



Fossil Club of Lee County

May 2008

Message from the president

As your new president, I want to take this opportunity to thank all club members for their vote of confidence. I will do my best to keep our club active, interesting and fiscally strong.

Since joining our club, about three years ago, I have met a lot of nice people, learned a lot about Florida fossils, and had a lot of fun. This is what our club is all about!!

I always look forward to our monthly meetings and will promise to keep them interesting. Our monthly get-togethers provide us with an opportunity to gain new knowledge, exhibit our new and old finds, and a chance to socialize with others who share our common interests.

With regard to our "show and tell", I encourage all members to participate in this segment of our monthly program. Bring in your specimens: new finds or acquisitions, articles from magazines, newspapers, or the internet, or something special or unusual which may be of interest to the club. This provides us with learning opportunities, and helps to keep up interest and enthusiasm. Also, for those who can't make the meetings -- so don't miss out on a lot -- we will try to summarize each month's highlights and publish them in the next newsletter.

Our newsletter editor and publisher is Sandy Schwartz. She does a great job, so let's give her a big round of applause at our next meeting. Also, Cheryl Mitchell, a relatively new member, has volunteered to

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on Thursday May 15th, at 7:00 p.m. at the Calusa Nature Center located at Ortiz and Colonial Blvd.

Officers

Bill Shaver, President (239) 834-0694

Al Govin, Vice President 541-2845

And cell 910-2339

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

Leslie Stieffel, Secretary, 458-9818

Board Members

Louis Stieffel, Director 458-9818

Michael Orchin, 574-6318

Sandy Schwartz, 772-8015

Mike Siciliano 980-1406

Committees

Newsletter: Sandy Schwartz

Speakers:

\$1. Raffel: Mike Siciliano

Auction: Louis Stieffel

Web Master: Curtis Klug

Pit Trip Director : Gunther Lobisch

do the newsletter and this hand-off is planned for July when Cheryl returns to Florida. Sandy will remain as back-up for Cheryl. As a side note, Sand's grandson Jacob has a knack for finding nice specimens on our field trips. We all hope Sandy will find something great on one of our upcoming field trips!

We keep working on our field trips, but as you know, getting access to pits is a hard sell. Nevertheless, we continue to work the problem. We had three trips to pits so far this year and two river trips. If there is enough water, and sufficient interest, I would like to set up a canoe trip on the Peace River in late May or early June.

Mike Siciliano and I have discussed setting up a dive trip. Dave Flynnbaugh (see his article in this newsletter) and Cheryl Mitchell are divers. So is Sandra, her grandson Jacob, Charles O'Connor and perhaps other members who are certified would be interested. **Contact Mike if you want to discuss this further.**

The Peace River, my personal favorite place to hunt, is low now, but that can change quickly with the onset of the rainy season. Entry to the Peace at Wauchula, Gardner, and Brownsville is still possible without a boat. With a bit of effort, and persistence, people are still finding fossils both north and south of the boat ramps. So keep exploring and digging. Good luck!

Gunther Lobisch, who never met a fossil shell he didn't like, has agreed to be our trip leader on "pit" field trips. As most of you know, he has an extensive collection of fossil shells that he found

locally. He has spent a lot of time researching, learning, and identifying his finds. He has been to the Vulcan Mine at Brooksville a

number of times and "hunted" our local pits many time. He is very knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and knows the landscape. Keep up the good work Gunther - you are an asset to our club.

Speaking of assets, Ray Seguin, our Treasurer, is one of our chief assets. He takes good care of our assets and does much more for the club than meets the eye. Don't know what we would do without him. Thanks, Ray.

I also want to recognize Chuck Ferber, our former Secretary. Thank you for your service to the club, we appreciate you. Leslie Stieffel, one of major "doers" is our new Secretary. We know she will do a great job.

Talking about doing a great job brings me to Louis. He truly has done a great job! He has a proven track record and much of what he has accomplished was lightly summarized in our last newsletter. What was not said was the fact the he worked many long hours getting over 100 items read for our annual auction. In addition to the hours he spent planning, and preparing, he donated many of his own specimens. Of course, others donated items for the auction, and we thank them, but Louis made the biggest contributions by far. Thank you Louis for your generosity and tireless efforts to make our auction so successful. Also, Louis is our resident expert on fossil identification. We are fortunate to have Louis as our advocational paleontologist on staff. In summary, we thank you Louis for all you have done for our club.

Al Govin agreed to stay on as Vice President for (in his words) "one more year". Al is a solid citizen and a strong member of our staff. We thank Al for all of his past contributions and appreciate his commitment to serve for another year.

In our last newsletter, we briefly discussed the need for volunteers to bring in refreshments. Thanks to Leslie and Louis for signing up to do May. We need someone for June and would like commitments for some of the future club meetings. Thanks in advance for helping to do your bit for your club.

With regard to our speaker program, we already have speakers slated for May, June and December. I am confident that we will locate other intersecting speakers for the remaining months of 2008. Louis has agreed to assist me in this area, and if anyone else has any suggestions for candidate speakers, please let me know. I would appreciate your input.

I look forward to seeing everyone at our May meeting.

William "Bill" Shaver, President
Fossil Club of Lee County

Refreshments

May -Leslie Stieffel
June—?
July—?

MINUTES OF MEETING OF FOSSIL CLUB OF LEE COUNTY

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

DATE OF MEETING: [April 17, 2008](#)

MEETING TIME: 7:00 P.M.

MEETING PLACE: Calusa Nature Center

Number in attendance: approximately 36

Louis Stieffel presiding.

Thanks go to Sandy Schwartz and Mike Siciliano for bringing the refreshments.

Elections were held: The nominations were: 1) Bill Shaver for president; 2) Al Govin for vice president; 3) Ray Seguin for treasurer; and 4) Leslie Stieffel for secretary. The nominations were closed. Alice Thorn moved that the nominees be elected. Donna seconded. Motion was carried by unanimous vote for all candidates.

Show and tell.

Trip to Quality Pit Sunday [April 20th](#).

Thanks go to Dr. Greg Herbert of the University of South Florida for his excellent talk on "Attack of the Killer Murex." Thank you for taking your time and traveling to Fort Myers from Tampa to talk to us.

Raffle and auction.

Secretary Chuck Ferber

FOSSIL AND SHARK TOOTH HUNTING

VENICE BEACH

By Dave Flinchbaugh

On April 20th, six of us arrived at the public boat dock off Venice Avenue, (the old railroad station), to depart on the Aristocat with Captain Jamie Bostwich.

This was new for me, and I really was researching this low cost charter. \$35.00 for 2 dives, your tanks, or rental is available.

Terry at Depth Finder Dive Center in Port Charlotte is the booking agent. Payments are in cash. Trips are scheduled every Tuesday and Thursday, plus Saturday and Sunday. They will do two trips a day if they have the required six divers per trip.

On our first dive we found one perfect meg, which measured five inches. The second dive resulted in five nice megs from 3" to 4".

I was asked to go in the afternoon for two more dives, which I readily agreed to do. There were only four divers on the trip, including the captain. The first dive was a dud, no megs, but there were plenty of smaller teeth. The second dive produced three megs in the 3" - 4" Category.

The Aristocat is a great boat with twin Honda 250's - well equipped. This is a no frills boat - you do all your own preparation. There is a cooler chest with ice and water. Everything else is bare bones. The Captain is licensed and insured.

If you need someone to hold your hand on each dive, this boat is not for you.

Serious diving, excellent people; I'd

recommend them to anyone. If you are interested, call Terry of Depth Finders at [941-766-7565](tel:941-766-7565).

Find suggests humans in Europe 1.3 million years ago

From News-Press March 27, 2008

A small piece of jawbone unearthed in a cave in Spain is the oldest known fossil of a human ancestor in Europe and suggests that people lived on the continent much earlier



than previously believed, scientists say.

The researchers said the fossil found last year at Atapuerca in northern Spain, along with stone tools and animal bones, is up to 1.3 million years old. That would be 500,000 years older than remains from a 1997 find that prompted the naming of a new species: Homo antecessor, or Pioneer Man, possibly a

common ancestor to Neanderthals and modern humans.

The new find appears to be the same species, researchers said. A team co-led by Eudald Carbonell, director of the Catalan Institute of Human Paleo-Ecology and Social Evolution, reported their find in today's issue of the scientific journal Nature.

The timing of the earliest occupation of Europe by humans that emerged from Africa has been controversial for many years.

Some archeologists believe the process was a stop-and-go one in which species of hominins—a group that includes the extinct relatives of modern humans—emerged and died out quickly only to be replaced by others, making for a very slow spread across the continent, Carbonell said in an interview.

Until now the oldest hominin fossils found in Europe were the Homo antecessor ones, also found at Atapuerca, but at a separate digging site, and a skull from Ceprano in Italy. Carbonell's team has tentatively classified the new fossil as representing an earlier example of Homo antecessor. And, critically, the team says the new one also bears similarities to much older fossils dug up since 1983 in the Caucasus at a place called Dmanisi, in the former Soviet republic of Georgia. These were dated as being up

at least 1.3 million years ago. to 1.8 million years old.

"This leads us to a very important, very interesting conclusion," Carbonell said. It is this: that hominins which emerged from Africa and settled in the Caucasus eventually evolved into Homo antecessor, and that the latter populated Europe not 800,000 years ago but "This discovery of a 1.3 million-year-old fossil shows the process was accelerated and continuous; that the occupation of Europe happened very early and much faster than we had thought," Carbonell said.

Chris Stringer, a leading researcher in human origins at the Natural History Museum in London and not involved in the project, said Carbonell's team had done solid dating work to estimate the antiquity of the new Atapuerca fossil by employing three separate techniques.

Freak! Malaysian Fisherman Reels in Shark with 'Webbed Feet'

Penang, Malaysia (Mar. 14, 2007) Has anyone ever seen a baby shark with webbed feet? A worker of the Malaysian Fisheries Development Board in Penang, made this unusual find when she was given the 1.7 kg fish by a fisherman at the jetty recently.



Mary Looi, 48 said she only realized the shark was different when she wanted to cook tomyam fish for lunch for her family. It was only when I was about to cut the shark the day after I received it that I found two webbed feet sticking out from the lower part of the body. "The shark is one metre long," she said. Looi said she dared not cook the fish after consulting her husband Gooi Man Kaw, 57, who told her that according to Chinese belief, eating fish with unusual features could bring disaster or ill luck. The fish was returned to the fisherman who threw it back into the sea. Prof Dr. Zulfigar Yasin of Universiti Sains Muka head of marine research in

The station said this is the first time he had heard of fish with legs found in the Malaysian waters. "There is the possibility that the fish could have swum from other waters into Malaysian waters.

"As far as I am concerned, fish species with legs or bony fins can only be discovered the waters of North Sulawesi in Indonesia or South Africa," he said.

Thank you to the people who clip and give me fossil related news articles for the news letter. It makes the news letter more interesting for everyone.

Remember to visit our web site at
www.FCOLC.com

Our web site has past newsletters, pictures, links to water levels and other interesting stuff.



Alligator Skull

Picture by Brian Seguin

The modern alligator as we know it today, has remain unchanged for millions of years. To gain an insight as to the nature of this beast, we can look at what we know from a living alligator. In North America, the alligator is the largest living reptile. Unlike crocodiles that have a narrow jaw and 4th position upper jaw tooth that hangs over the lower jaw when closed, alligators have a broader skull and their 4th upper tooth fits into a socket in the lower jaw, and is concealed when the jaw is shut. Alligators inhabit fresh and brackish marshes, ponds, lakes, rivers, swamps, bayous, and large spring runs. Their diet mainly consists of fish, birds, small mammal, turtles, snakes, frogs and invertebrates. After emerging from hibernation in April, they mate from that time up until May. The female builds her nest in June. Hatchlings will remain with the mother for as long as 3 years from birth.

The largest known prehistoric American Alligator skull mounted in matrix was found in a shell pit in Charlotte County, Florida. It was from the Pleistocene Period (Irvingtonian) and is 1.7 to 1 millions years old. The skull is 30.5 inches in length, and has been examined by staff at the Florida Museum and is believed to be the largest and most complete fossil skull ever found of *Alligator mississippiensis*. An original associated anterior portion of the lower jaw is also present but if the lower was complete, the skull is estimated to have been approximately 36 inches! The alligator this specimen came from would have approached 20 feet in length, surpassing the largest modern American alligator ever discovered. This skull is the only known prehistoric fossil *A. mississippiensis* skull of this size and degree of completeness known to science. See it at www.paleodirect.com/mv27-004.htm