

**Fossil Club
of Lee County
Newsletter
May 2005**

Message from the President

It is time for another get together of the Fossil Club of Lee County. These weeks really fly by. I hope you found some good fossils since last month's meeting!!!

We just finished our monthly board meeting, and, as usual, discussed several important topics. One of them was our new logo. Sue Lundgren has taken on the task of designing a new logo for the club, and the executive committee got their first look at it tonight. Very promising, I'll tell you that!! We will present the design to the membership at the meeting. Thanks, Sue.

Charles (Chuck) Ferber discussed his research into the club incorporation proceedings. We will present this to the membership soon. He also has researched appropriate statutes on our new by laws. We fine tuned them a little bit, and are attached for your review. Thanks Chuck for all your hard work on this.

I have reached gridlock in my quest to acquire butvar (bone hardner) for the club members. This is a very important item to have on hand to help preserve your fossils. I will do a how-to presentation at this month's meeting. I strongly urge everyone to use butvar on all the fossils you find and/or acquire. Carl Fricke has generously volunteered to get a 140 pound drum of butvar and sell it to club members for about \$10 per pound in two pound bags. If and when this happens and the butvar becomes available for your purchase, PLEASE avail yourself of this opportunity. Carl is willing to do this to help out the club, but we need to support him and buy butvar. He will also take on the task of trying to supply other clubs, as the previous supplier has made it too difficult to get. I cannot stress how important it is to support Carl in this endeavor.

Debra Powell and I will be the speakers this month. We will be talking about "how to effectively hunt a pit". Debra has prepared a Powerpoint Presentation, and we will have some display pieces, tools, and fossils. Please come to the meeting and bring your "show and tell" fossils and any you want identified (no promises, but we will try).

Ray, the treasurer, reported a healthy balance of about \$3400 in our account. We had presented to Bruce McFadden, last month's speaker, a proposal to contribute some money towards a fossil ID project, but it is under review for the time being. The club, at this time, is financially strong. We may need some of the funds to help jump start our fossil show. It will be held on Dec. 10 at the nature center, 9-5. We discussed the show in depth at the meeting. Michael Orchin, a member, attended, with some ideas of organization that they use in his club, C.C.F.O.W. He had some good ideas and we will look into them. Debra Powell also had some good ideas, and a three person committee was formed along with the show chairman, Marc Cantos. Any members who want to help are welcome and strongly encouraged!

The Handi Phil pit in Englewood is again open for hunting, but each club will be designated certain times to hunt. Our time will be the third Saturday of each month, from 9:15 to 3 pm. You MUST be on time and, except for an emergency, you must stay till the end--3pm. We will have direction handouts at the meeting. It is not always the most prolific, fossil producing pit, but some very good finds have been made there. Debra will have info and pics of this pit in her presentation.

My wife Leslie and I are doing refreshments this month, but we really need someone to volunteer to do this in the future. I would really appreciate it if someone will step forward and help bring some refreshments to the meetings. One person can agree to do it for a period of time, or several people can step forward for a meeting apiece. The club will reimburse you for the soda, water, light snacks, etc. that you may bring. Last month Sue Collier stepped up and volunteered and at the last minute had to work!! She came early and brought the goodies so all you fossilers had refreshments. Thanks, Sue, very much.

Sixteen of us club members went to Gainesville on a field trip last month. This trip was open to all members and everyone that went enjoyed it. We saw some GREAT fossils in the collections, in the museum and at Dr. Gordon Hubbel's museum. Thanks to Bruce McFadden, Richard Hulbert, Russ McCartney, Gordon Hubbell and every one else that helped out.

We have researched several fossil books attempting to acquire some for the members. Ray was able to purchase a small quantity of Frank Kosis' excellent book and we will have some for sale at the meeting next Thursday. Sandy Schwartz has tried to track down others, but it is a daunting task. She will succeed and soon we will have other helpful books for sale to members.

Curtis Klug has updated our website with some pictures of the Gainesville trip. We will continue to add to the site, so check it out periodically. The site is, www.fcolc.com. In the future we will add lots of fossil pictures and links to other clubs and interesting fossil digs and sites.

Lastly, I close with part of a newsletter article that I wrote in January, 2002. As you can see, things change, yet still remain the same!!! "As you can see, from this overview of events that our club is involved in, not everything is fossil hunting. The purpose of joining a club is for involvement in that area of interest. We let you know when and where fossil events are going on. We directly involve ourselves in local community events that are associated with our interests. We do things related to this hobby, not just field trips and fossil hunting trips. Members should get involved in the overall range of club activities and you will find a greater appreciation of this great hobby. Go to and participate in fossil shows, sign up for activities, swap a fossil gift at Christmas, teach a child about fossils, show and tell at a meeting. All of these things will help you enjoy this more if you do."

Thank you, Louis

July Meeting

Our July Meeting will be held on Thursday July 21st at 7:00 p.m. at the Calusa Nature Center, located at Ortiz and Colonial Blvd. in Ft Myers. Louis Stieffel and Debra Powell will talk on how to work a pit. Louis will demonstrate how to use butvar and acetone on your fossil finds to strengthen them.

Pictures from Gainesville



Real Men Don't Shell

By Al Govin

Tuesday evening July 12, 2005 Louis Stiffel and Al and I spoke at the Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife meeting (CCFOW) held at Rotary Park. We had been invited by incoming president, Micheal Orchin, to speak about the Fossil Club of Lee County (FCOLC) as well as our hobby of fossiling. It was interesting to be seated in the rear of the meeting room, listening to another hobby club as its agendas were discussed, growth problems, membership participation in volunteer programs and what could be done to get greater community recognition. It seems as though our ideals and ideas were very similar in many regards even though CCFOW is trying to save and promote burrowing owls, we are trying to promote and save the hobby of fossiling. While fossiling may not be as noble it certainly is important. Louis started out by speaking about the two principal types of fossil collecting, invertebrate and vertebrate. He jokingly said, "shells are what we step over to get to the bones". I stated that there really are three types of collectors. 1. shell collectors, 2. bone collectors and 3. rare collector of both, i.e.

Louis. I further explained that if the golfer who gets up of 5:00 A.M. on the weekends to get an early tee time is considered avid, then Louis is an avid fossil hunter. Louis brought approximately 30 large fossil samples of items he has collected and did a detailed show and tell. Some of the examples were a leg bone from a gomphothere, megalodon tooth, gator vertebrae, gomphothere tooth, horse tooth, horse toe bone, agatized coral, Ft. Drum crystallized clam, a riker case of assorted shark teeth to mention a few. He spent time explaining the different fossil eras and why Florida is so rich in fossils. Louis spoke for approximately 45 minutes so it would be impossible to detail everything he spoke about. However I want to say that he did an excellent job and at the conclusion of our talk we were both warmly received and thanked.

I brought "smaller" treasures for my part of the presentation. I started out by explaining how little is required to get into fossiling. I showed a typical river screen, nail apron and said bring that and a shovel and head to the Peace River. Find some gravel, shovel and screen and you will find fossils. I did, however, mention that this has not been a good year for the river since the water levels have been too high.

My fossil display consisted of a modern alligator head from a 9' gator and a fossilized partial jaw bone from an approximated 18' alligator. I had teeth on display from wolf, peccary, deer, alligator, gar fish, whale, seal. A jaguar toe bone, peccary tusk, alligator gar scales, turtle jaw and numerous small fossils.

Both Louis and I promoted the club as well as extended an invitation to our next meeting. Our web site was given for membership information. We fielded questions of many types. At the conclusion of the meeting a number of people came forward and thanked both of us for our efforts. The most gratifying comment came from a gentleman who said " my grandson loved your talk, and we are coming to your next meeting". Maybe a FUTURE fossil hunter.



FIELD TRIP REPORT

On June 25th sixteen of the club members met in Gainesville at the Florida Museum of Natural History for what I personally thought was a most memorable trip. Bruce MacFadden met us outside the old museum. We were given an introduction to what we would see in the collections department by Bruce and then escorted inside. Some pictures taken while we were there and are on our website www.FCOLC.com so check it out. (continued next page)



Once inside we were introduced to Richard Hulbert and the staff. We were able to touch a table full of fossils in various stages of preparation. They have a completed hand from a giant ground sloth on display. We got to go down aisles of shelves and trays of fossils, shovel tooth elephants, 8' tusks, elephant skulls, rhino jaws to mention a few. They opened up drawers filled with fossils from all over Florida. Some came from Felda and Labelle, and some we had helped excavate. On a personal note I got to see a lower camel jaw with two incisors that I discovered at Labelle. There is some satisfaction knowing that long after I'm gone that fossil will be there for people to see and enjoy. Our personalized, behind the scenes tour lasted about 1-1/2 hours, but seemed like fifteen minutes. I was surprised to see that they did not check out Louis's pockets to make sure nothing left the area.

We got to see some actual preparation work in progress as well as ask questions. Super glue tip, wrap in aluminum foil, and when not in use refrigerate. This will have it last for years. They use Dremel tools with modified tips to clean fossils and air abrasives as well. After our time was up we moved on to the new museum with Bruce.

Entry is free to the museum but a donation is appreciated. In addition to the fossils they also have a living butterfly exhibit with a separate admission fee. The entrance to the museum has a life size exhibit of a Mammoth and a Mastodon, very impressive. The fossil exhibits are arranged in a time line and along a pathway. A **few** of the highlights are a glyptodont, giant ground sloth in an upright pose, they are all originals, no casts. It was really neat seeing where the various bones that we find belong. Quite frankly it was overwhelming to see so much in such a short time. Never the less, it was worth the time and effort. It seemed that the 5:00 p.m. closing time came all too quickly. If you have not been to the museum, it's a must, as it will make you appreciate your hobby all the more. A big thanks you to Bruce, Richard and the staff.

We stayed over night in Gainesville at a motel secured through Louis Steiffel's efforts. A Huddle House restaurant was next door for breakfast the next morning and then we were off to Gordon Hubble's home museum of sharks.

Mr. And Mrs. Hubble were extremely accommodating hosts, and it should be remembered we were in their home. Gordon Hubble is considered the most renowned expert on fossil sharks in the world. We have been fortunate enough to have him speak to the club in the past. At this time he has committed to speaking at our fossil club show in December. Again there are some pictures on our web site showing the shark exhibits. There are tiny teeth barely visible to the eye and a giant megalodon tooth 7-1/2" big. Mr. Hubble's display is touted as better than the Smithsonian and the Natural History museum combined. After seeing the displays, I would agree. Again on behalf of the club thank you Mr. And

Mrs. Hubble. The walls are lined with life sized shark jaws with teeth giving a perspective of the size of some these monsters. Again, it was so much to take in but so very impressive.

Louis made contact with a young man who was gracious enough to give us directions to a local spot to try a little fossil hunting. After leaving the Hubble museum we headed to Possum creek and with our shovels and screens in hand gave things a try. We had not planned on spending a lot of time since it's a long ride home but it was fun any way. I found approximately 50 small shark teeth and several ray mouth plates. They were nicely colored and it will remain a place to try in the future with more time available.

I feel the trip was a great success and hope that the other fifteen people feel the same way. To get to two museums with private guided tours and do a little fossil hunting was awesome. We will continue to do things like this if you request them and support them. Let your officers know your feelings, as you are what the club is all about. If anyone has any ideas for future trips please let me know. As you know we have had trip problems because of mother- nature. Al Govin



MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE FOSSIL CLUB OF LEE COUNTY

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

DATE OF MEETING: June 16, 2005

MEETING TIME: 7:00 P.M.

MEETING PLACE: Calusa Nature Center

Number in attendance: 32

Louis Steiffel, President, presiding.

If your information provided on the Club membership list is not correct, please let Sandy Schwartz know to update it.

Also, check your e-mails before field trips for current updates.

Contact Debra Powell for Handy Phil field trips.

Thanks go to Sandy Schwartz, Newsletter Editor, for all her efforts and the fine job she is doing on the Newsletter.

Thanks go to Ray Seguin, Treasurer, for all his efforts and the fine job he is doing as treasurer. The Treasurer reports there is \$3,479.97 in the Club's account.

The Club is going to sell the Neophytes Guide to Fossils at Club meetings.

December 10, 2005 is the Fossil Club Show. Mark Cantos is chairman and is asking for ideas for food vendors and kids games. Admission will be \$2 for adults and \$1 for kids.

Thanks go to our June meeting speaker Dr. Bruce McFadden, Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology at the Florida Museum. He gave an excellent talk on the process of field collecting in his talk entitled "Adventures in Peru."

Secretary Chuck Ferber

Reminder

We are trying a different format as some people are having trouble printing all of the newsletter. Please send me input on whether you like this better or not. It is fun having pictures to include, if you take pictures of your fossil hunting trips, please send them to me along with a short story about your success or lack there of.

Remember to print out and read the updated by-laws that the board and especially Chuck Ferber have taken a lot of time and trouble over. We will vote whether to accept these by-laws as they have been rewritten at the July meeting. If you want input, please read them and be prepared to vote on them.
Sandy Schwartz

Officers

Louis Stieffel President (239) 458-9818 Cape187@earthlink.net
John Reilly Vice President 482-7787
Ray Seguin Treasurer 939-1921 /936-5019
Charles Ferber Secretary 541-9424
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Committees

Web Site Curtis Klug
Fossil Show Mark Cantos
Trip Director Al Govin and Debra Powell
Newsletter Sandy Schwartz
Speakers Louis Stieffel
\$1. Raffel Jerry and Loretta Graham
Auction Louis Stieffel
Publicity Carl Fricke

