



# **FOSSIL CLUB OF LEE COUNTY**

**MAY 2013**

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## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

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Hello all!!

I am honored to be re-elected as president of the Fossil Club of Lee County. Thank you for your confidence in me. I promise to do my best to continue the strong traditions of the club, and help guide it forward.

The club belongs to all of the members. It is not mine. It is not any of the officers or board members. Rather, it is all of us members who are the club. So, to keep it functioning smoothly, all of us must help. There are various committees and tasks that need to be staffed with volunteer members. Please consider joining one of these committees and helping out. By doing so, you make the club stronger, but, you will also enjoy it more. In the coming months, as the new executive committee meets and defines the wants and needs of the club, I will be asking for your help. This fossil club is now 20 years old. It has experienced many changes, from a name change to a growth phase, incorporation, a scholarship fund, and many, many, good members. The goals and objectives are still to promote the science of paleontology and I think we do a pretty good job of it, and try to have fun doing it.

I extend a grateful thanks to Bill Shaver, for his leadership as president the last five years.

Due to an unfortunate illness he is stepping down, but not before making his mark on our fossil world. Thank you so much, Bill, for all of your efforts, and also your kindness you have shown to each member. We value your knowledge and judgments and hope to avail ourselves of that in the future. Again, thank you.

Many of our snowbird visitors are packing up and heading back north. We should have smaller meetings during the summer, but no less enthusiasm. The rivers are still being hunted, but with this early rainy season, I don't know how long that will be. Go hunt while you can! And then bring your finds in for show-n-tell. This way everyone gets to learn just a little bit more!

I have a few ideas that have been brewing, which I will bring up at our first board meeting. Read your newsletter to hear of any new developments. Or not! Maybe my ideas are only interesting to ME. But, if any member has an idea, please pass it on to me, or the board. After all, it's YOUR club.

Louis Stieffel

President, F.C.O.L.C.

### **Next Meeting**

FCOLC next meeting is on Thursday, May 16th, 2013  
in the Iona House @ Calusa Nature Center  
Meeting starts at 7 PM.

**OFFICERS**

Louis Stieffel, President, 239-458-9818  
cape187@earthlink.net  
Michael Siciliano, Vice President, 239-980-1406  
Pam Plummer, Treasurer, 239-246-5993  
Kathy Pawlowski, Secretary, 239-267-6130

**DIRECTORS**

Jack Boyce, 239-281-2416  
Joshua Frank, 239-248-5094  
Dean Hart, 941-979-8217  
Gunther Lobish, 941-268-7506  
Charles O'Connor, 239-246-5526  
Ray Seguin, 239-939-1921  
Bill Shaver, 239-834-0694

**COMMITTEES**

Cherie Neat, Newsletter Developer  
Jack Boyce, Newsletter Publisher  
Curt Klug, Web Master  
Bill Shaver, Speakers  
Louis Stieffel, Auctioneer  
Kathy Pawlowski, Club Merchandise  
Pam Plummer, Club Badges  
Pam Plummer, Membership  
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

**SCHEDULE OF EVENTS AND SPEAKERS**

May 16th FCOLC Monthly Meeting at Iona House Calusa Nature Center  
May 16th Speaker: Charles O'Connor, Science Chair, Lexington Middle School, FMY  
May 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> Florida Paleontological Society's Spring Meeting in Bradenton and Field Trip to SMR Aggregates Seashell Quarry. Seashells and fossils are 2-3 mya in age.  
June 1<sup>st</sup> Dean Hart leads a Peace River Fossil Hunting trip river depth permitting. Meet at Crews Park, Wauchula boat ramp at 9am.  
June 20th FCOLC Monthly Meeting @ Zion Lutheran Church, 7401 Winkler Road, Fort Myers, Fl 33919  
June 20th No Speaker; Members Exhibits/Show & Tell/Buy/Sell/Swap Meet  
July 18th FCOLC Monthly Meeting @ Zion Lutheran Church, 7401 Winkler Road, Fort Myers, Fl 33919  
July 18th Speaker – TBD

**Minutes of April meeting**

**THE FOSSIL CLUB OF LEE COUNTY**

Date: April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013 Place: Iona House @ Calusa Nature Center

Presided by: Mike Siciliano, Vice-President

50 members, including 5 new members, were in attendance tonight.

We would like to welcome back Bill Shaver, retiring FCOLC President. Bill informed us that he will be having surgery on May 6th. We all wish him well and thanked Bill for his significant and long-term contributions to FCOLC club and members.

Mike announced that we are holding annual FCOLC elections tonight in accordance with club bylaws. There will be an election for a new president to replace Bill as all other officers will be staying in their positions.

Welcome and recognition to all new members.

Steve Koski from the University of Miami is our speaker tonight, he is taking about warm mineral springs called Little Salt Springs (LSS) located in North Port, Florida.

Louis Steiffel has been elected as the new president of the Lee County Fossil Club. Mike Siciliano is staying on as Vice President, Pam Plummer is staying on as Treasurer, and Kathy Pawlowski is staying on as Secretary.

Show and tell: Al Govin, Jack Boyce, Louis Steiffel, Mike Siciliano, Marc Cantos, Ron Seavey, Coby Pawlowski, Gunther Lobish.

**Speaker**

FCOLC Director Charles O'Connor. Charles is a Golden Apple teaching award winner who frequently lectures on fossils, and who worked in the Vertebrate Paleontology Lab at the Florida Museum of Natural History.

Learn about the natural history of sharks, human and shark interactions, and fossilized teeth in this lively presentation, featuring a special focus on Megalodon (Carcharocles), a super-predator that reached 70 feet, with a tooth length that surpassed 7 inches.

**Peace River fossil hunting trip – Saturday, June 1<sup>st</sup> 2013**

FCOLC director Dean Hart will lead a Peace River Fossil Hunting "walk-in" trip given that the wet season holds off and the water depth is reasonable. Meet at Crews Park, Wauchula boat ramp at 9am on June 1st. If you are interested, email Dean at [nyboss@comcast.net](mailto:nyboss@comcast.net) or 941-979-8217 for additional details.

# Websites & Locations of Interest

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

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/](http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/)

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

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

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

[www.MUSEUMofHISTORY.org](http://www.MUSEUMofHISTORY.org)

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

[www.shellmuseum.org](http://www.shellmuseum.org)

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

[www.hardeecounty.net/crackertrailmuseum/about.html](http://www.hardeecounty.net/crackertrailmuseum/about.html)

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.org](http://www.calusanature.org)

Imaginarium 2000 Cranford Ave, Fort Myers

[www.i-sci.org](http://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](http://www.canoeoutpost.com/peace/showpage.asp?page=waterlevel)

## Florida Fossil Clubs

Southwest Florida Fossil Club

[www.southwestfloridafossilclub.com](http://www.southwestfloridafossilclub.com)

Tampa Bay Fossil Club

[www.tampabayfossilclub.com](http://www.tampabayfossilclub.com)

Orlando Fossil Club

[www.floridafossilhunters.com](http://www.floridafossilhunters.com)

The Fossil Forum

[www.thefossilforum.com/index.php](http://www.thefossilforum.com/index.php)

Fossil Treasures of Florida

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

Florida Paleontological Society

<http://floridapaleosociety.com/>

## 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](http://www.flheritage.com/news/faq.cfm)*

## **REFRESHMENTS**

We are pleased that Jack Boyce and Bobby Joe Sherrill volunteered to take care of refreshments for the April 2013 meeting. The pulled pork sliders were a big hit. Jack & Bobby Joe have volunteered in the recent past and we appreciate the way you support your club.

Providing monthly refreshments are an easy way to 'give-back' to FCOLC. We always appreciate a new volunteer for future meetings. A signup sheet is available at FCOLC monthly meetings and everyone is encouraged to take a turn at doing the refreshments.

## **Another message from the President**

I wanted to do a short recap on ideas we discussed at the board of directors meeting. (Yes, we are now an official board of directors, since incorporation!)

The biggest change we have in mind affects everyone in the club, so even though it got 100% approval from the board, it needs to be presented to the membership, at this meeting, to be voted on. It is dealing with a change of venue for our meetings. Bill located a great place for us to meet during season when our attendance increased so much. It is the Zion Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall on Winkler Avenue. This place has worked out so well we feel the need to make it a regular location, and after 20 years, move away from the Calusa Nature Center. Some of the advantages are better parking, a kitchen area we can use if needed, an audio and video system, well lighted, and, very important, a place for us to store our fossil store products. It is also able to accommodate a larger crowd than the Iona House. Our out of pocket cost will be exactly the same as we now spend on a yearly basis. The difference in location, though, means a different route for most people, but I don't believe that's a deal killer. This topic will be on the table for discussion and vote.

We formed a fossil show committee, of me, Mike Siciliano, Joshua Frank, and Coby Pawlowiski. We may ask for others if the need arises. (Anyone wanting to join in is welcome). Our intent is to research a possible move to a different location. Also, we plan on sending out dealer inquiries, so as to better understand the needs of the fossil dealers and sign up as many as possible. Any ideas from members are appreciated as well.

Much discussion was spent on the fiscal aspects of the club. Pam Plummer, our treasurer, has spent considerable time working out the logistics of the incorporation filings and also our defunct non-profit status, as well as club taxes. After speaking with a CPA and also an attorney, new bi-laws have been drawn up for the club. It was suggested that these bi-laws get published on our web site, [www.fcolc.com](http://www.fcolc.com) so every member can have easy access. Much of the old bi-laws were not appropriate for the corporation, and those parts deemed just rules and regulations of the club will be redone in a separate informational paper, available to all club members.

An idea I have had for a while is a new member packet. This idea was discussed by the board and deemed as something to pursue. Therefore, I will be devising this packet of information, given to new members, to help them get a jumpstart on the intricacies of what we do. We all had to learn this sometime, and maybe this can be a better way. I am open to ANY suggestions from members as to content of this information packet.

We also plan on composing and distributing a member survey. Your thoughts are important to the continued well being and operation of the fossil club and this may be a way to express those thoughts and ideas. This club, now 20 years old!, is a reflection of the members, so your input is needed and valuable.

Kathy Pawlowski has agreed to head up merchandise, as well as take on the duties of club Secretary. Thank you Kathy! She plans on possibly adding a new to-be-designed t-shirt to the inventory. Ideas are being accepted on what you would want to wear.

Jack Boyce has taken on the newsletter, and is very serious about having a great one. Membership will be initially through Pam Plummer, but names will get distributed to Jack Boyce.

The refreshment committee has been disbanded and I will ask for volunteers at the meetings. If there is no one to do it, then we will not have refreshments that month. It's ALL of our club, so please take part in helping. We get about 50 to almost 100 members at a meeting. If everyone took a refreshment turn, your turn would be about every 4-6 years!!

Curtis Klug will remain as our great web master! He has done an outstanding job over the years, and is greatly appreciated.

We discussed a youth club. This has been an idea of Coby Pawlowski for a while. However, since we have only a couple of youngsters at present this idea is tabled for now.

We have possibly the best fossil library of any fossil club in the state, thanks to Robin Brown's literary donation, added to the literature already in the club. This resource has been underutilized. We tossed around some ideas about it, but what is needed is a member to act as the librarian. All the books are presently curated and ready to be lent out, but we need someone to keep it organized and available to members. If we decide to move our meeting venue, an idea is to get a rolling bookcase, stored in the back room, to bring into the meetings for accessibility. If ANY member has an interest in helping the club with this task, PLEASE let me know. I can see instances of future donations and acquisitions to the library so as to keep it viable moving forward, but we need a librarian to handle this. It's not a big time consuming project, so please consider this.

One of the biggest needs, and wants, of the fossil club is TRIPS! Everyone wants trips! We want to go fossil hunting, and joined a club to do so, right? But—it is very difficult to arrange trips for a group. We have, in the past, had several members volunteer to do different type of trips, like land sites, rivers, diving, etc. but at present we have no trips scheduled. I will try to take on this task and see what I can do to get us some trips. I can only promise to try. The rainy season is early, this year, so the rivers are rising extremely fast. River trips are difficult to schedule right now, as we don't know what water levels will be like on the trip date. Dean Hart has volunteered to lead a Peace River trip on June 1<sup>st</sup> IF the wet season holds off a few more weeks. Thank You, Dean! I plan on seeking out some of our contacts and trying to get into mines and/or quarries. This, however, is a difficult task, so I can't make promises at this time. ANY member who wants to join me in this task of arranging trips is more than welcome. ANY member who has a valid idea of a fossil trip is welcome to share that with me. We all want to fossil hunt, but the hunting locations are scarcer than the fossils! Wish me luck.

One suggestion brought up for trips is to try more non-fossil hunting trips. Possibly trips to places like natural history museums, warm mineral springs, Solomon's Castle, Gainesville where the state fossil collection resides, possibly volunteering at dig sites conducted by the state paleontologists, etc. Again, ideas are welcome.

Well, I've covered a large part of this new administration's first board meeting. We discussed a few other things, but I have included the majority here. I believe in openness, and overall participation in the club. The Fossil Club of Lee County belongs to EACH member and by working, and playing, together we will keep it strong and fun for another 20 years!

Louis Stieffel

President, F.C.O.L.C.

## Kids Spring Break 2013 – Calusa Nature Center

During spring break, the campers at Calusa discovered just how wild paleontology can be. They got a close look at saber tooth cats being excavated from the LaBrea tar pits and how bone fossilizes into rock. The entire week was filled with exciting documentaries and hands on activities. After studying the prehistoric creatures of Florida, our campers went out to practice what they had learned; on a dig site on the grounds of the Calusa Nature Center and Planetarium. Photos taken during the excavation show the young paleontologist experiencing the joy of digging up history first hand.

### **Digging and measuring:**



**Finding: Fossils used in this dig were donated by Bill Shaver**



Victoria Menszak, Education Coordinator for Calusa Nature Center submitted this article and photos.

## Archaeological treasures make the Peace River popular

The Peace River Paddling Trail stretches 70 miles along the state's interior, starting in Bartow and ending in Arcadia. It's one of the most popular canoe routes in the state, with tens of thousands of people paddling the river each year. Marked and managed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the paddling trail offers great fishing, riverside camping, late summer float trips, and even hunting for archaeological treasures such as Megalodon and Mastodon teeth — some as big as a human's hand.

Becky Bragg, owner of Canoe Outpost-Peace River in Arcadia, said her company alone takes out between 30,000 and 50,000 people each year.

“That's the big thing — looking for the giant shark's teeth,” Bragg said. “They're hard to find, but they're there. People find lots of little ones, and there are all kinds of bones from prehistoric life. We call it black gold.” Late spring is prime fossil hunting time, mostly because of the lowered water levels associated with the dry season. This time of year, paddlers often pull their canoes up on the bank, walk out into the river, sit and sift mud, sticks and, they hope, ancient bones with bare hands.



**Ian Van Donkelaar, 25, a graduate student in paleontology at the University of Wisconsin (Milwaukee), looks for fossils in the Peace River while on an excursion last month out of Canoe Outpost near Arcadia. / Terry Allen Williams/The News-Press**

Bragg said families come from across the country and even abroad year after year to see what treasures the river has uncovered. She said some even monitor the rainy season, hoping from afar that heavy rains will stir up that perfect shark tooth for the next year's fossil season. Paddlers who own their own canoe or kayak can use two cars, one at the start point and one at the takeout, or employ outfitters like Bragg, who shuttle paddlers to various entry points on the river.

Shallow waters may require an Everglades portage, which is basically getting out of your canoe and slogging through the muck until you find deeper waters. Summer rains, which typically start in June, will raise river levels and current flow, offering a different paddling experience than the dry spring months. Bragg said the rainy season is the time when most paddlers are content to just float along the river and soak in the sun. “Once the river starts coming up in the summer, when we have some nice flow to it, everybody ties together and just lays back and floats coming down the river,” Bragg said.

Late fall through spring is prime camping season. Much of the land along the lower Peace River is private, although some outfitters own campsites along the route. The Bartow section of the Peace River Paddling Trail is more rugged, Bragg said. “It's beautiful but it's total wilderness,” she said. “You're on your own and you take everything in the canoe with you and you work your way down the river.”

Article written by Chad Gillis for Fort Myers News-Press edition dated May 2, 2013

<http://www.news-press.com/article/20130502/ENT13/305020007/Archaeological-treasures-make-Peace-River-popular-paddlers>