



FOSSIL CLUB OF LEE COUNTY

APRIL 2014

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

April fool!!! HA! I WISH our meeting was on that day! We could have SO much fun with show and tell.

However, we will still have an enjoyable meeting. On a serious note, though, the April meeting is our annual election of officers and board of directors. We have a few changes this year, but still retain the core group of experienced members. I hope you vote everyone in to office that is running. I will write a separate little article about the elections.

We had another nice canoe trip since last month's meeting. Al Govin has now put on two trips to the Peace. Those who have participated enjoyed themselves. However, Al and myself have been surprised at the small number of members who took advantage of these trips. Both were custom designations, with Canoe Safari, to a remote location and also being picked up at a remote location, allowing a short paddle time through good hunting grounds. The regular canoe outfitters will bring you to a remote location, but you must canoe all the way back to their place of operations in Arcadia. If we are to continue doing these custom trips we would like to see more club support. Al puts in a lot of effort to do these trips.

The March meeting consisted almost solely of the annual auction. I believe it was a good time enjoyed by all. Many members went home with new fossils and other things. The club treasury was increased by over \$3,000, so it was very successful financially for the club. We have more expenses than we used to, so this money is good to have in the bank. I want to thank Dean Hart for his help up front, and our hard working team trying to keep track of everything on the sidelines. This was Sandy Schwartz, Mike Scialano, Joe Larkin, and my lovely wife, Leslie Stieffel. Thank you to all and also to everyone who donated such great fossils and other items to the club for the auction. We had a backlog at the payout

table at the very end, when everyone tried to check out at the same time, yet the auction was still going on. We tried very hard to have a great fossil auction, but apologize for any inconvenience this backlog caused. Remember, it is all VOLUNTEERS, not a professional auction house putting this on. And—we can always use more volunteers!

A tradition of the annual auction is the refreshments at break time. A certain group of members, who are called the Bonita Beachcombers, always volunteer to put on a terrific variety of goodies to enjoy! We sincerely appreciate it and thank them from the bottom of our hearts for their friendly generosity!

The World Famous Shell Factory, on HWY 41, will be the location of our December fossil show. Dean Hart, who is a fossil show co-chairman along with Pam Plummer, has an article in this newsletter about it. I'm already excited about the show!

The shell factory is also close to the opening for their new fossil museum! Our own Pam Plummer has been hired to be museum Director! She's been working hard to fill the cases and label the loans/donations. I urge all of you to try and attend the fossil museum grand opening on April 17, 2014. It's pretty nice, very informative, and FREE!, and you will see a lot of fossils on loan from fellow club members.

I want to thank Jack Boyce for all the hard work he has put in over the last several years as newsletter editor. Jack has decided to give it up, and I am doing the fill-in. I ask that anyone willing to help gather articles for the newsletter and send them to our publisher/developer for organization, to please let me know. I wear enough



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hats in this club, and will gladly pass this on to someone else who wants it. I can answer any questions you may have, so please give this some thought.

I want to also thank David Sheehey, our club's librarian. He has managed to keep up with new book donations and keep them organized and listed. We have the largest and best fossil library of any fossil club in the state. I urge our members to take advantage of it!

Besides the unique distinction of being the most southerly fossil club in the country, we also have the oldest member in a Florida fossil club. He is Ray Seguin, and on April 8, Ray will be 90 YEARS OLD!! I still remember the time we had a club outing at Brownsville, on the Peace River, and when finished in the river, could NOT get up the bank to dry land. It took 4 or 5 of us to help pull, push and half carry Ray to the top. Once there, we realized he had on a backpack and in it was about a hundred pounds of fossil Dugong ribs!! Ray wouldn't part with his fossils, but good thing we were all there to help! He's been a valued member since the first meeting back in 1993. Ray can't fossil hunt anymore, but he misses it dearly. He donated many books to our library and fossils for our auction. Ray is a loved and valued member, and we are glad to have him! Tell him HAPPY BIRTHDAY at the meeting!

Matt Hayes will be our speaker this month, so I hope to see many of you at the meeting.

Don't forget your show and tell fossils. The featured fossil of the month is HORSE.

Louis

OFFICERS

Louis Stieffel, President, 239-851-7499

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Joe Larkin, 239-265-6772

Charles O'Connor, 239-246-5526

Pamela Plummer (**New 2014**) 239-246-5993

Ray Seguin, 239-939-1921, Emeritus

Dean Hart, 941-979-8217

COMMITTEES

Al Govin, Club Trips Director

Curt Klug, Web Master

Gunther Lobisch, Invertebrate Education

Cherie Neat, Newsletter Developer

Pam Plummer and Dean Hart, 2014 Fossil Show

Sandy Schwartz, Badges, Membership

Ray Seguin, Merchandise

David Sheehey, Librarian

Michael Siciliano, Raffle and Dive Trips

Louis Stieffel, Auctioneer, Vertebrate Education, Speakers,
Newsletter editor, FOSSIL project representative

Grand Opening

Grand Opening of The Fossil and Gem Museum at the Shell Factory is April 17th. We have many members who have put some of their nicest fossils on loan at the museum. I encourage all of you to go visit the museum. Pam Plummer, one of our members, has been retained as the Fossil Museum Director, and she has been busy putting together a great visual and educational display. The many cases are filled with great fossils, with the vast majority of them being from Florida.

The museum is open now, but will be complete and officially open on April 17. Admission is free, so stop by the Shell Factory and see the museum!

Next month we will do a follow-up and include some pictures for those of you who are not able to go there.

Minutes of March Meeting
THE FOSSIL CLUB OF LEE COUNTY

Date: March
Zion Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall
Presided by: Louis Stieffel, President

Since the fossil auction dominated the March meeting, very little time was spent on anything else. The following is the minutes of that shortened business meeting:

- ★ Louis is now the news letter editor, Jack has moved on. Send all articles to Louis.
- ★ Next month we are having our annual election. Some officers and directors are staying in their positions and some will be changed.
- ★ The Fossil show is going to be Dec 6, 2014 at the Shell Factory this year. So mark your calendars.
- ★ Bonita Beach Combers provided refreshments tonight. We need a volunteer for next month's refreshments.
- ★ The annual fossil auction gets underway.

Secretary, Kathy Pawlowski

Next Meeting

FCOLC next meeting is on Thursday, April 19th, 2014

at Zion Lutheran Church
7401 Winkler Avenue, Fort Myers
Meeting starts at 7 PM.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Just a friendly reminder that 2014 Membership fee is past due. Our treasurer, Sandy Schwartz will have membership forms available at our March 20th meeting. Even if you are a long time member she would appreciate having you fill out the form completely so she can update the membership roster. For your convenience there is a Membership Form on the last page of this Newsletter.

If you joined the club in the last quarter of 2013 you are paid up for year 2014. Also, if you don't have a name badge, please let Sandy know so she can take care of it. **Thanks to all who continue to support your club.**

Thank You

The club would like to thank our departing Treasurer, Pam Plummer, for all her hard work in helping the club through its' incorporation proceedings and also the efforts and troubles with the IRS to apply for non-profit status. Her participation in many aspects of the club and her accomplishments have helped the club greatly. Pam has to step down because of a new job and night college classes.

Thank you, Pam.

The club also thanks our departing Secretary, Kathy Pawlowski, for all her efforts helping the club at her position. Kathy also got all of our 2013 fossil brochures printed, and donated the cost. Kathy has also been a valued member, and we thank her for her help. **Thank you, Kathy.**

Jack Boyce has been our newsletter editor. We thank him for his many efforts at putting together a high class publication. He also volunteered to help with fossil walk-in river trips for new members.

Thank you, Jack.

Speaker

Matt Hayes is a paleoecology doctoral student at the School of Geosciences at the University of South Florida, with research interests in food-web reconstruction, vertebrate paleontology, stable isotope biogeochemistry and taphonomy (fossilization and preservation processes).

Rows of Teeth and the World of Whorls: The Evolutionary History of Sharks and Their Relatives

Matt will discuss the fascinating history of sharks through the fossil record, including their appearance, changes in habit and structure, and what we can tell about the seas of the past. He will also comment on their close relatives, the chimaeras (or ratfish) and some of the incredible ancestors these now-small fish claim as their forebears; such as the amazing tooth structures of the Paleozoic *Helicoprion*.

Attached is an image of a *Helicoprion* specimen featured at the Idaho Museum of Natural History. I will try to bring along a few smaller, and admittedly less impressive specimens that I'm using in some of my research.



Websites & Locations of Interest

Fossil Club of Lee County: www.fcolc.com

FCOLC, c/o Sandra Schwartz, 1821 SE 5th Terrace, Cape Coral, FL, 33990

The FCOLC website is a source for links to Fossil websites of interest, archived monthly club newsletters, details on club meetings and officers.

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 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/>

Collecting Vertebrate Fossils on Florida state lands **requires** a permit. A fossil hunting permit is also part of being an ethical Florida fossil hunter.

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

Peace River Water Levels

<http://waterdata.usgs.gov/fl/nwis/rt>

Picking Up Isolated Native American Artifacts www.flheritage.com/news/faq.cfm

If you find an Indian artifact, such as an arrowhead, on Florida state lands or river bottom, be aware that possession of an Indian artifact found on state lands after 2004 is a Class 3 Felony.

SMR Trip

A fossil collecting trip to SMR will be held on May 24. We are sharing this trip with the Mannisota Fossil Club. We have 20 spots. There is a cost associated with the trip, of \$15. This goes towards the expenses occurred by the trip leaders, who come from Gainesville to take us into the mine.

I will have a sign-up sheet. Please DO NOT sign up for this trip unless you are 100% sure you can make it. We have a very limited number of spots. If we get more sign-ups than we have spots for we will choose names from a hat, or something, at the meeting. Notarized forms needs to be signed, at the meeting, to be able to be allowed into the mine. We will collect the \$15 per person at this meeting, also.

Sorry for the strict rules, but that's the way it is these days.

Louis

THE FOSSIL PROJECT

Last month I attended, along with long-time member Al Govin, the North American Paleontological Convention (NAPC), in Gainesville, Florida. This was initiated through the new program, THE FOSSIL PROJECT. This is a 4 year funded program with the goal of joining professional Paleontologists, Natural History museums, and amateur or avocational paleontologists, such as us. As the NAPC convention wound down, the participants in the FOSSIL project commenced meetings to meet and discuss ways to make this program work. We had organized workshops on various topics, such as involvement of citizen scientists with museum collections, how to best maximize communications between the professional and amateur communities, and the future of digital advances on the hobby. There were many other topics and after the round table discussions we reviewed the results as a total group, with everyone attending understanding the objectives needed to reach the goal of that particular topic.

We all stayed in the same hotel, so afterhours consisted of meeting each other and networking for future communications. There are a few clubs, in various parts of the USA, that now have some Florida fossils which I sent to them. In turn, we will get some fossils from their local area, which I plan on putting into next year's auction.

Many times, as one of us goes on a vacation trip we wish we knew of a fossil location to hunt while there. This new, developing network will help us have the contacts in those places to help us do this. Want to visit a natural history museum? We just may have the acquired the right contact person to

help show you around. We may also get some interesting speakers for our meetings as many of these club members, and professionals, from other parts of the country visit our area. So, the direct benefit to our club is a bonus from this project and should continue to get stronger.

While at the convention, I was able to procure a number of publications which are not readily available, on paleontology. Many are now out of print. These will be going into our club library, as soon as David Sheehey, (the club librarian) can curate them into the library.

Another project that is happening right now, with a direct interest to us, is the I-Dig Bio project. This ambitious project is trying to put entire collections on the internet, using the Cloud as the repository. You will then be able to see the collections hiding behind the scene, in the basements, and out of view of the general public. You can view on:

www.idigbio.org

We learned a lot about other fossil organizations, which were attending from all over the US. I hope to present some of their unique and creative ideas to our club, as I can fit it into a busy schedule. In the meantime, you can learn more about the fossil project at: www.flmnh.ufl.edu/myfossil/

Also another interesting website to check out is: www.myfossil.org

I will do my best to keep you informed of continuing developments with the FOSSIL PROJECT and how it affects our club. In the meantime, check out these websites and see how interesting things are getting!

Louis

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS AND SPEAKERS

April 11th-13th 22nd Annual Venice Sharktooth Festival, Venice Airport Festival Grounds

April 17th FCOLC Monthly Meeting @ Zion Lutheran Church, 7401 Winkler Road, Fort Myers, FL 33919

April 17th Speaker; – **Matt Hayes**, Graduate Student/Researcher, UFMNH

Presentation: Isotopic Analysis of Fossil Shark Teeth

Election of 2014 Officers

Saturday April 19th Peace River Fossil Hunt Walk_in trip

May 15th FCOLC Monthly Meeting @ Zion Lutheran Church, 7401 Winkler Road, Fort Myers, FL 33919

May 15th Speaker; – Tom Granata

Saturday May 24th SMR Aggregates Fossil Shell trip

SO LONG.

It is time for this snowbird to return to the northern forests (still under 4 ft. of snow), and bid adieu to the sunny south. It has been a great winter here. The highlight of course has been the collection of Florida fossils. My passion is fossiling and rock hounding so I was more than thrilled to find out about the FCOLC. Imagine that at the very first meeting I was able to sign up for a fossiling trip on the Peace River. This not only gave me a digging site but also placed me in contact with a bunch of like minded scroungers ignoring deep water, cold winds and aching backs to recover a scute, a bone, a tooth, a vertebra, and a mass of other interesting items that existed so many years ago.

I think back of the meetings that I attended. They were informative, fun and with good food to boot. Mostly I think back on the conviviality of the group, the enthusiasm of showing off a spectacular find, the good food, Coby's enthusiasm, the dead pan smile on "laid back Mike S." face, the serious look on Ray's face, Louis' attempts at joking, Al exhorting the members to sign up for field trips, etc. It has been great to have a club like this available to us, and I want to thank all the board and committees to make it all possible. Thanks for your hard work and dedication to the club. Really the only disappointment I experienced was when only nine of the nineteen people who signed up, showed up for the last canoe trip.

I was privileged to spend most of my digging time with Al and Louis, we became friends and I learned a lot too. I learned that Al is stubborn and will dig in the same hole practically all day as long as even a small shark tooth shows up on his screen. Louis was forever teaching me, especially how to identify a faux Tortoise spur. I thought they were just pointy rocks.

So again my thanks and appreciation to the club and all its members.

Good huntin'

Chuck Zietsma

Fossil Club of Lee County Fossil Festival.

DECEMBER 6TH 2014

Mark your calendar for the Fossil Club of Lee County Fossil Festival.

We are trying to keep everyone up to date on how the Festival is progressing.

As you all know it will be at the Shell Factory in North Fort Myers and they have done a lot to help us along with our Festival.

The vendor area for this years show is a little smaller than last year but should produce a lot more foot traffic because of its' great location and reputation. We will have a large room and two tents outside. Parking should not be a problem as there is plenty of parking all over the property.

Pam and I went to the Tampa Bay show to pick up some pointers and promote our show to the venders.

We also got some donations and some good deals on some fossils for our Festival.

We are asking for some donations of fossils for our Festival. We could use stuff for our Kids dig (such as broken sharks teeth-horse teeth and such). We also can use fossils for our door prizes and for our raffle prizes and for our spinning wheel game.

When we get closer to the Festival we will be asking for help at the show. Hopefully the people that helped us last year will help again as they all did a fine job and were a very important part of our show. If anyone would like to help now we are always looking for people with ideas to help us out.

Remember everyone can be a part of the Festival by donating time or fossils .

We will try to keep everyone informed with short updates in the clubs newsletters.

It is going to be a lot of fun and we hope al of our club members want to get involved!

Dean Hart

FCOLC Canoe Trip

Al Govin, the trips coordinator will be putting together another canoe trip, probably in May, before the rainy season begins. I urge as many members as possible to participate. The trips are fun! The river is beautiful. Lots of beautiful scenery as well as wildlife. You can get some great pictures, as well as fossils! The cost is minimal for a whole day fossil hunting on a customized trip itinerary.

Here are a few pictures from our most recent canoe trip.

Louis



Canoe Trip

On March 22nd the FCOLC completed our second of two canoe trips. I had 18 signups. A total of 8 eager fossil hunters showed up, paid and signed in.

The weather was great. The sun was out, the temperatures were real nice. Due to the high number of no shows the bus we were originally to use was changed to a van and our departure was significantly delayed.

We finally got underway and stopped four or five times along the way and hunted various gravel bars. Everyone found something and we shared some laughs and a great day in the outdoors.. One of our companions kept finding rocks that remind him of tortoise spurs and by the end of the day had at least 8 faux spurs. I think the find of the day was a nice Bison tooth, but many other fossils such as horse teeth, deer antler, shark teeth, toe bones, vertebrae, etc, was found. The group consensus seemed to be it was a very enjoyable day. NO one turned their canoe over!!

Future canoe trips are going to required a \$10.00 down payment for each name signed in. Canoe Safari has been extremely accommodating to our club but can not continue to deliver canoes with accessories to the river and then have us use less than half of our commitment. We also had a few members who had signed up but simply didn't show up. We called everyone, as we don't want to leave someone back, but some signers were actually perplexed that we called. If you sign up for a trip, please remember that you did so.

I'm open to any and all suggestions, critical or otherwise, for future trips canoeing or otherwise. Suggestions for trip improvement's are also welcome. Please email all suggestions to algovin1@hotmail.com. Please remember the club needs your support on these trips or they will be eliminated if there is not enough interest.

Al Govin Trips Coordinator

Aquatic Sloths

While at FOSSIL in Gainesville, we were treated to a webinar (lecture via the internet) about some fossil whales found in Peru. The researcher mentioned in passing that they found fossils of aquatic sloths as well. I had never heard of aquatic sloths so I did some research and this is what I found. Hope you find it interesting. ~ Bonnie



Ground sloths (Gravigrada, Xenarthra) are known from middle or late Oligocene to late Pleistocene in South America and from late Miocene to late Pleistocene in North America. They are medium to gigantic in size and have terrestrial habits. Discovery of abundant and well preserved remains of a new sloth (*Thalassocnus natans*), in marine Pliocene deposits from Peru drastically expands our knowledge of the range of adaptation of the order. The abundance of individuals, the absence of other land mammals in the rich marine vertebrate fauna of the site, and the fact that the Peruvian coast was a desert during the Pliocene suggest that it was living on the shore and entered the water probably to feed upon sea-grasses or seaweeds. The morphology of premaxillae, femur, caudal vertebrae (similar to those of otters and beavers) and limb proportions are in agreement with this interpretation.” [Nature 375, 224 - 227 (18 May 1995)] The research was reported by C. de Muizon and H. Greg McDonald in Nature.

In 2004, de Muizon, McDonald, Salas and Urbina reported on the evolution of the feeding strategy of the sloths: “The aquatic sloth *Thalassocnus* is represented by five species that lived along the coast of Peru from the late Miocene through the late Pliocene. A detailed comparison of the cranial and mandibular anatomy of these species indicates different feeding adaptations. The three older species of *Thalassocnus* (*T. antiquus*, *T. natans*, and *T. littoralis*) were probably partial grazers (intermediate or mixed feeders) and the transverse component of mandibular movement was very minor, if any. They were probably feeding partially on stranded sea weeds or sea grasses, or in very shallow waters (less than 1 m) as indicated by the abundant dental striae of their molariform teeth created by ingestion of sand. The two younger species (*T. carolomartini* and *T. yaucensis*) were more specialized grazers than the three older species and had a distinct transverse component in their mandibular movement. Their teeth almost totally lack dental striae. These two species were probably feeding exclusively in the water at a greater depth than the older species.” Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology: Vol. 24, No. 2, pp. 398–410.

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FOSSIL of the MONTH

Since I received no submissions from a member for the fossil-of-the-month, I will use a couple of my wife Leslie's finds from January, when we collected at the Mosaic Mine. One is a very nice Meg tooth, showing the beautiful blue blade and white root. The other is the larger toe bone, Medial Phalanx, from the three toed horse, *Nannipus* sp. Both of these were nice finds. Leslie was very pleased to find these, along with some other neat mine fossils.

Leslie does not fossil hunt very much, but still has gathered a pretty nice collection from over the years. Dragging her along to hunt with me has given her more opportunity to collect fossils than she would have you think!

I ask that anyone who wants to submit a fossil-of-the-month find to email, to me, (cape187@earthlink.net), a picture or two, and a short description and story about the find. I will try to include as many of these finds as we have room for in the newsletter.

Louis

