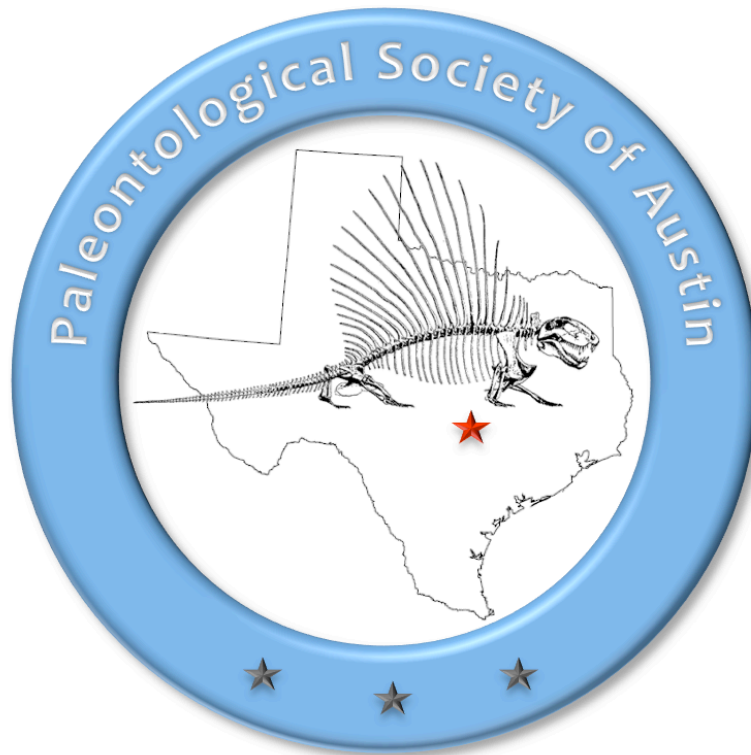


# Paleo Footnotes

Newsletter of the  
Paleontological Society of Austin

Austin and Central Texas



Volume 6, Number 12  
December 2011

## **President's Note**

Wow, tempus fugit lickety-split! It seems like just last week I stepped into the office of President and tentatively set about finding my way through the myriad events that would present themselves to me. The year has been one of challenges and rewards, frustration and joy, and one in which I am thankful to have played a part.

I wish the 2012 Officers, Board of Directors and Committee Chairs every success in your respective areas and encourage the membership to participate in club events as much as possible. Together we can fulfill our mission and have a great time while doing it!

So, as the old year draws to a close and the new one waits to see what we'll make of it, I wish each and every one of you a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Happy hunting,

Melody

## **Next Meeting Saturday December 10, 2011**

**6:00 p.m. at the Austin Gem and Mineral Society building  
6719 Burnet Lane, Austin, TX**

## **2011 Annual Holiday Potluck Party**

Please join us for the annual PALEONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTIN WHITE MAMMOTH HOLIDAY POTLUCK! The main dish (BBQ) and drinks will be provided. Bring your favorite side dish or dessert (let us know what you will bring when you RSVP to avoid duplicates).

If you would like to participate in the "White Mammoth" gift exchange, please bring a gift-wrapped fossil-related item (around \$15).

Rules will be explained after the dinner.

RSVP by Friday, Dec. 2nd  
via Evite or to Suzanne Galligher at [suzanbg@gmail.com](mailto:suzanbg@gmail.com) or (512) 751-1351

## Meeting Minutes: November 15th, 2011

The meeting was brought to order at 7:00pm.

A presentation "Fossil evidence for the Evolution of Birds" was made by Dr. Julia Clarke. Dr. Clarke is an associate professor and Wilson Fellow in Vertebrate Paleontology at the Jackson School of Geo-Sciences at the University of Texas Austin. Dr. Clarke discussed a 5 week field trip to Antarctica where she searched for evidence of avian evolution in Cretaceous era dinosaurs.

Dr. Clarke also discussed "field" research at a museum in Beijing China where she studied Xiaotingia Xu an Archaeopteryx-like theropod from Jurassic China.

Originally there was resistance to the idea that birds were the descendants of dinosaurs. One argument against this idea was that fercula (wishbones) had not been found in dinosaurs. Dr. Clarke gave several examples of dinosaurs with fercula. Another find that support this idea was Sinosauropteryx. It had Filament like proto feathers. Psittacosaurus and Tianyulong are other Asian fossils that have proto feathers.

There was some discussion on how we can tell what the color the dinosaurs feathers were. Jakob Vinther found that structures in light and dark fossilized squid ink were different in structure. This lead to the discovery that the shapes of fossilized melanosomes correspond to distinct chemical composition and therefore distinct colors. It was recognized that as soon as we find pinnate feathers they are patterned.

A break was taken.

### Business:

The minutes from the two prior meetings were corrected as follows:

- Under the heading of "Fossil Mania in Glen Rose" the following people should be added to the list of persons helping: Rosemary Smith, Jean Wallace, Diann Strout ( already listed were Frank, Joan, Jaime and Rochelle)

- Frederick Falk's name was misspelled.

The corrected minutes from two prior meetings were approved.

Treasures report given:

|             |            |             |  |
|-------------|------------|-------------|--|
| Checking    | \$5,312.57 | Savings     |  |
| \$20,250.12 | Total      | \$25,562.69 |  |

Treasures report approved.

Chelse gave a report of the AGMS show. The club expressed our thanks for her spearheading of the show!!!

Mass inventories continue and Dr. Ann Molineux would welcome volunteers! Contact Melody Barnett if you need more information.

### Fossil Fest:

Gary Vleet offered the use of his truck to haul stuff from storage.

This will be Bruce's last year as Setup Ramrod. A request was made for an apprentice to shadow Bruce and learn the setup secrets. Frederick Falk and Kevin Bills Volunteered.

Volunteers were requested to help Frederick set up.

We need lots of small fossils for the dig pit and wheel. Please donate some if you can.

There is a signup sheet in the lobby for Fossil Fest.

Suzanne asked for help with the phone tree.

### Other Business:

Jaime Young reminded us that there is a Georgetown fossil show on February 18 & 19. Keep it in mind.

The field trip was changed to the Kileen area. We will meet at the McDonalds off of 190 on Indian Trails at 8:00am. Mike will send an email blast.

The Scholarship committee report will be published in the December newsletter. The committee is asking for feedback after you have read it.

Erich will schedule a board meeting for the end of this year.

No one volunteered to take over the Fossil Mania duties. The board will decide if we will continue participation.

The White Mammoth Holiday Potluck Party will be held December 10th at 6pm. Cathy Rylander will purchase the meat for the dinner (club will reimburse her). On the Evite (to be sent by Suzanne) list what dish you will be bringing.

The election of officers was held. The following slate was proposed.

- Erich Rose – President & Editor
- Suzanne Galligher – VP Show Chairperson
- Dennis Stock – Secretary

- Gary Rylander – Treasurer
- Ed Elliott – Field Trip Chairperson
- Frederick Falk – Board Member at Large
- Kevin Bills – Board Member at Large
- Marilyn Austin – Presentation Chairperson
- Mike Smith – Membership Chairperson
- Cathy Rylander – Hospitality Chairperson
- David Lindberg – Audio/Visual Chairperson

All officers proposed were elected.

Door prizes awarded.

Meeting adjourned.

## **Fossil Fest 2011 Thanks to everyone!**

Well now Fossil Fest has come and gone for yet another year. The cold and the rain certainly had an impact, but we still managed a decent turnout. As far as I know we had no complaints and all who attended left smiling.

Gary Rylander provided a break-down which I will paraphrase here:

Total attendance for this year was 302 adults and 190 students. Last year's totals were 391 adults and 212 students. Total raffle tickets this year were 576, compared to 467 last year. The big winner for this year was raffle ticket sales. So far we do not have a complete accounting of expenses but at this time it looks like our profit will be down from the year before.

As has been the case for a number of years now the biggest thanks must go to Suzanne and Linda. No show without them, for sure. Linda will be bowing out next year in her official capacity and Suzanne will be in charge. Expect her to be recruiting others to carry the torch soon. In fact the planning for the next year pretty much started before we are even out of the building last Sunday night.

Suzanne, in particular, wanted everyone to be recognized. Her words: I would really appreciate it if you would recognize all the Volunteers who worked so hard to make Fossil Fest a success! Everyone worked hard to make it a fun experience for the attendees! It is a true pleasure to work

with such selfless and giving members! Here's a quote that sums it up nicely:

"Volunteers don't get paid, not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless."

~Sherry Anderson

This year's volunteers (in no particular order): Kelsey Tom, Gary Vliet, Jimmy Hendricks, Melody Barnett, Jamie Young, Erich & Emelia Rose, David Lindberg, Kathleen Howard, Paul Hammerschmidt, Frank Crane, Eric & Marcus Hunter, Ryan Galligher, Gary & Cathy Rylander, Marilyn Austin, Diana & Sam Ramirez, Doris Hill, Jackson Shoultz, Frederick & Melinda Falk, Dennis & Morgan Stock, Christine Bennett, Samuel, Brandon & Tammy West, Jeanne Bowman, Melvin Noble, Dax Gonzalez, Earl Richards, Joni Sula, Dale Vargo, David Silver, Rosemary & Jamie, Kevin Bills & Elise Bright. (These were the names off the final sign up sheet, so if we missed you, both our apologies and greatest thanks!) Suzanne also mentioned that everyone who signed up showed up!

And we couldn't forget Alan Peters, who makes the show extra special for our youngest visitors and adults alike, and the folks of AGMS who brought their own activities and represented the other side of rock hounding. My own special thanks to Cathy and Craig Brandt for once again hosting the dealer's dinner. Dang he makes good BBQ! Melody asked that we also give a big thanks to Nature's Treasures for donating the Moroccan Trilobite to our touch table collection.

This year we had the usual good displays of fossils with Linda McCall filling a majority (8?) of cases. I (ER) filled three, Ed Elliot did three, David Lindberg did at least two and Dale Vargo had a beautiful display of south Texas Petrified wood. I hope we can encourage more members to create displays for next year's show.

## **November Field Trip Report Harker Heights**

I've never seen a McDonalds so packed full of people. The parking lot was full. Oh, that's all of US filling the lot. There were thirty members and guests present: Kevin Bills, David Lindberg, Andrew Dunham, Mike Smith, Deborah and Marcus Hunter, Jason, Jordan and Mariah Burns, Suzanne and Ryan Galligher, Joe Watkins, Beki Pool, Erich Rose, Dax Gonzalez, Earl Richards and Joni Sula, Monte and Karen Sisk, Frederick and Melinda Falk, Rene and Linda Wojcik, Gary and Cathy Rylander, Paul Hammerschmidt, Terry and Hunter Collins, Shawna Graves and Abram Millar.

The Harker Heights area, from Belton to Copperas Cove (and a good bit more) is all Walnut Formation, Fredericksburg Group. Of the four sites visited that day, there were two types of outcrop, each with its' own (non-exclusive) fauna. The first stop was large enough to contain some of both. The upper area was rich in *Phymosoma texana*, *P. mexicana* and a host of other mega fauna, including a large steinkern population. Lower areas contained *Salenia mexicana* and the solitary coral *Parasimilia austinensis* in abundance. With these is a rich small fauna population containing many small gastropods with original shell detail as well as other bivalves. The *P. texana* level seems to have a greater abundance of the ammonite *Engonoceras* while the

*S. mexicana* level seems to be abundant in *Oxytropidoceras*. And there is almost always a *Texigryphaea* oyster bed between the two layers. While the upper marly bed contains the greater number of macrofauna, the lower beds are just as much fun to hunt.

Of the interesting finds of the day, I think that Gary R, takes the cake. I've never known of anyone just digging a hole in a hill to find *Phymosoma*. Gary did and came up with nearly a hundred at our third site. Leave it to Gary to think of it and pick the right spot. Kudos. And the same site yielded at least 6 or 7 shark teeth and some fish teeth as well. Andrew found most of them, but I believe that both of the Falks got one as well. And while we were on hands and knees looking for *Salenias*, several of us picked up a different coral. While *P. austinensis* is short and squat, this one is taller and much more slender. I'm uncertain as to a name.

We were lucky to have come after some rain, the “pickens” were slimmer than usual – but there were fossils there. I hope everyone had a good time, I know that I did. See you at the Christmas party!.

## **Paleontological Society of Austin Research Grant Proposal to Formalize the Process**

The following is the final *draft* for the membership's review. It is requested that all comments and concerns be submitted before January 1st, 2012. Feed back from members is encouraged and will be taken into consideration by the board before final approval of the new grant process.

Some of the issues we still have to discuss include:

Where the grant information will be published. Our web site would be the main location but are there others?

We have suggested the Grant Committee will be made up of three(3) current PSA members and two(2) science advisors. Is this the right make up, and how will we decide who ends up on the committee?

We need to make sure our committee can decide grants based on a set of "written and well understood criteria" and make recommendations in writing so that a record of the process is kept. I would suggest that the committee's first task is to create the criteria.

### **Paleontological Society of Austin Research Grant**

#### **Purpose:**

To support research and education in paleontology in the state of Texas.

#### **Eligibility:**

Students, teachers and others working in the field of paleontology or a related biological or earth sciences may apply. This grant may be used for research, fieldwork, museum displays, education or publication of related research.

Applicants must be currently enrolled at, or employed by, a university, college or museum located in the state of Texas.

#### **Grant Amounts:**

Grants ranging from \$250 to \$1,000 will be awarded yearly. Grant amounts awarded will be based upon the requested amount and merits of the application. The number of grants awarded will be based on that year's budget as determined by the board and approved by the membership.

#### **Application Date:**

Applications must be postmarked\* and submitted to PSA between November 1st and January 31st. The grants will be selected by March 10th of each year. The grant will be approved during the March meeting (3rd Tuesday) and the award will be presented during the April meeting. All applicants will receive a reply at that time.

\* Applications must be submitted in hard copy and mailed to: Paleontological Society of Austin P. O. Box 90791 Austin, TX 78749 Attn: Research Grant Committee

**Feedback to PSA:**

Applicants will be required to mention the Paleontological Society of Austin (PSA) in all publications related to the grant. A copy of the paper will be provided to the PSA. A presentation will be made to the Paleontological Society of Austin at one of the monthly meetings within two years of receiving the grant.

**Approval:**

The award(s) will be selected by a committee made up of PSA members and advisors and approved by a majority vote at the regular monthly meeting in March.

**How to apply:****Applicants must include:**

- Applicant's full name, mailing address, telephone number and e-mail address
- Applicant's current enrollment or employment status
- Date of submission
- Title of project
- Description of proposed research, field work, museum displays, education or publication of related research
- Proposed timeline for completion
- Budget with emphasis on how the grant will be used
- A letter of support from a professor or supervisor with contact information
- Name of school or institution the applicant will be affiliated with for the project and name and contact information for an immediate supervisor or counselor with whom the project may be confirmed

**Applicants may also include:**

- List of affiliations and other professional organizations
- Career plans (especially for students currently enrolled in college)
- Most significant publications
- Professional recognition

**Applications must be submitted in hard copy and mailed to:**

Paleontological Society of Austin, Attn: Research Grant Committee  
P. O. Box 90791  
Austin, TX 78749

Applications should be printed in a black and white (color photos or graphics are OK) and font should be 10 points or larger.

Applications must be postmarked and submitted to PSA between November 1st and January 31st.



The purpose of the **Paleontological Society of Austin**, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is the scientific education of the public, the study and preservation of fossils and the fossil record and assistance to individual, groups and institutions interested in various aspects of paleontology.

Meetings of the **Paleontological Society of Austin** are held the third Tuesday of each month, 7:00 p.m. at the Austin Gem and Mineral Society building, 6719 Burnet lane, Austin, TX. The public is cordially invited to attend.

Annual Dues: \$15/individual, \$20/family and \$10/associate (non-voting, receiving newsletter) Send to: Treasurer, Paleontological Society of Austin, PO Box 90791, Austin, TX 78749-0791

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DATED MATERIAL – MEETING NOTICE

**FIRST CLASS MAIL**