Secretary Ripley Discusses Folk Interest in Myths

In this article Secretary Ripley examines the subject of the first in a series of TV programs concerning Smithsonian interests. It was adapted from Mr. Ripley's comments recorded for the program.

By S. Dillon Ripley

For many years, as I have travelled on research expeditions around the world, I have been interested in mythology. There seems to be an essential and continuing validity to myths as myths. Through the ages, man has manifested a need to believe in scientifically unproven facts as a way to reinforce his other beliefs.

Such myths have become part of the traditional folklore of many civilizations, both old and new, as humans seek to explain somehow a practice, a belief, or a short or long-lived phenomenon. What is fact? What is fiction? The scientific method often can be used to ferret out the truth. Mythology, however, still confronts modern science with some animal legends that still offer challenges to those who seek to explain them.

One of the most fascinating, interesting, and rewarding things that the Smithsonian Institution's large staff of scientists and cultural historians does, as a part of its mission to increase and diffuse knowledge, is to verify whether "facts" brought to our attention are really facts. This information often comes to our attention from the public at large in the form of suggested ideas about objects or reports of occurrences. A good example was our study of the famous Kensington stone, a piece of rock found in Minnesota that appeared to have runic inscriptions on it, leading one to believe that the Vikings may well have explored the interior of our continent as early as the 14th century.

We spent considerable time studying this stone and finally concluded that it was a hoax. Over the years we have often been challenged by the question of whether certain animals actually occur in the world or are merely myths or hoaxes. On one occasion a report that seemed at first fantastic turned out to be true. The coelacanth, a fish thought to be extinct for 60 million years, was found in 1938 still alive near South Africa in the Indian Ocean. So it goes, some of the mysterious reports that the Smithsonian investigates prove to be myths, some prove to be true.

One report that I have had a particular interest in for a long time is the existence of the so-called Abominable Snowman. For years I have been traveling in the Himalayas, that range of mountains that fringes Northern India and Tibet and Paki.

(Continued on page 8)
Survey Measures Staff Interest in Physical Fitness

A recent survey showed that there is substantial employee interest in physical fitness at the Smithsonian.

The survey, conducted by the Institution’s Committee for the Advancement of Physical Fitness, drew responses from more than 500 occupants of Smithsonian buildings on or near the Mall.

Some 72.5 percent of those responding said they would use shower and changing facilities at work, and only 9 percent responded with no interest in such facilities. Of those who would not use the facilities, more than one third favored their implementation for others’ use. More than one fourth of the interest in the facilities came from those who would play touch football, jogging, or team sports. But a whopping 17.2 percent of named activities. Closest to one third still favored their implementation for others’ use. More than one third still favored their implementation for others’ use.

The survey questionnaire were tabulated by Dr. Bernard M. Mergen, Professor of American Civilization and a past director of the American Studies Program at the George Washington University. He has been a Fulbright Scholar, a Woodrow Wilson Fellow, and received a Smithsonian Fellowship this year. He is also the author of a number of articles and books which have appeared in special collections.

The questionnaire was designed to elicit thoughtful and suggestive remarks submitted on the returned questionnaires, including a “minority report” composed of marks opposed to the envisioned facilities.

The survey questionnaire was designed to elicit thoughtful and suggestive remarks submitted on the returned questionnaires, including a “minority report” composed of marks opposed to the envisioned facilities.

The谕奎en questionnaire has been urged to make their copies available to interested employees for their examination.

Dr. Bernard Mergen

To Edit Portfolio

Dr. Bernard M. Mergen has been appointed editor of the Smithsonian Institution Bicentennial Portfolio Series. Secretary Ripley has announced.

Dr. Mergen is Assistant Professor of American Civilization and a past director of the American Studies Program at the George Washington University. He has been a Fulbright Scholar, a Woodrow Wilson Fellow, and received a Smithsonian Fellowship this year. He is also the author of a number of articles and books which have appeared in special collections.

The Bicentennial Portfolio Series, entitled “The American Experience,” will consist of 20 portfolios, each covering a particular period or theme. Each portfolio will consist of 51 by 14 inch unbound images of scenes, persons, and objects significant in American history. Each image will have a brief caption and credit line, and each portfolio will have a short essay on the historical period or theme covered as well as additional information on the images. Scholastic Magazine, Inc., will publish and distribute the portfolios to schools, libraries, historical societies and small museums.

Dr. Hindle Elected Foundation Trustee

Dr. Brooke Hindle, Director of the National Museum of History and Technology, has been elected a trustee on the board of Eleutherian Mills-Hagley Foundation, Wilmington, Del.

Dr. Hindle has long been associated with the Foundation. He served for a time as senior resident scholar, and his term as a member of the advisory committee expired this year.

The Foundation is a non-profit educational corporation devoted to American economic and industrial history. It administers the Hagley Museum and the Eleutherian Mills Historical Library at Wilmington.

Outstanding Guards—Outstanding members of the Smithsonian guard force for July have been named by the commanding officers of each of the five companies that comprise the force. Honored were (top, from left) Cpl. Michael Squared, Company A; Pvt. Lacey Lahren and (second row, from left) Pvt. Donald Bulluck, Company B; Pvt. Dyron Byers, Company C; (bottom, from left) Pfc. Eithel Hale, Company D, and Pfc. Masaw Williams, Outpost Detachment.

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Credit Given To MHT Staff For New Exhibit

The new “Suiting Everyone” exhibit at the National Museum of History and Technology is the result of the work of many people from all parts of the Museum who were not mentioned in the story about the exhibit that appeared in the October issue of THE TORCH.

Following is a list provided by the Museum staff of those who had a part in preparing the exhibit:


Building Manager—Lawrence Bush and his staff.

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Smithsonian Opens Hirshhorn Museum

6,000 Works in Collection; 900 in Opening Exhibition

With champagne toasts, a specially composed musical salute, and a carefully chosen selection of art works, the Joseph H. Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden was opened the first week of October.

The Hirshhorn quickly became a popular attraction as the newest museum of the Smithsonian, drawing an average daily attendance of 6,000 to 10,000 persons the first week it was opened and a peak attendance of 30,000 was reached the first Sunday.

The week of opening festivities began September 30 with a day-long press preview on the evening of October 1, high government officials and other dignitaries attended dedication ceremonies. The following night was set aside for all the art world to take a look at the Hirshhorn collection. The inaugural formal opening was held the evening of October 3 for Smithsonian Associates. The building was opened to the public the evening of October 4.

The Hirshhorn Museum brings to the nation's capital one of the most comprehensive collections of 20th century art. Masterworks by leading modern artists reflect major trends and styles that have evolved in this century and the latter part of the 19th century. The exhibition provides visitors with change as a national museum of modern art. The Museum's purpose is to encourage a greater appreciation of modern and contemporary art through exhibitions and research activities.

The Museum resulted from the gift to the nation in 1960 and 1972 of the collection of paintings and sculptures comprising over 40 years by Joseph H. Hirshhorn.

Scope of Collection

As it opens, the Museum's collection numbers some 4,000 paintings and 2,000 sculptures tracing the development of modern art from the 19th century to the present. The internationally renowned sculpture collection, one of the best such collections ever assembled, includes works in every medium by European and American masters such as Rodin and many others.

The painting collection covers the changing styles of modern American paintings from the late 19th century to the most recent manifestations. European painting from the last three decades is also well represented.

The exhibition of 900 works in all media represents highlights from the Museum's collection. The paintings, sculptures and media arranged in historical sequence fills the entire Museum and covers the entire scope of the collection. Works by European and American artists exhibited side by side show how they influenced one another.

The inaugural exhibition includes such major art movements of the 20th century as Cubism, Abstract Expressionism, Pop, Op, and Minimal Art. The paintings and sculptures on display were never publicly exhibited before. The inaugural exhibition continues through December.

'Special Music'

Special music was an essential part of the opening ceremonies. On the evening of October 3, 1974, the city's premier orchestra, the University of the District of Columbia Orchestra, played under the direction of Antal Dorati. A recording of the work was scored for wind and percussion instruments. It was played at opening ceremonies by the National Symphony Orchestra under the direction of John Barbirolli for a Great Occasion," the work was scored for wind and percussion instruments.

It was played at opening ceremonies by the National Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Antal Dorati. A recording of the opening fanfare was played over the Museum's sound system at intervals during the special events.

An inaugural book published by Harry N. Abrams, Inc., illustrates 1,000 works in the permanent collection, with 290 plates in full color. The 768-page book includes a foreword by Secretary Ripley, an introduction by Abram Lerner, the museum director, and essays by leading writers in the field of art history and criticism. A catalog that is not only a guide to the collection but provides full documentation of each work, short biographies of the artists and many statements by them. Other printed literature about the collection is also available.

Four posters commissioned by the Smithsonian Associates to commemorate the inaugural exhibition. Two by Kenneth Noland and William de Kooning were from works from the collection, while Robert Indiana and Larry Rivers created original designs.

Special educational programs include films, lectures, music and dance programs. Volunteer docents conduct tours for school children and various other groups. Rental facilities are available for rental, present information in English and Spanish on selected works in the galleries.

The Sculpture Garden adjacent to the Museum is a multi-terraced area 356 by 156 feet in size with a rectangular reflecting pool. The 1-acre sunken garden is 6 to 14 feet below the Mall, thus creating an area for viewing sculpture. Special designed outdoor exhibits are finished in a granite aggregate which echoes the Museum's exterior finish. Approximately 75 pieces of sculpture including trees to a height of 82 feet. Floor-to-ceiling windows open on the interior court overlooking the Mall and the Sculpture Garden.

The building's second and third floors house selections from the collection. Serving these floors are escalators and a sales shop and a large rectangular gallery which will be used for changing exhibitions. An auditorium seating 280 persons is also on this level.

The Hirshhorn Museum was created by an Act of Congress on November 4, 1966, authorizing a site on the Mall for the garden and building. By mid 1967 the design was approved by the National Capital Planning Commission. Ground was broken January 8, 1969, and construction began in March 1970.

Secretary Hails Opening

As 'An Exceptional Moment'

Following are the remarks by Secretary Ripley at the dedication of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden October 1.

This is an exceptional moment for all of us at the Smithsonian. We welcome this occasion as an answer to prayer. We welcome this Museum and Sculpture Garden as an answer to prayer also.

As I pointed out at the ground-breaking ceremonies in January 1969, Congress had legislated for the creation of a new gallery in the Smithsonian 36 years ago. Such an institution would act as a foil for the newly created National Gallery to house Andrew Mellon’s magnificent gift of old master paintings. Such a gallery was to stimulate and encourage contemporary art, and to develop a panoramic view of the arts in America. Much of the latter has been and is being splendidly developed by other aspects of the Smithsonian, most notably the National Collection of Fine Arts, but the ensuing years since 1938 had managed to bring little if any recognition by the Smithsonian itself of the incredible surge of activity in contemporary art in this country. Thus the effort by a number of us to make up for a generation of neglect, which has culminated in a gift to the nation by Joseph Hirshhorn and his foundation, filling the gap in time. We have been caught up, in one giant step, to match the exponential increase in productivity in art, in interest in art collecting, and in the incredible attendant inflation in marketplace values in art.

Without Mr. Hirshhorn and this gift of his "children" as he calls them, there would have been no single way in which the Smithsonian could have lived up to its Congressional mandate. This is a fact easily forgotten or glossed over by those without a broad understanding of the recent history of art and art collections. It is not one which any museum curator can afford to forget. Let us be thankful therefore that Mr. Hirshhorn with his collection has given us the needed base and with it the appropriate im-
Media Views of the Hirshhorn

A NEW MUSEUM AND SCULPTURE GARDEN

From The Washington Post

With the opening of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in a series of festivities this week (Oct. 1, 2, 3), the art of this century is at last firmly established (in fact, looking at the building, you might say entrenches) in the national capital. It has taken a long time—36 years, to be exact. For it was in 1938, while the National Gallery was still under construction, that Congress passed legislation calling for another art gallery on the opposite side of the Mall, to be devoted primarily to the work of contemporary artists. The Finnish-born father and son team, Eileen and Elie Saarinen, won the national competition for the design of the proposed modern museum. Most critics at the time loudly praised the arrival of the new bare and square architectural style among the temples of the Mall. Most congressmen quietly condemned this newfangled modernity. And in the end, even Eero Saarinen said he was glad the asymmetrical structure, with its 5-story tower and low-slung exhibit halls, was never built. For all its forbidding, almost intimidating rudeness, Gordon Bunshaft’s cylindrical concrete container for the Hirshhorn collection seems more appropriate for monumental Washington.

Nor does it seem likely that a Smithsonian Gallery of Art, as envisioned in 1938, could have mustered anything like the artistic bounty Joseph H. Hirshhorn gave to the nation in 1966. ‘‘Like the Medici or, closer to home, such American tycoons as Henry Clay Frick and Charles Lang Freer, Mr. Hirshhorn collected art with the same aggressive spirit that he brought to the owning of a vast fortune. He often dashed out of board meetings of his various enterprises for half an hour, running to some gallery or artist’s studio, striking quick bargains and occasionally buying paintings literally by the handful. The opening exhibition, which fills three gallery floors of the new museum as well as its plaza and sculpture garden, displays less than one-sixth of the enormous collection Mr. Hirshhorn has donated—some 900 of the 6,000 paintings and sculptures. So vast an assortment obviously varies in quality. There are critics who complain that some of the work including objects displayed in the inaugural exhibition, are less than outstanding. But critical tastes, after all, are capricious. Art works that only yesterday were disparaged as mediocre are suddenly discovered to be magnificent. A few decades ago, critics and collectors did not deign to look at the work of Georges de La Tour, whose “Repentant Magdalen” has just been triumphantly acquired by the National Gallery for several million dollars.

The sum of Mr. Hirshhorn’s collection, in short, is far greater than its many great parts (the parts include masterpieces, such as Rodin’s “Burghers of Calais,” Eakins’s “Portrait of Mrs. Thomas Eakins,” and Picasso’s “Baby Carriage”). Just about every artist deemed significant to the creative mainstream of this century is represented, including a great many Americans whom Mr. Hirshhorn is proud to have discovered and to have helped. This wealth will enable the Hirshhorn, better perhaps than any other museum, to present a comprehensive account of the development of modern art from the mid-19th century to the present. There are no strings attached to the Hirshhorn gift. That means that under the protective mantle of the Smithsonian Institution, the new museum can sell and trade individual items and thus gradually turn this grand private collection into a great public museum.

We were eager for the last of the first to explore the wonders of the Joseph H. Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden to finish exploring them, and have their say. And once they had departed—the captains, kings and critics—we were ready to step in with our devastating lapman’s eye for art and tell it like it really is.

Well, we’ve seen it now. And we’re in love with it. It’s exciting, it’s full of old friends and many new ones that we hadn’t had the pleasure of meeting before, and it’s above all, great fun.

First off, Gordon Bunshaft’s building, the so-called “great doughnut,” is not a doughnut at all, or even a great oil tank, as it has been described. Instead, for all the austerity of its stone, it reminds us of a pristine water tank in which an enterprise kid is invited to splash around on a summer’s day. The problem, of course, is getting inside, and here the planners have cleverly contrived to scatter such riches of sculpture outdoors that it takes an extraordinary act of will to quit them for the indoor blandishments of Eakins, Hopper, Benton, Matisse, Gorky, Pollock and the like.

What’s so great outdoors? Well, everyone will have his favorites, but ours include among Henry Moore’s pinheads his seated “King and Queen,” serenely resigned to their eminentence; and Bourdelle’s “Great Warrior of Montauban” with the shadow of that huge, spread-fingered left hand thrown against the pebbled wall behind it by the afternoon sun; and Manza’s superb “Young Girl on a Chair,” her eyes half closed against the sun to which her face is slightly raised. All this would be lost indoors.

The same goes for Marino Marini’s spread-eagled “Horse and Rider,” the
starved horse's legs splayed out in the same arrested fashion as the truncated arms of the round-eyed, naked, idiot rider, and both of them with heads thrown back as if transfixed by some blinding celestial sign.

All this sculpture, a vast display of bronze and steel and stone, is only a third of the whole collection. Another thousand pieces are still to be shown, along with hundreds of paintings still stored on the fourth floor.

What gets us is how those who accuse Joe Hirshhorn of avarice, along with various lesser sins, have missed the central point: The man has taste and humor, and a strong affection for each of his "children," even for those in the begetting of which he may have been bamboozled. The collection is singularly his, and whatever selfish motives may have contributed to his decision to give it all away to the nation's capital, we suspect the chief one was simply that it is all out of that Manhattan warehouse now and in a place where he can enjoy it along with the rest of us. It will be difficult to go there now without bumping into Joe.

While splashing around inside the water tank, we came upon Giacometti's bronze, scruffy, insouciant "Dog," looking somewhat smaller than we had expected, but going steadfast on its way, recalling the last lines of the poem that Robert Wallace wrote to this same sad mutt:

...It's not this starved hound,
but Giacometti seeing
him we see.

We'll stand in line all day
to see one man
love anything enough.

Which, in the context of the museum which now so rightly bears its affectionate benefactor's name, is exactly how we feel.

The birth of a new museum in the nation's capital is not an unusual event; they appear with elephantine regularity. But in the case of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the fanfare of this week's multiple openings is justified. This is the overdue inauguration of a national museum of modern art, something the capital has conspicuously lacked.

Washington has extraordinary collections, from the impeccable old masters of the National Gallery and the oriental treasures of the Freer to the "nation's attic" esoterica of the Smithsonian Institution. And the city has talked about an official modern art museum since the 1930s. But only with Joseph H. Hirshhorn's remarkable gift of 6,000 works of contemporary art, including some of the more spectacular sculpture of this century, has the dream come true. This work will form the sizable nucleus of a collection, under the aegis of the Smithsonian, that can be refined and expanded as time goes on.

Mr. Hirshhorn has had the commendable foresight to allow future curators freedom to sell and exchange material—the often necessary deaccession process—and thus strengthen the whole, for a truly national museum.

The capital is less fortunate in the museum's architecture than in its art, however. It is regrettable that the new structure is one more stillborn monument on the Mall. Doubts that were raised about putting a sculpture garden on that uninterrupted greensward have not been allayed by the unrelentingly concreted setting. The sculpture would have graced the site more eloquently with no architectural design at all.

But the museum functions well in other ways, and the works of art, in comfortable galleries, are often glorious. With only about one-seventh of the total on display, the museum's incomparable collection would have been overwhelming. Both the capital and the nation are the beneficiaries of Mr. Hirshhorn's desire to go public, and an extra and lively dimension has been added to Washington's impressive art and museum resources.

**Hirshhorn Trustees**

The trustees of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden are:

Warren E. Burger, Chief Justice of the United States (ex officio)

S. Dillon Ripley, Secretary of the Smithsonian (ex officio)

Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Chairman

Harvard Arnason

Leigh B. Block

Theodore E. Cummings

Anne d'Harnoncourt

George H. Hamilton

Taft B. Schreiber

Hal B. Wallis

Daniel P. Moynihan, Chairman of the HM&SG Board of Trustees, was a participant in opening ceremonies.
Chronology of
The Museum

**May 17, 1966**—President Johnson recommends to Congress enactment of legislation enabling the Smithsonian to accept the Joseph H. Hirshhorn collection of contemporary sculpture and paintings and to establish and construct the Museum.

**November 7, 1966**—Congress authorizes construction of the Museum, designates the Mall site, and provides that the Museum and Sculpture Garden bear Mr. Hirshhorn's name and be under administration of the Smithsonian Board of Regents.

**June 24, 1967**—Congress appropriates funds for planning the Museum.

**July 13, 1967**—Architectural plans approved by the Fine Arts Commission.

**December 22, 1967**—Architectural plans approved by the National Capital Planning Commission.

**July 26, 1968**—Congress appropriates $2,000,000 in construction funds and contract authority in the amount of $14,197,000 to construct the Museum and Sculpture Garden.

**January 8, 1969**—Official groundbreaking ceremonies led by President Johnson, Secretary Ripley and Mr. Hirshhorn.

**February 27, 1970**—Competitive bids received by the General Services Administration and construction contract awarded with approval of the Comptroller General.

**March 23, 1970**—Mr. Hirshhorn agrees to give $1,000,000 toward construction of the building.

**March 25, 1970**—Construction begins.

**July 2, 1971**—President Nixon appoints eight persons to be members of the Board of Trustees of the Museum and Sculpture Garden. They were H.H. Arnason, Elizabeth Houghton, Taft B. Schreiber, Hal B. Wal lis, Leigh B. Block, Theodore E. Cum mings, George Heard Hamilton, and Daniel P. Meynahan.

**March 6, 1972**—Mr. Hirshhorn agrees to transfer to the Smithsonian 326 additional works of art with an aggregate value of more than $7,000,000.

**April 7, 1974**—Full legal title to the Hirshhorn Collection passes to the Smithsonian.

**September 30, 1974**—Beginning of special events to mark opening of the Museum and Sculpture Garden.

**October 4, 1974**—Museum and Sculpture Garden opened to the public.

Mr. Lerner greets the first visitor, Mrs. H. A. Calkins of Monrovia, Calif.

**Lighted gallery windows and spectacular fountain provide an artistic touch.**

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**The Architecture**

_Architect: Gordon Bunshaft, Partner in Charge, Skidmore, Owings and Merrill of New York. Other major buildings designed by Bunshaft: Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Sid W. Richardson Hall, University of Texas in Austin; Lever House, New York; Brincke Race Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University; Addition to the Albright-Knox Gallery in Buffalo._

**Diameter of the Museum: 231 feet**

**Height of the Four Piers on Which Museum Stands:** 14 feet

**Thickness of Exterior Walls:** 3.25 feet

**Surface of the Museum: Precast and cast-in-place concrete with Swenson granite aggregate.**

**Eccentricity of the Museum's Circles:** 4 feet

**Radius of the Bronze Fountain in the Museum Court:** 30 feet

**Site Area Including Garden Complex:** 4.4 acres

**Area Occupied by the Sculpture Garden:** 1.3 acres

**Distance Below Ground Level of the Sculpture Garden:** Varies from 6.3 feet to 14 feet

**Height of the Wall Surrounding the Museum:** 8 feet (approx.)

**Depth of Exterior Columns:** 9 feet

**Floor Areas of the Museum:** 168,000 square feet

**Height of the Exhibition Galleries:** 15 feet high with concrete columns three feet deep

**Auditorium Seating:** 280

**Corridor and Escalator Lobby Floors:** Venetian Terrazzo

**Number of Paintings in Inaugural Exhibition:** 400

**Number of Paintings in the HMSG Collection:** 4,500

**Number of Sculptures in the HMSG Collection:** 1,500

**Dimensions of the Sculpture Garden:** 356 by 197 feet

**Date of Groundbreaking:** January 8, 1969

**Engineering Concepts:** Foundation: 99 steel “H” piles under each of four core supports.

**Superstructure:** Four reinforced concrete core supports carry two ring girders of reinforced concrete which are cantilevered off inner and outer edges of core supports. Cantilevered beams are reinforced with 30 post tensioned tendons per support. The two ring girders carry balance of superstructure. The exterior wall is 2” thick concrete; inner wall is glass window wall set back from concrete spandrel beams and columns.
Women’s Committee Sponsors Film Theater

( Smithsonian employees not familiar with the Free Film Theater may be interested in the following account written by Mrs. Edith Schafer, Free Film Coordinator.)

In 1965 Secretary Ripley suggested that the Smithsonian should have a program which would provide an orderly presentation of films on a wide range of subjects. Thus began the Free Film Theater which plays a useful role in the overall Smithsonian mission.

In the beginning, films were shown in Baird Auditorium at the Natural History Building, and the program included an introduction by a specialist. This format proved so successful that Wednesday and Thursday noon shows had to be scheduled, and on week days attendance dropped for the evening show and it was discontinued, but the noon shows remained popular. However, personnel shifts then occurred and audiovisual programs were dropped. This was stopped one summer and not resumed that fall.

In the autumn of 1970, the Women’s Committee of the Associates took it up, offering to provide volunteers for the screenings and to help with previewing films. At about this time, the Free Film Theater moved to Carmichael Auditorium at the National Museum of History and Technology where films were screened Wednesdays and Thursdays at 12:30.

The audiences are enthusiastic, generally almost filling the auditorium. If the film is especially popular it can usually be repeated again in the following week, as in the pastoral cases, such as The Acre of Mann, the schedule is further expanded to fill the demand.

Some of the popular films have been in series on poets, a China and Black Africa series, The Decade of Man, and films on technology such as tunnel and bridge building. Other popular subjects are archeology, natural history, anthropology, earth sciences, art, music, and almost all of the other areas of interest embraced by the Smithsonian.

The Free Film Theater will be a natural forum for films produced for the Bicentennial. We would also like to maintain a closer relationship with current SI exhibitions. We seek suggestions of quality films that amplify, or coordinate with, exhibits and programs (we need two months advance notice), or are simply worth showing on their merits. (Please contact Edith Schafer at 381-5911)

The film program thrives on diversity—the more variety the richer the fare, as can be seen from the December film schedule; Dec. 4-5, The Civilization—enlarge the concept of nature; BSC, conventual lifestyle, life in outer space; "Chinese," the life of a man and his country; the story of the South Pacific, the storage and migration of that sensibility rare in the Polynesian life; "The Great Mistic Regulator," an account of a genius; "Race, Brain, Brainwash." Dec. 11, "Passport Pressure of a Free nation: walking only of Africa's "apartheid" laws and the variety of life in the, including a wonderful support idea of a helmet's view...

Two on SI Staff

Pass CPA Exam

James Holohan and David Palmer, staff members of the Smithsonian Office of Auditing, recently were notified by the Virginia Department of Professional and Occupational Registration that they passed the Virginia Certified Public Accountant examination.

Mr. Holohan Mr. Palmer

Mr. Holohan, a native of Pittsburgh, Pa., is a graduate of Duquesne University where he received his BS in business administration. He is a member of the Federal Government Accountants Association and has been with the Smithsonian since December 1972. Mr. Palmer, a native of Spartanburg, S.C., is a graduate of Howard University. He is a member of the Federal Government Accountants Association and the National Association of Black Accountants. He has been with the Smithsonian since April 1973.

Mr. Myers is working in the Facilities Planning and Engineering Service staff.

Mr. Shelton is a special assistant for exhibit matters. He will be primarily in charge of the coordination of exhibit projects and their interface with the various engineering, design and contracting functions.

Mr. Myers is a civil engineer, previously associated with Control Data Corporation. He is working in the Facilities Planning Branch of OFFES, planning and developing a wide range of construction projects for the Institution.

Soaring Is ‘Poetry in Motion’

One Smithsonian staff member gets his weekend relaxation tiling and flying gliders.

Richard Ault at the controls of a towplane.

Richard L. Ault, Director of Support Activities, is a charter member of the Warren Soaring Center, Inc., operating from a natural setting among the trees and pasture land surrounding Warrenton Air Park is restful in itself, but viewing this lovely mosaic in the quiet flight of a sailplane is sheer poetry in motion, a truly exhilarating experience.

Shelton, Myers Join OFPES Staff

James Shelton and Thomas Myers have recently become members of the Office of Facilities Planning and Engineering Services staff.

Mr. Shelton is a special assistant for exhibit matters. He will be primarily in charge of the coordination of exhibit projects and their interface with the various engineering, design and contracting functions.

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JOURNALIST SPOKES—Sarah McClendon, radio and television newscaster and publisher of White House Report and Texas Trends, spoke to the newsmaking and printing docters of the National Museum of History and Technology October 3. Ms. McClendon, perhaps best known for her participation in conferences, discussed "Women in the News." She recalled her start in the field of journalism and told of incidents in her career spanning more than 30 years. While at the Museum Ms. McClendon toured the Hall of News Reporting with Peter Marzio, Associate Curator of the Division of Graphic Arts (left), and Robert S. Harding, of the Division of Public Information and Education.

SI Jazz Collection Still a Best Seller

Made in Chicago Art Exhibition Now at NCF A

Facultal and eccentric images, combining recognizable and imaginative elements—often disquieting, provocative, and boisterous—characterize a new exhibition of 77 contemporary paintings and sculptures by 12 artists associated with Chicago's "Imagist art."

"The "Made in Chicago" exhibition, now at the National Collection of Fine Arts, will continue through December 29. It will be shown at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago in 1975. All the works are exhibited at the 1973 Sao Paulo Bienal in Brazil, and later toured Latin America. The exhibition is part of a continuing program to intensively review the artistic heritage and current directions of important regions throughout the United States.

Dr. Joshua C. Taylor, Director of NCF A, observes in his foreword to the "Made in Chicago" catalog: "Chicago has been a significant center for art and artists for a very long time, sometimes following international trends and often going quite its own way... Not to conform seems to have been a positive program for many Chicago artists. If there has been a unity, it has been that of nonconforming together."

Walter Hopps, NCF A Curator of 20th Century Painting and Sculpture, originated the idea for a Chicago exhibition.

The Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz, a boxed set of six LP's with more than $5 selections from the great figures of jazz, is entering its second year on the best seller list of items available through the Smithsonian Museums.

From the day the album was first issued in 1973, the demand has been constant. Thousands of people, jazz buffs and novices alike, have purchased the album.

The contents were selected and annotated by Martin Williams, Director of the Jazz Program for the Smithsonian's Division of Performing Arts. The historic project took two years and the cooperation of 17 major record companies to complete. The boxed set is accompanied by an authoritative 48-page booklet of jazz history, discography and photographs. The accompanying text deals with essential aspects of each recording, each artist, and each style. It is both a beginner's library of jazz history and a rare collection of records, some of them long unavailable.

The W. W. Norton Company is the distributor of the collection to schools and colleges. It is available to the general public through the Smithsonian Museum Shops. It may be ordered by mail by writing Classic Jazz, P.O. Box 5734, Terre Haute, Indiana 47802. The cost is $21.50 plus $1.50 to cover postage and handling. It is available to Smithsonian Associates for $20 plus $1.50 for postage and handling.

New Boards at A&I

Two new bulletin boards have been symmetrically installed in the vestibule of the north entrance to the Arts and Industries Building for the use of all SI units who wish to post Smithsonian-approved advertisements or other notices. Units have been asked not to duplicate advertisements or announcements on the boards.

SMITHSONIAN TORCH November 1974

Published for Smithsonian Institution personnel by the Smithsonian Office of Public Affairs, William G. Craig, Editor; Kathryn Lindeman, Assistant.
The Smithsonian Mammalogical Association of Natural History sponsored its “first annual scientific method” and Mignon of Natural History, their families October 14 at Fort Hunt Park. More than 400 persons attended the event which included displays, exhibits, films, games with prizes, and appearances of a Punch and Judy show (seen above) and a magician. Fred Collier, association president, organized the picnic with the assistance of Joe Brown, Arnold Powell, Veranita Williams, Dottie Caruso, Barbara Hefferman, Mike Carpenter, Charles Obermeyer, and Mary Jaue Mann. Entries in the photo contest organized by Mr. Davis, second prize, Mr. Carpenter, third, Robert Purdy; Man’s Technology, first and second, Mr. Purdy, third, Mr. Carpenter; People, first, Kathy Stemler, second and third, Mrs. Newfield; Honorable mention, Mr. Carpenter, Miss Mann and Mrs. Davis.

Myths: ‘No Hard Evidence’

Continued From Page 1

star, trying to make a definitive tabulation of all the species of bird life indigenous to that area. But I am also interested in mammal species and have become fascinated with rumors and reports from natives and travelers, some of whom are friends of mine, like Eric Shipton, the mountaineer, of a strange creature in those mountains—a creature somewhat different from those known to everyday science. It was called the Abominable Snowman.

Back in 1947, I thought of taking an expedition out to see if I could find any real evidence of the Abominable Snowman’s existence. I decided that it would be interesting to try to use a helicopter. Eric Shipton, who had been on the Everest expedition, had suggested this to me and it seemed the only feasible way to sweep back and forth over the 18,000-feet-high Himalayan valleys. A species of animal might occur that would be rapid enough in its movement to avoid the casual mountain observer who at this altitude works rather slowly. But then I discovered that helicopters just don’t work well at that altitude and so I scrapped the idea.

In the years that have followed, no hard evidence has turned up that such a creature exists. I’ve examined a scalp that was purportedly that of a Snowman and the hairs that were embedded in the scalp were from a goat antelope or serow, not from a primate. And the scientific method, which we at the Smithsonian endorse, consists of ferreting out real facts and real evidence as well as folklore hearsay. And what is real evidence? Well, it might be a skull, hair, bones, digestive leavings, or some other solid, objective piece of evidence by which trained scholars can make dispassionate conclusions.

Hair, for example. The Abominable Snowman is reputedly a mammal, and must have long fur to keep it warm in cold weather. Our people at the Smithsonian are quite expert at this and can examine the cellular construction of hair under a microscope and tell whether it belonged to a pig or a bear or to a primate. So far no primate hairs have been found.

Then there is the matter of footprints that have been seen in the mountains and photographed. These prints are very elusive and controversial because in the snow footprints enlarge or become smaller with the melting and freezing cycle in the high mountains. None of the footprints are really compelling in being able to determine “yes,” that is a raccoon or some other animal—elephant, tiger, or leopard. There is nothing like that which really enables one as a scientist to say that the footprint is quite obviously a primate, a higher primate, a gibbon, or some equivalent animal.

And, of course, there is the fact that a great many of the reports of the people who live in the Himalayas—Tibetans, yak herders, Chinese, Sherpas, Nepalese—are fanciful and mythical.

On the first trip I made in the western Himalayan, when I was 13 years old, I became aware of the sensitivity of the Tibetans who live there toward myths and folk tales. I have since become convinced that the vast high altitude in which they live has an effect on them that may have something to do with this. It is quite possible, as you go up a mountain, for a stone to come rolling down soundlessly just missing your head, and for you to believe that someone, some evil being, just rolled that stone down. It is a question of mental imagery at a high altitude. Think of people living for generations in this atmosphere where they believe in giants and all kinds of imaginary people as inhabiting those mountains and rolling stones down on them! Naturally, or course, there is a remote possibility that there are animals up there which we have still not yet discovered. I wouldn’t totally exclude it, because the vastness of the landscape, the distance, the difficulty of moving as a human being through those high altitude mountain ranges, is immense.

This animal, if it exists and is not just a series of folk tales, certainly should not be called “Abominable” or a “monster.” It’s the sort of small harmless primate gibbon-like creature that I think it could conceivably be, it’s certainly not abominable; it’s merely a living species of animal, that is as yet unknown.

Our purpose at the Smithsonian is to make a tabulation of all the species of plants and animal forms on the face of the earth and under the seas and in the skies. It will require generations to complete this task, and there are many, I am sure, that may disappear and become extinct before we’re even known of their existence.

Abominable Snowman

As for the possibility that the Abominable Snowman is a myth, I think that it is common to everybody to be fascinated by the idea that perhaps things exist that we don’t know about. It’s a phenomenon that we are all aware of as children when we wonder if there are animals up there that we really are on the side of the gods.

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Scientific Hoaxes

And there is the possibility, of course, that all of those legends can be scientific hoaxes. Scientific hoaxes can be fun. They can be entertaining, they can be amusing and generally they are not dangerous. When I was a graduate student at Harvard University and there was a Professor Wheeler there. Once a week, Professor Wheeler had a question and answer period in his course on insects. An insect which a student had painstakingly put together after weeks of work was put on his desk by a student who had quite a bit of imagination. The student had put it together painstakingly with weeks of work in his room and we were all on pins and needles to see what Professor Wheeler would say. He looked at it. He held it up in front of the class, examined it minutely and then exclaimed: ‘Gentlemen, this is a hummingbird.’

I also recall that I had a bird in my collection that was a ‘hummingbird.’ It was created as a present for me one of my Japanese colleagues as a new species, which he described because he was taken in. And, I had the interesting task of taking this bird apart under low-power magnification, and showing that the specimen really was made of several different kinds of birds laboriously pinned together by a Japanese taxidermist. Very clever, those Japanese!

As for myself, I suppose I am a traditional scientist and I would not just take the legends and stories about various mythological animals as fact without eventually having an opportunity to see the bone or a piece of the hide or a hunk of hair. My Dear Watson, I would like to see some solid evidence.