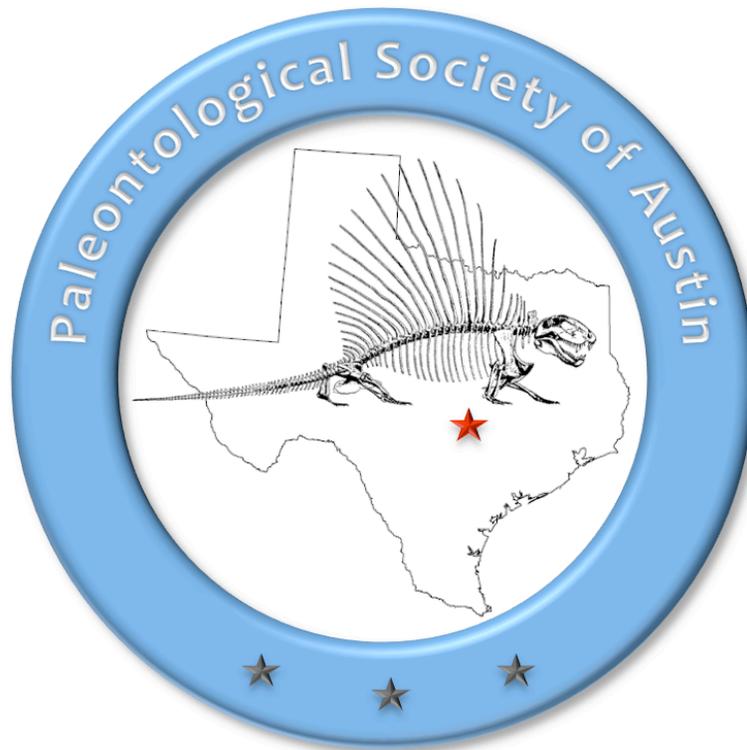


Paleo Footnotes

Newsletter of the
Paleontological Society of Austin

Austin and Central Texas



Volume 6, Number 9
September 2011

President's Note

I hope everyone enjoyed that brief respite from the heat and had a chance to get out and do a little digging. Those few cool nights and mornings were really nice and hopefully, with the onset of the autumn months, we'll have more cool temperatures to enjoy our upcoming field trips.

September is when the Nominating Committee is formed so please be thinking about the ways in which you want to support the society. Many hands make light work so the more people who are willing to get involved the better the society will function. The slate of officers will be presented at the October meeting, voted on at the November meeting, and assume office in January. Wow, the year seems to be just flying by!

I look forward to seeing everyone on the 20th, so until then... Happy hunting,

Melody

Next Meeting Tuesday September 20, 2011

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

Friesenhahn Cave

by Dr. Lawrence Meissner

One of Concordia University Texas' most valued properties is the famous Friesenhahn Cave in San Antonio. Considerable work has been published about prior research at the Friesenhahn Cave and at least one publication has identified this site as "one of the most important paleontological sites in the United States" (Veni, 1988).

Besides the [La Brea Tar Pits](#) in California, it is believed that no site in the United States has yielded a greater variety of significant Pleistocene vertebrate fossils. From excavations conducted by the University of Texas at Austin over 40 years ago, the Friesenhahn Cave has yielded over 4,000 isolated teeth and bones of more than 30 genera of ice age mammals, reptiles and birds.

Especially noteworthy from the Friesenhahn Cave is the holotype specimen of *Geochelone wilsoni*, a recently discovered species of turtle which is represented by only a very few specimens worldwide ([Milstead, 1956](#)).

Dr. Lawrence Meissner is Professor of Biology and the Director of Environmental Science Program at Concordia University in Austin since 1973. He is a member of the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology and the Texas Academy of Science.

He was one of 15 educators selected from public and private universities and colleges in Texas for the "Piper Professor of 2010" award by the Minnie Stevens Piper foundation for excellence in teaching. He is a member of the Advisory Board for the Texas Elementary Science In service Project that trains Texas teachers in implementing the Project 2061 science curriculum and has been a workshop leader and speaker for numerous teachers conferences in the Lutheran and public education systems of Texas.

Monthly Minutes: 08/16/2011

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm.

Dr. Ann Molineux reported on the 9th International Congress of Rudists, held in Jamaica. The collecting was very different from collecting in Texas. For one, there is very dense vegetation to deal with. She presented several maps of the geology of Jamaica.

Robert T. Hall, considered the father Texas geology, is called the Father of Antilles Geology. Jamaica is a volcanic island that sits near the North American and Caribbean tectonic plates. Also nearby is the Cayman Trench. Approximately 40 mya Jamaica was completely underwater. There are many coral and rudist fossils on Jamaica. A slide of a Titanosar colites rudist was shown. It is a very large hoop like rudist. Dr. Molineux reported on 2 field trips.

Secretaries note: See the following for circulars describing the conference.

http://www.mona.uwi.edu/geoggeol/conference/Rudist%20Conference_files/RudistConference.htm

A break was taken.

Business Minutes from last meeting were corrected: The mass inventory is at the UT Non-Vertebrate lab at the Pickle center. Minutes of last meeting were approved as corrected. There was a discrepancy in the dates of the Scholarship Committee report between the last meeting and what was discussed in the board meeting.

Treasurer's Report:

Savings	\$20,045.76
Checking	\$4,633.71
Total	\$24,679.47

The treasurer's report was approved and accepted. Board Meeting minutes were read. All actions of the board were approved. Frank and Joan Crane were

approved as life time members.

National Fossil Day Volunteers are needed for Wednesday October 12th. Mike Smith tentatively volunteered. We will have a standard touch table display. Contact Erich Rose if interested.

AGMS Show, Kelsey gave a report. She went to the AGMS show committee meeting. We have been asked to pass out fliers. Kelcey has a draft of an application for a "display box" completion. The application deadline was not known. Most of our table top items for the show are in the club storage shed. Kelcey asked if the club wanted to donate a prize for the display box completion.

Fossil Mania, Jamie stated that the tables have been sold out.

Fossil fest will be the first weekend of December (the 3rd & 4th) keep these days on your calendars.

The field trip will be a kayak trip to the Brazos river. It will be hot, prepare accordingly. Please be safe, wear a personal flotation device!

The October field trip will be on the 15th.

Discussion about donating to the American Lands Access Group. There was some thought that a donation might affect our non-profit status. It was decided to decline.

Next month a nominating committee will be formed. Volunteers were asked for.

Door prizes were awarded.

The meeting was adjourned.

Next Field Trip Saturday, September 24th

TXI Quarry Midlothian, TX

Arrive at TXI by 7:45 and meet in the first parking lot on your left. This is on Ward Rd. and is just west of Midlothian off of Highway 67. NOTE: There is a 25-person limit. If you want to attend you must contact Ed Elliot (512-657-7581, evenings or edwardelliott@ymail.com) as soon as possible. Persons attending will have to sign two papers prior to entry. These will be sent to attendees by e-mail or handed out at the meeting. Ed will have a few blank ones at the meeting site. We will receive hard hats and safety glasses from the company. Kids under 18 are permitted if accompanied by a parent. Please, no very small kids in this active quarry. There will be other stops made, yet to be determined.

Directions: take IH-35 north; Stay left onto IH-35W toward Fort Worth; Take exit 26A for US-67 and turn right heading east toward Dallas (& Midlothian); exit US-67 at Ward Road and go right (south) to the quarry. There will be a parking lot on the left where we will meet up. Driving time from Austin is about 3 plus hours.

This site exposes a contact zone between the Upper Cretaceous Eagle Ford and Austin Chalk Groups. Vertebrate fossils, including teeth and bone material from sharks, large bony fish, mosasaurs and other marine reptiles are the prizes. Most are preserved as a black phosphatic material. Other invertebrates can be found as well as carbonized wood and pyrite. You will want a hammer and chisel to break up larger pieces but much of the material will be loose. Bring lots of containers and some newspaper to wrap more delicate items.

We will be in the quarry for only a few hours but it will be very hot so bring lots of water, sun-screen and protective clothing. Since we will only be in the quarry for the morning you will have the option of grabbing lunch on the way to the next stop, which is yet TBD.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

National Fossil Day Wednesday October 12th, 1 - 4:45PM Texas Memorial Museum

PSoA will be taking part in this national event at the Texas Memorial Museum on the UT campus. We will have a table or two set up with a variety of material about our organization as well as displays and sample fossils. We will be looking for volunteers to be at the museum that day for an hour or two and help by talking with visitors about our society and collecting fossils here in Texas. You do not need to be an expert or a long time member to help out. The museum will provide parking validation at the nearby garage for those who participate. Contact Erich Rose if you are interested. 512-626-9930 or erichrose@austin.rr.com

Places to be, Things to do...

DALLAS GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY, 54th Annual Show, "The Crystal Craze"
Saturday, November 19th 10am-6pm, Sunday, November 20th 10am-5pm
Rodeo Center Exhibit Hall, 1800 Rodeo Drive, Mesquite, Texas 75149
(I-635 @ Military Parkway, Exit 4)

Adults: \$8.00, 12 & under: \$3.00, 3 & under: FREE!
Family of 4 or more: \$20.00, Scouts & Leaders in uniform FREE!

Rocks/Mineral Specimens, Polished/Faceted Gems, Fossils, Lapidary Equipment, Jewelry Supplies, Games & Demonstrations, Fluorescent Display, Prizes & Silent Auction, Rock "Food" Table, Gem Identification, Gem and Mineral Identification

www.DallasGemAndMineral.org

July Field Trip Report, 2011

From field trip chair Ed Elliot.

Driving up to our meeting spot, I couldn't help but think - "What a great day for fossil collecting!" It may be July in Texas, that doesn't stop us from having a great day down in a creek in our backyard. Seventeen hardy souls followed me down the creek : Ron Root, Jason Burns, Ron McMullen, David Lindberg, Rosanne Steele, Margo and Seth Harvey, Melvin Noble, Terry and Hunter Collins, Rosemary Smith, Melody Barnett, Dax Gonzalez, Paul Hammerschmidt. So many new names to learn – have patience with me.

Walking upstream from Highway 290 in Little Walnut Creek it is possible to see the Dessau Formation – which is what you are walking on. Under the bridge and in the hillsides you pass is a more marly, yellowish rock (at this location) which is the Burditt Formation. Most of the rock at this location shows the curved fracture lines running through it that I usually associate with dewatering after the beds were laid down. Regardless of the cause, large fossils tend to be fractured beyond repair. Back in the early 80's I saw a large (3 feet plus) ammonite on these slopes, which had been undercut and was very visible. So many cracks in it. Above the level of the stream bed and on up the hill is the Pflugerville Formation. It used to be collectable at this location – now mostly a housing area. All are in the Austin Group. There is collecting all along the creek, almost all involving chopping the fossil from the fairly soft rock. There are some rather nice oyster beds, the first being on the west side about 400 yards from the bridge and containing mostly *Exogyra laeviuscula*. The next is about 300 yards further on the east side and containing both *E. laeviuscula* and *E. tigrina*. The latter being on the higher portion of the outcrop. Also to be found individually are *E. ponderosa* and *E. erraticostata*. These, plus the ubiquitous large *Inoceramus sp.* are the easiest to find. Careful looking at the rock will yield ammonites, small oysters, gastropods, occasional corals and rarely echinoids. Dax found a large ammonite and turned it over to me. I said "what the heck" and started chopping. The top was water worn and I had hopes for the other side. It was compressed and chopped out easily. (Any one want an 17 inch yard rock?) Probably a *Parapuzosia sp.*

By noon some members were wanting something else. I wasn't ready to go – I had just uncovered a bed of *Lopha panda* in the Burditt. There were still several people in the creek, so I gave directions to the site over near Pease Park and they went there. This site is the Del Rio Formation, Washita Group. I was told that they found some nice things. Paul and I excavated the *Lopha* bed for an hour and were ready to leave. Anyone left there had managed to get by us and leave without us seeing them – we were the last. Not wanting to hunt where the others had just hunted, I took Paul over to Shoal Creek near 45th. We had a good time and picked up some nice things. My best was some small ammonites, *Faraudiella texana*. This part of Shoal Creek is Del Rio Formation, with overlying Buda Formation, Washita Group.

We very seldom have local trips, these are the spots we are supposed to be hitting on our Saturdays, or after work (when it isn't 107). I can only encourage people to look around town and emphasize all the really great fossils I've gotten from local creeks and outcrops. You don't have to drive a long way to find really great specimens. Hope to see you on the Brazos River soon!

August Field Trip Report, 2011

From field trip chair Ed Elliot.

We had seven kayaks and one canoe heading up the Brazos River from San Felipe and it was a beautiful blue-sky day, perfect for collecting. With me were Gary and Cathy Rylander, Melvin Noble, Mike Smith, Danny Draper, and Richard, Josh and Will Wilberson. After unloading and shuffling vehicles to the bridge, we were floating by 8:45 and hunting by 9:00. I had said at the meeting that I expected a fun day on the water and we might see a fossil or two. With the drought unabated and the water always low – I expected that this area would be picked clean of anything except petrified wood pieces. I'm happy to say that I was wrong. (OK, not a rare occurrence.)

At the first gravel bar, Mike picked up a nice little tooth that he thought might be rodentia of some kind. Gary found most of a mammoth tooth that was trying to come apart. Paul picked up a small, but pretty, lower jaw without teeth (recent?) and a well preserved astralagus (?) I believe it was Danny that picked up the nice piece of turtle. And I remember a giant armadillo dermal scute being found as well. Yes, sir. Totally picked over.

On the third stop, I believe it was Cathy that picked up a great horse tooth. Paul found a large water-worn mammoth tooth on the shoreline. We went on to the next stop and I picked up a soft-shelled turtle plate. I saw several people on the shore, clustered around Paul and went over to show it off and ended up just sticking it in my bag. Paul was holding 50 percent of a lower jaw of a large gomphother with a tooth still in the jaw. Whether this was a “gomp” or a pliomastodon will take some cleaning – regardless, this was one of the nicest finds I've seen come from our trips on the Brazos. Kudos to Paul for spotting this one in the rocks. Yes, sir. Totally picked over.

As a river trip, this one was great. The water was up just enough for the three or four riffles to be fun to run through. For those of us who are birders, seeing Roseate Spoonbills, White Ibis and all

the other birds there was a real treat. And by early afternoon, when the heat was becoming unbearable, it clouded over and gave us a quick shower. After the rain, the temperature dropped by ten degrees. Can't ask for more than that in the summer in Texas.

While there weren't great numbers of fossils on this trip, what was found more than made up for our efforts in getting there. There are no bad trips on this river and we all had a great time. And we all want to go back. Soon.



The Banks of the Brazos.

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