



Paleo Footnotes

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February 2017

President's Note

Erich Rose
PSoA President

Are you ready for another installment of Fossil Collecting 101? Our next class will be before our Feb. 21 meeting. This month you will learn how to find fossils – from reading geologic maps to what tools are needed.

Our speaker will be our newest science advisor Rowan Martindale from The University of Texas. She will be telling us all about some amazing new Jurassic fossils from Canada.

If all goes as planned the February field trip will be to Jacksboro, TX. This is one of the richest sites you could visit for Pennsylvanian marine fossils. The Finis Shale at that site yields a tremendous variety of fossils from corals and brachiopods to shark teeth and ammonoids. It's a long drive but well worth the effort. I'll keep this short. See y'all next meeting.

Club Member Passes Away

Jean Wallace, a longtime Club member, passed away on December 19, 2016 after a brief illness. She traveled the world in search of fossils and received numerous awards for her trilobite and ammonite collections. Jean served as Club secretary until 2006. Read her obituary: <http://bit.ly/2kAFhRA>.

Next Meeting

Tuesday, February 21 – 7 p.m.
Austin Gem and Mineral Society Building
6719 Burnet Lane
Austin, Texas

Next Field Trip

Saturday, February 25 – 8 a.m.
Meet at Jack County Extension Office
100 N. Main St.
Jacksboro, Texas 76458

Fossil Collecting 101

Erich Rose
PSoA President

PSoA members will host the second in a three-part series of presentations on paleontology, collecting fossils and making a collection for beginners and seasoned collectors. The Club will hold the second session at 6 p.m. – prior to its regularly scheduled meeting – on February 21. The session, entitled “How do I find fossils,” will focus on geology and stratigraphy, maps and guidebooks, public and private property, collecting equipment, labels and notes, and safety.

Handouts will be provided, but you may want to bring a notebook and lots of questions. Note that these presentations will take place prior to the regular meetings, and we will be covering a great deal in each 45-minute session. Please be there on time or early so we can start at 6 p.m. sharp.

Upcoming Speaker

Paul Hammerschmidt
PSoA Program Chair

UT Assistant Professor Rowan Martindale will discuss exceptionally preserved Jurassic marine fossils discovered in Canada. The preservation of the fossils – which include soft body parts as well as shells and bones – ranks the site among the highest quality sources of Jurassic (183 million year old) marine fossils in the world, and the only such site in North America.

The presence of fossilized soft tissue is especially significant because it offers a more complete view of life in ancient ecosystems and can help fill the gaps in knowledge connecting extinct organisms to those living today, explains Martindale. Read more about it: <https://www.jsg.utexas.edu/news/2017/01/exceptionally-preserved-jurassic-sea-life-found-in-new-fossil-site/>

Upcoming Field Trip

Ed Elliott
PSoA Field Trip Chair

Join us for one of the group's favorite hunting spots: Lake Jacksboro. This Upper Carboniferous site is replete with fossils from the Upper Pennsylvanian Period. Most fossils will be marine in origin, including brachiopods, trilobites, corals, bryozoans, molluscs, crinoids, echinoids and teeth. Fossils will generally be small and loose, so bring plenty of small containers.

The drive back into downtown Jacksboro is not far, but it will waste valuable collecting time – bring food and plenty of water to maximize your time. If you stick around for more collecting on Sunday, some members will visit various road cuts and possibly the Mineral Wells Fossil Park.

We will meet at 8:00 a.m. in front of the Jack County Extension Office located at 100 N. Main St. in Jacksboro. This is the heart of the Jacksboro town square. To get there, take 183 North from Austin and, in Lampasas, turn onto 281 North, which will take you straight to Jacksboro. When you get into town, look for a group of fossil hunters huddled near the sign proclaiming the Jacksboro Tigers "State AA Football Champs" from 1962 to 1971...what a feat! There is a gas station one block up, which is a good pit stop for coffee and other necessities prior to heading out to the site.

Remember that Jacksboro is about four hours from Austin, so either drive up the night before or be prepared to leave early Saturday. We will caravan as a group to the first site, so please be on time. There will be a small admission fee to cover admission to the state park we must cross to get to the collecting site. Bring \$3 cash for each adult in your vehicle (children are free). The weather forecasts look good, if a little chilly, but check before you prepare to leave just in case.

Field Trip Report

Ed Elliott
PSoA Field Trip Chair

It was a great day for a field trip, and we had a large turnout: Gary and Cathy Rylander, Dana, Willian, Emily Anderson, Dave Hodapp, Mike Zimmer, Robert Saxelby, Dave Hoppes, Vaughn Nelson, Gary Vliet, Scott, Angie, and Mary Steelman, Ann Skowronski, Vlad Medrano, Melvin Noble, Keller and Claire Groves, Kevin Bills and Dax Gonzalez.

Our first location in Harker Heights is large and easily accommodates a large group. It is Walnut Formation, Fredericksburg Group. I think everyone, even the large (for our outings) number of kids, found a good assortment of fossils. The sought after *Phymosoma* and *Heteraster* echinoids, a few *Engonoceras* ammonites and a large number of *Oxytropidoceras* pieces, bivalves of all kinds, crab claws, a few small corals and Gary Vliet even found a nice shark tooth. By the time we left around noon, our numbers were greatly diminished.

The second site was the parking lot on Business 190, which is Walnut Formation. The little *Salenia mexicana* echinoid is a main draw. The coral *Parasimilia austinensis* is abundant as are many species of small gastropod with original shell markings. Occasional *Oxytropidoceras* ammonites are found, and *Texigryphaea* are found by the ton. By the time we left this site we were down to three, so I suggested a small site I hadn't been to in years. It is out past Copperas Cove off Hwy 2657 with an interesting assortment of fossils. The main draw is a small gastropod with the ornate original shell intact. It is *Semineritina apparata* and is really pretty. A few nice specimens were found.

It was a beautiful day with a lot of friendly people to talk to and lots of fossils from which to choose. A good local trip that most of us go to on our own. The next trip is to Jacksboro and Mineral Wells for some Pennsylvanian marine specimens. Regardless of weather, always a fun trip. See you there.

Donations Needed

Emelia Rose
PSoA Vice President and Show Chair

Paul Hammerschmidt will be facilitating the “Fossils Talk” presentations at Club outreach events and is in need of some items. If you have any extra specimens or replicas of the items below, please consider donating them to the Club. Just bring the items to the next meeting or contact Paul at: paulhammers75@yahoo.com.

Modern Heart Urchin	Various Mammal Eggs
Ammonite Replica	Modern Amphibian Replica
Whole Chambered Nautilus	Prehistoric Amphibian Replica
Sliced Chambered Nautilus	Dino Skull
Belemnite	Dino Models
Preserved Bat	Various Tracks

Meeting Minutes

Gary Vliet
PSoA Secretary

January 17, 2017 – Austin Gem and Mineral Society Building

The meeting was opened by Club President Erich Rose at 7:10 p.m.

Erich explained that on the next two Tuesday meeting nights there will be sessions beginning at 6 p.m. for those new to fossil collecting...sort of “Fossil Collecting 101” sessions. For this Jan. 17 initiation session Erich had brought a number of ‘specimen’ fossils and had conducted a basic session on “What is Paleontology.” For the Feb. meeting the topic will be “How do I find Fossils” and for the March meeting the topic will be “How do I Start a Collection.” This three-topic sequence will be repeated later in the year, months yet to be determined.

The meeting minutes for December were approved.

Erich reported that the Board had met on Jan. 5 to develop a budget for the coming year and to establish a field trip schedule. Mike Smith reported that for the 2017 year we will be overspending by about \$1700. There was extended discussion about raising money for the society. One interesting suggestion was that we should have a regular auction of member-donated specimen. Ed Elliott reviewed the field trip schedule for the year. It is available on the Club website calendar. Of particular note is that the July trip will be to the Natural History Museum in Houston, and the Auction will be on April 22 at Westcave Preserve.

There was discussion about the Fossil Preservation Act. The “rules” for the act are currently being formulated, so if you have an interest and input you can offer them through the website which Linda McCall recently shared with Club members. Related to this, Kathleen announced that on Jan. 26 at the Austin Gem and Mineral Society meeting there will be a presentation on the “ethics of collecting,” including land rights, etc. It is open to the public.

It was announced that Matthew Brown of The University of Texas Paleo Lab has invited a few members of the Board to meet with him over issues related to the ownership of a specific fossil and of what constitutes public or private land. Two members agreed to meet with Brown.

Melvin Noble, hospitality chair, passed around the ‘goodies’ sign-up sheet, and requested members to sign up.

Erich announced that Allan Peters is resigning from the great volunteer presentations he has done at Fossil Fest for many years. Paul Hammerschmidt will be stepping into his shoes and has asked for contributions that will assist him in these presentations.

The Jan. 21 field trip is to Harker Heights. We meet at McDonald’s on Indian Trail at 8 a.m.

There were four visitors who introduced themselves, three adults and a child. There was no speaker for the evening.

The meeting was adjourned about 8:15 pm.

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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