

Paleo Footnotes

Newsletter of the
Paleontological Society of Austin

Austin and Central Texas



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December 2010

President's Note

SEASONS GREETINGS !! Tis the season, to be sure. I'll start off by saying that I hope to see most of you at the Christmas party. It's a fun, social occasion with lots of good food, a fun gift exchange, a very short business meeting and a lot of laughs. We're also going to vote on a new slate of officers for the coming year.

Our shows are all over for the year and I know we're all grateful for that. As much fun as they are, it is nice to put it all behind us. From what I saw, from what I heard from the Dealers..... I have to say that Fossil Fest was a great success! I'm sure that David will submit the numbers very soon, I don't need those - all I have to do is remember all the smiling faces that I saw all weekend long. We are here to promote an interest in science. It's part of our stated purpose. Ain't it great when we can have so much fun doing it? A great deal of thanks goes out to all those who help make our shows the success they always are. I've never tried to figure out all the man-hours that go into having a show. A little here and there, all year long. Then during the last month they really stack up. Everyone who participated deserves a lot of thanks, but a SPECIAL THANK YOU goes out to Suzanne Galligher and Linda McCall. These two have been tireless, working on every aspect of the show. I hope that next year a lot of new people will join in and see the fun we've been having.

It would be silly of me to talk of saying "Good-bye", I'm simply moving to the back of the room instead of the front. I am, however, not going to be writing this note any more. It's about time, I believe, for someone else to take over and I look forward to seeing Melody Barnett standing up there next year.

And BEST WISHES for the New Year. May we all find wonderful undiscovered outcrops!

MERRY CHRISTMAS!!

---Ed

Next meeting, no I mean: PARTY – Friday December 10th, 2010

"White Mammoth Holiday Potluck Party"

**7:00 p.m. at the Austin Gem and Mineral Society building
6719 Burnet Lane, Austin, TX**

The main dish and drinks will be provided. Bring your favorite side dish or dessert (let us know what you will bring when you RSVP to avoid duplications).

RSVP to Suzanne Galligher 512-751-1351.

If you would like to participate in the "White Mammoth" gift exchange, please bring a gift-wrapped fossil-related item (around \$10).

Rules will be explained at the party.

PSA November Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order by Marilyn Austin at 7:00 pm.

A presentation "How God designed the earliest life on earth and may end up with vertebrate nannopaleontology." was given by Dr. Robert L. Folk, Professor Emeritus at the Department of Geological Sciences University of Texas.

Dr. Folk started by showing us slides of travertine in Italy. He then stated that this travertine was comprised of annual layers of minerals precipitated out of the water by the presents of micron-sized bacteria. The different colors of the travertine are created by differing water temperatures and differing bacteria.

Dr. Folk displayed photographs of bacteria filaments encrusted with Aragonite needles. Some of the photos showed sphericalites that were .05 to .2 microns. These were called ultra-micro bacteria. These fossils show up when the mineral is etched with acid. There are some who claim that these are too small to represent anything living and are therefore not fossils. More photos were taken with a Transmission Electron Microscope. This microscope functions a lot like an x-ray. The sample was stained with a stain that turns black when it comes in contact with organic material. Some of the black stains showed up as .1 micron sized dumbbells. Some critics have said that the small size of the assumed organic material was in opposition to what we know about nature. Many photos were show that appeared to be nano fossils. Some appeared to have been caught in the process of dividing. It appears that these nano structures are the fossil remains of very small bacteria.

Break

Old Business

Current balance of club's account is \$22,910.68

The last minutes were approved.

Club members were requested to sign up to volunteer at Fossil Fest. Suzanne will send out a signup sheet.

Ron volunteered to donate some of the sodas for the kitchen.

Fossil Fest set up will start Friday December 3rd at around 10:00am and will continue until complete. Please drop by if you have time to help. A request for volunteers to fill a display case (your fossils) was made.

Joan Crain mentioned that our profit from Fossil Mania was \$963.00.

New Business

Frank Crain told us of an opportunity to talk to school children in Leander Most any Tuesday during school hours. Volunteers were requested.

The annual Christmas Party will be held on December 10th at 7:00pm. As usual it will be a potluck with the club providing the main meat dish and drinks. There will be a White Mammoth gift exchange. Please bring a fossil related gift. Suggested value of \$10 or less. Suzanne will send out a signup sheet.

Jaime Young read the slate of proposed board members for the coming year. They were as follows:

President - Melody Barnett
 Vice President - Michael Smith
 Secretary - Dennis Stock
 Treasurer - Gary Rylander with help from Cathy
 Show Chairs/ Board Members - Linda McCall and Suzanne Galligher
 Program Chairman - Marilyn Austin
 Field Trip Chairman - Ed Elliott
 Web Master - Michael Smith

The field trip to Clifton was changed to Whiskey Bridge. An email will be blasted to the club members (by Erich Rose) about the change.

Door prizes were awarded.

Meeting was adjourned.

Fossil Fest Report

Not in any order what-so-ever...

From Dennis Stock who worked that wheel hard:

Wheel of Fossils, the rules were:

- 1: For kids under 95
- 2: Every spin is a win
- 3: No smiles allowed

Rules 1 & 2 were strictly followed. We need to work on compliance for rule #3 next year ;-)

From Linda McCall...

Please also include a special thanks to Suzanne for all her hard work as my right hand man (woman) and to Ron and Janet Root for running the concessions - it's a lot of work to stage all that, and to those core club members who came on Friday and left on Sunday night - they know who they are! Also thanks to everyone who volunteered - great job - it's not only our greatest outreach of the year, but also a great time to get together with other fossil fanatics and socialize and share stories and sites and exchange information. (I said some of that already, so just pick what you want...)

From Melody Barnett...

A standing ovation to the Show Chairman, Linda McCall, for putting the show together, and to Suzanne Galligher for organizing the volunteers. Neither of these is a particularly easy job and we sincerely appreciate you taking them on again this year. Special thanks to Bruce McCall for handling the hundreds of extra things that came up (and especially for your early bird specials J). But most of all, thank-you, thank-you, thank-you to all the PSA members who gave their time and talent that make this event such an enjoyable and educational experience for the public and for the vendors...it simply could not happen without you.

From David Lindberg, Treasurer...

The summary of the 2010 Fossil Fest is:

Attendance: 684
Non-dealer income: \$2482.63
Raffle tickets sold: 472

By comparison, this is a little better than what we did last year:

Attendance: 663
Non-dealer income: \$2259.63
Raffle tickets sold: 400



November Field Trip Report Whiskey Bridge - The Stone City Bluff, Eocene

The day started out rather inauspiciously, actually rather opaquely as there was a pea-soup fog for nearly half of the trip from Austin to “Whiskey Bridge”. Or as most of us call it – Highway 21 at the Brazos. Our arrival was somewhat sporadic, given the conditions. It is somewhat disconcerting to realize that that red glow that just appeared over your head is a stop light at a major highway crossing – actually makes you slow down a little. Eventually we had 17 hunters on the outcrop: Earl Richards, Theda Strickler, Shanna Graves, Kevin Bills, Gary Vliet, Jimmy Hendricks, Frederick and Melinda Falk, Gary and Cathy Rylander, Erich Rose, Melvin Noble, Dennis Stock, Jamie Young, Jamie Spinello, and Kristen van Patten.

The stratigraphy at this location is mid-Eocene, and is all contained in the Claiborne Group. The Sparta Formation at this location is at the river bed and is of deltaic origin and basically barren of fossils. Above that is the Stone City Formation, which is a glauconitic marl and makes up most of the bluff. The uppermost portion of the bluff consists of the Wheelock Member of the Cook Mountain Formation. Both the Stone City and the Cook Mountain are extremely fossiliferous. For reference, the Weches, which we hunt in East Texas, lies under the Sparta. The age estimate here is from 43 to 46 MYA.

Given the incredible number of things that can be found here, I will only mention a few of the more interesting things that I saw. I know that both Melvin and Gary R. picked up a hand full of shark teeth. And I saw Gary V. pull a *Cornulina armigera* from the bluff. This is a somewhat larger fossil than is usually found here and (I think) is somewhat rare here. I have one, but I haven't seen any others. Kudos! There were quite a few corals found of the kind that the Emerson book refers to as Unknown. Several of them were growing from other shells, and Gary R. had one with three encrusting a shell. I had a nice piece of *Madracis johnsoni*, some *Balanophyllia irrorata* and several *Turbinolia pharetra*. Those last are interesting only in that I found them sitting there in the green sands – I usually have to use magnification to see them - they are common if you look hard for them. While I don't remember who found them, I saw a couple of nice *Belosaepia veatchi*, or “squid beaks”, found. With this many people looking, I'm sure many other treasures were found that day.

While the day started out in a questionable manner, it was nice the rest of the day and everyone that I spoke to enjoyed the collecting locality. It's a world class site as well as the Type Locality and I never get tired of going..... AND it's somewhat local! Another great day hunting fossils! See you at the party. Ed

Award Winning Web Site: PSoA!

Congratulations Michael (as in our own Michael Smith!)



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 the third Tuesday of each month, 7:00 p.m. at the Austin Gem and Mineral Society building, 6719 Burnet lane, Austin, TX. The public is cordially invited to attend.

Annual Dues: \$15/individual, \$20/family and \$10/associate (non-voting, receiving newsletter) Send to: Treasurer, Paleontological Society of Austin, PO Box 90791, Austin, TX 78749-0791

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DATED MATERIAL – MEETING NOTICE

FIRST CLASS MAIL