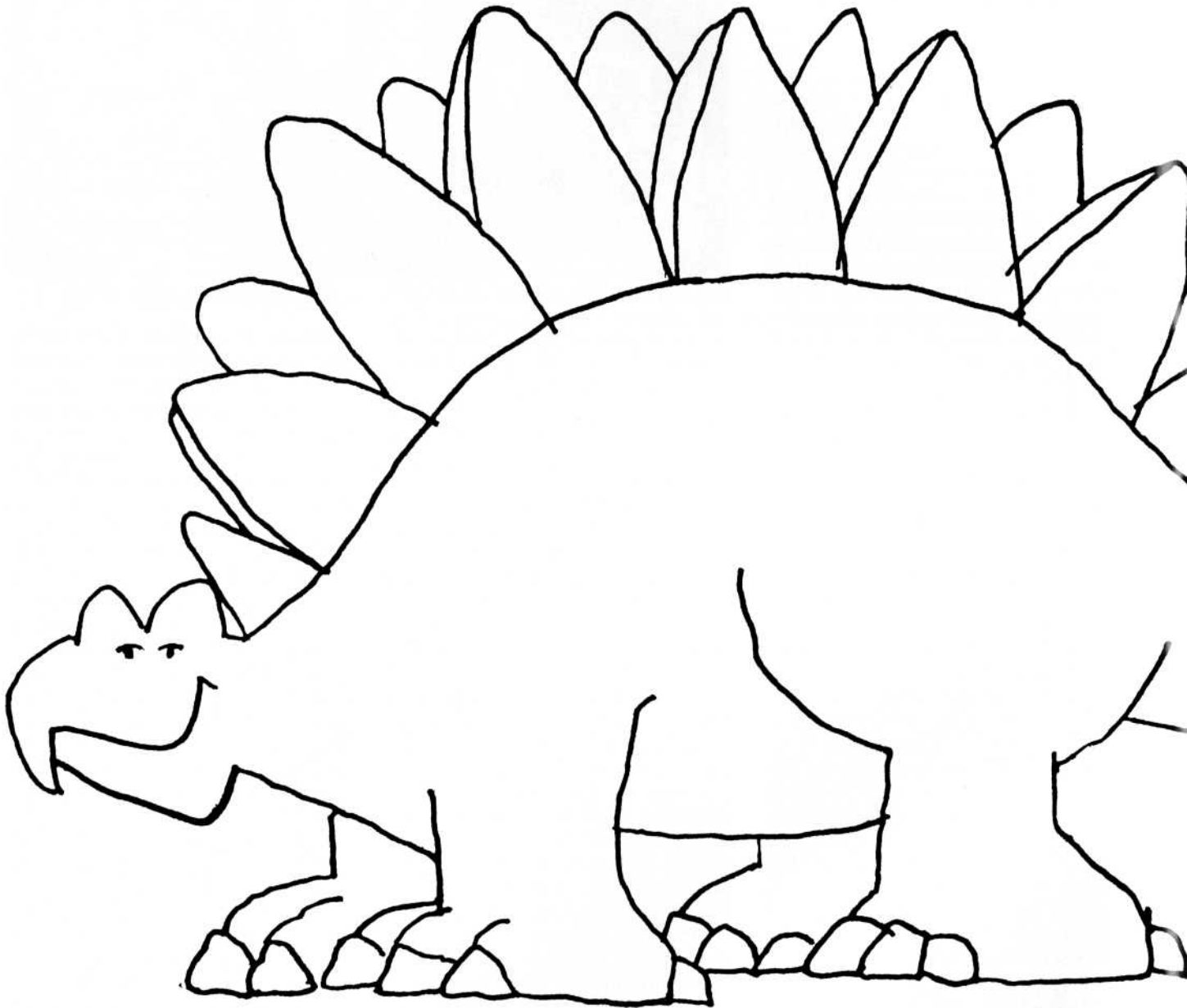
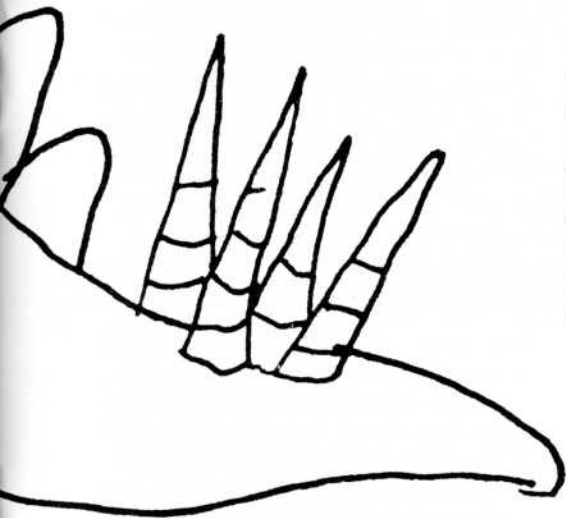


DINO DAZE

By Carol J. Burr





Dinosaurs.

A topic equally fascinating to dedicated scientists and 10-year-old boys.

Dinosaurs.

A single word to capture the imaginations of young and old alike.

Dinosaurs.

A sure-fire attraction for the museum-going public.

Young people who find Shakespeare's English difficult and Chaucer incomprehensible think nothing of rattling off names like Tyrannosaurus, Brontosaurus, Stegosaurus, Plateosaurus, Triceratops, Pterosaur, Pterodactyl. Mastering such paleontological terminology is a skill acquired at an early age, a requirement for admission to a fan club whose members never completely outgrow their youthful fascination with the Age of the Dinosaur.

Small wonder, therefore, that for the last three years the University of Oklahoma's Stovall Museum of Science and History has made these mysterious prehistoric creatures the subject of its most successful annual event, Dino Daze.

Anything concerning dinosaurs comes naturally to the Stovall staff, since the museum possesses the 15th largest vertebrate paleontology collection in the United States. But Dino Daze is more than an exhibition of old

bones. The May celebration is a hands-on experience designed to involve Stovall's visitors while enlightening and entertaining them.

This year some 8,500 viewers filed through the museum during the month-long event, which included a 10-day visit by the computerized dinosaur models from Dinamation, Inc. The featured public lecturer was author Helen Sattler, well known among dinosaur buffs for books such as *Dinosaurs of North America* and *The Il-*

lustrated Dinosaur Dictionary. Family Day activities included a variety of crafts, clay modeling, printmaking and creation of a community mural, while a film series offered free prehistoric creature movies.

The most innovative and creative part of Dino Daze, however, was the Third Annual International Dinosaur Art Contest and Exhibit, a multimedia opportunity which drew 3,168 entries from 44 states, the District of Columbia and five foreign countries.

"Every child has drawn a dinosaur at one time," explains Peter Tirrell, Stovall's assistant director who originated the idea for the first competition in 1984. "Dinosaurs are exciting; almost everyone has a great curiosity about them. Many new dinosaurs have recently been discovered, and many new theories about their behavior, lifestyle and ecology have been advanced. Here was an opportunity to let youngsters develop art skills and be scientifically creative at the same time."

Tirrell also wanted to provide an opportunity for dinosaur art to be taken seriously. "The artists are serious, especially the children," he contends. "Their work deserves to be provided with a gallery, rather than being relegated to the refrigerator door."

Dino art came in the form of paintings, drawings and sculpture—even poetry, although the latter was displayed but not judged. The three age categories—5-to-9 years old, 10-to-15 years and 16-to-adult—were judged by a panel of artists and scientists on the basis of both artistic merit and scientific accuracy, and 153 were selected for display in one of Stovall's galleries. The judges were Roger Runge, director of Norman's Firehouse Art Center; Dr. Leonard Wilson, OU professor emeritus of bio-paleontology; and Jane Hallett, museum educator at the OU Museum of Art.

As it had for the first contest and exhibit in 1984, the Norman Arts and Humanities Council provided Stovall with grant support this year from monies generated by the local hotel/motel room tax. Part of the grant was used in March to engage art instructors for a series of free dinosaur art workshops in printmaking and clay sculpture, using dinosaur pictures and

fossils from the museum collections as models. Several local artists also volunteered their teaching services, while Norman's Firehouse Art Center fired the clay sculpture.

The scope of the '86 contest changed dramatically with the decision to go both national and international. What had been essentially a local event in 1984 with 76 entries was expanded to central Oklahoma with 600 entries last year and received worldwide attention with 3,168 participants this year.

"One of a museum's most important functions is to share knowledge with people from around the world," Stovall Director Michael Mares insists. "Stovall trades scientific knowledge with other countries and other state

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museums. This art contest is a positive way to broaden our sensitivity to other peoples and cultures, to share our cultural contacts with the community and to bring materials from various cultures right to our doorstep."

The initial task, of course, was to reach potential contest participants in countries around the world. An advertisement in *Junior Scholastic Magazine* and personal contacts with other museums resulted in entries from schoolchildren throughout the United States. Naturally, the largest response came from area schools with experience in the contest, some of which submitted from 50 to 200 entries each, especially Adams, Wilson, Lakeview, Eisenhower and Lincoln elementary schools in Norman, Bridge Creek school in Blanchard and Hubbard elementary in Noble. Notable for the overall quality of their entries were McLoud Junior High School, John Marshall Junior High School of Oklahoma City and Crooked Oak High School of Choctaw.

Internationally, the Stovall staff had to rely on a lot of help from their friends to obtain entries, eventually receiving 22 from the Soviet Union, 19 from the People's Republic of China, 12 from Japan, eight from England and one from West Germany.

"We started with staff members who had friends overseas," Tirrell says. "But the ball really got rolling when we called Ellen Herscher at the International Committee of Museums in Washington. She gave us names and addresses of museums and individuals around the world who might be interested in our project."

The Norman Chamber of Commerce used its sister-city relationship with Kyoto, Japan, to aid the cultural exchange, and the Peace Links organization provided names of teachers in the Soviet Union with whom they had corresponded. The letter writing began with OU's international students and the modern languages department translating the correspondence both ways.

In all their letters abroad, the Stovall staff included brochures—mostly pictures—about the museum, the University, Norman and Oklahoma. "We were trying to demonstrate good faith and communicate something about ourselves," Tirrell explains, "and to provide a reference point to show them where their artwork would be going."

Of the dozens of letters circling the globe, only one failed to reach its destination, the Hang Zhou Children's Palace in the People's Republic of China. Notified of the problem by a go-between with the Boston Children's Museum, Tirrell dispatched a second translated invitation the same day.

"The Chinese entries were too late for the judging," he says of the 19 delightful pen and ink drawings that finally reached Norman, "but we knew that they were coming and saved four spaces for the best of them in the exhibit. However, choosing only four was very difficult."

While somewhat unprepared for the volume of entries the contest attracted, the Stovall staff was not surprised at the universal appeal of the subject. With new discoveries being made every year and new facts becoming known almost daily, the interest

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Judges Roger Runge, left, Leonard Wilson and Jane Hallett pore over the 3,168 entries in Stovall Museum's Third Annual Dinosaur Art Contest and Exhibit.

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15-year-old Les Walker's dino was one of several drawing winners from McLoud.

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Jake House of Cashion had a winner in the 5-to-9-year-olds.

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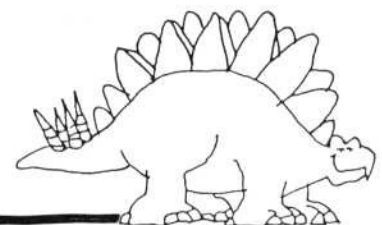
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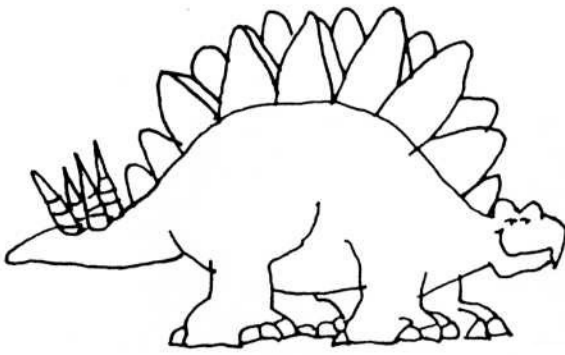
A family flair is evident in sculptured dinos by Paula Barrett, center, and daughters Leah, 10, left, and Samantha, 8.

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The charming Chinese entries missed the judging but won the hearts of the 8,500 visitors who viewed the exhibit.





A whimsical dino, surrounded by poetic tributes from a dozen 8th graders, was the contribution of Blanchard's Bridge Creek School to Stovall's Dinosaur Art Contest and Exhibit. "A bit of frivolity," admitted teacher Jane Schlup, but since the verses were not judged, scientific accuracy could be sacrificed to youthful poetic license.

*He ruled the world for millions
of years.
He had a little brain and tiny
ears.
He had rippling muscles and
gripping teeth,
And now he lay the earth beneath.*
Brad Ezell

*Dinosaurs
large, small
Eats, runs, flies
sad, happy, hungry, superior
Prehistoric beast.*
Kim Rogers

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Dominic Winn, 18, Oklahoma City.

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Michael Nobert, 15, McLoud.

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Justin Bondoni, 13, McLoud.

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Brandon Poteet

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Brandon Stucks

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Monica Perry

in dinosaurs and their contemporaries
is easy to maintain.

The existence of dinosaurs has only
been known to the world for little more
than 150 years, although they first ap-
peared on Earth more than 200 mil-
lion years ago and eventually domi-
nated the single lush, tropical land
mass. By the time the land finally had
split apart into continents 65 million
years ago, the gigantic creatures had
mysteriously disappeared.

Of the 300 types of dinosaurs known
today, nearly one-third have been dis-
covered in the last 20 years. Brand new
dinosaur graveyards were uncovered
recently in China and in the Canadian
province of Alberta, which may ac-
count for the eagerness of the Chinese
to be represented in this year's Stovall
art contest and the promise of Cana-
dian participation in 1987.

"Every continent has had a major
fossil discovery," says Roberta Pailles,
the museum's education officer and art
contest coordinator. "Everyone can re-
late to dinosaurs, and everyone seems
to like them. What better basis for a
cultural exchange? Part of a museum's
purpose is to share information, not
just scientific, but personal and cul-
tural information like you get when
you view Russian or Chinese art. It's
our job to provide this information to
our community."

Unfortunately, Stovall's historic
space limitations restricted to 153 the
number of dino art entries that could
be exhibited. Possessor of paleontolog-
ical, anthropological and zoological
collections renowned in academic and
research circles, Stovall occupies
cramped quarters in the former Uni-

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*Eleven-year-old Tony DeFranco of Kenosha, Wisconsin, left no doubt as to the
ownership of his dino art entry, one of 3,168 from artists around the world.*

versity ROTC building. Only a small
fraction of the five million objects
owned by the museum can be exhib-
ited at any one time.

"It's a shame we couldn't have exhib-
ited more of the entries," Pailles says.
"There were many others that de-
served to be seen. At the same time,
it did make being included in the
exhibit an even greater honor for those
selected."

The prizes awarded in each category
were carefully selected to fit the win-
ners' ages and the nature of the en-
tries. The international schools sub-
mitting group entries received educa-
tional aids, such as books and model
dinosaur skeleton kits. Individuals
were given ribbons denoting their
order of finish, plus T-shirts, books,
subscriptions to science magazines,
skeleton kits and other dinosaur
memorabilia from the Stovall gift
shop.

Appropriately, the dinosaur art con-
test awards ceremony was held at
Stovall on May 18, International
Museum Day. The capacity crowd at-
tending included representatives of
the participating foreign countries
and most of the winners, who received
their awards from Rep. Dave McCurdy
of Oklahoma's 4th congressional dis-
trict. Foreign language press releases
accompanied the prizes sent to the in-
ternational winners, along with the

certificates of commendation that
went to all entering artists.

The dismantling of the art exhibit
after the May 30 closing marked the
end of Dino Daze 1986, but plans were
already under way for next year. A siz-
able increase is expected in the
number of participating countries,
and in response to several national
and international requests, funding is
being pursued to underwrite a travel-
ing exhibit of the best of the art from
this year and next.

In 1987 the poetry will be judged as
well as exhibited. The museum also
hopes to sponsor a pterosaur contest,
which would feature models of the
exotic flying reptiles that coexisted
with the dinosaur, with one category
for models that actually glide.

The Stovall staff takes considerable
pleasure in knowing that young people
around the world will spend time in
the coming months puzzling over the
unsolved mysteries of the dinosaurs
and pterosaurs as they express their
theories in art and poetry.

How did they look? What did they
eat? What was their intelligence, their
adaptability? How did they bear their
young? How did they evolve? Most of
all, why did they disappear?

In the profound words of one young
poet from Blanchard: "No one knows
how come they're gone, so we simply
say, 'So long.'"

