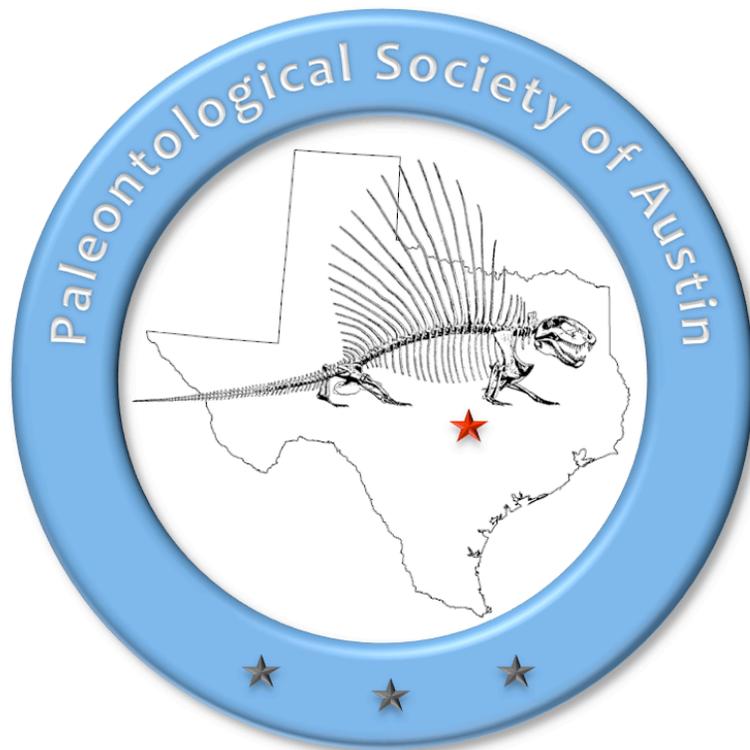


Paleo Footnotes

Newsletter of the
Paleontological Society of Austin

Austin and Central Texas



Volume 7, Number 12
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President's Note

Man-o-man did we have a good Fossil Fest this year! I have yet to hear how all the numbers will shake out, but as far as attendance and enthusiasm goes it was an absolute success. I don't have all the attendance info for the 21 prior years, but compared to last year, which I know was slow, and the years I worked the show before, it felt really busy. As of now it looks like about a 90% increase over last year. Gary will be providing us with a report and comparison once he has the final tallies. I want all of you to make an effort to thank our show chair Suzanne as well as the rest of the show committee Ron, Kathleen, Frederick and everyone else who helped plan the event. Suzanne is going to provide me with a full list of the volunteers. A week before the show she was a little anxious because the sign up sheets had many blanks, but, when it came time we had more than enough members pitch in. This included members who we have not always seen at our volunteer events. Everyone's efforts were greatly appreciated, big or small. We pushed some new (and old) ideas this year and they paid off well.

Paleo Passports - the Falk's (Melinda and Frederick) did a terrific job with this. It was a hit with the kids and families. Almost every child of grade school age searched out the answers and left the show knowing more about fossils and earth history than when they came (as well as a small prize!) – even the parents learned a thing or two! Ed Elliott and myself set up three new educational display cases: Index Fossils, Types of Fossils and the Tools we use to Find and Collect Fossils. Ed's incredible echinoid display case was a featured stop of the Passport quest. As I write this, Suzanne is assembling more of a show report and will have her own list of those to thank including all those I am forgetting. This was a major team effort. Well done!

This year we returned to emphasizing a show theme: Austin's Fossil Volcanoes. Al Cherepon and Chris Caran of the Austin Geological Society provided materials for the showcase display, and Al even brought some volcanic rocks for the display AND showed up both days to work the table answering questions and educating folks about Austin's explosive past. Linda McCall filled two display cases with volcano-related fossils and gave her presentation each day on Pilot Knob. Alan Peters worked the stage all weekend doing his always-bang-up job impersonating dinosaurs and getting the rapt attention of both kids and adults. Old dead things can be fun!

Our Grand Door Prize winners include PSoA member, Dax Gonzalez, who went home with the Grand Prize nautiloid, Edward Keilman, second prize echinoid and George Contor, third prize Miocene fossils. Congrats to all.

Now you are all getting this issue of Paleo Footnotes at this incredibly early date because we are having the holiday party THIS SATURDAY! Finding the right date is always a challenge and this year we are going with an early December date – Saturday, Dec. 8th at 6PM. See the party info on the next page and look for the Evite in your e-mail inbox. It's always fun!

See you at the party. -- Erich



Fossil Fest 2012 Dealers and Grand Prize Winner, Dax Gonzalez (photos by E. Rose & S. Galligher)

Next Meeting
Saturday December 8, 2012
6:00 p.m. at the Austin Gem and Mineral Society building
6719 Burnet Lane, Austin, TX

2012 Annual Holiday Party

Potluck Dinner & White Mammoth Gift Exchange

Please join us for the annual PALEONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTIN WHITE MAMMOTH HOLIDAY POTLUCK! The main dish and drinks will be provided. Bring your favorite side dish or dessert (please let us know what you will bring when you RSVP to avoid duplicates).

If you would like to participate in the "White Mammoth" gift exchange, please bring a gift-wrapped fossil-related item. We suggest around \$10-15 value or just something you think would be fun to have. Obviously fossils, books, toys, games, etc. will all work nicely.

Rules for the exchange will be explained after the dinner.

RSVP via Evite or to Suzanne at showchair@austinpaleo.org or (512) 751-1351



Fossil Fest 2012 (photo by D. Silver)

FOSSIL FEST REPORT

Suzanne Galligher, VP & Show Chair

The 22nd Annual Fossil Fest has come and gone. Wow, what a show! The attendance was fantastic - it blew our socks off! The kids had tremendous fun tracking down answers to Melinda Falk's TEKS based "Paleo Passport" educational quest. Alan Peters "Fossils Talk - Hear their Stories" was phenomenal and entertaining - to kids and adults alike. Everyone learned about Central Texas' explosive past with help from Erich Rose's showcase display, Alan Cherepon's volcano talks & specimens and Linda McCall's presentation on the reef fauna at Pilot Knob. The display cases were fascinating and educational mini-worlds. The hands-on mini-workshop on fossilization and create your own imprint was a huge hit. Learning is effortless when it's fun!

Everyone involved in the show this year - from planning, organizing, providing material support, executing, presenting and volunteering - deserves a standing ovation! Everyone who helped out made a difference in the quality and atmosphere of the show. It is truly an honor to stand shoulder to shoulder with such dedicated individuals! There are many individuals and groups that deserve recognition for this year's successful show.

Last year when I learned that our esteemed friend and researcher Linda McCall was "retiring" as Show Chair, I knew that I had some big shoes to fill. After the panic wore off, I realized that I'm building upon the shoulders of what others have already done. Linda left us with an extensive knowledge base of processes and tools to organize and run the show. She created a theme that will carry us for many years - "What's in your backyard?" - along with one of the most educationally packed and engaging press releases on Central Texas' prehistoric past. If you're not familiar with this press release, it's the one with the following sound-bites: "Sharks swimming in Round Rock! Mammoths stampeding through downtown! Volcanoes exploding by the airport! Dinosaurs stomping around Zilker Park! Monster marine reptiles cruising town! This is Central Texas?" This press release inspired me to turn these sound-bites into show themes that we can rotate to keep things fresh and keep our prior attendees coming back year after year.

At the end of last year's show, our 2011 dealers gave us survey results that provided a roadmap for future shows (i.e., more advertising, more scouting group attendance, more educational info, etc.). I took this feedback and made it my focus to drive more attendance and enhance the educational content across all venues of the show. The 2012 Fossil Fest Show Committee started working this past March to turn these ideas into reality. I'm very proud of all that we've been able to accomplish and am thankful for the involvement of the following individuals on the Show Committee: Erich Rose, Frederick Falk, Kathleen Howard and Ron Root. Please make a point of thanking them for their commitment and tireless efforts the next time you see them! A few of our accomplishments include a public Facebook page, mapping the different areas of our show to TEKS curriculum, educational enhancements across the show, the Paleo Passports, replacement of our heavy outdoor signage with lightweight eye-catching advertising, the purchase of six foot tables so that we are no longer scrambling at the last minute for more tables and numerous other show enhancements.

I really appreciate our Board Members & Chairs for their herculean efforts in the weeks prior to Fossil Fest. The following individuals deserve recognition: David Lindberg (Teachers Kits, microscope), Ed Elliott (Dig Pit "Tools" display), Erich Rose (general advisor, Wheel of Fossils & educational displays –Showcase, Index Fossils & Types of Fossils), Frederick Falk (Admissions Desk, Hall setup, "Paleo Passport" desktop publishing, printing & assembly), Gary Rylander (all treasury activities & financials), Kevin Bills (setup & tear down), Mike Smith (merchandise, Grand Door Prize tickets, Hourly Prize call-outs) and Ron Root (Food Service).

Special thanks to the following individuals for their support, dedication and hours of volunteering creating display cases, during show set-up, public show hours and tear-down: Bill Hill, Bob McDonald, Bruce McCall, Cathy Rylander, Christine Bennett, Dale Vargo, David Lindberg, David Silver, Dax Gonzalez, Earl Richards, Ed Elliott, Emelia Rose, Eric Henry, Erich Rose, Frank Crane, Frederick Falk, Gary Rylander, Gary Vliet, Hoang Le, James Hendricks, Jamie Young, Kevin Bills, Linda McCall, Marcus Hunter, Marilyn Austin, Melinda Falk, Melissa Rios, Melvin Noble, Paul Hammerschmidt, Rene Wojcik, Ryan Galligher, Sal Scibetta and Thuy Nguyen.

I am grateful to Susan and Les Postlethwait of AGMS for their advice, support and efforts packing and transporting the show trailer to our show, as well as, Nature's Treasures for their assistance transporting display cases from AGMS to Old Settlers.

I want to leave you with one last thought about our show. You may recall the poem, "The Starfish Flinger," from the last newsletter. We had a busload of kids from Killeen visit Fossil Fest this year. Their teacher mentioned that some of these kids live in a homeless shelter. She relayed to me the sheer elation she saw on one boy's face the entire time they were visiting our show. He could barely contain his excitement as he went from one area to another, soaking in all that we had to teach. This particular child was one of the homeless children. If we can provide joy, make this child forget his troubles for a short time or better yet - *inspire him to pursue science* - then we have made a difference and that makes *us* Starfish Flingers!

Thank you!



Awesome Pleistocene Display (photo by S. Galligher)



Frederick & Mike man the admissions desk (photo by E. Rose)



Al Cherepon talks about volcanoes (photo by E. Rose)

November Meeting Minutes 11-20-2012

The meeting was called to order and guest speaker introduced by Mike Smith.

Our speaker was Michelle R. Stocker, PhD Candidate, Vertebrate Paleontology, from the Jackson School of Geosciences at The University of Texas. Michelle discussed reptile fossils from the Eocene in west Texas. The concept of bio-chronology was discussed.

Michelle showed slides of and discussed a variety of reptilian fossils. Among them were Worm Lizards and Crocodylians. A very interesting discussion.

A break was taken.

Business:Minutes

Prior meeting minutes were amended to show that Tables were approximately \$900 and Banners were approximately \$900. Minutes were approved as amended.

Treasurers Report

Checking	\$5,691.43
Savings	\$17,904.82
Total	\$23,596.25

Gary reported that a request to IBM to Donation

match was turned down.

Treasurer's report was approved.

Fossil Fest

13 tables were purchased for \$999.44 and Signage was purchased for \$783.81. There is a signup sheet in the foyer. Please sign up to help with fossil fest. Suzanne will update the online version of the signup sheet, so if you do not sign up tonight sign up online.

Tables will be setup Thursday the 29th. Setup time for dealers and those with displays will be Friday from noon until 9:00pm and Saturday morning from 7:00 to 9:00am. Fossil Fest will run from 9:00am to 5:00pm on Friday 11/30 and Saturday 12/1.

Field Trip

Ed will send out an email detailing when and where.

Other

Hats have been ordered. There will be two colors khaki and blue. Hats will be approximately \$8 for members and \$10-12 for non-members.

The remaining club t-shirts will be awarded to children.

Door prizes were awarded.

Meeting was adjourned.

November Field Trip Harker Heights-Area

Ed Elliot, Field Trip Chair

Everyone seemed to want a "local" trip this time, so I chose the Harker Hights and Copperas Cove area. We have, in the last few years, gone to the same sites..... good big sites that produce a lot of good fossils. This time we went to a few that we've been missing or that I've not taken the club to. On a day trip, four sites are as much as we can do justice to, so we went to four different sites. I also found that a couple of places I've gone before are under houses or have road construction on them. Starting out the day at our usual McDonalds, we had Gary Rylander, Mark Montgomery, Ron Root, Gary Vliet, Terry and Hunter Collins, Kasey, Liam, Simon, Amira Lansongan, and Melvin Noble.

All of the sites were Walnut Formation and all had similar fauna. The echinoids found were *Phymosoma texana*, *P. mexicanum*, *Heteraster texana*, *Salenia mexicana*, and Hunter found a lovely partial *Tetragramma taffi*. Seeing Amira pick up her first (very nice) *P. texana* was worth the trip. The ammonites found were (to my knowledge) all *Engonoceras sp.* There were the usual broad variety of clams, oysters, and gastropods. For those who stayed until dark, we went to a small site looking for a small, original shelled and very pretty gastropod called *Semineritina apparatus*. As always, while there were quite a few found, only a handful of them were really nice.... but worth the effort.

The newest club members were made aware of four more local sites and we all spent a beautiful day hunting fossils. As far as I'm concerned – it doesn't get any better. ----See you at the party.

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. See web site for April & December dates.

Annual Dues: \$18/individual, \$24/family and \$12/associate (non-voting, receiving newsletter) Send to: Treasurer, Paleontological Society of Austin, PO Box 90791, Austin, TX 78749-0791

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PALEONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTIN

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DATED MATERIAL – MEETING NOTICE

FIRST CLASS MAIL