



# **FOSSIL CLUB OF LEE COUNTY**

**JULY 2011**



## *Message from the President*

Summertime greetings to all members and friends. This July we celebrate Independence Day as we have for the last 235 years. It seems like a very long time ago, but everything is relative. Most of the fossils we find are thousands of year old and when we find a megalodon shark tooth we are finding a fossil that is over two million years old as a minimum. Since I found four pristine "meg teeth" a few days ago, I thought this would be a nice way of telling everyone about my find without appearing to be bragging.

Incidentally, my hunting spot is now under seven feet of water, which means a long wait until the river level drops, which might not happen for a few months. In the meantime we are fortunate to have some non-river places to hunt. Some club members found several echnoids and some mammal specimens at the local aggregate pit and our members who dive the Venice area have had very good luck especially with "megs".

All things considered, we should have an excellent "Show and Tell" this month. Everyone is encouraged to bring in their recent finds and other specimens from their collections that they would like to share. This is a great opportunity for all of us, young and old, experts and novices, to learn more about fossils. If you are not sure of what you have found, please bring it to the meeting. We have some pretty knowledgeable people who will be able to ID your find.

In June, our Club provided scholarship grants to the University of Florida and the University of South Florida to help deserving students pursuing advanced degrees in paleontology. We received letters this month from both organizations expressing their appreciation. This is a wonderful arrangement we have with these organizations. They are always willing to help us by providing speakers for our monthly meetings.

We are in the planning stage for our annual Fossil Show which is now scheduled for Saturday, December 3rd, 2011. The Show is one of our best fund raising events and it is great for the young people in our community. We invite all members, especially our newer members to participate in this event.

The program for the July meeting features a speaker from the University of South Florida who is pursuing his Masters in geology. We will also have the monthly raffle consisting of a wide variety of items, "Show and Tell", and refreshments of course. We appreciate all of our officers, directors and committee persons who do so much for our club. Thanks for your support and I look forward to seeing everyone.

Regards, Bill

### **Next Meeting**

Our next meeting will be July 21<sup>st</sup>, 7:00 pm at the Iona House at the Calusa Nature Center.



## **SCHEDULE OF COMING EVENTS**

### **July**

July 4<sup>th</sup> Independence Day  
July 21<sup>st</sup> Fossil Club Meeting

## **WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

Marilyn & Ray Villarreal  
Christopher  
Jett  
Hunter  
Thomas Rost  
Davis Rost  
Coleman Rost  
Tom Rost

Our Club is pleased that you chose to join us. Its your club now, so participate in the activities and enjoy the fun and camaraderie.

## **OFFICERS**

Bill Shaver, President, 239-834-0694  
[billshaverpeaceriver@hotmail.com](mailto:billshaverpeaceriver@hotmail.com)  
Michael Siciliano, Vice President, 239-980-1406  
Ray Seguin, Treasurer, 239-939-1921  
Kathy Pawlowski, Secretary, 239-267-6130

## **DIRECTORS**

Dean Hart, 941-979-8217  
Gunther Lobish, 941-268-7506  
Charles OConnor, 239-246-5526  
Pam Plummer, 239-573-7807  
Joshua Frank, 239-248-5094

## **COMMITTEES**

Cherie Neat, Newsletter  
Curt Klug, Web Master  
Bill Shaver, Speakers  
Louis Steiffel, Auctioneer  
Kathy Arnold, Club Merchandise  
Pam Plummer, Club Badges  
Ray Seguin, Membership  
Joshua Frank, Refreshments  
Dean Hart, Refreshments co-chairman  
Gunther Lobish, Pit Trips  
Michael Siciliano, Raffle and Dive Trips  
Coby Pawlowski, Youth Activities Director  
Hollie Tiner, Club Photographer  
Gunther Lobish, Invertebrate Education  
Louis Steiffel, Vertebrate Education

## **SPEAKER FOR JULY 2011**

*The speaker for July is Jack Hutchinson from the University of South Florida who is studying under Dr. Greg Herbert in the geology department. Jack has a BA in Philosophy from USF and is currently pursuing his Master degree in geology. His talk will be about the behavior of the drilling gastropod family, commonly referred to as moon snails (officially, the Naticidae), and their effect on their environment. Club members are encouraged to bring in their specimens of predator and prey fossil shells that might be appropriate to his presentation.*



## **SHOW AND TELL PROGRAM**

Our Fossil Club has developed and continues to develop an excellent "Show and Tell" program. Many members join fossil clubs for many reasons. One of the main reasons is to learn more about the wide variety of fossils, especially those that are found here in the Florida. Our Show and Tell segment of the monthly meetings is a excellent way to learn about fossils. Observing and handling fossils is an education that you will remember and the next time you find one that you have seen and held, you will most likely be quick to identify it. The specimens that are brought in and talked about also make you want to go out and find your own the next day! Well, some us get more enthused than others. The Club encourages everyone to participate in the Show and Tell program so bring in something and share it. Nine people participated in the June meeting Show and Tell. Everyone is invited!



## **MINUTES OF JUNE MEETING THE FOSSIL CLUB OF LEE COUNTY**

Date: June 16th, 2011

Place: Iona House at Calusa Nature Center

Attendance: 46

Presided by: Bill Shaver, President

Bill opened the meeting and welcomed all members and guests.

The Treasurer gave the financial report. He reported that FCOLC donated \$3,000.00 for university scholarships and \$1,000 to the Calusa Nature Center.

Bill thanked Joshua Frank and Melanie Hutchinson for providing the refreshments and for Joshua and Dean Hart for managing the refreshment program. Several members have signed up and Bill encouraged all persons to participate in the program. Also, the FCOLC Board voted to provide a gift/prize to persons who bring in the refreshments.

The speaker for the evening was Bob Hanchey. He spoke about the evolution of weapons developed by the North American Indians and demonstrated/displayed several replicas of Indian weapons that he had made as well as several authentic artifacts from his collection.

Bill announced the Board had voted to hold the Fossil Club of Lee County annual Fossil Show on the first Saturday of December. More information is forthcoming.

The Show and Tell was well supported with nine people presenting some of their collections, acquisitions and recent finds.

Submitted by:  
Kathy Pawlowski, Club Secretary

## **WEB SITES & LOCATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

Museum of Natural History @ Gainesville  
[www.flmnh.ufl.edu/](http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/)

Florida Vertebrate Fossil Permit <http://flmnh.ufl.edu/natsci/vertpaleo/vpppermit.htm>

Southwest Florida Fossil Club  
[www.southwestfloridafossilclub.com](http://www.southwestfloridafossilclub.com)

Orlando Fossil Club  
[www.floridafossilhunters.com](http://www.floridafossilhunters.com)

PEACE RIVER Water Levels  
[www.canoeoutpost.com](http://www.canoeoutpost.com)

Mark Renz's Fossil Expeditions  
[www.fossilx@earthlink.net](mailto:www.fossilx@earthlink.net)

Smithsonian Natural History Museum  
[www.mnh.si.edu](http://www.mnh.si.edu)  
Florida Fossil Clubs  
[www.fossil-treasures-of-florida.com](http://www.fossil-treasures-of-florida.com)

Picking Up Isolated Native American Artifacts  
<http://dhr.dos.state.fl.us/archaeology/underwater/finds>

Calusa Nature Center and Planetarium 3450 Ortiz Av, Fort Myers Tel 239-275-3435  
[www.calusanature.com](http://www.calusanature.com)

Imaginarium 200 Cranford AvE, Fort Myers  
[www.cityftmyers.com/imaginarium](http://www.cityftmyers.com/imaginarium)

Southwest Florida Museum of History 2300 Peck St., Fort Myers [www.swflmuseumofhistory.com](http://www.swflmuseumofhistory.com)

The Bailey-Matthews Shell Museum, 3075 Sanibel-Captiva Rd, Sanibel, FL [www.shellmuseum.org](http://www.shellmuseum.org)

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

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

Lost in Time, 4719 69th Street, N. St Petersburg, FL 33709, Tel. 727-541-2567 Owner Brian Evensen

Tampa Bay Fossil Club  
[www.tampabayfossilclub.com](http://www.tampabayfossilclub.com)

Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife Burrowing Owls  
[www.ccfriendsofwildlife.org](http://www.ccfriendsofwildlife.org)



## Ice Age Art Found In Florida Depicts Ancient Mammoth



Researchers have discovered a bone fragment in Florida at least 13,000 years old with the incised image of a mammoth or mastodon, in what may be the first example of Ice Age art found in the Americas, scientists said on Wednesday. The artifact is the oldest and only known example of Ice Age art depicting a proboscidean (the order of animals with trunks) in the Western Hemisphere, the researchers said. Fossil hunter James Kennedy discovered the bone in Vero Beach, Florida, and noticed the engraving while cleaning it. Recognizing its potential importance, Kennedy contacted scientists at the University of Florida and the Smithsonian's Museum Conservation Institute and National Museum of Natural History.

"This is an incredibly exciting discovery," said Dennis Stanford, anthropologist at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History and co-author of the study. "There are hundreds of depictions of proboscideans on cave walls and carved into bones in Europe, but none from America—until now." "The results of this investigation are an excellent example of the value of interdisciplinary research and cooperation among scientists," said Barbara Purdy, professor emerita of anthropology at the University of Florida and lead author of the team's research. "There was considerable skepticism expressed about the authenticity of the incising on the bone until it was examined exhaustively by archaeologists, paleontologists, forensic anthropologists, materials science engineers and artists."

One of the researchers' main goals was to study the timing of the engraving to determine whether it was made thousands of years ago or more recently, as an imitation of earlier, prehistoric art. The bone was originally discovered near a location, known as the Old Vero Site, where human bones were found side-by-side with the bones of extinct Ice Age animals in an excavation from 1913 to 1916. The researchers examined the elemental composition of the engraved bone and others from the site using optical and electron microscopy, which revealed no discontinuity in coloration between the carved grooves and the surrounding material. This indicated that both surfaces had aged simultaneously. Furthermore, the edges of the carving were worn and showed no signs of having been carved recently, or that the grooves were made with metal tools.



These factors led the researchers to believe the art is genuine, and that it serves as evidence that people living in the Americas during the last Ice Age created artistic images of the animals they hunted.

The engraving is at least 13,000 years old, the researchers concluded, as this is the date for the last appearance of these animals in eastern North America. More recent Pre-Columbian people would not have seen a mammoth or mastodon to draw. The study further validates the findings of geologist Elias Howard Sellards at the Old Vero Site in the early 20th Century. His claims that people were in North America and hunted animals at Vero Beach during the last Ice Age have been debated over the past 95 years.

A cast of the carved fossil bone is now part of an exhibit of Florida Mammoth and Mastodons at the Florida Museum of Natural History in Gainesville.

The research is published online June 12 in the Journal of Archaeological Science.

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**Image 1: The engraving, approximately 13,000 years old, is 3 inches long from the top of the head to the tip of the tail, and 1.75 inches tall from the top of the head to the bottom of the right foreleg.**

**Credit: Chip Clark/Smithsonian**

**Image 2: This fragmented fossil bone found in Vero Beach, Fla. is the oldest and only known example of Ice Age art to depict a proboscidean in the Americas. Credit: Chip Clark/Smithsonian**

Story from REDORBIT NEWS:

<http://www.redorbit.com/news/display/?id=2068981>

Published: 2011/06/23 05:40:00 CDT



## FOSSILING TIPS

This month, again, I want to point out some vertebrate fossil identification that may help you guys in the field. Even though the Peace river, (our favorite fossil hunting river) will be at high water levels and probably unhuntable, by the time this newsletter is delivered, I would still like to point out a few things that may help you, even if hunting someplace else. I usually start digging the gravel by using someone else's hole. That way I am getting undug gravel, hopefully!, and not digging their picked through stuff. However, even then I find I get a lot of "diggings", as I find few to none shark teeth and no easily recognized fossils, so I know it's been dug sometime in the past. I still find fossils, though, as many people look through their screen too fast, and not thoroughly enough. They also are not familiar with many fossils, so toss them back, inadvertently. The pictures accompanying this article shows what I mean. From one side, these fossils look like nothing, and many folks just pick them out and toss them, without a glance. But, turn them over and you can see that rare fossils are discarded through this need for speed. How many of you even HAVE a Giant Armadillo Patella, or rear claw?? Or a Tapir patella, or even a Dugong skull cap? Yet these items were discarded in dug and picked gravel!! (I also show a picture of a more complete skull cap, for comparison.) SO, be careful, guys, and don't be in such a rush to toss something back. You can always do that, so anything interesting you do not know what it is, save it, and bring in to the meeting or send me some pictures, and we can let you know if you found trash or treasure!!

This time of the year, when the rivers and creeks are high and not huntable, we try to fossil hunt pits, and digs on construction sites, etc. It is also important to hunt slow, as only a tiny edge may show, and you are going to fast or impatient to dig it up and that nice sloth claw will belong to someone else!! Also, the dirt on the fossils makes it hard to see, so try to wash it off some before being in a hurry to throw it away. Carry a small bucket, with a bit of water in it, if you have to.

Again, fellow fossil hunters, hunt slow, be careful with your discards, and keep things until ID to toss them back. Good luck and happy hunting!!  
Louis Stieffel



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## COBY'S COLUMN

### Hunting Jobsites

Jobsites can produce some amazing specimens, and are some of the best sites to hunt. Getting permission to a site can be like pulling teeth, but can be worth it in the end. Most of the time, getting into a jobsite is hard because of insurance. When access to a site is granted, it is usually very important to hunt the site as much as possible because the site will likely be covered up, picked over, or access will be taken away. Always remember, never enter a site without permission, not only does it make you look bad (Plus possible legal charges), but it makes fossil hunters as a whole look bad.

Happy Hunting,  
Coby Pawlowski



## **LUCK OF THE IRISH**

**by Jack Boyce**

I enjoy writing up articles for the FCOLC monthly newsletter because it means that I am finding some very nice fossils. It gives me a chance to talk discuss fossil hunting and identification techniques. On June 21st, Bill Shaver and I headed out to hunt on Joshua Creek instead of spot on the Peace River where we were finding megs and other nice fossils. We temporarily gave up our good spot because we were getting a nasty rash complete with intense itching and swelling. After surveying Joshua Creek, we decided it wasn't going to pay off so we headed off to a place (not the rash hole) on the Peace River that supposedly was all picked over. We did some probing and sample screening and gave up on the first stop. It was picked over! We moved downstream and probed for gravel. We found plenty of loose gravel which is indicative of a spoil pile, but dug through it anyway until we hit the bottom. We were hoping that the previous hunters were using 1/2 inch mesh screens, small shovels (good for Makos and Megs to slide off when being brought up to the screen), not digging deep enough, and not recognizing fossils such as dermal scutes, etc. As many of you know, there is a lot of skill, experience, techniques, and persistence that prepares a fossil hunter for a really lucky day. Sometimes, Bill finds the best quality and most fossils, but on this day I had the Luck of the Irish. By the way, I am half Irish. During the course of the day, we found several of the small teeth one can find in the river, a few small Makos, and a variety of scutes. But on this day, I had the most luck in finding a perfect horse molar, and very nice Meg, and best of all, a Roughtail? Stingray dermal twin buckler.

To share some of the details of the day, I found a few small shark teeth in my first seive, and the 2nd seive, I found a high quality lower molar that once belonged to a young horse. This is easily the best Equus tooth in my collection! There is a good feeling when you know early that the day is already successful. In the early afternoon, Bill noted that I my finding rate had slowed down and he suggested I come over by him as he was still finding several species of shark teeth and other fossils. I have learned to follow my partners suggestions---it is one of the primary rules of the unwritten Fossil Laws, following the bit about not angering the River God. It was my second seive after moving over by Bill that I found what appeared to be a two inch square of bark, but after flipping it over, it turned out to be rare, pristine double dermal buckler from either a Roughtail or Thornback Ray. It is the best fossil I have ever found and I am feeling fantastic and fulfilled!!! Hunting fossils is an addiction and I continued to dig. At four o'clock, Bill calls for "last seive" and I am really ready to quit for the day as my back is hurting from lifting four shovels full of gravel for each seive all day long! I always put a fifth shovelful in my last seive of the day. Just as I was lifting up the fifth shovelful I see a 2 and 1/4 inch almost perfect Megalodon tooth hanging over the upper left tip of the shovel. It goes plop into my basket. A perfectly lucky day on the Peace River ends in a high note!

