

town to the invasion beaches, and about an hour from Caen. It is a charming medieval city renowned for its 11th-century tapestry depicting the victory of William the Conqueror over King Harold at Hastings. Try the Lion d'Or or the Hôtel de Bellefontaine for accommodation.

About an hour's drive east of Bayeux is the village of Ste.-Mère-Eglise, virtually the same today as it was during the predawn hours of June 6, when paratroopers of the U.S. 82nd Airborne Division dropped from the skies and made it the first town liberated in France. Draped from the bell tower of the 12th-century church is a parachute and a dummy of the American parachutist who dangled there for hours while the streets below crackled with gunfire. (Red Buttons played the part in the film *The Longest Day*; pick it up at your video store before going over.)

Across the square from the church is an Airborne museum, full of old military gear, including one of the 2,200 gliders used in the assault.

There are several other military museums in the area—at Pointe du Hoc, where Rangers scaled 100-foot cliffs to take out a feared gun emplacement; at Arromanches, where an artificial port was built; and at other sites in the region. If time or interest runs short, visit the military museum at Bayeux, which is crammed with old military hardware and documents that include accounts of the war in Vichy French newspapers.

Finally, there is the American cemetery at Colleville-sur-Mer. Situated on a bluff overlooking Omaha Beach, the white marble crosses and Stars of David mark the remains of 9,386 forever-young servicemen and -women who died in the battle of Normandy.

An American visiting a relative's gravesite is escorted by a cemetery staff member. Omaha Beach sand is used to make the name engraved on the cross stand out, and a Polaroid picture is taken and later given to the visitor, along with a packet of information about the cemetery and the battle of Normandy. In order is a stop at the chapel, where an inscription on one wall catches a visitor's eye: "Think not upon their passing. Remember the glory of their spirit." —W.G.F.

Thanks to Hollywood, collecting fossils is all the rage. But there are thorny questions of title.

A dinosaur named Sue

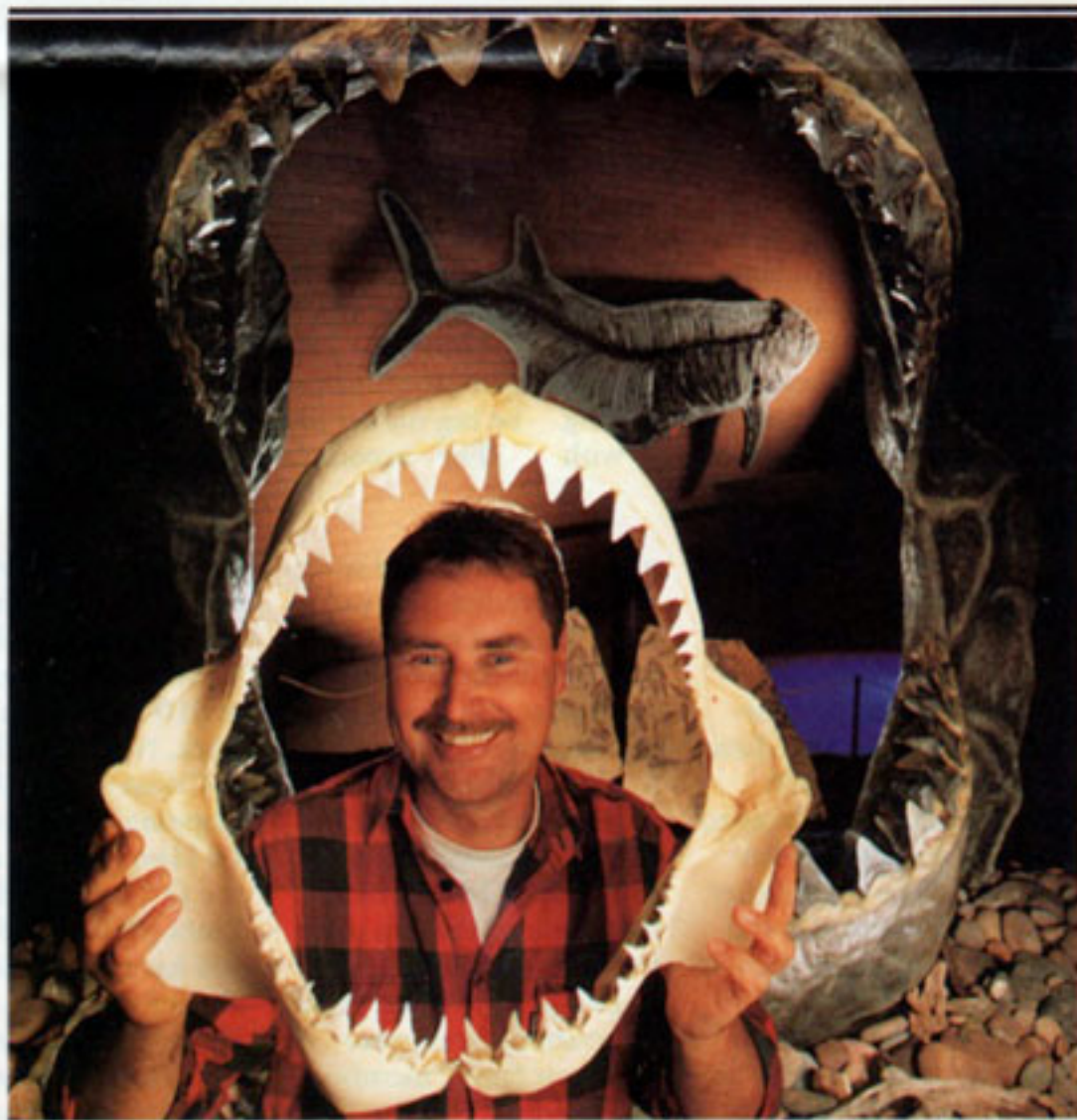
By Christie Brown

NOT ONLY IS *Jurassic Park* the biggest-grossing film of all time (nearly \$900 million worldwide so far) but it has also helped create a fossil frenzy. Fossils peddled at dusty roadside stands 20 years ago for \$20 are now cleaned up, mounted and selling for over \$1,000 at high-priced New York shops like Maxilla & Mandible.

Practically anything fossilized is be-

ing snatched up. Last year Bonhams auction house in London fetched \$5,000 for 23 petrified dinosaur droppings, \$7,700 for 33 bug-filled chunks of amber and \$78,000 for a nest of 10 dinosaur eggs. Both Christie's and Sotheby's will have fossil sales in March.

For many fossil collectors, buying isn't nearly as much fun as finding and



John Babiarz holding jaw from a modern white shark. Behind are remains of its 15-million-year-old forebear.

digging up the fossils themselves. Take John Babiarez, who owns a citrus tree nursery in Mesa, Ariz. Over the last 20 years he has dug up hundreds of fossils, many from the Oligocene period (25 million to 38 million years ago), when dinosaurs had died out and mammals were on the rise. Among Babiarez's finds are fossilized remains of an *Archeotherium*, a 7-foot-tall pig; and of a *Poebrotherium wilsoni*, an 18-inch-tall camel.

Babiarez has done most of his hunting at commercial quarries and private ranches in Nebraska, Wyoming and Arizona. One year he went to Kemmerer, Wyo. to hunt fish fossils at the famous Green River formation, which covers 35,000 square miles on the borders of Wyoming, Colorado and Utah. Near Kemmerer there is the 8,100-acre Fossil Butte National Monument, which is off limits to collectors. But the museum lists commercial quarries in the area that sell fossils and let amateurs dig up their own fish fossils—for a fee, usually \$30 a day.

"You cut around it [the fossil] and pop it out and have a whole fish, just like you threw it in the frying pan," says Babiarez, who used to have an 11-foot-long fish fossil standing in his living room.

Babiarez also scuba dives the murky waters of the Morgan and Cooper rivers in South Carolina for the teeth of Miocene sharks (about 10 million years old). These sharks had jaws up to 7 feet high and 7 feet wide; the teeth are as big as spearheads. Over the last four years Babiarez has found 210 teeth. Gleaming gray and razor sharp, they fill a fiberglass jaw Babiarez had made and which is displayed along with much of his collection at Arizona State University at Tempe. A similar collection of shark teeth, set in a model jaw, sells for \$40,000 in New York City.

Dinosaur eggs are caviar to fossil collectors. And they are now bargain priced. Babiarez recently bought a single egg and a nest of 2½ eggs for \$2,000. Two years ago they would have cost him about \$6,000. Credit



Peter Larson with a *T. rex* named Sue

Who should own dino bones? Finders keepers?

the laws of supply and demand: Over the last two years huge deposits of dinosaur eggs have been found in China, bringing down prices.

Other than the eggs, Babiarez has avoided collecting dinosaur fossils. "Too controversial," he says. Babiarez is referring to the bitter debate that has erupted over ownership rights to dinosaur fossils. On one side are the professional scholars who feel that the country is being stripped of national treasures. On the other side stand commercial dealers and amateur collectors who feel they ought to be able to own fossils that otherwise would rot away once they are exposed to the elements.

A case in point is Sue, a 10-ton, 40-foot-long *Tyrannosaurus rex*. Sue was discovered in South Dakota in 1990 by Susan Hendrickson, who noticed big bones sticking out of the ground on a walk one day. Hendrickson described her find to her then boyfriend, Peter Larson, one of the owners of a commercial fossil company, the Black Hills Institute of Geological Research in Hill City, S.D.

The institute paid \$5,000 to Maurice Williams, the rancher on whose land Sue was buried, for the rights to the bones, carefully dug them out and planned to build a museum in Hill City around the reassembled skeleton. But in 1992 FBI agents raided the institute, seized Sue (the fossilized one) and locked her up in a garage at the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology.

Outraged Hill City citizens

promptly erected a statue of Sue and fed her the U.S. attorney for South Dakota in effigy. Soon the town was papered with signs reading "Free Sue!"

But the government had a case. The land on which Sue was found is part of the Cheyenne River Sioux reservation and is held in trust for Williams, a Sioux member, by the U.S. government.

So who owns Sue? The feds? The Sioux? Williams? Larson? The matter is far from settled, and Sue remains in the garage.

Meanwhile, the Black Hills Institute is in deep trouble. Last month the owners were indicted for excavating fossils from federal lands—a felony that could put them out of business and in jail.

The furor has even reached the halls of Congress, where conflicting bills have been drawn up. One would restrict vertebrate fossil collecting on public lands to collectors associated with museums and universities. And all vertebrate fossils would remain the property of the government. Violators would be subject to imprisonment and stiff fines.

The other bill would permit anyone to collect any type of fossil on public lands, providing he or she stays within the guidelines of good behavior and minimal disturbance.

As the debate heats up, make sure you have good title to any fossil you buy or pick up. Join up with collecting clubs or natural history museums that sponsor field trips. Dr. Robert Bakker, the paleontologist who served as consultant for *Jurassic Park*, runs fossil field trips to Utah, Wyoming and Colorado. The trips last three to seven days and cost \$600 to \$900. But no one gets to keep any dino fossils. Call 800-DIG-DINO.

One of the best sources for information is the Mid America Paleontology Society, which serves as a clearinghouse for collectors. It also puts out a newsletter and directory of clubs around the country. Membership is \$15 annually. Contact Sharon Sonneleitner, 4800 Sunset Drive SW, Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52404.