

Old mining headframe,
Cobar, Australia.

Unearth Something New at the Museum

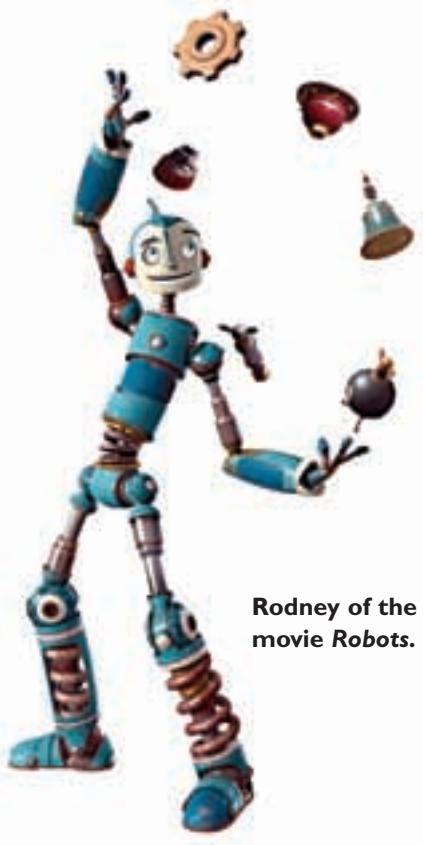
Whether it's checking out the newest exhibit, participating in an activity, or enjoying an informative lecture, March and April are great months to explore local museums. —by Ann Marie O'Phelan

More than Mines and Minerals at the Southwest Florida Museum of History through April 21

Ben E. Clement, a former teacher with an interest in the mineral industry, spent his life compiling an outstanding, one-of-a-kind collection of minerals from around the world. This exciting exhibit, currently on loan from the Ben E. Clement Mineral Museum of

Kentucky and said to be one of the finest in existence, includes period journals, photographs, mining tools, artifacts, stunning multicolored specimens, and other fascinating items. Adults \$9.50, seniors \$8.50, students with ID \$5 (other discounts available).

*Southwest Florida Museum of History,
Fort Myers, 239-332-5955, www.cityftmyers.com/museum*



Rodney of the
movie *Robots*.

***Robots: The Interactive Exhibit
at the Imaginarium Museum
through April 22***

Based on the hit movie *Robots*, this exciting interactive exhibit captures the imagination and fun of the film while providing educational experiences about real-life robotics. The exhibit is composed of 15 different hands-on educational "interactives" including *Robot Explorers*, "Paint-A-Bot" Artificial Intelligence, *Build-A-Wonder-Bot*, *City-Scape*, *Crosstown Express*, *Robot Round-up*, *Dominos Workspace*, *Future of Robots*, and *Industrial Robots*. Adults and children alike will get a chance to better understand the science, complexity, and importance of today's robots and the role they play in medicine, industry, and outer space exploration. "We are thrilled to have an exhibit of this caliber that promises to be as educational as it is fun," says Helena Finnegan, public relations and marketing manager, Imaginarium and Southwest Florida Museum of History.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE IMAGINARIUM MUSEUM



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Left: One of the SEA-to-SEE touch tanks at the Imaginarium Museum. **Right:** Fish around in the tidal pool, complete with horseshoe crabs, sea stars, sea urchins, sea cucumbers, and much, much more.

Also new to the Imaginarium Museum are three SEA-to-SEE touch tanks that are home to horseshoe crabs, sea stars, sea urchins, sea cucumbers, sand dollars, marine snails, and more. A 600-gallon tank hosts a variety of stingrays (de-barbed for safety), while a 400-gallon tidal pool is home to mollusks, urchins, and crabs, and a ten-gallon tank is wheelchair accessible. "The touch tanks allow visitors to view and interact, so they appeal to all ages. Plus, the windows make them enjoyable even for toddlers," says Shelby Baucom, education manager at the Imaginarium Museum. Adults \$8, seniors 55 and over \$7, children 12 and under \$5, free for children under 3.

The Imaginarium, Downtown Fort Myers, 239-337-3332, www.cityftmyers.com/imaginarium

Encouraging American Genius: Master Paintings from the Corcoran Gallery of Art, and Bedazzled: 5000 Years of Jewelry from the Walters Art Museum

at the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art through April 29

More than 70 works of art from the Corcoran Gallery of Art, on their first ever tour, are on display at the John and Mable Ringling Museum. The works trace the development of American painting from the late eighteenth century, through the Gilded

Age, to the American Impressionists, and finally into twentieth-century realism.

Henry Walters, an American railroad magnate and founder of the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, Maryland, formed a magnificent private collection of jewelry—much of which is on display in *Bedazzled: 5000 Years of Jewelry from the Walters Art Museum*. This dazzling collection includes everything from antiquities to the Art Nouveau creations of René Lalique. Adults \$15, seniors and active U.S. military \$13, students and Florida teachers with ID \$5.

The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, 941-359-5700, www.ringling.org

The Great American Game: Baseball at the Naples Art Museum through May 13

"This is one of the most important baseball collections in America," says Myra Daniels, chairman and CEO of the Philharmonic Center for the Arts. "You can expect to see everything from Babe Ruth's 1919 contract with the Yankees, to Joe DiMaggio's 1948 uniform, to a 1999 World Series trophy, and autographed baseballs." Along with historically significant baseball memorabilia, you can also enjoy baseball-inspired artwork by George Luks, Raoul Dufy, Elaine de Kooning, Jacob Lawrence, and Robert

Rauschenberg, as well as the only known baseball painting by George Bellows. Call for ticket prices.

On March 21, through Lifelong Learning at the Phil, Dale A. Petroskey, president of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, will lecture on baseball's role in American culture. "A few star ballplayers are expected to show up, and baseball game food will be served," says Daniels. Adults \$22, students \$7.

Philharmonic Center for the Arts, Naples, 239-597-1900, www.thephil.org

The Natural History Lecture Series at the Bailey-Matthews Shell Museum through May 16

Every month through May, the Bailey-Matthews Shell Museum offers lectures on topics ranging from *Shorebirds of Southwest Florida* to *Natural History and Global Warming in Churchill, Manitoba* to *Exploring New Zealand*. All lectures are given by experts on the different subjects, such as Randy McCormick, environmental specialist at the Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in Naples, who will lecture on *Estuaries: Yours to Explore, Enjoy, and Protect*. Each lecture lasts about 40 minutes and is followed by a question and answer session. Members \$3, non-members \$5.

Bailey-Matthews Shell Museum, Sanibel, 239-395-2233, www.shellmuseum.org



Wheelchair accessible SEA-to-SEE touch tank at the Imaginarium Museum.

Wild Wizard Jr. Scientist Classes and Mini Inventor's Club

at the Edison & Ford Winter Estates through July 8

The Estates offers a new series of classes that provide young scientists (ages 9-12) the opportunity to discover, invent, and experiment. Class topics range from *Sizzling Summer Science* to *Sun, Sea, and Air*, to *Big Bang's & Beyond the Sound Barrier*. Classes are four weeks long and held from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays. They conclude with an invitation to participate in the Wild Wizard Lab Show held on the first Sunday after the last class.

Members \$90, non-members \$110.

Preschoolers and their parents can enjoy the Mini Inventor's Club, which offers activities like story time, garden stroll, and science. Club dates are held on a monthly basis between 10 a.m. and 12 p.m. Monthly topics include *Exploring with Your Senses*, *Fruitful Fun*, and *Under the Garden*. Members \$8, non-members \$10, free for accompanying adult.

Edison & Ford Winter Estates, Fort Myers, 239-334-7419, www.efwe fla.org

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