



Outreach. A billboard-size version of “Untitled (For Jeff),” a black-and-white photograph of an outstretched palm, by Felix Gonzalez-Torres, was installed on the Independence Avenue façade of the Hirshhorn building on July 16. The image will be reproduced in various sizes and installed at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, the National Gallery of Art, and six other buildings and roadside sites. HMSG is presenting the work throughout the city to promote “Gyroscope,” a celebration of the museum’s permanent collection. (Photo by Chris Smith)

NPG receives ‘hedcut’ portraits

BY JANICE KAPLAN
Special to The Torch

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

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

“Picturing Business in America: Hedcuts in the Wall Street Journal,” located at the Web site www.npg.si.edu/exh/journal/index.htm, not only recognizes some of this country’s foremost business leaders—from Bill Gates to Martha Stewart—but also tells the story of how this special form of portraiture came into existence.

Invented in 1979 by Kevin Sprouls, then the newspaper’s associate art director, the hand-drawn illustrations are based on photographs and deliberately emulate the appearance of 19th-century engravings.

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Former Wall Street Journal artist Kevin Sprouls devised the stipple technique used to create these portraits of Bill Gates and Oprah Winfrey.

Century-old biology text gets an e-life

BY CARA SEITCHEK
Special to The Torch

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

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

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

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

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

BY HOPE CRISTOL
Special to The Torch

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

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

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

tips for families and interactive activities for students.

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

More than a year before the launch of the site, SCEMS commissioned a study of education content on all Smithsonian Web sites and examined patterns of user behavior.

The research showed that, of the more than 65 million visitors to Smithsonian Web sites in 2001, one in four was searching for educational materials. In response, SCEMS developed a resource-finding tool as the centerpiece of the new site.

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

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

Aging craftmakers tell life stories for Archives of American Art

BY BRENDA KEAN TABOR
Special to The Torch

It’s not just what you say, it’s how you say it. That is one reason why the Archives of American Art collects not only the written papers of artists but also their spoken recollections of their lives as artists.

The Archives’ Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and

Decorative Arts in America is capturing the lives of America’s craft artists in their own words. “The Archives of American Art has a venerable oral history program,” Liza Kirwin, curator of manuscripts at the Archives of American Art, says. Started in 1958 with such artists as Edward Hopper and Charles Burchfield, approximately 2,000 artists have been interviewed over the years.

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Database

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Weitzman and Garnett are leading the effort to scan every page in the book and link its historic biological data with current research and specimens from all over the world. By July 2004, the volumes will be digitized and available online.

Although SIL has already digitized many rare books, “the BCA project is a more complex form of digitizing than we’ve done before,” Garnett says. “This project involves not only making page facsimiles but also devising a structure in XML, a special version of Web-page coding. The on-line book is both a tool and a serious addition to the SIL Digital Library.” The online version will allow scientists to update information in the compendia.

“We are creating a new biological research tool from an old, and still revered, information source—books,” explains SIL Director Nancy Gwinn. “Science still needs the information that libraries have managed for years, but by working with scientists, we can develop more useful delivery systems.”

“We will be providing information in a way that will help the world overcome the obstacle of getting to data stored in natural history museums—in their collections, libraries, filing cabinets and curators’ heads,” Weitz-



Tom Garnett, left, holds SI Libraries’ copy of one of the volumes of *Biologia Centrali-Americana*, and Anna Weitzman displays objects from Natural History’s collections that are described in the volumes. (James DiLoreto photo)

man says. With this technology, MNH provides researchers, students and the public with a wide variety of research resources, including specimen drawings and photographs, distribution maps and habitat information, bibliographies and current literature, and links to museums.

“Many scientists in Central America do not have access to the BCA. Providing this data online is a way to repatriate information to Latin American countries,” Garnett says.

For preservation purposes, the impact of this project also is enormous,

both for the libraries and the collections by lessening the need to use the original books and reducing the need to handle specimens or ship them around the globe.

The project is “the first step toward tying together all biodiversity and taxonomy data in the world,” Weitzman says. “We’ll ask new questions and see new patterns in the data that haven’t been seen before. It opens the doors to understanding the planet better.”

Sample pages can be viewed at www.sil.si.edu/bcaproject. ■

MESSAGE CENTER

GOT A MESSAGE?

Smithsonian staff and volunteers may place ads in “Message Center.” Send specifics, your name and telephone number to Rachel Sears, The Torch, SIB 354, MRC 033; by e-mail to searsr@publicaffairs.si.edu; or by fax to (202) 786-2377. Send before Aug. 8 for listing in the September Torch. Include area codes. Office phone numbers and e-mail addresses will be used for car-pool ads and office-related business ads. Home or other non-SI phone numbers or e-mail addresses will be used in all other ads. We reserve the right to edit all copy.

For sale: 1988 Chevy Cavalier station wagon, light blue. \$1,000 or best offer. Also, 1986 Toyota Camry, gray, 4-door. \$1,000 or best offer. Call Bob, (301) 613-5589.

For rent: Spacious bedroom with large windows and own bathroom in 2-bedroom apartment in luxury building. Downtown Silver Spring, across from Metro and adjacent to grocery store. Near restaurants, post office and mall. Outdoor pool. \$640 per month. Parking additional. Available Sept. 1. Professional nonsmoking females only. Contact Annika Black at dcbound7@yahoo.com.

For rent: 2-bedroom condo located at Grosvenor Metro in North Bethesda. Big balcony overlooks beautiful landscaping and lake; new refrigerator and dishwasher; walk-in closets. Easy access to Beltway and Routes 270 and 95. Pools, tennis courts; across the street from Rock Creek Park. \$1,600 per month, utilities included. Available Sept. 1. Call Floyd at (301) 530-2312.

For rent: Bedroom in a 2-level town house in Ballston, Va., available Sept. 1. Shared bath, \$600 per month plus

utilities. 1 block to Ballston Metro; close to movies, restaurants, bars, grocery stores. Street parking. Available to nonsmoking female. Call Wendy at (703) 465-1432.

For sale: Two antique wicker arm chairs with cushions. Antique handmade wooden play pen and high chair. Set of green dishes. New and antique spinning wheels. Various pottery items. Wool yarn. Call Joan Andrews at (703) 671-6751, evenings.

SPARE TIME

Jeannie Whited trains rescued horses to stride with style

BY DANIEL FRIEND
Special to The Torch

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

The highest bidder not only saved the horse but later helped it be the best horse it could be. She hired Jeannie Whited, an Air and Space museum specialist, to condition and train this “improbable cross” between a Tennessee Walker and Paso-Fino as a hardy, if not graceful, pleasure rider.

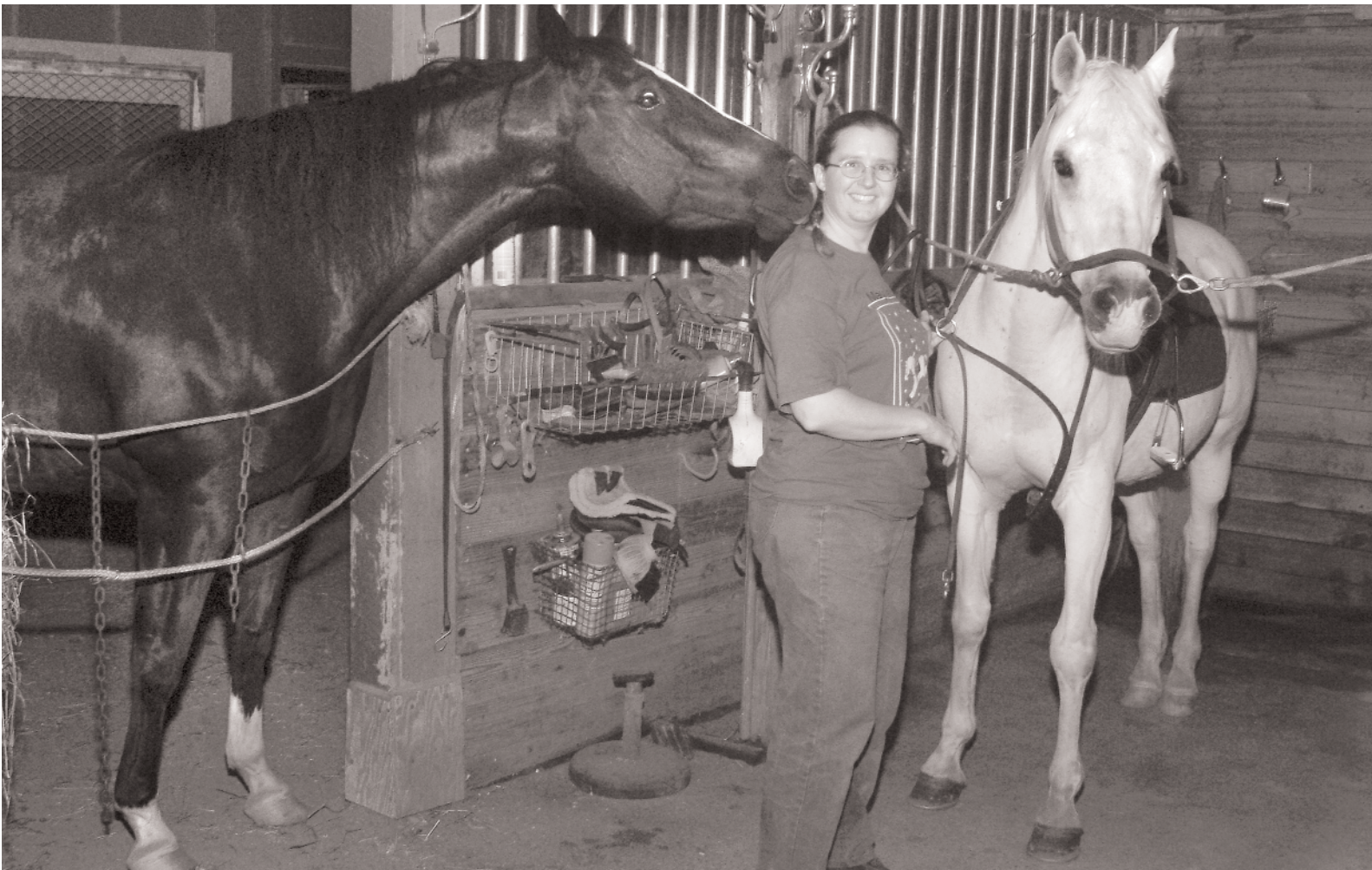
“She was a very confused horse,” Whited recalls. “She is capable of doing something different with each leg. She’s a real sweetheart, but a bit of a klutz.”

The Paso-Fino and Walker breeds move in completely different ways, Whited says, guessing that Christie’s father “must have jumped the fence.”

Whited hopes to someday adopt a horse like Christie through one of the many rescue agencies that attend auctions for the sole purpose of outbidding meat companies. “I actually have never owned a horse, which is one of the great ironies of what I do,” Whited says, seated on a stack of Masonite during a recent interview at NASM’s Udvar-Hazy Center hangar work site.

Several horses and 20 years in the saddle have earned Whited her reputation as a horse trainer and sidesaddle riding instructor. Some of her most rewarding work has been with horses like Christie, whose owners gave up on the animals after learning how much time and effort training a horse requires.

“The single greatest problem with horse training is the owners,” Whited says. “Some owners want a horse to



At a barn near Centreville, Va., Jeannie Whited prepares to ride Halima, right, while Ebony moves in for a neck nibble. (Photo by Harold Dorwin)

do too much in too little time. You can destroy a horse by pushing it too young, too hard or too fast. That kind of pushing can lead to a bad-tempered horse.

“An owner can’t just put horses in the back yard and expect them to survive,” Whited continues. “I’ve worked with some really nice rescued horses. They seem to appreciate what you did for them.”

Because horses can live to be 25 to 30 years old and can successfully compete in shows and races through their mid-teens, they require constant care and exercise. Owners are always

looking for experienced riders like Whited to help care for their horses.

She often enters into agreements with horse owners whereby she exercises and helps care for the horse in exchange for riding and showing privileges. Living in Centreville, Va., Whited finds time twice a week to work with two horses at a farm near Centreville, owned by a retiree.

Halima, an Arabian gelding, has won competitions “just based on how beautiful his head is,” she says. “The way people talk about their grandkids, that’s how the owner talks about this horse.” Whited also rides Ebony,

a black mare owned by a retired Army officer.

Whited specializes in and prefers the less-popular sidesaddle method of riding that puts both of the rider’s legs on the left side of the horse and requires a special saddle. She typically gives one riding lesson a month and has organized a sidesaddle class to be held in August at Fairfax County’s Frying Pan Park.

Whited started pleasure riding about 20 years ago, when she was in elementary school in California. “I was at a slumber party, and one of the girls was showing me a book of

horses,” Whited recalls. “I wouldn’t let Mom alone until she got me riding lessons.”

In her high-school years, Whited made the transition from student to teacher. “If a horse doesn’t know what I’m trying to do, I usually end up teaching it,” she says. “You’re basically exploiting their natural reactions to things. They are not born knowing how to move in the most efficient, powerful manner. I teach them to use their bodies properly, so they don’t get hurt.” With Whited’s guidance, even a klutz like Christie can aspire to grace and poise. ■