



Fossil Club of Lee County

June 2007

Message from the president

Hello All!!

Yes, it's that time again!! Time for another meeting of the Fossil Club of Lee County. Lots of things have been taking place since our last meeting. For one--the rains have started!! I have been saying for two months now how low the Peace River is and for you guys to hunt it!! Well, soon it may be too late. We have already seen a small rise and if these rains continue, like they should this time of year, the hunting may have to wait until next year, at least in the Peace river and adjoining creeks. One of the accessible, popular pits we have been able to hunt, for a long time, has been closed to us. This is the Handi-Phil pit in Englewood, Fl. As of this date, it is closed, and we will let you guys know if that changes. A private pit that I have hunted for the last couple of years has also been dug out and is in it's last gasp!! I guess I will regroup and try to catch up on fossil prep work while trying to find other places to hunt!! It's like losing a limb--it hurts and you miss it, but you can still function and life goes on!! This state is and has been under construction for so long now, it seems like it always has been. However, with the abrupt downturn of the building industry, the need for fill dirt and rocks and shells has drastically decreased and new pits are not being started. I always said that it is easier to find the fossils than a place to hunt!! By the way, Sandy Schwartz, our newsletter editor, has discovered diving at Venice Beach!! Ask her about her experiences, especially with the wicked, striped, attack fish!!

By the time of our meeting, the grand opening of the exhibit "Megalodon--the greatest shark

June Meeting

Our June meeting will be held on Thursday, June 21st at 7:00 p.m. at the Calusa Nature Center located at Ortiz and Colonial Blvd. Our speaker will be Jennifer Silko. She will talk about the extinction period between the Pliocene and the Pliestocene eras.

that lived" at the museum of Natural History in Gainesville, Fl., will be history. The exhibit will continue, but our direct involvement will not. Our club will be represented at the museum on opening day by at least a half dozen or more members. We will showcase the club and displays and participate in the opening activities. I wish everyone could be there, but not all of us can make it. I will also be having a meeting with the other clubs about the proposed web based fossil ID project. I will report at the meeting about this.

Our speaker this month will be Jennifer Silko. She will talk about the extinction period between the Pliocene and the Pliestocene eras. She has done a lot of research using large fossil corals from that time period to learn weather events. This should be an interesting talk. Bring show and tell items, possibly geared toward the Pliocene invertebrates. Jenn will also be bringing some of her students along to learn more about South Florida fossils, so share your knowledge freely with these guys. Next month's speaker will be Andreas Kerner, a great fossil dealer and friend of the club who has always given us a spirited, interesting talk!!

I will pick up more butvar, while in Gainesville, so we should have enough for the club's use for a while. We sell this to you guys for our cost, so use this great product to protect your vertebrate fossils!!

This time of year, school's out, the weather heats up, the rains start, and we just want to stay inside and be cool or sit in a lounge chair at the beach, preferably on vacation!! However, if you find the energy, find the time and, most importantly, find the place to go fossil hunt, let us know!!! Write up a short article for the newsletter. Share your fun and excitement and knowledge. We are all in this together, so share!!!

Al, thanks for running the meeting last month, when I was on vacation. (The Mayan Riviera is a very nice place this time of the year!) I hope you guys didn't give him too hard of a time!!

See you at Gainesville and then at the meeting!!

Louis, President, Fossil Club of Lee County

Officers

Louis Stieffel, President (239) 458-9818

or e-mail: Cape 187@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

Trip Director: Alice Thorne

Committees

Newsletter: Sandy Schwartz

Speakers: Louis Stieffel

\$1. raffle: Mike Siciliano

Auction: Louis Stieffel

Web Master: Curtis Klug

Ancient whale skeleton found in Italian city

ROME-Italian researchers have excavated the skeleton of a 4 million-year-old whale in the Tuscan countryside, a discovery that could help reconstruct the prehistoric environment of the sea that once covered the region, officials said Tuesday.

The 33-foot skeleton, dating to the Pliocene epoch, was found in almost perfect order, with only the jaw bones out of place, said paleontologists with the Museum of Natural History in Florence.

Nearly all of Italy was once under water, and it is not unusual to find cetacean fossils in Tuscany.

But the whale skeleton's discover, about 6 miles east of the Mediterranean, was extraordinary because it was almost complete, and a wealth of organisms were found around it, officials said.

"The finding is spectacular," said Elisabetta Cioppi, the head of the museum's paleontology department and coordinator of the excavation.

"The variety of the sea organisms associated with the whale is extraordinary. It enables us to make a thorough reconstruction of the environment," she told The Associated Press in a telephone interview.

Greetings from Eric Jacobs in the Australian Outback

Gday from down under mates!!!! I have finally found an internet machine.... after just a couple of thousand kilometers of running around the bush. It took just over a week to pick up a four wheeler that will suffice for crossing the country through the center east to west. The preference is the Toyota "troopie" but they are few and far between in the used department, so the Nissan Patrol will have to do despite its cramped feeling with 60 extra liters of water and 60 of fuel, camp gear, prospecting gear and 3-4 weeks of food. I have made my way North from Perth through Paynes Find, Meekatharra, Newman, Marble Bar and am in Port Headland to get more cash... Cost thus far about 15,000.00 Australian-The Metal detector cost

almost a thousand U.S dollars less in the U.S. and it is made here in Australia...the manufacturer had no reasonable excuse when I spoke with him.

Beware, Western Australia is outrageously expensive!!!! At least double the cost of anything in the states and fuel is between 5 & 6 dollars a gallon depending on where you get it. All the money stuff aside, I have only been out with my detector a few hours so far and just picked up detailed maps at the mining office today to let me know where gold has been mined in the past. I have my GPS operational now and I am ready to go out. I will most likely be out in the bush for three to four weeks. It is prime season as the weather is cooling down and the professional nugget hunters are flying in from around the world. If you have any questions send them along and I will try to answer them. Wish me luck!!!!!!!

Eric

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: May 17, 2007

MEETING TIME: 7:00 P.M.

MEETING PLACE: Calusa Nature Center

Number in attendance: approximately 47

Al Govin presiding.

Thank you to Bill Shaver (NOT Bill Campbell, whoever he is!) for bringing refreshments for our May meeting. Thank you to V.P. Al Govin for providing the following minutes of the May meeting.

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m. We discussed the shark exhibit at Gainesville

Johnson and Pam Plummer are the only committed volunteers. It was mentioned that trip wasn't going to be coordinated, everyone would be on their own. Rush Lake motel was where we stayed last year and might be a good place to stay again. Al Govin stated he had room for two passengers but he and Louis were planning on leaving Friday and would not return until Sunday. Alice spoke about her upcoming trips and asked for feedback on her survey requests. We discussed how important it is to hunt the river now while the water levels were low and Al told how Louis and he just walked upriver and hunted with positive results. Ray gave a treasurer's report with balance of approximately \$5800.00. We did show and tell with some very fine fossils shown by various members including Rick, Donna and Gunther. Asked for refreshment volunteer for July and Rick replied that he would do it. The dollar raffle was held and then we took a break.

After the break Len Canterbury spoke, with slides, about various fossil and dinosaur finds out west while hunting with Bill Palmer for the Charleston Museum. At 9:15 the meeting adjourned.

Secretary

Refreshments

June - Rick Piper

July

August

My first fossil hunting dive

After talking about taking a meg tooth hunt/dive out of Venice, Mike Siciliano, his friend Dave, Jacob Rosenkranz (my grandson) and I finally did it. It was about 1 mile off shore from Venice in about 30 feet of water.

We went with Florida West Scuba who take 12 passengers maximum and are booked weekends until the end of summer. It was a two tank dive, very relaxed and pleasant. On the first dive, I noticed my grandson putting stuff in his bag non stop. Although I was only 3 feet from him, I did not see anything much. We were surrounded by some very territorial fish that attacked us, biting our fingers, ears and hair. Luckily they were only 3 inches long and had no teeth so it was like being attacked by an anole. Once you recovered from the shock, it was funny. I turned over a pile of shells, it was a sea urchin that had small shells and pebbles stuck all over it. I found ribs and rocks and 4 tiny teeth. When we got aboard again and changed tanks, I found that only 2 of us had little to show. Many small megs from 1-3 inches were found, many large shards from bigger teeth were also found, as well as small teeth of every variety and people were happy to share their findings. We moved to another location for our next dive. Apparently the first location was the best but there were some great finds on the second also. One man found a 5 inch meg, verified with a ruler. It was slender and really beautiful, only one tiny chip on the serrated edge. Another man hunts every day and sells his stuff on e-bay. He had a 1 gallon plastic bag at the end of the day, full of great finds. Altogether I did find 8 teeth, 4 were from the deck of the boat that other people dropped

and didn't care enough about to bend over and pick them up. I concluded that with the distortion of the water and a need for reading glasses anyway, that I just couldn't see clearly enough and was passing over a lot of stuff. Since then I have purchased a set of magnification lenses to place inside my mask. I am all ready to do it again, it was the most enjoyable dive I have taken, even without finding anything. Unfortunately all dives are sold out until early in July. When we got out, there was a restaurant connected to the dive shop and we ate lunch there, it was a truly great day.

Sandy Schwartz

Volunteer Hours

Our club goal is to provide volunteer hours to the **Calusa Nature Center** in exchange for our free meeting room each month. This is voluntary but we hope all those who are able will participate. Please call **Laurel La Croix at 275-3435** to volunteer. Laurel is there Monday to Friday from 9:00—5:00. There are no special events planned at this time but there are always mailings, front desk work and help needed in the butterfly garden as well as other outdoor things to do. Please report the number of hours and date worked to me at; Cameraqueen @earthlink.net or (239)772-8015
Sandy