

Fossil Club of Lee County

February 2009

Message from the President



It is a pleasure to welcome so many new members to our Club and to welcome others of you who recently decided to rejoin. We hope we can live up to your expectations. We have over 140 members and try to offer something for everyone. We are active in field trips and have an excellent speaker program lined up for the near term. There are also several upcoming events in the local area that many of our members will attend or participate in directly. For your convenience, our editor has listed them in our newsletter.

One of our most important events is our annual auction which will be held at our monthly meeting on March 19th. This is a fun event that gives everyone an opportunity to acquire excellent fossil specimens at a price generally far below the average retail price. As most of you know, this is our major fund raising event and the proceeds go in to our treasury for operation and for grants to fund scholarships and other worthwhile causes germane to our paleontology interests. We are encouraging our members to donate a specimen/s for the auction. We need to have these items brought to the February meeting so they can be processed and be available for the March auction. All donors and all buyers will be greatly appreciated.

We had a club trip to the Peace River on February 1st and a trip to the Quality mine on Feb 1st as well. All in all, 26 people participated in these trips and we also had a trip to CF Industries on January 30th. More trips are in the works and will be announced at our next meeting. If you can't make the field trips, but want to experience some fossils, our club has a sizeable fossil exhibit at the Imaginarium and one at the Calusa Nature Center. The Historical Museum on Peck Street in Fort Myers also has a good collection of local fossils.

In accordance with our Club by-laws, election of officers are to be held annually with elected officers taking office on May 1st. We will discuss elections at our next meeting. We will also talk about having a Fossil Show in 2009.

(Continued on page 2)

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on February, 19, 2009, at 7:00 p.m. at the Calusa Nature Center located at Ortiz and Colonial Blvd.

Officers

Bill Shaver, President (239)834-0694 /
billshaverpeaceriver@hotmail.com

Al Govin, Vice President 541-2845
and cell 910-2339

Ray Seguin, Treasurer, 939-1921 or
936-5019

Leslie Stieffel, Secretary

Board Members

Director—Louis Stieffel, 458-9818

Michael Orchin, 574-6318

Sandy Schwartz, 772-8015

Trip Director, Bill Shaver

Dive Trip Director, Mike Siciliano ,
980-1406

Committees

Newsletter: Cheryl Mitchell

Speakers: Bill Shaver

\$1.00 Raffle: Mike Siciliano

Auction: Louis Stieffel

Web Master: Curtis Klug

Pit Trip Director: Gunther Lobish

The Club officers and directors are in favor of having a show and will poll the membership to see how you feel about it. The last show was a lot of work, a lot of fun, and raised a lot of money which can be used for worthwhile purposes. Again, I want to thank all of you that so well supported your club for Fossil Show 2008.

Looking forward to seeing all of you at our next meeting. We will have door prizes, a raffle, Show and Tell, one or more mystery fossils, refreshments, good fellowship, and an interesting speaker. Bill



Our Members on Peace River



Happy Valentines to
FCOLC and Welcome to
our NEW Members

Lynn Foster
Al & Nancy Parry
Bob & Ann Love
Dave & Charlotte Rose
Elizabeth Henry
Gordon Ahl
Kay Small
Jay Timberlake
David Richardson
Wayne Naumburg
Suzanne Fagan
Hugh & Rita Bass
Edward & Deborah Foley
Mary Alice Smoak
Copley Smoak
Randi Fullerton

COMING EVENTS

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA FOSSIL CLUB ANNUAL AUCTION - FEB 14TH CALL OLLIE TIPTON, PRESIDENT 941-9792791

FLORIDA FOSSIL HUNTERS FOSSIL FEST (ORLANDO CLUB) - FEB 28TH CALL VALERIE FIRST 407-699-9274

CAPE CORAL FRIENDS OF WILDLIFE - BURROWING OWL FESTIVAL - FEB 21ST CALL 239-980-2593

CALUSA HERITAGE DAY AT RANDELL RESEARCH CENTER - FEB 21ST [web flmnh.ufl.edu/RRC/events.htm](http://web.flmnh.ufl.edu/RRC/events.htm) or call 239-283-2062

FOSSIL FEST 2009 TAMPA BAY CLUB MAR 7TH & 8TH tampabayfossilclub.com

FOSSIL CLUB OF LEE COUNTY ANNUAL AUCTION MAR 19TH CALL Bill Shaver, President, 239-834-0694

17TH ANNUAL VENICE SHARK TOOTH FESTIVAL - FRI APR 17TH, SAT, APR 18TH, SUN APRIL 19TH

18TH ANNUAL THOMAS FARM DIG SPRING 2009 - HUMMINGBIRD CHALLENGE MAR 31ST - APR 5TH call Dave at 352-273-1968 web http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/ponyexpress/pe_adventures.htm

WEB SITES OF INTEREST

Nine links in the dinosaur-to-bird transition <http://www.msnbc.msn/id/28985201/from/ET>

Canoe Outpost in Arcadia (peace river water levels and rentals. <http://www.canoeoutpost.com/Peace/prwaterlevel.htm>)

Fossil Club of Lee County - www.fcolc.com

Museum of Natural History @ Gainesville - <http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu>

Florida Vertebrate Fossil Permit - <http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/natsci/vertpaleo/vppermit.htm>

MINUTES OF MEETING OF FOSSIL CLUB OF LEE COUNTY

By: Leslie Steiffel, Secretary

A meeting of the membership of the Fossil Club of Lee County was held at the time, date and place set forth below:

DATE OF MEETING: January 15, 2009

MEETING TIME: 7:00 P.M.

MEETING PLACE: Calusa Nature Center

Number in attendance: 62

Presided by: Club President Bill Shaver.

Ray Seguin gave a year end treasurer's report.

Bill thanked Cheryl Mitchell for being our newsletter editor and asked members to help with input for the newsletter.

Bill also thanked Ray Seguin for being our treasurer and for bringing door prizes.

The club discussed upcoming field trips including February 1st at both the Girl Scout camp and Quality mine. Quality is full through February 15th. CF Industries will have trips soon. We can get into Vulcan mine.

The club has scholarships to give and we will discuss it soon.

The speaker was Brian Evensen, from his store Lost In Time, located on the St. Pete Pier. Brian gave an interesting talk on arrowheads and southwest Florida Indian artifacts.

Delicious refreshments were brought by: Sally Jane Moore, Ted & Pat Oakes, Suzie Sprout and Skip Friend, Bill thanked them all.

February refreshments: Volunteer needed.

March refreshments: Sharon Drake, Melissa & family.

The Southwest Florida Club auction will be held on February 14th.

Louis Stieffel will manage our auction, which will be held at our March meeting (19th). Donations for the auction should be brought to Louis at the February meeting.

Dollar raffle and door prize drawing were held.



Coming Events

Just A Reminder

Dues for membership were due on January 1, 2009. Anyone who joined this past September, 2008 is covered for the 2009 year. If you would like to mail in your dues, go to the website: www.FCOLC.com and print out a membership application. Be sure to print your email address on the application in order to receive your newsletter via the internet. If you change your email address and home address, phone # be sure to email or contact Sandra Schwartz at cam-eraqueen@earthlink.net

SPEAKER PROGRAM

FEBRUARY: Michael Gesel - Diving, Treasure., and Bottles

MARCH: Annual Auction: No speaker, But a Real Fine Auctioneer (Louis Stieffel)

APRIL: University of Florida - Fossils of Panama

MAY: Michael Wylde - Calusa Indian Culture

VOLUNTEERS FOR REFRESHMENTS

February: Gisele Myers & Helma/Herb Rudolf

March: Sharon Drake & Missie Cosme

April: Volunteer Needed

May: Volunteer Needed



FEBRUARY SPEAKER

Michael Gesel has been an avid scuba diver since his youth; he grew up in Buffalo, NY and has spent over 35 years diving. He is a Buffalo Fire Lieutenant looking forward to retirement and relocation to the SW Florida area. In the spring, summer, and fall, Michael can be found in his free time diving the Niagara River and Lake Erie. While diving, he is very good at scrounging the bottom, and finding many "treasures" dropped or thrown into the water which include bottles, jewelry, coins and firearms.

Michael will be at the meeting on February 19th to speak on a couple different topics.

He has found a cache of metal tokens ranging from the start of the last century thru the early 1950's. They included amusement, telephone, slot machine, and "Good for... in Trade" merchant's tokens. He promises to speak on his 20,000 token haul in a 10 week period.

Also he has many bottles that he's found in the bottom of the Niagara River. Many include the old 1880's thick, colored-glass embossed "Soda Pop" variety known as Hutchenson's, because of their unusual hand-blown tops with wire loop closures.

He has promised to bring examples of both the tokens and bottles; and will actually donate some of them for the Chinese Auctions that night!



Ancient fossil find: This snake could eat a cow!

By MALCOLM RITTER, AP Science Writer

NEW YORK – Never mind the 40-foot snake that menaced Jennifer Lopez in the 1997 movie "Anaconda." Not even Hollywood could match a new discovery from the ancient world. Fossils from northeastern Colombia reveal the biggest snake ever discovered: a behemoth that stretched 42 to 45 feet long, reaching more than 2,500 pounds.

"This thing weighs more than a bison and is longer than a city bus," enthused snake expert Jack Conrad of the American Museum of Natural History in New York, who was familiar with the find. "It could easily eat something the size of a cow. A human would just be toast immediately." "If it tried to enter my office to eat me, it would have a hard time squeezing through the door," reckoned paleontologist Jason Head of the University of Toronto Mississauga.

Actually, the beast probably munched on ancient relatives of crocodiles in its rainforest home some 58 million to 60 million years ago, he said. Head is senior author of a report on the find in Thursday's issue of the journal *Nature*.

The discoverers of the snake named it *Titanoboa cerrejonensis* ("ty-TAN-o-BO-ah sare-ah-HONE-en-siss"). That means "titanic boa from Cerrejon," the region where it was found. While related to modern boa constrictors, it behaved more like an anaconda and spent almost all its time in the water, Head said. It could slither on land as well as swim. Conrad, who wasn't involved in the discovery, called the find "just unbelievable.... It mocks your preconceptions about how big a snake can get.

Titanoboa breaks the record for snake length by about 11 feet, surpassing a creature that lived about 40 million years ago in Egypt, Head said. Among living snake species, the record holder is an individual python measured at about 30 feet long, which is some 12 to 15 feet shorter than typical Titanoboas, said study co-author Jonathan Bloch.

The beast was revealed in early 2007 at the University of Florida's Florida Museum of Natural History in Gainesville. Bones collected at a huge open-pit coal mine in Colombia were being unpacked, said Bloch, the museum's curator of vertebrate paleontology. Graduate students unwrapping the fossils "realized they were looking at the bones of a snake. Not only a snake, but a really big snake." So they quickly consulted the skeleton of a 17-foot anaconda for comparison. A backbone from that creature is about the size of a silver dollar, Bloch said, while a backbone from Titanoboa is "the size of a large Florida grapefruit." So far the scientists have found about 180 fossils of backbone and ribs that came from about two dozen individual snakes, and now they hope to go back to Colombia to find parts of the skull, Bloch said. Titanoboa's size gives clues about its environment. A snake's size is related to how warm its environment is. The fossils suggest equatorial temperatures in its day were significantly warmer than they are now, during a time when the world as a whole was warmer. So equatorial temperatures apparently rose along with the global levels, in contrast to the competing hypothesis that they would not go up much, Head noted.

"It's a leap" to apply the conditions of the past to modern climate change, Head said. But given that, the finding still has "some potentially scary implications for what we're doing to the climate today," he said. The finding's suggest the equatorial regions will warm up along with the planet, he said. "We won't have giant snakes, however, because we are removing most of their habitats by development and deforestation" in equatorial regions, he said.

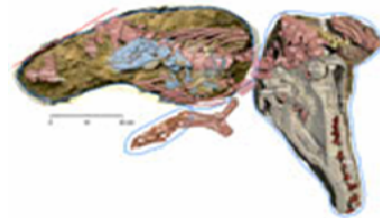


[Ancient Whales Gave Birth on Land](http://www.livescience.com/animals/090203-pregnant-whale-fossil.html)

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This artist's conception shows what the ancient whale (male), *Maiacetus inuus*, may have looked like when alive about 47.5 million years ago. Credit: John Klausmeyer, University of Michigan Museums of Natural History.



Researchers discovered the skeletal remains of an ancient female whale (skull shaded white, teeth brown and other parts of body in red) with a near-term fetus inside of the mother whale. The fetus is shaded blue with orange teeth. Credit: Copyright University of Michigan Museum



The nearly complete skeleton (overlaid on an artist's conception of animal) of the male ancient whale reveals the animal had its legs still connected to the backbone and feet elongated into flippers. The limbs suggest the whale was a foot-powered swimmer with limited locomotion on land. Credit: John Klausmeyer and Bonnie Miljour, University of Michigan Museums of Natural History. m of Paleontology.



TRIPS REPORT

Peace River Trips

OUR CLUB BRAVED THE COLD WATERS OF THE PEACE RIVER ON FEBRUARY 1ST TO HUNT FOR SHARK TEETH AND OTHER FOSSILS. THE WATER LEVEL WAS ABOUT A FOOT ABOVE NORMAL AND THE WATER CLARITY WAS GOOD. FOR THOSE OF YOU THAT WERE NOT DRESSED WARM ENOUGH FOR THE CONDITIONS, DON'T GIVE UP---WE WILL HAVE ANOTHER TRIP IN ABOUT A MONTH WITH A PROMISE OF WARMER WATER. ALL IN ALL, MOST PEOPLE WERE IN GOOD SPIRITS AND HAD A GOOD TIME. WE WILL WAIT UNTIL SHOW AND TELL AT OUR NEXT MEETING TO SEE WHAT WAS FOUND. ALSO, ON FEBRUARY 1ST, GUNTHER LOBISCH, OUR ESTEEMED TRIP DIRECTOR FOR PITS/MINES/QUARRIES LED A GROUP TO MODERATE SUCCESS AT THE QUALITY MATERIALS OPERATION. ON JANUARY 30TH, PAM PLUMMER LED THE TRIP TO CF INDUSTRIES. WE WILL GET A VERBAL OVERVIEW OF BOTH TRIPS AT OUR NEXT MEETING AND HOPEFULLY SOME SHOW AND TELL.

OUR DIVE TRIP DIRECTOR, MICHAEL SICILIANO, HAS EXERCISED GOOD JUDGMENT BY WAITING UNTIL THE GULF WATERS WARM UP. HE WILL SET UP SOME TRIPS IN THE FUTURE WHEN MORE FAVORABLE CONDITIONS PREVAIL. ALSO, LINDA AND DICK KEMPER ARE ASSISTING GUNTHER ON SOME SIDE TRIPS AND WILL GIVE US A RUNDOWN ON THEIR ACTIVITIES. WE WILL HAVE SIGN-UP SHEETS AT OUR NEXT MEETING. AS A COURTESY TO OTHERS, PLEASE LET THE TRIP LEADER KNOW IN ADVANCE IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO MAKE A TRIP THAT YOU SIGNED UP FOR--- THAT WAY THE SLOT CAN BE GIVEN TO THE NEXT PERSON ON THE LIST. ALSO, IF YOU HAVE BEEN ON A CERTAIN TRIP BEFORE, WE ASK YOU TO YIELD TO OTHER MEMBERS WHO HAVE NOT YET HAD THE OPPORTUNITY. WE WANT TO BE AS FAIR AS POSSIBLE. GUNTHER IS PLANNING ANOTHER TRIP TO THE VULCAN MINE IN BROOKSVILLE AND WILL HAVE SIGN-UP SHEETS. GETTING ACCESS TO THE LOCAL PITS IS DIFFICULT AT BEST, SO LET'S ALL MAKE SURE WE ALWAYS COMPLY WITH THE RULES SET OUT BY OUR HOST.

WE DON'T WANT TO RISK LOSING ANY OF OUR SCARCE FOSSIL HUNTING AREAS.

WE ARE ALWAYS ON THE LOOKOUT FOR NEW PLACES TO HUNT, ESPECIALLY IN THE PITS/ETC., SO IF YOU HAVE ANY LEADS OR INSIGHT, LET US KNOW ABOUT IT AND PERHAPS WE CAN GET PERMISSION/ ACCESS.

GOOD HUNTING!!!!



Sunday, the first day of February, 2009, opened to grey, cold, dreary skies and cold, (for us!) temperatures. However, we had a fossil hunting trip planned, to the old Girl Scout Camp on the Peace River, north of Arcadia, and weather was not going to stop us!! We all met at 9am at the boat ramp west of Arcadia and followed Al and Louis to the camp. Louis had permission and a key to the gate of this beautiful property that affords the Peace river and would allow us direct access to a large gravel bar. After slowly driving through the wooded roads to the river, we all got prepared to deal with the cold water and filed in to dig and seek fossils!! The water had risen about a foot, and was running hard and was cold. This did not deter anyone, though, and everyone started digging and having fun. About four members brought kayaks and took off for hopefully secret, richer, fossil deposits both up and downriver. The rest of us, numbering about a dozen or so stayed close by and worked on our own individual spots in the river. Soon fossils started showing the light of day and were promptly put in pockets, nail bags and buckets. I saw fossils from horse, camel, bison, shark, ray, mammoth, mastodon, porpoise, sloth, rhino, tapir, fish, birds, whale, small rodents, deer, raccoon, opossum, glyptodont, giant armadillo, and dugongs along with other animals. Lots of species and a few good quality fossils were collected. Many shark teeth were found, but mostly smaller ones. I don't believe anyone found a good, complete Megalodon or larger Mako tooth. It always amazes me though, if you use a smaller (1/4") mesh screen, how many fossil shark's teeth you can find!! I know I found well over a hundred, and I only hunted a small portion of the time. There must have been millions of sharks swimming these ancient waters! Ray Seguin was there!! At 84 he keeps saying that he's hanging up his screen and shovel, but somehow continues to participate on these trips. He seems to out dig most of the younger folks!! I heard that Mike S. and Jake found a small goat and made a new friend!! It is still there, waiting to get petted some more!! We had some new members present. I think they may have gotten the fossil hunting bug!! It was a beautiful place, a good, clear blue, crisp sky, and lots of great company!! Everyone had a good time. The cold water persisted, though, and a few members packed up and left a little before the rest of us, but we all enjoyed the day. We plan on trying to do as many of these types of outings as time and weather allow, so that more members can get the most from this great hobby!!

Louis