

LAS April 2013 Headlines:

Eli Navant, 9, is honorary chief curator for a day at Denver museum

By Claire Martin, The Denver Post, 3/22/2013

Most 9-year-olds might think of a job as a one-off — helping clean the garage or wash the car — or as a weekly chore, accompanied by appropriate compensation in the high single digits.

Not Eli Navant, who attends third grade at Kyffin Elementary School.

When he learned last November that the Denver Museum of Nature & Science was looking for a new chief curator to replace Kirk Johnson, who decamped to the National Museum of Natural History, Eli decided to apply for the position.

As a longtime member and regular museum visitor, Eli knew his way around both its cavernous rooms and odd nooks.

As an aspiring paleontologist with some experience at finding fossils and bones, he thought he could handle supervising digs, especially with the help of Joe Sertich and Ian Miller, two paleontology curators he particularly admires.

He even had an ace reference in his pocket: paleontologist Robert Bakker, whose theories helped reshape how scientists interpret dinosaur biology. True, Eli knew Bakker only through a Boulder museum event, where Bakker supervised an in-house mini-dig, but still.

So Eli submitted a portfolio that included his experience: "a few digs, some in my backyard and some on South Table Mountain," and "Step Through The Eras," his self-published book on dinosaurs. That book has been a huge hit when Eli has done classroom presentations for students in Mary Ford-Doherty's kindergarten at Pleasant View Elementary School in Golden.

Maria Hannon, the museum's director of human resources, was so impressed that she interviewed Eli in person, and told 9News that it "was the best interview I've ever done in my career."

Naturally, Eli had his hopes up. So when the call came that the job had gone to Scott Sampson, featured on the PBS show "Dinosaur Train" and a member of the museum's board of trustees, Eli was disappointed.

"It was kinda sad that I didn't get the job," he said. "But I'm young, and probably I need to stay in school a little bit longer."

As consolation, Eli was named honorary chief curator on Friday, and made the rounds of the museum's science departments and met their curators. Museum president and CEO George Sparks introduced Eli at a staff meeting, where Eli offered a PowerPoint presentation on his nascent paleontology career.

Afterward, he took questions, offering an insight into the kind of action he would have taken as a chief curator.

Job One: Adding the Utahraptor to the Prehistoric Journey exhibit. Eli acknowledged that being chief curator was surprisingly educational.

"I learned how to pronounce 'dimetrodon,' " he said. "All these years, I've been saying it wrong."



Inside the Mammoths and Mastodons: Titans of the Ice Age exhibit, Eli Navant, 9, joins Joe Sertich, curator of vertebrate paleontology, as they prepare the fossil of a stegomastodon vertebrae and ribs. (Photos by Kathryn Scott Osler, The Denver Post)



Loveland Archaeological Society, Inc.

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LAS Find of the Month, April 2013:

Members can bring an artifact to be entered into the competition at the monthly meeting, which will be judged based on the following rules:

1. Must be a member of LAS in good standing.
2. The artifact must be a personal find.
3. It must have been found within the specified time frame, i.e., within the month prior to the meeting.
4. The artifact doesn't have to be a Colorado find—all that matters is that it was found in the last month.

The Find of the Month for April 2013 was made by Brian Waggoner

Type: Angostura

Material: Unknown

Location: Larimer County, Colorado



LAS News and Upcoming Events:

- Speakers Needed!** We need speakers for our 2013 Summer meetings. If you would like to give a presentation or know of someone who would give a great program please contact Andy Coca, Jean Steinhoff or Kevin Zeeck. No experience is necessary. All that is needed is a passion for our hobby and a willingness to share that passion. Thanks!
- Through Feb 2014** "Ancient Southwest: Peoples, Pottery and Place," featuring more than 100 rarely exhibited ceramics covering more than 1,000 years of Southwestern history starting in 500 A.D. University of Colorado Museum of Natural History, Henderson Building, 15th and Broadway, Boulder, Colorado. **Info:** 303-492-6892 or cumuseum.colorado.edu
- April 20, 2013** 2013 Spring Into Archaeology Fair, Poudre Valley REA Building. If you plan to exhibit please call Andy Coca at (303) 286-7711 for table space. A map was mailed with the February and March newsletters. If you need directions or additional information see the website at www.stoneagefair.com. Hope to see you there!
- May 7, 2013** May meeting. Program: Alvin Plucker will give a presentation on "Hunting the Sand Hills of Nebraska." Alvin has made some incredible finds over the years, and you won't want to miss his program!
- June 4, 2013** June meeting. Program: to be announced.