

**For Immediate Release
Sept. 26, 2008**

**Contacts: Patti Carpenter or Scott Pettett
pcarpenter@umnh.utah.edu or spettett@umnh.utah.edu
801-585-6369**

**Bugs, Bats and Bones at the Forefront of
Utah Museum of Natural History's *What's in the Basement?*
Annual event, set for Oct. 11, to feature objects in Museum's storage**

SALT LAKE CITY -- There's nothing to be scared of in the basement at the Utah Museum of Natural History. The annual *What's in the Basement?* event, a behind-the-scenes tour at the Museum, is slated for Saturday, October 11, from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Regular Museum admission applies. This is the 15th year that the Museum has put on *What's in the Basement?*

This year's theme for the one-day event is Bugs, Bats and Bones! Visitors will be able to tour all of the back rooms of the Museum and have the opportunity to talk with various collections staff. Approximately one percent of the objects are on display, with the other 99 percent stored away in the collections areas. In addition to the tours, visitors can participate in the following activities (the entire day offers many photo opportunities):

- Do what archeologists do; excavate a "Pit House" and find actual artifacts
- See bugs up with the Museum's bug handlers, "The Bug Brigade"
- Watch how DNA comes together to build a living creature
- Attend Science Academy where lab and art collide
- Participate in the Science Decathlon
- Enjoy hand-on learning at numerous discovery carts
- Discover the fascinating shell collection, and see how large clams get
- Watch a pinecone open under heat

"One of the great things about the *What's in the Basement?* event is that you can see how interesting bugs, bats and bones really are," said Museum Director Sarah George. "They can be very fascinating, and they're not as creepy as some people may think."

Among many other exhibits at this year's *What's in the Basement?*, the herbarium will uncover the interconnected world of plants, bugs and fire; the anthropology department will show the utilitarian role bugs played in past societies; and the paleontology department will have fossilized bugs, bugs from preserved in the La Brea Tar Pits and bones that bugs gnawed on before the fossilization process took place.

-- more --

“We’re excited to highlight live insects from around Utah for this year’s *What’s in the Basement?*,” said the Museum’s entomologist Christy Bills. “This will not only be a great opportunity to validate scientific enthusiasm, but it’s a great way to show everyone how the world of insects is both bizarre and wonderful.”

One of the more unique aspects of *What’s in the Basement* is the face-to-face interaction visitors have with the Museum’s scientists and curators. In addition to seeing the objects in storage, the Museum’s researchers share not only their knowledge with patrons, but their newest finds and the latest information that research today has to offer as well.