



# Paleo Footnotes

Volume 14, Number 2

February 2019

## President's Note

### Erich Rose

PSoA President

I want to begin this month's note by apologizing for any field trip confusion you experienced last month. Switching the February and January field trip locations made sense, once the meeting ended, so I should have just listened to what others were saying at the meeting about the forecast and made the decision right then. I heard of at least one member who missed the email blast and went all the way up to Jacksboro. Ugh. Please see the year's field trip list in this newsletter and remember to always check for any last-minute changes, and make sure we have your current email address to receive all last-minute updates

So with that said we did have a field trip last month to the Wilson Clay Pit near Brownwood. Not a big turnout but despite the winter temperature it was a beautiful day and we had fun. See my report.

We will be going to Jacksboro, Texas this month and hopefully the weather forecast will be better. This is a great place to collect and if you stick around all weekend Ed will lead you on to some other great locations in the Mineral Wells area on Sunday.

Take care,

Erich Rose

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## Next Meeting

Tuesday, February 19 – 7 p.m.  
Austin Gem and Mineral Society Building  
6719 Burnet Lane Austin, Texas

## Next Field Trip

Saturday, February 23 – 8 a.m.  
Lake Jacksboro – Meet in Jacksboro, Texas  
See directions in Upcoming Field Trip Report section

## January Meeting Minutes

### Lisa Izzi

PSoA Secretary

We started the meeting around 7:10 pm

Speaker: Lisa Boucher - "Shell Games"

- Their collection includes invertebrate fossils and recent specimens
- Plants, micro-fossils, rocks and sedimentary samples, minerals and gems, and meteorites
- [jsg.utexas.edu](http://jsg.utexas.edu)
- 176,000 cataloged records - 80% are from Tx
- They have a searchable reference database
- Location: PRC 122 & PRC 33
- Database of specimens that include the location
- Their mission is to catalog all specimens they have - they use a program called "Specify"
- They are currently funded by 2 NSF collection grants
- The collection is accessible and useable by others
- Paleocentral - online collection browsing (open & accessible)
- Collection space renovation: new cabinets, walk in freezer, new climate controlled space
- They are interested in volunteers
- If you are interested in volunteering - email Lisa at [Lisaboucher@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:Lisaboucher@austin.utexas.edu). More information from Lisa in the Special Notices section.
- They work M-F 9-5 and Wed 5-7
- Darwin Day 2/9 @ the Pickle Research - Center for Inquiry

Business started around 8:10 pm

- Budget: very similar to last year, we have \$1500 for scholarships
- We will post the field trip schedule in the February Newsletter
- Some dates for 2019:  
4/13 Auction  
10/19 AGMS Show  
11/2 Fossil Fest - Fossil Fest will have its first meeting in March, the topic this year is New Discoveries in Paleontology  
12/17 Holiday Party
- Then we introduced visitors and gave away door prizes

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## Upcoming Meeting Program

### Paul Hammerschmidt

Programs Chair

Not available at publication time.

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# Upcoming Field Trip

**Ed Elliott**

PSOA Field Trip Chair

Join us for one of the groups' favorite hunting spots – Lake Jacksboro. This Upper Pennsylvanian site is replete with fossils from the Finis Shale, Graham Formation of the Cisco Group. Most fossils will be marine in origin, including brachiopods, trilobites, corals, bryozoans, molluscs, crinoids, and teeth. Fossils will generally be small and loose, so bring plenty of small containers or sectional boxes. The drive back into downtown Jacksboro is not far, but coupled with the walk back across the spillway, it will waste valuable collecting time – bring food and plenty of water to maximize your time. If you stick around for more collecting on Sunday, we will visit various road cuts and possibly the Mineral Wells Fossil Park.

We will meet at 8:00 am in front of the Jack County Extension Office located at 100 N Main St. in Jacksboro (the town square). To get there, take 183 North from Austin and, in Lampasas, turn onto 281 North, which will take you straight to Jacksboro. Or, take I35 North to the EI35/ WI35 split just North of Hillsboro. Take WI35 to Ft Worth and take I20 West. On the West side of Ft Worth take the loop 820N and just North of Lake Worth exit for West 199 (the Jacksboro Highway). This will take you straight into Jacksboro. Saturday morning look for a group of fossil hunters huddled near the sign proclaiming the Jacksboro Tigers “State AA Football Champs” from 1962 to 1971.... what a feat. Remember that Jacksboro is about four hours from Austin, so either drive up the night before or be prepared to leave early Saturday. Jacksboro motels are somewhat bare-bones, so if you want top quality accommodations.... some people stay in Mineral Wells as we will be in that area for Sunday. We will caravan as a group to the first site, so please be on time. There will be a \$3 admission fee per person (children are free) to cover our parking in and crossing the spillway in the state park. Please have cash handy to put into envelopes at the pay station. Check the local weather before leaving so that you can dress appropriately. It is February in North Texas.

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## Field Trip Report

### **Wilson Clay Pit, Brownwood, Texas, January 2019 (Erich Rose)**

There was a rather brisk breeze blowing at 8am at our meeting spot in Early. But the sun was shining and there was a good vibe amongst the small group of nine who gathered. The day held promise. Fairly quickly we were off caravanning the 30 minutes north west to the site.

Wilson Clay Pit is what's left of a former quarry. The clay was mined for making bricks. Now the site is just a huge jumble of limestone, mudstone, shale, etc. and although there is still a small water-filled pit at the back of the site, what is encountered are the great piles of what they didn't want. Good for us as that is where the fossils are found and the huge piles weather rather nicely, exposing new fossils constantly with every rain.



The rock units encountered here are the Harpersville Formation and the Saddle Creek member of the Pueblo Formation. The transition from the uppermost Pennsylvanian to the Permian Periods is somewhere in this mix. Fossils appear to be mostly Pennsylvanian. And there is quite a variety to be found. Crinoids, mollusks, bryozoan, brachiopods, corals, forams, and more make up the invertebrates. But the pit is best known for the vertebrate fossils that can be often found here. The teeth of early sharks like *Petalodus* and *Peripristas* are fairly common. Other teeth as well as cartilage and fin spines show up as well. I think at least two of us found the crushing teeth of *Deltodus* and that was a new one for me from this site.

I managed to get a peek at some of the fossils others were finding. I saw some really well-preserved brachiopods, a nice variety of clams and other bivalves, plenty of crinoid bits including a few cups and a smattering of articulated arms. I didn't see any “show-stoppers” but I also didn't see anyone at the end of the day who felt disappointed.

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# Preparation for Fossil Fest 2019

**Emelia Rose**

PSoA Show Chair/VP

Fossil Fest 2019 will be on November 2nd and 3rd with the theme of "New Discoveries." Moving forward we will be the first week in November. Thank you again to everyone who volunteered and helped make the show a success. This year we went through all of the fossils for the dig pit and wheel. In any upcoming field trips you attend, please consider picking up a few larger fossils for the wheel and we are always in need for small fossils for the dig pit and baggie stuffing.

Also, the first show committee meeting of the year will be in March. If you are part of the committee, you will receive an email from me in the next couple weeks with a set date, time, and location. If you are not part of the committee but would like to join, please email me at [showchair@austinpaleo.org](mailto:showchair@austinpaleo.org) and I will make sure you are included in the e-blasts. Thank you!

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## Special Notices

### PSA 2019 Calendar of Scheduled Events

- Monthly meetings, with the exception of April, are held the third Tuesday of each month.
- January 19, Field trip to Brownwood area, Wilson Clay Pit (Pennsylvanian)
- February 23, Field trip to Jacksboro, TX (Pennsylvanian)
- March 23-24, Field trip to East Texas (Eocene)
- April 13, Picnic and Auction at Westcave Preserve (NO regular meeting in April)
- April 27-28, Field trip to Oklahoma (Paleozoic)
- May 25, Field trip to Midlothian, TX (Late Cretaceous) YET TO BE CONFIRMED
- June 22, Field trip to Brazos River, Float Trip (Pleistocene) or Whiskey Bridge (Eocene)
- July 20, Museum trip, location TBD
- August 24, Field trip to Whiskey Bridge (Eocene) or Brazos River, Float Trip (Pleistocene)
- September 21, Bandera, TX & Vulcan Quarry, Uvalde, TX (Cretaceous) (Note the quarry is tentative)
- October, 12-13 (note early date!) Field trip to Lake Texoma (Cretaceous)
- October 18-20, Gem Capers, Austin, Volunteers Needed
- November 2-3, FOSSIL FEST, Volunteers Required
- November 23, Field Trip to Brady &/or Santa Anna, TX (Pennsylvanian &/or Permian)
- December 17, White Mammoth Holiday Party (=regular 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday)

**Please note** that all dates and locations for field trips are subject to change. Always check the newsletter for that month. Whenever possible we will publish an email alert if things change at the last moment (as we just did for January). If you are not on the emailing list we highly recommend it and make sure we have a current email as well. If you have any questions, or want to confirm a location and date, contact Ed Elliott [Fieldtripchair@austinpaleo.org](mailto:Fieldtripchair@austinpaleo.org) or Erich Rose [president@austinpaleo.org](mailto:president@austinpaleo.org).

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### Call for volunteers to assist in the UT Non-vertebrate Paleontology Lab!

Dear Friends of NPL,

We are very excited to share with you that the new cabinets in PRC 33 have been installed! We are especially in need of volunteers during the re-housing process, which involves freezing for pest control, imaging, and inventory tracking. We will need the most help on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. For those of you interested in evening hours, the Wednesday evening volunteer group regularly meets from 5-7pm. Please contact me by email if you are interested in helping with this effort.

Best wishes,

Lisa Boucher, Interim Director

Non-vertebrate Paleontology, UT- -Austin

[lisadboucher@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:lisadboucher@austin.utexas.edu)

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## **Follow-up from Lisa Boucher Regarding UT Paleo Databases**

As a follow-up, could you share the following with members, especially those interested in the technical aspects of our database; it is MySQL-based and here is the link about the software: <https://www.sustain.specifysoftware.org/products/specify-6/>

Also for those interested, here is the PaleoCentral link where our type and figured collection records are shared: <http://paleocentral.org/>. And our other currently shared data (a work in progress) is through the iDigBio portal at: <https://www.idigbio.org/portal/search> .

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## **Odds and Ends**

### **Could these fossils push back the history of flowers?**



A study analyzing 200 tiny flowers from 174 million years ago suggests angiosperms were around during the Jurassic, but paleobotanists are skeptical.

Read more at <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/fossil-pushes-history-flowers-180971090/>

### **Scientists Used a Robot to Study How Prehistoric Lizards Walked**

OroBOT, a robot version of an ancestor to the dinosaurs, is helping fill in some gaps in the evolution of walking.

Read more at <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/scientists-used-robot-study-how-prehistoric-lizards-evolved-walk-land-180971283/>

### **This Ancient Reptile Had a Small Head, Tiny Eyes and a Platypus-Like Bill**

*E. carrolldongi*, the discovery revealed, had a small head, tiny eyes and a big, cartilaginous bill—much like the modern-day platypus.

Read more at <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/ancient-reptile-had-small-head-tiny-eyes-and-platypus-bill-180971351/>

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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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