



Paleo Footnotes

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February 2018

President's Note

Erich Rose
PSoA President

Bad weather kept us from holding a meeting last month and hopefully that will not be the case again this month. We don't get that kind of freezing icy weather that often and to have it line up on our meeting night was a shame. But we did manage to have some fabulous weather the following weekend for the field trip. This month we are going a bit further north to Jacksboro and one of the best places to collect Pennsylvanian Period fossils. Come to the meeting and find out more about this fabulous location.

And speaking of field trips & special events, here is our tentative* schedule for the rest of 2018:

- February 24th, Jacksboro (Pennsylvanian)
- March 24th, East Texas (Eocene)
- April 14th, Auction & Picnic
- April 21st & 22nd, Oklahoma (Paleozoic)
- May 19th, Midlothian or Waco (Cretaceous)
- June 23rd, Brazos or Whiskey Bridge (Pleistocene or Eocene)
- July 21st, Museum Trip (TBD)
- August 25th, Harker Heights (Cretaceous)
- September 22nd, Clifton (Cretaceous)
- October 19th, 20th & 21st, Gem Capers
- October 27th & 28th, Texoma (Cretaceous)
- November 3rd & 4th, Fossil Fest
- November 24th, Local creeks & cuts (Cretaceous)
- December 18th, Holiday Party

Some of these trips require water levels to be not too low or too high and access to some of the quarries can change. Look to that month's newsletter for updates.

Hope to see you there.

Next Meeting

Tuesday, February 20 – 7 p.m.
Austin Gem and Mineral Society Building
6719 Burnet Lane
Austin, Texas

Upcoming Field Trip

Ed Elliott
PSoA Field Trip Chair

Join us for one of the groups' favorite hunting spots – Lake Jacksboro. This Upper Pennsylvanian site is replete with fossils from the Finis Shale, Graham Formation of the Cisco Group. Most fossils will be marine in origin, including brachiopods, trilobites, corals, bryozoans, mollusks, crinoids, echinoids and teeth. Fossils will generally be small and loose, so bring plenty of small containers or sectional boxes. The drive back into downtown Jacksboro is not far, but coupled with the walk back across the spillway, 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, we will visit various road cuts and possibly the Mineral Wells Fossil Park.

We will meet at 8:00 am in front of the Jack County Extension Office located at 100 N Main St. in Jacksboro (the town square). To get there, take 183 North from Austin and, in Lampasas, turn onto 281 North, which will take you straight to Jacksboro. Or, take I35 North to the EI35/ WI35 split just North of Hillsboro. Take WI35 to Ft Worth and take I20 West. On the West side of Ft Worth take the loop 820N and just North of Lake Worth exit for West 199 (the Jacksboro Highway). This will take you straight into Jacksboro. Saturday morning 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. Remember that Jacksboro is about four hours from Austin, so either drive up the night before or be prepared to leave early Saturday. Jacksboro motels are somewhat bare-bones, so if you want top quality accommodations.... some people stay in Mineral Wells as we will be in that area for Sunday. We will caravan as a group to the first site, so please be on time. There will be a \$3 admission fee per person (children are free) to cover our parking in and crossing the spillway in the state park. Please have cash handy to put into envelopes at the pay station. Check the local weather before leaving so that you can dress appropriately. It is February in North Texas.

Next Field Trip

Saturday, February 24 – 8 a.m.
Lake Jacksboro – Meet in Jacksboro, Texas

January Meeting Minutes

January 16, 2017 – Austin Gem and Mineral Society Building

The January meeting was cancelled due to bad weather.

Field Trip Report

PSA Field Trip Report: Wilson Clay Pit, January 2018 (Erich Rose)

On a cool, crisp and sunny Saturday morning we had a great turnout in Early, TX. More than twenty members arrived, including: John Hinte, Lee & Susie Schnelle, Frederick & Melinda Falk, Scott, Mary and Angie Steelman, Robert Saxelby, Vaughn Nelson, David Lindberg, Gary and Cathy Rylander, Gary Vliet, Ed Walston, Ron DiPronio, Mike Zimmer, Kevin Bills, Andrew Dunham, one or two others whose names we didn't catch and of course our FT leader Ed Elliott and myself.

By 8:15 the caravan was on its way to the site. It's a good 30 minutes from the meeting place up some country highways and down some dusty farm roads, but well worth the bumps and jiggles and quarter inch of dust on the windshield.

Although the day started in the 30s by noon most of us were shedding layers under that Texas sun. A nice steady breeze kept us comfortable all afternoon as temps climbed over 70 degrees right up to sunset.

The former clay pit (they mined the clay layers to make bricks) is a jumble of all the shale and limestone the quarry didn't need. All of it is material completely turned over and tossed about. Luckily it is almost all from just two formations: The Harpersville and the Saddle Creek. These layers are part of the very uppermost Pennsylvanian Cisco Group (Virgilian Series) and some geologists believe the transition to Permian may be found in these layers. The two units are not hard to discern. The great big blocks of heavy limestone are the Saddle Creek and pretty much everything else is the Harpersville. Fossils are plentiful in all of it.

The goal of most of us was to find good specimens of two types: ancient shark teeth and well-preserved crinoids. And there are loads of other fossils, as well as fragments of teeth and crinoids pretty much everywhere. The trick was finding fairly complete ones.

Personally, I made my mark finding one 99% complete *Petalodus* tooth as well as a small, but fairly intact, crinoid calyx. I found a few other good partial teeth including another *Petalodus*, *Peripristas* and *Deltodus*. I also found some other crinoid material and a variety of invertebrates.



Odds and Ends

World's oldest butterfly and moth fossils discovered in 200-million-year-old 'pond scum'

Scientists in Germany discovered the oldest known fossils of moths and butterflies while sifting through what could be described as 200-million-year-old "pond scum" — ancient soil samples filled with pollen, spores, pieces of plants and insect legs and wings.

Read more at <https://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/science/2018/01/11/worlds-oldest-butterfly-and-moth-fossils-worlds-oldest-butterfly-and-moth-fossils-discovered-200-mil/1024442001/>.

Dinosaur and Ancient Mammal Stomping Ground Found in NASA Parking Lot

In 2012, amateur paleontologist and dinosaur track aficionado Ray Stanford headed out to lunch with his wife Sheila, an information specialist at the Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland. After dropping her off back at work, he noticed a chunk of rock sticking out of a nearby hill that was the exact same color as a piece he had found several years ago that contained a small dinosaur print. The tip of the rock led to the discovery of an 8.5-foot long slab of sandstone with roughly 70 tracks from eight different species.



Read more at https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/dinos-and-early-mammals-romped-nasas-doorstep-180968023/?utm_source=smithsoniandaily&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=20180202-daily-responsive&spMailingID=32904714&spUserID=NzY1MjM2NjM0NzcS1&spJobID=1220277702&spReportId=MTIyMDI3NzcwMgS2 & also <https://www.nasa.gov/feature/goddard/2018/dinosaur-age-meets-the-space-age-at-nasa-goddard>.

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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