

SAN DIEGO NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

Dead Sea Scrolls

www.sdscrolls.org

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Tickets Now on Sale for Dead Sea Scrolls

Archaeological Treasures to be Exhibited at the San Diego Natural History Museum

San Diego; February 2007—On June 29 the San Diego Natural History Museum will open *Dead Sea Scrolls*, the largest, most comprehensive exhibition of the Dead Sea Scrolls ever assembled. The exhibition—created and assembled by the Museum—includes authentic Dead Sea Scrolls, ancient illuminated manuscripts, artifacts, landscape and aerial photography, and interactive displays about science, discovery, and exploration. Thanks to the generosity of the Israel Antiquities Authority and the Department of Antiquities of Jordan, 27 Dead Sea Scrolls, 10 exhibited for the first time ever, will be on display over the course of the exhibition. Tickets and more information are available at www.sdscrolls.org. Joan and Irwin Jacobs are the presenting sponsors of *Dead Sea Scrolls*.

Dead Sea Scrolls will not travel: this comprehensive exhibition will only be at the San Diego Natural History Museum. The exhibition is unprecedented in size, scope and length. The six-month exhibition brings together materials never before exhibited together: Dead Sea Scrolls from Israel and Jordan reunited for the first time in sixty years, never-before-exhibited ancient Hebrew codices from the Russian National Library, medieval manuscripts from the British National Library, and stunning modern interpretations of the texts. Tracing the scrolls and their meaning through time, the exhibition connects the ancient world to the modern. The exhibition will span two floors and over 12,000 square feet.

“This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to encounter some of the world’s most significant documents and artifacts, all in the same space,” says Dr. Risa Levitt Kohn, curator of the exhibition and director of San Diego State University’s Judaic Studies Program. “The scrolls are the oldest discovered copies of the books of the Hebrew Bible, and the ideas in them have shaped our world. They shed light on life, faith and culture in ancient Israel, which influenced Judaism and Christianity.” The Museum anticipates 400,000+ in attendance over the six-month period.

“We expect that this cultural event will be a magnet for visitors from all around California and the entire Southwest,” comments Dr. Michael Hager, President and CEO of the San Diego Natural History Museum. “The opportunity for us to host a world-class exhibition is one that we take on with great pride and excitement.”

The Dead Sea Scrolls, dating from 250 BCE–68 CE, are indisputably one of the greatest archaeological finds of all time. Discovered beginning in 1947 in 11 caves along the shores of the Dead Sea in Israel, the scrolls are a bridge to the period when the foundations of western civilization were being laid. These ancient manuscripts embody universal values and bring to life a vanished world.

-OVER-

The Exhibition

Photography

Upon entering the exhibition, visitors will be surrounded by gorgeous landscapes, from top Israeli photographers Neil Folberg and Duby Tal, that explore Israel's unique beauty and varied climate (including the Dead Sea climate—unique on Earth—which allowed the scrolls to be preserved). The photographs will also show the similarities in San Diego's and Israel's climate—two of the five Mediterranean climate regions on Earth.

Discovery and Science

Visitors will then enter an area called “Discovery and Science,” where they will be transported back to the original mid-century excavation of the caves where the scrolls were discovered and of Qumran, a site close to the caves. Original archeological tools, artifacts, photographs and a replica of the archeologists' tent will re-create the excitement of the scrolls initial discovery. The discovery area gives way to an exploration of the science of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Scientific methods, new and old, unlock the mysteries of the scrolls and help researchers better understand them. The exhibit investigates scroll preservation, DNA and chemical analysis, infrared technology, Carbon-14 dating, and digital document reconstruction.

Qumran

Visitors will proceed down to the Legler Benbough Exhibition Hall. Re-creating the Bedouin goat herder's experience finding the first Dead Sea Scroll, visitors will enter through a cave like one of the scroll caves near the Dead Sea. Visitors will then explore Qumran, an archeological site near where the scrolls were found (thought by some to be where some scrolls were copied and written). This area will partially recreate Qumran at the height of its existence around 100 BCE to 68 CE. Authentic artifacts, including coins, sandals, and an inkwell—provide insight into the lives of this ancient community.

The Scroll Room

Twenty-seven scrolls will be on display throughout the course of the exhibition: visitors will see 15 at any given time, scrolls will change in the fall. Scroll highlights include: scrolls of the biblical books of Leviticus, Isaiah, Job and others; scrolls such as the Damascus Document and the War Scroll highlighting the life and thoughts of the Qumran community; Psalms scrolls containing passages from liturgy still in use today; a section of the Copper Scroll from Jordan, the only Dead Sea Scroll inscribed on copper; the best preserved of all Deuteronomy manuscripts containing the text of the Ten Commandments; and scrolls written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek.

Ideas Over Time

Visitors can trace the impact of these texts as they were copied through history. The exhibition will include: 1st Hebrew codices from the Russian National Library (the second oldest biblical documents, after the Dead Sea Scrolls); illuminated manuscripts from the British National Library from the Middle Ages; and manuscripts from St. John's College and the San Diego Public Library that bring visitors up to the present. The exhibition will explore how ideas survive, spread and inspire. These materials will trace the story of the transmission of the biblical Dead Sea Scrolls from Qumran to our present day.

In the Giant-screen Theater

The Qumran Visualization Project—a virtual reality tour of Qumran—will be featured in the Museum's giant-screen theater and is included in admission.

The Museum will offer a robust educational program which will include 22 lectures by world-class scholars and archaeologists, films, classes, and audio tours (Spanish and English, included in the price of admission). Additionally, a curriculum will be prepared for use in schools, home schools, synagogues and churches.

Most admission tickets range from \$20–\$28. There are discounts for members, seniors, students, military and groups. Admission includes exhibitions offered in other areas of the Museum. Visit www.sdscrolls.org for more information. Group tour operators may arrange for on-site boxed lunches.

Joan and Irwin Jacobs are the presenting sponsors of *Dead Sea Scrolls*. Other sponsors include: Anonymous; Bank of America; CerasoliStafford Media Management LLC; Charmaine and Maurice Kaplan; Cohn Restaurant Group; County of San Diego – Community Enhancement Program; Deborah and Sarah Livia Szekely; Don and Judy Oliphant; George P. Lauren Foundation; Goldberg Charitable Trust; Harold R. Stern Foundation; Helene and Allan Ziman, Sid's Carpet Barn, Inc.; Hilton Hotels; Jewish Life TV (JLTV); Melvin Garb Foundation; Northern Trust, NA; Novak Charitable Trust; Point Loma Nazarene University; Rancho Santa Fe Foundation; Righteous Persons Foundation; San Diego Foundation Arts & Culture; San Diego State University; Shamrock Holdings of California, Inc.; Sheryl and Harvey White; The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation; The Skirball Foundation; The Szekely Family Foundation; The Waitt Family Foundation; and Union Bank of California.

Celebrating its 133rd year, the San Diego Natural History Museum is the second oldest scientific institution in California; third west of the Mississippi. A binational Museum, its mission is to interpret the natural world through research, education, and exhibits; to promote understanding of the evolution and diversity of southern California and the peninsula of Baja California and to inspire in all a respect for nature and the environment. Located in Balboa Park at the intersection of Village Place and Park Blvd., it is open daily except for Thanksgiving and Christmas. Phone: 619.232.2821. Website: www.sdnhm.org.