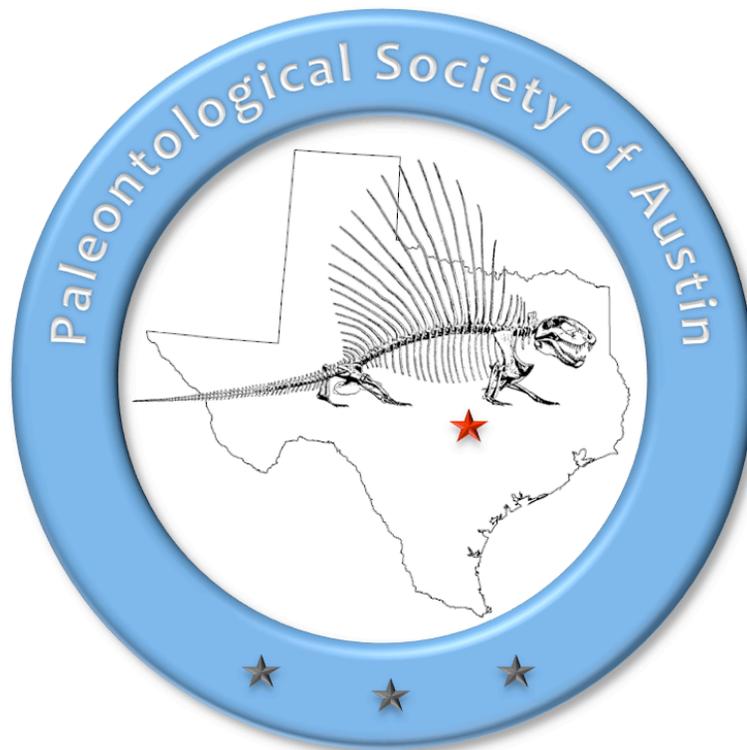


Paleo Footnotes

Newsletter of the
Paleontological Society of Austin

Austin and Central Texas



Volume 8, Number 7
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President's Note

Ok, it certainly is summer in Texas. Hot days and semi-cool nights. I have been able to do a little collecting here and there with mixed results but mostly I have switched to catching up on identifying and cataloging specimens. All things I can do sitting in the airconditioned house.

Our speaker Tuesday will be our own long time member Davidd Lindberg. He will be speaking about amber, and he always gives a well-researched and engaging talk. David suggests bringing your own specimens to show and share and he will even show you how to make sure it's the real thing.

We will be holding an indoor field trip this month. The Perot Museum of Nature and Science in Dallas awaits. It is big and brand new and should be a great experience. Hopefully we will have more folks show up than signed up. Unfortunately that number was too low to qualify us for the discounted group rate. Despite pleas in the newsletter and via our e-mail group we only had a handful of folks sign up. Honestly I was very surprised by this. If we even had a few more tentative members contact me I would have felt confident sending in the check to lock us in as a group. But Ed warned me that last year only a small handful of members showed up at the museum in Houston so I had to be cautious. But I am sure the museum will still be worth the time and expense for those of us who still attend. Please surprise me and show up on the 20th.

Again, I hope to see you all shortly. Either at this Tuesday's meeting or in Dallas Saturday.

Take care and stay cool,

-- Erich



T. rex at Perot Museum

Next Meeting

Tuesday July 16th
7:00 p.m. at the Austin Gem and Mineral Society building
6719 Burnet Lane, Austin, TX

Amber - Paleontological Gold

David Lindberg, PSA

Amber is valued both by paleontologist and non-paleontologist. For the paleontologist, amber is valuable both because it is fossilized resin and also because of the various plants, animals, and other items that can become trapped in amber. This presentation will cover amber's properties, the kinds of information paleontologist can derive from amber, and how to care for amber. We'll also cover the different kinds of amber and where they are found.

Since amber is valuable, there is a large quantity of fake amber on the market. Unfortunately, there is no one test that is cheap, definitive, and non-destructive. A demonstration will be given of one way to tell some fake amber from real amber.

If you have pieces of amber or amber jewelry, please feel free to bring it to the meeting, so that we can enjoy looking at it.

David

Next Field Trip

Saturday July 20th

Perot Museum of Nature & Science, Dallas

We will meet at the museum at 10AM. Plan on spending most of the day.

Admission is \$15 for an adult, \$11 for a child 2-11, \$12 for students 12-17 and \$12 for seniors 65+. There are other fees for various movies and special exhibitions. See the web site for more information and directions: <http://www.perotmuseum.org>

Possibly later that afternoon we may visit one or more collecting sites (TBD) with the group in the Dallas/Ft Worth area if time and interest allows.

If you are interested in going please contact erichrose@austin.rr.com or 512-626-9930 ASAP. Currently we are past the deadline for obtaining a group rate, but I will still try if we get a few more confirmed participants.

June Field Trip Report **Pleistocene on the Brazos**

The Brazos trip is always one of my favorites, more so because water levels and timing frequently cause us to miss it. A great day out on the water AND a chance to find fossils is the way I think of it. With me at the waters' edge was, to the best of my memory, Ron Root, Earl Richards, Dale Vargo, Paul Hammerschmidt, Gary and Cathy Rylander, John Hinte, and Melvin Noble. In the haste to get everything in the water, ferry vehicles to I10, etc. I forgot to get a sign in sheet. Hope I didn't forget anyone. No matter how many times I do this, I'm always excited to get in the water – and I usually haven't slept much.

The two weeks prior to the trip I kept a watch on the water levels as they slowly crept up and down. I didn't think about checking the recent history. The levels had been low for quite a while, which means that other eyes had checked out the gravel before us. We just had to look harder. At the first stop, Cathy picked up a shark tooth and a very small, pretty rudist. Not exactly Pleistocene-material. Just as all the petrified wood is probably reworked Eocene/Miocene material, rivers wash things in from everywhere. We stopped at five large gravel bars and lots of little spots. I stopped at one that was 3x4 out in the middle of the river, just to look in the water around it. Dale found a horse tooth there in a foot of water. Melvin, Paul and Gary also found horse teeth. Melvin also picked up a decent alligator scoot right near the horse tooth. John and I both found pieces of very large turtles. Gary came out on top this trip. He showed me a really nice astragalus (horse ?) which I think I told him was a calcaneum. He also showed me several really nice long bones that he fished out of water. And John told me that Gary also found a tooth that is probably sloth. Though I haven't seen them, Dale said that he also picked up some artifacts. I'm sure that there were other things found as well. Not bad for an area that had been picked over.

The chance to be on the water and see roseate spoonbills, white ibis, kingfishers and kites is enough reason to go on this trip. The chance to look for Pleistocene fossils is also a great reason to go on this trip. The chance to do both at the same time can only mean that it was a great day and a good trip. We were tired when Paul pulled our kayaks up the hill, but we were all smiling. See you at the museum in Dallas.

--Ed



Collecting along the Brazos (Ed Elliott)



Collecting along the Brazos (Ed Elliott)

Meeting Minutes for Austin Paleo Society June 18, 2013

Erich called the meeting to order at 7:08. He then introduced the speaker, Natasha Vitek, a Master of Science graduate of the University of Texas. Her talk, "The Eastern Box Turtle in Time and Space" described her degree work with the Eastern Box Turtle, a common turtle species, one that is well-represented in modern fauna and in the fossil record. Ms Vitek photographed and measured many specific points on box turtle shells, measuring hundreds of shells from many locations. By computer analysis of these shell measurements, paired with age data for each shell, Vitek has produced workable analytics, accounting for variation of shell shape in samples due to size, maturity, geography and geologic age. As a result of her extensive analysis, she has determined that certain box turtle sub-species are not actually a separate group, but only natural variation and incomplete analysis of the sample group. She has also applied her criteria to studying Pleistocene turtle fossils of Florida and has concluded that there were two distinct box turtle species there. She then answered members' questions. From here, Ms Vitek will now focus her work on the fossil record of the Bighorn Basin. The meeting then took its break and then resumed by approving the previous month's minutes. The Treasurer's report was given and Erich noted that our paleo society's Scholarship Fund had helped

finance Ms Vitek's research. Both Gary and Erich spoke of the need to increase these research funds. Erich then asked the club to consider what our policy is for giving talks to outside groups and events.

Then, exciting mud and discovery stories of the recent Waco pit field trip were related by the expeditioners.

The July field trip options were discussed, involving a possible visit to the Perot Museum of Nature and Science in Dallas, with a potential side trip to a fossil collecting site, to be determined. It was also noted that with proposed museum trips such as this, those interested should say so sooner rather than later to make for effective fee discounts, travel and participation.

Ed gave the go-ahead and the meetup details for the upcoming Brazos River float trip, since the river levels indicated good fossil collecting conditions.

Then, a variety of door prizes were won by a fortunate few.

The meeting was then adjourned, and members continued to visit, put things away and then left.

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. See web site for April & December dates.

Annual Dues: \$18/individual, \$24/family and \$12/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

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