



LAS June 2013 Headlines:

Springs girl reacts to fossil find: 'I think I'm going to be pretty famous'

By Debbie Kelley, Colorado Springs Gazette, June 11, 2013

A May snowstorm that spoiled a field trip for fourth-graders at Academy International Elementary School serendipitously gave one student her first 15 minutes of fame. It's now apparent her celebrity status will last a lifetime.

Ten-year-old Gabrielle "Gabby" Linden struck the lottery of the paleontology world in class on May 20. As she gently cracked open one of several layers of a piece of shale with a butter knife and a hammer, she saw something different.

"In my first layer, I found a stick. My other friends were finding a leaf or fish," she said. "I thought it was a fish. Or poop."

Nope. Gabby's rock from the Florissant Fossil Quarry turned out to contain a rare fossilized bird from the Eocene epoch, which dates back 34 million years.

"It was exciting. I think I'm going to be pretty famous," she said Tuesday during a press conference announcing the finding, held at the Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument.

Shawn Frizzell validated Gabby's thoughts.

"This is such an important find. This is something that doesn't happen all that regularly," said Frizzell, a National Park Ranger who was helping the kids with their science project at school that day.

Students at the District 20 school had been scheduled to visit the Florissant Fossil Quarry in person, but Mother Nature decided otherwise. Instead, the school bought eight cases of shale from the quarry, a privately owned business adjacent to the fossil beds monument.

Gabby said she was surprised that out of all the students, she was the one who found the fossil. But her teacher, Wanda Lepillez, said Gabby's discovery seemed meant to be.

"There was an incredible randomness to this. Gabby could have chosen one of five or six hairline fractures and never found anything, but something told her to pick that one," Lepillez said. "She's my science girl - she's totally engrossed in science. The fossil couldn't have fallen into better hands."

But it didn't stay in Gabby's hands for long.

Although she had never seen a bird fossil, Frizzell said she immediately recognized impressions of feathers, along with skeletal features of a head, jaw, toes and feet.

"Gabby wanted to split it again, but I said, 'Oh my goodness, this is so important to science,'" said Frizzell, who has been stationed at the fossil beds for 14 years.

Gabby's family, Academy International Elementary School and D-20 donated the artifact to the fossil beds, where it is being researched.

It will be on display for one day only, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, during the grand opening of the new Visitor Center and Paleontology Lab.

Fossil beds paleontologist Herb Meyer said fossil birds are rare at Florissant, which millions of years ago was submerged under water. Volcanic ash helped preserve life in the area in shale formations.

"More than 40,000 fossils from Florissant are in museums around the world, but most of them are plants and insects," Meyer said. "Only about 12 are birds."

Meyer sent a photo of the discovery to Bob Chandler of Georgia College, an expert on Florissant birds. In a written statement on his findings, Chandler said he believes the fossil bird is a new genus and species, possibly related to the potoos that today live in tropical Central and South America.

"In the fossil record, potoos have been described only from Europe. This will be the first member of this group described from the Western Hemisphere and from North America," he concludes. "This is a significant contribution to our understanding of the origins of potoos."

"This important find will be studied by scientists for many years to come," Meyer said.

On Tuesday, the fossil beds named Gabby an honorary junior paleontologist and junior ranger. She also got to again admire her fossil, which for now is being called "The Gabby Bird."

The experience has cemented Gabby's desire to continue studying her love - plant cells - and someday work in the field.



Loveland Archaeological Society, Inc.
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**Joint Meeting with the
Colorado Archaeological Society**

<http://www.ou.edu/cas/archsur/plainsanth/meeting/meeting.htm>

A note from Dr. Marcel Kornfeld:

Some of you expressed interest in visiting Hell Gap site excavations, or perhaps one of the other Paleolndian Research Lab Projects or are volunteering at one of these. I should note that July 26 (evening) to July 28 is the WAS summer meeting at Hell Gap. There will be an atlatl contest sponsored by the Wyoming Atlatl and social club as well as several flintknapping demonstrations by Bill Beekman, Larry Langford from Colorado as well as other knappers. Of course everyone is welcome as are friends, acquaintances, etc., and there are ample camping places available if you wish to spend a weekend. And please pass this information around to the community and others who have an interest in things archaeological.

Some information can be found at either <http://www.uwyo.edu/pirl/> or <http://www.uwyo.edu/anthropology/field-school/advancedfieldschool2013.html> (see Information on Hell Gap Tab).

Hope to see many of you this summer.

Sincerely,
Marcel Kornfeld
Anthropology, University of Wyoming

- Sponsor of the Annual Loveland Stone Age Fair -
www.stoneagefair.com



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LAS Find of the Month, May 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 June 2013 was made by Kevin Zeeck.

Type: Harrell / Plains Tri-Notch Eccentric (two additional notches)

Material: Alibates Dolomite

Location: Weld County, Colorado



LAS News and Upcoming Events:

July 2, 2013

July meeting. Program: "In Plain Sight." Pam Whelden will give a presentation on archaeological anomalies in America.

July 6 - 7, 2013

Loveland Archaeological Society Independence Day Weekend field trip to the Harris Ranch at Bosler, Wyoming. See map and instructions on the next page. Respect the landowner and do not abuse the privilege. This includes the following: Do not litter; respect gates, fences and cattle; drive only on established dirt roads and don't bring motorcycles and ATVs; camp only where designated; and if you bring an animal don't let it run loose. To view the Loveland Archaeological Society Code of Ethics please go to the following website: http://stoneagefair.com/LAS_code_of_ethics.htm. Remember – Please DO NOT go to the ranch on Thursday, July 4, 2012.

August 6, 2013

August meeting. Program: Annual picnic/potluck. More information will be included in the July newsletter.