

Amateurs look for real 'Jurassic'



NATIONAL

RHAME, N.D. (AP) — While millions pack air-conditioned theaters to watch fictional dinosaurs in *Jurassic Park*, amateur fossil hunters are braving the elements in North Dakota's badlands to find the real thing.

Merle Clark, 55, a rancher, and Dean Pearson, 36, a feed mill operator, are part of a group of Bowman County volunteers working carefully to unearth a *Tyrannosaurus rex* skeleton. They may be amateurs, but they've had special training and get guidance from paleontologists.

Only 13 other specimens of the meat-eating giant have been found. This particular *Tyrannosaurus*, which died some 65 million years ago, is entombed in part of the Hell Creek rock formation in North Dakota's southwest corner. The adult *Tyrannosaurus* was usually 20 to 23 feet tall and 40 to 45 feet long.

The group began digging last fall, after Pearson found a single fossilized bone sticking out of a steep hillside. He took it to the Museum of the Rockies at Bozeman, Mont., to find out what it was.

"We thought we had a leg bone, but it was nothing like we'd ever seen," Clark said.

He showed it to John Horner, a well-known paleontologist at the museum and a technical adviser to the hit movie *Jurassic Park*.

Horner "took one look at it and said 'T-rex,'" Pearson said.

"Everybody's pretty excited about it," he added. "The stuff is pretty well-preserved."

The desolate site, kept secret by the group, is surrounded by a snow fence and posted only with a sign warning "No Admittance."

"We're not trying to hide anything," Pearson said. "We're trying to preserve the security of the site and prevent damage."

It's hard to imagine anyone moseying by. The site is three-quarters of a mile off a little-used gravel road, shielded by the badlands' jagged

buttes, towering hills and deep gullies.

"We're assuming the site was not scavenged, but until we get more uncovered we won't know for sure," Pearson said.

The Denver Museum of Natural History and the North Dakota Geological Survey have been providing expert advice. Thirty-six residents have gone through hours of paleontology training on their own time.

Whatever bones are uncovered at the site are destined for the new Pioneer Trails Museum, a small volunteer-run operation in nearby Bowman with an undinosaur-like annual budget of \$750 and plenty of space for new exhibits.

Clark said about 15 volunteers make up the core of the group and others help when they can. No one is paid.

"A lot of people do it for money. There's more to it than that," said Laurie Oakland, who ranches and digs for fossils with her husband, Jeff.

"I enjoy it," she said, her boots caked with a gooey clay known locally as "gumbo."

"Something 65 million years old is in there and we're going to be the first humans to see it."

Early last week, eight volunteers worked 20 feet up a steep hillside to remove tons of dirt and clay and carve out a bone bed roughly 30 by 40 feet.

Wind and rain — from clouds so low they appeared within reach — pelted them but they didn't stop.

"You can't hay when it's raining, but you can sure dig a dinosaur; we're living proof of that," Clark said.

Some worried about lightning, but after a momentary pause for a clap of thunder they continued to work.

And when the sky began to clear, someone remarked that they might be able to work until sunset, which comes around 9 p.m. this time of year.

Jurassic Park and the movie theater are far away.

"You can't hay when it's raining, but you can sure dig a dinosaur; we're living proof of that."

— Merle Clark,
Rancher turned dinosaur hunter

Demonstrators ask president to release hidden UFO files

WASHINGTON (AP) — The first time Natra was taken aboard a starship, she was only 6 and told nobody about it because they would have thought her crazy. Now she talks freely about having traveled at the speed of light.

Natra — who would not give her last name — took part in a demonstration Monday in front of the White House to demand that President Clinton make "full disclosure of government UFO secrets and an open, public inquiry into the phenomena."

Forty-five people marched in a circle, carrying signs. They were outnumbered by reporters.

Natra was a popular interview because she was one of the few to claim ridership on UFOs. Most of the others had merely seen something, or read something, or felt a visit from something.

Natra actually was manifested — the proper term, she said — aboard starships, hundreds of them since that first ride.

Just recently, she said, she was aboard a starship and the inhabitants — they could have been Cleatians, or Orions or from Sirius — showed her a computer panel with different colored lights. Sirius is the brightest star in the sky.

"I put my hand on a light and whoosh, I now know how it feels to move at the speed of light," she said. "I was flying the craft. It was so fast that no words can express it."

The demonstration was by "Operation Right to Know" a small group that believes the government is withholding 20,000 pages of documents that proves the existence of Unidentified Flying Objects, including the retrieval of a crashed flying saucer in New Mexico in 1947.

The pickets attracted little attention, partly because it was so hot that only true believers and reporters would venture out in merciless heat. President Clinton was in San Francisco, en route to the economic summit in Tokyo.

"This demonstration is more important than any demonstration ever held in Washington, D.C.," said Hal McKenzie, an organizer from Maryland. "This one affects everyone. We are here to let the world know and here to tell the government, no more lies."

It was the second White House demonstration in the UFO cause. Last year the pickets were only McKenzie and Ed Komarek, who came to Washington from his home in rural Georgia.

Komarek likened his cause to the civil rights movement, which also got started with demonstrations. "We are not here to tell people what to believe," he said. "We just want to get them information."

Natra said she communicates with space aliens telepathically. Just last week, she said, she was taken aboard a starship and was given an implant — to give her the energy to communicate, she said, with those strange beings in Washington, the news media.

Operation Rescue promises hot summer for abortion clinics

CLEVELAND (AP) — With Operation Rescue targeting clinics in seven states for its summer anti-abortion campaign, cities and abortion clinics far and wide were making plans of their own to keep things calm.

Next weekend, Operation Rescue begins a 10-day "Cities of Refuge" demonstration aimed at closing clinics in Cleveland; Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minn.; San Jose, Calif.; Philadelphia; Dallas and Fort Worth, Texas; Jackson, Miss.; and several cities in central Florida.

"Anyone in the continental U.S. will be within a day's drive of a rescue," said Operation Rescue spokeswoman Wendy Wright.

In spring 1992, there were more than 600 arrests during Operation Rescue protests in Buffalo, N.Y. In summer 1991,

Wichita, Kan., police made more than 2,700 arrests in a 46-day clinic blockade. Some protesters were arrested more than once.

Even as plans for the protests unfold, the target cities are preparing:

- Two Cleveland suburbs last week banned picketing in residents' driveways, obstructing traffic and disturbing the peace at a residence. Abortion opponents often demonstrate outside the homes of doctors, nurses and other clinic staff members. The San Jose City Council passed a similar measure after doctors complained about getting threatening letters from abortion protesters.

- The Philadelphia and San Jose city councils have made it illegal to prevent patients from entering abortion clinics.

- Police in St. Paul have erect-

ed an 8-foot-high, chain-link fence around the Planned Parenthood clinic. Officers guard the gates.

- A Cleveland television station said police will convert the city convention center into a jail to feed, house and try hundreds of detainees. Police would not comment on the report.

"We're planning for the worst. We're ready for anything that comes down the pike," said Philadelphia police Inspector John Norris.

Eric Johns, 21, and his wife, Michelle, have been in Jackson, Miss., since May, preparing to protest there.

"We hope to put these places out of business, expose abortionists to their community, embarrass them for what they do, expose staff workers at these places and eventually shut down

'Anyone in the continental U.S. will be within a day's drive of a rescue.'

— Wendy Wright,
Operation Rescue
spokeswoman

the whole grisly abortion industry in the state of Mississippi," Johns said.

"I think I have a biblical responsibility and am commanded by God to do what I'm doing."

Johns expects the protests to be confrontational but nonviolent.

In Texas, Operation Rescue spokesman Tom Cyr said his

group has targeted 13 clinics and some doctors' homes in Dallas and Fort Worth. Activists will pray, protest and offer "sidewalk counseling."

At abortion clinics around the country, staff members are intensely making ready.

"People ... should think about what Operation Rescue is going to cost them in taxes to pay for the extra police officers and security on duty. And then maybe the people would help keep these people from coming to our city," said Carol Westfall, Cleveland Surgi-Center spokeswoman.

"They will not close us down. If a patient wants an abortion, we will figure out a way to get them in the clinic," said Jeanie Hollis, spokeswoman for the Mississippi Women's Medical Clinic in Jackson.

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