NPG receives ‘hedcut’ portraits

BY JANICE KAPLAN
Special to The Torch

They may be small in size, but the miniature portraits, or “hedcuts,” that have graced the pages of the Wall Street Journal for a quarter century feature some of the biggest names in American business.

Sixty-six of the newspaper’s original “dot drawings” have been donated to the Portrait Gallery and are currently the focus of an online exhibition organized by Anne Collins Goodyear, the museum’s assistant curator of prints and drawings.

Century-old biology text gets an e-life

BY CARA SEITCHEK
Special to The Torch

A massive, 100-year-old biology book series is becoming a cutting-edge digital research tool.

The 63-volume series Biologia Centrali-Americana once contained the most current and relevant information about the flora and fauna of Mexico and Central America. The compendia attempted to cover everything known about the topic at the time. But that was more than 100 years ago.

“For many scientific disciplines, it’s still the most complete work there is,” Anna Weitzman, research and collections information manager at Natural History, says. SI Libraries Assistant Director Tom Garnett agrees. “Many tropical biologists use the BCA in their daily life,” Garnett says.

Because of its value to SIL, MNH and researchers worldwide, it was selected for the pilot project of a new SIL-MNH database initiative. MNH scientists and information technology staff and SIL librarians and data management specialists have joined together to transform sets of comprehensive biology books into an interactive database.

SI’s vast education resources now at one easy-to-use Web site

BY HOPE CROSTOL
Special to The Torch

Smithsonian education has never looked so good—or been so easy to access. SmithsonianEducation.org, a new Web site developed by the Smithsonian Center for Education and Museum Studies, offers, for the first time, one-stop shopping for all Smithsonian’s education resources.

The site is filled with new content developed by staff in SCEMS’ Publications Department, who worked with many educators inside and outside the Institution. The official launch of the site in September is well-timed with the back-to-school season.

With a clean design and easy navigation, SmithsonianEducation.org targets educators, families and students as separate audiences. There are lesson plans for teachers, museum tips for families and interactive activities for students.

“We received a significant amount of feedback from users, asking us to create an easy-to-navigate central education Web site,” SCEMS Director Stephanie Norby says.

More than a year before the launch of the site, SCEMS commissioned a study of education content on all Smithsonian Web sites and examined patterns of user behavior. The research showed that, of the more than 65 million visitors to Smithsonian Web sites in 2001, one in four was searching for educational materials. In response, SCEMS developed a resource-finding tool as the centerpiece of the new site.

The study also showed that the most commonly searched term on SI Web sites was “lesson plans,” so the new site features dozens of plans.

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Legends of our Times

Champion Barrel Racer Joan Perry, a Secwepemc Indian from British Columbia, leads her horse through a sharp rodeo turn. This image is in “Legends of Our Times,” an exhibition about the artistry, history and poetry of Native American cowboy life, which will be on view at American Indian’s Heye Center through March 7, 2004. (Barb Stewart photo)
BY DANIEL FRIEND
Special to The Torch

Christie was on the auction block with a slate of other substandard live stock. The horse was in such poor condition that not even the meat companies bid on her. Had she not been rescued, Christie would have been euthanized.

The highest bidder not only saved the horse but helped her be the best horse it could be. She hired Jeanne Whited, a Tennessee Walker and Paso-Fino as a horse trainer and sidesaddle rider. "An owner can't just put horses in the barn to be handled. They need training manuals that tell them how to handle them," Whited says. "The Paso-Fino and Walker breeds are fast and powerful, so you have to teach them to move in the most efficient, economical way. They are not born knowing how to move in the most efficient, economical way."

"If a horse doesn't know what he has to do, he can destroy a horse by pushing it too hard, too fast, too much in too little time. You have to train him slowly," Whited recalls. "She was a very confused horse, but with Whited's guidance, she made the transition from student to teacher. "If a horse doesn't know what he has to do, he can destroy a horse by pushing it too hard, too fast, too much in too little time. You have to train him slowly," Whited recalls. "She was a very confused horse, but with Whited's guidance, she made the transition from student to teacher.

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