

Fossil Club of Lee County

February 2006

Message from the President

Hello fellow fossiliers!! Time for another newsletter and, of course, right behind it, another meeting of the Fossil Club of Lee County. This month's featured speaker will be Dr. Charles O'Connor, who will speak to us about fossil collecting here in our area. Charles interacts with the school system giving talks to our little ones explaining fossils and how they got here and where to find them, so if you can think of a question to ask him that he has not yet heard, then you win the prize!! Come to the meeting and let's get involved!! Bring your show and tell items. Lots of members find fossils and they disappear into a "black hole", never to be seen again!! (Sandy, Chuck, Al!!) Share these finds with others and we all learn. You will get more out of this hobby if you share with the rest of us.

Speaking of hunting, we are having a terrible time trying to have a club fossil hunt!!! The first trip of the year, to the Peace River, at Brownsville, was a signal for winter to start. BBBrrrrrr. What a day!!! But--- we had fun!!!! The next trip, last week, to Wauchula, brought the record setting rain!!! Al Govin, you really did your best. Thanks !!! The river rose 2-3 feet in a day!!! Wow!! What is it going to take to stop this weather jinx?? Last year five river trips and one pit trip were cancelled due to unexpected weather. Now, again this year, it's happening!! We will keep trying, though, until we get it right. Michael Orchin says he will be a contact person for an impromptu trip back to Wauchula in three weeks. More on this later. We still have the

Orange River trip rescheduled for March 4th, so let's hope the dam doesn't burst!! A canoe trip seems to be an impossible dream until the weather stabilizes, but we are looking hard at arranging one in a month or so. We are trying hard to get you guys, especially the new ones, to a huntable spot so you can see how it's done. Then you will feel more comfortable on your own. Remember, the club can and will help you, but you have to do it for yourself. Every time you pass a new pile on the side of the road, a freshly washed housepad, a golf course under construction or a new road going in, you are passing potential fossil hunting spots. If they have dug it, it could be good. Stop and look and sometimes you will be pleasantly surprised!!

Last month's speaker, Dr. Robert Sinibaldi, was excellent!! He compared the prehistoric fishing cultures of the northwest with the Walmart fisherman. We get really good, informative, knowledgeable speakers and usually they have to travel quite a distance to speak to us, you should try your best to attend the meetings. And, of course, as long as you are coming, bring some show and tell!!

Our annual auction (the one time we won't do "show and tell") will be at the March meeting. I work hard all year long at having a great auction and the board all has auction night tasks, but we need your help. Bring some sellable items, fossil or otherwise, to this meeting, and then come and buy some other stuff!! We need to get all donations for the auction **prior to the auction**. Last minute additions make for a time consuming and confusing effort to add to the already listed items, so, at least, let me know if and what you have if you cannot get it to me before the auction. If you show up with something the night of the auction, it will not be presented but held over for later use. Sorry, but we have been announcing

March Meeting

The Annual Auction of the Fossil Club of Lee County March 15, 2006

Bring any fossils or other items you might have to donate to our February meeting. We are delighted to get fossil and gem material but we will also take non-fossil items. Any items that you want to donate need to be received by Louis before the auction as it is too disruptive to try and add things the night of the auction. If you do not bring them to this last meeting before the auction, you will want to call Louis at the number below (see officers) or e-mail him at the address, also below, to make arrangements to get them to him.

MINUTES OF MEETING OF FOSSIL CLUB OF LEE COUNTY

A meeting of the membership of the Lee County Paleontological Society was held at the time, date, and place set forth below.

DATE OF MEETING: January 19, 2006

MEETING TIME: 7:00 P.M.

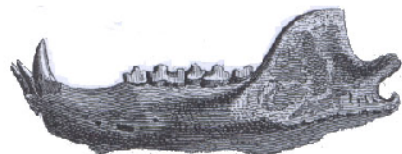
MEETING PLACE: Caloosa Nature Center

Number in attendance: 39+

Louis Stieffel presiding.

The meeting began with an excellent talk on paleonative American fishing techniques by Dr. Robert Sinibaldi. He autographed books, including "Fossil Diving" which the club has for sale. The club would like to especially thank Dr. Sinibaldi for taking the time to speak to us after the recent death of his father, John Sinibaldi.

The club's trip to the Peace River at



the need to contribute for several months now. As usual, at this meeting, (but not the auction meeting), we will have books, t-shirts, butvar (bone hardner), door prizes, and \$1 raffle table items.

Refreshments will be on hand, but eat first, as it's snacks and drinks only. We could use a few volunteers to bring refreshments to meetings so raise your hand at the appropriate time!! Sue Collier is hosting February, Rick Piper will get March, and Sandy Schwartz will take care of April. After that we need others to step up to the plate like these other members have done.

The Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife will be hosting their annual Owl Fest on Feb. 18th, in Cape Coral. Lots of their members belong to our club, we would like to get enough people interested in promoting the FCOLC club at this venue. If enough people sign up to man the table, no one individual will have to stay more than an hour or two. I will have a sign up sheet at the meeting. Sign Up!!!!

Last month we had great attendance and it was good seeing all of you. Make sure you keep coming and I really hope to see you there!!

Louis

February Meeting

Our February Meeting will be held on Thursday February 16th at 7:00 p.m. at the Calusa Nature Center, located at Ortiz and Colonial Blvd. in Ft. Myers. Our speaker will be Dr. Charles O'Connor.

Brownsville was a good time, despite slightly cool temperatures, but it was good weather for shoveling and screening.

There are two river trips scheduled: February 4, 2006, 10 a.m. at Wauchula and a February 18, 2006 (since moved to March 4th) Orange River Trip. If you need a screen, call Al Govin who has some screens for sale.

Sandy Schwartz reformatted the newsletter to PDF, so let her know if you are having problems.

March is the fossil auction. Please bring donations to the next meeting, as last minute donations the day of the auction create difficulties.

The following people have volunteered to bring refreshments: February: Sue, March: Rick, April: Sandy, May: Mary.

The Southwest Fossil Club may co-sponsor next years Fossil Festival. It is being discussed.

T-shirts from the Fossil Festival are on sale. All volunteers at the Fossil Festival who didn't pick up their free t-shirt should do so. All members who paid their dues can get a t-shirt for \$5.00. For all others the t-shirts are \$9.00. Please purchase t-shirts as the club needs to move them.

Show and tell: Louis has some interesting tortoise foot bones, sloth material, scallop and urchin assemblage, and other stuff.

Mr. Charles O'Connor is our speaker next month.

Secretary

The Brownsville River Trip

As the trip director I have been nominated to report our successes at Brownsville on our recent trip. The weather cooperated for a change, however, the river is still a little high but dropping steady so our upcoming trip to Wauchula will, hopefully, be even better.

Where we entered by the island just upriver from the Brownsville boat ramp should have been dry

to ankle deep but was running about knee deep. This allowed us to hunt just fine but lower water levels would have allowed us to explore a larger area. The approximately 15 brave souls who showed up all experienced the luck of finding several things. In my first 15 minutes of digging I found a entire gator humerus, a rare find and of course I was immediately accused of salting the area. No! No! No! I really found it there. The group was overall very successful with the finds covering the following: shark teeth, ray material, fish, turtle, snake, alligator, bird, armadillo, rabbit, deer, elephant, dugong, horse and peccary. Chuck found bird bones which is pretty rare.

We had trouble getting Ray up the steep hill because he wouldn't put his pack of finds down. He had a pretty nice meg tooth and declared it was his last trip. So far it is his third last trip. Mike Orchin found a whale tympanic bulla (inner ear bone.) With that wide an array of fossils I think everyone left happy or at least I hope they did. I still remember when I lived in Wisconsin and any kind of fossil find was impossible and to enjoy such great success here is never forgotten and always appreciated.

Al Govin

Officers

Louis Stieffel, President: (239) 458-9818

Cape187@earthlink.net

Ray Seguin, Treasurer: 939-1921/936-5019

Chuck Ferber, Secretary: 541-9424

Jerry Graham: (941) 423-0803

John Reilly, Vice President: 482-7787

Committees

Web Site: Curtis Klug

Fossil Show: Michael Orchin and Louis Stieffel

Trip Directors: Al Govin and Debra Powell

Newsletter: Sandy Schwartz

Speakers: Louis Stieffel

\$1. Raffle: Jerry and Loretta Graham

Auction: Louis Stieffel

Publicity: Carl Fricke

Membership

Individual \$15. _____

Couple \$17. _____

Family \$20. _____

Please fill out a **membership application** and mail it with your check out to: Fossil Club of Lee County and give it to Ray at the front of the room or mail it to;

Fossil Club of Lee County
2124 Harvard Avenue,
Ft. Myers, FL 33907

Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

State _____

Phone _____

e-mail _____

We prefer to send newsletters and messages by e-mail whenever possible. It saves the club a great deal of money and reaches the member faster than snail mail. Please let us know if you do not receive your newsletter and trip notices promptly and it will be corrected. Newsletter editor Sandy; Cameraqueen43@worldnet.att.net

From the Newspress Feb. 9, 2006 Scientists find earliest-known ancestor of T. rex Dinosaur much smaller than descendant (from Northwestern China)

Digging near Chinese badlands that appeared in the movie "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon," scientists have found their own hidden dragon: the oldest-known tyrannosaur, a primitive ancestor of the fearsome Tyrannosaurus rex.

The two skeletons they unearthed shed light on the lineage that produced T. rex, revealing a creature that lived some 160 million years ago. That's more than 90 million years before T. rex came along.

A two legged meat-eater with a puzzling crest on its head, the beast was far smaller than its celebrity descendant, measuring about 10 feet from its snout to the tip of its tail and standing about 3 feet tall at the hip. It also sported relatively long, three-fingered arms, rather than the two-fingered stubby arms T. rex had. Scientists suspect it had feathers because related dinosaurs did.

The discovery is reported in today's issue of the journal Nature.

The big surprise, said study co-author James Clark of George Washington University in Washington, D.C., was the finding of a narrow, delicate, largely hollow crest on its head. While other dinosaurs have had similar features, this one was have had similar features, this one was unusually large and elaborate for a two-legged meat-eater, Clark and co-authors wrote. Nobody knows its purpose, but it was probably some kind of display to other members of its own species, said Clark, co-leader of 2002 expedition that found the beast.

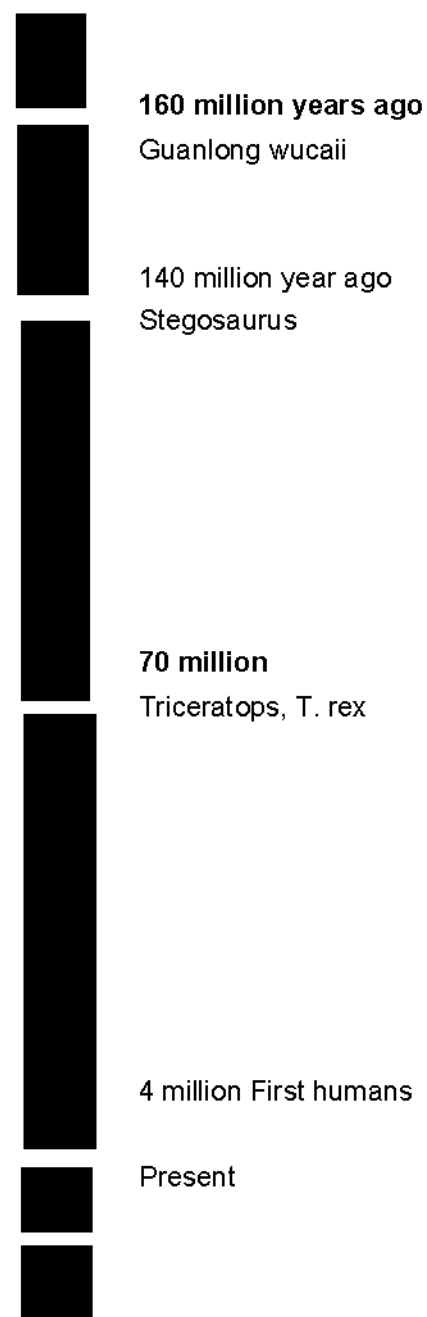
The researchers named the creature Guanlong wucaii, from the Chinese words for "crown" and "dragon," referring to the crest, and for "five colors," from the multi-hued badlands where the creature was found.

Because it preserves anatomical features from its ancestors that were lost in T. rex and other tyrannosaurs, the primitive beast helps scientists understand where tyrannosaurs fit in the evolutionary tree, said an expert not involved in the discovery.

"This is the best look so far at the ancestral condition from which the tyrant dinosaurs, T. rex and company, evolved," said the expert, Thomas Holtz Jr. of the University of Maryland.

Along with some other finds, the creature helps illustrate the sequence of anatomical changes that occurred along the way to the later, more specialized tyrannosaurs, said Philip Currie of the University of Alberta in Canada.

Ken Carpenter, curator of lower vertebrate paleontology at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, said he tentatively accepts the creature as a tyrannosaur but isn't convinced of its age. It could be much younger, he said. Clark said that other date, not yet published, support the proposed age of 160 million years.



Guanlong wucaii
Two-legged meat-eater
10 feet long from snout to tail
Features large hollow crest
Has three-fingered arms
Stood 3 feet tall