



Fossil Club of Lee County

July 2008

Message from the president



It sure seems as though our concerns about shallow water in the Peace River are over for the time being. We cancelled our June 8th canoe trip because the water level at Gardener was so shallow it would have been a canoe "drag"! Since then the water level has risen about 40 inches! According to legend, this surge in water will renew our river and wash in many wonderful specimens! I hope this is true!

Gunther and I checked out a new pit and found several fossil shells and one horse tooth each. The pit operator will let us in to hunt, but only on week days and limited to five persons. We will have a trip sign-up sheet at our next meeting.

According to my sources, Rick Piper is having a prolonged recovery from surgery. Get better soon Rick!

We have had two real good speakers in a row---and now it is time for our third. Our own Louis Stieffel will provide us with an "identification of fossils" presentation at our July 17th meeting. I encourage everyone to attend. Also, as always, bring in some of your unidentified finds and I am sure that Louis can shed some light on what you have found.

Our Webmaster, Curt Klug, has been very

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on Thursday, July 17, at 7:00 p.m. at the Calusa Nature Center located at Ortiz and Colonial Blvd.

Officers

Bill Shaver, President (239)834-0694 /
billshaverpeaceriver@hotmail.com

Al Govin, Vice President 245-7650
And cell 910-2339

Ray Seguin, Treasurer, 939-1921 or
936-5019

Leslie Stieffel, Secretary

Board Members

Director—Louis Stieffel, 458-9818

Michael Orchin, 574-6318

Sandy Schwartz, 772-8015

Pit Trip Director, Gunther Lobisch

Dive Trip Director Mike Siciliano ,
980-1406

Committees

Newsletter: Cheryl

Speakers: Bill Shaver

\$1. Raffle: Mike Siciliano

Auction: Louis Stieffel

Web Master: Curt Klug

busy working out of town, but when he gets a chance he has plans to update our web site.

At our last meeting we briefly spoke about having a Fossil Show at the Calusa Nature Center on December 6th, 2008. Before we go too far, I would like to see how much interest and commitment we have as a club to have a show. We will bring up the subject again at our next meeting.

We had a "big spread" provided at our last meeting by Linda and Dick Kemper. Thanks for the great refreshments. We don't expect this type of service at every meeting, but once in a while, it is a nice treat.

This newsletter will be published by the great team of Sandy and Cheryl. Cheryl Mitchell has returned from her stint up north and has signed up to do the newsletter starting next month. Thanks for all of your service Sandy!

As usual, bring in your recent finds for the Show and Tell feature. Incidentally, Gunter is still on vacation so someone will have to take up the slack. See you at our next meeting!

Louis Stieffel

Since I was a small child, I have had an interest in fossils. Over the years I have collected rocks, minerals, stamps, coins, bugs, seashells and old bottles, and just about anything else I could find. I used a metal detector for several years, finding over 12,000 coins, lots of jewelry and interesting "stuff"!! I have tried my hand at small scale carpentry, gardening, wood carving, taxidermy, painting (a disaster!!), and even pot holder making. However, out of all the collecting and other ventures over the years, fossil

Some of my collection



hunting and collecting is by far the very best hobby for me. It is a hobby that always has the challenge. It is almost impossible to collect it all!!! There is always a bigger or better or prettier or nicer fossil and the thrill of the hunt is consuming!! This hobby takes you to some beautiful locales and you meet great people. I'm sure you die-hard fossil hunters/collectors know what I'm talking about, right?

Since it makes it much more interesting to know what you are finding, I will pass on some of the information that I have tried hard over the years to learn, including skeletal anatomy (osteology) this month at the meeting.

I will also try to gather all the literature on these fossil animals that I can. I have copied some of this as handouts for this month's talk on fossil identification. Please try to make the meeting and feel free to bring in fossils for identification. I will try to help with that, but can not promise to always be successful. Many times the best and most accurate way to identify a fossil is to actually compare it with the real thing, already identified. I will bring a good assortment of fossils to help do that, but, of course, can not bring everything that could possibly be needed. I hope to see you at the meeting!!
Louis

Minutes

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: June 19, 2008

MEETING TIME: 7:00 P.M.

MEETING PLACE: Calusa Nature Center

Number in attendance: 33

Club President Bill Shaver presiding.

Bill discussed upcoming possible field trips to C.F. Industries and Quality Pit.

A trip is scheduled for Sunday June 22 to Quality pit, led by Gunther. Also possible future trips to Vulcan mine.

Speaker: Peter Harries from the University of South Florida gave a nice talk on the mass extinction event in Florida and geology in Florida.

Upcoming Refreshments:

July: Al Govin

August: Donna Johnson and Pam Plummer
Bill thanked Linda & Richard Kemper for the delicious refreshments.

Show and tell was held by the following club members:

Sandy Schwartz found a nice large meg tooth while diving.

Jacob showed his bison tooth & incisor, hemi & mako shark teeth & horse teeth.

Mike Siciliano brought a crusted meg tooth and some lovely bottles from Belize, one from the 1840's or 1850's.

Gunther Lobisch brought his great shell collection from the Panther & Quality pits, including leidie shells from the Pliocene era and sea urchins, among others.

Louis Stieffel brought corals and shells from a pit in Punta Gorda and a neat coral on a rock.

New member **Kim B.** brought nice arrowheads and other Indian fossils.

Dollar raffle and door prize drawing were held.
By: Leslie Stieffel, Secretary

Coming Events

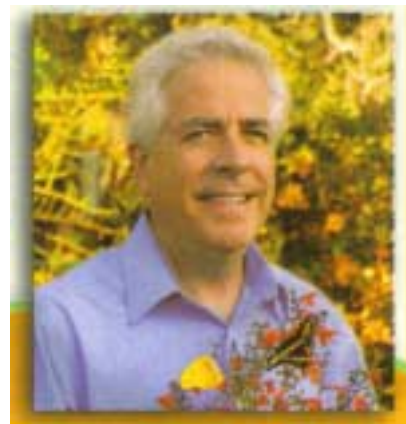
2008 Fossil Fair

Central Florida Fairgrounds Saturday, **October 11, 2008** - 9:00 - 5:00pm and Sunday, **October 12, 2008** - 10:00am - 4:00pm

The Florida Fossil Hunters present the Seventeenth Annual Fossil, Mineral, and Gem Show

\$4.00 Adults | \$1.00 Children

For more information on the 2008 Fossil Fair contact us at FossilFair@floridafossilhunters.com
More information and directions as we get closer in time.



Tom Allen

We have many members in our club with many different interests. It is cool when we discover another side to someone. Louis found our member, **Tom Allen**, is a contributing member to **Birds & Blooms**. This month in the August/September issue, he talks about his favorite moth, the **Io Moth**. He is a recognized expert on butterflies. Now if someone can just find him a fossil butterfly, you will make his day.

Report from Below

I have been diving for 2 years now. This is a rather expensive hobby and very addictive. There is nothing like a slow crawl across the bottom of the bay with sea urchins, attack fish (little striped fish that peck at your mask and fingers), sea robins and sea horses as your companions as you look for THE BIG ONE. My grandson, Jake, dives with me on a buddy line. Visibility isn't very good but it is good enough to see Jake's hand dart out as he grab a 3" meg in front of me. People seem unable to believe that we are diving together because he often flashes a treasure while I show off my small prizes. "But aren't you close together", they ask. "Don't you see the same things?" Well, of course I do. He is just faster!

Charles O'Conner goes to South Carolina and dives with friends where the visibility is zero. He finds megs by feel and has some terrific finds. He and Mike Siciliano recently dove together out of Venice with **Florida West Scuba**. Captain Steve has a regular clientele that dives several times a week and you can see divers out anytime off the beach in Venice and small boats that move in when the Hammer Head pulls out. Recent finds are large and small megs, mammoth teeth, rhino teeth, and horse teeth. Also, makos, hemis, whale teeth and tympanic bones. And of course, many small, perfect teeth that lay on the bottom waiting for you to pick them up.

We have about 10 people in FCOLC that dive. Pam recently got certified and is soon to make her first hunt. If you would like a dive buddy, there are plenty of people willing to join you, just ask.

Sandy Schwartz



Jake Finds the Big One!!!!!!



The Hammerhead Diving Out of Venice

Diving in Venice

Visibility 6-12 feet, Depth approximately 28 feet

FloridaWestScuba.com for calendar and information/great service and cookies too.

Cost \$69+tip with 2 dives/air provided/cash preferred/discount possible after several dives.

Air tanks 3,000 psi last from 1-2 hr. depending on breathing ability. The boat takes 12 people and always has a full load. If you have dived on the east coast, you will really appreciate the calm, pleasant diving in Venice.



Cheryl Mitchell is going to take over the job of newsletter editor. Cheryl has been a member for about a year now, she first became interested in fossil hunting when she found sharks' teeth on Barefoot Beach in Naples. During off season, she finds them in knee deep water as well as on the beach. She has a large number of larger teeth which she has had wrapped and made into necklaces at the Flamingo Flea Market in Bonita Springs. I was not aware that so many nice teeth could be found at other beaches, maybe we need to get out and check out other locales. She became aware of the club when she met Don and Flo Young hunting on the Beach. Cheryl also digs in the Peace River



Cheryl's grandchildren, Levi and Calli showing their fossil finds

And has found large meg teeth, horse teeth, camel teeth, dolphin tympanic bones, whale tympanic bones , a sperm whale tooth , gator, mammoth and mastodon. And of course, turtle. She has started collecting fossil shells when Gunther introduced her to pit digging. Go Gunther!

7/05/08

Paleontologist uncovers fossils of manatee cousin

Frank Garcia was informed on Friday, that his discovery of a small manatee-like creature is an official species. It took decades and about 70 fossil pieces for Frank to put together the long-extinct *Nanosiren garciae*. The fossils will be displayed at the Smithsonian Institution and the Florida Museum of Natural History in Gainesville.

Garcia found some of the animal's bones in deep pits dug by a phosphate mining company in the 1960's. He continued searching the area, gathering bone fragments from pits in Polk and Hardee counties, sending them to the Smithsonian Institution.

Daryl Domning, a professor of anatomy at Howard University, helped piece together the 6 foot animal, which he said probably lived about 5 million years ago in the Caribbean. It most likely became extinct when north and south America were connected, he said. The Isthmus of Panama cut off the Caribbean from the Indian Ocean and south west Pacific Ocean, the only place dugongs are found today.

The *Nanosiren garciae* had a dolphin-like tail rather than a paddle, and tusks about an inch long, Domning said.

From the Newspress June 13

Unicorn deer

Visitors are flocking to the nature preserve in Tuscany, Italy to see a shy, young deer nicknamed "Unicorn", named because of a rare, single horn in the center of his head. The center is receiving many calls from people and many are coming to see it," said Gilberto Tozzi, the director of the Center of Natural Sciences in Prato, near Florence.

From Newspress June 13

Seedling from ancient tree is growing well

Just over 3 years old and about 4 feet tall, Methuselah is growing well. Methuselah is a date palm, whose parents may have provided food for the besieged Jews at Masada some 2,000 years ago.

The little tree was sprouted in 2005 from a seed recovered from Masada, where rebelling Jews committed suicide rather than surrender to Roman attackers



Donna Johnson and Eric Jacobs fossil hunting on the Peace River.

WASHINGTON,DC (June 2008) FOUR-LEGGED CREATURE'S PRIMITIVE FOSSIL FOUND

Scientists unearthed a skull of the most primitive four-legged creature in Earth's history, which should help them better understand the evolution of fish to advanced animals that walk on land.

The 365 million year old fossil skull, shoulders and part of the pelvis of the water dweller, *Ventastega curonica*, were found in Latvia, researchers report in a study published in Thursday's issue of the journal *Nature*. Even though *Ventastega* is likely an evolutionary deadend, the finding sheds new details on the evolutionary transition from fish to tetrapods. Tetrapods are animals with four limbs.



Donna on the Peace River again!