



FOSSIL CLUB OF LEE COUNTY

APRIL 2013



Message from the President

Dear Members and Friends,

As many of you have heard, I have encountered some serious health issues, which preclude me seeking reelection. It has been a great five years and time for someone else to take on the leadership. You will be asked to vote for a new president this month who will take office on May 1st.

There are many people for me to thank for their support over the years. Specifically, I want to thank our board of directors and fellow officers, Mary Rawl at the Calusa Nature Center, our club web master, all of the professors and curators at the University of Florida Museum of Natural History and University of South Florida, the dealers who supported our Annual Fossil Show over the past five years, and our friends at the Imaginarium. Last, but not least, I want to thank our club's 'volunteer labor force' who always come forth to do the extra things to help to make this a wonderful club.

Let us also thank Cherie Neat, our newsletter designer and editor and Jack Boyce who has

volunteered to take on the role of newsletter publisher. We have a first class newsletter and with your support, I am confident that Jack will do an outstanding job.

We had our annual Auction in March which was a "smash". Congratulations to everyone for their role in pulling off another super auction and to everyone who made generous donations and to those who had the winning bids on some great items.

Although it's a lot of work, I hope the club can continue to put on the annual Fossil Show. It is a great event for the children in our community and it also helps us to raise additional funds for university scholarships.

We have so many wonderful people in our club that I would need a couple of extra pages to mention each by name. I'll just summarize by saying we have a great club and that is attributed to the fact that we have so many great members! I will miss everyone.

Best regards as always, Bill

OFFICERS

Bill Shaver, President, 239-834-0694

billshaverpeaceriver@hotmail.com

Michael Siciliano, Vice President, 239-980-1406

Pam Plummer, Treasurer, 239-246-5993

Kathy Pawlowski, Secretary, 239-267-6130

DIRECTORS

Dean Hart, 941-979-8217

Gunther Lobish, 941-268-7506

Charles O'Connor, 239-246-5526

Joshua Frank, 239-248-5094

Ray Seguin, 239-939-1921

COMMITTEES

Jack Boyce, Newsletter Publisher

Cherie Neat, Newsletter Designer

Curt Klug, Web Master

Bill Shaver, Speakers

Louis Stieffel, Auctioneer

Kathy Pawlowski, Club Merchandise

Pam Plummer, Club Badges

Pam Plummer, Membership

Joshua Frank, Refreshments

Dean Hart, Refreshments co-chairman

Gunther Lobish, Pit Trips

Michael Siciliano, Raffle and Dive Trips

Coby Pawlowski, Youth Activities Director

Jack Boyce, Club Photographer & Peace River Trips

Gunther Lobish, Invertebrate Education

Louis Stieffel, Vertebrate Education

MINUTES OF MARCH MEETING THE FOSSIL CLUB OF LEE COUNTY, INC

Date: March 21st, 2013

Place: Zion Lutheran Church, Ft Myers, FL

Presided by: Michael Siciliano, Vice-President

The FCOLC Annual Auction was held from 6pm to 9pm.

Auctioneers: Louis Stieffel & Coby Pawlowski

There were no formal minutes.

WELCOME MEMBERS

John Battin

Aimee Hankel

Bill Johnson

Chris Johnson

Jim Manderfield

Vicki Manderfield

Next Meeting

FCOLC next meeting is on Thursday, April 18th, 2012 in the Iona House at the Calusa Nature Center. Meeting starts at 7 PM. The April meeting speaker will be Steve Koski. Steve is a research associate and site manager at the University of Miami Little Salt Spring Archaeological and Ecological Preserve.

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 always appreciate a new volunteer for future meetings. Joshua will have a signup sheet available and everyone is encouraged to take a turn at doing the refreshments. See Joshua during the April Meeting for details.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS AND SPEAKERS

April 6th FCOLC Peace River trip -

Rescheduled to Crews Park, Wauchula

April 12th, 13th and 14th: 21st Annual Venice Shark Tooth Festival

April 18th FCOLC Monthly Meeting at Iona House Calusa Nature Center

April 18th Speaker: Steve Koski

May 16th FCOLC Monthly Meeting at the Iona House

May 18th Speaker: Charles O'Connor

June 20th FCOLC Monthly Meeting @ Iona House

June 20th No Speaker; Members Exhibits/Show & Tell/Buy/Sell/Swap Meet

July 18th FCOLC Monthly Meeting @ Iona House

July 18th Speaker - TBD

Websites & Locations of Interest

Fossil Club of Lee County: www.fcolc.com

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

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

Smithsonian Natural History Museum www.mnh.si.edu

Southwest Florida Museum of History 2031 Jackson St., Fort Myers

www.MUSEUMofHISTORY.org

The Bailey-Matthews Shell Museum, 3075 Sanibel-Captiva Rd, Sanibel, FL

www.shellmuseum.org

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

www.hardeecounty.net/crackertrailmuseum/about.html

Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife Burrowing Owls

www.ccfriendsofwildlife.org

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

www.calusanature.org

Imaginarium 2000 Cranford Ave, Fort Myers

www.i-sci.org

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

Peace River Water Levels

www.canoeoutpost.com/peace/showpage.asp?page=waterlevel

Florida Fossil Clubs

Southwest Florida Fossil Club

www.southwestfloridafossilclub.com

Tampa Bay Fossil Club

www.tampabayfossilclub.com

Orlando Fossil Club

www.floridafossilhunters.com

The Fossil Forum

www.thefossilforum.com/index.php

Fossil Treasures of Florida

www.fossil-treasures-of-florida.com

Florida Paleontological Society

<http://floridapaleosociety.com/>

Mark Renz's Fossil Expeditions

www.fossilexpeditions.com

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

Owner Brian Evensen

Picking Up Isolated Native American Artifacts

If you find an Indian artifact, such as an arrowhead, on Florida state land or river bottom, be aware that possession of an Indian artifact found on state lands after 2004 is a Class 3 Felony. www.flheritage.com/news/faq.cfm

FCOLC Peace River Fossil Hunt

The 2nd fossil hunting trip to the Peace River was held at Crews Park, Wauchula on Saturday April 6th, 2013. There are two primary purposes in holding these fossil hunting trips: Introduce novice fossil seekers to the Peace River, the techniques and tools for finding fossils, and identify a specific location where they can return on their own and expect to find fossils; the 2nd purpose is to build relationships with other FCOLC Peace River enthusiasts, who would be good partners on future fossil hunting trips to the river.

We did not have a large turnout possibly because many of our FCOLC snowbirds returned to their northern homes or possibly because the weather which is normally very reliable in April turned problematic. On Thursday there were heavy rains and a front going through the Peace River drainage area. Depending on geography, the river was 9 to 16 inches higher than it was the day before, the water was filled with mud and debris limiting visibility, and the current was strong carrying away gravel and sand before the shovel could reach the sieve. We lost 2 gravel probes and 1 shovel in the muddy water. There were breezes and cloud cover until noon that increased the chill especially for those who did not bring wetsuits.

We had two groups of 4 traveling in canoe/kayak (Aimee Hankel, Bill Johnson, Jim & Vickie Manderfield) and 4 walking into the river just above Crews Park (Jack Boyce, Sue Coller, Sandy Schwartz, and John Battin). This was a 1st time in the Peace River for Bill & John plus Aimee, Jim and Vickie started their trips to the Peace River this season. All of us, novice and experienced had a great time given the weather conditions.

In addition to numerous smaller teeth, Megs and Makos and Snaggles were added to shark tooth collections. Jim Manderfield found a complete single plate of a Mammoth tooth and all of us were finding Mammoth and Mastodon tooth fragments.

Some of the finds:



Our two first time hunters (Bill Johnson and John Battin:



Co-Leaders: Aimee & Jack

FCOLC Auction March 21st, 2013

This year's Fossil Club of Lee County's fossil auction is now in the books!! Yes, folks, it's done for another year. It was fun, though, and we made a record sales amount, again. Every year seems to get a little bit better. Thanks to all the great members who donate their fossils and to all the great members who help with the auction, it went smooth and flawlessly. The Bonita Beachcombers, a group of club members who live in Bonita this time of year--and love the beach!, kept with their tradition, and put on a terrific buffet of food and sweets. No one left early because of hunger pains! It sure was good, and we are so fortunate to have these fossil hunters who love to cook!

Coby Pawlowski is not just one of the youngest members, but he is also the newest auctioneer's assistant. He also tried his hand, successfully, at auctioning some of the items. Coby has never been shy, so he is in the right place, now, at the head of the pack, taking charge! I see great things ahead for Coby. We are lucky to have him, and his mother, Kathy, as club members.



Our accounting team of Pam, Leslie, Ray, Mike, and Jack kept all the non-auctioning affairs in order. I don't think anyone settling up for their purchases had any problems at all. This is not always an easy thing to accomplish, so I say congrats to them all! Michael Gesal took many pictures! Michael Sicilano took care of getting the building opened and prepped in time. And several members helped in the set-up and placement of all the auction items. It was a group effort. Thank you all.

To sum it up, I felt that it was a good auction, with some great items, and most folks got something new for their collection. The Dinosaur baby pajamas and the fossil poop seemed to be a big hit, so next year we may try to stock up on more of these! Coby tried modeling the PJ's, so maybe we will not get too many of them!

I thank all of you for attending and hope you all had a good time.

Louis Stieffel, auctioneer

HORSE FOR DINNER!

About 22,000 years ago the Last Ice Age reached its maxima, began to wane, and earth entered into what is known as the Inter-glacial Period. The huge mountains of ice in the northern climes began to melt returning water back to its original sources.

During these times of extreme cold and subsequent warming in North America, the mass of land now called Florida teemed with a wide variety of large and small animals. Saber-toothed cats and dire wolves were common predators of the time and three-toed horses, tapir, bison, deer and the horse species *Equus* were abundant.

In the later stages of the Pleistocene Epoch, about 11,000 years ago, humans appeared on the scene.

The humans hunted the larger animals, but feared the saber-toothed cats who might be hunting them.

On one hunt, two humans set out to ambush a large three-toed horse (perhaps a *Cormohipparion*) that was returning from a watering hole. As the unsuspecting horse drew near, a saber-toothed cat pounced on the horse sinking its long canines into the neck area. The horse went down with the cat firmly locked onto the horse.

One of the humans was only a few feet away from the downed horse and killer cat. Suddenly losing all fear, the human drove his spear into the chest of the preoccupied cat.

The cat let out a terrible scream, withdrew its deadly canines, and in its last few seconds of breath stumbled a few feet away and lay motionless.

Sensing that the cat was no longer a threat, the humans ran to the dying horse which lay gasping its last few breaths. In a matter of

moments the horse lay dead. The humans using their stone knives cut open the horse's stomach and removed the vital organs. They rushed back to their camp area with the still warm organs for an evening meal.

There was much celebrating. The feared cat was dead and they all enjoyed horse for dinner.

Later, knowing that predators would soon come for the rest of the horse, one human from each of the four families went back to where the horse lay. They cut up the horse so that each family would get one fourth of the horse. There was much more celebrating as each family ended up with a "quarter horse".

The next day the humans mused as how they could use the dead cat's fangs as a knapping tool or perhaps as ornaments to prove that they were the superior hunters.

Later that day after sweltering from the effects of global warming, they rested, and then began to talk about their heroics of yesterday. After much discussion, they agreed that the dead cat was probably the species *Rhizosmilodon Fiteae*, which was indigenous to the area now known as Polk County in Florida.

The sun was slowly sinking to the western horizon. The same two humans were getting ready to return to camp and they marveled at the vast herds of horses in the distance. They remarked that there were so many horses that their descendants and all generations to follow would never face hunger. They would always be able to have horse for dinner!

Article written and submitted by: Bill Shaver

UF researcher describes new 5-million-year-old saber-toothed cat from Florida

Fast Forward 11000 years à>>

March 14th, 2013



UF paleontologist Richard Hulbert Jr. measures fossil teeth of saber-toothed cat. In the foreground, the lower jaw of *Rhizosmilodon fiteae*, is pictured between a modern Florida panther, left, and the famous *Smilodon fatalis* from about 15,000 years ago. Florida Museum photo by Jeff Gage

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — A University of Florida researcher has described a new genus and species of extinct saber-toothed cat from Polk County, Fla., based on additional fossil acquisitions of the animal over the last 25 years.

The 5-million-year-old fossils belong to the same lineage as the famous *Smilodon fatalis* from the La Brea Tar Pits in Los Angeles, a large, carnivorous apex predator with elongated upper canine teeth. Previous research suggested the group of saber-toothed cats known as *Smilodontini* originated in the Old World and then migrated to North America, but the age of the new species indicates the group likely originated in North America. The study appeared online in the journal *PLOS One* Wednesday.

“*Smilodon* first shows up on the fossil record around 2.5 million years ago, but there haven’t been a lot of good intermediate forms for understanding where it came from,” said study co-author Richard Hulbert Jr., vertebrate paleontology collections manager at the Florida Museum of Natural History on the UF campus. “The new species shows that the most famous saber-toothed cat, *Smilodon*, had a New World origin and it and its ancestors lived in the southeastern U.S. for at least 5 million years before their extinction about 11,000 years ago. Compared to what we knew about these earlier saber-toothed cats 20 or 30 years ago, we now have a much better understanding of this group.”

Hulbert helped uncover fossils of the new genus and species, *Rhizosmilodon fiteae*, from a phosphate mine during excavations in 1990. The species was named after Barbara Fite of Lutz, Fla., who in 2011 donated one of the critical specimens used for the new description and allowed UF scientists to make casts of two other partial jaws in her collection.

The donation was a major contribution to the research because the remarkably well-preserved lower jaw contains almost pristine examples of all three chewing teeth, Hulbert said. The genus name *Rhizosmilodon*, meaning “root of *Smilodon*,” implies the animal could be a missing link and direct ancestor of *Smilodon*, which became extinct about 11,000 years ago.

The study’s lead author, Steven Wallace, an associate professor in the department of geosciences and member of the Don Sundquist Center of Excellence in Paleontology at East Tennessee State University, used comparative analysis of saber-toothed cat anatomy to help determine the animal’s taxonomy. The analysis was primarily based on structure of the animal’s lower jaw and teeth, smaller than the *Smilodon* and about the size of a modern Florida panther.



Saber-toothed cat species, holotype specimen, is pictured in the foreground and the paratype specimen is pictured in the background. Florida Museum photo by Jeff Gage

“The taxonomy of this animal was controversial because when it was first published 20 years ago, they only had one partial, somewhat-decent lower jaw, and it was missing some of the critical features,” Hulbert said. “We now have more complete specimens showing it has a mixture of primitive and advanced characters, and does not match any previously named saber-toothed cat genus or species.”

Originally misidentified as a member of the genus *Megantereon* in the early 1980s, *Rhizosmilodon* is instead the sister taxon to *Megantereon* and *Smilodon*, and the oldest of the group. These three cats are in the same tribe — meaning they are more closely related than a family or subfamily — and are often called as saber-toothed cats because of their long canine teeth, Hulbert said.

“When people think of saber-toothed cats, they think of it as just one thing, as if the famous tar pit saber-toothed cat was the only species, when in fact, it was an almost worldwide radiation of cats that lasted over 10 million years and probably had a total of about 20 valid species,” Hulbert said. “Counting the newly described animal, there are now six different species of saber-toothed cats known just from Florida.”

Saber-toothed cat expert Julie Meachen, an instructor at Marshall University School of Medicine in Huntington, W. Va., said the study helps settle the debate about whether the tribe arose from the Eurasia before coming to North America.

“I think that this revision was well-needed,” Meachen said. “The fact that it’s one of the oldest lineages is really interesting because that means that this exciting group of saber-toothed cats really is a North American tribe — it evolved and persisted in North America.”

Since 1915, more than 60 new species of reptiles, birds and mammals have been named from Central Florida phosphate mines, located southeast of Tampa and south of Lakeland. *Rhizosmilodon* lived in a forested coastal habitat that was also home to rhinos, tapirs, three-toed horses, peccaries, llamas and deer. Its relatively small size probably allowed it to climb trees and safely hide captured prey from large carnivores, such as packs of wolf-sized hyena-dogs and an extinct type of bear larger than the modern grizzly.

Writer: Danielle Torrent , dtorrent@flmnh.ufl.edu

Source: Richard Hulbert, rhulbert@flmnh.ufl.edu, 352-273-1821

Media contact: Paul Ramey, APR; 352-273-2054, pramey@flmnh.ufl.edu

<http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/pressroom/2013/03/14/uf-researcher-describes-new-5-million-year-old-saber-toothed-cat-from-florida/#more-3668>

Fossil Fest 2013 – A trip into prehistoric Florida

Bill Shaver introduced me to the Tampa Bay Fossil show a couple of years ago. This year it is called Fossil Fest 2013 and was held on March 23rd and 24th. I always have a great time and this year was no different. I carpooled with Charles O’Conner (looking for small animal skulls) and Steve Sims, who was looking for appraisals on artifacts he had found in the 1970s. Although they had never met, it turned out to be a great match since Charles was a Paleontology grad student at UF Gainesville at about the same time that Steve was collaborating with UF professors excavating Mammoth skull, teeth and other materials. As for me I was interested in seeing the new displays, looking for Tampa Bay coral, and maybe purchasing a couple of teeth for NEXT years FCOLC auction. The show had something for all of us and an added pleasant surprise. I started off with the displays which are always lining the left wall of the exhibition hall. The most impressive display is a complete skeleton of a juvenile Mastodon found in an Illinois Peat Bog and displayed by many of the people who actually removed it from the ground. Every bone was present including 23 inch tusks, and articulated spinal column plus articulated leg and toe bones. This even included the medial phalanx toe bones, one of which I had found in the Peace River 4 months ago – Just fantastic and by itself worth the price of admission.



Next I was looking for large shark teeth that I might keep or donate to the 2014 FCOLC auction. I had 2 friends in Charles and Steve who are large shark tooth experts and could both recognize a great deal and negotiate to a great price. I always look for a vendor who supports FCOLC. Bill Eberlien, also known as Megateeth, is a consistent vendor who participates in the Annual FCOLC Fossil Show and contributes in many other ways. At the 2012 Fossil Fest, Bill gave me a great deal on ten 2.25 inch Makos and this year I was after Megalodon. In the end, I chose a gorgeous 3 inch posterior Meg and a 4 inch tooth that has a “feeding damage” bite mark which I have seen on other Megs that I find.

Thanks to Bill and Charles and Steve, here they are:



While I was browsing the Tampa Bay coral geodes and sloth skulls, the PA called for Barbara Fite to come to the author book signing table. Barbara and her husband are FCOLC members and Barbara has recently become more famous as the namesake of *Rhizosmilodon Fiteae*, a newly discovered Saber_Cat. We talked about Barbara’s find in 1990 (identification & publications can take a long long time), Barbara signed a copy of the scholarly paper, and posed with the feline jaw with teeth on display at the Fossil Fest. THANKS Barbara! So now I know how to get my name up in lights – just discover a unique fossil and wait 23 years.



This fossil show is just great year after year. If FCOLC members have an opportunity, I definitely recommend the Fossil Fest 2014 which should be held in late March next year. You might see me, Charles O’Conner, Steve Sims, Louis Stieffel, Coby Pawlowski, Joshua Frank, and lots of other FCOLC members at the show.

Article written by Jack Boyce