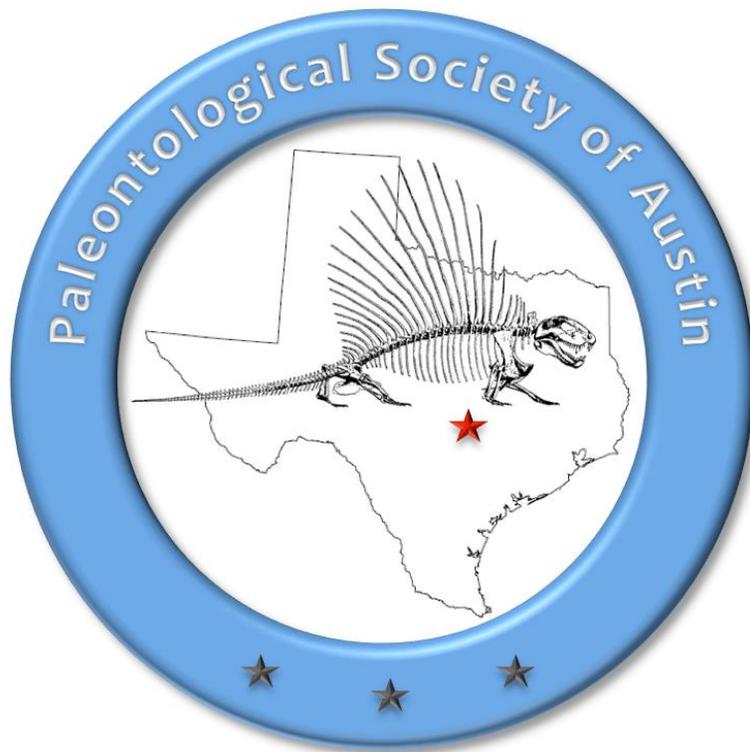


Paleo Footnotes

Newsletter of the
Paleontological Society of Austin

Austin and Central Texas



Volume 9, Number 6
June 2014

President's Note

This is going to be a brief note, relatively speaking.

Please be present this Tuesday to hear from our very own Suzanne Galligher who will be speaking to us all about her trip to the FOSSIL conference in Florida. This is something that may become very important to our club and we would love to have as many members there as possible to hear and learn more about this great new national effort to make what we do even more meaningful. I think Suzanne's presentation could be the spark that gets us all talking and thinking about what we say we want to do and how we go about doing it.

In addition we hope to also have good news from Ed regarding the Brazos River levels and the prognosis for the annual Pleistocene canoe and kayak adventure. The heavy rains should have refreshed the gravel bars and as long as we don't get any more heavy rains* they appear to be lowering steadily to just the right levels for easy paddling and superb picking. See the field trip notice for details or come to the meeting for the down low from Ed and company.

*And speaking of the rains we are in a quandary here, asking for a respite before the canoe trip but also hoping for a wet June to both replenish the fossil beds and our gardens.

See you Tuesday,

-- Erich

Charles E. Finsley (1938-2014)

The "paleontological societies" of Texas have lost a great friend and resource. And by "societies" I mean all of us, professional, academic and amateur, in clubs or not, who appreciate the great resource of earth's history placed here under our feet. I did not know Chuck at all other than to have spent hundreds and hundreds of hours pouring through A Field Guide to Fossils of Texas trying to figure out what the heck I had there in my hand. It was my number one resource for anything found here in the Lone Star State and often stuff found elsewhere as well. And a good handful of us in PSA did get to hear him speak at one of our annual April Auctions out at Westcave Preserve a number of years back. I know he even drew other visitors at the preserve in to listen to him talk, not just about hunting fossil but also about collecting snakes out in west Texas and many other odd bits all around. He had all of us doubled over with stories of jumping out of moving vehicles to snag the rare ones.

That is about all I can add to his story. For more go to for the obit in the Dallas paper:
<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/dallasmorningnews/obituary.aspx?n=charles-e-finsley&pid=171061105>

Next Meeting
Tuesday June 17, 2014
7:00 p.m. at the Austin Gem and Mineral Society building
6719 Burnet Lane, Austin, TX

**"Perspectives from the FOSSIL Project Symposium and Workshop:
How Participation and Collaboration among Amateur and
Professional Paleontologists Presents Unique Opportunities for
Fossil Clubs"**

By Suzanne Galligher

As a young child, Suzanne was always fascinated peering at the geodes her uncle collected as a professional geologist while working in the Oklahoma oil and gas industry. A visit as a tween to the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History helped feed the interest for natural objects, especially gems such as the Hope Diamond. However, it wasn't until her 6-year-old son became obsessed with dinosaurs, as many children do, and announced that he wanted to become a paleontologist that Suzanne crossed paths with the Paleontological Society of Austin.

In search of educational science programs to enhance her young son's passion, Suzanne and family attended their first Fossil Fest, joined PSoA and were soon hooked on fossil hunting. And so began the journey of an informal science learner. Today, Suzanne is not only engrossed with fossils, especially ammonites, and learning about paleontology but she has discovered her passion for science education. In her role as Fossil Fest Show Chairman since 2012, Suzanne has striven to improve the educational content and quality of PSoA's flagship community outreach event.

Suzanne participated in the 10th North American Paleontological Conference (NAPC) and the FOSSIL (Fostering Opportunities for Synergistic STEM with Informal Learners) Project Symposium and Workshop in Gainesville, FL this past winter as a guest of the University of Florida. University of Florida researchers were awarded a four-year, \$1.97 million National Science Foundation grant to create a nationwide network of amateur and professional paleontologists with the goal of promoting life-long learning. FOSSIL will cultivate a networked community (known as a community of practice) in which fossil club members and professional paleontologists collaborate in learning, the practice of science, and outreach. Suzanne will talk about the unique opportunities FOSSIL offers PSoA members and other fossil clubs nationwide that she learned about while representing PSoA at the NAPC.

Next Field Trip

Saturday, June 21st

Pleistocene on the Brazos

We will be collecting on the gravel bars of the Brazos River for Pleistocene-age fossils. You may also find arrowheads and other stone artifacts as well as the odd bottle. This is a great trip when the weather is hot.

Meet at Stephen F. Austin State Park in San Felipe at the statue parking lot at 8:00AM. Traveling east on I-10, just east of Sealy, take exit 723 to FM1458 north (left) to the park. Bring whatever you would need for a day on the water: food, lots of water, a canoe or kayak, hat, collecting materials and packing materials since some finds are fragile, etc. Wear clothing that you won't mind getting in the red water. You will get wet and probably muddy. This trip is always a lot of fun.

NOTE: as of the writing of the newsletter the water level on the Brazos was looking very good for the trip. If it is too high the gravel bars are under water. So if there is a lot of rain in the Brazos watershed things can change. For this reason the trip may need to be either called off or changed. Please keep an eye on your e-mails for updates. If you are one of the members who do not use e-mail please contact Ed Elliot (512-657-7581) if you have questions.

Field Trip Report - May 2014

After a lovely, early morning cross-country trip to Meridian, we met up with the days' crew. Present were John Hinte, Melvin Noble, Paul Hammerschmidt, Bob McDonald, Mike Smith, and Joe Watkins. After waiting a good while to make sure there were no stragglers, we drove on to the rudist reef. This is an Edwards Formation, *Eoradiolites davidsoni* reef. Our one section of outcrop is almost a single species feature. It is bounded by a strip of cedar trees and just past those you find, on the same hillside, a nice Edwards fauna with only a few rudists. All of us picked a good number of nice specimens over the course of the morning. For numbers of nice, nature cleaned specimens this place wins hands down – though it does take a long time to replenish.

Our second outcrop was a clear miss. What I mean is that I drove right by it and didn't see it. Rather than backtrack and look for another rudist outcrop, the group decided to continue on to number three – which was the outcrop on 107, just east of Gatesville. Just a mile west of the spot we usually stop at is a slightly smaller and somewhat different outcrop. The same formations are involved, but in different proportions. There is much more Walnut at the bottom and the Comanche Peak contact is well up the hill. It is difficult to see the change to Edwards Formation at the top, but there are definite Edwards fauna, including rudists, there. I climbed towards the top and stayed there for the duration, and so didn't see all that others found. I know that Paul found a couple of nice, large horn corals. And John found three *Metengonoceras* ammonites.

It was my usual idea of a perfect day – great weather, beautiful scenery, good friends and lots of fossils. Everyone said that they enjoyed themselves and looked forward to the next one. That

may or may not be a float trip on the Brazos River. The water levels continue to rise and fall. We'll see what it looks like when the time gets closer. If not, then on to Whiskey Bridge. See you at the next one.

Meeting Minutes for Austin Paleo Society, 5.20.2014

Suzanne began the meeting by noting our visitors. Then Ron introduced tonight's speaker, Kenneth S. Bader, M.S. Geology Univ. of Kansas, and specimen preparator at UT Austin. Kenny's talk tonight is "Dinosaur CSI", in which he explains taphonomy, the natural processes that happen after a creature dies, how the remains are affected by various factors, and how evidence in the fossil record reflects these processes. Bader discussed natural processes that influence a carcass' condition, including states of decomposition, disarticulation, transport by floods, burial, erosion and destruction. He described his recent fieldwork in the Black Hills of Wyoming, a "re-discovered" dinosaur site, showed slides of the numerous fossil dinosaurs recorded there and presented his analysis of the natural processes that worked on the site's dinosaur remains that led to their present state of preservation. Bader particularly described the processes and effects that insects exert on carcasses and how these ancient dinosaurs at site KU-WY-121 show some of the same effects that he has noted in his present work cleaning specimens for UT Austin. Using such similar insect feeding processes that occur today and through his forensic analysis, Kenny concluded by stating that the evidence suggests many of the dinosaur carcasses dried out for about three weeks before being buried by flood sediments. Members' follow-up questions to Bader were addressed. Suzanne said a UT video is now on our Facebook page. Then she had the visitors tell us about themselves, and then we took our refreshment break.

After the break, the previous month's minutes were accepted. Then Frederick gave the Treasurer's report. He then reported on the proceeds from the annual auction. He stated that income from it was a little lower than last year and lamented that if the Galligher girls had been there, auction proceeds would have been up. Kathleen suggested a closer auction event site might improve the attendance. Then Suzanne and David reported on their Dino Day outreach event at Williamson County Park. Suzanne brought up our upcoming commitment at "Nature Night", June 19. Kathleen requested info for helping Round Rock Gold Prospectors as vendors at Fossil Fest. David announced that renowned Texas fossil expert Charles Finsley has passed away and it was said that he was kind, unassuming, and always-helpful answering questions. Suzanne wondered whether our club should donate to the upcoming Finsley fossil lecture series and said we will check into this. Mike suggested we advertise it in our newsletter. Ron said he took Charles Finsley's advice and openly displayed his fossils rather than keeping them stored in boxes. Suzanne then commented on her recent attendance at the FOSSIL Project in Gainesville, FL and a spontaneous discussion of ethics, policy, collecting, commerce and interaction between government, science and private individuals ensued. Many members gave their considered opinion on these subjects, including Dr. Sprinkle and our guest speaker Kenny Bader. Suzanne offered to give a presentation on the FOSSIL Project at a future meeting. Ed then gave details for the upcoming field trip to Meridian and Gatesville. Door prizes were won by Melinda, Paul, Dr. Sprinkle, David, Allan, Frederick, Ryan and Merrily. The meeting adjourned at 8:55PM.

PSoA PUBLIC & K-12 OUTREACH

Sixty 5th graders at Laura Welch Bush Elementary were given an introduction to paleontology and learned about several significant fossil finds in their own backyard by Suzanne Galligher on May 22nd. The students especially enjoyed creating their own trace fossil paperweight from air-dry clay. The students used modern seashells and small toy dinosaurs to make their own imprints trackways. Another favorite activity was "playing" with the touch table fossils especially the dinosaur footprint cast from the South San Gabriel River. Many thanks to the hard working teachers at Bush Elementary for sharing their students and inviting us to speak at their school!

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 – *Next Meeting June 17th.*

FIRST CLASS MAIL