

# PALEO FOOTNOTES

NEWSLETTER OF THE PALEONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTIN

VOLUME 19 | NUMBER 02

FEBRUARY 2024



## President's Note

**I hope this message finds you in good spirits, despite the somber tone of the past few weeks. It is impossible not to acknowledge the great loss of our President Emeritus, Erich.**

His exuberance and unwavering commitment to our society and its members has left an indelible mark. I can wholeheartedly attest that my commitment to, and participation within, our society is largely due to Erich's enthusiasm and insatiable need to share his passion with others. It was infectious. Let us continue to provide a welcoming and supportive atmosphere within our community in his honor.  
(continued on page 2)

## This Month's Speaker

**Dinosaurs from the Morrison Formation - what we can learn about their diet and lifestyles by using isotopes in their teeth.**

Speaker: **Liam Norris**

Liam will share his experience and the steps he took to go from a dinosaur-loving kid to a full-fledged paleontologist. From the Houston Museum of Natural Science, to the University of Texas at Austin, Liam has seen many aspects of paleontology, and looks forward to sharing what he has learned.

(continued on page 2)

February 2024

**PSoA Regular Meeting**  
Tuesday January 20th - 7pm  
**AGMS Clubhouse**  
6719 Burnet Lane

Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88451710052?pwd=Uy9hV05BTy9rUmIzYlMzdVVnNTVjdz09>

**Club Field Trip**  
Saturday January 24th - 9am  
Jacksboro / Mineral Wells  
(see details page 2)

**April Auction & Potluck**  
April 20th 12-3pm  
Westcave Outdoor Discovery Center  
(see details page 2)

## President's Note

---

(continued from page 1)

Hopefully the weather plays out better for our February field trip to Lake Jacksboro. Unfortunately, it is looking as though I may not be able to attend this one. However, I'm looking forward to hearing about all your incredible finds!

See you all soon,

**Heather Aziz**

PSoA President

## This Month's Speaker

---

(continued from page 1)

Liam Norris is a third year Ph.D. candidate at the Jackson School of Geosciences studying paleontology working with Dr. Rowan Martindale. Liam is originally from Houston, Texas, and gained an early appreciation for science through his fascination with animals and paleontology. He worked at the Houston Museum of Natural Science (HMNS) as a Volunteer Docent and employed Gallery Attendant during high school and college. Liam attended Texas A&M University where he gained his Bachelor of Sciences in Geology with a specialization in biology.

Liam's research interests are based around paleoecology, particularly what the relationships between contemporaneous organisms can tell us about the environments in which they lived. His current work includes studying calcium-isotopes in dinosaur teeth from the Morrison Formation to understand niche partitioning between multiple large sauropods and their theropod predators. Liam plans to utilize calcium, carbon, and oxygen isotopes to glean as much information about the life history of these animals as possible, with a focus on diet, water resources, and migration. Liam is on track to complete his Ph.D. in 2025 and plans to continue his academic career helping to equip the next generation of scientists with knowledge.

## April Auction & Potluck

---

Mark your calendars for our April Auction & Potluck on Saturday April 20th from 12:00pm – 3:00pm at Westcave Outdoor Discovery Center (24814 Hamilton Pool Rd, Round Mountain, TX 78663). We will have a small table set up for the public to view inside of the Discovery Center earlier in the day.

**Heather Aziz**

PSoA President

## February 2024 Field Trip

---

### Lake Jacksboro / Mineral Wells

Field Trip on Saturday February 24th  
Lake Jacksboro – Lost Creek Spillway.

Since we didn't make it last month to Jacksboro...we are going to try again! It's hard to predict the weather this far in advance, but it looks like it will be in the 50s and 60s this month. Here's Hoping!

We will meet at **9am Saturday the 24th** at the Jack County Court House in the Jacksboro Town Square.

This site is Upper Pennsylvanian and 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, Mollusks, Crinoids, and the occasional shark tooth. 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 – so 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 9:00 am in front of the Jack County Extension Office located at 100 N Main St. in Jacksboro (the town square). Look for Jamies blue Scion with turquoise wheels or Melvins blue truck.

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.

PLEASE NOTE There will be a \$3-5 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 looks like it will be in the mid 40s for collecting. The walk across the spillway can be particularly chilly. If you have any questions or need help, feel free to call Jamie (512) 214-2589 or Melvin (512) 468-8914, or email them at [fieldtripchair@austinpaleo.org](mailto:fieldtripchair@austinpaleo.org)

**Melvin Noble + Jamie Shelton**

Field Trip Co-Chairs



## Minutes of the January 14th Meeting

---

The meeting opened at 7:00 pm. There were about 20 persons in attendance via zoom - due to inclement weather, the in-person meeting was canceled.

**Speaker:** The speaker for the evening was Jamie Shelton whose topic was "Micro-Fauna of the Aguja Formation, Brewster County, Texas."

### Officers:

The club officers for 2024 were announced as:

President – Heather Aziz  
Vice-President – Eric Jones  
Secretary – Gary Vliet  
Editor – Brian Bedrosian  
Field Trip Co-chairs – Melvin Noble + Jamie Shelton  
Programs - Jamie Shelton  
Webmaster – Randy Whited  
Show Chair – Eric Jones

**Outreach:** Jamie made note of a Boy Scout event in Pflugerville on Jan 22, and asked for volunteers.

**Januray Field Trip:** The scheduled field trip to Jacksboro was cancelled due to the 'icy' weather. In place of this trip, there will be a field trip to Harker Heights. Members should meet at usual place at 10 am. Weather will be 'overly cool', so dress appropriately.

**Budget Report:** Mike Smith noted that the bank balance was 'about' \$26,000

**Newsletter:** There was extensive discussion about possibly of changing the club policy on paper copies of the newsletter - either charging an additional fee or removing the option. A decision was put off till our next meeting. Brian mentioned that the Side Trips section of the newsletter was open to content from all members and encouraged folks to submit their own stories and photos.

**Spring Picnic and Auction:** Heather noted the Spring Picnic and Auction will likely be held the Saturday after the third Tuesday of April at West Cave Preserve - our typical field trip weekend. Final date to be set at our next meeting.

**Sample Fossil Packages:** Melvin suggested that the club develop a set of representative fossils typical of Central Texas, which would be available to teachers and other parties, including our new PSoA members. There was genuine enthusiasm!

Meeting ended about 8:30 pm.

**Gary Vliet**  
Secretary

## Outreach Opportunities

---

**PSoA Members:** It is a primary part of our mission to provide outreach education to our community. Below are two events that offer an opportunity to interact with kids who will be excited to learn more about the fossils in their own backyards. Please consider signing up for one of these events. Please reach out to me at [president@austinpaleo.org](mailto:president@austinpaleo.org), or speak up at the February meeting. Hope to see you there!

### Texas Day at Ray Elementary

Thursday March 7th from 9am-2:30pm  
225 Swindoll Lane, Hutto, TX 78634

This is a request from a teacher who attended the Fossil Fest. They are looking for us to attend with our touch table and have someone there to talk to the kids. A very delicious lunch was promised. This event will host up to 700 students.

### STEM Night at Manor Rise Academy

Thursday March 7th from 5:30-7pm  
13300 FM 973, Manor, TX 78653

This is an event for up to 200 kids to learn about STEM topics. PSoA will man a booth with a touch table and speak to students who come by. I plan to participate and it would be nice to have one additional person.

### Heather Aziz

PSoA President

Join us this month in Jacksboro for some fantastic spring hunting in the Pennsylvanian - see info page 2



Goodbye,  
Dear Friend



# Erich Rose

---

## In Memoriam

Our dear friend and fellow club member, Erich Rose, passed away Saturday, January 20.

Erich was a major figure in PSA since the day he joined the club in 2005. He became newsletter editor in 2006, inaugurating the very first PSA Newsletter on Jan 1 of that year. He cranked out newsletters for nine years, overlapping his presidency for the last three of those. He became President in 2012 and held that position for 12 years until handing it off for health reasons last year. Due to that overlap of President and Editor, no one has devoted more years to significant PSA positions than Erich.

Erich combined an outgoing personality, a love of paleontology, and a depth of knowledge unusual in an amateur. It was a delight to watch him at outreach events, sharing that enthusiasm with the public. At field trips, Erich could always be found with his magnifying visor, helping fellow members identify their finds with an enthusiasm that always included "...that is a *really* nice find...".

As a volunteer organization, PSA has been able to avoid drama. Not all clubs are so successful. There are horror stories about feuds erupting, people leaving in a huff and even forming splinter organizations. In fact, PSA itself is the result of the merger of two such clubs. Erich's demeanor and light touch made it clear by example that PSA is a group of people united by their desire to meet, study, and collect with friends that share the bond of their interest in paleontology.

I have vivid memories of heading up to Lake Jacksboro early in the morning with Erich and a young Emelia snoozing or reading in the back seat. It is a small consolation that Emelia, a once active youth member, ultimately Show Chair and VP, was able to share a new granddaughter with Erich in these last few months.

Our sympathy goes out to Erich's wife Gail, his daughter Emelia, her husband Andrew, and Erich's new granddaughter, Cora.

Please remember Erich with the joy, enthusiasm, and kindness that he shared with everyone he encountered.

## Mike Smith

Treasurer

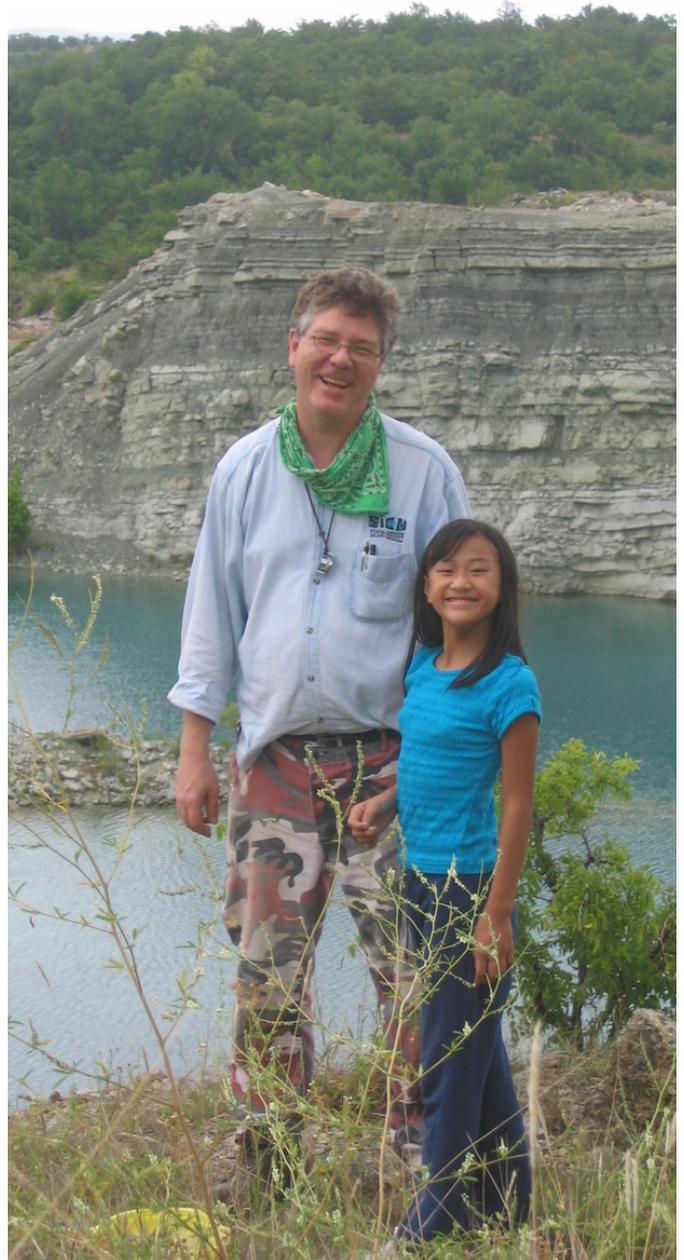




Fig. 1 *Phymosoma echinoid* - in situ (Anders Bedrosian)

Fig. 2 *Phymosoma echinoid* - prepped (Ed Elliot)

## January Field Trip Report: Harker Heights

The morning started out at a brisk 25°degrees, but at least it was not windy. One and a half hours later we arrived at Harker Heights the wind started up a little but when it warmed up it was not so bad. After meeting with with some new and old members, we drove out to the first collecting site where we took a group picture. Ed Elliot, Melvin Noble, Jamie Shelton, John Herron, Helen Riggins, Mike Smith, Eric Jones, Heather Aziz, Will Jo, Andy Peters, Brain Dozier, Art Siebert, Will Linns, Leslie Riddle, Diane Bedrosian, and Brain Bedrosian with his sons Emerson and Anders all showed up to collect in the Cretaceous, Walnut formation.

(continued on page 7)



# January Field Trip Report:

## Harker Heights - Site #1

I soon found a small complete *Metengonoceras* sp. ammonite (fig. 6), my big find of the day, but needs cleaning. It made the trip worth it for me and is a welcome addition to my collection. I found a few *Gastropods* named *Arrhoges* sp. These have a wing on the side that goes way out. Usually the wing is in the matrix. Ed found a real nice one (fig. 7) and I believe several other people also.

Leslie found about a 7 inch *Engonoceras* sp. Ammonite (fig. 3). These are different from the *Metengonoceras* that has a smooth ridge. On Leslie's the nodes on the ridge alternate like a tractor tire. Hers was complete also, usually they are halfway there or broken. Jamie found a nice crab claw. Heather found several large *Phymosoma* echinoids and a *Heteraster* that was crystallized inside. Eric Jones and Ed both found some nice *Phymosoma* (fig. 2) also. Several people found sea urchin spines. Andy found a true *Pecten* with tiny spines. Ed says its a rare find. Still needs to be ID'd. Andy found one of the nicer *Pinna* also. I know several other people found them. Several fish vertebra were found (fig. 5)

(continued on page 8)



Fig. 3 *Engonoceras* ammonite - in situ (Leslie Riddle)



Fig. 4 Shark tooth (Brian B)



Fig. 5 Vertebra (Brian B)



Fig. 6 *Metengonoceras* ammonite - in situ (Melvin Noble)



Fig. 7 *Arrhoges* gastropod (Ed Elliot)

## January Field Trip Report: Harker Heights - Site #2

In the afternoon the cold started taking its toll, and several folks started to head home. The rest of the group left at 3:00 and went to the other collecting site. Here we found the usual crystallized Gastropods and little horn corals. Several of us found *Leptosalenia Mexicana* echinoids. I was looking for sharks teeth around the corner of the area when I saw a piece of ammonite. I thought it was just going to be a piece but when I pulled it out it was almost complete, a *Oxytropidoceras* Sp. - possibly a *Elaboratum* (fig 10). Kind of nice, hard to find a almost complete one in this area. The Bedrosians found several *Leptosalenia Mexicana* echinoids (fig. 8). Ed found a nice little *Trigonia* when he got home latter in his stuff, a small cute fella. Around 5:00 everybody decided to call it a day. I believe everybody had a good time getting out of the house and do a little collecting during the middle of winter. We did not find any *Tetragrammas* this time, usually Ed or Gary Rylander can find them, but there is next year and maybe an impromptu trip in the spring?

**Melvin Noble**  
Field Trip Co-chair



Fig. 10 *Oxytropidoceras* ammonite - in situ (Melvin Noble)



Fig. 8 *Leptosalenia Mexicana* echinoid - in situ (Brian Bedrosian)



Fig. 9 *Plicatula incongrua* bivalve - in situ (Ed Elliot)



## Tailings...

### In The News

#### **Paleontologists Discover Two New Shark Species From Fossils in Mammoth Cave National Park**

The “active predators” prowled the oceans more than 325 million years ago, before the time of Pangea

Shi En Kim, [Smithsonian Magazine](#), 09 February 2024

#### **Uncovering the Secrets of Colombia’s Rich Fossil Deposits**

Paleontologists are working hard to understand oceanic remains buried high in the Andes

Santiago Flórez, [Hakai Magazine](#), 06 February 2024

#### **Rare Fossil Shows Trees Looked Very Different 350 Million Years Ago**

The newly discovered specimen looks like something from the imagination of Dr. Seuss, and it sheds light on a little-understood era of prehistory

Christian Thorsberg, [Smithsonian Magazine](#), 05 February 2024

#### **Scientists Build a Robot Dinosaur to Probe the Mystery of Tiny Wings**

Robopteryx—a makeshift dinosaur with training wheels—offers clues to the purpose of prehistoric proto-wings, which are too small to have powered flight

Christian Thorsberg, [Smithsonian Magazine](#), 30 January 2024

### 2024 Field Trip Schedule

February	<b>Jacksboro (2 days)</b>
March	<b>Whiskey Bridge <i>East Texas</i></b>
April	<b>Club Auction + Picnic</b>
May	<b>Oklahoma (2 days)</b>
June	<b>Austin Loop 360 <i>Lower Brazos</i></b>
July	<b>Johnson City</b>
August	<b>Ross Perot Museum Dallas</b>
September	<b>Texoma <i>Moody / Evant (2 days)</i></b>
October	<b>Brady / Santa Anna</b>
November	<b>Brownwood</b>
December	<b>White Mammoth and Pot Luck</b>

*Locations in italics are alternates depending on weather and availability of sites.*

**Important Note:** Please refrain from visiting sites the club is scheduled to access as part of a scheduled field trip. Doing so can clear a site of quality fossils and negatively impact the experience folks will have, especially new members, if the site suddenly feels “picked over”. We do our best to carefully space out trips to allow them to recover, so please be respectful of the club and stay off these sites within 3 months of a planned trip. Please note that dates and locations are subject to change - check the monthly newsletter or come to our monthly meetings for updates.

### New Austin Paleo Gear!



#### **The Pocket Paleontologist**

Eric Jones, on behalf of the PSoA, produced this awesome laser etched card that includes handy scales and other information for use in the field. The size of a credit card, it fits neatly in your wallet so you always have it with you. Available for sale at our meetings or by contacting Mike Smith. Makes a great gift!

### WhatsApp for PSoA Members

This would be handy for folks to have on their phones for Fossil Fest - or just an easy way for the board to communicate with you when email is not practical.

We are not setting this up for random interactions, like “anyone know what this fossil is”. The goal is to have something we can use to broadcast last minute field trip changes, emergency notifications (like “we are locked out of AGMS, meeting cancelled”), pleas for help at Fossil Fest, etc.

To start you need WhatsApp installed on your phone. If you don’t already know, WhatsApp is an app similar to normal texting and will show up as a text message on your mobile devices. If you want to get real-time information without having to check the app, then make sure to allow push notifications when you set it up. Then just scan the QR code and an Admin will approve your joining the group.



## Good Field Trip Etiquette

1. Arrive on time or early. At the prescribed meeting time (often 8AM) you should be out of your car standing with the field trip leader, signed in and ready to hear the day's schedule, directions and helpful pointers.
2. Do your homework. Use one of the online mapping programs to determine travel time and directions from your home the day before. Take the map with you and leave at least 15-30 minutes early. This is critical when we are going to quarries, private property or if the first stop is a meeting-point, not the collecting site. The field trip leader will not wait more than 15 minutes beyond the scheduled time.
3. Make sure you have the field trip leader's phone number. Their number will appear in the field trip notice. Bring a copy of the notice from the newsletter or e-mail blast so you have the information. That is the best way to find the group if you do get delayed or lost. But do not count on it. Some of our remote sites have poor cell reception. We have no way to guarantee you will get there if you miss the meeting spot.
4. The first stop is not breakfast. Please do not expect the rest of the group to wait while you order food or take care of business. If you need to do that, arrive 30 minutes early and then be ready to go at 8:00AM sharp!
5. The field trip leader sets the schedule. Gather near the leader at the beginning of every trip and listen carefully. The leader will describe where and when things will happen. That will include directions, plans for breaks and everything else you need to know about how the day will unfold. If you are not sure about directions or the schedule speak directly with the field trip leader. Do not count on hearsay.
6. Do not ask the entire group to stop for unscheduled breaks. If you need to take a break during the day, do it after you know where the collecting site is located. The field trip leader will usually schedule a break around lunch but not between every stop. Follow the group to the site and then circle back for food or facilities. This is why we suggest bringing your own food and beverages. Also being prepared with TP, or whatever else, for "emergencies".
7. Sign in and don't forget to report to the leader when you leave. This is not critical, but he or she will greatly appreciate those two things. Having everyone's name let's him know how well attended the trip was and we like to list everyone in the follow up reports. Secondly, getting a chance to hear and see what you found that day and being able to keep track of who is on site at the very end is just a good thing.
8. Be prepared. Make sure you have the materials you need to collect safely. In particular, water, hat, sunscreen and food.

9. Don't crowd the next guy. Please be courteous of your fellow collectors space. If someone says "Hey I found a good one!" don't come rushing over and crowd into their collecting zone. Let them offer to share the space. You can ask them where they found it and then move off to one side or the other, but don't just flop down next to them.

10. Be safe. If someone is working an area on a slope do your best not to pass above them. If you need to do so, please let them know you are passing and do your best not to send any debris down on top of them. If someone is working above you and you must pass below, please alert them for the same reasons. Generally speaking, if someone is working a spot respect that they "own" that area and your passage through or around that location should only be done with their permission and/or invitation.



### Editor's Note:

I would like to extend an invitation to all members to submit stories of their own travels for publish in future episodes of SIDE TRIPS. All I need is a short write up (and I can assist with this) as well as some photos of your trip (iPhone or Android photos are perfect - just make sure to send me the full resolution version). Fossil hunting trips are always welcome, but so are trips to museums, fossil/mineral shows, and other adventures that explore the world around us. You can reach me at [editor@austinpaleo.org](mailto:editor@austinpaleo.org) and I will do my best to include your stories in future issues.

**Brian Bedrosian**  
Newsletter Editor

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 normally 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.

*Please note, our monthly meetings are currently held in a hybrid format, with in person gatherings at the AGMS Clubhouse which can also be attended virtually via Zoom. Please see information provided on page one of this newsletter each month. While we are not currently requiring masks at any in person gatherings, we ask that you maintain a safe distance from others when socializing. Please note all virtual meetings are recorded and the Society may elect to publish the video of these meetings, in part or in total, to the Society's website or another publically accessible venue as benefits the goals of the club listed above.*

#### Membership Information

Annual Dues: **\$18/individual**  
**\$24/family**  
**\$12/associate** (non-voting, receiving newsletter)

Pay on-line at: <https://www.austinpaleo.org/newMembership.html>

Send payment to: **Treasurer, Paleontological Society of Austin,**  
**P.O. Box 90791, Austin, TX 78749-0791**

PSoA Web Site: [www.austinpaleo.org](http://www.austinpaleo.org)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/austinpaleo>

Twitter: [@Austin\\_Paleo](https://twitter.com/Austin_Paleo)

#### Current Club Officers

President	<b>Heather Aziz</b>	<a href="mailto:president@austinpaleo.org">president@austinpaleo.org</a>
President Emeritus	<b>Erich Rose</b>	
Vice President	<b>Eric Jones</b>	<a href="mailto:vicepresident@austinpaleo.org">vicepresident@austinpaleo.org</a>
Treasurer	<b>Mike Smith</b>	<a href="mailto:treasurer@austinpaleo.org">treasurer@austinpaleo.org</a>
Secretary	<b>Gary Vliet</b>	<a href="mailto:secretary@austinpaleo.org">secretary@austinpaleo.org</a>
Field Trip Co-Chairs	<b>Melvin Noble &amp; Jamie Shelton</b>	<a href="mailto:fieldtripchair@austinpaleo.org">fieldtripchair@austinpaleo.org</a>
Programs	<b>Jamie Shelton</b>	<a href="mailto:programchair@austinpaleo.org">programchair@austinpaleo.org</a>
Editor	<b>Brian Bedrosian</b>	<a href="mailto:editor@austinpaleo.org">editor@austinpaleo.org</a>
Webmaster	<b>Randy Whited</b>	<a href="mailto:webmaster@austinpaleo.org">webmaster@austinpaleo.org</a>
Show Chair	<b>Eric Jones</b>	<a href="mailto:showchair@austinpaleo.org">showchair@austinpaleo.org</a>
Science Advisors:	<b>Pamela R. Owen, PhD.</b> <b>James T. Sprinkle, PhD.</b>	<a href="mailto:powen@mail.utexas.edu">powen@mail.utexas.edu</a> <a href="mailto:echino@mail.utexas.edu">echino@mail.utexas.edu</a>

Permission to copy material printed herein is granted provided proper credit is given to the author and source.  
The Paleontological Society of Austin is a member of and affiliated with:

**South Central Federation of Mineral Societies & American Federation of Mineralogical Societies**

