



Paleo Footnotes

Volume 11, Number 4

April 2016

President's Note

Erich Rose
PSoA President

Hope you all are enjoying this great spring weather. We look forward to a beautiful day at Westcave Preserve for our annual pot luck picnic and fund-raising auction. This is one of our best events of the year. Good food shared with good friends in a beautiful setting, coupled with the chance to help the Club earn some money to keep things running. Bring a tasty dish, a paleo-related item or two worthy of bidding and cash or checks.

If you have never been to Westcave, come early or stay late for one of the guided tours into the canyon and grotto. There is some very interesting geology to observe including a Lower Cretaceous oyster bed. Visit Westcave.org for details.

We are holding this year's auction a weekend early so that there is still time this month for a field trip – and not just any field trip. The Club will be embarking on the annual weekend trip to Oklahoma to collect in the Paleozoic.

I look forward to seeing you all at the Preserve next Saturday.

Next Meeting

Saturday, April 16 – 12 p.m. to 3 p.m.
Westcave Preserve
24814 Hamilton Pool Rd.
Round Mountain, Texas 78663

Next Field Trip

Saturday, April 23-24
Ada, Oklahoma

Meet-up:
East Central University Campus
Corner of N. Francis Ave. and E. Main St.
Ada, Oklahoma 74820

Upcoming Field Trip

Two days in Oklahoma.

Ed Elliott
PSoA Field Trip Chair

The Club's next field trip will be to Ada, OK for some Devonian, Silurian and Ordovician collecting. We'll meet on the East Central University Campus on the corner of E. Main St. and N. Francis Ave. near the petrified Callixylon tree at 8 a.m. Saturday, April 23. Park near Francis Ave. and East 12th St.

This is a two-day trip and we will visit numerous sites. Facilities will be scarce, so be prepared. Bring at least a gallon of water a day for each person, food, hats, long-sleeve shirts, sunblock, knee-pads, etc. Bug spray is also recommended for chiggers and ticks. Some of the locations will require a short hike. Depending on the site, you may need a hammer and chisel. Bring lots of containers, zipper bags, soda flats, newspaper, etc. and something to label your finds.

Ada is a college town with a number of motels and restaurants in the area. We usually gather for a group dinner on Saturday night. More information will be provided at the auction, but call me at 512.657.7581 (during the evening) if you need more details.



An example of the terrain the Club will be visiting.

PSoA Annual Auction

Join us for the PSoA Annual Auction and Potluck Picnic on Saturday, April 16 from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. at Westcave Preserve. The main dish and soft drinks will be provided, just bring your favorite picnic side dish or dessert. Please consider donating a fossil or fossil-related item for the auction, as all proceeds go toward furthering our mission of education. In addition to fossils, books, maps, tools, hand-made cards and art have been popular items in the past – consider anything on which folks might competitively bid. Remember, this is one of our two money-raising events for the year, and it often makes up a substantial portion of the next year's budget. And, don't forget your checkbook or cash!

Come early or stay after the auction to take a guided tour of Westcave Preserve at 10 a.m. or 4 p.m. Tour rates are \$10 per adult, \$5 per child (4–12 years) or \$25 per family. Westcave Preserve is located on Hamilton Pool Road in western Travis County. From Austin, travel west on Highway 71 and turn left at Ranch Road 3238 (Hamilton Pool Road). Westcave Preserve is the first gate on your right after crossing the Pedernales River.

Field Trip Report

Ed Elliott
PSoA Field Trip Chair

We had a nice small group meeting in Nacogdoches. The eight members were Linda McCall, Melvin Noble, Cathy and Gary Rylander, Lyle Graham, Vaughn Nelson and Michael Bowland. I suppose the forecast for cool, wet weather kept some away – it was cool but not wet.

Our first stop was an old quarry that has been extensively reclaimed and reconfigured for gas production. Their goal was not to protect our fossils and we lost a lot of area. This time the big cut we've been hunting has just about disappeared under weeds, trees and grasses. There were still places to hunt and a good number of sand dollars (*Protoscutella mississippiensis*) and BB's (*Fibularia texana*), a few gastropods and bivalves were also found. Before they changed over to gas production, we certainly took our share of fossils home, so I won't whine too loudly. It always hurts to see a sea of vegetation over what was a great site.

Our second site was the spoils piles at a working glauconite quarry. I spent nearly all my time there with my nose in the dirt and didn't look at anyone's finds. I can say that I picked up six kinds of coral, at least two dozen different gastropods – a few I've never seen – a few small sand dollars, a dozen different bivalves, scaphopods, belosaepia and other small things. It wasn't until the end of the day that we got a few "big ticket items." Linda found a very nice crab carapace and I found a nice heart urchin (*Maretia argutus*). I will also mention that quite a few shark teeth were found. Not a bad day in the beautiful Piney Woods.

Only a few of us showed up for the last site. Lake Nacogdoches was up to the edge of the outcrop with nice whitecaps from the strong wind. This site is getting harder to hunt every year. We did well, all of us found some nice things, but you can dig forever and find little. Three feet over you find several nice things, and then nothing. I'm spoiled by all of the really nice sites we visit. I did get into a bed of corals (*Flabellum cuneiforme*) and picked up about 20, of which maybe 5 were great. I picked up a button coral (*Discotrochus orbignianus*), which made me happy, and a few really nice gastropods. All things considered, I think we all had a great time this weekend and I look forward to going back many more times. See you at the auction!

Meeting Minutes

February 16, 2016
Austin Gem and Mineral Society Building

Dale Vargo
PSoA Secretary

Tonight's speaker, Chiara Tornabene, a Master's student from The University of Texas at Austin, began our meeting with her presentation on her search for conclusive evidence of photosymbiosis in fossil corals. She explained the abundance and benefits of photosymbiotic relationships with algae in modern corals. And, her paleontological work involves the analysis of ancient corals for solid links toward the same mutually beneficial interaction of photosynthetic algae living with their host corals in ancient reef coral populations.

The thorough search and analysis of fossil corals for a direct link to the algae is difficult due to their poor preservation and she has tested various chemical traces and markers that could be indicators of fossil algae relationships with certain

corals, with inconclusive results. So, Ms. Tornabene is continuing to focus on modern coral photosymbiosis with algae to discover/confirm more subtle molecular effects that she will test on Eocene-era and older corals to establish conclusive markers for such a relationship in the fossil coral reef record. She finished her presentation by taking questions, some related to modern coral die-offs. We then took our refreshment break.

After the break, Mike stood in as interim leader of the meeting. He called on Suzanne to report on upcoming outreach opportunities and she noted some soon in Belton March 30 and April 7. Mike then requested that the most recent minutes be amended to include the last names of this year's officers and Board members. Dale, as Secretary, replied that he would resubmit the newsletter with the names in full. Mike then gave the Treasurer's report, stating the club's assets and noting an increase in payments to AGMS for our use of this building as a meeting location. Ed then outlined the upcoming field trip to Harker Heights with meet-up details and fossil descriptions. Ed explained the loss of access for collecting at a couple of sites, but that there are still several places to collect there. Then the door prizes were drawn and won by Cathy B., Mike S., David L., Cathy R., and Nathaniel E. The meeting was then adjourned.

Meeting Minutes

March 14, 2016

Austin Gem and Mineral Society Building

Dale Vargo
PSOA Secretary

Upon arrival at our AGMS meeting location, tonight's attendees were faced with an electrical power outage of the building. So we gathered together standing outside in the daylight amidst this rare occurrence and generally visited with each other, and with some visitors and newer members. Then at 7:15 p.m., Erich called the meeting to order, with us standing together outside the building, noting the unforeseen outage conditions, and resolving to go on and have the meeting right here and now anyway.

Erich called for the Treasurer's report and Mike gave the particulars. Regarding outreach, Erich stated that he will be giving a fossil talk to some students soon, and is setting up a presentation and family field trip at Westcave Preserve for this summer. Ed recommended some localities along Hamilton Pool Rd. as promising stops for collecting. Erich acknowledged our failure to publish the newsletter this month and proposed a larger edition newsletter be published before our upcoming annual Society Auction. Erich then called for more volunteer reports, and John announced the opportunity for members to outreach at Jacob's Well, a local spring. Suzanne did not have any other outreach to report. Erich then gave the details of our annual auction and potluck luncheon at Westcave Preserve on April 16, from 12-3 p.m. In support of the Paleo Society Auction, he encouraged all to bring an item to donate to the auction of high quality and interest that people would bid on.

Ed then gave details of this month's upcoming field trip to East Texas, which will collect nice fossil sand dollars Saturday and go to Lake Nacogdoches Sunday for collecting. Mike requested that participants in the field trip be aware of the possibility for flooding during their travel to East Texas. He also referred us to last year's March newsletter for reading the meet-up details for this year's field trip to the same localities. Erich stated that there will be a field trip to Oklahoma on April 23-24, the week after the Auction. Erich gave a shout out to Willie, a new member and Andrew, a visitor. Paul explained that this meeting's speaker has been re-scheduled for July. Erich announced that our own member and active paleontologist Linda McCall is, as we speak, driving here to attend tonight's meeting, in spite of experiencing a rental car breakdown.

The meeting took a slight break, waiting for Linda's arrival from Corsicana. Upon arriving, Linda greeted everyone and gave a surprise presentation about her recent fossil finds from the North Carolina shore. For us, she unpacked and exhibited a table full of beautiful and varied Eocene marine and Pleistocene vertebrate fossils that were inadvertently dredged up from the Atlantic ocean bottom offshore as part of a beach sand replenishment program, which caused these fossils to be dumped right up onto these replenished areas along with the new sand. Linda pointed out how many of these fossil echinoids have a uniquely colorful feature to their shells, which she postulated could be rare evidence of ancient color preservation. And, she also pointed out how many of these echinoids are preserved with their spines adjacent or intact, which usually means that they were involved in a quick, mass-casualty event like a large storm that caused their life's immediate termination and burial in sediments, which is indicated by the presence of their spines still intact with them. We all thanked Linda for her journey and efforts to be with us, as we adjourned the meeting at 8:12 p.m., just as the City of Austin power repair truck was pulling in to make an assessment of the needed repairs to restore electrical power to the building.

Amended Meeting Minutes

January 18, 2016

Austin Gem and Mineral Society Building
(Amendments underlined)

Dale Vargo
PSoA Secretary

Erich gavelled the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. with a nod to our visitors and guests. Then Ron introduced tonight's presenter, one of our own long-time members, Alan Peters. Alan began his talk, "Everyday Geology: Tricks of the Trade," with a fast-paced presentation of many interesting facts about Earth's physical makeup; describing the main elements of the core, its inner temperature and other geologic descriptions of the planet to us. He gave us quick rules for finding fossils, depending on whether we are in an erosion zone. Alan had young volunteers from the audience come to the front, and by using large, lightweight graphic blocks, he had them demonstrate the types of faulting and movement of Earth's crust in a fun and understandable way. Alan showed slides of Earth's constantly moving tectonic plates, and the ways that the plate movements are creating and destroying the surface areas of the planet. Alan showed the audience simple ways of understanding different types of rocks and the ways they are formed, again using fun ways of teaching, such as stomping toast into layers. Alan concluded his talk by giving us the "ten commandments" of dating rocks. We then took our refreshment break.

After the break we started the regular business portion of the meeting, with Erich noting a good number of young people in the audience. The door prizes were won by Angie, Dale, Francis, and Frederick. Then Ed gave the upcoming Jacksboro field trip details. Erich announced that we have set a proposed field trip schedule at our recent board meeting. We then recognized our newcomers for tonight, including Linda, Jonathon, Nathaniel, Laura and Harmony. Ed and Erich explained some of the ways in which we conduct our field trips, by going to distant localities as well as nearby ones to find a wide variety of quality fossils. Rose mentioned that even Shoal Creek her is a good fossil locality. Dr. Sprinkle requested an extra person to write a letter recommending that our member Linda McCall be given an award for her paleontological activities. Erich volunteered to do it and noted what an accomplished scientist Linda is.

Erich announced the upcoming instatement of Board members and Officers for 2016: President Erich Rose, Vice-President Suzanne Galligher, Treasurer Mike Smith, and Secretary Dale Vargo, as well as the other positions: Webmaster-Tech Gordon Galligher, Newsletter Editor Dax Gonzalez, Show Chair Suzanne Galligher, Field Trip Chairman Ed Elliot, Program Chair Paul Hammerschmidt and Refreshment Chair Melvin Noble. We then talked about the upcoming calendar dates for the Auction in April, which will be the Saturday before the regular meeting this time. Fossil Fest will be held the weekend before Thanksgiving this year.

Erich suggested that we include reports of our outreach activities in the monthly newsletter. Erich reported that the Board has met and reviewed our financial activities for last year and has proposed a budget for 2016. Mike noted that we had a successful financial year last year, making a profit at the Auction and Fossil Fest. Our board has approved a grant to fund a summer internship working at the UT paleontology labs. Ron and Ed both recommended volunteering to help catalog the UT labs' old fossil collection. Frederick inquired about approving the budget and Mike and Erich outlined the 2016 budget and process. Then Frederick moved that we accept the budget as presently proposed. Acceptance was seconded by Gary and then voted approved. The meeting was then motioned adjourned.

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 on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Austin Gem and Mineral Society building located at 6719 Burnet Ln. in Austin, Texas. The public is welcome to attend. Visit austinpaleo.org for more information.

Annual Dues: \$18/individual, \$24/family and \$12/associate (non-voting, receiving newsletter) Send to: Treasurer, Paleontological Society of Austin, P.O. Box 90791, Austin, TX 78749-0791.

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