a short time ago we remember the Center being blanketed by thick plastic tarps during the fall and winter seasons. This did not make for the most ideal experience for our supporters who visited during those months.

Fast forward. Now, the DLC is an ideal place to visit year round. We have a variety of tour experiences that are designed for all seasons, ages, and lemur enthusiasts. Our new buildings enable us to view the lemurs both indoors and out and to offer more in depth experiences to our guests. If you have not visited the Center since the new buildings have become a reality, I encourage you to do so. If you have, I would invite you to take a more in depth tour of the Center.

As always tours are available Monday-Saturday by appointment. We now offer gift certificates as well for our premium tours. Stop by the Lemur Landing gift shop Monday through Friday 10-4 to get a great gift for that lemur enthusiast in your life! Call 919-401-7240 or visit lemur.duke.edu to find out more!

Later we got to get up close to an aye-aye without glass between us! I was so happy when it came within 2 feet of us. In the beginning the aye-aye was afraid of us because the lights were on. We turned them out, and it came up to a bowl placed five feet away from us. In the bowl there were nuts, honey and….mealworms!

The aye-aye’s trainer shook a blue bag hung on a stick in the enclosure and out came a grumpy looking slow loris! He ran in circles and still looking grumpy, sat on a box. Meanwhile, the aye-aye was eating a nut and I heard it tap with its middle finger against the nut! After finishing the nut, it ran around a branch and came to investigate us! It tried to leave its enclosure but the trainer gently pushed it back in.

That day was the best day of my life!

Later we got to get up close to an aye-aye without glass between us! I was so happy when it came within 2 feet of us. In the beginning the aye-aye was afraid of us because the lights were on. We turned them out, and it came up to a bowl placed five feet away from us. In the bowl there were nuts, honey and….mealworms!

The aye-aye’s trainer shook a blue bag hung on a stick in the enclosure and out came a grumpy looking slow loris! He ran in circles and still looking grumpy, sat on a box. Meanwhile, the aye-aye was eating a nut and I heard it tap with its middle finger against the nut! After finishing the nut, it ran around a branch and came to investigate us! It tried to leave its enclosure but the trainer gently pushed it back in.

That day was the best day of my life!
FROM THE DIRECTOR

Two words that belong in the Department of Redundancy Department, do they not? Why would you strategize without planning, and why would you plan, if not strategically? And so it is that I have tended to scoff at this phrase. But here I sit, at exactly 7:47 p.m. on Friday night, November 18, 2011, having just completed the final FINAL version of the DLC Strategic Plan. It has been an arduous process, beginning on October 24, 2010, with an email to Peter Lange that said the following: “This spring semester, I wish to begin October 24, 2010, with an email to Peter Lange that Plan. It has been an arduous process, beginning on

completed the final FINAL version of the DLC Strategic p.m. on Friday night, November 18, 2011, having just
to scoff at this phrase. But here I sit, at exactly 7:47

you strategize without planning, and why would you

Redundancy Department, do they not? Why would

couldn't even be imagined, only a few years ago.

explore biological phenomena non-invasively that

genomics, informatics, and nanotechnology, we can

But now, with the recent scientific revolutions in

completely committed to non-invasive research.

one of our major foci, we have been, and remain,

guished history. Though research has always been

the DLC is on the cusp of a new phase in its distin-

weaker eye of interim Director, Dr. Jim Siedow, Vice

the DLC staff and management team, and under the

The keystone of the week-long training is the teacher’s manual, and training in how to use it in their classes.

In the next phase of the program, the newly trained teachers will lead workshops for the school directors. In the third and final phase, these directors will train the teachers in their schools. The experienced MFG trainers will periodically oversee training sessions to assure quality and consistency. This method of teacher training, using the teacher’s manual, has been successfully implemented by the MFG in the Tamatave area for a decade, and we are all excited to now be transferring that knowledge and experience to a different region of the country!

Experience has taught us that teacher training goes far beyond the transfer of information to students only. Teachers are often the most respected members of rural communities, so if they receive environmental education, which was developed by the Madagascar Fauna Group (MFG) education team, and approved for use in public schools by the Madagascar Ministry of Education. The manual was designed to dovetail with the existing primary school curriculum, and gives the teachers a source from which to teach their students about Madagascar’s environment and ecosystem relationships, topics which are overlooked in Malagasy primary school education. Eventually, each of the 2,431 teachers in the two districts will receive a copy of the manual, and training in how to use it in their classes.

The plan is built on four fundamental themes: scientific inquiry, scholarship, information, and global engagement. It takes advantage of many existing assets at the DLC, but equally importantly, of its unique place within the broader Duke community. It will enrich the lives of students and researchers, while opening new opportu-
nities for our conservation mission in Madagascar. The plan extends into the year 2017, which, as luck would have it, will mark our 50th anniversary! We are excited about the future, and the insights and impacts that lie ahead are truly beyond imagining.

On this note, I bid you adieu until Fall of 2012. I will be undertaking a period of scientific refreshment for the spring term (aka, sabbatical). Beginning in January, I will be working in the UK with my colleague, Zhong Yang, at the University College London. I have a list of projects that is way too long to be realistic, but oh the joy of data analysis! I can hardly wait. While I am gone, the Center will be in the superbly capable hands of the DLC staff and management team, and under the watchful eye of interim Director, Dr. Jim Sadow, Vice Provost for Research.

Happy Holidays to all, and very best wishes for the New Year – 2012. Year One of the DLC Strategic Plan!

From Charlie Welch, Conservation Coordinator

Our new conservation initiative in the SAVA region of northeastern Madagascar has taken its inaugural step in the form of teacher training in environmental education! After extensive planning, in August we sent three Malagasy teacher-trainers to the town of Sambava. The three have had years of experience with Madagascar Fauna Group (MFG) teacher training workshops, and were lead by our long time colleague and environmental education specialist André Ratsimbazafy. The first phase of the training program was not actually conducted with the teachers, but rather focused on training of the future train-
ers - 33 education professionals from the CISCOs (school districts) of Sambava and Andapa.

The keystone of the week-long training is the teacher’s manual, and training in how to use it in their classes.

In the next phase of the program, the newly trained teachers will lead workshops for the school directors. In the third and final phase, these directors will train the teachers in their schools. The experienced MFG trainers will periodically oversee training sessions to assure quality and consistency. This method of teacher training, using the teacher’s manual, has been successfully implemented by the MFG in the Tamatave area for a decade, and we are all excited to now be transferring that knowledge and experience to a different region of the country!

Experience has taught us that teacher training goes far beyond the transfer of information to students only. Teachers are often the most respected members of rural communities, so if they receive environmental education and become convinced of the value of conservation themselves, the message is conveyed not only to students, but also to adults in the communities. The training workshops and follow-ups help incite enthusiasm for conservation issues, and are an effective early step in building long-term trusting relationships with local peoples – a crucial element in any viable conservation project.

Sincere thanks to the Margot Marsh Fund for making possible the first phase of the training program.

Without their support, we would have been unable to move forward on the trainings in such a timely manner. We have no time to lose!

Anne D. Yoder, PhD

Director

FROM THE DIRECTOR

The plan is entitled “Revo-

so what is in the plan, you are (hopefully) ask-

of rural communities, so if they

receive environmental

evolution, and global engagement.

inquiry, scholarship, information, and global engagement.

in the SAVA region of northeastern Madagascar has taken its inaugural step in the form of teacher training in environmental education! After extensive planning, in August we sent three Malagasy teacher-trainers to the town of Sambava. The three have had years of experience with Madagascar Fauna Group (MFG) teacher training workshops, and were lead by our long time colleague and environmental education specialist André Ratsimbazafy. The first phase of the training program was not actually conducted with the teachers, but rather focused on training of the future train-
ers - 33 education professionals from the CISCOs (school districts) of Sambava and Andapa.

The keystone of the week-long training is the teacher’s manual, and training in how to use it in their classes.

In the next phase of the program, the newly trained teachers will lead workshops for the school directors. In the third and final phase, these directors will train the teachers in their schools. The experienced MFG trainers will periodically oversee training sessions to assure quality and consistency. This method of teacher training, using the teacher’s manual, has been successfully implemented by the MFG in the Tamatave area for a decade, and we are all excited to now be transferring that knowledge and experience to a different region of the country!

Experience has taught us that teacher training goes far beyond the transfer of information to students only. Teachers are often the most respected members of rural communities, so if they receive environmental education and become convinced of the value of conservation themselves, the message is conveyed not only to students, but also to adults in the communities. The training workshops and follow-ups help incite enthusiasm for conservation issues, and are an effective early step in building long-term trusting relationships with local peoples – a crucial element in any viable conservation project.

Sincere thanks to the Margot Marsh Fund for making possible the first phase of the training program.

Without their support, we would have been unable to move forward on the trainings in such a timely manner. We have no time to lose!

Anne D. Yoder, PhD

Director

FROM THE DIRECTOR

The plan is entitled “Revo-

so what is in the plan, you are (hopefully) ask-

of rural communities, so if they

receive environmental

evolution, and global engagement.

inquiry, scholarship, information, and global engagement.

in the SAVA region of northeastern Madagascar has taken its inaugural step in the form of teacher training in environmental education! After extensive planning, in August we sent three Malagasy teacher-trainers to the town of Sambava. The three have had years of experience with Madagascar Fauna Group (MFG) teacher training workshops, and were lead by our long time colleague and environmental education specialist André Ratsimbazafy. The first phase of the training program was not actually conducted with the teachers, but rather focused on training of the future train-
ers - 33 education professionals from the CISCOs (school districts) of Sambava and Andapa.

The keystone of the week-long training is the teacher’s manual, and training in how to use it in their classes.

In the next phase of the program, the newly trained teachers will lead workshops for the school directors. In the third and final phase, these directors will train the teachers in their schools. The experienced MFG trainers will periodically oversee training sessions to assure quality and consistency. This method of teacher training, using the teacher’s manual, has been successfully implemented by the MFG in the Tamatave area for a decade, and we are all excited to now be transferring that knowledge and experience to a different region of the country!

Experience has taught us that teacher training goes far beyond the transfer of information to students only. Teachers are often the most respected members of rural communities, so if they receive environmental education and become convinced of the value of conservation themselves, the message is conveyed not only to students, but also to adults in the communities. The training workshops and follow-ups help incite enthusiasm for conservation issues, and are an effective early step in building long-term trusting relationships with local peoples – a crucial element in any viable conservation project.

Sincere thanks to the Margot Marsh Fund for making possible the first phase of the training program.

Without their support, we would have been unable to move forward on the trainings in such a timely manner. We have no time to lose!

Anne D. Yoder, PhD

Director
Big changes are afoot at the Lemur Center’s Division of Fossil Primates (DFP). Long time director, Elwyn L. Simons, has retired and moved to a new life in Arizona. Equally long-serving curator, Prithijit Chatrath, will retire early in the New Year. Elwyn and Prithijit spent their careers building a truly amazing and unique collection of fossil vertebrates, now numbering some 24,000 individual specimens. Duke University and the Duke Lemur Center owe a huge debt of gratitude to both of them for their many years of service and their lasting contributions, not only to the DFP but to the understanding of the evolutionary history of primates.

Incoming DFP director Gregg F. Gunnell has a tall task following in the footsteps of Elwyn and Prithijit. Gregg plans to maintain the traditions of field and specimen based research while bringing some aspects of the DFP collections into the new information age. In this time of budget constraint, new models of field research will have to be developed. In order to engage Duke students directly in the process and to provide field opportunities for as many students as possible, a renewed focus on North American field work will be emphasized. Working in the western United States will not only build important research collections for the DFP, it will provide more readily available (and affordable) field opportunities for Duke graduate and undergraduate students.

The DFP will continue to carry on the traditions of field work in Egypt and Madagascar that were initiated by Dr. Simons. However, the realities of fiscal restraint will require a re-think of how best to carry out this field work. This may entail smaller crews for shorter periods of time and developing new collaborations with different partners. In order to provide Duke students with as many opportunities as possible for global engagement, Gregg will continue to develop his contacts and field work options in SE Asia and in other parts of Africa, as well as pursuing all possible avenues to continue the work in Egypt and Madagascar.

The collection facilities at the DFP are undergoing renovation as we develop a climate controlled room for some sensitive material. We anticipate adding new cabinets for specimen storage in order to continue collection expansion. An exciting new initiative places the Lemur Center and the DFP on the cutting edge of new technology as we have formed a partnership with several other institutions and museums to develop a 3D digital repository for storing and accessing virtual specimens. As this repository expands and develops, most DFP fossil specimens will become available for virtual study online.

This will have many advantages including: cutting down on the need for colleagues to undertake expensive and time consuming travel to examine specimens first-hand; and eliminating most of the inherent dangers of physically manipulating specimens in the lab or eliminating costly and potentially dangerous shipping of specimens to other locations.

The challenges for the DFP are many but each also provides an opportunity to achieve great things – we will move forward, excited by the opportunity to expand on the legacy left by those who went before.
This past month we bid a fond farewell to Meritaten, a sweet and gentle, 27 year old crowned lemur, who had been blissfully living out her declining years in Natural Habitat Enclosure (NHE) 1 with her son, Geb, and sister, Nefertari. As her energy and appetite started to decline earlier in the summer, Meritaten enjoyed a daily parade of delectable and nutritious treats hand delivered to her at 10, 2 and 4 by her dedicated technician, Bevan Clark. Meritaten died in her sleep 24 October.

Crowned lemurs are a species which generally have proven to be difficult to maintain and breed in captivity. But Meritaten proved to be one of the rare exceptions, as she was the second most productive crowned lemur female in Duke Lemur Center (DLC) history (second only to her mother, Nefertiti), giving birth to 14 infants, 7 of which survived over a year (an excellent percentage for this delicate species).

Meritaten was the youngest member of the first group of crowned lemurs introduced to a free range enclosure in the summer of 1985. However, the crowned lemurs did NOT receive a warm welcome from the group of brown lemurs already living in NHE1, so they had to be relocated to NHE2, where they were released in fall, 1985. Things didn’t work out for them in NHE2 either, so the group was reintroduced into NHE1, where they remained until 1989. At that point, the crowned lemurs were moved out to NHE1 the following year.

In 2000, Meritaten was moved from the forest to a new breeding group with a young male, Bes, destined to become the love of her lemur life. The pair, perfect mate to Meritaten, he was not too fond of humans (a condition not that unusual in crowned lemur males), and his hostility towards the two legged creatures resulted in a number of amusing (at least in retrospect) instances in which the frail little 3 pound lemur chased his keepers down the trail through the forest and into the safety of the adjoining parking lot! Bes never actually harmed anyone, merely threatening to do so, but his potentially aggressive behavior, meant that he had to be in a cage in the forest, when Duke Anthro students came out to observe crowned lemur behavior. This proved to be rather impractical from a management standpoint, not to mention that it made the whole exercise of the observation of a free ranging crowned lemur group somewhat pointless, since the group’s adult male always had to be separated from his family and locked up! So the group was brought back to traditional caging in fall, 2000.

Bes died in winter, 2001, and the following Spring, Meritaten and her offspring were moved out to NHE 1 once again, where she spent her declining years free ranging in glorious freedom, basking in the sun, and waiting for Bevan to bring her treats! As tends to happen at the Lemur Center, the sad news of Meritaten’s passing was tempered somewhat by the arrival of a beautiful 1.5 year old crowned lemur male, Mosi, from the Indianapolis Zoo, not two weeks later. Mosi is now in quarantine, and when he gets out he will be paired with the lovely Sheeshat, born at the Center July, 2010, in the first crowned lemur birth here since Meritaten gave birth to her last set of twins in 1996. They might be hanging on by a thread in captivity, but crowned lemurs are indeed hanging on!