

PALEO FOOTNOTES

NEWSLETTER OF THE PALEONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTIN

VOLUME 19 | NUMBER 05

MAY 2024



President's Note

Congratulations to all the 2024 April Auction winners and thank you to everyone for filling our bellies with delicious potluck dishes!

We had an extremely successful auction this year. All proceeds from the auction will be added to the contributions that we have already received for our in-memoriam donation to the Texas Science and Natural History Museum to honor Erich. Thus far, our fossil-loving community has raised just over \$5,000.00 in honor of Erich, truly a testament to how much love and respect we all hold for him. We will be collecting additional donations until (continued on page 2)

This Month's Speaker

Water caves provide an alternate perspective on the taphonomy, diversity, and biogeography of late Pleistocene vertebrates on the Edwards Plateau, Texas.

Speaker: **John Moretti**

Fossils and associated deposits from the Edwards Plateau of Texas played a critical role in developing our understanding of Quaternary faunal change in Texas and North America and helped to frame the debate over the cause(s) of late Pleistocene extinctions. That fossil record was based primarily on materials recovered from dry caves (continued on page 2)

May 2024

PSoA Regular Meeting
Tuesday May 21st - 7pm
AGMS Clubhouse
6719 Burnet Lane

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88451710052?pwd=Uy9hV05BTy9rUmIzYlMzdVVnNTVjdz09>

PSoA Club Field Trip
May 25th+ 26th
Ada OK sites
(see details page 2)

President's Note

(continued from page 1)

June 15th . If you intend on contributing but have not done so yet, please do so soon. As a reminder contributions can be made on our website. From the drop-down menu select "membership" and then, on the right-hand side of the page, the button that says "contribute". When completing the form please indicate in the "notes" section that your contribution is for Erich.

I'm sad to say that I am unable to attend our field trip to Oklahoma this month. However, I expect everyone to come home with some spectacular specimens and send me photos!

See you all at the May meeting,

Heather Aziz

PSoA President

This Month's Speaker

(continued from page 1)

across the region. New and ongoing investigations of water caves on the Edwards Plateau are documenting different patterns of fossil diversity and taphonomy. In this talk I will provide an introduction to water caves in the region, the challenges of working in those caves, and the fossils and their significance.

About our Speaker:

John A. Moretti is a PhD Candidate in the Jackson School of Geosciences at The University of Texas at Austin. John is a paleontologist studying patterns of vertebrate diversity and distribution throughout the past 3-5 million years with a particular focus on the Quaternary and the natural history of extant species and associated communities. John is currently engaged in a number of projects examining the temporal distribution and climatic context of vertebrate taxa based on remains preserved in caves and karst across the Edwards Plateau of central Texas in the United States

May 2023 Field Trip:

Ada, OK

DATE: Saturday May 25th + Sunday May 26th

Ada Oklahoma - Devonian, Silurian, Ordovician

The May Field Trip is on schedule for May 25-26 in Ada Oklahoma for some Devonian, Silurian and Ordovician collecting. We'll meet on the East Central University Campus on the corner of E. 12th. and N. Francis Ave. near the petrified Callixylon tree (1 block over by East Main St) at 8 a.m, Saturday, May 25 and caravan to the first site at Yellow Bluff. We will spend the entire day at this site as it is large and productive. Please bring a \$10 donation for the landowner so we stay in his good graces!

Sunday will be a variety of hunting options and we will meet at the same place as Saturday at 8am. We will caravan to the sites from there. The Black Cat Mt site is waiting list only but we will have another site for everyone else. (TBD).

Facilities will be scarce, so be prepared. Bring at least a gallon of water a day for each person, food, hats, long-sleeve shirts, sunblock, kneepads, etc. Bug spray is also recommended for chiggers and ticks. Also watch out for snakes. Some of the locations will require a short hike. Depending on the site, you may need a hammer and chisel. Bring lots of containers, zipper bags, soda flats, newspaper, etc. and something to label your finds. Ada is a college town with a number of motels and restaurants. You are on your own for finding accommodations. Please be aware, these are unfortunately not kid friendly fossil hunting environments...so we are going to request no kids under 12 attend. This is a very exciting trip but also a long drive - so we want to make sure you are aware of the opportunities before you make plans and leave Austin.

If you have any issues or questions please call Melvin at (512) 468-8914. These are unfortunately not kid friendly environments...so we are going to request no kids under 12 attend. This is a very exciting trip but also a long drive - so we want to make sure you are aware of the opportunities before you make plans and leave Austin.

Jamie Shelton

Field Trip Co-Chair



Join us in the field in Oklahoma! - see [Field Trip instructions, this page](#)



Fig. 1 The offerings ready for the auction

April Club Report: West Cave PSoA Auction and Picnic

We had great success at our auction and picnic with quite a good turnout! I think I counted about 32 people or more. I got to see several old friends in the club that have not been around for a while and the camaraderie with fellow fossil collectors was very wonderful. The food was excellent and as usual we had barbecue brisket, turkey and sausage. Several people brought deviled eggs and Ed brought a rhubarb pie that was a big hit. Brian brought some of his famous hot sauce to spice things up. I was very happy most of my homemade coleslaw disappeared.

Most of the items for auction came from the collection of our beloved friend, President Emeritus Erich Rose. The bidding was very lively and facilitated by our auctioneer Mike Smith, of course. People were eager to bid on the items so they could have something for remembrance and the club could make a nice donation to the Texas Science and Natural History Museum in his name.



Fig. 2 Erich's collecting bag and homemade sifter

April Club Report (Continued)

West Cave PSoA Auction and Picnic

There were several volumes of Treatise on Invertebrate Paleontology. Memorably, Heather fought for and won Erich's collecting bag, notebook and collecting tools - something quite special. There was a lot of great fossils to be had: mosasaur vertebra, ammonites etc. I got a few great books - Texas Through Time and Lone Star Geology Landscapes and Resources - and a Rangifer Tarandus (Caribou) antler piece from New Jersey Pleistocene 18000 to 2.6Ma.-permineralized. I think its probably very late Pleistocene. Erich made real nice little ID plaques which was an added bonus for many of the fossils as well.

While we will have to wait for the treasurer's report at the meeting, it was pretty clear we managed to raise a good amount to donate in honor of Erich. It was a great auction and picnic with perfectly cool weather.

Melvin Noble
Field Trip Co-chair



Fig. 3 The Spread



Fig. 4 Mike Smith, our illustrious auctioneer, at work!



Tailings...

In The News

Scientists Uncover Bones of Massive Extinct Snake, Comparable in Size to the 43-Foot Titanoboa

The 27 vertebrae discovered in India suggest the enormous creature, dubbed Vasuki indicus, was between 36 and 50 feet long

Will Sullivan, [Smithsonian Magazine](#), 22 April 2024

Dentist Discovers Human-Like Jawbone and Teeth in a Floor Tile at His Parents' Home

Scientists are planning to study the specimen, embedded in travertine from western Turkey, in hopes of dating and identifying it.

Sarah Kuta, [Smithsonian Magazine](#), 23 April 2024

Paleontologists Unravel Secrets of 'Enigmatic' 33-Foot Prehistoric Shark After Fossil Discovery

Scientists didn't know much about Ptychodus, an ancient shark genus, because its remains were usually just fragments. Now, complete fossils reveal its body shape and hunting habits

Christian Thorsberg, [Smithsonian Magazine](#), 24 April 2024

Paleontologists Discover Massive Dinosaur Tracks in China, Hinting at One of the Largest Known Raptors

The footprints, left behind by a 16-foot-long creature some 96 million years ago, represent the biggest raptor tracks ever found

Aaron Boorstein, [Smithsonian Magazine](#), 26 April 2024

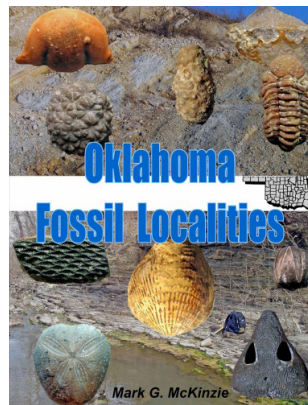
2024 Field Trip Schedule

May	Oklahoma (2 days)
June	Austin Loop 360 <i>Lower Brazos</i>
July	Johnson City
August	Ross Perot Museum Dallas
September	Texoma Moody / Evant (2 days)
October	Brady / Santa Anna
November	Brownwood
December	White Mammoth and Pot Luck

Locations in italics are alternates depending on weather and availability.

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.

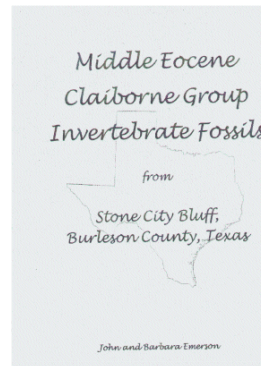
Oklahoma Resources



Oklahoma Fossil Localities

by Mark G. McKinzie . A collector's guidebook to the fossil riches to be had in the state of Oklahoma. Thirty-nine fossil localities described in detail, ranging in age from the Ordovician to the Cretaceous. Over 500 fossil species illustrated in full color. Revised edition updated in 2022. It is available to order on [Lulu.com](#). This is an online publisher who prints books to order, so expect a week or two for delivery. \$60 and worth every penny.

Whiskey Bridge / Eocene Resources



Middle Eocene Claiborne Group Invertebrate Fossils from Stone City Bluff, Burleson County Texas

by John and Barbara Emerson . This self published volume catalogs over 200 species known to come from this exposure. All specimens are described in detail and shown in black and white photographs. It is available from the [Houston Gem and Mineral Society](#) website for \$20 (paperback copy) or \$10 (digital download).

Stone City Member, Middle Eocene, Clairborne Group, Stone City Bluff, Burleson Co., Texas Main Glauconite Bed (MGB) Study Guide

by James E. Flis and Christopher J. Flis (2015 Rights Reserved v. 1.1) This study guide available on the [Houston Geological Society](#) website is great primer on the exposure and provides a faunal menu with full color photographs.

WhatsApp for PSoA Members

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



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