



Fossil Footnotes

Central Texas Paleontological Society

February 2006

President's Message

By Ron Root

I hope everyone is taking advantage of the great collecting weather. The good news is the dry weather is lowering water levels and exposing some areas usually under water. The bad news is the lack of rain is preventing new fossils from being uncovered in many areas.

Collecting is the reason Janet and I joined CTPS. We were looking for new places to collect and CTPS has certainly been just what we were searching for. So one of the items on my agenda for the year is to identify new places for our field trips. We added central Oklahoma to the list of places to regularly visit three years ago and it has continued to be one our best field trips. So if anyone has any ideas of new locations, please pass them on to Ed Elliot or myself. An option that we are always looking for is access to private property. We would be willing to pay a fee if it seemed appropriate. Do you know anyone with a fossiliferous ranch??

The merger of CTPS and APS (Austin Paleontology Society) is on both club's agenda for this year. Members from both clubs are working hard to come up with a new charter and resolve the few issues that exist. Many of us are members of both clubs so for us it will just mean one less Tuesday night meeting. If you are not an APS member and do not attend their meetings, I would encourage you to do so. They have very knowledgeable members and the club usually has a great program. They meet the 3rd Tuesday of

the month at the AGMS club house on Burnett Road.

Happy Collecting,
Ron

February Meeting Not a regular meeting night

The February meeting will be at the LCRA Building on **Monday night February 13** starting at 7:00 PM

2006 CTPS Officers

President: Ron Root
Vice President / Show Chair: Danny Harlow
Secretary / Webmaster: Mike Smith
Treasurer: David Lindberg
Newsletter Editor: Hollis Thompson
Field Trip Chair: Ed Elliott

Meeting Calendar

February 13 (Monday)	CTPS meeting
March 14	CTPS meeting
April 11	CTPS meeting
May 9	CTPS meeting
June 14 (Wed)	CTPS meeting
July 11	CTPS meeting
August 8	CTPS meeting

September 12	CTPS meeting
October 10	CTPS meeting
November 3-5	Fossil Fest , CTPS Fossil Show Old Settlers Heritage Association, Round Rock, TX
November 16 (Thursday)	CTPS meeting meeting in the Board Conference Room
December	Christmas Party (no meeting)

Visit our web site

<http://www.texaspaleo.com/ctps/index.html>

Membership Information

- \$18 per Family
- \$15 per Individual. Individual and Family memberships include a newsletter subscription, membership in the South Central Federation, and liability insurance coverage for club activities.
- Associate membership is \$10 per year and includes a newsletter subscription.



Paleontologist Barbie - On the Scene

Dinosaurs are really Birds and Birds are Really Crocodiles

Paleontologist Barbie discusses the hot topic question- Aves or Ave-nots?

Actually Paleontologist Barbie discusses Crocodiles as much as Birds but anyway! Okay. What do you think right away when you see two extra holes on either side of a skull? What is your first thought? Some people might think- Hello! This animal has been shot! But Paleontologists laugh and say: Oh do you mean a Diapsid Skull-!

Long, long ago, even before Dinosaurs had skulls, it was this Diapsidian group of Reptiles, of which both Birds and Crocodilians are totally Charter members, who possessed the first genuine holey skulls and the original mutating ankle-bones.

It was like this. The Holey-skullcodonts (shortened, I believe, to The codonts), were crawling around on all four legs, dragging big heavy bodies, like totally daunting, you know, so they mutinied like crazy, (who wouldn't?) for a few million years and voila- in a rocking feat of Scientific achievement, their ankle bones shifted around, and then, one day, at dawn, the first real Dinosaur, Eoraptor, (dawn raptor), (naturally) walked alone into the sunrise on only its hind legs.

Meanwhile, our old friends, the Diapsidian Crocodilians, who could not be knocked over as easily as, say, a cow of the same size, were unimpressed by these historical changes unless these changes would affect what they might be having for lunch.

The Crocodilians stuck with their sprawling legs, a wise and natural selection for beasts who had holes in their skulls. Hey- these guys yawned and napped through two major extinctions and seemed to have very little use for revolution.

Birds, on the other hand, could be easily knocked over, naturally, since they were the ones who

finally ended up with the new and rapidly revolving vertical ankle design, and really, their new bones had them all walking on tippy-toes, which made jumping back and leaping away from snapping jaws so much easier that Scientists had to argue that they landed on the branches of the family tree where they laughed in their ancient birdlike way and dropped coprolite on the heads of the alligators. Again we must note an uncanny intelligence demonstrated in creatures with holey skulls.

Normally peace-loving Paleontologists took sides as to whether powered flight began at the top or at the bottom of the family tree- the Tree-Down theory does not explain how the alligators got up in the tree in the first place or how they might have brought the tree down. Did birds come down from tree-dwelling ancestors or was it that alligators on the ground went up to the birds? Will we ever know?

But back to dinosaurs- this is really about dinosaurs-

Nowadays there are 22 bones which birds and dinosaurs share- of course most dinosaurs resisted sharing their bones with the birds because sometimes you know when birds borrow bones they don't always remember to give them back.

The Wishbone, (or furcula), a (skeletal) bone often directly connected to flight muscles, has been another hot topic in scientific circles, but it's obvious to me that Wishbones were used by dinosaurs who really wished they could fly, and as we see by Evolution, many millions of years later their wishes were granted and they became birds.

The dinos who did not have the benefit of holey skulls were kind of dumb- they did not realize that by sharing their bones they would have become birds sooner.

Now, the Fossil record hints at the genetic mutilation of the forelimbs of Avatars and Raptors. In fact, Manipulotora, a group of Bird-like Therapists from the Jurassic, had a manus larger than a pes, which, frankly, this reporter thinks just might be a little bit TMI (Too Much Information)!

Anyway, in order to modify the seizing function, early Dino-birds began to sit on their own eggs, using their elongated arms to shoo away predators who were trying to seize the eggs. This was later called the flight stroke. Alligators who sat on their eggs did not multiply.

So you see, you have your bird-like Dinosaurs and your dinosaur-like Birds.

Without its feathers the famous fossil, *Archaeopteryx* looks exactly like a small Colanderosaur- an extremely Bird-like Therapeutic Dinosaur!

So, in summary, we have seen that Diapsidian Birds and Crocodiles are really the ancestors of Dinosaurs, and due to extinctions beyond their control, dinosaurs perished, and the tried-and-true basic crocodylian life forms are still with us today, carrying on their same old feud somewhere between the top and the bottom of the family tree, with the birds who are still using bones they shared with the dinosaurs millions of years ago.

Evolutionarily Yours, ***Paleontologist Barbie.***

**Next month Paleontologist Barbie discusses
Natural Extinction**

2006 Field Trips

Tentative Schedule for field trips

January 14	Brownwood		
February 18	Jacksboro or Big Bend		
March 18	East Texas	Wood trip	
April 22	Picnic and Auction @ West Cave Preserve	North on 12 from Dripping Springs. At T intersection with Hamilton Pool Road (3238) go left. West Cave Preserve is about 7 miles, just after the hairpin curve and one lane bridge over the Pedernales.	Noon
May 13	Lake Travis		
June 17th-18th	Ada, Oklahoma?	Meet at the Callixylon Tree on the campus of East Central University in Ada. Entering town from the west side on Main you just head east until Main ends at Francis. The tree is on the south side.	8:00 am
July 15	Brazos Canoe Trip?	Bring your canoe or kayak. Subject to river height.	
August 12	Visit Paleo lab		
September 16	Alabama Ferry or Brazos		
October 14-15	Lake Texoma?		
November 18	Waco Pit		
December	Christmas Party	Date to be announced	

January 6th Field Trip Brownwood

It dawned a beautiful, cool, clear day for collecting in Coleman County. Club members Gary Rylander, Mike Smith, Danny Harlow, Paul & Steven Hammerschmidt, David Lindberg, Bill Kidd, Rosemary Smith, Linda and Bruce McCall, Erich and Emelia Rose, Kandra Niagia and myself, met in Early on this crisp morning. The

feeling of excitement and anticipation always permeates the waiting time at our rendezvous point.

The first stop was the club site at Santa Anna. I'm not certain but I believe this to be the Santa Anna Member of the Moran Formation. It is said this formation is exposed at the high points all around Santa Anna. If anyone knows differently, please notify me and I'll run a correction.

There were crinoid cups, brachiopods, and coral found. I didn't hear anyone say that they had found any trilobites, though they certainly are there. There were some short squat corals found, as wide as they are tall, and if anyone has a name for them, please notify me.

We spent the morning there and everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves. The stay was made especially nice by the conversations, the banter and the laughter we all shared. I have to say that I enjoyed meeting a young lady by the name of Emelia. We all enjoyed her joyful presence that day.

Our next stop was at Wilson Quarry. This is Upper Moran Formation. I always put in that this is either uppermost Pennsylvanian or lowest Permian. The experts can't agree. I think we can agree that the purple and green rocks of this quarry are fun and productive to hunt. There are brachiopods, corals, nautiloids, all kinds of bivalves, trilobites, bryozoans, various sharks teeth, crinoids and even the occasional gastropod. Destroyed echinoids are not uncommon. Gary found a slab with several on it at the end of the day. He also found a very niche *Peripristis semicircularis* (sharks tooth). Bill had several nearly complete *Petalodus* shark teeth. Kandra picked a pretty *Delocrinas* crinoid cup. Wilson is large enough that I honestly didn't see what anyone else found. Many of us went on to other places on the way home. For most the destination was Goldwaithe and a little Walnut Formation collecting.

A note for the newer members from those of us who have collected through droughts before; when the rains comes again, the collecting will improve a great deal. See you at the next one!!

Here is Barbie at Wilson Quarry



The following has circulated on the web since 1995. Just in case you are not sure, it was not written by anyone at the Smithsonian. Harvey Rowe is a real person, but he's an emergency room physician with a sense of humor (at least according to what I was able to find – again, it is information off the Internet, so who knows.) - Mike Smith

Paleoanthropology Division
Smithsonian Institute
207 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20078

Dear Sir:

Thank you for your latest submission to the Institute, labeled "211-D, layer seven, next to the clothesline post. Hominid skull." We have given this specimen a careful and detailed examination, and regret to inform you that we disagree with your theory that it represents "conclusive proof of the presence of Early Man in Charleston County two million years ago." Rather, it appears that what you have found is the head of a Barbie doll, of the variety one of our staff, who has small children, believes to be the "Malibu Barbie". It is evident that you have given a great deal of thought to the analysis of this specimen, and you may be quite certain that those of us who are familiar with your prior work in the field were loathe to come to contradiction with your findings. However, we do feel that there are a number of physical attributes of the specimen,

which might have tipped you off to its modern origin:

1. The material is molded plastic. Ancient hominid remains are typically fossilized bone.
2. The cranial capacity of the specimen is approximately 9 cubic centimeters, well below the threshold of even the earliest identified proto-hominids.
3. The dentition pattern evident on the "skull" is more consistent with the common domesticated dog than it is with the "ravenous man-eating Pliocene clams" you speculate roamed the wetlands during that time. This latter finding is certainly one of the most intriguing hypotheses you have submitted in your history with this institution, but the evidence seems to weigh rather heavily against it. Without going into too much detail, let us say that:

A. The specimen looks like the head of a Barbie doll that a dog has chewed on.

B. Clams don't have teeth.

It is with feelings tinged with melancholy that we must deny your request to have the specimen carbon dated. This is partially due to the heavy load our lab must bear in its normal operation, and partly due to carbon dating's notorious inaccuracy in fossils of recent geologic record. To the best of our knowledge, no Barbie dolls were produced prior to 1956 AD, and carbon dating is likely to produce wildly inaccurate results.

Sadly, we must also deny your request that we approach the National Science Foundation's Phylogeny Department with the concept of assigning your specimen the scientific name "Australopithecus spiff-arino." Speaking personally, I, for one, fought tenaciously for the acceptance of your proposed taxonomy, but was ultimately voted down because the species name you selected was hyphenated, and didn't really sound like it might be Latin.

However, we gladly accept your generous donation of this fascinating specimen to the museum. While it is undoubtedly not a hominid fossil, it is, nonetheless, yet another riveting example of the great body of work you seem to accumulate here so effortlessly. You should know that our Director has reserved a special shelf in his own office for the display of the specimens you have previously submitted to the Institution, and the entire staff speculates daily on what you will happen upon next in your digs at the site you have discovered in your back yard.

We eagerly anticipate your trip to our nation's capital that you proposed in your last letter, and several of us are pressing the Director to pay for it. We are particularly interested in hearing you expand on your theories surrounding the "trans-positating fillifitation of ferrous ions in a structural matrix" that makes the excellent juvenile Tyrannosaurus rex femur you recently discovered take on the deceptive appearance of a rusty 9-mm Sears Craftsman automotive crescent wrench.

Yours in Science,

Harvey Rowe
Curator, Antiquities

Some Web sites

<http://www.wildtexas.com/guide>

<http://www.paleoportal.org>

from this web site, learn Texas does not have a State Fossil but does have a State Dinosaur

Pleurocoelus (state dinosaur)

Texas does not have a state fossil, but it does have a state dinosaur, as well as a fossil for its state stone (petrified palm wood). Pleurocoelus was a large herbivorous sauropod dinosaur that lived during the Early Cretaceous (~ 140-110 million years ago).

<http://manly.delconet.com>

Check out this web site for information on the Marine Fossil collecting near Bryan, Texas off Highway 21.

<http://www.gtlsys.com>

Where to hunt fossils in Texas

<http://www.texaspaleo.com/ctps/revFieldGuide.html>

Central Texas Paleontological Society
Book Reviews

[A Field Guide to Fossils of Texas](#) by Charles E. Finsley as reviewed by Mike Smith

[After the Dinosaurs: A Texas Tropical Paradise Recovered at Lake Casa Blanca](#) as reviewed by Bill Kidd

[A Field Guide to Fossils of Texas](#) as reviewed by Michael K. Smith

[Fossil Crinoids](#) as reviewed by Danny Harlow

[Texas Cretaceous Echinoids](#) as reviewed by Robert Lawrence



See you at the meetin', pardner.

Central Club Contacts, 2006

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Club Information

The Central Texas Paleontological Society is a scientific, non-profit, community-based organization devoted to the study of fossils, advancing the state of the science, educating the public, and collecting fossil specimens. Most of us are amateurs, fascinated by fossils, who love to collect.

Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at the LCRA building, 3700 Lake Austin Blvd. (between Redbud Trail and Enfield Ave.) at 7:00 PM in the LCRA Offices Board Room of the Hancock Bldg. **The public is cordially invited** to attend these meetings as well as our field trips held throughout the year.

Annual dues are: \$15 per person or \$18 per family, which includes a subscription to this newsletter, membership in the South Central Federation of Mineral Societies, and liability insurance coverage for club activities. Associate membership is \$10 per year and includes a subscription to this newsletter.

Central Texas Paleontological Society
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About the Newsletter

Fossil Footnotes is distributed once a month prior to each meeting. Contact the Membership Chair to subscribe or obtain a sample-issue. If your mailing-label has a date marked with a colored pen, it means your membership has or is about to expire. Please send your check to the club Membership officer or bring it to a meeting.

We accept material from club members (and non-members at our discretion) including, but not limited to, information relevant to club activities, fossil collecting, paleontology & geology, and science education. Feel free to reproduce original material contained in this newsletter for educational purposes (including other club newsletters), so long as you credit the newsletter issue and author, if applicable. Send submissions by e-mail or hardcopies to the Editor (see above) at least two weeks before the meeting. Expect some publication delays for exotic formats.

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