

Peter, your big news up our way! Thanks for a great talk! Best Elvis

Dinosaur creator thrills crowd at Bruce County Museum and Archives

By Christine Bachiu

Peter May, creator of the 'Dino-Might' and 'Children of the Ice Age' exhibits, visited the Bruce County Museum and Archives Saturday to give a speech on dinosaurs.

May, who owns Research Castings International in Beamsville; is well-known for his dinosaur castings. He built the skeletal displays featured at the information center in the movie,

"Jurassic Park."

"He is world renowned for his castings," said Barb Elias, promotions co-ordinator for the museum. "His background is in paleontology (the study of life forms from other geological eras)."

Elias said that 1,500 school children have been through the museum since the dinosaur exhibit opened June 3.

"And we're seeing record

attendance numbers this summer," she added.

May began his speech with a tour through the Dino-Might exhibit. He explained the differences between the various dinosaurs to the crowd, mentioning the time periods in which they lived and what is known about them today from fossil discoveries.

"Sue is the most complete tyrannosaurus rex ever found," May said. "I've done eight casts of her; five are mounted in museums, one is at Walt Disney World promoting the movie 'Dinosaurs,' and two are McDonald restaurants in the States. Another one was sold to a private owner, who had to build a separate room onto his house to hold her."

May said the t-rex was found in Montana in 1992 and was 80 per cent complete.

"A girl was taking a walk on her farm, through the backyard," he told the interested crowd of about 50. "She found a bone sticking out of the hillside and when the local museum came out for a look, they uncovered the dinosaur laid out under the surface of the soil."

May said that finds such as that one are usually made in the badlands of Alberta, one of the largest and best

dinosaur deposits in the world. The bones are usually found embedded in the rock surface and are uncovered through the process of erosion.

"The raptors in 'Jurassic Park' are based on the skeleton of a Deinonychus, one of the many dinosaurs discovered in Alberta," May said, pointing out the Deinonychus casting in the exhibit.

"The mobility and small bones in his wrists allowed him to move his hands the way other dinosaurs could not. He was a real attacking machine."

The tyrannosaurus rex and the raptor are just two of May's dinosaurs that travel with the 'Dino-Might' exhibit across the continent to museums like Bruce County.

A graduate of the University of Guelph, May began his career at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) and was asked to build a dinosaur in his spare time.

"That just developed into a full-time business," he said. "In the last two years, the company has probably built 12 to 13 models of the t-rex, our most popular cast."

May said it takes his staff about three months to create a mould from the original dinosaur bones.



Dinosaur creator Peter May during a recent visit to the Bruce County Museum and Archives

"Then it takes three weeks to cast and about two months to mount," he said.

Once a casted dinosaur is complete, the owner of the original skeleton, or the owner of the land where it was found, receives a percentage of all the sales generated from the casted copies.

One popular casting created by May's company is the

malawisaurus, valued at \$85,000. This dinosaur is currently at the museum, on display for the first time in Canada until September 4.

Research Castings employs about 20 people, May said. The 'Dino-Might' exhibit has been on tour for six years and will remain in Southampton for the rest of the summer.


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