

Fossil Club Of Lee County

May 2006

President's Message

Another month already!! I sure hope you guys are doing some serious fossil hunting. The Peace River is about as low as it can possibly get and still have water in it!!! Land sites are very tough to hunt without any rain for a couple of months, but the rivers are happening!! I went a couple of times the last couple of weekends and you can walk where ever you want to go. Al Govin and Leslie and I went two weeks ago, north of Wachula, and we're glad we didn't bring the canoe. We would have wound up carrying it more than floating it. We were able to walk everywhere. I know I went at least two miles without getting wet past my knees, and they were usually high and dry!! You can access just about any gravel bar right now, so if you are ever going to hunt the Peace---do it now!!! I hope Al is planning on writing an article of that trip as he kicked fossil butt. I always said I would rather be lucky than good!!

We have a canoe trip planned for May 21. This is a Sunday and I know some folks don't want to go on a Sunday, but any other day will not let everybody go because some folks have to work on Saturdays. The unique thing about this fossiling canoe trip is that it is free to the members of the Fossil Club Of Lee County!! We have sufficient funds in the treasury because of the support of the members so the executive committee decided to "give

back" to the membership. Any member wanting to participate in this canoe trip needs to contact Michael Orchin and let him know. He needs a good count so as to reserve the right number of canoes. The plan is to canoe from Wachula to Zolfo Springs, about a 2- 2 1/2 hour trip. This allows us plenty of time to fossil hunt along the way. Details will be available at this month's meeting. A few members signed up last month. We hope will not have to cancel due to too little water. Be sure and check as we get closer to that date.

The speaker this month will be Terry Selari. He is a good guy, a fossil dealer, a past president of the Tampa Bay Club, and has spoken to us several times before and is always interesting. Terry knows his stuff! He will also bring some fossils to show and tell and sell, so bring a buck or two and add to your collection, and help show our appreciation to Terry for making the long journey to see us.

June's speaker will be Alex Hastings. He is a graduate student at the University of Florida, in Gainesville, majoring in paleontology. Alex is also a recipient of the Ken Ericson scholarship contributed to the university by our club. Alex said he will be glad to attempt to ID the fossils you do not know the identity of. Al Govin, the newly elected Vice President of the club will be chairing the meeting. I will be on a vacation trip, whether I need it or not! This will be my first meeting missed since I have taken office and I

will try to not do it again. We had a trip planned last meeting to go the Orange River again, but only one person signed up to go!! I was very surprised since so many members went the last time and all seemed to enjoy themselves. I guess not enough fossils were found for folks to want to go back. However, fossils were found by some, so they were there, just not as easy to find as everybody wanted, I guess. We keep trying though, so when we can arrange a trip, we will.

I hope lots of you guys make it to the meeting this month. I know summer vacations will kick in soon, but try and support your club as much as possible. OK?

Louis Stieffel, President, F.C.O.L.C.

May Meeting

Our May meeting will be held on May 18th at 7:00 p.m. at the Calusa Nature Center located at Ortiz and Colonial Blvd. Our speaker will be Terry Sellari. Terry has been the past president of the Tampa Bay Fossil Club for 6 years, from 1991-1995 and 1996-1997. Terry comes from Perry, Florida and has been fossil hunting for over 15 years.

Terry will speak about Florida river diving, ice age mammals, and pathologicals. He is leaving at the end of May for two weeks to dig with Frank Garcia in the Bad Lands on 900 acres of leased property. The formations are the Oligocene, dealing with large mammals that were the first after the dinosaurs, turtle, oreodont, and more. Most were covered in ash from when the Rocky Mountains were forming. He particularly favors saber cats and carnivores and will speak on a wide range of topics and will bring a wide range of items for sale.

Executive Committee

Officers

Louis Stieffel, President (239) 458-9818 or e-

mail; Cape187@earthlink.net

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

Ray Seguin, Treasurer; 989-1921 or 936-5019

Chuck Ferber, Secretary: 489-2891

Board Members

Leslie Stieffel 458-9818

Michael Orchin 574-6318

Sandy Schwartz 772-8015, Cameraqueen43@worldnet.att.net

Committees

Web Site: Curtis Klug

Trip Director: Al Govin

Newsletter: Sandy Schwartz

Speakers: Louis Stieffel

\$1. raffle: Louis Kimsey

Auction: Louis StieffelPublicity:

Publicity: Carl Fricke

My Aurora Field Trip

On April 23rd, nine people from the FCOLC arrived at the parking lot of the PCS mines in Aurora, N.C. The other groups who were there were also from Florida clubs including SW. We were checked in by guides, who are volunteers who also like to hunt, and were transported to the collecting area by bus. PCS allows up to 50 people per trip, although there about half that this trip, with about 100 people doing surface collecting each weekend. There was a huge area, including a new section that was recently opened with a lot of very weathered dolphin vertebra, whale bone, coral, small teeth and chunks of phosphate. It was hot and we

were tired but we had a good time.

Michael Orchin, Donna Johnson and I visited with a friend of Louis' in SC on the way to PCS and on the way back. Bill and Linda Palmer did not know us but invited us to stay with them. Bill is a volunteer for the Charleston Museum which is the oldest museum in America. He is a retired Navy Submariner who is a trained Field Collections Supervisor for the Charleston Museums. He has discovered over 35 new species of fossil whales, turtles, billfish, dugong, echinoid, snake and multituberculate. This also includes 16 new Eocene Decapods. He has donated these to the Charleston Museum, Smithsonian, Georgia Southern University and the South Carolina State Museums.

Bill took us to a quarry that produced the most primitive whale (Protocetid) from North America. It was called *Carolinacetus gingerichi*. It is 42 million years old and still has the nasal opening over the canine teeth. This is like land animals. Several of the bones we found that day were from these protocetids. Michael found a piece of whale skull that he gave to Bill, as Bill thought might be part of a skull he is working on or could be used in the reconstruction.

Donna found a small piece of a mandible about the size of a thumbnail. Bill was interested in it, thinking at first, that it might be from a small cat, it turned out to be from a mink. It is from the Middle Pleistocene and is the oldest record of minks from South Carolina. The next oldest on record is only 12,000 years old. She has donated it to the museum which will send her a form for her donation so that she'll get credit. Is that cool or what?

Bill explained the process of how a new species is established. It is first carefully examined and compared to similar species. Sometimes casts are available for examination and sometimes trips must be made to the location of the similar species. The new species is then named, described and the resulting paper distributed throughout the world to over 500 museums and institutions. This is a very long and expensive process and many "new finds" wait a long time

before appearing in print. Bill makes casts of finds before they are assembled. He uses "dragon skin" which produces molds that can be used many times without losing detail, although it is very expensive and he uses wood putty to make the casts.

We learned a lot and had a great time. Bill and Linda's generosity was much appreciated. That did not, however, stop Donna and I from beating Linda at "Push."

Sandy Schwartz

Ecstasy and Agony

I recently had the fossil day of my life at the Peace River. On a Sunday, accompanied by Louis and Leslie Stieffel, we went exploring for a spot I had discovered 3 years ago but was never able to revisit because of the high water on the Peace River. That has changed, so back again for the big hunt. We were exploring various spots when Louis suggested I try across the river on the opposite bank. What a great suggestion!

Over a period of about 4 hours, I found 3 mammoth teeth, 1 mastodon tooth (my first), part of an unerrupted mastodon tooth, shark teeth, fossil wood, deer tooth, glyptodont scutes, deer antler, and turtle footpad. I will bring the finds for show and tell at the next meeting.

I had dug a relatively small area and planned on returning another day. During the last 1/2 hour, a large group of people canoeing from another fossil club stopped to view my finds. I returned on Wednesday to have another go at the site. Upon my return on Wednesday, I was shocked and disappointed to find my spot had been completely hunted and destroyed. Whoever came from the group had enlarged the area four fold and one man was there when I arrived on Wednesday.

There is supposed to be honor and

respect in this hobby. Let this be a lesson for all of us to respect sites others have found.

Al Govin

Coming Events

18th Annual Gainesville Indian Artifact and Fossil Show

Gainesville, Florida Saturday June 10th, 2006
8:00am-3pm; Location: Holiday Inn—West
7417 Newberry Road, Gainesville, FL (352)
332-7500

Public Admission \$2.00/person, under 12 free

For show information contact: Hugh McKenzie at (407) 647-3074

MINUTES OF MEETING OF FOSSIL CLUB OF LEE COUNTY

A meeting of the membership of the Lee County Paleontological Society was held at the time, date, and place set forth below.

DATE OF MEETING: April 20, 2006

MEETING TIME: 7:00 P.M.

MEETING PLACE: Caloosa Nature Center

Number in attendance: 30-40

Louis Stieffel presiding.

Thank you to Sandy Schwartz for refreshments.

The meeting began with an excellent talk on Florida Shells by Mr. Steve Wilson. Thank you.

May's refreshments: Mary; June's refreshments: Chuck; and July's refreshments: Ian.

Next months speaker Terry Selleri

June will have someone from UF talk, probably

a graduate student named Mr. Hastings.

No FCOLC fossil festival this year.

Had elections: floor was open for nominations, a slate of volunteer officers and directors were elected uncontested by unanimous vote of the membership present. The 2006-2007 officers are:

Louis Steiffel, President; Al Govin, Vice President; Ray Seguien, Treasurer; Chuck Ferber, Secretary; the new board of directors consists of Leslie Steiffel, Sandy Schwartz, and Michael Orchin.

Thanks to John Riley for being VP last year.

Al Govin and Louis Steiffel investigating ways to fulfill commitment to Calusa Nature Center for FCOLC.

\$5,003.94 in Treasury. Fossil auction brought in highest total yet.

Curtis Klug is web master. FCOLC website is www.fcolc.com

Meeting ended with auction of some items, show and tell and raffle.

The club's trip to the Peace River at Brownsville was a good time, despite slightly cool temperatures, but it was good weather for shoveling and screening.

There are two river trips scheduled: February 4, 2006, 10 a.m. at Wauchula and a February 18, 2006 Orange River Trip. If you need a screen, call Al Govin who has some screens for sale.