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PHILIP J. CURRIE
DINOSAUR MUSEUM

FREE

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER of the PHILIP J. CURRIE DINOSAUR MUSEUM

- proudly in print -
SINCE 2011

The Currie Museum wants YOU.

Events aplenty upcoming, come and join the dinosaur museum excitement!

By Erika Sherk

This has always been a project that has brought people together. A huge team of supporters, cheerleaders, fundraisers, donors and sponsors have been involved since the idea first cropped up over a decade ago.

Now, as we move closer to early August, we want to call in the masses to join as we celebrate the Philip J. Currie Dinosaur Museum. You are all invited to the museum's Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony on August 9th.

Taking place at 1:30 p.m. at the museum site (at the East Access to Wembley, AB,) we will cut the ribbon to celebrate the completion of the uniquely-designed museum building. Maxxam Analytics is hosting a barbecue at the site for everyone attending, please come out for the festivities!

If you like motorbikes, we can offer you an even more exciting day. Join the Mighty Peace Harley Davidson Aykroyd Family Ride that morning and ride in style with Dan Aykroyd and his celebrity friends out to the Ribbon-Cutting. Pre-registration is required and it's a minimum donation of \$20. Register at www.curriemuseum.ca/events.



photo by Erika Sherk

It's still a construction site now but the Philip J. Currie Dinosaur Museum will have a very different look at the Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony in August. The metal roofing will be installed in early July - get ready for this beast of a building to suddenly become pretty flashy!

Then collect your limited-edition commemorative patch and hit the open highway on your motorcycle! Mr. Aykroyd will be leading the charge on a brand-new, dino-customized Harley Davidson Softail Breakout. Have you ever before seen a motorcycle sporting a ghosted Hadrosaur or Troodon? If not, it might be time!

Later that evening, you can put away the shorts and t-shirts and get out your tuxes and spangles for the Amber Ball. The museum's pinnacle

annual fundraiser, it is definitely not an evening to miss. With a gastronomically delightful five-course meal, entertainment by internationally acclaimed quartet, The Tenors and upcoming star T. Buckley, a high-class silent auction and a very special musical performance by Dan Aykroyd himself, it's going to be an evening to go down in the annals of history.

There are still a limited number of tickets available, please call (780) 532-2362 to purchase yours. Some of

the special guests attending the ball include Dan Aykroyd, Donna Dixon and their daughters, Paul Allen, co-founder of Microsoft, John Paul DeJoria, co-founder of the Paul Mitchell line of haircare, Fran Drescher, star of TV show 'The Nanny,' Michael Budman, co-founder of Roots Canada and many other intriguing personalities.

For a listing of all the events happening in August, check out www.curriemuseum.ca/events. See you there!



Executive Director's Note

Greetings from the Dino project. Things are moving along quickly and the commissioning of the building is due for completion on schedule in October.

Unfortunately however, we were not able to source the funding required (\$4.3 million) for the museum displays and therefore will not be opening the museum as scheduled in December.

We will advise once we have secured the remaining funds and have established a date for opening the museum to the public. I am pleased to announce that the sale of tickets for the Amber Ball is going well, the Dino bike raffle tickets are sold out and we are working on signing up as many bikers as we can for the Mighty Peace Harley-Davidson Aykroyd Family Ride with Dan Aykroyd on August 9.

If you wish to register for the ride please contact us at www.curriemuseum.ca/events.

We are seeking a museum CEO commencing August 1 and all interested parties are encouraged to go to our website and check out the job description.

See you all at the Amber Ball and until then have a great Dino Day.

Brian Brake
Executive Director
Pipestone Creek Dinosaur Initiative

Unique roof incoming!

By Karla Horcica,
PCL Construction



photos by Erika Sherk

The roof is now covered in clips that will support the metal panels that will cover the building. Keep an eye out for big changes in the roof's look over the coming weeks.

Only four months of scheduled construction left to go!

As we move into more finishing work on the building there continues to be lots of activity on site.

On the outside, the site has been brought up to rough grade (meaning all the cutting and filling is complete and ready for the final layer of topsoil and landscaping, concrete, or asphalt) and the concrete curbs, sidewalks, and pads are being laid out and ready for concrete. The piles are drilled for the car plugs, light standards, and flag poles and soon the

electrical conduit will be trenched to them and the piles poured.

Soon the paving operations will begin which starts with a layer of granular base course and then the asphalt itself.

Soft landscaping such as grass, trees, and shrubs will be the final activity outside.

The envelope of the building is proceeding with the air and vapour barrier almost complete, and ongoing activities include wood blocking and clips to support the metal panels that will cover the roof and walls, aluminum curtain wall frames and glazing

for the window openings, and framing of soffits. Soon you'll see a shiny metal covering on the roof.

Inside the building, ongoing activities include steel stud wall and ceiling framing, mechanical and electrical rough-ins within the walls, drywall boarding and taping, painting, and door frame install.

The majority of the door frames within the building are pressed steel frames, however there are a handful of feature door frames that are a glue laminated wood material to match the glue laminated wood of the structure.

Arctic find by Currie Museum palaeontologist

By Dr. Matthew Vavrek
PCDI Palaeontologist

Fossils of several young plesiosaurs – swimming carnivorous reptiles – have been found on Melville Island, Nunavut, as revealed in a recent journal article in *Cretaceous Research*.

The new discovery was described in a recent paper by lead author Dr. Matthew Vavrek, head palaeontologist for the Philip J. Currie Dinosaur Museum, and his Canadian and international colleagues.

While dinosaurs ruled the earth, plesiosaurs were some of the top sea predators. These extinct marine reptiles had barrel-shaped bodies and four large turtle-like flippers.

Some had very long, snake-like necks and heads, while others had shorter necks and wider heads.

While the species of this Arctic find is unknown, the animals were from a group known as the polycotyliids, notable for large heads and short necks and tails.

Plesiosaurs existed in a great range of shapes and sizes and inhabited much of the earth's oceans and seas for over 100 million years, eating fish and other swimming animals like ammonites and squid-like creatures.

Instead of using their tails to swim, as modern-day whales and dolphins commonly do, they used their flippers like wings to 'fly' through the water.

This is the earliest record



graphic by S. Ambramowicz

of polycotyliids in North America – they have been found just slightly earlier in Australia but, later on in the fossil record, are found all over the world.

The fossils from Nunavut were about 110 million years old, dating from the Early Cretaceous period.

“The group as a whole appeared to quickly radiate and spread throughout all of the seas and oceans around the earth,” said Dr. Vavrek, “starting with the first occurrence in Australia to the next known occurrence up here in the Arctic. They were a very successful group.”

One of the more unusual aspects of the discovery is that the palaeontologists found mostly juve-

nile bones – perhaps a year or two old – rather than adults. This suggests that the juveniles and adults may have inhabited different environments.

The juveniles may have stayed in shallow waters, closer to shore, where they were less at risk from predators (possibly even adult plesiosaurs.)

As they became adults, they would have moved out to the open seas to feed on larger prey.

The find represents just a fraction of what the Arctic regions have to offer scientists, said Dr. Vavrek.

The expedition was organized by another of the papers' authors, Dr. Hans Larsson of McGill University in Montreal.

It was through fund-

ing from a large number of national agencies, including: the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council; Canada Research Chairs; and Northern Scientific Training Program.

The logistical support for the expedition was funded by the Polar Continental Shelf Project, a national program to encourage research on Canadian Arctic environments and communities.

“The Arctic is incredibly underexplored and under-sampled in comparison to other parts of the world,” he said.

“There are more discoveries awaiting us there; it's just a matter of putting in the time and money to go and find them.”

DINOSAUR OF THE MONTH

Mercuriceratops

Mercuriceratops is a new species of horned dinosaur that was described last month by a team from Canada and the USA, including Dr. Philip Currie. The dinosaur itself is found both in Dinosaur Provincial Park in Alberta and along the Missouri River in Montana. In each locality a squamosal was found, one of the bones of the head. This bone was so distinctively different from those of all other horned dinosaurs however, that it was determined to be a new animal. This find further underscores the incredible diversity of dinosaurs found in the fossil record.



graphic by Danielle Dufault



What kind of **tools** are used to find **fossils?**

When we look for fossils of dinosaurs or other extinct creatures, we use techniques and tools that have changed very little since the beginning of palaeontology in the 1800s.

To find fossils, the best way is still just to look for them with your eyes. Fossil hunters go to a place where the rock is exposed, and carefully look around them as they walk, searching for fossils.

Once a fossil is found, relatively simple tools are used to extract it. The typical tools in a palaeontologist's field kit include: awl, chisel, paint brush, dental tools, rock pick.

If a large fossil is found, or the rock is particularly hard, other tools can be brought in, such as a shovel, pick-axe, or jack-hammer. Most fossils that are found today are extracted using these relatively simple tools.



photo by Suzanne Sagmeister

Ask a Paleo! by Robin Sissons.
Have a question for a palaeo?
Visit curriemuseum.ca

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Ken and Teresa Sargent
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