

meaning we had the laborious task of cutting her out of the rock and carting her to the museum. But others— the preparators— then had to spend years chipping away the rock around the petrified bones, assembling the skeleton and studying her.

What are your goals?

Hendrickson: Well, I love diving and always will. I am involved in another site off the coast of Egypt in Abu Qir, where we have found shipwrecks from the time of Napoleon to antiquity and the sunken city of Herakleion. The port and the sunken city of Herakleion and the port at the ancient entrance to the River Nile. This will keep me busy probably for the rest of my life. And I still want to return to Peru, where I have hunted for



fossil whales. I would like to go to Antarctica to look for dinosaur bones, but it is so cold there that I might let that one go.

I want to continue to build more museum exhibitions that make people say “wow.” For example, I would like to find a woolly mammoth and put it in a giant, REAL ice cube so people could go up and touch it. There is technology that might make this possible. And I want to keep searching the Cuban waters for Cortez’s ship that sank with all the treasure that was raised to pay Montezuma’s ransom. The film, *Pirates of the Caribbean* is partially based on that story, combined with the true history of some real life

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pirates. I enjoyed the movie because they got most things archeologically right, like the ship, the pirates town, even the some of the treasure. Of course, the ghosts and their story aren’t true, but the rest of it is wonderfully accurate.



What words of advice do you have for us?

Hendrickson: I wish all young adults could go spend 3 months or a year in a third world country so they could understand that 90% of the world does not live like they do. This is important in order to develop not only tolerance for other ways, but to open their eyes and minds to a whole vast world outside what they are used to.

The most important thing is for you to have an open mind,

to be curious and follow your dreams. And if you don’t have a dream now don’t worry. Just try a lot of different things and new ideas will keep emerging. To me it isn’t so much your level of intelligence or luck as it is your persistence. If you really want to do something, go for it. You must believe in yourself. You can do anything in spite of what anyone says.



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Read more about Sue Hendrickson at:
www.sue-hendrickson.net
www.fieldmuseum.org/sue/discovery.html

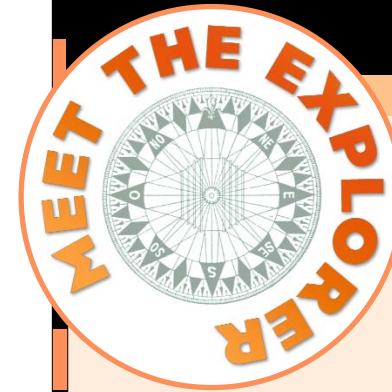
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Sue Hendrickson

In 1990, fossil hunter Sue Hendrickson discovered the largest, most complete, best preserved skeleton of a Tyrannosaurus rex ever found. Sixty six million years ago, this dinosaur roamed what are now the Badlands of South Dakota and it died on what is now the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation. Sue and her dog Gypsy



found the skeleton eroding from a sandstone bluff miles from their base camp. Today the skeleton resides in the Field Museum in Chicago, Illinois.

But dinosaur hunting is only one of Sue’s passions. She is also an archaeological explorer under the sea. Her diving adventures have taken her around the world from

the sunken city of Cleopatra in Alexandria, Egypt to ship wrecks in the Pacific and the Caribbean. She also searches rain forests for deposits of amber, fossilized tree sap that often trapped insects in its sticky clutches. Sue dives for conchs and studies the rare pearls found in them. She is a modern day explorer looking where she must for answers to ancient mys-

Sue and her dog, Gypsy, with Tyrannosaurus Sue at the Field Museum in Chicago

teries to discover more about the earth and the ancient and modern creatures on land and sea.

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You have been an explorer all your life. What have you learned?

Hendrickson:

Tolerance, Adaptability, Courage, Self reliance, Confidence and the importance of Freedom—having the freedom to make good choices when opportunities appear. Throughout my life I have always been on the lookout for something new and interesting to learn about. I have always had a goal even though I sometimes switch directions in the middle of a project. That is what I mean by adaptability, the ability to recognize an opportunity and seize it. Many people don't realize an opportunity is there, or if they do, they hesitate and miss it.

I have learned to lose the fear of taking that first step. That fear is what stops most people from moving forward and learning new things. For me that fear never goes away, it just



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Interview with Sue Hendrickson

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gets easier. But once you have made the move towards the unknown, the momentum builds and it is fantastic. Once you start down the path, the thrill or the interest of the excitement is so worth it, that you never go back!

What was the most difficult thing you have done?

Hendrickson: The most difficult things I've done have been on dives. Some were quite dangerous, but always well thought out and under control. They were dangerous in that there was zero tolerance for error. But you grow used to these 'calculated risks' and make your own decisions whether to accept them or not. It all depends on your self confidence and the calmness with the upcoming effort. Only panic can truly kill you.

Have you ever felt you had to prove yourself on expeditions?

Hendrickson: Well, I have had to prove that I have the skills and abilities. For example, when I began working with a French archaeological diving group, I was starting from scratch, even though I had years of diving experience. I had to prove myself all over again to them. I had to do everything better and longer and harder. But that project was so incredible that I could not wait to

begin each day.

It probably took a couple of seasons for them to accept without question that I could accomplish as much, or more than all the team. Each of us has talents. We have to find them so they can be optimized in each project.

Tell us about your most famous discovery, Tyrannosaurus Sue. This dinosaur is now at the Field Museum in Chicago and drawing record crowds.

Hendrickson: Finding Sue was awesome. I still don't believe that I found such a great T rex. People say I have a knack for finding things and I do. I just open my eyes and look around and see what is there. In addition to being an underwater archaeological excavation diver, I am a field paleontologist. Every summer I go to the Badlands in the Dakotas and Wyoming to look for dinosaurs. I don't even pitch a tent. It is much easier sleeping outside looking at the stars!!! In the summer of 1990 I was volunteering for the Black Hills Institute. We had excavated duckbill dinosaur bones for six weeks. And finally I had time towards the end of the summer



to do some scouting on a neighboring ranch the second to the last day of our season (we were finishing excavating a triceratops skull). We woke up at the campsite and found we had a flat tire on the truck. I was so pleased as the rest of the team went to the nearest town to fix the tire. My dog Gypsy and I had most of the day to finally go look at one small exposure of the Badlands that had been 'calling' me for two weeks. ...but I hadn't had time to go see until the flat tire. It was a window of opportunity! Usually I just find scraps of bones. But I looked up and just saw her in the rocks. It was awesome. Once I found her I turned her over to the Institute. We excavated her,

