

Paleo Footnotes

Newsletter of the
Paleontological Society of Austin

Austin and Central Texas



Volume 8, Number 9
September 2013

President's Note

We should have a very interesting presentation this month by doctoral candidate Lauren English. And yes you would be correct, that is exactly what I said last month. Turned out we had a few wires crossed last month. Lauren was actually scheduled for this month. She will be talking about pterosaur evolution.

As we head into the fall of 2013 we will be gearing up for the two big events that always dominate the end of year planning: Gem Capers in October, and then Fossil Fest in December. The AGMS Gem Capers show is the easier one since we just need to find volunteers to stuff fossil bags and then attend the show. It is always fun and worth the time since you get into the show for free and you get to spend time with fellow members in a relaxed setting. This is an excellent chance for our new or younger members to spend time with some of us diehards and learning about what makes our club so great. Fossil Fest is of course the bigger project and involves much more effort since it is our own show. The show committee had its first meeting and we have picked "Dinosaurs of Texas" as this year's theme. Suzanne will be pitching for specimens, volunteers and all sorts of other help to make this a great event.

And a big congratulations to our very own Michael Smith for winning the First Place Award from the SCFMS for our web site. Mike has been our defacto webmaster for many years and always does a great job. But recently he has suggested it is time to get another member interested in helping him keep things up and running and ready to go should he finally decide that retirement would be better spent on some south sea island. If you like or have good knowledge of web design and maintenance please talk to Mike. I'm sure he would be quite happy to share future awards for our excellent web site.

Take care and stay cool,

-- Erich

Teacher Kit Time: FOSSILS NEEDED

It's time again to put together a new set of teacher kits to give out at Fossil Fest. What we're lacking this time around are Central Texas fossils. We have enough algal fruiting bodies and gastropods, but we don't have enough urchins (regular and irregular), clams, oysters, and what ever else you might have a quantity of. If you have some of these that you are willing to donate, please bring them to the next meeting.

We need specimens that are easily recognizable by elementary school kids, less than about twice the size of your thumb, and you have at least ten of a type. We have maybe two-dozen kits still on hand but our goal is to have a stock of at least 75 before Fossil Fest. The donated specimens that we can't use in the teacher kits will be passed along to the spinning wheel and/or dig pit.

Thanks to those who have already donated their fossils to this cause.

Next Meeting

Tuesday September 17
7:00 p.m. at the Austin Gem and Mineral Society building
6719 Burnet Lane, Austin, TX

Evolution of Pterosaur Wings

Lauren English

She will be discussing the research she did for her M.S. in looking at how wing shape in pterosaurs changed as species evolved to become larger and as individuals grew up to adulthood.

Lauren is a doctoral student working under Julia Clark. She is originally from Long Beach, California and has a B.S. in Geology from University of California, Riverside and M.S. in Biology from California State University San Bernardino.

Next Field Trip

Saturday September 21st

Whiskey Bridge **Eocene Marine Fossils of the Stone City Member**

We will meet at the bridge on TX-21 & the Brazos River at 8AM.

Collecting will all be in mostly soft matrix. A wide variety of invertebrate fossils as well as shark teeth can be found. All are small and generally loose and mostly you will need lots of small containers.

Directions: You have your pick of two routes. Each takes just under 2 hours from Austin:

If you live on the north side of town, take US-290 east to TX Hwy-21 north, and proceed as per below.

If you live on the south side of town, take TX Hwy-71 east to Bastrop, and then pick up TX-21 north and proceed as per below.

About 10-15 minutes after passing through Caldwell on TX Hwy-21 keep your eyes open for a large steel railroad bridge parallel to the road on the left(north) side. Look for a crossover and then a pull off on the left a couple hundred yards before the bridge. If you miss it then just cross the river and make a U-turn.

Park on the gravel or grass near the utility poles. Do not park too close to the RR tracks.

If you get there late just walk down to the river and look for the group just upstream of the bridges. The collecting is in the bank of the river along that area.

August Field Trip Report **Mineral Wells & Vicinity**

Meeting me in Mineral Wells for a day of fun were Paul Hammerschmidt, John Hinte, Gary and Cathy Rylander, Terry and Hunter Collins and Hunters friend Eddy. We discussed it and decided that instead of going to the Fossil Park, we'd go to the same formations in a place we had only hunted a few times before. After a short caravan we arrived at our first outcrop on Texas Highway 337. This is Mineral Wells Formation, Strawn Group and fairly fossiliferous. It seemed to me that we stayed at this site until early afternoon, hunting both sides of the road. We found a good variety of brachiopods, gastropods, bryozoans, bivalves and a few corals. Both Hunter and Paul found nice large examples of *Echinaria semipunctata*. Moving down the road a short distance, we came to our second stop, which was Keechi Creek Shale below and Palo Pinto Limestone above. The Keechi Creek is the top member of the Mineral Wells Formation, Strawn Group. Resting on that would be the Wynn Limestone of the Canyon Group. Most of our hunting was done in the Wynn. This is an extremely fossiliferous outcrop, though you have to stick your nose in it to see much. Other than a few large *Neospirifers* or large examples of the sponge *Regispongia contorta*, I can find little without sitting down and looking closely. Doing so yields many brachs including many examples with spines still attached. There are *Caninia torquia* horn corals of many sizes as well as a small one I don't have an ID for. Also, the colonial coral *Syringopora* is well represented. There is a pretty gastropod, *Trachydomia nodosa*, which has "bumps" all over the outer whorl. I have also found at least four gastropods that I don't have names for. Trilobites, bryozoans and even quite a few pieces of wood were found.

By late afternoon, only John and I remained. We decided to check out the other three stops on 337 that were listed in the literature. Two were small and had only fragmentary remains. The middle one was also small but had nice fossils – however, they were locked up in a very hard, dense matrix. The two sites we visited were the best of the five by far. All in all, I think everyone had a good time hunting the middle Pennsylvanian this day. See you at the next one.

PSoA BOOTH at AGMS GEM CAPERS SHOW

Sign-up as a Volunteer (at the monthly meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 17th) or online (after the meeting) at www.mysignup.com/agms (the passcode is paleo) for the Paleontology Table at the **AGMS Gem Capers** show held **Friday through Sunday, October 18 - 20** (with set-up on Thursday, October 17) at the Palmer Events Center.

This is our largest educational outreach of the year and presents an enormous opportunity to spread the word about Fossil Fest. It's great fun and all volunteers will receive free admission all weekend long! In the meantime, please start gathering up small, clean fossils for donation. We'll utilize those donations at a **Pre-Meeting Fossil Stuffing Party on Tuesday, October 15th at 6pm**. We'll be bagging 1500 fossils along with our Fossil Fest show flyer for give-aways at the Gem Capers show to school children and the general public. After the show, the extras will be given to Pamela Owen for give-away to field trip students at the Texas Memorial Museum.

FOSSIL FEST UPDATE

Save the date! The 23rd Annual Fossil Fest will be **Saturday to Sunday, December 7 - 8, 2013** (with set-up on Friday, December 6). This year's show theme is... Dinosaurs! We'll be exploring dinosaurs that roamed Texas. Once again, industrial & exhibit designer Erich Rose will be producing the central display and accompanying display cases. Stay tuned for requests from Erich to borrow dinosaur specimens for the show. At this month's meeting, **volunteer opportunities will include the Fossil Fest Sign-up and dispersal of Fossil Fest tear pads/flyers** to designated public attractions and facilities around the Austin area by October 1. Locations include Georgetown Public Library, Pflugerville Public Library, Round Rock Public Library, Cedar Park Public Library, Texas Memorial Museum, UT Geology Dept., Walter Geology Library, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, Inner Space Cavern, Austin Nature & Science Center, Beverly Sheffield Education Center - Splash Exhibit (by Barton Springs Pool), and the Austin Children's Museum. A basket with a labeled packet for each location (containing tear pads, flyers and instructions) will be left on the sign-in table. If you live, work or travel near one of these locations, please consider picking up a packet for that location and dropping it off by October 1. Please send email to showchair@austinpaleo.org if you have ideas for other locations where we should advertise our annual show. The support and assistance of every PSoA member is essential in making Fossil Fest a success. There are many ways that members can help out so please stay tuned for upcoming opportunities!

Currently, there is 1 Large and 2 Small Booths available for interested vendors. Vendors include: Jack Grant, K. Howard, Lonestar Paleontology, Natural Selection Enterprise, Nature's Treasures, Don Painter (FL fossils), Shu's Rocks & Minerals and Teredo's.

Keep your eye out for potential vendors while travelling or at upcoming gem and fossil shows. Send your vendor recommendations to showchair@austinpaleo.org. In the meantime, please consider displaying your fossils at Fossil Fest and start gathering fossils for donation to the Dig Pit and Spinning Wheel as detailed below.

DISPLAY CASES: We encourage you to create a display case for the show this year. We have a lot of display cases to fill! We would love to see those fossils you worked so hard to collect - in searing heat, ankle deep mud, slippery slopes, capsizing canoes or finger numbing cold! So start sorting through your fossils now! Additionally, it would help us teach some key TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills) concepts to students. If you're in need of display case ideas, please consider:

A display of how a plant or animal becomes a fossil

Examples and a brief description of changes to an organism over time

Collection of a particular organism and their structures

One organism - characteristics used to identify it with samples and diagrams

A fossil and display showing what we were able to learn about the type of climate / environment the organism would have been in while living - deep ocean/shallow ocean, cold/warm temperature, turbid/calm environment, etc - this may be one for one of our university grad student / researcher / professor

FOSSILS: We need lots and lots of CLEAN cast off fossils for the DIG PIT (very small) and SPINNING WHEEL. Keep this in mind when you're out collecting: if you come across an outcrop with a lot of a particular fossil, please pick up extras for the fest! Until next month...

Suzanne Galligher
Fossil Fest Show Chair

Dax Gonzalez, Kathleen Howard, Melvin Noble, Ron Root, Erich Rose and Mike Smith
Fossil Fest Show Committee Members

Meeting Minutes for Austin Paleo Society August 20, 2013

Suzanne Gallagher called the meeting to order and welcomed new member, Bob. Erich took over from Suzanne and began announcements, including info for upcoming Williamson County's Dino Day, and Suzanne announced aspects of our Society's annual event, Fossil Fest. She placed FFest info in our current newsletter and asked members to donate small fossil specimens for these events. Erich encouraged these donations too.

Erich spoke about our club policy of shifting the Oct date of our monthly field trip to allow our participation in AGMS' annual show, Gem Capers.

Because our speaker for tonight did not arrive, Erich recreated the field trip to the Perot

Museum for the meeting, describing various departments, architecture and exhibits there.

Ed and Erich described possible aspects of the upcoming field trip to Mineral Wells and its 'Fossil Park'.

We then took our refreshment break. After resuming the meeting, the Treasurer's report was given, we noted the dates for the remaining 2013 field trips, and we awarded the door prizes.

Erich said to be ready for a 'show and tell' meeting next month. We wished Erich and Emelia safe travels to Virginia to begin college. The meeting adjourned at 8:01PM.

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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PALEONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTIN

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DATED MATERIAL – MEETING NOTICE

FIRST CLASS MAIL