



FOSSIL CLUB OF LEE COUNTY

MARCH 2012



Message from the President



Greetings to all members and friends and a warm welcome to our new members. Its March already and winter is on the wane especially for those of us in sunny Florida. March is a busy month for our club. We hold our Annual Auction, set up exhibits at the Calusa Heritage Festival and the Cape Coral Fossil Festival, and many of us plan to attend the Tampa Bay Fossil Fest. Look for the details in our newsletter.

Our club trip to Gainesville was great. Our hosts were so gracious and accommodating. We visited Dr. Hubbell's outstanding collection of shark jaws and teeth and then went to the Vertebrate Laboratory where we were hosted by Dr. Richard Hulbert. The Lab houses an amazing collection of fossils found in Florida.

From there we went to the Museum of Natural History where we were met by Dr. Bruce MacFadden who gave us a VIP tour. He explained many of the details about how the museum was designed, techniques for visitor interaction, especially for children, and how the scenes and displays were created for reality and visual impact. We then took in the temporary exhibit called "Cruisin the Fossil Freeway", which will be on display at the museum throughout the summer. This is a wonderful trip for anyone who just loves our Florida fossils. We plan to do it again next year.

We have received many excellent donations this year for our Annual Auction and I want to thank each of you again for your generosity. We have over 100 auction items. It will be hard to decide on which ones you must have for your personal collection and also they will make fine gifts. As an auction bonus, everyone will be treated to a super refreshment break sponsored by our wonderful club members called the Bonita BeachCombers. Please don't eat and run---if you can, please stay to the end. Our auctioneer, Louis Stieffel will be disappointed if you dont stay to the end. He promises he will entertain and enlighten you with little known information about each item until they are all gone! Everyone is invited to participate.

Just a little reminder, the auction will be held at the Zion Lutheran Church on March 15th and the preview starts at 5:30 pm. See the articles in this newsletter for more details. I look forward to seeing everyone at the auction.

Best regards, Bill

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be March 15th
5:30 pm at Zion Lutheran Church
7401 Winkler Road, Fort Myers, FL.

OFFICERS

Bill Shaver, President, 239-834-0694
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239-980-1406
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Joshua Frank, 239-248-5094

COMMITTEES

Cherie Neat, Newsletter
Curt Klug, Web Master
Bill Shaver, Speakers
Louis Stieffel, Auctioneer
Kathy Pawlowski, Club Merchandise
Pam Plummer, Club Badges
Ray Seguin, Membership
Joshua Frank, Refreshments
Dean Hart, Refreshments co-chairman
Gunther Lobish, Pit Trips
Michael Siciliano, Raffle and Dive Trips
Coby Pawlowski, Youth Activities Director
Hollie Tiner, Club Photographer
Gunther Lobish, Invertebrate Education
Louis Stieffel, Vertebrate Education

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Sue Harrison
Rosie Sorrells

REFRESHMENTS

March: Barefoot Beach Combers

April: Jack Boyce

We sincerely appreciate all of the members who have taken a turn to bring in the refreshments for the meeting. All of us enjoy having a cold drink and some light snacks available before the meeting and during the break. The club has the coolers to use for the drinks and will reimburse members the expense of the drinks and snacks. We would like to see this tradition continue, but we need volunteers to keep it going. Volunteering to provide the refreshments is only committing to do this for one meeting a year maximum. It isn't very difficult but we need the help of the club members. Please contact Bill Shaver - billshaverpeaceriver@hotmail.com or Joshua Frank - megfinder@gmail.com if you can commit to bringing the drinks and snacks one time this year, and please state which month you can do it. We currently need volunteers for the meetings in May - November. Thanks again for your participation. It is appreciated!

Joshua Frank, Refreshments Committee

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Please make sure that you have paid your membership dues for 2012. You can either mail your check to our treasurer or pay at the next monthly meeting which will be held at the Zion Lutheran Church on March 15th. Our treasurer, Ray Seguin will be busy with the Annual Auction, but he will take time out to accept your dues! Thanks for your continued support of your club.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS AND SPEAKERS

Mar. 15th FCOLC Annual Auction at Zion Lutheran Church
Mar. 24th and 25th Tampa Bay Fossil Club Annual Fossil Show (see club website)
Mar. 31st Cape Coral Fossil Show at Rotary Park (FCOLC will exhibit)
Apr. 19th FCOLC Monthly Meeting @ Iona House, Calusa Nature Center
Apr. 19th Speaker: Cindy Bear, Randell Calusa Heritage
May 17th FCOCL Monthly Meeting @ Iona House
May 17th Speaker: Dr. Bruce MacFadden, University of Florida Paleontologist
June 14th FCOCL Monthly Meeting @ Iona House
June 14th No Speaker; Members Exhibits/Show & Tell/Buy/Sell/Swap Meet
July 19th FCOLC Monthly Meeting @ Iona House
July 19th Speaker: Dr. Brian Andres, USF Geology/Paleontology
Aug. 16th FCOLC Monthly Meeting @ Iona House
Aug. 16th Speaker: Ian Bartoszek, Florida Tortoise/Turtle

MINUTES OF FEBRUARY MEETING THE FOSSIL CLUB OF LEE COUNTY

Date: February 16th 2012
Place: Planetarium, Calusa Nature Center
Attendance: 98
Presided by: Bill Shaver, Club President

Bill opened the meeting by welcoming everyone, introducing Bob Soter, CNC Interim Executive Director, and Dr. Robin C. Brown, who made a presentation entitled "The Whale in the Swimming Pool".

The monthly meeting was preceded by an Executive Committee meeting. The Executive Committee voted unanimously to incorporate FCOLC. Bill explained that rationale was to shield all members from potential liability of law suits. Motion was carried by the membership to incorporate FCOLC. Bill recognized Charles Ferber for his key role and efforts to process all the necessary documents.

The other major issue discussed at the Executive Committee meeting was the selling of items at the monthly meetings. It was voted by a majority to discontinue that practice less it become too much like a flea market atmosphere at the monthly meetings and it would also divert monies from club activities to the informal vendors. It was decided that one meeting a year would be set aside for all members to "set up shop" for buy or sell, or trade; and to bring in their best finds/exhibits for a show and tell.

Bob Soter also welcomed Dr. Brown to the Calusa Nature Center and recognized him for his role in the early developments of the Center. Bob also opened the Center Lobby for all club members for the selling of club merchandise, tables for refreshments, tables for the raffle, and a table for Dr. Brown for books signing. Bill, on behalf of the entire club, thanked Bob for being so gracious and offering the extra space to accommodate the very large attendance at the meeting.

The trip to Gainesville was announced and several members signed up to visit the Vertebrate Lab and the Museum of Natural History

Refreshments were provided by Gunther Lobish and Bill Shaver. The Bonita Beachcombers volunteered to do refreshments for March.

Bill thanked all the members for bringing in some great donations for the Annual Auction.



WEB SITES & LOCATIONS OF INTEREST

Fossil Club of Lee County: www.fcolc.com

Museum of Natural History @ Gainesville
www.flmnh.ufl.edu/

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

Southwest Florida Fossil Club
www.southwestfloridafossilclub.com

Orlando Fossil Club
www.floridafossilhunters.com

PEACE RIVER Water Levels
www.canoeoutpost.com

Mark Renz's Fossil Expeditions
www.fossilx@earthlink.net

Smithsonian Natural History Museum
www.mnh.si.edu
Florida Fossil Clubs
www.fossil-treasures-of-florida.com

Picking Up Isolated Native American Artifacts
<http://dhr.dos.state.fl.us/archaeology/underwater/finds>

Calusa Nature Center and Planetarium 3450 Ortiz Av, Fort Myers Tel 239-275-3435
www.calusanature.com

Imaginarium 200 Cranford AvE, Fort Myers
www.cityftmyers.com/imaginarium

Southwest Florida Museum of History 2300 Peck St., Fort Myers www.swflmuseumofhistory.com

The Bailey-Matthews Shell Museum, 3075 Sanibel-Captiva Rd, Sanibel, FL www.shellmuseum.org

Randell Research Center PO Box 608, Pineland, FL
www.flmnh.ufl.edu/RRC/

Cracker Museum at Pioneer Park in Zolfo Springs, FL Tel 863.735.0119

Lost in Time, 4719 69th Street, N. St Petersburg, FL 33709, Tel. 727-541-2567 Owner Brian Evensen

Tampa Bay Fossil Club
Www.tampabayfossilclub.com

Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife Burrowing Owls
www.ccfriendsofwildlife.org



FCOLC ANNUAL AUCTION

Our annual auction will be held on Thursday, March 15th at the Zion Lutheran Church on 7401 Winkler Road in Fort Myers. Viewing of auction items will begin at 5:30 pm and the auction will start at 6 pm.

We have accumulated over 100 items for the auction--thanks to the generosity of so many of our members. We hope that all members will be able to participate in this once a year event. We try to make it a fun event as well as an opportunity for everyone to acquire some new specimens or articles at a reasonable price. Many of the items are packaged in riker boxes and are ready made gifts for yourself, relatives or friends.

Our treasurer, Ray Seguin and his volunteer staff will be on hand to accept cash or checks. There is no ATM on premises, but there are two banks within walking distance. Our Club Auctioneer is Louis Stieffel and he will briefly go over the "rules of the auction". He wrote a separate article about the rules and procedures we follow to ensure a fair and orderly auction. Please refer to his write-up which is included in this newsletter.

We will call for a break at some point in the evening and will be treated to the wonderful dishes and dessert donated by several of our members known as the Bonita BeachCombers. This has become a tradition with these wonderful people and everyone always looks forward to this extravaganza.

If anyone has any questions or needs help with directions to the Zion Church, call Bill Shaver at 239-834-0694 or Mike Siciliano at 239-980-1406



AUCTION RULES

This month we will have our annual fossil auction. It is a great opportunity for you to add to your collection, at the same time as helping the club. We use these funds for operating expenses and also donate monies to several organizations. The auction is fun, but to keep it running smoothly we have a few rules to follow:

Everyone who is bidding must register and get a bidder number.

As the auctioneer, I cannot accept your bid if I can't see that you are bidding. So, make sure I know!

I will allow adequate time for everyone to bid, but once I say closed—it's over! If you call out a last minute bid, there is the possibility that it may be too late.

Please do not get up and check out, pay, and then continue to bid again. We are a 100% volunteer group, as you know, and we try our best to keep it running smooth and simple, so help us out and one check out please!

I ask that if you must talk a lot, take it out side, please. It's not fair to the others in the room.



Please mute your cell phone.

Many folks leave as soon as we take the midway break, but I assure you that there will be good items and good bargains if you stick around.

Many people have their own strategy for bidding, but it sure makes it easier(for me!) if you don't make me wind it down to the end for each bid! It's a friendly club action, so just go ahead and jump in and get it!

As far as the fiscal end of it, we do not take credit cards, but will accept checks and even cash.

We will have OVER a hundred good items to auction, so everyone should be able to get something. Bring a truck load, or two, of good old American greenbacks and enjoy!!

See you at the auction!

Louis Stieffel
FCOLC auctioneer



CETATION EAR BONES

Over the last several months at the monthly fossil club meetings I have been asked to ID a good many fossils. With the Peace River down and the creeks also, many members are hunting a lot, so they find fossils they don't know the identification of. Frequently I get to ID citation (whale and porpoise/dolphin) ear bones. Most collectors know what the Whale Bulla looks like, as it is that distinctive cup shaped one, but most members do NOT know what the OTHER ear bone looks like. Yes! There are two! The second one is called the periodic. It actually attaches to the Bulla, when in use inside the live animal. However there is only a small connection point, so we very rarely find it still connected. I have never found a complete whale ear bone, but I was lucky enough, years ago, to find one from a porpoise. That's how I learned that the two attach together. I include pictures of both the whale and the porpoise ear bones for your viewing pleasure.

The very first fossil that stumped me as to ID was a Whale inner ear bone. I had found a dozen or so, hunting the shoreline at Venice Beach, about 20 years ago, back when you could find good fossils at the shoreline. I saved them, as I knew they must surely be something, but at that time I just didn't know. After I found out about and joined the club, at my first meeting I saw one on the dollar raffle table, and discovered what I had found and saved. It made for a good start in the club for me and I never forget that we all start sometime and must learn. I am always happy to help ID your fossil, and who knows, it just may be another ear bone!

Louis Stieffel
Vertebrate Education

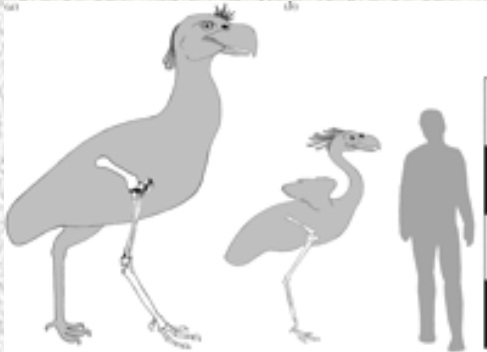


Terror Birds by Charles O'Connor

The phororhacids (FOR-ruh-RAH-sids) (Rag-Thieves), which consists of five subfamilies and 13 genera, were large terrestrial, flightless birds that thrived in the ecosystems of the American continents from 65 - 2.5 million years ago. Most of the terror bird species lived in South America, which was an island continent, and many unique species evolved in isolation from the rest of the world.

However, *Titanis walleri* has been found in Texas and Florida, and is the only known terror bird to migrate north during the [Great American Interchange](#) (after the Isthmus of Panama formed). The name derives from the holotype's discoverer, Ben Waller. The flightless, carnivorous terror bird likely hopped to North America via islands that came to form what is today the Isthmus of Panama, said Bruce MacFadden, a paleontologist at the Florida Museum of Natural History and researcher.

It is estimated that *Titanis* could run at speeds of 40 mph (about as fast as an ostrich), stood 8 ft. tall, and weighed 300+ lb. They were probably sexually dimorphic (the sexes are sized differently, as are humans).



Mechanical modeling suggested that another species, *Mesembriornis*, may have run 60 miles an hour (97 kilometers an hour). The speed is comparable to that of a cheetah, the fastest land animal today, running at full speed. It's possible that the robust nature of the legs has been misinterpreted. Instead, some species may have kicked the bones of their prey kung-fu-style to obtain marrow.

The smallest known terror bird, *Psilopterus lemoinei*, was the size of a harpy eagle and weighed about 18 pounds (8 kilograms). The largest terror bird was the gargantuan *Brontornis burmeisteri*, which was nearly 10 feet tall, weighed 900 lb., and could swallow a dog in a single gulp.

Researchers still do not know if terror birds hunted in groups - as velociraptors (bipedal dinosaurs who share a similar body shape) are thought to have - or alone, as jaguars or tigers do today. Experts believe the extinct birds were meat-eaters because their beaks resemble those of predatory eagles and scavenging vultures. They probably ate carrion, small rodents, mammals, and reptiles by running prey down, holding it with its huge feet and large claws, and using an axe-like beak to finish the job.

CT scans reveal that rigid, architectural beam-like bones in the skull where almost all other known birds have flexible joints. The beams fortify the skull and beak, making them extremely strong for up and down jabbing movements. Scans also revealed hollow beaks, which when modeled under different loads were found to be weak and vulnerable to breaking with lateral movement, making it unlikely the bird thrashed its prey around like a dog. Instead, the beak was probably used as an axe with multiple, vicious jabbing attacks.

The last of the terror birds died out shortly after South America and North America were joined a few million years ago. The event is thought by some experts to have allowed North American predators, such as jaguars and saber-toothed cats, to outcompete remaining terror-bird species to extinction. Their closest relatives are seriemas, which live in the more southern regions of South America.



TRIP TO GAINESVILLE

Several members of the club arrived in Gainesville early on the morning of February 25th, 2012 to begin a special day of "fossiling". Our first host was Dr. Gordon Hubbell who gave us a wonderful tour of his collection of shark jaws, shark vertebrae, and a wide range of fossil shark teeth from places all over the world. In our opinion, Dr. Hubbell has the best collection of fossil shark teeth in the world. He has an extensive collection of extinct megalodon and extinct mako shark teeth, many of which he personally collected in here in Florida.

We expressed our appreciation to Dr. Hubbell and then convoyed off to Leonardo's for pizza and salads before heading over to the Vertebrate Laboratory. Charles O'Connor, who worked for the museum some years ago and was familiar with the area, was unofficially appointed to be in the lead vehicle. He and several others were also appointed as temporary club photographers.

We met with Dr. Richard Hulbert, the Collections Manager at the Vertebrate Lab, and he most graciously gave us a first class tour of the facility. There is a fantastic collection of mega fauna fossils from Florida at the Lab. Dr. Hulbert, who has spent many years in the Lab and in the field, was able to share detailed information and personal knowledge about the many specimens that reside there. We also got some great pictures and Dr. Hulbert showed us some of the specimens he helped to recover in our local area. One was the mammoth he worked on in the Charlie Creek area and the other was the "Whale in the Swimming Pool" that Dr. Robin Brown talked about when he was our speaker at the February meeting.

We left the Lab and headed over to the Museum of Natural History where we were met by Dr. Bruce MacFadden for a VIP tour. We were treated to a wonderful tour and we learned so much about the design and development of the current museum. It is truly a great museum and the focus is on the visitors. We certainly appreciated Dr. MacFadden, not only for him coming in on his day off, but for all the years he has devoted to the development of the museum and for all the advances he has made in the science of paleontology. As a side note, Dr. MacFadden is slated to be the speaker for our May 17th meeting.

Our next stop was to visit the temporary exhibit in the museum called "Crusin the Fossil Freeway", which featured dinosaurs, ammonites, and other specimens we just don't find here in sunny Florida. It was nicely done and certainly an extra highlight on our program for the day.

Like all good things, it had to end and we headed home. Now we are waiting to see who has the best photos.



Enjoying the Shark Teeth



Touring the Vertebrate Lab



Charles OConnor with Megalodon Tooth

See photo link for pictures taken by Charles O'Connor <https://picasaweb.google.com/102417533422180983240/GVLFossilTrip212?authkey=Gv1sRgCPP7wNTEoaDMtAE#>