



FOSSIL CLUB OF LEE COUNTY

JUNE 2013



Bill Shaver (1933-2013)



Dear Members and Friends,
“Members and Friends” This is how Bill started his farewell President’s Message in the April FCOLC newsletter. He briefly mentioned the health problems that were sapping his strength, and then he took the remainder of his message to thank the key leaders, friends, and members who had helped Bill make this fossil club vital and robust to kids, scholarship recipients, and FCOLC members. Bill closed his message with “I will miss everyone. Best Regards as always, Bill” It’s a good idea to go back and re-read his message in your April 2013 Newsletter.

Bill Shaver died on Friday afternoon. There were many highs and lows in the last couple of months. On Monday Bill chose to stop the operations, the Chemo, the drugs and enter the Shell Point Hospice unit. There could only be one ending and he was in pain. In some sense, this was a blessing.

Bill was my best friend. Maybe we hit it off so well because we spent growing up time on rural farms in the Northeast, or because we both had a military background, or because we both invested heavily of time and resource in family, but mostly because Bill made me want to be a better person. For the last 3 years, Bill and I met at 6:30 am and drove to the Peace River for Fossil hunting 2 or 3 times a week. We talked all the way there and all the way back about fossil hunting, memories of childhood and the military, politics and everything under the sun. Bill was a truly decent person. I rarely saw him angry. I never heard him belittle anyone. He saw the good in people and avoided discussing those who did not have all that much good in them.

I recognized Bill as a really good person.

I met Bill in the Peace River in the fall of 2009. He was walking down stream looking for fossils and told me about FCOLC. I joined up and by the summer of 2010 we were a fossil hunting tag team. Bill shared his knowledge, experience and best fossil locations with me. Once we moved to a new area and on our 1st day digging, Bill stated that he could “feel a Mastodon Tooth close by this location”. We dug in this location for 6 or 7 weeks running and one day I was digging deep about 12 feet from the hole where Bill was finding horse teeth, sand tigers, and lemons. Up came my shovel full of gravel and in the center was a perfect beautiful Mastodon tooth with roots. I turned to Bill and said with sophomoric humor “I hope there is another Mastodon tooth in this location for you”. Bill was instantly as happy as I was that I had come up with this fantastic find. There is a photo and write-up in the April 2012 FCOLC Newsletter.

I tell the story of finding this Mastodon tooth frequently. Some think the story is about hunting techniques or the Mastodon tooth, but it is not. This story is about Bill. He taught me most of what I know about fossil hunting, took me to a spot where he thought we could make a fantastic find AND was still seeking his first perfect Mastodon tooth. Bill was truly pleased that I had found the Mastodon tooth and rejoiced in my joy. I do not know many (any) fossil hunters, including myself who could see another make such a great find and not have even a twinge of envy. Bill was a special person. He was also my friend and I will miss him greatly.

Jack Boyce

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello everyone!

It's important that everyone reads this month's newsletter, as we have a meeting venue change, and I don't want anyone going to the wrong place! After some spirited discussion at last month's general meeting, the club voted, almost unanimously to **change our meeting location from the Calusa Nature Center to the Zion Lutheran Church Fellowship hall.** This is the same place we meeting during season when we had too many members for the Iona House. Since most of the seasonal residents (snowbirds) already meet there for the meetings when they are in town, it is no different for them. However for us year round folks, we must remember to go there for every meeting now. **Address is 7401 Winkler Road, 33919,** for you GPS using members.

I was asked by a seasonal resident why I waited for them to go up north before voting on a meeting change, and bi-law revision. Let me answer by saying that it was my first month of taking office as president, and the bi-laws were revised by the lawyer we retained to help us deal with the club incorporation and non-profit status. No attempt was made to exclude any members. It was a timing thing, that's all. And, like I stated above, the change of venue will hardly affect the seasonal residents.

Our club library will soon be up and running. David Sheehey has agreed to take over as librarian. All of the books, as well as all the rest of the club things, are now in a cabinet at the fellowship hall. The plan is to acquire a rolling bookcase and bring it out for each meeting to be accessible for the members. So, look for this to be a regular feature of the monthly meetings in the coming months.

I have composed a member survey. Some survey forms were passed out at May's meeting and many were returned before leaving. I hope to get these out to everyone who is a current member. They will be sent out electronically, and can be filled out and returned the same way. Keep a look out for them, so you don't accidentally delete this survey. And please give it a little thought and fill out all the questions. Thank you. From these questionnaires I hope to be able to ascertain what the majority of the club members are looking to learn from the club.

We are working on the fossil show. I will report any progress at this upcoming meeting. The show committee of Mike Siciliano, Joshua Frank, Coby Pawlowski and I are working on it and we hope to have some positive information about the show real soon.

Fossil hunting trips are very scarce in the summertime. The river is up and we have no land sites available. Work is being done on this though, as we all want to go on a fossil hunting trip. I hope to report on availability of new trips soon.

Pam Plummer, our trusted treasurer, is working diligently with the IRS, and an attorney, and an accountant, to make sure our financial books are in order. The club has incorporated and is filing for non-profit status and this complicates the book keeping. Pam is on top of it, though, and we will report any substantial financial changes and issues.

We are working on many different aspects of the club, and should be able to update you on current topics as we move along.

I hope to see you all this month at the meeting, which is a show and tell and sell and trade!! It will be fun!!

Louis Stieffel

President, FCOLC

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COMMITTEES

Jack Boyce, Newsletter Publisher, Photographer & Peace River Trips
Curt Klug, Web Master
Cherie Neat, Newsletter Developer
Coby Pawlowski, Youth Activities Director
Kathy Pawlowski, Merchandise
Pam Plummer, Badges, Membership
Gunther Lobish, Pit Trips, Invertebrate Education
David Sheehey, Librarian
Michael Siciliano, Raffle and Dive Trips
Louis Stieffel, Auctioneer, Vertebrate Education, Speakers
Louis Stieffel, Joshua Frank, Coby Pawlowski, Mike Siciliano
Fossil Show Committee

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS AND SPEAKERS

June 1st Dean Hart was the leader on a walk-in Peace River Fossil Hunting trip. Club members met 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 plus Show & Tell/Buy/Sell/Swap Meet

July 18th FCOLC Monthly Meeting @ Zion Lutheran Church, 7401 Winkler Road, Fort Myers, Fl 33919
July 18th Speaker – Curt Klug – Paleontologist, Certified Geologist, FCOLC Webmaster will discuss Fossil Identification and requirements on a FCOLC Fossil Identification Website.

August 15th FCOLC Monthly Meeting @ Zion Lutheran Church, 7401 Winkler Road, Fort Myers, Fl 33919
August 15th Speaker - TBD

Minutes of May meeting

THE FOSSIL CLUB OF LEE COUNTY

Date: May 16th, 2013 Place: Iona House @ Calusa Nature Center

Presided by: Louis Stieffel, President

37 members were in attendance tonight.

New incoming president Louis Stieffel called the meeting to order. After announcing the door prize, reminders about club merchandise, and dollar raffle, he introduced Dr. Charles O'Connor as the speaker.

Charles gave a spirited talk about fossil animals, especially sharks. Along with an informative power-point presentation, he also had some very nice displays for actual viewing.

Break

New business was conducted.

Louis presented a proposal to the membership to move the meeting location from the Calusa Nature Center's Iona House to the Zion Lutheran Church Fellowship hall. After spirited discussion, a vote was held and it was approved by a vote of 36 for and one against. This new location will be effective for the next meeting, which is June 20, 2013.

Louis discussed and handed out a member survey. This is an effort to find out more of what the members of the club would like to see done. These surveys will be emailed to members who were not present, as soon as some digital logistics can be worked out.

Dean Hart will lead a Peace River fossil hunting trip to Wauchula on June 1st. He asked for interested members to see him and sign up.

Mike Cox volunteered to do a fossil hunting trip, sometime in the immediate future, to locations in the Caloosahatchee River.

Mary Southhall and Mike Cox volunteered to bring refreshments at the June meeting.

The fossil show was discussed, with more information to come after the show committee meets and has some ideas to present.

Show and tell was presented by several members.

The dollar raffle was called by Mike Siciliano.

Meeting was adjourned.

Websites & Locations of Interest

Fossil Club of Lee County: 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/

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

Peace River Water Levels

www.canoeoutpost.com/peace/showpage.asp?page=waterlevel

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/>

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

REFRESHMENTS

We are pleased that Kathy and Coby Pawlowski volunteered to take care of refreshments for the May 2013 meeting. Everyone enjoys Pizza and there were many variations with desert for those who saved some stomach room. A big FCOLC THANKS to Kathy & Coby.

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.

Mary Southall and Mike Cox volunteered to cover refreshments at the June meeting.

Peace River Fossil Hunting Trip

The final FCOLC Peace River fossil hunting trip of the season was scheduled on June 1st launching at 9 am from Crews Park in Wauchula Florida. On Friday night I called all those people who had expressed interest in the trip. Many of the club members had run into other commitments or late breaking emergencies and told me they couldn't make it. So it looked like we would only have a few active fossil hunters. We were concerned about the weather and the rainy season. Would summer storms hold off long enough to allow hunting in **relatively** shallow water? The weather and the water depth were just fine. Tropical Storm Andrea was still a week away.

I arrived at to the park and discovered, as normal on these trips, a couple of fossil hunters (Bill Howat and Walt) had started out at 8 am and were up the river in their kayaks. In quick succession, Mike Cox, John Battin, then David and Zack Deyo arrived at the launch point. So we had a few people in our hunting party. We started up the river and I told everyone that they should go up the river and I would go up with my boat to where we would be digging. I also told them that on the way to where I would be they should look for gravel and dig a little to see what was there. One of the rules of fossil hunting is "Always be looking as you walk the river". Some fossil hunters find Mammoth teeth. I took John in my boat and we got to an area I thought would be an area where not a lot of digging had been done. We hunted there for a bit and didn't have a lot of success. So I moved up the river to a site that has previously produced some nice fossils. Bill and Walt came down from where they had been hunting and joined us there. Also three other club members showed up while we were there swelling our number of hunters. It is always good to have many diggers because it helps to isolate and avoid those areas which have been cleaned out.

Some of our group started to leave around 1 pm with Bill and me leaving at 2 pm just in front of rain showers. By the time we were completely out of the water there was some lightning. We did not get a lot of stuff but any trip to the Peace River produces lots of small shark teeth (Lemons, and Bulls, Tigers and Snaggles).



Our hunters also produced some turtle spurs, deer teeth, lots of other bones and teeth and even a couple of Meg teeth. One of those Megs was a nice tooth and had to be over 3 inches but was not quite complete. Finally a nice toe bone was found. It might be from a type of cat similar to this Jaguar toe bone (31 mm) found close to the same location a couple of months back. You may see some of these fossils at the June 20th club meeting. We ended up with 9 members there and I hope everyone had a good time and hope to have more Peace River trips for the members, as soon as the depth of the water cooperates.

Dean Hart

New ancient shark species gives insight into origin of great white

November 14th, 2012

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — The great white shark is one of the largest living predatory animals and a magnet for media sensationalism, yet its evolutionary history is as misunderstood as its role as a menace.



This artist's rendering shows how a new extinct white shark species, *Carcharodon hubbelli*, may have looked. A new University of Florida study in the Nov. 14 issue of *Palaeontology* concludes modern white sharks descended from Mako sharks rather than megatooth sharks as originally believed based on a well-preserved 4.5-million-year-old fossil.

Florida Museum of Natural History illustration by Jason Bourque

Originally classified as a direct relative of megatooth sharks, the white shark's evolutionary history has been debated by paleontologists for the last 150 years. In a study appearing in print and online today in the journal *Palaeontology*, University of Florida researchers name and describe an ancient intermediate form of the white shark, *Carcharodon hubbelli*, which shows the modern white shark likely descended from broad-toothed mako sharks. The study deviates from the white shark's original

classification as a relative of megatooth sharks such as the extinct *Carcharocles megalodon*, the largest carnivorous shark that ever lived.

Based on recalibrated dates of the excavation site in Peru, the study also concludes the new species was about 2 million years older than previously believed.

"We can look at white sharks today a little bit differently ecologically if we know that they come from a mako shark ancestor," said lead author Dana Ehret, a lecturer at Monmouth University in New Jersey who conducted research for the study as a UF graduate student. "That 2-million-year pushback is pretty significant because in the evolutionary history of white sharks, that puts this species in a more appropriate time category to be ancestral or kind of an intermediate form of white shark."

Most ancient shark species are named using isolated teeth, but analysis of *C. hubbelli*, also known as Hubbell's white shark, was based on a complete set of jaws with 222 teeth intact and 45 vertebrae. The species was named for Gainesville resident Gordon Hubbell, a collector who recovered the fossils from a farmer who discovered them in the Pisco Formation of southern Peru in 1988. Hubbell donated the specimens to the Florida Museum of Natural History on the UF campus in December 2009.



Dana Ehret, lead author of a University of Florida study on the origin of great white sharks, analyzes a 4.5-million-year-old fossil at Gordon Hubbell's private gallery in Gainesville, Fla., on March 6, 2009. Researchers named the species *Carcharodon hubbelli* for Hubbell, who donated the fossil to the Florida Museum of Natural History on the UF campus. Ehret, now a lecturer at Monmouth University, conducted the research as a UF graduate student.

Florida Museum of Natural History photo by Jeff Gage

"The impetus of this project was really the fact that Gordon Hubbell donated a majority of his fossil shark collection to the Florida Museum," Ehret said. "Naming the shark in his honor is a small tip of the hat to all the great things he has done to advance paleontology."

Ehret and co-authors published an initial study describing the shark specimens in the *Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology* in 2009, but dates for the site reflected

information from a 1985 study about the Pisco Formation, he said. With Hubbell's hand-drawn maps and descriptions of the landscape, researchers returned to the site and found the exact spot the fossils were discovered.

Scientists extracted more accurate age estimates from mollusk shells in the fossil horizon to determine the shark species was from the late Miocene, about 6.5 million years ago, rather than the early Pliocene, about 4.5 million years ago. The new dates will also be useful for better understanding other fossils found in the rich Pisco Formation, which include new whale, marine, sloth and terrestrial vertebrate species.

"The thing that was remarkable to me was that these fossils came from right out in the desert and this was before GPS, so Dana had only an approximate notion of where it was," said Florida Museum of Natural History Director Douglas Jones, a study co-author who conducted strontium isotope dating of the fossils. "But after a few days of looking, we were able to find this deposit and Dana found the rest of the missing shark's teeth."

Researchers determined Hubbell's white shark was related to ancient broad-toothed mako sharks by comparing the physical shapes of shark teeth to one another. While modern white sharks have serrations on their teeth for consuming marine mammals, mako sharks do not have serrations because they primarily feed on fish. Hubbell's white shark has coarse serrations indicative of a transition from broad-toothed mako sharks to modern white sharks.

These evolutionary relationships have been hypothesized for decades, and researchers who interpret modern white sharks as being more closely related to megatooth sharks say it is "a friendly disagreement," according to Michael Gottfried, an associate professor in geological sciences at Michigan State University.



This well-preserved fossil is the only intact partial skull ever found of *Carcharodon hubbellei*, a white shark that lived 4.5 million years ago. The jaw, pictured here, has 222 teeth intact, some in rows up to six teeth deep.

Florida Museum of Natural History photo by Jeff Gage

But shark expert David Ward, a research associate at the Natural History Museum, London, said "fewer people believe the big megatooth sharks are related to the great white sharks than believe the Earth is flat."

"Everyone working within the field will be absolutely delighted to see this relationship formalized," Ward said.

Study co-authors include Bruce MacFadden of the Florida Museum, Thomas DeVries of the Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture in Seattle, David Foster of UF and Rodolfo Salas-Gismondi of Museo de Historia Natural Javier Prado in Lima.

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<http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/pressroom/2012/11/14/new-ancient-shark-species-gives-insight-into-origin-of-great-white/>

Next Meeting

FCOLC next meeting is on Thursday, June 20th, 2013
at Zion Lutheran Church, 7401 Winkler Avenue, Fort Myers
Meeting starts at 7 PM.

Directions:

RT 41 going south, turn west on Cypress Lake Drive, then south on Winkler Road. Go a couple of miles, the church will be on your left just before the traffic light.

From RT 41 going north, turn west on Gladiolus, go under the overpass, and turn north on Winkler, the church will be on your right just past the Sweet Bay Market.

Call 239-851-7499 (Louis) or 239-980-1406 (Mike) if you have questions or need help.

On the hunt for the teeth of giant prehistoric sharks

By SUSAN COCKING

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Maggie Martorell / For the Miami Herald A collection of ancient bones and teeth found on the sandy bottom of the Gulf of Mexico off Englewood Beach. Paul Reinckens kicked slowly over the sandy bottom 30 feet deep in the Gulf of Mexico looking for triangular objects — not an easy task with visibility a mere four feet and this dive being his first underwater fossil hunt. But suddenly, there it was: a hard, brownish-gray chevron lying on the sand.

Elated, Reinckens picked it up, stuck it in a mesh bag and continued looking. A few minutes later, he found and pocketed a similar object.

“It’s fun!” said the Long Island, N.Y. volunteer firefighter, as he climbed back on board the dive boat Aris-Ta-Kat. “I got the bug!”

What Reinckens and several other divers from captain Jamie Bostwick’s boat found off Englewood Beach on Florida’s Gulf Coast were full or partial teeth from prehistoric megalodon sharks, the

largest fish ever to swim in the world’s oceans.

Megalodons, which grew to 60 feet and up to 77 tons, roamed the ocean, eating whales and dugongs — predecessors of the manatee — from 17 million years ago until they became extinct about two million years ago. Each had as many as 270 teeth up to seven inches long, adding up to a vast treasure trove for fossil hunters and collectors.

“There’s a big addiction to hunting for megalodon sharks’ teeth,” Bostwick said. “Once you find a big one, you’re hooked. When you get a tooth, it’s permanent. It’s a piece of history.”

Megalodon sharks’ teeth were not the only finds that day. Paul Steffen of Punta Gorda found the ear bone and a tooth from an ancient whale. Dave Flinchbaugh of Port Charlotte found the tibia of a prehistoric horse.

“Anything you see that’s black, you want to flip,” Flinchbaugh, 71, explained of his hunting technique. “The more you do it, the better you get at it.”

The six-person party on board the Aris-Ta-Kat was hunting south of Venice, renowned as the “Sharks Tooth Capital of the World”. Swimmers, snorkelers, scuba divers and beachcombers regularly turn up fossil shark teeth — bull, lemon, dusky, great white, seven-gill, sand tiger, mako and thresher, among others. But “megs” are king, fetching from a few bucks to tens of thousands of dollars, depending on their size and condition. At Venice’s annual Shark Tooth Festival in April, several “meg” molars sold for around \$2,000 each.

Perhaps the most popular fossil hunting area is the “Bone Yard” — the nearshore waters from the Venice jetty and pier to about 1 1/2 miles out. But ancient bones and teeth also spread out about 11 miles to the south, which was where Aris-Ta-Kat’s crew dived.

“The beach gets the teeth after they roll up,” Bostwick said. “Here, it’s before they roll up. If they’re encased in clay, they are the best preserved. They are worth more if the enamel is shiny.”

Fossil hunters, unlike most Floridians, pray for hurricanes because they flush sharks’ teeth up from the clay bottom where they can be readily spotted. Following Hurricane Debbie’s passage last summer, a meg tooth was found in the parking lot of the Venice jetty.

Another popular hunting area is west-central Florida’s upper Peace River, which would have been a shallow, saltwater bay millions of years ago when sea levels were much higher than today. Paleontologists believe those waters served as birthing and nursery sites for the big sharks.

Joshua Frank of Naples, who serves on the board of the Fossil Club of Lee County, goes scuba diving in search of sharks’ teeth every chance he gets. He posts videos of his finds on YouTube.

“I’ve liked collecting sharks’ teeth since I was a kid,” Frank said. “Finding out I could dive for them makes for fun on the weekends.”

On his trip aboard the Aris-Ta-Kat, Frank uncovered three pieces of a tooth from an ancient mammoth and seven meg teeth. His fellow divers gathered around admiring them.

Flinchbaugh, who became a certified diver at age 65, sells fossils to supplement his retirement income.

“At my age, when I croak, my kids will have a garage sale and they might make a nickel or a dollar,” he said.

But the real draw of fossil diving, Flinchbaugh and others say, is the hunt.

Said diver Chris Vaught of Tampa: “I moved down here from St. Louis, Missouri, so I could do this for the rest of my life. I like diving and hunting for stuff and it all works out.”