

# Staff memo Alberta

CULTURE



## MEET PETER MAY

When Peter May is asked about his job he could say that he makes dinosaurs. As Head of Casting at the Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology, he makes copies of dinosaur bones, on loan from other museums, which will be displayed at the Tyrrell Museum when it opens in June 1985.

Peter joined the Museum at Drumheller in December last year after five years as a casting technician with the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. He is now working on two specimens of creatures that lived in Alberta about 70 million years ago.

The National Museum in Ottawa has lent one specimen of *Chasmosaurus belli* so that a copy of the approximately 18-foot long, horned dinosaur can be made. The second specimen is of a *Champsosaurus*, not a dinosaur at all but another kind of reptile similar to a modern alligator and about six feet long. This skeleton is

only about 50 per cent complete and scientific illustrations will be followed by Peter May and the three people he supervises to fabricate the necessary bones to complete the *Champsosaurus*, Peter explains.

Peter is well qualified for his work. Before joining the Royal Ontario Museum, he obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree, specializing in sculpture.

Casts of fossil bones are made by first building a mould of a high quality rubber compound or of pure latex and this is supported by a stronger, rigid mould of fibreglass. "The high quality rubber moulds are more expensive but can produce about 10 times as many casts as latex moulds," says Peter. Great care is taken when making these moulds to ensure the preservation of all the features of the originals, such as tendons. Once the moulds have been made, copies of the original can be cast. The quality of these casts is so high that they can be used by scientists for research.

At first, casts may be black or brown but will later be painted the same colors as the original fossil bones.

"It would be just about impossible to actually tell which was the original and which the cast until a person lifts them up. The original might weigh 80 lbs. and the cast about 5 lbs.," says Peter.

One advantage to the lightweight casts is that arranging the bones for display - making an animal pose for visitors, for example - is much easier if the bulky reinforcements necessary for original fossils are avoided.

A total of 27 people work in the laboratories at the Tyrrell Museum, preparing fossils removed during summer field trips to Dinosaur Provincial Park, Crowsnest Pass and other areas in Alberta. These fossils arrive at the Museum in heavy, protective casts made

of plaster and burlap wrapped around the rock containing the fossils. All the layers must be removed with care and patience to expose the fossil bones. Only when the bones have been removed from this case can moulds, and then copies, be made by the technicians for display.

In addition to his technical work at the museum, Peter continues to sculpt clay models of the human torso during his spare time at home. He has made one aluminum cast of a completed sculpture.

Time for sculpting is now restricted with the new addition of his daughter, Amelia.



#### PERFORMANCES AND SPECIAL EVENTS

**CONVENTION CENTRE - INNOVATIONS** - a fashion show, July 10, 3:00 p.m.

**SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL SQUARE** - Performances by international performing troupes and Alberta Artists, to July 10 daily at 11:30 am, 1:00, 7:30 pm plus...

Summerfest/CHED Rock Night - Darkroom & Spoons, Friday, July 8, 9:00 p.m. and Alberta's Salute, Sunday, July 10, 7:30 pm

**LEGISLATIVE GROUNDS** - Performances by international performing troupes and Alberta artists, to July 10 daily at 12:00 noon

**BORDEN PARK** - Kaleidoscope for Kids, July 9 & 10, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm

**DOWNTOWN EDMONTON** - Street performers and city celebrations - Every Day! All Day! Everywhere!

**MUTTART CONSERVATORY** - Colourfast Cup - balloon, to July 6, 7:00 am & 7:00 pm

**WALTER KAASA THEATRE (JUBILEE AUDITORIUM)** Winter is Yours - Spring is Ours - a spectacle about Poland, to July 10, 8:00 pm

#### EXHIBITIONS AND DISPLAYS

**CONVENTION CENTRE** - Crafts of the World; International Student Poster Competition; International Student Photography Competition; and The Dead Sea Scrolls - all to July 17.

"Ten - 83" The Alberta Art Foundation; Universiade Collection; Changing Traditions - Inuit Wall Hangings; Our Alberta Mosaic; and Soviet Sport History - all to July 11.

#### UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Ring House Gallery - Masquerade to July 31, 11am - 4pm M/T/W/F, 11am - 9pm Thurs, 2pm - 5pm Sun.

Central Quadrangle - Papaschase Village, to July 15, 10am - 8pm daily

Athabasca Hall - Alberta Before Oil, to July 15, 10am - 8pm Mon-Sat, 12am - 6pm Sunday.

Rutherford Library - Art & Design - Students on Display, to July 15, 8am - 5pm weekdays, 1pm - 5pm Saturdays.

Student Union Building - Craft Kiosk, to July 13, 9am - 9pm daily.

#### OTHER EVENTS CELEBRATING KALEIDOSCOPE '83

**LEMARCHAND GALLERY** - Art Alberta: Alberta Society of Artists, to July 31, 10:00am - 5:30pm except Monday

**U.OF A. - EDUCATION BUILDING PAVILLION** - Local Exposure - Swimwear on the Prairies, to July 10, 10am - 5pm, M/T/W/F; 10am - 7pm, Thurs; 12am - 5pm, Sat & Sun