Since January, our collections team has been rehousing arrows that are part of our 8,000-piece weapons collection. These arrows come from all over the globe and are made from materials like metal, stone, and horn — we even have a quiver of poison-tipped arrows used for hunting monkeys in the Brazilian Amazon! The arrow collection had been stored in cardboard tubing since the early 1950s, an outdated storage method that makes their rehousing a top priority.

With funding from the Takahashi Family Fund at the San Diego Foundation, our staff and volunteer interns have been able to move 2,500 arrows from their old storage containers into new, custom trays made from archival-grade materials. Each arrow has its own slot, preventing them from rolling and their fletching (feathers) from being crushed.

The arrow rehousing project is just the beginning of a planned overhaul of the entire weapons collection, which includes artifacts from all over the world, including Japan, France, India, and Native American cultures. Most are from earlier than 1915, and many are part of the Jessop Weapons Collection. We are applying for substantial funding in order to research, identify, and rehouse the remainder of the collection.
Dear friends,

If you've ever seen our collections, you know how special they are. I always feel like a kid in my favorite candy shop — I know I’ll find a mind-blowing treat on every shelf, in every drawer, and inside every archival box.

This particular candy shop began June 20, 1916, when the San Diego Museum Association purchased almost 5,000 items from the directors of the Panama-California Exposition for the deal of the century: $1. Many of the artifacts had been collected by prominent researchers from the Smithsonian. Over the years, community luminaries added to them.

Today, we steward more than 100,000 ethnographic artifacts, 300,000 archaeological artifacts, 18,000 books and journals, 100,000 images, and 6,500 human remains.

As you'll read in this issue of Discovery, we have adopted a new comprehensive collections management policy (which you can read at http://museumofman.org/cmp2015) to guide us in maintaining these collections.

We are also pouring more resources and effort into them: adding a new state-of-the-art collections management system, hiring more professional staff, consulting with our Native American partners to repatriate human remains and artifacts, conserving artifacts in need of care, and adding much-needed infrastructure.

We are also working through our first major inventory of our collections in 30 years. A critical part of it is reevaluating what we have accumulated to determine whether it is still consistent with our mission, vision, and collection strategies.

We couldn’t be more proud of the amazing collections we have and the staff and donors who help care for them. Thank you for all of your support. Here’s to the next 100 years!

Sincerely,

Micah D. Parzen, Ph.D., J.D.
REMEMBERING ALANA CORDY-COLLINS

Alana K. Cordy-Collins, our friend and the Museum’s former chief curator and curator of South American archaeology, died August 16, 2015 of cancer. She was much loved by her friends, colleagues, and students, who remember her as colorful and gracious, and as the person who spent her first paycheck on faux leopard-skin upholstery for her Chevy roadster.

“She was much loved by her friends, colleagues, and students, who remember her as colorful and gracious...”

Alana received her doctorate in archaeology from UCLA and joined the University of San Diego faculty in 1980, where she was a professor of anthropology and curatorial director of the David W. May American Indian Collection and Gallery. She led archaeological excavations every summer in Peru, where she focused on the prehistoric peoples of the Peruvian north coast.

One of her special areas of expertise was the Moche “giants,” six-foot-tall mummies — far larger than of others in that culture — who were determined to be noblemen, as their bodies showed none of the signs of manual labor.

Her work led to the publishing of at least six books and more than 35 scholarly articles and book chapters, including several that were published by the Museum, where she was involved in many ways for decades.

Donations to San Diego Museum of Man are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Your support makes it possible for us to preserve the extraordinary collections entrusted to our care, to foster dialogue and lifelong learning through our innovative exhibits, and to offer admission to countless schoolchildren and other visitors.

Please also consider naming the Museum as a beneficiary in your will. Your gift can ensure that generations to come will enjoy our wonderful museum.

To donate, call Hope Carlson at (619) 239-2001, ext. 16, or email her at hcarlson@museumofman.org. You may also mail your check, made out to San Diego Museum of Man, to 1350 El Prado, San Diego, CA 92101.

Every gift matters. Thank you for your support!
COLLECTIONS SNAPSHOTS

• In September, the Museum finished installing the final portion of a large storage system for our North American basket collection. The complete system now stores more than 2,500 baskets! Next, in spring 2016, the team will begin installing new storage for our weapons collection. Modern storage allows us to better protect and store more objects in the same amount of space.

• A conservator will visit the Museum in spring 2016 to stabilize and preserve 10 high-priority Egyptian artifacts. Casey Mallinckrodt, who is now a conservation fellow at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, previously examined and stabilized the Museum’s rare Ancient Egyptian child sarcophagus, which dates to 305–30 BCE. Funding for this project is made possible thanks to the Ellen Browning Scripps Foundation.

• With the help of the Balboa Park Online Collaborative (BPOC), the Museum is undertaking a huge digitization project that will make much of the Museum’s library accessible in new ways. More than 18,000 books and 15,000 journals are being looked at as targets for scanning, depending upon their copyright status and whether they are already easily available online. The first step is to digitize the paper card catalog; so far 1500 records have been keyed into a new library management system, with the full set expected by the end of the year. “We’re beginning to see what cool things are in the library,” said Dani Heinemeyer, who is managing the digitization for BPOC. “For example, we found a first-hand account called “Among Cannibals,” from 1889, by Carl Lumholtz, who traveled throughout Australia.” This digitization is one of the first steps in a parkwide effort, led by BPOC with initial funding from the Legler Benbough Foundation, to make the digital assets of the park’s museums available through a unified interface within a few years.

AN ARTIFACT CONNECTS WOMEN ACROSS CULTURES

Every artifact has a story and a connection to history. Consider this Ndebele wedding apron.

The Ndebele, scattered by Anglo-Zulu conflicts, were defeated by the Boers in 1883, resulting in the imprisonment of their chiefs, confiscation of their lands, and the virtual enslavement of their people through indentured labor on Boer farms.

In an effort to hold on to their cultural identity, the Ndebele developed creative arts centered on house painting and beadwork.

More than a century later, beaded aprons are still an important adornment for an Ndebele woman, who will make and wear different aprons as she moves through the stages of her life from young girl to married woman. This mid-20th century apron was meant to be worn on its maker’s wedding day.

“Mother and daughter would bead the apron together leading up to the wedding. Its design reflects the bride’s hopes and dreams for her married life,” said Director of Collections Kelly Williams.

This apron’s design is of a modern dwelling with lights, windows, and doors, showing the importance of home and family, and the bride’s wish for a modern lifestyle.

“As a young woman myself, I identify with her thinking about what she wants her life to be and at the same time, I think, ‘She’s in a completely different part of the world and has a different life from me,’” said Williams. “We have lives that overlap despite time and geography, and it creates a special connection.”
**NEW FACES IN COLLECTIONS**

*Left to right: Kara Vetter, Lael Hoff, and Melanie Dellas*

**Kara Vetter, Registrar**
Kara grew up in Missouri with family who were unabashedly interested in science and history. She continued the tradition in Indiana where she earned her B.A. in anthropology and her M.A. in museum studies. She worked for the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites for six years as registrar before joining the Museum of Man. Kara and her husband, Josh, have a two-year-old daughter, Lorelei, and a six-year-old dog, Leela.

**Lael Hoff, NAGPRA Assistant**
Lael has nearly six years of experience working as a Native American monitor, including archaeological surveying and site evaluation. In addition, she was a tribal consultant for the Museum of Man and Red Tail Monitoring and Research, Inc., doing work related to the Museum’s NAGPRA grant in 2009–2010. She is currently working towards her M.A. in anthropology with an emphasis in biological anthropology at SDSU. Lael is also a mom to two-year-old twins.

**Melanie Dellas, Curatorial Assistant**
Melanie has worked at the Museum for more than three years, beginning as an intern while in graduate school at USD. She has her M.A. in ancient history, with a heavy focus on Archaic Sparta and post-Minoan Crete, and has written three books on mythological creatures from cultures around the world. Melanie is the proud mom of two boys: John, 12, and Nick, 9.

**NEW COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY**

How do you manage a collection of hundreds of thousands of items? First, you lay down some rules.

The Museum’s new Collections Management Policy is a cross-disciplinary document that reflects current Museum-industry practices and ethical considerations. It explains what the Museum collects and why, and how to handle intake, record object details, and store them.

The policy also includes information on deaccessioning (see the article below), and it governs access and reproduction of our items by researchers, authors, and others. In addition, it establishes a formal collections review committee, which includes board members and staff.

The policy’s main focus is to outline how the Museum collects pieces that help it fulfill its mission, which is to inspire human connections among as broad an audience as possible. Any artifact could do this — it wouldn’t have to be rare, valuable, or ancient — but fulfilling our mission isn’t the sole criterion. Is there space? Do we need it? Does it fill in gaps in our collections? Is it a duplicate? Can it really be preserved? Could we see ourselves using it in an exhibit?

You can find the full Collections Management Policy at http://museumofman.org/cmp2015.

**THINKING ABOUT DEACCESSIONING**

“Deaccessioning” may sound like evasive jargon, but in the museum world it’s standard language for permanently removing items from a museum’s collections. That can mean selling or giving the item to another organization, or even discarding it.

But why deaccession at all? Sometimes an item is a better fit at another museum. Other times, modern analysis shows it’s not what we thought it was. Some items disintegrate beyond usefulness, some are unneeded duplicates, and others are impossible to preserve and protect without expending enormous resources.

At the Museum of Man, any item proposed for deaccessioning must be brought before a seven-member Collections Review Committee and go through rigorous checks and approvals.

Good examples of this are sugar skulls, which are traditionally made in Mexico to celebrate Día de los Muertos. They’re pretty cultural artifacts, but they have a big problem.

“The sugar skulls have a level of inherent vice,” Collections Manager Karen Lacy said. “There is something that is integral to them that ultimately results in their disintegration.”

The problem is that sugar skulls are made of sugar. Besides attracting pests that can also harm other artifacts, there’s also no museum-friendly way to preserve sugar — at least not yet. The Museum is in discussion with institutions that have conservation programs to see if they want to take our too-far-gone sugar skulls to figure out new preservation techniques.

Despite these challenges, two of the Museum’s sugar skulls will soon go out on loan to the California Center for the Arts in Escondido, which will hold a Día de los Muertos show this October.
UPCOMING EVENTS

December Nights
Friday and Saturday, December 4-5
Celebrate the holidays with free admission for San Diego residents from 5-9 p.m.

Beer and Desserts Tasting
Thursday, January 14 at 6 p.m.
Sample decadent desserts and delicious craft brews.

Tower After Hours: Ireland
Thursday, February 11 at 6 p.m.
The best Irish party in town with traditional fare, Guinness, and entertainment (on left).

Visit museumofman.org for more details and our updated events calendar.