

# THE SMITHSONIAN TORCH

Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

May 1974

## Boorstin of MHT Wins Pulitzer Prize for History

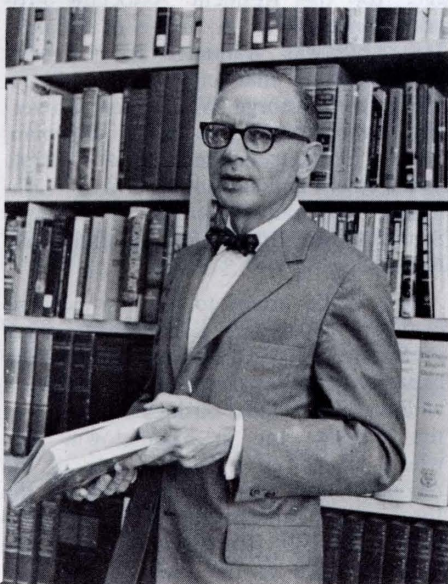
Dr. Daniel J. Boorstin, former Director and now Senior Historian of the National Museum of History and Technology, has been awarded a Pulitzer Prize for history for his book, *The Americans: The Democratic Experience*.

He is believed to be the first Smithsonian staff member to win a Pulitzer.

Published last June, *The Democratic Experience* completed the "Americans" trilogy Dr. Boorstin began 16 years ago with *The Colonial Experience*. The second volume was *The National Experience*. The Pulitzer winner was the Book-of-the-Month Club's main selection last July and was also a National Book Award finalist.

Dr. Boorstin gave up his duties as Director of MHT last October so that he could devote more time to research and writing. He had come to the Smithsonian to head the museum in October 1969 after a distinguished career on the faculty of the University of Chicago.

Among Dr. Boorstin's other books, all highly acclaimed, are *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America*, *The Genius of American Politics*, *The Decline of Radicalism*, *America and the Image of Europe*, *The Lost World of Thomas Jefferson*, and the *Landmark History of the American People* for younger readers. He has now shifted his focus from America to the world and is preparing to write a world history.



Dr. Daniel J. Boorstin

## SI Is Nominated For Safety Award

The Smithsonian has been nominated for the 1973 President's Safety Award, Secretary of Labor Peter J. Brennan has informed Secretary Ripley.

Standards on which the award is based were developed and approved by the Federal Safety Advisory Council. Each qualifying agency's safety and health program will be evaluated by a panel of judges selected from sources outside the government.

The Smithsonian recently received the President's Safety Award for 1972.

## Smithsonian Offers New Tour for Groups

The Smithsonian is now offering to groups of adults a free tour in the National Museum of History and Technology, entitled "The Spirit of 1776."

To schedule the tour for civic groups, clubs, or other organizations, please call Mrs. Reese at 381-6471. The tour will be given at 1 or 1:30 p.m. on Tuesday through Friday and must be scheduled in advance.



**HISTORIC OCCASION**—The Old Patent Office Building was commemorated as a National Historic Landmark in a ceremony held April 3 in the courtyard of that building which houses the National Collection of Fine Arts and the National Portrait Gallery. Shown affixing the plaque are Harry Jordan, Assistant to the Director of NCFA, Mrs. Richard Nixon, and Secretary Ripley. Others present for the ceremony included (from left) Meredith Johnson, Office of Public Affairs; Mrs. David Finley; Ronald Walker, Director, National Park Service; David Finley, Commissioner of NCFA and NPG; Charles Blitzer, Assistant Secretary for History and Art; Joshua Taylor, Director of NCFA; Mrs. Ripley; and Marvin Sadik, Director of NPG.

## Fieldcrest to Manufacture Products With SI Designs

The Smithsonian Institution and Fieldcrest Mills, Inc., have signed an agreement for the manufacture and sale of fashion home textile products that will feature designs found in the Smithsonian collections, William C. Battle, President and Chief Executive Officer of Fieldcrest Mills, Inc., and T. Ames Wheeler, Smithsonian Treasurer, have announced.

Mr. Wheeler said the licensing agreement was one of the first signed under the Institution's new product development program that will offer families across the nation articles based on significant items in the Smithsonian collections.

The contract with Fieldcrest provides for the manufacture and marketing of coordinated lines of bedspreads, blankets, sheets, towels, and area rugs in patterns inspired by the designs of original artifacts in the Smithsonian's collections. Each article will be accompanied by written material designed to inform the public about the history and significance of the related original artifact.

Mr. Battle, who served as the United States ambassador to Australia under the administration of the late President

John F. Kennedy, and Secretary Ripley signed the agreement several weeks ago.

"By creating various articles based on the collections the Smithsonian will be able to reach beyond the Mall to fulfill its educational role," said Mr. Wheeler. "The Smithsonian sees the contract with Fieldcrest as an important step in a program of working with quality manufacturers to develop articles that will enable the American people to share in the resources of our collections."

"Fieldcrest is pleased to have been selected by the Smithsonian to produce traditional items in an important area of home furnishings," said Mr. Battle. He said the initial collection would be introduced in May and would be based on designs created or used by Americans of the past.

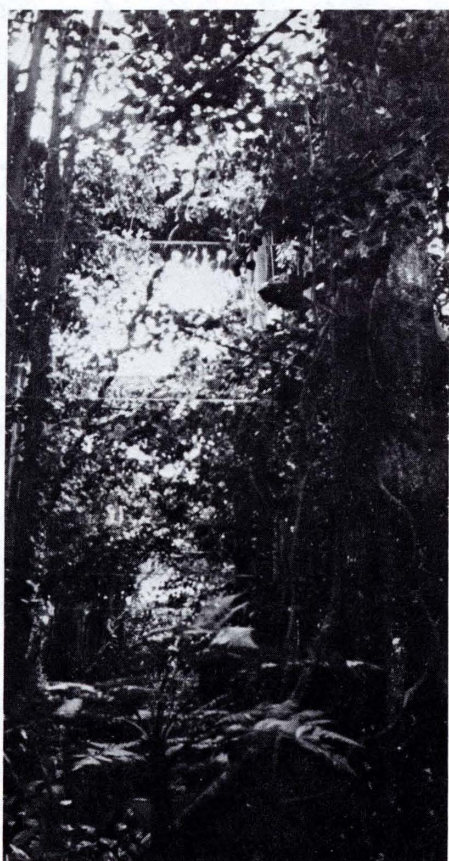
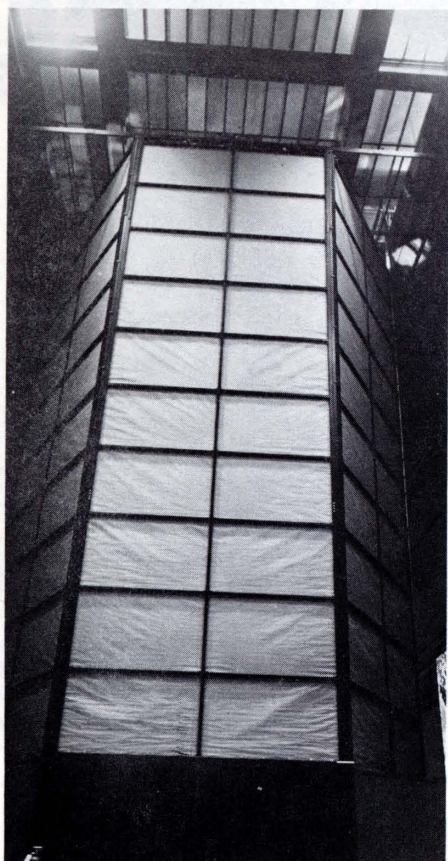
## Latest News From the SI Animal World Features New Owlets, Playful Pandas

There was good news recently for animal lovers at the Smithsonian. Six owlets are reported flourishing in their tower home in the old SI Building where they are being raised by Alex and Athena, the barn owls brought there from the National Zoological Park in February. Mike Johnson of the NZP staff took the photo below of Athena and three of the youngsters. The others are behind her. He re-

ported that Alex has dispatched three pigeons in the tower, but still seems to be depending on handouts to sustain his family. By putting bait outside, Mike hopes to persuade the owls to start hunting. Meanwhile at the Zoo, the giant pandas Hsing-Hsing and Ling-Ling have been allowed together for brief periods this spring. The photo is by Bernie Boston of the Washington Star-News.







Inside and outside the MNH "rain forest."

## Exhibits Experts Create 'Tropical Forest' in NMNH

After many months of painstaking labor, Smithsonian exhibits experts have created a walk-through tropical rain forest in the National Museum of Natural History as the centerpiece for a new ecology exhibit which opened there April 6.

Rising high up toward the exhibit hall ceiling, the rain forest is the symbol of an environment in which "It All Depends"—the title of the exhibit. Here all the plants and animals, like actors in a play, are intimately related to each other. If this balance is upset, the whole environment can be placed in jeopardy.

Smithsonian exhibit experts created the rain forest environment inside a 27-foot-wide, 54-foot-high silo. The exterior of the silo is a unistrut steel structure covered by natural colored paper paneling. Inside, the surface of the silo is covered by plastic mirrors 2/1000 of an inch thick which give a visitor the impression of a forest stretching endlessly around him.

In 1962 an NMNH expedition spent six weeks in a rain forest in British Guiana (now Guyana). They collected and photographed specimens to use as the basis of a life-size imitation of a rain forest for an exhibit hall on plant life.

The exhibit proposal was later abandoned, but in the late 1960s when the museum began to consider doing an exhibit on ecology, it again took up the rain forest idea. Work on the project began in early 1973. John Widener and William Miner of the Smithsonian's exhibits staff, accompanied by NMNH scientist Dr. Donald Duckworth, visited an actual rain forest in Panama near STRI to study the problem of creating an authentic appearance.

The simulated forest's components were sculpted and molded at NMNH's Models & Plastics Laboratory by experts, including Bud Sayre. Branches were made by covering plastic water piping with mache. Thousands of leaves molded in the laboratory were wired on the branches, and then the branches were hoisted high up into the silo by rope and pulley, attached to the trunks of the trees and properly adjusted. Boulders and rock outcroppings were sculpted at the base of the trees.

Dr. Thomas Soderstrom, NMNH botanist who was one of the scientists who went along on the expedition in the early '60s, is pleased by the illusion that has been achieved. "It's what I remember it looked like in the Guyana rain forest," he said.

Visitors who part the curtains of the doorway and enter the dimly-lit silo interior, see giant trees, woody vines, and forest foliage.

The mache trees are tapered to increase the illusion of height. They rise

34 feet upwards to a translucent plastic screen through which a small amount of light is filtered. Looking straight up through the foliage gives a person the illusion that he is seeing the sky 80 to 100 feet above him.

The throbbing life of the tropical rain forest is heard in the background—birds, the screech of a howler monkey, the sound of rain—and the visitor can see in the forest foliage such inhabitants as a monkey climbing a vine, a brilliantly colored parrot perched on a limb, and an anteater climbing a vine towards a termite nest.

Other environments are exemplified in glass cases depicting life in the desert and marine life. The five motion pictures that give continuity to the exhibit were produced by Karen Loveland and John Hiller of the Exhibits Motion Picture Unit in the SI Office of Exhibits Central. They include a three-screen film, *Survival Depends on Man's Use of the Earth*, which sums up the exhibit theme. One of the films, *Sharing a Niche*, won a Golden Eagle award from the Council on International Non-theatrical Events.

The overall design of "It All Depends" was created by James Ward and Robert Gersin Associates of New York, working in collaboration with the Smithsonian exhibits staff under the direction of James Mahoney. Original music was composed, arranged, and conducted by Eldon Rathburn of the National Film Board of Canada and performed by the U. S. Marine Band. The exhibit script was written by Ralph Caplan.

## Main Entrance To NCFA Reopens

The main entrance to the National Collection of Fine Arts at Eighth and G streets in downtown Washington has been permanently reopened after being blocked four years by Metro subway construction.

Work on the subway continues, but from now on will be entirely underground in the area of the entrance. The project necessitated underpinning the building with pilings sunk 80 feet deep.

Because of modifications at the site underground, visitors approaching the building will now mount stairs to a raised, paved platform extending out from the NCFA's entrance, with pediments at each side. Steps formerly led directly up to the entrance.

## White, Able Are Asst. Directors For Associates

The appointments of Edward H. Able as Assistant Director for Administration of the Smithsonian Resident Associate Program, and Herbert W. White as Assistant Director for Programming, have been announced by Janet W. Solinger, Director of the Program.

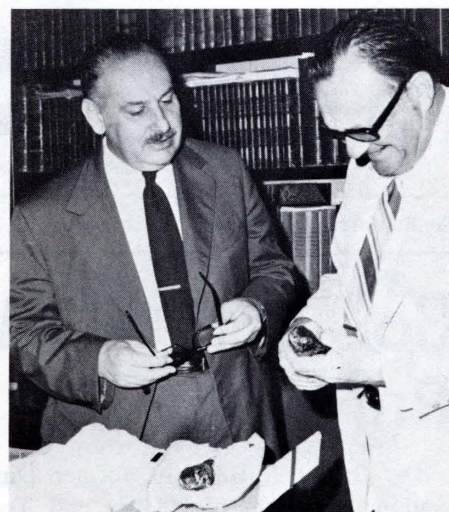
Both posts are newly-created, reflecting the rapid growth of the Program and the continuing effort to fulfill the cultural and educational aspirations of a membership that has grown from 8,500 to 22,000 in 1½ years.

Mr. Able has served as Business Manager for the Resident Associate Program since 1973. A native of Atlanta, Mr. Able was graduated from Emory University in that city and holds an MBA from George Washington University. Before coming to the Smithsonian, he was staff executive with a multiple management and consulting firm in Washington and had served as an aide to Senators Richard B. Russell and Mike Mansfield.

Mr. White brings to his new position extensive experience gained as Manager of Special Projects Consulting in which capacity he served as consultant to a wide variety of local businesses, including the Wayside Inn in Middletown, Va., where he played a leading role in the reconstruction and development of the Inn and was instrumental in the establishment of the Wayside Theater. Mr. White is a graduate of the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service.

The arrival of Mr. White places the number of full-time Resident Associate staff members at 25, plus four part-time staff members, 18 more than existed in August, 1972. The membership figure of 22,000 represents approximately 65,000 individuals being served by the Program when "double" and "family" memberships are taken into account.

## Birds Exchanged



The National Museum of Natural History recently sent two specimens of the North American Nighthawk to the National Museum of Natural History in Montevideo, Uruguay.

The specimens of these birds, which are insect-eating nocturnal birds found in urban and country habitats across the United States, were exchanged for those of a peculiar South American gull occurring on the south Atlantic coast, *Larus atlanticus*. They are the counterpart of the Pacific coast gull called Belcher's Gull or *Larus belcheri*.

The exchange was arranged by Robert L. Brownell, Jr., research collaborator in the Smithsonian's Department of Vertebrate Zoology, while he was in Uruguay recently. Shown accepting the birds in the photo above is Prof. Miguel Klappenback, left, Director of the national museum in Uruguay. Making the presentation is Abraham N. Hopman, U.S. Cultural Affairs Officer.

### SMITHSONIAN TORCH

May 1974

Published for Smithsonian Institution personnel by the Smithsonian Office of Public Affairs, William O. Craig, Editor.



**ANACOSTIA DIRECTOR DIVES**—This scuba diver surveying a coral reef in the Caribbean is not a Smithsonian scientist, but a Smithsonian administrator—John Kinard, Director of the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum. During a conversation last year with Dr. Porter Kier, Director of the National Museum of Natural History, in which they discussed setting up a cooperative NMNH-Anacostia Museum program, Kinard said he would like to learn more about what SI scientists do. Dr. Kier invited him to come along on a spring field trip to British Honduras where SI scientists are engaged in a comprehensive study of a coral reef ecosystem. To prepare, Kinard took a crash one-week scuba diving course, passing it with high honors. In British Honduras, he spent a week making dives in deep and shallow waters and aiding the scientists in a survey of organisms and environments in the reef waters. The photograph was taken by Dr. Kier.





Van Dyck's "Christ Carrying the Cross" (left) and Rubens' "Head of King Henry IV" (right) are among the masterpieces in an extensive SITES exhibition from Belgium, "Antwerp's Golden Age," which is now touring major museums in the United States. Center photo shows paintings in the exhibit hanging in the New York Cultural Center.

## SITES Gets the Shows on the Road

To educate and entertain millions of Americans who may never get to museums in Washington, the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES) brings the Smithsonian to the Broadways and Main Streets of communities across the nation.

The service has been in existence more than 20 years, but is still expanding and developing under the innovative and enthusiastic leadership of its director, Dennis Gould, who is assisted by a talented staff of 13.

Although it is located away from the Mall in the picturesque Barney Studio House at 2306 Massachusetts Avenue, SITES is very much a part of the day-to-day operations of the Institution in Washington (it is, incidentally, on the SI switchboard and has SI mail service). SITES circulates some exhibitions originated at the Smithsonian and hopes to increase the number. However, 80 per cent of the exhibitions now traveling come from outside the Institution, many from foreign countries.

Therefore, SITES depends greatly on the advice of Smithsonian curators in various fields to provide the expert opinion necessary to evaluate a prospective exhibit.

"We will not circulate a show unless it gains the approval of a Smithsonian expert in the field," Mr. Gould emphasized. "We depend on the curators to give a careful review of the scripts of each show. They really have the life-and-death, 'go-or-no-go' decision."

SITES is placing new emphasis on science, technology, and history exhibits, while maintaining its reputation as a circulator of art shows. Several other institutions also circulate art exhibits, but SITES is almost alone in the other categories, Mr. Gould noted. It also is working to place more emphasis on SI-originated exhibits.

### Information Wanted

"We want to put more Smithsonian exhibitions on the road, and to do this we also need the cooperation of SI staff members in telling us about transportable exhibits," Mr. Gould commented. "We can assure them that we will not circulate items that should not be moved about. If an item is essential to the show, we will make a replica."

SITES, under the administration of Paul Perrot, Assistant Secretary for Museum Programs, is now circulating 115 exhibit units. Each year 40 new shows are needed to keep 100 exhibit units in circulation. Duplicates of some exhibits are made and circulated, if feasible. Mr. Gould said existing demand could sustain twice the number of units. In fact, SITES is planning to have 250 units traveling during the Bicentennial in 1976.

Each year, 600 SITES installations are viewed by an average of 8,000 persons each, or a total audience of approximately 4,800,000. SITES supports its direct costs largely through the fees it charges for exhibitions. Most indirect

costs are met by the Smithsonian. In the current budget of \$480,000, federal funds are included for the first time—\$80,000 which is being used to provide a base appropriation that enables SITES to keep exhibition rental fees low.

Recent shows in Washington that were organized by SITES include "Antwerp's Golden Age," and the Kurt Kranz exhibition, both at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, and three shows at the Renwick Gallery: "American Pieced Quilts," "The Avant-Garde in Theater and Art," and "Two Hundred Years of Royal Copenhagen Porcelain."

SITES reviews six to eight exhibit proposals each week, submitted in many forms from both within and outside the Institution. Factors considered include quality and accuracy of content and preparation, how well the topic is suited to an exhibit format and to SITES' program, desire for certain exhibits expressed by SITES' customers, and ability of the exhibition to carry its expenses and the expense of administering the tour from rental fees.

### How Fees Are Set

To meet its expenses, each exhibition must be booked to its full potential at the rental fee determined by SITES. The fee is determined by estimating all direct costs such as insurance premiums, expense of design and production, and printing and transportation expenses. Then 100 to 200 per cent for overhead is added to cover indirect costs such as staff time. These costs are divided by 12 (the number of exhibit displays in a two-year loan period). The result is the rental fee per exhibitor. Lower rental fees result in more successful tours. SITES is trying to keep rental fees low to service smaller museums, and sought the federal funds now in its budget to help do this.

In addition to circulating "outside" shows and exhibitions by the SI museums, SITES is sponsoring research and developing its own exhibitions. "Ride On," an exhibit about bicycles, was developed by Andrea Stevens, SITES exhibits coordinator. An exhibit of dolls in America is being put together by Eileen Rose, SITES administrative assistant.

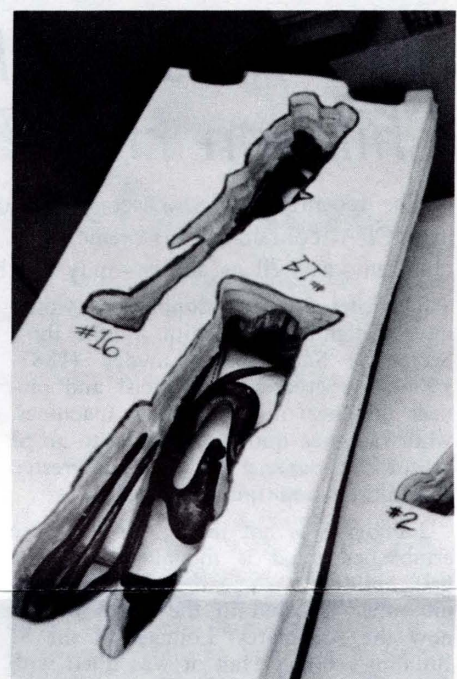
The growing list of SITES "customers" and the number of institutions that rely on SITES regularly for exhibitions attest to the popularity of the service. Distribution of the shows appears to follow population patterns, but one museum in the Southwest booked 22 exhibits in a 12-month period. SITES has customers in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, and also circulates shows in Canada. One exhibit unit was pur-

chased by the U.S. Information Agency for showing overseas.

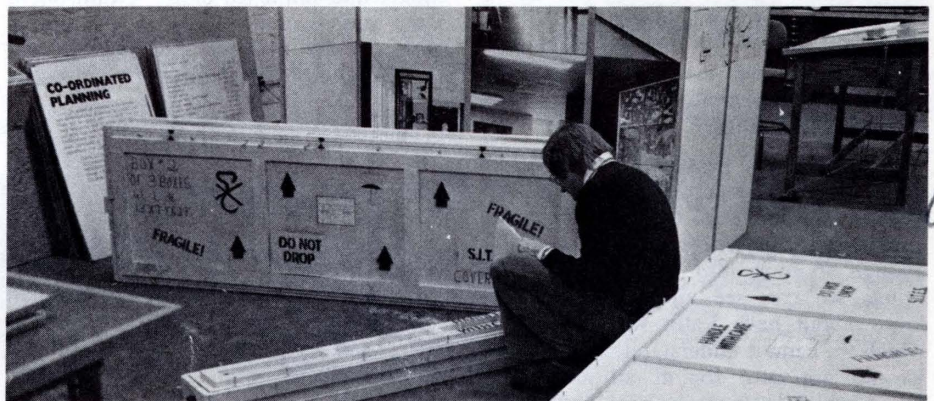
The SITES mailing list of "customers" numbers 2,500 and increases at a rate of 30 a month. There are 27 different categories. Colleges and universities are SITES' most frequent users (60 per cent), followed by museums of all types and sizes (30 per cent), and libraries (5 per cent). Miscellaneous exhibitors, including some in commercial buildings, make up the remainder.

Exhibitors report on the condition of an exhibit and are responsible for shipping it to its next location. SITES sends publicity material out in advance, and in some cases makes arrangements for special educational activities as part of a show.

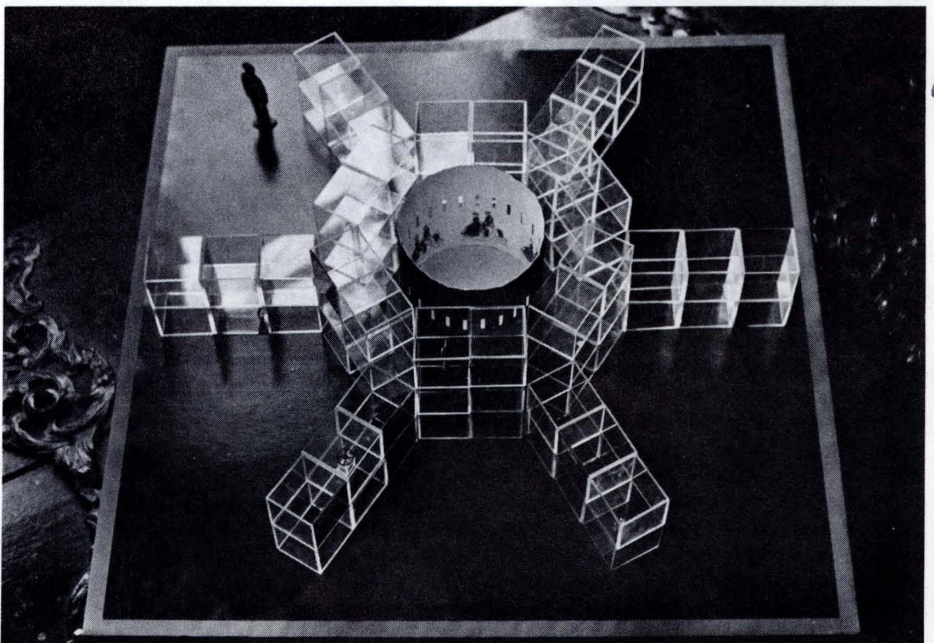
"SITES circulates more shows on more subjects to more different people than any other service," Mr. Gould concluded. "With the continued help of the Smithsonian staff we can maintain our high standards and expand our efforts on behalf of the Institution to increase and diffuse knowledge throughout the country."



SITES regularly solves special packing problems. Makonde sculptures were embedded in hollowed-out foam rubber. Dennis Gould, SITES director, is shown making a final check of crates at the SI's 24th Street facility in Washington.



Model below shows appearance of bicycling exhibit.







A contemporary photo of the 1901 children's room in SI Building.

## New Museum Rooms for Children Had Predecessor

The recently opened Discovery Room at NMNH and the Explorer Room at NCFA contain an assortment of natural history and art objects which children—as well as adults—may touch and examine.

This development doubtlessly would have delighted the Smithsonian's third Secretary, Samuel P. Langley (1887-1906), the great astrophysicist and pioneer designer of aeronautical machines, who was once quoted as saying to an SI visitor, "Madame, I am chiefly interested in children and fairy stories."

Langley was not joking. In 1901 he established what is thought to be the first children's room in an American museum. Located in the room that is now the Associates' Lounge off the SI Building's Great Hall, it was filled with cases of natural history objects that included birds' nests, eggs, shells, minerals and fossils, corals and sponges. There were also singing birds in gilt cages and an aquarium.

### Museum 'Crimes'

Langley, identifying himself with "my young clients" listed the discriminatory crimes that museums practiced against youth in *St. Nicholas Magazine*, a sort of turn-of-the-century *Boy's Life*.

"I should say," he said, "that we never have a fair chance in museums. We cannot see the things on the top shelves which only grown-up people are tall enough to look into, and most of the things we can see and would like to know about have Latin words in them which we cannot understand; some things we do not care for at all and other things which look entertaining have nothing on them to tell us what they are about—We think that there is nothing in the world more entertaining than birds, animals, and live things—We are not very much interested in the Latin names, and however much they may mean to grown-up people, we do not want to have our entertainment spoiled by its being made a lesson."

### Childhood Impressions

"If I may speak for myself, I am sure I remember how the whole studies of my life have been colored by one or two strong impressions received in childhood. The lying down, as a child, in a New England pasture and looking at the mysterious soaring of a hen-hawk far above in the sky, has led me to give many years of mature life to the study of traveling in air; and puzzling about the way the hotbed I used to see on the farm kept the early vegetables warm under its glass roof has led to many years of study in after life on the way that this great hotbed, the earth, is kept warm by its atmosphere; and so on with other things."

## Brentano's Features Books From SI Press

For the past two months Brentano's bookstore on Fifth Avenue in New York has been highlighting a full selection of books from the Smithsonian Institution Press, accompanied by newspaper advertising, interior displays, and prominent window treatment featuring the theme "The Smithsonian Comes to Brentano's."

Gordon Hubel, Director of the Smithsonian Press, and Miss Lillian Friedman, Vice President of Brentano's, said the test program is designed to measure the impact and influence of the Smithsonian name and its contribution to the sale of books when properly advertised and merchandised by a prominent retail bookseller.

The test was launched with an 800-line ad in the New York Times two months ago. Since then SI Press books have been prominently displayed in the Fifth Avenue window as well as in an attractive interior shelf display. Brentano's is stocking about 40 Smithsonian Press titles. According to Miss Friedman more than two-thirds of the titles have moved extremely well. She said the company plans to extend the program to two other stores soon.

Mr. Hubel explained:

"For the past year we have been evaluating a variety of marketing and merchandising techniques designed to increase the visibility and sale of our books in retail bookstores. During the past few months we have become increasingly convinced that we can attract the attention of book shoppers and increase our sales if we show a significant number of titles in a prominent shelf display adequately identified with the Smithsonian Press name. We have been extremely conscious of the fact that our museums are host to more than 20 million visitors annually who return to their homes, we believe, with a favorable impression of the Smithsonian Institution and its many products and services. Accordingly, a few weeks ago we asked Brentano's, whom we consider to be among the world's leading retailers of scholarly books, to help us put our theories to the test. Miss Friedman and her associates have been kind enough to lend us their support in this effort, and we are extremely pleased at this early evidence of success."

## Dierker, Wilson Join Counsel's Office

Robert A. Dierker and James I. Wilson have been appointed to serve as Assistant General Counsels.

Mr. Dierker received a B.A. degree in psychology from Ohio State University in 1968. He attended the Ohio State University College of Law, pursued his legal studies at the University of London, England, and returned to the United States to receive his Juris Doctorate degree in 1971, cum laude, from the Ohio State University. Prior to joining the Smithsonian, Mr. Dierker was a trial attorney with the U.S. Department of Justice, where he specialized in criminal prosecution.

Mr. Wilson received his B.A. degree from the University of Miami. In 1969 he received his Juris Doctorate degree from the University of Miami School of Law. Before joining the Smithsonian he was associated with the law firms of Bilger & Blair and Prince & Paul in Washington, D.C. He specialized in the practice of communications law.



**OUTSTANDING GUARDS**—Outstanding members of the Smithsonian guard force for February have been named by the commanding officers of each of the four companies that comprise the force. Honored were Pfc. Walter Voloshin, Company A (top left); Pfc. Ervin Harris, Company B (top right); Pfc. Melvin Butler, Company C (bottom left), and Pfc. James A. Smith, Company D.

## Two Chairmen Appointed at NMHT

Dr. John T. Schlebecker has been appointed as Chairman of the Department of Industries of the National Museum of History and Technology.

He will continue to serve as Supervisor of the Division of Agriculture and Mining. Dr. Schlebecker has been with the Smithsonian since 1965.

Dr. Vladimir Clain-Stefanelli has been appointed as Chairman of the Department of Applied Arts, at NMHT. He will continue to serve in the capacity of Supervisor of the Division of Numismatics, a position he has held since coming to the Institution in 1956.

## Chambers Heads Protection Office

Jay W. Chambers has been appointed Chief of the Protection Division, Office of Protection Services.

He is responsible for the planning, direction and supervision of all matters pertaining to the security force of the Smithsonian Institution.

Mr. Chambers received his B.S. degree in law enforcement and correction from the University of Nebraska. Recently retired as a lieutenant colonel from the U.S. Army, his experience has included security, investigations, police operations, computer security, intelligence operations and communications security.

## Roadrunners May Mar Mirrors

By John Powers

Although ornithology is not among the many areas of research presently conducted at SAO's Mt. Hopkins Observatory, the Smithsonian might consider investigating the matter of the Arizona roadrunner.

The poor birds have a problem—they can't quite cope with the facility's giant gamma-ray reflector, a 10-meter-wide concave dish of 248 spherical mirrors of front-aluminized glass used to search for possible celestial sources of gamma rays (see photo).

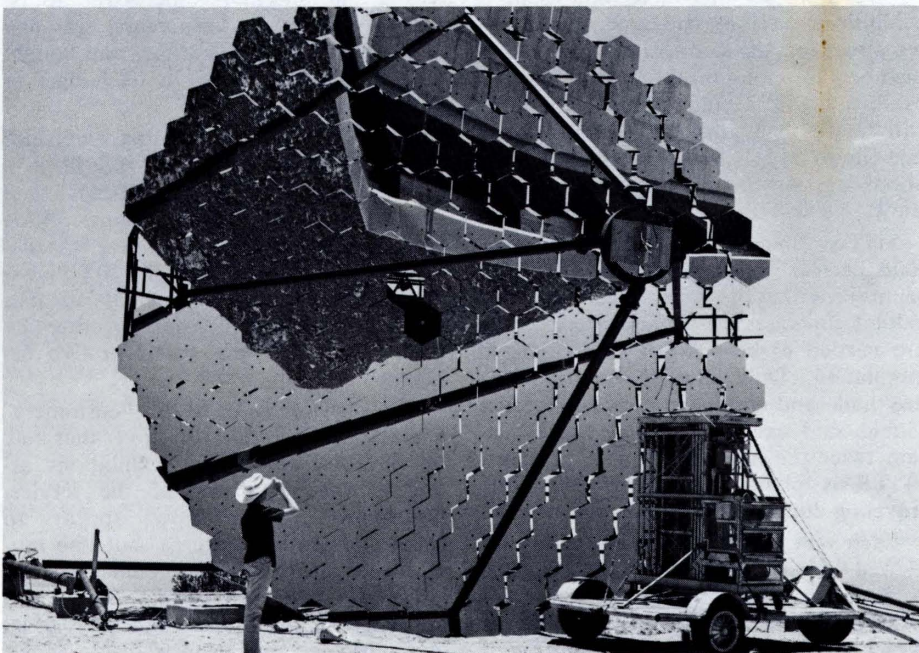
Last fall, Ed Horine, a field engineer in charge of equipment maintenance, became concerned by the strange scratches appearing on a few of the reflector's lower mirrors. Obviously, it wasn't gamma rays doing the scratching.

The mystery of the marred mirrors continued until one morning last winter when Ed happened to spot a roadrunner warming himself in the sun on one of the reflector's anchor pads. Then, as Ed watched, the bird saw something in

the mirror—and it apparently didn't like what it saw!

With what Ed describes as "a sudden flapping of wings and plenty of squawking," the roadrunner attacked the image in the mirror. When several attempts to find a foothold on the smooth surface proved futile, the bird settled for a furious pecking at the glass.

The short skirmish appeared to end in a draw—with both combatants retreating at the same time. Only the mirrors suffered any battle wounds. So far, the scratches haven't interfered with astronomical research, but to protect the mirrors from further attacks, Ed is taking the only possible preventive measure: "I try to shoo the darn things away, just like any other birds."



The birds' problem at Mt. Hopkins.