Victoria Black

Born and bred in Rochester, N.Y.

Birth date: November 18, 1980 (proud to be a Scorpio)

Degrees:
May 2002: B.A. in Geological Sciences at State University of New York College at Geneseo (minored in Anthropology)

M.S. in Geology at Northern Arizona University (in progress)
Thesis title: Vertebrate Paleontology at Herring Park Cave, South Park, central Colorado

Field Work:
Paleontology: Terapa, Sonora, Mexico in March 2006, April 2005, and March 2004
Geology: Field Camp at Butte, Montana and Mackay, Idaho with Idaho State University in June-July, 2002

I did field work from 1998 to 2002 with the Department of Geology at SUNY Geneseo at numerous sites around western New York, including Fall Brook and Wheeler's Gully near Geneseo, N.Y., and at various sites on South Island, New Zealand in January 2001.

Thesis Committee: Jim I. Mead (advisor)
Tad Theimer
Dave Elliot

Hobbies: Running, swimming, hiking, sci-fi and mystery novels and shows. I'm a huge movie buff, especially psychological thrillers and horror movies. I am impatiently waiting for the last Harry Potter book, and I can tell you everything you want to know (and some you don't) about the Beatles.

Professional Interests: Mammals are the best! I'm interested mostly in rodents, lagomorphs, and carnivores. Also, I like the "unique" ones (monotremes, pangolins, etc.). In addition to their bones, I enjoy wildlife behavior and ecology. I think that it's important to learn more about the animal assemblages of the past as well as the present in order to gain an understanding of wildlife response to changes in habitat and climate and to human activity. We can use this knowledge to better preserve animals that are threatened or endangered and to dispel common societal misunderstandings about certain wildlife.

Thesis: Herring Park Cave is an overhang located in the Mosquito Range on the western border of South Park, central Colorado (yes, that South Park). The area is a montane grassland with some bristlecone and Ponderosa pine located at about 2800 meters (10,000 feet) in elevation. It was excavated in 1996-1997 by the University of Colorado at Denver for skeletal material, which was later sent to Jim Mead. A charcoal layer near the bottom of the site was dated at about 1900 years, so the assemblage is late Quaternary in

age. The material includes bison (extirpated from the area since the 1870s), deer, small carnivores, rodents and lagomorphs. Most of the material appears to be from a raptor's roost. However, large bones were found in a packrat midden at the surface (including the bison material). These bones were chewed by packrats (*Neotoma*). There is no evidence of human alteration, although the Ute Indians used the area for hunting before white settlers came for mining and hunting/trapping (Simmons, 2002). My work involves identifying the assemblage and its taphonomy, as well as observing any trends or changes over time. I plan to finish in Fall, 2006.

Reference:

Simmons, Virginia McConnell (2002) Bayou Salado: the story of South Park, Revised Edition: University Press of Colorado, 280 pp.