

PALEO FOOTNOTES

NEWSLETTER OF THE PALEONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTIN

VOLUME 18 | NUMBER 11

NOVEMBER 2023



President's Note

This year is finally winding down...

We had a rather decent Fossil Fest. Thanks to all the Volunteers!

We have a proposal for a new slate of officers (see on page 2) which will be voting on this coming meeting - please show up to throw your support behind your fellow club members!

Please note that our field trip this month will be **THIS WEEKEND** - before our meeting due to the upcoming holiday weekend. We will be headed back out to Santa Ana (we were rained out last month) as well as (continued on page 2)

This Month's Talk

Dinosaurs and Other Ancient Animals of Big Bend

by Cindi Sirois Collins - PSoA Member

Our Speaker for November will be Cindi Sirois Collins, who was one of our presenters at Fossil Fest. She is the author of *Dinosaurs and Other Ancient Animals of Big Bend*. Presentation will include animals from the marine, coastal, forested, and grasslands of the Late Cretaceous through the Pleistocene.

Cindi Collins is a retired Texas science teacher, self-taught paleontologist and lover of earth science with a soft spot (continued on page 2)

November 2023

Regular October Meeting

Tuesday November 21st - 7pm
AGMS Clubhouse 6719 Burnet Lane

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87951667239?pwd=aUtmNXVBOVlaWHJSVkJjSUFxLzVQdz09>

Meeting ID: 879 5166 7239

Passcode: 826070

November Field Trip

(one week early and on Sunday!!!)

SUNDAY October 19th - 8:30am
Santa Anna + Wilson's Clay Pit
(see page 2)

President's Note

(continued from page 1)

a trip back to Wilson's Clay Pit for those who missed it last month. It's a huge site so I am sure there is still much to be found. Hope to see everyone Tuesday and that you have a wonderful Thanksgiving!

Erich Rose

PSoA President

This Month's Speaker

(continued from page 1)

for geology. Her book is informed by her own research in primary literary sources as well as through conversations with the Big Bend paleontologists that did the important digging and discovery who were generous with their time and info.

November 2023 Field Trip

Santa Anna and Wilson's Clay Pit

The Field Trip this month is going to be the weekend BEFORE our normal field trip Saturday as it falls on Thanksgiving weekend! So we will be meeting on Sunday Nov 19th to go to Santa Anna and probably Wilson's Clay Pit. **Yes, SUNDAY the 19th.**

Santa Anna is a lower Permian site with the rare treat of a trilobite along with a really nice little brachiopod called Wellerla. Wilson's Clay Pit is in the Harpersville Formation, Cisco group, Virgilian series ~ 297 million years (MYA) and we will be hunting for upper Pennsylvanian marine fossils. Crinoid material abounds here as well as brachiopods, bryozoans, bivalves, sponges, corals, gastropods and rare paleozoic shark teeth, such as Petalodus, Orodus or Deltodus. Trilobites have also been found here but are very rare. Most material will be small to hand size but there are larger boulders around the sites with nice things in them you may want to hammer away at. Consider bringing containers of various sizes, bags for larger items, hammer and chisels, eye protection and something to wrap fragile things in. We are very much out in it, so bring lots of water, sturdy footwear, food for lunch or snacks, and watch the weather for Brownwood for appropriate clothing. It can be colder there than here. It is a long way back to town and there are no facilities, so be prepared.

We will meet at 8:30 am in Brownwood at the Underwood Cafeteria on 402 W Commerce St. Brownwood TX 76801. Look for Melvin's Blue Tacoma or my Blue Scion with turquoise wheels. See y'all Sunday the 19th!!

For more info contact me at: fieldtripchair@austinpaleo.org or on my cell (512) 214-2589

Jamie Shelton

Field Trip Co-Chair

October Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the Paleontological Society of Austin
October 17, 2023

- Erich Rose opened the meeting at 7:00 pm. There were about 25 persons in attendance and a couple on Zoom.
- The speaker for the evening was David Lindberg, who spoke on the fossils he and the group had found several years ago when the Terra Vista development (between Austin and Round Rock) was underway. This is in the Austin Chalk formation.
- The business meeting resumed about 8:00 after a brief break.
- There was no financial report.
- Heather Aziz reminded us of the upcoming Gem Capers, and the need for volunteers to staff the PSA table. She also reminded us of the upcoming Fossil Fest set for Nov. 4 & 5 and the need for volunteers.
- Melvin announced that because of Gem Capers the field trip to Brady will be delayed one week.
- Meeting ended about 8:30 pm.

Gary Vliet

Secretary

Proposed Slate of Officers for 2024

At the November meeting we will vote on Officers and Board Members for 2024.

President	Heather Aziz (Board Member)
VP & Show Chair	Eric Jones (Board Member)
Treasurer	Mike Smith (Board Member)
Secretary	Gary Vliet (Board Member)
Editor	Brian Bedrosian
President Emeritus	Erich Rose (Board Member)
Co-Field Trip Chair	Jamie Shelton (Board Member)
Co-Field Trip Chair	Melvin Noble (Board Member)
Webmaster	Randy Whited
Program Chair	Jamie Shelton

The President, VP, Treasurer and Secretary are automatically Board Members. In 2024 we propose to modify the Bylaws to expand the Board to 9 members to better reflect the requirements of the club. Changes to the Bylaws require approval of 2/3 of the responding members after a notice published at least 20 days prior.

Mike Smith

Treasurer

FOSSIL FEST 2023





I would like to thank all the volunteers, vendors, nonprofit and academic groups for helping to make Fossil Fest 2023 a success! Here is a summary of our recent event:

- While total attendance was lower this year (approximately 200 fewer attendees) when compared to 2022, our profit increased from 2022.
 - We had more members volunteer this year which made everything run smoothly.
 - We greatly increased raffle ticket sales this year.
 - Overall merchandise sales (shirts, hats, trilobite kits, etc.) helped make up for the reduced number of vendors that participated this year.
- Vendors truly appreciated having lunch provided each day.
- Both the wheel and dart game brought in the equivalent of the wheel and ping-pong game last year.

The past two years we have had fewer vendors participate than in years pre-COVID. With many vendors retiring for one reason or another it is paramount that we try to garner the interest of potential new vendors next year. If you are attending a fossil show over the next few months, please share our event with vendors that are selling fossil or fossil-related materials and if they show interest, please have them email showchair@austinpaleo.org for more information.

Our venue fee was higher this year than last year. It may be necessary to increase vendor booth fees next year as well as game fees.

I am looking forward to Fossil Fest next year and hope that you all are as well!

Heather Aziz
Vice President / Show Chair





October Field Trip Report: Brady + Brownwood

Fig. 1 *Petalodus* sp. tooth (Brian Bedrosian)

As we're getting into the rainy season it makes it a little hard to decide if we should cancel a trip or not. Thursday night the weather said it would maybe clear up a little Saturday, but the rain continued to fall all week. On Saturday morning little had changed, but I have learned that the fossil collectors of the Austin Paleo Society are a hardy and determined group of people - so we packed up the truck and headed out. When we got to the first site a hard rain had just fell and it was still misting. Some people sat in their cars to let it clear out a little. After it cleared, Edward Elliott, Tyler Stoviak, Gene Wu, Will Jo, Leah Plaff, Cindi Collins, Bob McDonald, Gary and Cathy Rylander, Brian Bedrosian, and me, Melvin, started to collect. It was quite muddy so anywhere you stepped would not be good to hunt anymore. Before long, though, Tyler found a crinoid crown with the arms attached and a piece of the stem (fig. 2), along with a nice *Goniatitie* sp. I went across the road and found a nice little crinoid cup. Nobody bothered looking for starfish this time around, the layer we found them previously was buried under a mound of mud and even if we could uncover it, they would have been almost impossible to see with all the sticky muck. We hunted the road cuts until about 11:00 and decided to move on.



Fig. 2 Crinoid crown (Tyler Stoviak)



Fig. 3 *Petalodus* sp. tooth (Bob McDonald)

Fearing that the Santa Anna site would be even muddier and a long walk to boot, we decided instead to head on towards Brownwood where you can stay dry if you stay up high. The rain having stopped, combined with cool weather made for pleasant collecting. This was Cindy's first time to go collecting with us, so I showed her some of the stuff that you find at this Pennsylvania site and soon she was finding fossils on her own. Ed found a nice *Puncotospirifer Kentuckyensis* to help get her excited about this productive site. I went over to one of the hills to look for rare sharks teeth but did not really find anything. Tyler found what looks like a *Cladodonot* sp. tooth (Fig. 4) and also a *Petalodus* sp. tooth with a trilobite pygidium in the same matrix (Fig. 5)! Bob McDonald found a *Petalodus* tooth (Fig. 3) and something that looked like a *Peripristis* sp. tooth but after consulting with other people it may simply be a crinoid crown plate - though Ed mentioned it is possible for the enamel to wear away on a tooth and leave the specimen Bob found. Ed found a bellerophon gastropod or a goniatite ammonoid. I think it looks like a goniatite. Gary found some *Petalodus* teeth, a *Peripristis* sp. tooth and a trilobite pygidium. I think several trilobite pieces were found on this trip also by others people. Will found his first *Petalodus* tooth and Gene found a trilobite pygidium and some teeth. Brian found a nature cleaned *Petalodus* tooth that was a nice burnt orange (Fig. 1). I'm always amazed at the different variety of teeth and amount that come out of this site. I'm glad I did not cancel the trip as it turned out to be a good collecting trip that even though it was a little wet, it was pleasant weather and everybody had fun.

Melvin Noble
Field Trip Co-chair



Fig. 4 *Cladodonot* sp. tooth (Tyler Stoviak)



Fig. 5 *Petalodus* sp. tooth with trilobite pygidium (Tyler Stoviak)



Tailings...

In The News

Paleobionics: A 450 million-year-old organism finds new life in softbotics

Researchers in the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Carnegie Mellon University, in collaboration with paleontologists from Spain and Poland, have used fossil evidence to engineer a soft robotic replica of pleurocystitid, a marine organism that existed nearly 450 million years ago and is believed to be one of the first echinoderms capable of movement using a muscular stem.

Kaitlyn Landram, [Carnegie Mellon University](https://www.cmu.edu), November 6th 2023

Long presumed to have no heads at all, starfish may be nothing but

For centuries, naturalists have puzzled over what might constitute the head of a sea star, commonly called a “starfish.”
Chan Zuckerberg, [Biohub](https://www.biohub.org), November 1st 2023

More than \$1 million in stolen dinosaur bones shipped to China, Justice officials say

Federal prosecutors had several bones to pick in a Salt Lake City courthouse this week. On Thursday, a federal grand jury returned a 13-count indictment against four people accused of selling more than \$1 million in stolen dinosaur bones taken from public lands in southeastern Utah and shipping them to China, the U.S. Attorney for the District of Utah announced in a news release.

Eduardo Cuevas, [USA Today](https://www.usatoday.com), October 21st 2023

Two Million Years Ago, This Homo Erectus Lived the High Life

Dating of a child’s fossilized jaw and teeth suggest our relatives lived at altitude earlier than once thought

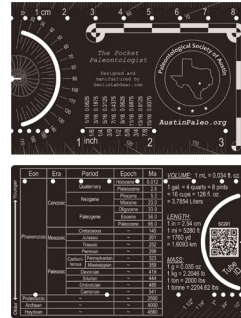
Brian Handwerk, [Smithsonian Magazine](https://www.smithsonianmag.com), October 13th 2023

2023 Field Trip Schedule

November **Santa Anna + 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 you wallet so you always have it with you. Available for sale at our meetings or by contacting Mike Smith. Makes a great gift!

WhatsApp for PSoA Members

This would be handy for folks to have on their phones for Fossil Fest - or just an easy way for the board to communicate with you when email is not practical.

We are not setting this up for random interactions, like “anyone know what this fossil is”. The goal is to have something we can use to broadcast last minute field trip changes, emergency notifications (like “we are locked out of AGMS, meeting cancelled”), pleas for help at Fossil Fest, etc.

To start you need WhatsApp installed on your phone. If you don’t already know, WhatsApp is an app similar to normal texting and will show up as a text message on your mobile devices. If you want to get real-time information without having to check the app, then make sure to allow push notifications when you set it up. Then just scan the QR code and an Admin will approve your joining the group.



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 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 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

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

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

Current Club Officers

President	Erich Rose	president@austinpaleo.org
Vice President	Heather Aziz	vicepresident@austinpaleo.org
Treasurer	Mike Smith	treasurer@austinpaleo.org
Secretary	Gary Vliet	secretary@austinpaleo.org
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