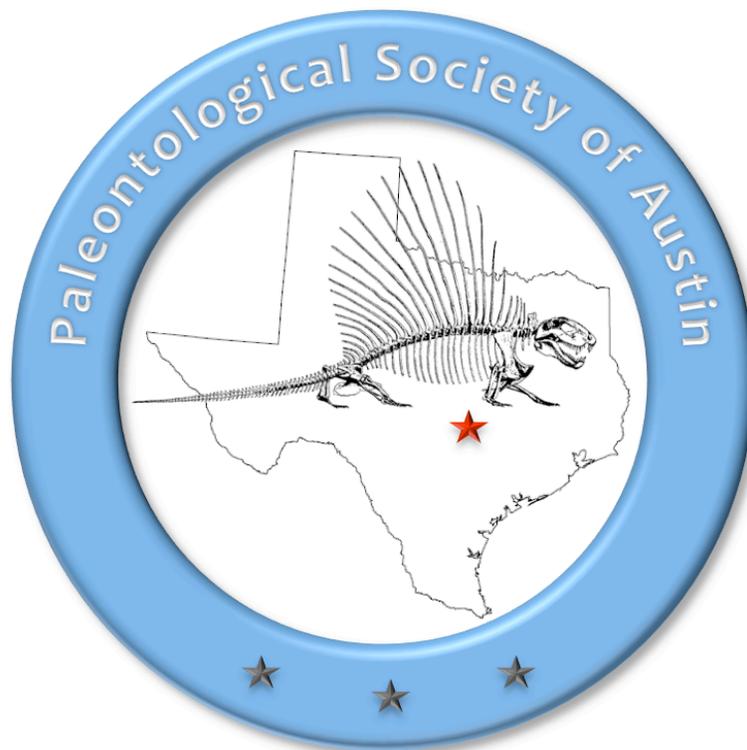


Paleo Footnotes

Newsletter of the
Paleontological Society of Austin

Austin and Central Texas



Volume 7, Number 1
January 2012

President's Note

We begin the year with a superb speaker, Dr. Leon Long of UT. He will speak on Plate Tectonics and it is guaranteed to be interesting. In addition, we have a great field trip schedule for the year starting with Pennsylvanian Period fossils from the Brownwood area. The Wilson Clay Pit is one of my favorite places to collect, and with any luck we'll have nice weather. Depending on the day, we may visit one or more other sites in the area. The rest of this year's field trip schedule will be presented at the meeting. In addition, please join us at the Texas Memorial Museum on Sunday the 22nd for Identification Day. Ed Elliot, several other members and I will be helping folks figure out what the "weird rock" they found really is. The museum is free and the event is fun.

Now to business: Last year we made a decision to pull out of Fossilmania, no longer taking part in that show with the Dallas Paleo Society. It was felt that doing the two shows as well as other outreach was stretching us a bit thin. We will still be putting on Fossil Fest, taking part in Gem Capers, as well as community outreach.

Dropping our participation in Fossilmania creates a financial loss of more than \$900, more than a quarter of our annual income. Fossil Fest brought in \$792. Our only other income source is dues.

As a priority, we have been working to improve our scholarship effort by developing a better application and award process. In the past, the society has been able to make awards ranging from several hundred to a thousand dollars (total). The board, and we believe the membership, feel the scholarship is a very important part of our mission. Keeping it at a generous level is our biggest challenge.

The board met this last week to develop a budget for the coming year. After much discussion and input we decided to do two things:

First, we will slightly increase dues. This does not fully solve our current shortfall, but it guarantees that we cover our basic costs. Individual membership will now be \$18, family \$24 and associate (non-voting) \$12. This is still very affordable and a modest outlay.

Second, we will be creating a new effort to raise money for scholarships. The plan is to ask for direct contributions to a scholarship fund. We will be asking both members and non-members alike. No hard sell, but if every member gives a tax deductible \$2-5 dollars we will be well on our way. Our goal is to raise a minimum of \$500 this year. The actual amount raised in 2012 will then become the basis for the 2013 scholarship.

We will be presenting the budget reflecting these changes at the January meeting. The budget is workable for the upcoming year. Next December, we will know the results of our new plan and tactics and adjust for 2013.

Take care and see you at the meeting, on the field trip, or anywhere in between.

-- Erich

Next Meeting Tuesday January 17, 2012

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

Plate Tectonics

Dr. Leon Long, UT

Geology is a synthetic science, drawing upon every available kind of evidence to assemble a story of how the earth operates. Only by the mid-20th Century had earth scientists accumulated sufficient evidence, especially from the 70% of the earth covered by ocean, to assemble the theory of plate tectonics. Plate tectonics is the revolutionary paradigm, a powerful explanation of the origin and behavior of all of Earth's most major features. These include the mid-ocean ridge system, ocean trenches, dangerous active fault zones, the greatest mountain ranges, and more. Plate tectonics explains drifting continents, the birth, maturing, and destruction of oceans, profound climate change, important aspects of the fossil record, and occurrences of valuable economic deposits.

A little about Professor Long

Professor and The Second Mr. and Mrs. Charles E. Yager Professorship, Department of Geological Sciences, Jackson School of Geosciences, University of Texas at Austin

Dr. Long's research is in isotope geology, especially to use naturally occurring radioactivity and its daughter products as a geologic clock (e.g., to date the crystallization of a magma), and as a geochemical tracer (e.g., to characterize the source rock whose melting produced the magma). Dr. Long is interested in applying the Rb-Sr isotopic age method to clay minerals, one possibility being to date when weathering had produced an ancient soil zone.

It is Never Too Early: Fossil Fest 2012

The Show Committee is forming for the upcoming 22nd Annual Fossil Fest. This is a great opportunity to shape the show and make a difference. All you need are lots of ideas! Please contact Suzanne Galligher, Fossil Fest Show Chair, at suzanbg@gmail.com if you are interested.

December 2011 Meeting minutes, sort of...

I did not take minutes as no business was discussed. I did not think to take minutes of the meal (very good) nor of the white mammoth exchange (very fun) ;-)--Dennis (PSA Secretary)

Next Field Trip
Saturday January 21, 2012

Pennsylvanian Fossils, Brownwood, TX

We will be collecting from rocks of the Upper Pennsylvanian Period. Fossils will be mostly marine in origin, and include brachiopods, trilobites, corals, bryozoans, mollusks of all sorts, crinoids (both stem and calyx), echinoids and shark teeth. These sites can produce amazing things so be prepared. Most of these fossils will be small and loose so bring plenty of divided boxes &/or zip lock bags for the small items and newspaper or bubble wrap for the larger stuff. You may also find specimens that need to be worked free of larger rocks so a hammer and chisel will be useful. A rock hammer is also a safe way to turn rocks in areas like this with snakes & scorpions. All of the sites are rugged and involve some hiking so be prepared with proper footwear, gloves, walking stick, etc.

We meet at 8:00AM in Early, TX at the Mall. (Early is just east of Brownwood)

Directions to the Mall in Early:

Head north on 183 from Austin. Be sure to stay on 183, watch the signs as you pass thru the various towns in between. As you approach Early and Brownwood (about 2-1/2 hours from central Austin) 183 will make a left turn. From there the mall will be about 1 mile further on the right. Look for our cars in the parking lot. We will caravan as a group to the first site so please be on time.

Bring food and drinks (WATER!) and whatever else you'll need, as we will probably be well out in the country all day. It's a long drive back to town just for lunch. Depending on the site we may be in full sun for hours so be prepared. Check the weather for temperatures as well. It can be both cold or warm this time of year and will probably be both.



Petalodus sp. (ancient shark) and Crinoid calyx w/arms. Harpersville Fm, (Pennsylvanian)Wilson Clay Pit

2011 Annual Holiday Party

We had a better than average turn out for our annual holiday party. More than fifty members and family attended. As usual, there was plenty of tasty food, great conversation and the ever-popular White Mammoth Gift Exchange. The exchange seemed a little tame this year, but everyone went home with something nice and there were no crying children or adults (as far as I could tell) Big thanks to everyone who helped organize and decorate. Especially Suzanne Galligher (Evites and "just plain making sure it all came together") and Gary & Cathy Rylander (gettin' the BBQ) and those who stuck around and put the AGMS club house back in order. Here are a few photos from the party and gift exchange courtesy of David Silver and Erich Rose.



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: \$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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The Paleontological Society of Austin is a member of and affiliated with:

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DATED MATERIAL – MEETING NOTICE

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