

Front-page flashback

Countdown to our redesign includes a daily history lesson

You're not seeing things. Today's front page features a "masthead" — the title on the front page — from the first year of *The Journal's* existence, 1903. It is the first in a week-long series that will culminate next Tuesday, March 20, with a

redesigned *Journal*, including a brand-new masthead and an array of new content. Every day between now and then, we'll feature mastheads from different eras of our history at the top of this page. Today's masthead is a hand-drawn rendition

of a typeface or font called Big Caslon. This look made its first appearance on the first page of *The Evening Journal* was published: Nov. 11, 1903. By 1908, our name had changed to *The Edmonton Evening Journal*, but the typeface remained in place for another year.

THE EVENING JOURNAL.

Nugent-Hopkins stick TaylorMade
BUSINESS / E1

Naked yoga sheds clothes, egos
FAMILY&FITNESS / F2

ESTABLISHED 1903

Breaking news at edmontonjournal.com

TUESDAY, MARCH 13, 2012

Mom's mental state key to trial

Committee pay for Tory MLAs halted

Reimbursements by Opposition 'stunts,' Redford charges

KAREN KLEISS
Journal Staff Writer
EDMONTON

Premier Alison Redford on Monday ordered Conservative MLAs to stop accepting committee pay until a salary review is complete.

She hasn't, however, asked government MLAs to refund money they were paid to sit on a committee that has not met since 2008.

Wildrose MLAs Heather Forsyth will return the \$40,000 she was paid for sitting on the committee and Wildrose MLA Guy Boutilier will return his \$4,000 in pay.

Liberal Leader Raj Sherman has also pledged to refund the money.

Redford dismissed the reimbursements as a political "stunt," while government house leader Dave Hancock called it "grandstanding."

"I find it terribly interesting that a number of people in this house, who today have come up with a convenient stunt to try and polarize an issue, are people who were fully aware of what they were receiving for payment and did nothing about it until today," Redford told the legislature.

"We will do exactly what I've committed to doing, which is to have an independent commission make a recommendation to not only how government members are paid, but all members in the legislature."

Redford promised to review MLA compensation during the Conservative leadership race last summer. After she became premier, she set up an independent commission to review MLA pay.

The commission, led by retired Supreme Court justice Jack Major, is expected to report back with recommendations at the end of April.

"We will take that recommendation seriously (and) accept those recommendations," Redford said.

The standing committee on privileges and elections made headlines last week when it was revealed that 21 MLAs are paid \$1,000 a month for sitting on the committee.

See **MLA PAY / A5**

Beaumont welcomes Man in Motion



The 25th anniversary relay marking Rick Hansen's around-the-world fundraising journey for spinal cord injury research stopped at Ecole Secondaire Beaumont Composite High School on Monday. Hansen addressed students and joined medal-carrier Seanna Paul on her portion of the relay. To see video of Rick Hansen, go to edmontonjournal.com/video. To see more photos of his visit to the Edmonton area, go to edmontonjournal.com/photos. Story / A3.

Opposition opens fire at health-care town hall

KEITH GEREIN
Journal Staff Writer
EDMONTON

In a preview of upcoming provincial election debates, Health Minister Fred Horne took on four party leaders Monday night in a town hall discussion on the future of health care in Alberta.

Amid continuing care, the use of health technology and worker

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To see a video of the town hall meeting, go to edmontonjournal.com

morale, some of the most emotional exchanges of the night erupted when a member of the audience asked if any of the parties had "the political will" to fix problems that have been

around for decades, such as long waiting lists and inadequate staffing. It was four against one, as the opposition leaders blasted Horne for his government's failings to make sufficient progress on the problems.

Horne said the Redford government was on the right track, adding that people need to stop looking for a "magic fix" to complicated issues.

See **TOWN HALL / A2**

Allyson McConnell searched computer on topic of death before drowning sons

JANA G. PRUDEN
Journal Staff Writer
WETASKIWIN

On the morning of Feb. 1, 2010, Allyson McConnell sat down at the computer set up on her dining room table and searched the question, "How long does it take to die from strangulation?"

By the end of the day, McConnell had killed her two children, drowning 10-month-old Jayden and 2-1/2-year-old Connor in the bathtub of the family's bungalow in Millet.

After that, McConnell drove into Edmonton and threw herself off an overpass into traffic.

At a trial that began in Wetaskiwin Court of Queen's Bench on Monday, Crown prosecutor

Gordon Hatch said there is no question that McConnell killed her children. The only questions, Hatch said, are why, and whether she had the intent required to be convicted of murder in her sons' deaths.

McConnell, 33, appeared pale and gaunt in court, her eyes rimmed with dark circles as she sat slumped in the prisoner's box.

She kept her eyes most often on the floor throughout the proceedings, and showed no visible reaction when she occasionally glanced at the lawyers, her mother and sister, or at the family of her in-laws, sitting in the courtroom.

McConnell spoke only once, a barely audible whisper as she confirmed her name. Her lawyer, Peter Royal, entered not-guilty pleas on her behalf to two counts of second-degree murder.

Photographs of the crime scene show a house filled with children's toys, the walls lined with photographs of the family in happy times.

According to an agreed statement of facts entered by the defence and Crown, McConnell and her husband, Curtis, had separated in 2009, and Curtis McConnell began divorce proceedings in December of that year. He had moved out of the family home and was living with his parents.

Forensic computer analyst Dwayne Pilling testified about Internet activity on Allyson McConnell's computer, including multiple searches about suicide, sleeping pill overdoses, firearms and "electrocution by hair dryer in the bathtub." There was also a search with the question: "How long can you go without food and water?"

Other researchers involved in the discoveries are paleontologist David Evans of the Royal Ontario Museum and University of Toronto, legendary dinosaur hunter Philip Currie of the University of Alberta, University of Toronto scientist Caleb Brown, and Don Brinkman of Alberta's Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology.

It was Currie who, in 1995, discovered the fossilized jaw of a previously unknown species of horned dinosaur at a site in Dinosaur Provincial Park.

See **DROWNINGS / A2**

Alberta mini-dinosaurs fill large evolutionary gap

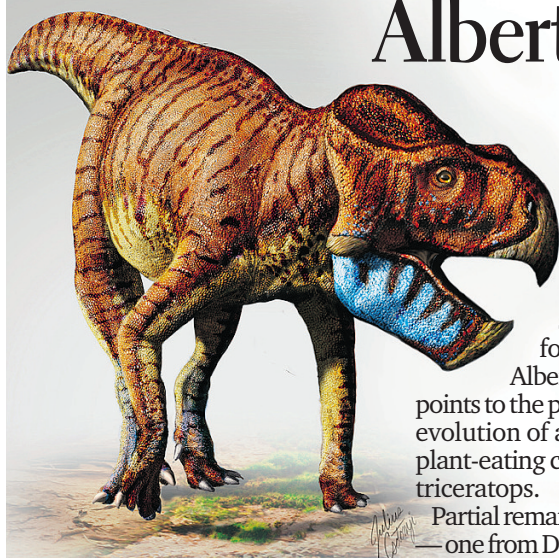


Photo illustration of a Gryphoceratops

RANDY BOSWELL
Postmedia News

A team of five Canadian scientists has identified two new species of dinosaurs from the famous fossil beds of southern Alberta, including one that points to the pivotal North American evolution of a family of pint-sized, plant-eating creatures related to the triceratops.

Partial remains of the two creatures — one from Dinosaur Provincial Park east of Calgary and the other from a site near the Alberta-Montana

border — were unearthed years ago.

But researchers led by Canadian scientist Michael Ryan, now curator of vertebrate paleontology at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, recently distinguished the two fossils from similar "leptoceratopsid" species known from Canada and Asia.

They concluded the borderline specimen — a two-metre-long, 90-kilogram animal, Gryphoceratops morrisoni, which lived about 83 million years ago — is one of the oldest of its kind, suggesting that key evolutionary developments and a major diversification in the

leptoceratopsid family unfolded in Cretaceous-era Canada.

"These dinosaurs fill important gaps in the evolutionary history of small-bodied, horned dinosaurs that lack the large horns and frills of relatives like triceratops from North America," said Ryan, an Ottawa-born scientist affiliated with Carleton University and the Canadian Museum of Nature, in a summary of the study.

"Although horned dinosaurs originated in Asia, our analysis suggests that leptoceratopsids radiated to North America and diversified here, with the new species, gryphoceratops, being the earliest record of

the group on this continent."

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See **DINOSAURS / A2**

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