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'Accidental Mummies' making US debut in Detroit

DETROIT — Through a replica of cemetery gates, a new exhibition offers a glimpse into the lives of people whose bodies were accidentally mummified in the mining town of Guanajuato, Mexico, more than a century ago.

Thirty-six mummies on loan from Guanajuato's Museo de las Momias (Museum of the Mummies) go on public display Saturday at the Detroit Science Center as part of the "Accidental Mummies of Guanajuato" traveling exhibit.

The roughly \$2 million project marks the first time the mummies have been shown in the U.S. Using scientific, historical and cultural research, the exhibit explores the lives of miners, soldiers, farmers and children whose bodies were mummified and stored in aboveground crypts.

"This is listening to these mummified remains tell their story," said Ronald Beckett, a professor emeritus at Quinnipiac University in Connecticut who studies the Guanajuato mummies and helped research the exhibit.

"Accidental Mummies" is designed to tell the story of Guanajuato, its culture and its people.

Past the exhibit gates — replicating the portal at the cemetery where the first Guanajuato mummy was discovered in 1865 — visitors walk through a room bordered with crypts, where they learn about Mexican traditions surrounding death. At one end, five mummies are displayed behind glass as they might have looked in their crypts.

Visitors then enter the main exhibition space, where 21 mummies — some positioned as if standing upright — are shown. Each mummy is accompanied by text in English and Spanish that gives his or her name, an estimate of the age at which the person died, and details about his or her life.

"Whether you worked in a mine or you were a soldier ... you had a significant place in making Guanajuato what it was at that period," said Martina Guzman, the exhibit's content developer. "All of these people were that."

According to local legend, the bodies were preserved because the city's water is rich with minerals and sulfur. But Beckett, former co-host of "The Mummy Road Show" on the National Geographic Channel, said researchers believe hot weather warmed the crypts, drying out the bodies.

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Beckett and Quinnipiac colleague Jerry Conlogue have studied two-thirds of the roughly 110 mummies in the Guanajuato museum's collection. But preparations for the Detroit exhibit offered a closer look, including CT scans of seven mummies performed at a Dearborn imaging center.

With the scans, Beckett said researchers were able to learn more about medical problems of those whose bodies were mummified. Those findings were incorporated into the displays, and the scientific techniques used — from DNA testing to forensic facial reconstruction — are highlighted in the exhibit.

Former Mexican President Vicente Fox plans to attend a preview Friday of the exhibit, which is being produced by a Science Center subsidiary. Detroit is the first of the exhibit's seven planned U.S. stops over three years. The Science Center is in talks to finalize other stops.

"Death has been part of the culture of Mexico, and in particular of Guanajuato, for centuries," Guanajuato Mayor Eduardo Romero Hicks, who has encouraged researchers to study the mummies, said in a statement. "We want to make sure that their story is heard beyond our borders."

On the Net:

Accidental Mummies of Guanajuato exhibition: accidentalmummies.com

Detroit Science Center: www.detroitsciencecenter.org

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Opposing Honduran factions resume talks to end crisis prompted by coup

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Investigators: Chemicals in heating oven sparked fire that destroyed part of Detroit factory

August 26th, 2009 Capt.: Detroit plant fire started in chemical ovenDETROIT — Investigators say chemicals in a heating oven sparked a fire and explosions that destroyed part of a Detroit factory complex. Detroit Fire Capt.

Detroit political consultant, former Michigan lawmaker indicted in Conyers corruption case

July 16th, 2009 Detroit consultant, former lawmaker indictedDETROIT — A federal grand jury has indicted a political consultant on corruption charges, accusing him of working with a Detroit City Council member to shake down businesses for bribes in exchange for favors. The charges against Sam Riddle filed Wednesday came less than three weeks after his

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steaprok if you add all populations of North, Central, & South America you'll probably find out that the average American is Latino! @ricksanchezenn
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inspiritu @JeffreyChapman Thanks Jeffrey. I really appreciate your continued support for our efforts in Central America.
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former boss, Monica Conyers, pleaded guilty to accepting bribes and quit the council.

Authorities say the same NY house caught fire two nights in a row; Both blazes accidental

June 26th, 2009 Same NY house catches fire two night in a rowLAKE SUCCESS, N.Y. — Authorities said the same house caught fire two nights in a row this week.

That's not your mummy; it's a man, baby! NY scan shows Egypt body thought to be female is male

June 24th, 2009 It's a man, baby! Scan reveals NY mummy is maleNEW YORK — A scan performed at a suburban New York City hospital shows an ancient Egyptian mummy thought for centuries to be a woman is a man. A Manhasset hospital examined four mummies from the Brooklyn Museum on Tuesday.

Texas 16-year-old charged in accidental shooting death of her 12-year-old sister

June 22nd, 2009 Texas teen charged in shooting death of sisterGALVESTON, Texas — A 16-year-old Texas girl faces a charge of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon in what investigators say was the accidental shooting death of her 12-year-old sister. Galveston police say the teenager was playing with a gun Sunday morning at home when it accidentally fired, striking her sister in her upper torso.

Coroner says deaths of children found in trunk appear accidental, but still determining cause

June 17th, 2009 Coroner says kids' deaths appear accidentalSPRINGDALE, Ark. — A coroner in Arkansas says he believes the deaths of two young siblings found in the trunk of the family car was accidental.

Education Secretary Arne Duncan: Detroit schools are 'ground zero' for failing US education

May 13th, 2009 Education secretary: Detroit schools 'ground zero'DETROIT — Education Secretary Arne Duncan said Wednesday that Detroit's troubled public schools are "ground zero" for education in the U.S. and promised federal help if leaders are willing to make necessary changes.

Detroit defenseman Brian Rafalski makes series debut in Game 6

May 13th, 2009 Rafalski returns to Red Wings lineupANAHEIM, Calif. — Defenseman Brian Rafalski returned to the Detroit Red Wings as they looked to eliminate the Anaheim Ducks in Game 6 of the Western Conference semifinals.

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New Detroit mayor won't occupy official residence, wants to find way to make money from it

May 12th, 2009 New Detroit mayor says no thanks to city mansionDETROIT — New Detroit Mayor Dave Bing says he won't move into the official mayoral residence — the Manoogian Mansion. Bing took office Monday and says he wants to find a way to make money from the 15-room luxury house on the Detroit River.

Detroit Free Press, newspaper partnership name top execs with Hunke's move to USA Today

April 29th, 2009 Detroit Free Press, news partnership get top execsDETROIT — The Detroit Media Partnership and Detroit Free Press have announced their new top executives. Susie Ellwood will become chief executive of the Detroit Media Partnership, which oversees the business operations of the Detroit Free Press and The Detroit News.

UAW official says American Axle to shutter Detroit plant, hundreds to lose jobs

April 28th, 2009 Union: American Axle to close Detroit plantNEW YORK — American Axle & Manufacturing Inc. plans to shutter the largest plant at its Detroit manufacturing complex and move production to Mexico, a union official said Tuesday.

Egypt unveils dozens of ancient tombs, brightly painted sarcophagi south of Cairo

April 26th, 2009 Egypt unveils ancient necropolis south of CairoILLAHUN, Egypt — Egyptian archaeologists on Sunday unveiled mummies, brightly painted sarcophagi and dozens of ancient tombs carved into a rocky hill in a desert oasis south of Cairo. The 53 tombs — some as old as 4,000 years — were discovered recently on a sandy plateau overlooking farming fields in the village Illahun, located in the Fayoum oasis about 50 miles (80 kilometers) southwest of the Egyptian capital.

Two mummies found in Peru

March 12th, 2009 LIMA - Two mummies, dating back to around 1,460 A.D., were found near an archaeological site in northern Peruvian province of Amazonas. 'The tombs had been plundered, but one of the mummies was fully intact,' said Maria Dolores Ramos, an official in charge of culture and tourism.

Over 20 mummies found in Egyptian tomb

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February 9th, 2009 CAIRO - An Egyptian archaeological team has found about two dozen mummies in a tomb dating back to the 3,000-year-old Pharaonic era. The mummies were unearthed in the tomb which lies to the west of Zoser's step pyramid in the Saqqara area.

To kiss or not to kiss: Mexican city debates

January 30th, 2009 MEXICO CITY - Mexico made an important contribution to world kissing culture with singer Consuelito Velazquez's song 'Besame, besame mucho'. However, if Guanajuato Mayor Eduardo Romero Hicks had his way, the 'mucho' (a lot) would be struck from one of the best-known songs in the Spanish language.

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