



Paleo Footnotes

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July 2015

President's Note

Erich Rose
PSoA President

When it finally gets this hot in the summer I switch my brain from thinking about collecting to working indoors cataloging the stuff I found earlier in the year. Lately I have been sorting and identifying specimens from the various Walnut Formation sites I collect. I find it interesting comparing the differences from one site to another. Certain sea urchins or bivalves will be present at one place but not the other. I find these things fascinating. There are so many things about this hobby that every one of us can find something interesting to pursue.

We have an interesting lecture on mosasaurs lined up for the next meeting and as is the rule for July an indoor, and hopefully air-conditioned, field trip to the vertebrate paleo lab at UT. See the info in the newsletter on both.

June field trip note: *I want to apologize for the last minute changes on the June trip. When I called the Corps of Engineers in Waco to make sure that water was not going to be a problem, I was told (with some prodding and a two hour wait) that the Research Center (the pit) was closed due to flooding. We sent out e-mails to everyone for whom we had e-mail addresses. Sorry to say we missed some people. If the club does not have an e-mail address for you, we can't contact you when the unexpected happens. It's not fun to drive three hours and find no one at the meeting spot. My phone number for emergencies – such as “where is everyone?” – is 512-657-7581. I never want anyone to miss a trip, but it happens to the best of us. – Ed Elliott, PSoA Field Trip Chair*

Next Meeting

Tuesday, June 16 – 7 p.m.
Austin Gem and Mineral Society Building
6719 Burnet Lane
Austin, Texas

Upcoming Field Trip

University of Texas Vertebrate Paleontology Lab

Ed Elliott
PSoA Field Trip Chair

We will tour the Vertebrate Paleontology Lab at the J.J. Pickle Research Center for our July field trip. The kind people over there advised me that no one is around their lab on the weekends, but they decided to open their doors for us at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, July 25. You will have to pick up a parking pass at the kiosk under the large white water tower. It is \$3 per vehicle for the day. Please be a little early, both to get the pass and to find the building. We haven't done this tour is a long time, and I think it will be a good one. [Click here for the lab's address and a map.](#)

Upcoming Presentation

Ron Root
PSoA Program Chair

Joshua Lively will be presenting on the subject of mosasaurs in Texas and beyond: evolution and (potential) response to environmental changes in a greenhouse climate. Josh is an assistant instructor and PhD student in the Jackson School of Geosciences at The University of Texas. He has a BS in geology from Auburn University and an MS in vertebrate paleontology from the University of Utah, where his research focused on Cretaceous turtles. His PhD work is focused on the evolution of anatomical diversity within mosasaurs through the Late Cretaceous. Mosasaurs were large, marine squamate lizards that dominated the global seas for the last 25 million years of the Age of Dinosaurs. Though very different than our modern large marine vertebrates (i.e., whales), their evolution may provide insights into the biotic response to environmental changes within a globally warm climate. For his PSoA talk, he will discuss the mosasaurs that are currently known to be from Texas and his research plans over the next couple of years.

Field Trip Report

Ed Elliott

PSoA Field Trip Chair

Meeting me on Highway 107 were Dave Hoppes, Gary and Cathy Rylander, Rose Farmer, Kevin Bills, Laura and Dan Bloemker, and Earl Richards. This outcrop is Walnut Formation at the bottom, Comanche Peak Formation through the middle and has Edwards Formation at the top. All are of the Fredericksburg Group. This fossiliferous site has at least six species of echinoid and we found four of them. Rose picked up a damaged but very pretty *Goniopygus zitteli*. There are many different ammonites (mostly broken) at this site. I found a very small *Oxytropidoceras* and Kevin found a palm-sized *Engonoceras*. Also found were lots of clams, oysters, and corals. I think five of us went up to the Edwards rudist overhang. A few good specimens were found. It's mostly for looking at – it is too crystalline to chop on. It was certainly worth the hike up the hill. Around 2 p.m., we decided to go elsewhere. For good or bad, we chose to go to Stillhouse Hollow. The recent creek flooding washed most of the normal loose fossils away – or someone really collected the site recently. We found a handful of small *Salenias*, a few crab claws, some very nice gastropods and some heart urchins. Fun, but far sparser than we remembered. Around 5 p.m., most of the remaining members headed home. Kevin and I decided to try a little more in Harker Heights.

The first site had lots of *Salenias*, small corals and lots of very pretty gastropods. Had. There is now a three-lane road going through it. Our next stop was a lot better with *Phymosomas*, crab claws, ammonites and lots of other stuff. I also found a very large *Pinna* that disintegrated on the way home. Around 7p.m., we decided on dinner and so ended another good trip. See you at the next one.

Meeting Minutes

June 16, 2015

Austin Gem and Mineral Society Building

Dale Vargo

PSoA Secretary

Erich welcomed the meeting to order at 7:11 p.m. and noted visitors Scott, Mary and Angie. And Shawn and Earl were in the audience. Erich said this will be a quick meeting due to not much on the agenda. The previous month's meeting minutes were motioned for approval and were approved. No Treasurer's report was available tonight due to problematic weather-related travel conditions affecting the Treasurer. Ron said that the Campfire outreach event went well even in the heat. There are no other requests for outreach at present. Cathy said she talked to Joan Crane and she said Frank is now in assisted living arrangements. Joan said she's doing some housecleaning of fossil-related items and may possibly be interested in selling "Miss Piggy," a Nebraska Oreodont fossil. Cathy suggested that we send a card to Frank. Erich suggested that we might help by using club funds to buy some fossils from the Cranes. Cathy said she will check with Joan.

Erich asked Scott what brought his family to the meeting, and Scott's answer was Mary's interest in fossils. Erich brought up the upcoming trip to the Waco Pit, a large excavation pit, and Ed warned of the possibility of a lot of muddy conditions and that there will likely be a second stop on the field trip at the road cuts near Gatesville. Ed intends to call and verify the feasibility of the Waco Pit destination for the field trip. And Erich reminded us that the Waco Mammoth Site is also there in Waco and that we may try to visit it while in the area. Ed said he will also check on the availability of the UT paleo lab as a field trip for July.

The door prizes, including a fossil feather from Creed, CO were won by Kevin, Cathy, and Mary. Ron then mentioned an upcoming field trip to the Creed area. Since refreshments were slightly delayed, Erich suggested that we go right into watching tonight's first of a DVD double feature of lectures by Prof. Stuart Sullivan. The first feature is an introduction to Paleontology, and notes that any holistic treatment of this field should include consideration of earth's major physical systems: Lithosphere, Hydrosphere, Cryosphere, Atmosphere, Biosphere, and Geosphere. Then the refreshments arrived and we had our customary break with snacks and conversation. And then the second Sullivan lecture was watched, which featured his discussion of the history of life, deep geologic time, fossils as clocks, plate tectonics, etc. Once the lecture concluded, we ended the meeting with more conversation and cleaning up as we left until next meeting.

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 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.

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

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