



# Paleo Footnotes

Volume 13, Number 8

August 2018

## President's Note

### Erich Rose

PSoA President

Hope yall enjoyed some of that rain last weekend. We had 1.75 inches at our house but I heard others had over 3 and some barely a half. I saw very few creeks that rose up but I know some local roadcuts got a good renewal. Erosion is the fossil collector's friend most often.

Our meeting and field trip come late this month. We will hear about some new work on early crinoids from Dr. Sprinkle and I think the current field trip plan is for Harker Heights. But we will wait to see what Ed has in mind. Maybe the Brazos is back to an acceptable level.

September and fall will be upon us quickly. That means outreach. We have at least two events in September. Identification day at Texas Memorial and Pioneer Day in Dripping Springs. Then October brings Gem Capers followed quickly in November with our own Fossil Fest. Emelia will be sending out requests and signup sheets for Gem Capers and Fossil Fest. Please sign on early so we know where we stand before the events. All of these are very important events and important to our society's mission.

One last note: My apologies to any and all of our members who showed up at the Perot Museum in July only to not have either myself or Ed Elliott along. I started out early that morning but never made it further than Cedar Park before my car broke down. By the time I was towed and repaired it was 1:30 and I was done for the day. Ed called me while I was waiting for the wrecker and informed me he was laid low by a cold or flu. Since then I have yet to learn of any of our members actually getting up there on that hot day. If you did make it, I sincerely hope it was worth it and would love to hear about the new dinosaur exhibits I was looking forward to seeing. Until the meeting, take care and stay cool.

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## Next Meeting

Tuesday, August 21 – 7 p.m.  
Austin Gem and Mineral Society Building  
6719 Burnet Lane Austin, Texas

## Next Field Trip

Saturday, August 25 – meet at 8:00am  
Harker Heights and Surrounding Vicinity  
Meet: McDonald's at 630 Indian Trail  
Harker Heights, Texas 76548

## Upcoming Meeting Program

### Paul Hammerschmidt

Programs Chair

### Updating the 1982 Bromide Echinoderm Monograph with new and more complete echinoderms - Dr. James Sprinkle

Dr. Sprinkle felt this talk would be of special interest to the Club as our Oklahoma field trip (usually in April) typically goes to at least one Bromide collecting locality.

### Dr. James Sprinkle Bio

James Sprinkle is now a Professor Emeritus at the University of Texas at Austin after holding the First Yager Professorship in the Department of Geological Sciences, for 18 years. He received a B.S. in geology from M.I.T. (1965), and M.A. (1966) and Ph.D. degrees (1971) from Harvard University. He spent 1970-71 as a Postdoctoral Fellow at the U.S. Geological Survey in Denver before coming to the University of Texas. During his 42-year academic career at Texas, Jim taught a variety of paleontology, soft rock, and introductory courses, plus field camp during the summers. Most of his research has focused on the systematics and phylogeny of early Paleozoic echinoderms, including crinoids and many extinct groups, such as eocrinoids, rhombiferans, and blastoids. He has also worked on echinoderms or other marine faunas from the Mississippian, Pennsylvanian, and Cretaceous.

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## July Meeting Minutes

### Gary Vliet

PSoA Secretary

No minutes were received by publication time.

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## Field Trip Report

### Field Trip Report: Perot Museum, July 2018 (Editor)

The July field trip was to the Perot Museum in Dallas that includes a special exhibit called Ultimate Dinosaurs. There's no field trip report available but the Perot has great fossil exhibits and well worth the trip.

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# Outreach Update

## Emelia Rose

PSoA VP/ Show Chair

There are three opportunities coming up for members to help support the Club and share their love for fossils. Remember, you do not have to be an expert! You just have to bring your smile and willingness to talk about fossils and the Club. Families are definitely encouraged to participate together.

Pioneer Day is Saturday, Sept. 22 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Jourdan-Bachman Pioneer Farms in Dripping Springs. I have volunteers for the morning shift, and am looking for 2 people to cover the afternoon shift from 1:00pm- 4:00pm including clean-up which takes about half an hour. Volunteers receive 1 free meal ticket and can purchase additional food at the concessions. If you would like to volunteer please email me at [showchair@austinpaleo.org](mailto:showchair@austinpaleo.org) and I will send the information to you.

ID Day at the Texas Memorial Museum is Sunday, September 23 from 1-5. Two members have already signed up to volunteer, so only two more are needed. If you would like to volunteer please email me at [showchair@austinpaleo.org](mailto:showchair@austinpaleo.org).

The Austin Gem and Mineral Society Gem Capers Show starts on Friday, Oct. 19. I have created a sign-up sheet (<http://signup.com/go/scnRSQJ>) for those who would like to participate. Feel free to sign up for multiple shifts in a day. I have made it so a maximum of 5 people can attend per shift, but 3 people are needed per shift.

Thank you in advance for volunteering!

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# Upcoming Field Trip

Hunting for Cretaceous fossils in Harker Heights

## Ed Elliott

PSoA Field Trip Chair

The Club is headed out to Harker Heights and other locations along US-190 this month. We will be collecting from the Fredericksburg Group, Walnut and Comanche Peak Formations. Although many of you have collected these same formations in and around Austin, the variety of fossils will be somewhat different with a few more types of echinoids being common and other species of invertebrates we don't commonly see here. Shark and other fish teeth have also been found.

Most of the fossils will be loose and easily collected. Some may require a little digging or down-sizing, so a rock hammer and chisel could be handy. Mostly you will just need a variety of containers (boxes, zipper bags, divided boxes, etc.) for everything from tiny crab claws to ammonites.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the McDonald's on the north side of 190 at Indian Trail. Take I-35 north to Belton and head west on US 190 to Harker Heights. Exit at Indian Trail and look for the McDonald's on the right.

Travel time from central Austin is about 1 hour and 15 minutes. So plan to be there on time because we will caravan to our first stop fairly quickly. Contact Ed Elliot at 512-657-7581 with any questions.

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# Special Note

## 2018 SCFMS Web Site Contest 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Award Winner Gordon Galligher

The PSoA club Web site serves several functions. Three of the major functions of the Web site are:

- (1) Attract new members
- (2) Provide information to club members
- (3) Public advertising of club activities such as shows, meetings, and field trips

The SCFMS (South Central Federation of Mineral Societies) sponsors a Web Site Contest each year to highlight those club web sites that exemplify these attributes that make a more meaningful experience for web site visitors and for club members and assist in fulfilling the mission of the club. In this year's contest, our club website received a 2<sup>nd</sup> place award. Congratulations to our Club and especially to our webmaster Gordon C. Galligher! The top two SCFMS Web Site winners will be forwarded to the AFMS Web Site Contest.

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# Odds and Ends

## Pink Was the First Color of Life on Earth

Researchers have found bright pink pigments in 1.1 billion year old fossils of cyanobacteria drilled in West Africa. The BBC reports that the pigment comes from the chlorophyll of fossilized cyanobacteria, also known as blue-green algae, whose pigment molecules have survived eons in the ground. When diluted, the molecules look pink when held against sunlight, but in their concentrated form they appear red and purple.

Read more at <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/pink-was-first-color-life-earth-180969583/#kBhrvRIbvPLz0TYr.03>

## Unidentifiable fossils: palaeontological problematica

Palaeontological research can yield an amazing amount of information about the lives of long-dead organisms, as specific as the last meal consumed, the colour of feathers or the precise depth at which a marine organism lived. However, there are some fossils that defy classification, whether because their remains are incomplete, they don't bear a resemblance to any known form of life or they are just plain weird. There is a detailed vocabulary used to describe organisms which defy classification and a system of nomenclature to denote confidence limits on probable or speculative affinities, but they are generally grouped together as "problematica".

Read more at <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2018/jul/26/unidentified-fossils-palaeontological-problematica>

## Rare Desert Pterosaur Fossil Discovered in Utah

The rare Triassic fossil is the most complete early pterosaur ever found, and gives new insight into the evolution of the first flying vertebrates. Researchers in Utah have unearthed one of the most detailed pterosaur—aka pterodactyl—fossils found to date, a discovery that tells us the first known vertebrates to take to the skies were more diverse and widespread than previously thought.

Read more at <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/rare-desert-pterosaur-fossil-discovered-utah-180969995/#7WhwA2xBT8MiWfit.03>

## 'Amazing Dragon' Fossils Unearthed in China Rewrite Story of Long-Necked Dinosaurs

Roughly 174 million years ago, a long-necked dinosaur roamed the plains of what is now northwest China. The creature—dubbed Lingwulong shenqi, or the Lingwu Amazing Dragon—was a member of the sauropod family, a group of dinosaurs that includes the famous Brontosaurus and the largest land animals to walk the earth.

Read more at <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/amazing-dragon-fossils-unearthed-china-rewrite-story-long-necked-dinosaurs-180969751/#Aix044C5A0xTw7OH.03>

## Are all those dinosaur fossils worth the fuss?

Researchers are encouraged to embrace the media to communicate their science.

Read more at <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2018/aug/15/are-all-those-dinosaur-fossils-worth-the-fuss>

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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](http://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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