



# **FOSSIL CLUB OF LEE COUNTY**

**APRIL 2012**



## *Message from the President*

Greeting to all members and friends of our Club. For those of you that just joined or rejoined, we extend a warm welcome to you. We have a great speaker program lined up for the next several months, excellent articles about fossils in the newsletter, ID expertise at the meetings, field trips, show and tell, a monthly raffle, and of course, refreshments and an opportunity to socialize with other fossil enthusiasts.

As most of you know by now, we had a very successful auction at our last meeting. We raised about \$4,000 and much of that will be available for us to continue our scholarship programs and make donations to other worthy causes. Many thanks to all the members who made generous donations to the auction and all of you who participated in the bidding/buying process. The success belongs to all of you.

Our host, the Calusa Nature Center has a new Executive Director. Her name is Mary Rawl and she is a professional geologist who loves all aspects of nature. We wish her well in her new position.

Several of our members recently attended the Tampa Fossil Club Annual Fair. It was an excellent event as always. The next big event is our locale is the Venice Shark Tooth Festival which benefits the athletes of Special Olympics of

Sarasota County. The dates are 13-15 April and details are in this newsletter.

Lately, I have been asked by several schools and organizations to make a presentation about the fossil of Florida. I agreed to do two this month and if anyone would like to make a presentation or help me out with mine, please let me know. I am not sure what is causing so much interest, but young and old alike seem to be so fascinated with fossil history and the wide array of fossil specimens we find in Florida.

Our esteemed treasurer and club lifetime member, Mr Ray Seguin asked me remind everyone that at this time membership dues for 2012 are overdue. You may pay in person at our April 19th meeting or send in a check. Details at [www.fcolc.com](http://www.fcolc.com). We look forward to seeing everyone at the meeting and for those of you who have already gone north for the summer, we wish you well and wait for your return.

Warm regards, Bill

### **Next Meeting**

FCOLC next meeting is on Thursday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012 in the Iona House at the Calusa Nature Center. Meeting starts at 7 PM.



## OFFICERS

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## 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

Stephanie Dickey  
Andrea Dickey  
Ted Dickey  
Danielle Dickey  
Bobby Joe Sherrill

## REFRESHMENTS FOR CLUB MEETINGS

Let's all give a big hand to our friends who call themselves the Barefoot BeachCombers. They donated their time and money to provide us with food and beverages at the March Annual Auction meeting. As always, they did a great job and we thank them.

We are pleased that Jack Boyce and Bobby Joe Sherrill have volunteered to take care of refreshments for the April meeting. Both of you have volunteered in the recent past and we appreciate the way you support your club.

According to Joshua Frank who co-chairs the Refreshment Committee with Dean Hart, we need a volunteer for the May meeting. Joshua will have a sign-up sheet available and everyone is encouraged to take a turn at doing the refreshments. See Joshua for details.

## MINUTES OF MARCH MEETING THE FOSSIL CLUB OF LEE COUNTY

Date: March 15th, 2012  
Place: Zion Lutheran Church, Ft Myers, FL  
Presided by: Bill Shaver, President

The annual auction was held from 6pm to 9pm. There were no formal minutes.



## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS AND SPEAKERS

April 13 <sup>th</sup> - 15 <sup>th</sup>	Venice Shark Tooth Festival
April 19 <sup>th</sup>	FCOLC Monthly Meeting @ Iona House, Calusa Nature Center
April 19 <sup>th</sup>	Speaker: Cindy Bear, Randell Calusa Heritage
May 17 <sup>th</sup>	FCOCL Monthly Meeting @ Iona House
May 17 <sup>th</sup>	Speaker: Dr. Bruce MacFadden, University of Florida Paleontologist
June 14 <sup>th</sup>	FCOCL Monthly Meeting @ Iona House
June 14 <sup>th</sup>	No Speaker; Members Exhibits/Show & Tell/Buy/Sell/Swap Meet
July 19 <sup>th</sup>	FCOLC Monthly Meeting @ Iona House
July 19 <sup>th</sup>	Speaker: Dr. Brian Andres, USF Geology/Paleontology
August 16 <sup>th</sup>	FCOLC Monthly Meeting @ Iona House
August 16 <sup>th</sup>	Speaker: Ian Bartoszek, Florida Tortoise/Turtle



# Websites & Locations of Interest

Fossil Club of Lee County: [www.fcolc.com](http://www.fcolc.com)

Museum of Natural History @ Gainesville  
[www.flmnh.ufl.edu/](http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/)

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

Southwest Florida Fossil Club  
[www.southwestfloridafossilclub.com](http://www.southwestfloridafossilclub.com)

Orlando Fossil Club  
[www.floridafossilhunters.com](http://www.floridafossilhunters.com)

PEACE RIVER Water Levels  
[www.canoeoutpost.com](http://www.canoeoutpost.com)

Mark Renz's Fossil Expeditions  
[www.fossilx@earthlink.net](http://www.fossilx@earthlink.net)

Smithsonian Natural History Museum  
[www.mnh.si.edu](http://www.mnh.si.edu)

Florida Fossil Clubs  
[www.fossil-treasures-of-florida.com](http://www.fossil-treasures-of-florida.com)

Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife Burrowing Owls  
[www.ccfriendsofwildlife.org](http://www.ccfriendsofwildlife.org)

Calusa Nature Center and Planetarium 3450 Ortiz Av, Fort Myers Tel 239-275-3435  
[www.calusanature.com](http://www.calusanature.com)

Imaginarium 200 Cranford Ave, Fort Myers  
[www.cityftmyers.com/imaginarium](http://www.cityftmyers.com/imaginarium)

Southwest Florida Museum of History 2300 Peck St., Fort Myers [www.swflmuseumofhistory.com](http://www.swflmuseumofhistory.com)

The Bailey-Matthews Shell Museum, 3075 Sanibel-Captiva Rd, Sanibel, FL [www.shellmuseum.org](http://www.shellmuseum.org)

Randell Research Center PO Box 608, Pineland, FL  
[www.flmnh.ufl.edu/RRC/](http://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](http://www.tampabayfossilclub.com)

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

## VENICE SHARK TOOTH FESTIVAL

This annual festival is being held on Friday, April 13<sup>th</sup> thru Sunday April 15<sup>th</sup> 2012.

**Hours** are as follows:

Friday 4 pm to 9 pm

Saturday 10 am to 9 pm

Sunday 10 am to 5 pm

**Location** is:

Venice Airport Festival Grounds  
1201 East Airport Av, Venice, FL 34285

**Admission:**

\$3.00 per person, Children 12 and under are free

**Contact:**

Special Athlete Boosters, Inc

**Phone:**

941-927-5940

The Shark Tooth Festival takes place every April to benefit the Special Olympics of Sarasota County.

## A Rare Find at the FCOLC Auction

I was at the club auction last month with not a whole lot to spend but wanted to spend something to help out. At first I thought I would watch the bidding on the things I donated and if I thought it was to low I would buy it back myself I was surprised that everything seemed to work out very nicely. As I was viewing the items I noticed a large box of shells with some Echinoids showing near the top. Looking through the box a bisquit caught my eye. At first glance it appeared to be an evergladensis but when I picked it up and inspected it I knew it wasn't. I was positive it was Rhyncholampas ayresi, I'd never seen one except in pictures, but I was positive. I kept the Rhyncholampas and gave the rest to the kids I was sitting next to. This last weekend it was confirmed as an ayresi and I am extremely happy as they are quite rare. I don't know who donated the box or where the material in it came from but would like to find out. As Louis has often said, check out the boxes off mixed stuff, you never know what you might find. Gunther



## Speaker for April

### Cindy Bear from the Randell Research Center

Cindy is a fifth-generation native Floridian and holds a Bachelor's Degree in Wildlife Ecology and a Master's Degree in Science Education. Her involvement with public archaeology came during her 20-year tenure as a resource teacher with the Environmental Education Program of Lee County School District when she led students and teachers on field trips to some of the first excavations undertaken at the Randell Research Center (RRC) on Pine Island. A resident of the island, Cindy also served as a volunteer and member of the RRC Advisory Board for over a decade. In 2011, Cindy joined the staff at the RRC as Coordinator of Programs and Services. In particular, Cindy coordinates group tours and volunteer activities at the Calusa Heritage Trail of the RRC and oversees land management on the internationally recognized archaeological preserve applying her background in science, education, and tourism and finding a great deal of personal happiness and gratitude in her role.



### Cindy will speak about the Calusa Legacy

In this presentation, Cindy will provide an overview of the Calusa people, and their ancestors, who lived along the shores of Pine Island Sound for thousands of years. The story of the Calusa people is one of a remarkable civilization thriving along the shores of a rich and bountiful estuary and building power and an economy based on their fishing technology. These Native Americans engineered a remarkable canal through Pine Island, developed a rich artistic tradition, and perplexed Spanish missionaries with their unique spirituality. This presentation will provide an overview of the Calusa civilization and include information on the methods archaeologists and historians have used to piece together the story we know today. Recently, archaeologists have conducted new excavations at the Randell Research Center and Cindy will highlight these new areas of archaeological investigation and how they are furthering our understanding of this remarkable culture and their ancestors.

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### Randell Research Center

The Randell Research Center (RRC) is a permanent facility dedicated to learning and teaching the archaeology, history, and ecology of Southwest Florida. Situated in the scenic community of Pineland on the western shore of historic Pine Island, the RRC encompasses more than 60 acres at the heart of the Pineland archaeological site, a massive shell mound site extending across more than 100 acres from the mangrove coastline. On the Calusa Heritage Trail, at 13810 Waterfront Drive, Pineland, visitors can tour this internationally significant site and learn about Calusa culture and their environment. The Trail meanders nearly a mile through the mounds, canals, and other features of the site. Signs along the footpath provide detailed information regarding the Calusa Indian people, the environment that sustained them, and the recent history of Southwest Florida. 239-283-2062 <http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/rrc/>

### COBY'S COLUMN

#### Fossil Hunting with Mark Renz

At the recent FCOLC auction, I was the successful bidder on a fossil trip (donated by Mark Renz of Fossil Expeditions) for a day trip on the Peace River. I arranged to meet Mark and hunted the river at Brownville with him and a small group of his other customers. There was plenty of gravel and the river was very shallow. We found quite an assortment of fossils. My best finds included a dolphin tooth and a crocodile scute, and of course we found numerous shark teeth and a variety of bones. Overall we had a great time with Mark and would definitely do it again given the chance.

**Happy Easter**





## FOSSIL CLUB ANNUAL AUCTION

Another great auction! Let's thank all the wonderful club members who helped to make this yet another successful club event. In terms of dollars, the proceeds almost hit \$4,000. In terms of quantity and quality of items, there were 130 excellent items on the bid tables. In terms of fun and food it was another real success. The Barefoot BeachCombers lived up to their reputation again and provided everyone with a feast of food, snacks, desserts and drinks. Many thanks to all of the BeachCombers---you are super people.

We need to say thanks to all of our club members who generously donated items for the auction, and to all of you who supported the auction by bidding and buying---couldn't do it without you. We also want to thank Mark Renz of Fossil Expeditions who donated a free fossil trip. Captain Jaime of the Aristocat dive boat who donated a free dive, the Imaginarium for donating passes, and the Calusa Nature Center for donating passes.

If you donated items for the auction and didn't see them on the bid tables, please don't be concerned that they were lost. We had to choose and limit what was on the bid tables so those extra items will be surfacing on the monthly raffle table or will be used in the Fossil Show.

There is a lot of work that goes in the preparation of the items before they get to the bid table. Let's thank all the behind-the-scenes workers. Then let's thank our all volunteer bid table accounting staff and our auctioneer Louis Stieffel for their efforts to put on another successful auction.



Some Great Auction Items



Auction Staff

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## CAPE CORAL FOSSIL FAIR

The Fossil Club of Lee County participated in the Cape Coral annual event held on March 31. The Club set up an exhibit of Florida Fossils with only one exception, The exception was a cast of a saber toothed cat found in the La Brea Tar Pits in California. The Florida fossils included a Miocene Epoch rhinoceros tusk; jaguar tooth, black bear molar, glyptodont and armadillo scute, alligator osteoderms, mammoth and mastodon teeth, ray dermal plates, and a variety of shark teeth including a large megalodon tooth.

Cape Coral City employee, Honey Archey (who is also a member of the Fossil Club) managed the event. Her father, Bill Davis, now deceased, was a well known fossil hunter and Honey displayed some of his best finds.

Bill Shaver, Club President, was on hand to make sure every young person who visited the exhibit received a shark tooth and a fossil seashell. Everyone seemed to enjoy the exhibit and the free fossils. As in the past, the club members known as the Barefoot Beachcombers came in force and added to the success of the event.

Bill thanked the members for their support and also thanked Dick Davis for helping with the exhibit and Gail Wilson and Gabe, Andre, and Morgan Hawthorne for their assistance in the tear down.



# ITS A BEAUTIFUL MASTODON TOOTH

by Jack Boyce



Whenever I find a particularly unique fossil, I ask a lot of questions of experts and also search the internet for more information and details on the specimen. A couple of weeks back, I was standing in the Peace River with FCOLC club members Bill Shaver and Dave Flinchbaugh looking for whatever we could find but mostly shark teeth and horse, bison or camel-llama teeth. From previous digging at the same spot, those fossils were “expected”. What came up in the center of my shovel was definitely not expected – a 6 mound adult Mastodon tooth (4 ½ x 3 ¼ x 3 inches). Naturally I was excited: yelling, dancing around in the water, generally acting like a fool and feeling fantastic. It was special that both Bill and Dave were suitably impressed with the find. To put this in perspective, I have been looking for fossils in the Peace River for 3 years and have found one 2 mound fragment of a Mastodon tooth. This complete tooth is a once-in-a-lifetime find.

I went to the Tampa Bay Fossil Show (Fantastic show but that is another article) on March 24<sup>th</sup>. Richard Hulbert, Director of the FLMNH (Florida Museum of Natural History) Paleontological Research Lab, was both a speaker and manning a table selling FLMNH research pamphlets, providing new Florida Fossil Permits, and answering questions. Richard said that Mastodons have a set of 5 adult teeth on each upper and lower jaw. These teeth run on a conveyor belt from the rear of the jaw moving forward to displace the used teeth (sometimes called “Spit” teeth because the animal would seem to spit them out).

There is a great picture of Mastodon teeth in a jaw at this website: [Photo of Mastodon Jaw and Teeth](http://www.paleodirect.com/pgset2/lm15x-001.htm) (<http://www.paleodirect.com/pgset2/lm15x-001.htm>) Unlike the Mammoth tooth with a chewing surface resembling the bottom of a sneaker, the Mastodon has teeth with multiple sets of 2 mounds which are better suited to chewing the twigs and branches which make up its diet. The 5 adult teeth

consist of a front tooth of 4 mounds, followed by three teeth with 6 mounds each and a final tooth of 8 mounds with a nub at the end of the tooth. There is a “chewing position” within the Mastodon jaw and at any one time, only one tooth handles the brunt of the chewing and is worn down. In the link above, you can see the final tooth just emerging with unformed roots, the 4<sup>th</sup> tooth has little or no wear, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> tooth has significant wear to the top half of the crown. The fossil tooth that I found shows a very similar wear pattern for a 6 mound tooth that was still in the Mastodon’s jaw at death.

There are many differences between Mastodon (Mammut Americanus) and Mammoths. The Mastodon was shorter (8-10 feet tall) and stockier than the Mammoths (13-14 feet tall). They had very different teeth and diets. The Mastodon is generally considered to have evolved earlier (approximately 25 MYA) than the Columbia or Imperial Mammoths (approximately 4.9 MYA). While neither is a direct ancestor of the Elephant, the Mammoth is more closely related to Elephants according to a majority of Paleontologists.

I feel incredibly lucky to have found a complete Mastodon tooth. There are more out there in South West Florida rivers and quarries. Good hunting to other FCOLC club members.





## GIANT TORTOISE LEG SPURS

The rivers and creeks are still low and many of us are hunting weekly. Since a lot of material is being sifted, it is inevitable that some fossils will be found, and many will be discarded by lack of attention and/or knowledge. I continually preach to KEEP ANY THING THAT MAY BE A FOSSIL until you make sure of what it is. You can ALWAYS throw it away, but it is a sinking feeling if you realize, upon learning what it was, that you tossed it back too quickly. I have highlighted several of these easy to miss fossils in past newsletters this hunting season, so as to try and make you aware of what you are finding. This month, I will do it again, and I will focus on Giant Tortoise leg spurs.

Frequently we find these bony defensive armor leg spurs and many look like it is just a broken piece of bone. However, once you realize that the Giant Extinct Tortoise, ( usually *Hesperastudo* sp.), had many spurs and they are shaped in many different ways, you may understand that you have found a complete fossil and tossed it. A few years ago, in a pit I was working, along the bottom of a cut I spied a layer of black bone, about six feet long. Upon further investigation I realized it was a crushed Tortoise. As I dug some of this shell away, I reached a pocket that looked like muddy grapes, and upon washing a few in the puddle near me, I discovered it was leg spurs. It seems the animal had both legs together ( I don't know if it was front or rear, but both were from the same end). Once buried and the weight of the overlying material covered it, and the Tortoise fossilized, these leg spurs collected together in a group. I include a picture of one of the two cases I have of these spurs. It was well over 125 total and there was two of each, proving there was two legs, and one spur from each leg. (The bones were crushed and not repairable, so I still didn't know front from back.) Another picture is a group of leg spurs that I collected on the last four river trips. One is HUGE!! And many are flattened, as they were positioned on an area of the leg that didn't need a pointy one for defense. A third picture shows what is called a caudal buckler, or "hiney binder". This is a fused section of spurs which is attached to the tail flab so that it protects the tail. If you find a spur with square sides, it may be from this buckler. The last picture shows some Tortoise claw/hoof cores, which are rarer and often confused with spurs. I didn't show, ( but should have!) a foot pad. MANY club members and others think most of what they find are foot pads, but in reality, there are very few of these to be found. AND-they will be flat on BOTH sides, not just one side and a rounded part on the opposite side.

So, I hope this helps you add to your Giant Tortoise leg spur collection!! Remember, YOU CAN ALWAYS THROW IT AWAY!! ( If you still have it!)

Louis Stieffel  
Vertebrate Education

