

# PALEO FOOTNOTES

NEWSLETTER OF THE PALEONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTIN

VOLUME 18 | NUMBER 09

SEPTEMBER 2023



## President's Note

### One hot long summer!

Maybe it is finally over? This morning we awoke to rain and I don't see temps over 100 any where in the immediate future. Sigh of relief.... Who can I thank for this? I want to believe it was the birth of my first grandchild on Tuesday. Many of you know my daughter Emelia. Well she had a lovely little girl! And the next day it rained!

OK, Weather and family business out of the way.... It is almost officially fall and let the Fossil Fest fun commence. First order of business is the distribution of flyers and pads or the (continued on page 2)

## This Month's Speaker

### Texas Memorial Museum's Stories in Stone and Bone by Pamela Owen

Texas Memorial Museum is a museum devoted to the natural sciences on the main campus of The University of Texas at Austin. Reopening to the public in September 2023, it is a vital educational resource for all communities, exhibiting outstanding fossil specimens and facilitating connections between the public and the work of scientists. From the early campaigns for a major museum in Texas, a statewide paleontological-mineralogical survey, and the (continued on page 2)

September 2023

**Regular September Meeting**  
Tuesday September 19th - 7pm  
**AGMS Clubhouse**  
6719 Burnet Lane

Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://us05web.zoom.us/j/84247973097?pwd=cErWd4vm7oElt9ccsMKPiLxVlQYlBE.1>

Meeting ID: 842 4797 3097  
Passcode: SciumW

**September Field Trip**  
Saturday September 23rd - 8am  
Lake Texoma  
(see page 2)

## President's Note

(continued from page 1)

event. This is our annual prep for Fossil Fest. The flyers are one of our best advertising bits and we need to get them ready and distributed. In fact we have an event late this month at the newly named Texas Science and Natural History museum (formerly Texas Memorial Museum). We will have more information by the meeting.

There will be plenty more things to discuss at the meeting. See you there.

**Erich Rose**  
PSoA President



Hear about Jamie and her flock of small tauranosaurids - see page 4!

## This Month's Speaker

(continued from page 1)

Centennial celebrations, the Museum is rooted in deep time and continues to evolve. We will explore the past, present, and future of the newly renamed Texas Science & Natural History Museum, including recent renovations and plans for new experiences and stories from our natural world.

**Pamela R. Owen**, PhD (she/her) The University of Texas at Austin Associate Director, Texas Science & Natural History Museum, College of Natural Sciences Research Associate, Texas Vertebrate Paleontology Collections, Jackson School of Geosciences. Dr. Pamela R. Owen is Associate Director of Texas Science & Natural History Museum (formerly known as Texas Memorial Museum), the museum of natural sciences on the main campus of The University of Texas at Austin. She is a mammalogist and vertebrate paleontologist as well as an informal science educator, providing preK-12+ teacher professional development and specimen based public outreach programs in the natural sciences for more than 23 years. Dr. Owen is a NAI Certified Interpretive Guide and a Project WILD Facilitator. Her formal education includes a BA and MS in Biology from California State University, Long Beach. Dr. Owen conducted her master's thesis research on saber-toothed cats, American lions, coyotes and dire wolves at La Brea Tar Pits & Museum in Los Angeles, California. In May 2000, Dr. Owen was awarded a PhD from The University of Texas at Austin. Her research focused on the evolution of American badgers, and included the description and naming of a new fossil badger species, *Chamitataxus avitus*. Dr. Owen is spending much of her time this year working toward the public reopening of the Museum. She continues to provide annual training in mammalogy and paleontology for several chapters of the Texas Master Naturalists

## September 2023 Field Trip

### Lake Texoma

We'll be collecting along the shores of Lake Texoma. We will meet at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, Sept. 23 at the entrance to Eisenhower State Park. Unless you want to leave at three in the morning, you will need to drive up the night before. Plan to stay overnight in the Sherman/Denison area, as we will also be collecting Sunday morning. We will visit a variety of sites. Some of these include large ammonites, so be prepared to carry heavy rock. You will definitely want to bring your hammers and chisels to remove specimens and backpacks to carry those specimens a fair distance along the lake shoreline, but there is collecting of smaller stuff if you do not want to carry heavy fossils.

It goes without saying that you will need lots of water, sunscreen, a good hat, food, sturdy shoes, etc. Since the weather is turning a little cooler you might possibly need a light jacket in the morning. This is a Cretaceous site, Washita group. You can find not just ammonites, but several species of echinoids such as (large) *Macrasters*, *Holasters*, different species of *Hemiasters* than are found around Austin area, the elusive Razor clam, *Rastellum* (often called denture clams but really an oyster), small shark teeth in the gravel and other fossils.

For more info contact me at: [fieldtripchair@austinpaleo.org](mailto:fieldtripchair@austinpaleo.org)

**Melvin Noble**  
Field Trip Co-Chair

A promotional poster for the Grand Opening of the Texas Science &amp; Natural History Museum. The poster features the museum's logo at the top, which includes a stylized sunburst and the text "TEXAS SCIENCE &amp; NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM The University of Texas at Austin". Below the logo, the text "Grand Opening" is written in a large, bold, orange font, followed by "September 23" and "10AM-2PM" in a smaller, bold, orange font. The main slogan "Life in Texas... It's Bigger Than You Think." is written in a large, bold, orange font. To the right of the text is a large, stylized illustration of a dinosaur skull in shades of green and blue. At the bottom of the poster, there is a list of activities: "Free admission all day", "Activities for the whole family", "Hands-on science", "Live entertainment", and "Light bites and beverages". In the bottom right corner, there is a logo for "event sponsored by HEB Helping Here".



For a chance to see Texas prehistoric life underwater, check out the permanent collection at the Witte Museum in San Antonio. We were told by one of the museum staff that they have plans to expand this exhibit to include a full sized mosasaur! Check out the Field Trip Report on page 4!

## Fossil Fest 2023 Update

### Volunteers are needed for Fossil Fest 2023 (November 3-5)!

You do not need any experience to work any of the tables. Please sign up [here](#)

Tear Pads and Flyers will be distributed at the meeting. Please take them to the drop off location to help advertise our event. Details for each location are on the envelope.

Please email Heather at [showchair@austinpaleo.org](mailto:showchair@austinpaleo.org) if you are able to do any of the following:

- You can commit to creating a fossil display at our event this year.
- Pull the AGMS trailer to Fossil Fest on Friday November 3rd around 11:00 am with your truck.
- Would like to give talks at our event on anything related to our show theme of “Prehistoric Life Underwater”.

Temporary food permit has been obtained for the event.

Insurance has been requested for the event.

Games will include the “Wheel of Fossils” and Paul Hammerschmidt’s “Dart Game.” We will not have the Dig Pit at this year’s event.

T-Shirts will be available to purchase at the monthly meeting and are \$12 for members.

### Upcoming:

October Meeting - Will be stuffing bags to hand out at AGMS’s Gem Capers. Each bag will receive a fossil, ¼ sheet flyer, and sea life sticker.

### Heather Aziz

Vice President + Show Chair

## Side Trip:

### Children In Nature

A Guided Field Trip for Children in Nature

As some of you may remember last December we offered a guided trip as one of the auction prizes for the Children in Nature’s annual vent. The money went to them and all we had to do was take them collecting (they also were given a rather large ammonite. Thanks John Hite!)

The winner of this prize, Katie Doyle of Corpus Christi, contacted us in June and we planned for a trip in early September (when we thought it was going to finally be cooler!)

After some discussion we settled on the classic location of Whiskey Bridge, September the 3rd. We sent Katie the directions and info on the site and she forwarded it on to 10 of her good friends.


So at 8AM on the third we all gathered at the bridge. Mike Smith drove me and Jamie Shelton drove out as well to meet Katie and her crew. A nice mix of adults and children showed up. After a brief down load of what to expect we all started collecting. I’m not aware of anything spectacular being found, but nice stuff was found by all. The morning became very warm pretty quick so the group headed out by late morning.

We want to thank Katie for making the high bid that went to an exceptionally worthy cause.

### Erich Rose

PSOA President





Field Trip Report:  
**The Witte Museum, San Antonio**

**T**hank goodness for Museums. They are fascinating, educational, and usually air-conditioned! So August is a great time for our field trip to be a museum trip! The San Antonio Witte Museum did not disappoint in any of those categories. We had a great group who all met just as the museum opened - Eric Rose, Mike Smith, Yoli and Will Lins, Will Jo, Eric Jones and family, Brian Bedrosian and family, Alan Keith and his wife, and Cassidy Jones and her friend Rene Bowler. The main entrance hall is filled with dinosaurs - including a Quetzocualtus, which was MOST impressive! They have a great array of Texas Fossils, including a mosasaur, xiphactinus fish and a nice selection of Aguja Formation (out in West Texas) Dinosaur and Crocodilian specimens.

## Field Trip Report:

# The Witte Museum - Tyrannosaurs: Meet the Family



(continued from page 4)

We were fortunate to be there while two traveling special exhibits were up- T-Rex Family Tree and Antarctic Dinosaurs. The larger exhibit was the T-Rex Family Tree which showed the evolution of the Tyrannosaurids. It was absolutely fascinating and very interactive! One of my favorite moments: 6-8 of us (I can't remember correctly because some were coming and going) played a table top video game of "Place The Hatched Dinosaur in the Correct Order of Family Tree". A virtual egg would hatch and you would get three clues as to what that dino was and what time frame it might be from and you had to drag and drop it into the family tree. Great fun... the little dino would run around a bit, eat some meat and roar. It truly took all of us to complete the family tree, but we did! And as soon as we did...VIRTUAL ASTEROIDS COME CRASHING THROUGH and destroyed everything...how apropos!



Other fun interactives were the Big Screen where you would be projected and Dinos would be in the screen with you! Mike got the best snap. And around the corner, the big T-Rex had a shadow projected on the wall that would occasionally "come to life" and move around, and then quickly go back to static. You only really noticed if you were really watching! But I saw it do something hilarious...pulled the head off a passing shadow "tourist" and ate it! Shadow tourist then walked around waving its arms about! It only lasted maybe 6 seconds and then it was gone...Will Jo and I stood there for probably 20 minutes trying to get a video of it and it never did it again! Maybe was just my imagination?? hahahah! But that all does not compare with the amazing fossils on display of the myriad Tyrannosaurids. It was incredible to see the diversity and realize the expanse of time that they were dominant.



## Field Trip Report:

# The Witte Museum - Antarctic Dinosaurs: A Forest Frozen in Time



Cryolophosaurus skeleton in foreground, fully rendered in color in background

(continued from page 4)

The other traveling exhibit was Antarctic Dinosaurs : A Forest Frozen in Time - an exhibit about the exploration of the Antarctic and the fossils that have been discovered. It had great displays of the actual “work” of extracting fossils from the very very dense matrix they are found in. It showed some Permian fossils found there as well as the actual Dinosaurs. My favorite was the Cryolophosaurus...a lovely name for a cold dino! It has a gorgeous ornate crest on it’s skull. How amazing to find something like that.

All in all, we had a great time at the Museum! And hopefully the weather will be a little more “seasonal” so we can do some proper fossil hunting come September!

**Jamie Shelton**  
Field Trip Co-chair



## Side Trip: Southern Indiana



One beautiful Saturday last month, my local fossil club - ESCONI (Earth Science Club of Northern Illinois) - met another club at a quarry in southern Indiana. The quarry is mostly known for cystoids. Silurian cystoids are generally rare, but are quite common here. They are often crushed but nicely inflated specimens can be found. The genus *Holocystites* are by far the most common. Almost everyone was able to find one - including me (fig. 1). The cystoids were found in one area of the quarry. After that area was thoroughly searched, we ventured to other parts in search of more varied fauna. Although trilobites have been known to be found, to my knowledge none were found that day. However, very clean typical marine fossils such as brachiopods, horn corals, and bryozoans were found in large quantities. I found a large rock with some of the nicest bryozoans I have ever seen, but I was unable to move it and had to leave it behind.

Later in the day, another club member and I were chatting and she mentioned that she knew of another place to hunt near a cemetery not far away. After getting detailed directions, the two of us met there. I looked around and found nothing. I walked to a creek hoping there would be things there but nothing. While walking back, I was about to tell her that there was nothing to find when I finally got my "fossil eyes". All of a sudden there were fossils all around us in the gravel. Before I knew it I had grabbed a trilobite, a few species of corals (fig.2), an (admittedly worn) crinoid cup (fig. 3), among a whole host of other things! All in all it was a very worthwhile trip and a great way to spend a day.

**Diane Bedrosian**  
PSoA Member



Fig. 1 *Holocystites* cystoid



Fig. 2 Coral



Fig. 3 Crinoid Cup



## Tailings...

### In The News

#### Paper Offers Glimpse of 500-Million-Year Old Sea Worm Named After ‘Dune’ Monster

Excavations by a University of Kansas paleontologist working in a treasure trove of fossils called the “Spence Shale Lagerstätte” have revealed an ancient sea worm unknown to science until now.

[The University of Kansas](#), August 3rd 2023

#### An Extreme Ice Age May Have Wiped Out Europe’s Earliest Humans 1.1 Million Years Ago

New research suggests the continent was devoid of hominins for about 200,000 years after a previously unknown cold snap Margaret Osborne, [Smithsonian Magazine](#), August 16th 2023

#### Paleontologists Discover Mummified Bees Preserved in Their Cocoons for 3,000 Years

Some kind of “catastrophic” event, such as a sudden freeze or flood, likely killed all the young adult bees at once, according to a new study

Sarah Kuta, [Smithsonian Magazine](#), August 30th 2023

#### Teenager Helps Uncover 34-Million-Year-Old Whale Skull in Alabama

Working with one of her teachers, the 16-year-old student found the fossil, which may represent a new species, on her family’s property

Carlyn Kranking, [Smithsonian Magazine](#), August 31st 2023

#### Drought Reveals 113-Million-Year-Old Dinosaur Tracks in Texas

The footprints are normally submerged under the water and silt of the Paluxy River, part of which has dried up this summer

Sarah Kuta, [Smithsonian Magazine](#), August 31st 2023

### 2023 Field Trip Schedule

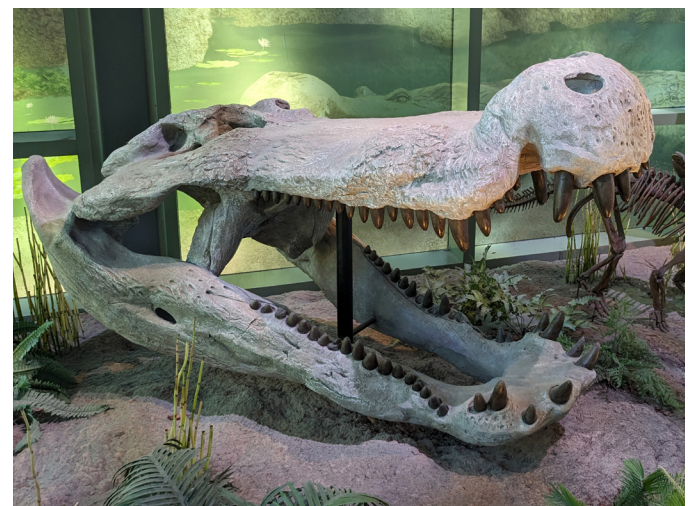
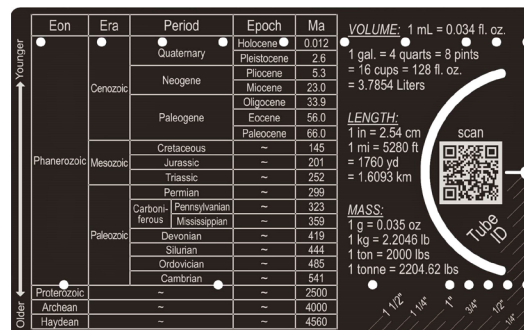
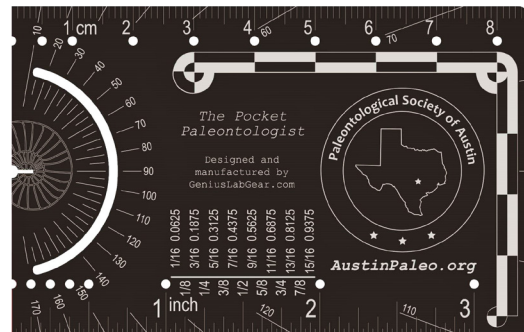
|           |                            |
|-----------|----------------------------|
| September | Texoma (Moody / Evant)     |
| October   | Brady + Santa Anna         |
| November  | Brownwood                  |
| December  | White Mammoth and Pot Luck |

**Important Note:** Please refrain from visiting sites the club is scheduled to access as part of a scheduled field trip. Doing so can clear a site of quality fossils and negatively impact the experience folks will have, especially new members, if the site suddenly feels “picked over”. We do our best to carefully space out trips to allow them to recover, so please be respectful of the club and stay off these sites within 3 months of a planned trip. Please note that dates and locations are subject to change - check the monthly newsletter or come to our monthly meetings for updates.

### New Austin Paleo Gear!

#### The Pocket Paleontologist

Eric Jones, on behalf of the PSOA, produced this awesome laser etched card that includes handy scales and other information for use in the field. The size of a credit card, it fits neatly in your wallet so you always have it with you. Available for sale at our meetings or by contacting Mike Smith. Makes a great gift!



Crocodillian specimen from the Aguja formation in the permanent collection of the Witte Muesuem in San Antonio - see Field Trip Report page 4!



## Good Field Trip Etiquette

1. Arrive on time or early. At the prescribed meeting time (often 8AM) you should be out of your car standing with the field trip leader, signed in and ready to hear the day's schedule, directions and helpful pointers.
2. Do your homework. Use one of the online mapping programs to determine travel time and directions from your home the day before. Take the map with you and leave at least 15-30 minutes early. This is critical when we are going to quarries, private property or if the first stop is a meeting-point, not the collecting site. The field trip leader will not wait more than 15 minutes beyond the scheduled time.
3. Make sure you have the field trip leader's phone number. Their number will appear in the field trip notice. Bring a copy of the notice from the newsletter or e-mail blast so you have the information. That is the best way to find the group if you do get delayed or lost. But do not count on it. Some of our remote sites have poor cell reception. We have no way to guarantee you will get there if you miss the meeting spot.
4. The first stop is not breakfast. Please do not expect the rest of the group to wait while you order food or take care of business. If you need to do that, arrive 30 minutes early and then be ready to go at 8:00AM sharp!
5. The field trip leader sets the schedule. Gather near the leader at the beginning of every trip and listen carefully. The leader will describe where and when things will happen. That will include directions, plans for breaks and everything else you need to know about how the day will unfold. If you are not sure about directions or the schedule speak directly with the field trip leader. Do not count on hearsay.
6. Do not ask the entire group to stop for unscheduled breaks. If you need to take a break during the day, do it after you know where the collecting site is located. The field trip leader will usually schedule a break around lunch but not between every stop. Follow the group to the site and then circle back for food or facilities. This is why we suggest bringing your own food and beverages. Also being prepared with TP, or whatever else, for "emergencies".
7. Sign in and don't forget to report to the leader when you leave. This is not critical, but he or she will greatly appreciate those two things. Having everyone's name let's him know how well attended the trip was and we like to list everyone in the follow up reports. Secondly, getting a chance to hear and see what you found that day and being able to keep track of who is on site at the very end is just a good thing.
8. Be prepared. Make sure you have the materials you need to collect safely. In particular, water, hat, sunscreen and food.

9. Don't crowd the next guy. Please be courteous of your fellow collectors space. If someone says "Hey I found a good one!" don't come rushing over and crowd into their collecting zone. Let them offer to share the space. You can ask them where they found it and then move off to one side or the other, but don't just flop down next to them.

10. Be safe. If someone is working an area on a slope do your best not to pass above them. If you need to do so, please let them know you are passing and do your best not to send any debris down on top of them. If someone is working above you and you must pass below, please alert them for the same reasons. Generally speaking, if someone is working a spot respect that they "own" that area and your passage through or around that location should only be done with their permission and/or invitation.



### Editor's Note:

I would like to extend an invitation to all members to submit stories of their own travels for publish in future episodes of SIDE TRIPS. All I need is a short write up (and I can assist with this) as well as some photos of your trip (iPhone or Android photos are perfect - just make sure to send me the full resolution version). Fossil hunting trips are always welcome, but so are trips to museums, fossil/mineral shows, and other adventures that explore the world around us. You can reach me at [editor@austinpaleo.org](mailto:editor@austinpaleo.org) and I will do my best to include your stories in future issues.

### Brian Bedrosian Newsletter Editor

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 normally 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](http://austinpaleo.org) for more information.

*Please note, our monthly meetings are currently held in a hybrid format, with in person gatherings at the AGMS Clubhouse which can also be attended virtually via Zoom. Please see information provided on page one of this newsletter each month. While we are not currently requiring masks at any in person gatherings, we ask that you maintain a safe distance from others when socializing. Please note all virtual meetings are recorded and the Society may elect to publish the video of these meetings, in part or in total, to the Society's website or another publically accessible venue as benefits the goals of the club listed above.*

#### Membership Information

Annual Dues: **\$18/individual**  
**\$24/family**  
**\$12/associate** (non-voting, receiving newsletter)

Pay on-line at: <https://www.austinpaleo.org/newMembership.html>

Send payment to: **Treasurer, Paleontological Society of Austin,**  
**P.O. Box 90791, Austin, TX 78749-0791**

PSOA Web Site: [www.austinpaleo.org](http://www.austinpaleo.org)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/austinpaleo>

Twitter: [@Austin\\_Paleo](https://twitter.com/Austin_Paleo)

#### Current Club Officers

|                   |   |  |
|-------------------|---|--|
| President         | <b>Erich Rose</b>   | <a href="mailto:president@austinpaleo.org">president@austinpaleo.org</a>   |
| Vice President    | <b>Heather Aziz</b>   | <a href="mailto:vicepresident@austinpaleo.org">vicepresident@austinpaleo.org</a>   |
| Treasurer         | <b>Mike Smith</b>   | <a href="mailto:treasurer@austinpaleo.org">treasurer@austinpaleo.org</a>   |
| Secretary         | <b>Gary Vliet</b>   | <a href="mailto:secretary@austinpaleo.org">secretary@austinpaleo.org</a>   |
| Field Trips       | <b>Melvin Noble &amp; Jamie Shelton</b>                       | <a href="mailto:fieldtripchair@austinpaleo.org">fieldtripchair@austinpaleo.org</a>   |
| Programs          | <b>Paul Hammerschmidt &amp; Jamie Shelton</b>                 | <a href="mailto:programchair@austinpaleo.org">programchair@austinpaleo.org</a>   |
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| Science Advisors: | <b>Pamela R. Owen, PhD.</b><br><b>James T. Sprinkle, PhD.</b> | <a href="mailto:powen@mail.utexas.edu">powen@mail.utexas.edu</a><br><a href="mailto:echino@mail.utexas.edu">echino@mail.utexas.edu</a> |

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