**Arrivals**

Guillermo Díaz-Pulido, University of Queensland, Australia, to teach in the NSF-PASI Advanced Tropical Phycology field course on Bocas del Toro.

Stephen Hubbell, STRI and University of California in Los Angeles, to continue studies, on diversity and abundance of *Drosophila* in Panama.

Bernardo da Gama, Universidade Federal Fluminense, Brazil, to teach in the NSF-PASI Advanced Tropical Phycology field course on Bocas del Toro.

Amanda Lea, University of Texas at Austin, and Franklin Marek, US, to study the rapid, environmentally-induced color change in a polymorphic poison frog, on Bocas del Toro.

**Bambi seminar**

Thursday, August 20, Bambi seminar speaker will be Steve Blake, Darwin Center

**Paleo-Talk**

Wednesday, August 19, Paleotalk speaker will be Felipe Villegas, STRI Intern

**Canopy crane leaf damage project: The photographs behind**

**Town meeting with Bermingham**

for serving as acting deputy director much longer that he ever signed out for. “Bill’s visits with all the staff and everybody’s candor in sharing their thoughts with him were of great help to me.” Bermingham was also particularly grateful to Oris Sanjur, who has been in charge of his laboratories since he accepted the position of director.

Bermingham promised to focus on the well being of STRI and its employees. He asked employees to establish a new committee to improve communication with the Director’s Office and help promote high morale across the STRI community. Bermingham announced a new format for STRI’s *Inform@* newsletter. Along with the Human Resources Office, the Director’s Office will assume a leading role in understanding the key importance of tropical ecosystems on global environmental health.

Ante una gran cantidad de asistentes, el director de STRI, Eldredge “Biff” Bermingham celebró una asamblea general con la comunidad de STRI, el jueves 13 de agosto en el Auditorio del Centro Tupper.

Bermingham inició su presentación con la triste noticia del fallecimiento del Dr. David Cofrin, gran amigo y donante de STRI, y su gran apoyo al Instituto. Anunció el nombramiento de Eva Pell como la nueva sub-secretaria

Before a packed audience, STRI director Eldredge “Biff” Bermingham held a town meeting with the STRI community on Thursday, August 13, at the Tupper Center Auditorium.

Bermingham initiated his remarks with the sad news of the passing of STRI good friend and donor Dr. David Cofrin and all the support he granted STRI. He announced the appointment of Eva Pell as SI new undersecretary for Science and Bruce Kendall as SI new OFEO director. He also announced the appointment of Owen McMillan as STRI’s new dean for Academic Programs, and the on-going selection process for STRI’s deputy director.

Bermingham expressed a sense of relief that the long transition period since the resignation of SI secretary Lawrence Small was coming to an end. He was especially thankful to William T. Wislós, their dedication and support in achieving that landmark publication. He emphasized that the culture of the Smithsonian had changed over the past five years, but that embracing the changes would help insure the high quality and productivity of STRI science.

Bermingham noted that this is the century of biology, and that STRI is superbly positioned to maintain its leadership role in basic studies of tropical diversity. Furthermore, the excellence of STRI science in tropical biology and anthropology enables the Institute to play a fundamental role in understanding the key importance of tropical ecosystems on global environmental health.

Where did all the elephants go and why do we need them back?

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**Tupper 4pm seminar**

Tuesday, August 18, 4pm seminar speaker will be Steve Blake, Darwin Center

**Using science to determine the conservation status of the forest elephant, a cryptic ecosystem engineer**
More arrivals

Maria Cristina Urrutia Villanueva and Maria Eckenweber, University of Wuerzburg, Germany, to study the echolocation and foraging behavior of Neotropical bats, on BCI.

Sarah Bouchard, Otterbein College, Ohio, to study fear, death and life history switch points: cumulative effects of phenotypic plasticity and predation across three life stages, in Gamboa.

Ya-Fu Lee, University of Ulm, Germany, to conduct comparisons of behavior, physiology, and ecology of sympatric bat species, on BCI.

Robert Lessnau, Detroit Zoological Institute, to study the intergroup relationships of white-faced capuchin monkeys (Cebus capucinus), on BCI.

Cotton Randall, US, to study the distribution, abundance and diet of red-eared slider turtles, Trachemys scripta elegans, in Gamboa.

Robert Lessnau, Detroit Zoological Institute, to study the intergroup relationships of white-faced capuchin monkeys (Cebus capucinus), on BCI.

Daniel Greene, University of Georgia, to conduct a telemetry study of an arboreal frog species, Agalychnis spurrelli, on BCI.

Chanaye Jackson, University of Washington, to join the tropical disease drug discovery from marine and plant sources in Panama, as part of the existing ICBG project.

Departures

William F. Laurance to Mendoza, Argentina, to give the keynote address at the International Mammal Congress.

Mark Torchin to Knoxville, Tennessee, to attend meetings of the American Society of Parasitologists.

David A. Cofrin (1923-2009)

Dr. David A. Cofrin, a dear and generous friend of STRI, passed away on August 11 at age 85, at Gainesville, Florida. A native of Green Bay, Wisconsin, Dr. Cofrin obtained a medical degree from Cornell University, was a chief surgeon in the US Air Force and eventually set up a medical and surgical practice in his wife Mary Ann’s hometown of Gainesville, Florida.

The Cofrins first learned about STRI on a Smithsonian cruise to Panama hosted by Stanley Heckadon in 2000, and helped to publish Stanley’s book *Panama: Puente Biológico*. David and Mary Ann made their first visit to STRI in January 2002 with friends from the Florida Museum of Natural History, and decided to help us complete the first phase of development and construction of the Bocas del Toro Research Station.

Inspired by a conversation with Tony Coates, in 2004 David offered to establish an endowed chair in paleobiology at STRI, which led to hiring Carlos Jaramillo as a new staff scientist in the Center for Paleoecology and Archeology. The Cofrins returned to Panama with their daughters Edie and Mary Ann and friends from the Florida Museum in 2006, and following that visit, made a gift toward construction of a new dormitory to keep up with the growing need at STRI.

Tony Coates (background) and Carlos Jaramillo and David A. Cofrin (foreground) 2006. Punta Culebra Nature Center. En el Centro Natural de Punta Culebra, en 2006.
More departures
Noris Salazar to Cape Town, South Africa, to attend the International Association of Bryology conference. Salazar is president of one of the committees at the conference and will present a paper.

Ben Turner to Washington DC, to lecture on organic phosphorus in the environment at the American Chemical Society annual meeting.

Carmen Schloeder to Lajas, Puerto Rico, to collect marine fossils (Cerithium/Cerithidea) for the evolutionary history of the marine snails in Central America Project.

New publications


demand for student housing in Bocas del Toro.

A trip to the Galapagos gave David the idea of having a glass-bottom boat in Bocas del Toro for non-snorkeling visitors. The boat has served many Bocas guests, including students from his alma mater the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay which in 2008 began to use the Bocas Research Station for a field-course in Panama. To further encourage the STRI-University of Wisconsin partnership, he also began to support a temperate-zone forest dynamics plot at Wabikon Lake, Wisconsin, now part of the Smithsonian Institution Global Earth Observatories network.

The Gainesville Sun described David Cofrin as a “quiet philanthropist” who shunned the spotlight, and certainly his giving at STRI reflected his sensitivity in understanding an organization’s vision and a desire to bring that vision to life.

According to STRI director Biff Berringham, “David has left an indelible impact on STRI. His philanthropy helped make Bocas the thriving research station that it is today, and his creation of the endowed chair in Paleobiology insured continuing of a robust and energized research program in Panama, where paleobiology is fundamental to understanding the modern world.”

A new species of soft coral from the Pacific coast of Costa Rica and Panama, Leptogorgia cofrini, was named by STRI marine biologist Hector Guzman in recognition of David’s support of marine research. David is survived by Mary Ann —his wife of more than 60 years— and their five children: Edie, Mary Ann “Junior,” David Jr., Paige and Gladys.

El Dr. David A. Cofrin, un querido y generoso amigo de STRI, falleció en Gainesville, Florida, el 11 de agosto a los 85 años de edad. Nativo de Green Bay, Wisconsin, Dr. Cofrin obtuvo su título de doctor en medicina de la Universidad de Cornell. Fue cirujano en jefe en las Fuerzas Aéreas de los EU, y eventualmente estableció su práctica como cirujano en la ciudad natal de su esposa Mary Ann, en Gainesville, Florida.

Los Cofrin conocieron por primera vez a STRI en 2000 durante un crucero a Panamá con Stanley Heckadon y ayudaron con fondos para la publicación del libro de Stanley: Panamá: Puente Biológico. David y Mary Ann llevaron a cabo su primera visita a STRI en enero de 2002 con amigos del Museo de Historia Natural de Florida y decidieron ayudarnos a completar la primera fase del desarrollo y construcción de la Estación de Investigaciones de Bocas del Toro.

Inspirados por una conversación con Tony Coates, en 2004 David ofreció establecer un fondo para una posición en paleoecología en STRI, que llevó a la contratación de Caros Jaramillo como nuevo científico de STRI en el Centro de Paleoecología y Arqueología Tropical. Los Cofrin regresaron a Panamá con sus hijas Edie y Mary Ann y amigos del Museo de Florida en 2006, y luego de dicha visita, hicieron una donación para un nuevo dormitorio en Bocas del Toro, dando así cabida a la creciente demanda de hospedaje por estudiantes en Bocas del Toro.

Un viaje a Galápagos le dio la idea a David de tener un bote con un fondo de vidrio en Bocas del Toro, para visitantes que no buceaban, y este bote ha servido a muchos visitantes de Bocas, incluyendo a estudiantes de su alma mater, la Universidad de Wisconsin en Green Bay, quienes en 2008 se quedaron en la Estación de Investigaciones de Bocas del Toro durante un curso de campo en Panamá.

Para promover aun más la asociación entre STRI y la Universidad de Wisconsin, Cofrin inició el apoyo a una parcela de dinámica de bosques en el Lago Wabikin, hoy día parte de la red de los Observatorios Globales de la Tierra del Smithsonian.

El periódico Gainesville Sun describió a David Confrin como “un filántropo silencioso” que evitaba ser una celebridad, y ciertamente que al hacer donaciones a STRI reflejó su sensibilidad al comprender la visión de esta organización, y su deseo de darle vida a esta visión.

De acuerdo al director de STRI, Biff Berringham, “David ha dejado un impacto indeleble en STRI. Sus acciones filantrópicas ayudaron a hacer de Bocas la pujante estación de investigaciones que es hoy día, y su creación de la posición en Paleobiología aseguró la continuidad de un programa de investigaciones robusto y vibrante en Panamá, donde la Paleobiología es fundamental para la comprensión del mundo moderno.”

Héctor Guzmán, biólogo marino de STRI, bautizó una nueva especie de coral suave de la costa pacífica de Costa Rica y Panamá Leptogorgia cofrini, en honor a David y a su apoyo a las investigaciones marinas.

David deja como deudos a Mary Ann —su esposa por más de 60 años— y a sus cinco hijos, Edie, Mary Ann, “Junior”, David Jr., y Gladys.
Future marine biologists visit STRI

“Three of the four students hope to go on to careers in marine science and the fourth aims for a career in engineering” said STRI director Eldredge “Biff” Bermingham, after spending time with the winners of the Wisconsin Regional Ocean Sciences Bowl and the US National Ocean Sciences Bowl.

As US national champions, the first place prize for the Marshfield students, was a week at STRI, including two days at Bocas with diving, snorkeling and journeys over the reef on board the glass bottom boat R/V David Cofrin.

The 2009 NOSB was held at the Smithsonian Natural History Museum’s Sant Ocean Hall in April. After testing their ocean knowledge at their regional bowl and at the two-day Finals Competition, Marshfield High School won the grand prize.

The US National Ocean Sciences Bowl (NOSB) is a program of the Consortium for Ocean Leadership based in Washington, DC. NOSB seeks to interest students in the ocean sciences as a college major and potential career. Through this educational forum, the NOSB strives to encourage and support the next generation of marine scientists, policy makers, teachers, explorers, technicians, environmental advocates and informed citizens.

Approximately 2000 students from over 300 high schools participated in 2009.

Above, from the left (arriba, desde la izquierda): Paul Herder, Nelida Gomez, Seth Berger, Biff Bermingham, Kathleen Meehan Coop, the “sloth” Alex Jensen, Michael Josephson & Elisa Prebble.

At left, from the left (a la izquierda, desde la izquierda): Seth, Michael & Alex on board the R/V David Cofrin.

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Above (arriba) A sloth from Metropolitan Par. Un oso perezoso del Parque Metropolitano.

At right: (a la derecha) A souvenir from Culebra. Un recuerdo de Culebra.

Below: The winning students from Marshfield High snorkeling in Bocas del Toro.

NOSB tiene como objetivo interesar a estudiantes para que obtengan títulos en ciencias oceanográficas en la universidad así como en sus carreras. A través de este foro, NOSB trabaja para alentar y apoyar a la nueva generación de científicos marinos, tomadores de decisiones, maestros, exploradores.

El Concurso Nacional de Ciencias Oceánicas (NOSB) es un programa del Consorcio para el Liderazgo Oceánico, con sede en Washington DC.

Cerca para 2,000 estudiantes de 300 colegios participaron en 2009.

El NOSB 2009 se llevó a cabo en el Salón Oceánico del Museo de Historia Natural de Smithsonian en abril. Luego de poner a prueba sus conocimientos sobre los océanos en sus concursos regionales y en las finales de dos días de la competencia, los estudiantes del Colegio secundario de Marshfield ganaron el Primer Premio.

Above (arriba) At the Metropolitan Park. En el Parque Metropolitano.

Below (abajo): Elisa Prebble on board the R/V David Cofrin.

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