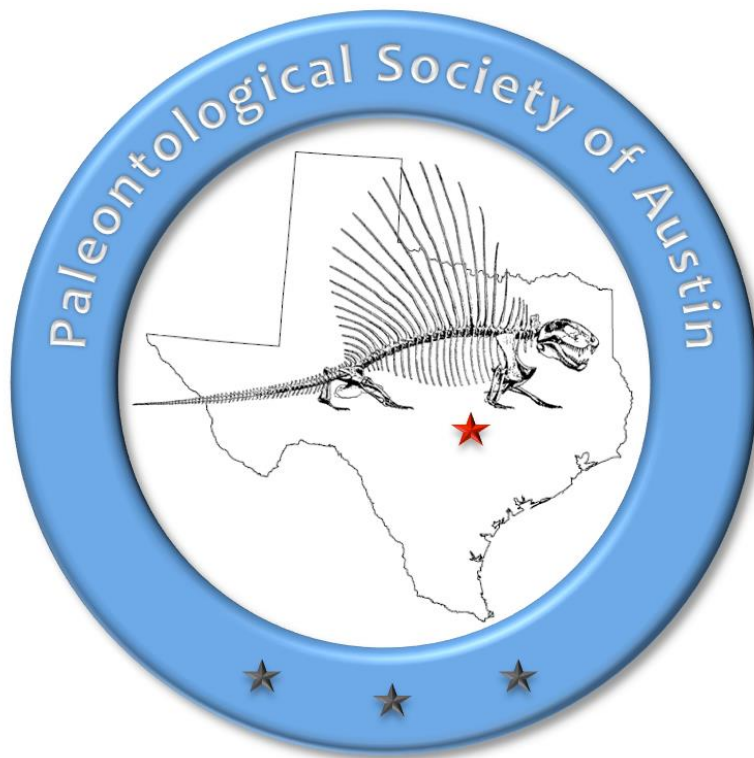


Paleo Footnotes

Newsletter of the
Paleontological Society of Austin

Austin and Central Texas



Volume 9, Number 1
January 2014

President's Note

Happy New Year to all. I hope you all had a great holiday season. It seemed like the weather was conspiring against me most of the two weeks around Christmas and New Years. It was either very cold or very wet and then those few days when it went warm and bright I had something else to do. I barely even touched the many fossils sitting here that need cataloging. And now it is time to go out and start collecting some more. And our first trip of the season will be up to a great site to collect a wide variety of Pennsylvanian Period fossils. See the Field Trip info and meet us there.

Just to keep everyone up to date the board and officers have not been able to meet properly so I do not have any info such as field trip schedule, yearly budget, or next Fossil Fest date. But we will be meeting before the meeting and will fill everyone in at the January meeting and then in the next newsletter.

Take care and hope to see you all at Tuesday's meeting or Saturday's field trip.

-- Erich

Texas Memorial Museum (Texas Natural Science Center) Needs Your Support

Recently several of us received a letter from Mary Newcomb (see below). One of the very first places my in-laws took me when first visiting Texas was the Memorial Museum. I was immediately impressed and so very happy to know that Texas had a rich geological history and an obvious passion for nature. For many of us, both old and young, those early museum encounters were there spark for our love of fossils and natural science. Every child needs that experience. So it has been the saddest news to hear of the drastic cuts to its budget next year and the obvious ramifications. I am a museum professional, and I am 99% certain that unless funds are restored the museum will close within a very short period of time. So I am encouraging all of our members to write, call, petition and anything else you can think of. Feel free to write letters yourself or use the links below that Ms Newcomb has provided.

My name is Mary Newcomb, daughter of William W. Newcomb, an anthropology professor and Director of the Texas Memorial Museum for many years. You may have heard that the College of Natural Sciences will cut all funding - \$620,000 – to the museum beginning next year. This is a travesty that cannot be tolerated! My husband and I have started a grassroots effort called Save the Texas Memorial Museum. Our goal is to gather many thousand signatures on a protest petition and deliver it to Dean Hicke of the College of Natural Sciences on Jan. 15, 2014 – the 75th anniversary of the museum's opening. If you email us, we will send you the petition and you can mail it back to us. We have a Facebook page and a group on meetup.com - please "Like" us on Facebook and RSVP on meetup.com. Thank you in advance for your support! Kindest regards, Mary Newcomb and Jeri Putnam
SavetheTexasMemorialMuseum@gmail.com

Next Meeting

Tuesday January 21

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

Paleogeography and the Cambrian ‘Explosion’

Dr. Ian W.D. Dalziel

The geologically abrupt appearance of almost all animal phyla in the fossil record is commonly referred to as the Cambrian ‘explosion’ of life on Earth. It is also referred to as “Darwin’s dilemma,” as he appreciated that this aspect of the fossil record, as known in the mid-19th Century, posed a major problem for his theory of evolution by natural selection. The explosion coincided with the initiation of the first of two major marine transgressions of the Phanerozoic. Although the metazoan ‘explosion’ is now seen as somewhat more protracted than formerly recognized, it is still regarded as one of the most striking and critical events in the history of the biosphere. Almost all palaeogeographic reconstructions for early Cambrian times feature a previously isolated Laurentia, ancestral North America. Yet geological evidence from four continents indicates that the present ‘southern cone’ of Laurentia was still attached to the newly amalgamated southern supercontinent of Gondwanaland into Cambrian times. Laurentia was then isolated by development of a major oceanic connection between the opening Iapetus Ocean basin and the already well-developed Pacific, as the marine transgression was initiated and the number of fossilized metazoan phyla ‘exploded.’ The apparently rapid development of this oceanic connection, and of an ocean floor-consuming subduction zone along virtually the entire Pacific-Iapetus margin of Gondwanaland shortly thereafter, need to be taken into account in consideration of environmental and biotic changes associated with the Neoproterozoic-Phanerozoic transition.

Dr. Dalziel's has multiple positions at The University of Texas at Austin, including: Senior Research Scientist, Institute for Geophysics, The University of Texas at Austin, Professor of Geological Sciences, The University of Texas at Austin, Research Professor, Institute for Geophysics, The University of Texas at Austin. He was the administrative Associate Director from 09/1994 to 08/2007.

Saturday January 25

Pennsylvanian Fossils, Lake Jacksboro, TX

This site will be in the Upper Carboniferous of Texas. The Finis Shale and Jacksboro Limestone. We will be collecting from rocks of the Upper Pennsylvanian Period. Fossils will be mostly marine in origin, including brachiopods, trilobites, corals, bryozoans, mollusks of all sorts, crinoids, echinoids and teeth. Most of the fossils will be small and loose so bring plenty of small containers. The site will involve some hiking so be prepared with proper footwear, gloves, walking stick, etc.

We meet at 8:00AM in Jacksboro, TX at the town square in front of the old courthouse. It will be easy to find and the site is a short drive from there. Its just a long drive from Austin (3.5+ hours) so either drive up the night before or set your alarm clock and hit the hay early Friday night.

Directions to the square in Jacksboro:

Head North on US 183 from Austin. In Lampasas watch for signs and follow US 281 North. At that point it's 281 all the way to Jacksboro. Look for our cars in front of the courthouse. That will be Main(281) and Belknap. We will caravan as a group to the site so please be on time.

There will be a small admission fee to cover the state park land we must cross from the cars to the collecting site. \$3 per adult, children are free, please bring cash.

Bring food and drinks (WATER!) and whatever else you'll need, as we will be out in the country all day. It's not a long drive back to town for lunch but why waste collecting time. Depending on the site we may be in full sun for hours so be prepared. Check the weather for temperatures as well. It can be both cold or warm this time of year and will probably be both.



Typical Finis Shale gastropods.

Fossil Fest 2013

Here is the note that Ace sent us with his report. And please check out the video.

Dear Mr. Rose and Ms. Galligher,

Thank you SO much for giving me an opportunity to set up a booth at the Fossil Fest. I had a great time and you can read all about it in my essay below! I am also working on a project called the Living Dino Project and you can see my video about it here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nE_40n_HIW0

Regards,
Asas Husain

My Awesome Time at the Fossil Fest Asas (Ace) Husain

I hopped into the car with my brother, aunt, uncle, and grandmother and immediately excitement and thoughts of what to do at my second Fossil Fest filled my mind. Since I had just celebrated my 10th birthday, I had some money to spend and my parents had allowed me to get anything I want at the Fest! I was eager to see what I would find, but this time it was going to be different than the last Fest I attended. Well, different for me at least, because this time I was sharing a booth with a Paleontologist/Geologist, which made me the Jr. Paleontologist! My neighbor (the person who I was sharing with) was Professor Ernest Lundelius from the University of Texas at Austin!! (Interesting fact: he was my dad's Geology professor at UT) Professor Lundelius was addressing the question: "What makes a dinosaur a dinosaur?" It was a great honor and privilege for me to sit alongside someone who knows so much about Geology.

I really enjoyed what Professor Lundelius had to say and when his session finished, I had one thought in mind! "Big hall time!" The big hall looked just as exciting as last time. I even recognized some of the larger ammonites from last year. I love this place because of the sharp shark teeth, mosasaur jaws, petrified desert rose buds, ancient sea urchins, trilobites, mammal jaws and countless other things. I thought that this time I should be a little smarter about what I buy. I settled on a box of assorted fossils and rocks. I also got a little case of fish jaws and shark teeth and another case of dyrosaurus teeth from the Phosphate mine region in Morocco (Dyrosaurus phosphaticus is a Cretaceous crocodile ancestor). As I walked back to my booth and flipped the 'back at: 3:30' sign, Prof. Lundelius had a look at every fossil I got! Wow! I was so happy to discuss my new finds with him! We had shark teeth, sea snails, sea urchins, clams, a rabbit jaw and so many other items like an emu egg all the way from Australia! So at the end of my day, I thanked Prof. Lundelius (He really is a great person and was very patient and friendly - even my dad admired him as a teacher).

I had also brought along copies of a book I wrote - Cephalo the Daring Dinosaur. Many people stopped by and I was happy to talk to them about my book. I also sold quite a few copies (yay, now I can save up for next year's fossil fest!) I had a brilliant time and can't wait to be back next year!



Asas and Dr. Lundelius discuss the fine points of dinosaur anatomy.
(photo by Basarat Kazim, Asas' grandmother)



Signing copies of his book.
(photo by Basarat Kazim)

Meeting minutes from the PSA Christmas party 2013:

The Christmas party was held at AGMS building at 7pm, Dec 17th as we celebrated the holidays with our customary potluck dinner and White Mammoth gift exchange. Afterward, President Erich Rose took time to bring some important topics requiring action up for discussion. Erich stated that Gary Rylander was open to completing his service as Treasurer and Erich called for a volunteer to serve on the board as Treasurer. Frederick Falk volunteered to be candidate for Treasurer for 2014 and Erich called for a vote and the members in attendance voted their approval of Frederick Falk to serve in that position in 2014. Erich also brought up the fact that Marilyn Austin is completing her term as Program Chair and called for someone to take that position. Ron Root volunteered and was approved as Program Director for 2014.

Erich also requested that someone new take the Hospitality Director position. And Melvin Noble agreed to that position. Erich also announced the returning Board Members: Erich, President, Ed, Field Chair, Dale, Secretary, Mike, Webmaster, and Suzanne, Show Chair. Erich then started discussion of the recent news that Fossil Fest would be moved from its date in early December due to the Old Settlers organization's need to use the exhibit hall during December weekends. So we considered when the best date to schedule the upcoming Fossil Fest. Complicating the date selection for Fossil Fest are selection of a date that works well with other show dates such as Gem Capers and Fossil Mania. The early consensus seems to favor a return to late Oct, early Nov as best. With that discussion concluded for now, Erich closed our party/meeting and we looked forward to our meeting in Jan 2014.

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 – **HOLIDAY PARTY NOTICE!**

FIRST CLASS MAIL