



Paleo Footnotes

Volume 11, Number 8

August 2016

President's Note

Erich Rose
PSoA President

Triple digits for the next several weeks. Argh! I did a little collecting a few days back and even in the early part of the day I had to keep it short. Hope you are finding ways to stay involved but beating the heat.

Not sure where Ed has in mind for the field trip. The Brazos was down enough for the Whiskey Bridge trip last month, but maybe still too high for Pleistocene collecting. We will have to wait and see what he proposes.

My daughter Emelia has just returned from China where she spent the summer. We both visited the Zidong Dinosaur Museum in Sichuan Province back in early June, and she then went on to both Shanghai and then Beijing where she visited science museums in each city. We will be giving a report with lots of photos of all three at this coming meeting.

We are also half-way through summer and fall and Fossil Fest will not be far behind. Are you ready?

Hope to see you all Tuesday

Next Meeting

Tuesday, August 16 – 7 p.m.
Austin Gem and Mineral Society Building
6719 Burnet Lane
Austin, Texas

Next Field Trip

Details on the next field trip will be shared with members at the next meeting and sent via e-mail to all members who have filed e-mail addresses with the Club.

Upcoming Meeting

Paleontological Museums of China: A travel report by Erich and Emelia Rose

Erich Rose
PSoA President

This last spring our family traveled to China. Our daughter Emelia went ahead of us and spent some time volunteering at a Panda research facility in the mountains of Sichuan. We caught up with her a week later in Chengdu from which we then travelled two weeks through the mountainous Tibetan regions of Sichuan. We saw amazing scenery, ate great food, and met beautiful people. But, the mountains of Sichuan are all virtually metamorphic and we saw no fossils. So, to satisfy our need, Emelia and I spent a day traveling to the Zigong Dinosaur Museum about two hours south of Chengdu. We were well rewarded with displays of Middle Jurassic dinosaurs from one of the richest sites in the world.

A day later, Gail and I boarded a plane home to the US while Emelia went on to Shanghai and then Beijing. In both cities, she visited science museums with the one in Shanghai being the one worthy of presentation.

We will give a small presentation describing both museums with lots of photos of the fossils and displays we encountered. It may border on making you all watch the "family vacation slide show," but there's no Aunt Martha at the beach this time.

Field Trip Report

Eocene hunting along the Brazos River.

Ed Elliott
PSoA Field Trip Chair

We were only a few on the banks of the Brazos River at 8 a.m. that lovely Saturday morning. Little by little more members appeared. As I had left my note pad up at the truck, Melvin took names with his phone. Twenty-one of us hunted at Whiskey Bridge that morning. Eric Jones, Jack, Lilly, Ana and Jessica Rice, Kevin Measell, Dax and Cruz Gonzalez, Jimmy Hendricks, Robert Saxelby, Nelson Vaughan, Dan and Rene Wojcik, Willie, Emily and Candace Vega, Scott, Mary and Angie Steelman, and Melvin Noble. After deciding that we could go to this site as the water got down to 18 feet, I was told that the Houston club wouldn't go unless it was below 15 feet. Since I had already sent the e-mail to everyone to be there, I was nervous that the water would still be too high. Just FYI: 18 feet is do-able, 15 feet is good and ten or eleven feet is what we are used to seeing.



Dax hunts for fossils while Cruz hunts for snacks.



Ed's shark tooth.

This site is also called the Stone City Bluff, and outcrops (downstream) the Sparta Formation in the bed of the Brazos River. The Stone City Formation overlies the Sparta, and the Cook Mountain Formation, Wheelock Member is at the top of the upstream bluff. This is all middle Eocene and approximately 45mybp. The Stone City and the Cook Mountain are marine deposits and the Sparta is deltaic.

People came and went all morning. Occasionally they would stop and show me something. What I saw that day was all pretty much the standard fare, nothing rare. With over 220 species possible, the standard fare is still pretty impressive. I used up most of my luck of the day by picking up a large *Carcharodes auriculatus* shark tooth from the ledge as I arrived. I was shown a couple of nice large *Conus* picked up upstream. And I remember that Jimi found a nice horn coral – listed in the Emerson book as unknown. I believe it is *Platytyrochus goldfussi*. And Dax showed me a *Belosaeptia veatchi*, a cuttlefish butt. There were many bivalves, gastropods and corals found that day, as always. This site never disappoints. Most of us were gone by 2 p.m. because of the heat. Another wonderful day spent picking up fossils.

Fossil Fest Update

Suzanne Galligher
PSoA Vice President & Show Chair

Save the date!

The 26th Annual Fossil Fest will be Saturday to Sunday, Nov. 19-20, 2016 (with set-up on Friday, Nov. 18). This year's show theme is "Prehistoric Sharks!" We'll be exploring all the prehistoric sharks that roamed the Texas seaways.

Volunteer

At this month's meeting, we'll be calling for volunteers to sign up for Fossil Fest and to distribute Fossil Fest flyers at designated public attractions and facilities around the Austin area by Sept. 1. Locations include public libraries, Texas Memorial Museum, The University of Texas Jackson School of Geosciences, 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 Thinkery. 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 off by Sept. 1. Please send an e-mail 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!

Show Off with an Exhibit Case

The Club traditionally sets out several display cases for us to show off member collections and other educational materials. This year, we're looking to fill the cases in the front room with shark fossils to highlight our show theme. Please consider creating an exhibit case, either with shark material or anything else that would be of interest to visitors. We want to see those fossils you worked so hard to collect – in searing heat, ankle deep mud, slippery slopes, capsizing canoes or finger numbing cold! Start sorting through your fossils now! Additionally, these cases can help us teach some key Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills concepts to students. If you're in need of exhibit case ideas, please consider:

- Collection of fossils from a specific locality around Texas and surrounding area
- Collection of a specific type of fossil from localities all around Texas and surrounding area
- 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 with descriptions of the characteristics used to identify it with samples and diagrams
- A fossil and display showing what we were able to learn about it (for instance "x" tells us the type of climate/environment in which the organism lived)

Lastly, I'd like to incorporate technology into the show again this year. How do you use technology with respect to fossils, paleontology or your hobby? Is anyone digitizing their collection? How about 3D scanning or printing? Please contact showchair@austinpaleo.org if you are utilizing any of this technology with our hobby.

Outreach Opportunities

Suzanne Galligher
PSoA Vice President & Show Chair

When it rains, it pours. So it is with outreach events! Volunteering at outreach events is a rewarding and valuable club experience. Don't be afraid to step up because you're "not an expert." We've all been in those shoes and the majority of us are hobbyists or amateurs. Your interest in fossils and paleontology means that you already know more than the general public! Join us in the thrill of introducing adults and children to the fabulous world of fossils in our backyards. If you're interested in volunteering, please email outreach@austinpaleo.org.

PSoA Booth at Gem Capers Show

One of our key outreach events, the Club booth at the Austin Gem and Mineral Society's Gem Capers show exposes scores of people to PSoA and what we do. Sign-up to volunteer at the Tuesday meeting or online at www.mysignup.com/agms (passcode: paleo) for the Paleontology Table at the AGMS Gem Capers show held Friday through Sunday, Oct. 21 - 23 (with set-up on Thursday, Oct. 20) 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. We have a lot of fun, so don't miss out! In the meantime, please start gathering up small, clean fossils for donation. We'll need those donations at a fossil stuffing party we'll hold before our regular meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 20 at 6:15 p.m. We'll be bagging 1,500 fossils along with our Fossil Fest show flyer to give away at public outreach events and the Gem Capers show. For more information, visit <http://www.austingemandmineral.org/gemcapers/index.html>.

Pioneer Day at the Dr. Pound Historic Farmstead in Dripping Springs on Saturday, Sept. 24 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, visit <http://www.drpoundhistoricalfarmstead.org/pioneer-day.html>.

Dino Day at Champion Park in Williamson County on Saturday, Oct. 22 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more info, visit <http://parks.wilco.org/Home/Parks/ChampionPark/tabid/1577/Default.aspx>.

Fossil Fest at Old Settlers Association in Round Rock on Saturday, Nov. 19 and Sunday, Nov. 20 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, visit www.austinpaleo.org/fest.

Meeting Minutes

Dale Vargo
PSoA Secretary

July 19, 2016

Austin Gem and Mineral Society Building

Erich Rose welcomed the meeting to order at 7:18 p.m., reminding everyone to sign the attendance book. Mike Smith gave the Treasurer's report. Erich asked if there were any changes to the meeting minutes, and the meeting minutes were accepted by vote. Erich requested feedback on whether there was any new business to discuss and reminded us about Museum Day in September that has fossil identification included in the activities at TX Memorial Museum, where we will be manning the invertebrate ID table. Erich said that Suzanne will soon be giving us the announcement of our upcoming Fossil Fest 2016. Erich noted the regulars in attendance and some new guests: Lee, Willie and Emily. Erich asked for any news regarding the UT invertebrate lab. Then Ed, noting that the Brazos is still too high, said he is planning this month's field trip to Whiskey Bridge. Mike gave some details regarding the proposed field trip there. There was news of a *Bison latifrons* being plaster-jacked for preservation. Kathleen mentioned the lab having a new director. Erich proposed visiting a new museum in Whiteside, TX. And Melinda noted the possibility of visiting the Mayborn Museum at Baylor. Ed stated that Whiskey Bridge would be a good choice. Erich agreed and he, Ed, Melvin and others gave details of the fossils likely to be found and the methods for collecting. Paul gave a preview description of the upcoming DVD viewing for the second part of the meeting. The door prizes were won by Melinda, Dale, John, Scott, and Danny. Then the refreshment break was taken.

After the break, Paul presented the DVD, "Dinosaur Hunters", the account of a modern expedition for dinosaur fossils in remote regions of the Mongolian Gobi Desert. Based on the 1922 Oviraptor dinosaur discoveries by explorer Roy Chapman Andrews there, The American Museum of Natural History sent a large expedition to see whether more Oviraptor dinosaur evidence could be discovered. The film documented the difficult travel to such an inaccessible location, the hard-won, eventful, fortunate discoveries, and the complex, difficult process of preserving and bringing the dinosaur fossils back to be further studied and showcased. Once the documentary concluded, Erich adjourned the meeting, advising everyone to look for the Whiskey bridge email blast.

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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