

STATE & LOCAL

Last Chance to See Animal Grossology

Nina McManus, Staff Writer

This is the last month to go see the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences' special exhibit "Animal Grossology." Based on the bestselling children's book series by Sylvia Branzei, this exhibit explores everything about smells, blood, poop, and slime that you always wanted to know but were afraid to ask. This exhibit was designed for the young, but it's also great for the young-at-heart.

The Grossology exhibit is set up arcade-style, with exhibits that more closely resemble games or shows than traditional museum displays. This highly interactive exhibit is designed to keep the young mind engaged. Large animatronic animals and insects greet the guests and explain certain games. Other games contain bright displays and television slideshows. The games themselves include dung beetle races, match-up challenges, and quiz games. The whole exhibit is large, colorful, and surprising. Be on the lookout for lights and motion where you least expect it. The final display in the exhibit is a quiz game that tests everything learned from all the other games. Of course, there is also the small gift shop where the museum has appropriately highlighted its grosser souvenirs, such as candy with real bugs inside.

Even though the exhibit is kid-oriented, adults can have fun as well; I know I did! After all, it's not every day you are addressed by a large flea in a red coat and top hat or an even bigger and more colorful fly with a Brooklyn accent. And did you know that human blood is never blue? That's a myth. Crabs have blue blood, but human blood is always red; it just appears blue under our skin. Even college-educated adults can learn something new here. So my advice is this: If you enter with an open mind and ready to have fun, you will.

The YouTube tour can be found below. This tour contains an owl pellets display called "Pellet Purge" that is not at the NC Museum of Natural Sciences.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JxwugLE6Meu4>



image via North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences'

New Plans at the NC DOT

Lizzy Wood, Staff Writer

The North Carolina Department of transportation (NCDOT) is proposing big ideas regarding the Raleigh/Durham area's transportation system with new initiative to repave roads and add more train tracks to the city in hope that this will speed up traffic and cut down the commute between Raleigh and Charlotte. The city is prepared to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on these updates and changes. City transportation director, Mark Ahrendsen, is quoted as saying "The smell of asphalt is going to be in the air pretty soon" because last fall, voters approved 20 million dollars to help repave streets in the triangle area and soon much of the repaving will begin in the downtown Raleigh area.

The state must present four plans regarding transportation. The Comprehensive Transportation Plan is a state requirement and looks 30 years in the future. The Long-Range Transportation Plan, a federal requirement, is designed for 20 years in the future. The Transportation Improvement Plan looks ahead seven years, and projects on this list must be eligible for state and federal grants. Lastly, the Capital improvement plan is for the city's transportation ideas. Each of these plans has recently been discussed.

The biggest proposals for the city came with the announcement of a plan to put more passenger cars and faster trains between Raleigh and Charlotte. The state won its request for \$461 million in federal grants to support the construction of the railroads. The building of the railroads is also

expected to create 4,800 new jobs. Gene Conti, the state transportation secretary, is quoted as saying "This will significantly improve our passenger service and also, I believe, have benefits for the movement of freight through that corridor." As part of President Obama's \$8 billion stimulus towards building high-speed trains across the United States, the state will receive \$545 million as their share of the stimulus. However, the government decided to withhold the money until the state could guarantee that the money would be going to improving the transportation overall. Now, the money is set to be going towards adding "28 miles of double track between Greensboro and Charlotte, plus five miles of passing sidings between Raleigh and Greensboro."

Also, some curves will be made straighter to increase speeds and some dangerous railroad crossings will be turned into bridges. The bulk of the stimulus money will be spent near Charlotte on an 88 million dollar bridge to be placed where a railroad crossing is currently stationed. The goal is for the trains to eventually be able to reach 90 miles per hour, something which will be made possible after the state installs safety technology on the tracks meant to help trains slow down. However, the installation of the new technology, which was set to be installed by 2015, has been temporarily halted due to a lack of federal funding.

Changes will be slow, but the city can expect to see the roads beginning to be paved in the near future. The train system will remain a long-term goal of the city, but one can expect that construction will begin as soon as possible.

Corrections:

Three facts were reported incorrectly in Jee-In Hur's 3/30 news piece "Karen Refugees in Raleigh." The Herald would like to apologize to the people interviewed and ask you to please note these corrections: Su Alpha Stylo did not come to the U.S. when he was three; he came to the U.S. three years ago. During the interview, Alpha spoke fluent English. Selda translates Karen to English, and vice versa to help other Karen refugee families. Karen have been targeted because they demanded an independent state and fought against corrupt government.

STAFF

herald@meredith.edu
heraldadvertising@
email.meredith.edu

Editor

Amy Hruby

Staff Writers

Sarah Sugg
Lyn Triplett
Rebecca Brodney
Mengjie Zhang
Aislinn Murphy
Emily Hawkins
Anne Caitlin Griffin
Emily Gamiel

Layout Editor

Emily Hawkins

Website Editor

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