

# Hunter believes she has a treasure

By Diane Goble  
Correspondent

You never know what you're going to find when you start rummaging around in your old storage boxes. When Cha, the fossil hunter and owner of Cha For The Finest Gallery at 183 E. Hood Ave., started brushing away at some ugly old rocks in a box, she discovered what she believes to be rather unique dinosaur fossils from the Cretaceous Epoch, 113 million years ago.

"If I had known what a treasure I had, I never would have left them in storage for six years," she said.

She recalled battling through thick clouds of chiggers and mosquitoes, and treading over soft, sticky sand riddled with tunnels of fire ants in the stifling, humid Texas heat to get to her digging site by a huge tree. She knew her hole was over a nesting site because of the petrified poop or regurgitation that surrounded the area, but what she found weren't the footprints she was expecting to find.

Among other things, she found the "Rosetta Stone" of embryos. The outer part had torn away revealing the pink agatized remains of a tiny sauropod — a gigantic herbivore. Anyone else might think this was a fossilized rock, but the fossil-hunter believes she was able to detect the nose and two umbilical cords leading from the placental mass, winding around the creature and entering its mouth.

"When I realized what I was looking at," she says, "I felt like I was seeing the



PHOTO BY DIANE GOBLE

Cha believes she has found dinosaur embryos.

beginning of all life suspended in time."

After this epiphany, she was able to recognize more embryos, like the T-Rex and others pictured, and understood how they formed inside the egg. She began cleaning the fossils she has at her gallery, which were encrusted with dinosaur doo-doo.

Cha has an eye for finding things most of us wouldn't notice in rocks. Like Michelangelo, she grinds away what doesn't belong and frees the image from the rock. As she was cleaning and processing the fossils using diamond burs and rotary brushes, she discovered what she believes are tiny heads, noses, teeth, feet, eggs, a little bird with feathers and a tiny stegosaurus in an egg among the collection. There were also skulls, some with flesh, some dried up heads that had petrified. Some look like puppies, puffins, eagles, rhinos, hippos and horses.

She has a theory about the blood and tissue fragments

she found here in Sisters covered in dino doo-doo: A volcano exploded and blew the local dinosaurs to smithereens, which petrified immediately. Other reptiles came along later and ate the crispy body parts. What they couldn't digest, they excreted. Their poop, containing the petrified pieces of tissue, became fossilized again and were lost to paleontologists — until Cha came along.

The intrepid fossil carver, who came to Sisters via New Mexico and Alaska, now invites scientists to visit her gallery and inspect her findings, many of which she has cleaned and polished, and turned into jewelry. She hopes some of these embryos will be purchased by organizations and donated to institutions for further study.

Cha also invites local fossil collectors to bring their finds in to her store where she will examine them and tell you if she thinks you may have discovered something amazing, too.

## ART STROLL: Arts association is building show

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samples available.

Studio Redfield will have a trunk show of Kristin Cahill's beautiful and creative jewelry. She is the owner of Lux Reve. As she grew up in the expansive outdoors of Bend, she was inspired by nature, giving her jewelry a chic, organic style.

Old West Collectibles is featuring the much sought-after collectable quilt charms by Peter Hedren. He is not going to make any more, so this may be the last chance to pick one up.

At Gone Wishin', Sandy Hinshaw is wrestling with all of the challenges of opening a new store. She's filling it with an assortment of art and many things she's collected during her life.

Canyon Creek Pottery's Ken Merrill has a new line of spring and summer pottery, hanging baskets,

wall-mounted pottery and much more. The colors of these baskets will bring art to your garden.

And speaking of outdoor art — there's always something new in the courtyard at Ken Scott's Imagination Gallery. His latest whimsy is "The Spawning Mantis," an organic sculpture designed to display potted and hanging plants in their most unique grandeur. Ken will also bring in the latest of his lighting creations.

Last but not least, you'll get a song from Western artist Dyrk Godby as you visit his work at Three Ponies. Dyrk's pop-up gallery is at 178 S. Elm St. (corner of Hood). He's there on weekends and by appointment.

The Sisters Arts Association is working with KZSO FM, 94.9, Sisters' own radio station, to produce a monthly (for now) arts-themed show. Airtime is to be determined, so stay tuned. If you miss it, the podcast will be available on the KZSO website, and soon, at [www.sistersartsassociation.org](http://www.sistersartsassociation.org).

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