictine University day camp children also visited several times over the summer. The fall field trip season is well underway and the Jurica Museum staff saw more than 700 visitors come to the museum in October. Many museums are noting a decrease in attendance due to the cost of buses and the constraints on teachers with the No Child Left Behind legislation. We at the museum continue to hold steady with our attendance numbers, but we will be keeping a watchful eye on this attendance trend.



leave no child inside  
a chicago wilderness initiative

## Museum Grants

Last year was a successful year for the museum in terms of grants. We applied for and received four grants! This has meant a busy summer and fall season. Work is steadily progressing on the new Sonoran Desert Exhibit that is being constructed with the support of The DuPage Community Foundation. We are anticipating that the exhibit will be finished in December so we can start to use it with school groups in January. Alumnus and former museum student worker David Hanke, C96 has been doing the work and it looks terrific. Four of the mule deer from the Pancotto collection are central figures along with a black bear, javelina, coyote, mountain lion and many birds. A tiny owl peeks out a hole in a saguaro cactus and an armadillo is in an underground tunnel. The exhibit has a lot of interesting little scenes in it along with the overall theme of predator and prey. We hope you will visit and check it out after the new year.

Another of the grants that the museum received last year was from Heritage Preservation, a national organization dedicated to preserving our nation's cultural heritage. This conservation assessment grant enabled the Jurica Nature Museum to hire a national expert in natural history collections to do an on-site visit and make recommendations for the museum's next steps in our collection conservation. We were fortunate to have Catharine Hawks, Ph.D. visit the museum in August for a daylong review of our collections, both on display and in storage. Hawks had visited the museum through this same program in the mid-'90s and we followed many of her recommendations when planning the museum's move to Birck Hall. We especially liked the way Hawks described the museum exhibits as "very specimen-rich!"

Our goals for this re-survey included increasing staff awareness of collections care concerns, developing a tool to help obtain funding for collections care and improving collections care. Sometimes conservation of a particular specimen and the everyday work of the museum are such that we lose sight of the overarching conservation needs of our specimens. We used many of the previous conservation suggestions when setting up the new museum. This visit was a good reminder to us that we need to keep updating our collections management, especially in our need for more storage space. We certainly

learned a lot in that one day visit and now we have a 50-page report that will help guide us over the next several years.

Overall, our collection is in very good condition, and this visit was also a reminder of how even our small museum is an important part of our nation's cultural heritage. We have many specimens that are rare, many that are very old, and even a few that may be unique and of value to scientists. We may have in our collection what is called a "Feegee Mermaid" This was a hoax based on parts of animals attached to fish bodies that were attempted during the 1800s by sailors at sea. We may also have a red wolf, about which we will contact the Field Museum. Dr. Hawks gave us ideas for student and faculty research projects as well as conservation suggestions. Now we only need a few more hours in the day!



*Two lions displayed in the Jurica Museum.*

The report from Dr. Hawks included many short- and medium-term recommendations which should be completed within the next seven years. One very large, high priority recommendation is to finish our computer catalogue with digital images and then make this information available to people via the Web site. We also have a lot of original specimen information which needs to be input with images. We have made progress with our digital database and we do have many animals on our Web page. We received suggestions for grant sources to complete this project. This is an ongoing project that will require updating every 3-5 years as technology changes, and we are fortunate to have University help as upgrades are planned.

There were many recommendations for the museum environment. We will need to do a study of our lighting to be sure that we do not have damage because of too much light. We are hoping that we can start with a student research project to

determine the levels of light in our displays. Then we can prioritize the exhibits we need to change so our specimens last for another 100 or so years. Some may only need to have the specimens moved a bit and some may need new lighting. There are many advances in museum lighting including LED and fiber optics. We have begun to talk with our physics faculty about this issue and potential research projects.

We will need to add cushioning materials to many of the skulls and skeletons to prevent damage from small daily vibrations. This can be done as we do our regular summer cleaning and maintenance. We have included a list of necessary conservation supplies for many of the new projects along with the costs. If you would like to sponsor one of these conservation activities, we would appreciate your help.

**Wish list of necessary equipment and supplies:**

Volara foam for cushioning	\$94.34/25 foot roll
Artifact ID kit	\$109.10
Paraloid B-72 adhesive	\$30
ColorpHast pH strips	
100 strips, 4 pH ranges	\$32.91
Tyvek fabric, 50-yard roll (storage)	\$222.75
Reemay polyester fabric (storage)	\$105.31/ 100-yard roll
Polyethylene foam backer rods	\$104.30/ 100 foot roll
Tri-rod foam rods, 60-feet/package	\$35.99
Quick Cut Hot Knife	\$278.20
Blades for hot knife	\$38.11
Thermogrip 6363 adhesive	\$11.05
Special glue gun	\$262.51
pH test pens	\$5.09 each
Wet specimen label paper	\$17.25/100
Pigma pens	\$14.29/6
Ultraviolet radiation meter	\$1,350
Scavengel	\$60/yard

Our third grant was from Chicago Wilderness and was for a series of teacher development workshops called “Reading Our Landscapes” presented with partners from Fermilab, Brookfield Zoo, Spring Valley Nature Center, Forest Preserve District of DuPage County and Peck Farm. The workshops are designed to teach about the Chicago area’s natural resources and connecting them to different kinds of reading materials. The group is developing a template for the workshop that other Chicago Wilderness partners can use at their sites. An important part of each workshop is outdoor activities. The teachers who have been involved have been enthusiastic about the topics and taking their kids outside. The most recent workshop was about the impact of non-native invasive species, and the participants were surprised to discover that invasive species of all kinds cost the United States more than \$130 billion last year. After doing a survey in an area by the slough, we met with a group of campus volunteers who were clearing buckthorn around the pond that day. The teachers learned about buckthorn and its impact on an ecosystem. They also learned to identify native species of trees, plants and animals.

The last grant we received is actually a set of books, CDs and other information about collections care. The materials are a basic set of information for caring for culturally important objects. We know we will be referring to it many times as we work on our new projects and for everyday museum cleaning. We have loaned some of the materials to the Benedictine University Library as they have many special photographic items in their collection.



*New displays being built for the Jurica Museum.*

**For more information or to schedule a tour,  
please call (630) 829-6546  
or e-mail mmickus@ben.edu.  
We hope you will visit soon!**

## Species Spotlight: Insect Collection

One of the most fascinating exhibits for many of our young student visitors is the insect collection which is housed in two cabinets with boxes of butterflies and moths. One case has many large insects including grasshoppers, katydids, moths, staghorn beetles and many monarch butterflies shown in evergreen branches to suggest their migration to Mexico every fall. There are fossils of dragonflies and insect larva as well as pieces of amber with insects clearly visible in them. One favorite is the blue morpho butterfly which has a wingspan of almost six inches! Often voted the creepiest insect in the museum is the Atlas beetle that is shown with its wings extended so you can see all the parts of the insect. The second cabinet has boxes of beetles collected by one man who gave his collection to the Jurica brothers. Unfortunately, the Jurica Museum does not have the donor name. We use the display to talk about what is involved in collecting insects. There are a number of butterflies mounted by Sherman Denton, probably around 1900. Sherman patented a method of mounting the butterflies so that they were not only preserved better but also displayed more beautifully.

This past summer, the museum was given a small beetle collection by Alice Zimring, Ph.D. Her husband, Daniel, had collected, identified and mounted many beetles beginning in 1943 and continuing until 1953 in the Lombard, Illinois area. There are field notes, many very detailed, along with the collection which make it more interesting than just seeing an insect in a drawer. The museum staff is looking forward to figuring out how to display these insects so that our young visitors appreciate the work involved with such a collection. The insects are in Cornell drawers in a small cabinet in the rear of the museum. We are thankful to Dr. Zimring for her kindness in sharing this collection.



*Part of the butterfly collection featured in the Jurica Museum.*

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