

## March 21st, 2017

# CTPA Field Museum “Fam” Trip

It was a lovely spring day when 22 CTPA members and guests met outside the East entrance of the Field Museum, for a “Familiarization Trip.”

We met **Michelle O’Connor - Group Sales Account Manager** for the Field Museum (shown below LEFT). She let us know that we would have access to the museum, the Specimens Exhibit and in just a bit, we were to split into groups for a docent-led walk. But first, Michelle would help us with some specifics about bringing groups to the Field Museum.



The “East Entrance” is the group entrance. Buses should turn into the drive to let students off the bus. This turn-in can get slow if it’s a busy day at the museum. Michelle let us know that the museum is aware of that problem, but for now, this is just the way it is! The buses should come to the same East Entrance for pick up. The East Entrance is also a nice meeting place for your group, there’s lots of room and it’s easy to find. Depending on what’s happening at the museum, there might also be places to sit.

Buses can then go to Canal & Roosevelt for parking. The area south of the intersection is where buses often park and wait.

There will usually be someone from the Field Museum to meet your group and escort them inside, but again, this can depend on how busy it is. If not, the staff inside the museum is waiting for you and they will know how to take care of your group. Do not bring a huge group of kids through the revolving door! Just use the regular door, this will make things exponentially easier and safer.

If your group is bringing their own lunches, there will definitely be someone to help show you where to store those lunches and where to bring the students to eat later. There is a room with 272 seats where students can eat lunch.

If you are scheduled with a docent, bathroom time is actually built into your time with the docent.

If you are scheduled for an exhibit visit - a bathroom break is not built into the time, but it is also a little more lenient, if you arrive after your time, it is okay. The only thing you have to show up on time exactly for, is the 3-D movies.

There are no printed tickets for groups, you just need the name of the group. **This is the most important thing.** The staff will verify the number of people in the group when you get there, don't worry, this is not for accounting purposes, just for attendance reporting.

Maps are given to chaperones, not to every student. Digital maps are available throughout the museum. Policy is one adult to every 10 kids and the Field Museum is serious about this. If you need the coat check, it's 3\$ for any item and no food can be stored in coat check.

There is first aid, ask anyone and they can help with minor issues. Both bathrooms have a nursing station and there are also gender neutral bathrooms.

The Playlab is closed Tues and Weds and is for kids 6 and under.

There are two restaurants - the Explorer Cafe and the more upscale Field Bistro

Elevators might be a little slow because they were originally built to haul things not people. There is no members lounge.

### **DOCENT VISIT (by Margaret Hicks)**

Then we all separated into 3 groups and went with our docents.

Our docent was Renee Goddijin and she was awesome. Renee told us most importantly "if you can touch it in the museum, it's not real. If you can't touch it, it is real."

The Museum of Science & Industry is a working science museum. There are four areas: Zoology, Botany, Anthropology and Geology.

Sue was known as an "Apex Predator," they are the top of the food chain. Sue cost 8.6 million to buy and is about 90% complete. It will never be complete, like an Ikea bookcase, there will be leftover parts no one is sure what to do with or where they go. We also don't know if Sue is male or female.

There are 5 copies of Sue's parts, so when they need to take a hand or a foot to study it, they replace that body part with a copy. Sue never really used her arms, maybe just to eat. She is related to the crocodile species and to birds. Her teeth are serrated on one side and smooth on the other.

The idea of dinosaurs having this green and yellow skin is an assumption. They thought it looked like a lizard so it most likely had that skin, but they think now that it's very possible that some dinosaurs (Sue!) had feathers.



The Field Museum has “drawers and drawers of dead birds.” There are over 30 million specimens and there are more bugs than anything. Renee told us that if you gathered all the animals and separated them, ants would be the largest biomass on earth. ANTS!

We learned with hieroglyphics that the way the birds are facing is the direction in which you read. In Egyptian times, tombs looked like the dead guy’s house. There is no heaven or hell. They believed that your face was what hold our soul, that’s why these tombs had their faces on them.

The Field Museum has the largest collection of meteorites outside of the US Government.

Every fake leaf is made out of the mold of a real leaf, to make it as realistic as possible.

The Ginkgo tree is a living fossil. After Nagasaki, the Ginkgo came back, it’s very resilient. It’s thought that plants wouldn’t react to nuclear explosion the way people do, they might be much stronger than we.

Maybe because of this: We learned plants have friends, that when one is hurt, trees will send nourishment to each other even if they’re not the same kind of tree. Plants have at least 15 senses.

We learned so much from Renee! Once again, proving that tour guides and docents are so valuable. We are amazed and excited about our new information on the Field Museum.



### **ANOTHER DOCENT’S TOUR (by Donna Primas)**

The three CTPA docent-led groups traveled in several routes to help stay out of the way of each other. The docents could have all provided the same tour, but in our case, they tailored their tour to their favorites and requests from the group.

In my group, we did not go into the Egyptology area at all. We did begin with a look at Sue’s skeleton in the Main Hall, then went upstairs to see her head close-up.



We paused by gallery entrances on the upper level, and learned what one might see inside. We did see several meteorite pieces and, Like Margaret's group, we also learned how lifelike plants and leaves are replicated by skilled artists.

We spent time in the **Grainger Hall of Gems**. Our guide explained what can be found in the online educator guide for Grainger Hall, quoted below:

<https://www.fieldmuseum.org/sites/default/files/jsandy/2014/08/07/gemseducatorguide.pdf>

*Each display features a gem in its three stages of transformation: as a raw crystal, as a cut and polished stone, and as a jewel mounted in a finished ring, brooch, or necklace. You'll also view gems notable for their size or rarity, including a 341-carat aquamarine and a 97.45-carat Imperial Topaz—the rarest type of topaz and the largest owned by any museum in the world!*

This brilliant setting representing a cloud and featuring clusters of dazzling diamonds caught my eye!

Back on the main level, we spent time seeing and learning more about the history of taxidermy and the advances in techniques pioneered by **Carl Akeley**. He was a nature photographer, inventor,



biologist, conservationist, and sculptor, who pioneered the idea of placing multiple taxidermy subjects in groups in lifelike dioramas. Read more about him at:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl\\_Akeley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl_Akeley)

We saw the famous Four Seasons diorama of deer that shows how the environment and the deer themselves exhibit physical changes throughout a year. Our docent told us that the snowy winter scene of deer is sometimes called the “sweetest exhibit” as the snow was made using real sugar!

We also went to the back of the taxidermy gallery to see the “man-eating lions of Tsavo” (SAH-vo), famous for attacking and eating rail workers in 1898 in what is now Kenya. Our docent wanted to show us a famous photograph of Akeley next to a dead leopard, which is on display near the dangerous pair of lions. Google: “Carl Akeley Leopard” (without the quotes) to learn the story and find the many posts on line about that incident!

### **SPECIAL EXHIBIT - Specimens: Unlocking the Secrets of Life**

At our leisure, many CTPA members took advantage of being in the Field to enjoy free entrance to this ticketed special exhibit continuing through **January 7, 2018**.



**Our docent had told us that only 1% of the Field's collection are on display.** This special exhibit helps one understand how the Field's “hidden” collections—boasting 30 million specimens and artifacts—is made accessible to scientists who use them to make discoveries, solve mysteries, and explore our world.

The Field collections often contain many specimens of the same thing gathered at different times or from different regions—dozens of a single species of bird or thousands of insects of one variety. This range and diversity helps scientist study creatures that are now extinct and/or compare changes in size, coloration, or other factors that take place over periods of time due to natural selection, changes in climate or environment, loss of habitat, or other reasons.

The exhibit is very thought provoking and gives hope that there are still many discoveries that may be made simply by studying artifacts already in the storage areas of the museum.

If you are going soon, consider seeing this other ticketed exhibits on view:

### Tattoo

Continues through **September 4, 2017**

<http://www.fieldmuseum.org/discover/on-exhibit/tattoo/>

### Cyrus Tang Hall of China

A new permanent exhibit visited by CTPA July 7, 2015.

<http://www.fieldmuseum.org/discover/on-exhibit/china/>

See the CTPA 7-page write up of the visit at:

[http://tourguidesofchicago.com/pdf/meetings/2015\\_07\\_07.pdf](http://tourguidesofchicago.com/pdf/meetings/2015_07_07.pdf)



CTPA members Dave Clark, John Burns, Monica Hasbun and Marlin Keesler can be seen listening intently to their docent!

*Write ups and photos provided by Margaret Hicks and Donna Primas.*