

Fossil Club of Lee County

August 2007

Message from the president

Hello!!

Welcome to another issue of the Fossil Club of Lee County newsletter and my monthly message. I just heard that the predicted number of hurricanes has been lowered slightly, so that's good news. Our rainy season could use the boost from a good tropical storm or two, so even though we may get fewer hurricanes, let's hope we don't get less rain.

The Peace River is actually low enough in some spots to fossil hunt!! Mike Siciliano and Sandy Schwartz took a bunch kids out hunting on July 6h! This is unheard of for this time of the year!! Usually it's flooding over the banks, and we don't have a chance to hunt it until late November at the earliest. The lack of rain is good for river hunting, but bad for the environment.

Also, this time of the year we use the rains to help us find fossils on land sites. When pits are dug, it is extremely difficult to find anything without rain to wash the piles. I guess it is not as bad as it sounds, sort of, because with the building and constructing business down, the pits are hardly being dug anyway! What is always tough, is finding places to fossil hunt, and it is getting tougher. You really have to be aware of dumped material and water sites and just keep trying. I will tell you about a few of my ventures this past month.

Leslie (my wife) and I stopped at some old house pads on the side of Burnt Store road, on the way to hunt a pit. These pads in Burnt Store Lakes have been there for at least 6 months, but the only activity I know of was

August Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on Thursday, August 16th at 7:00 p.m. at the Calusa Nature Center located at Ortiz and Colonial Blvd. Our speaker will be Terry Selari, past president of the Tampa Bay club.

that fellow club member Michael Orchin checked them out months ago. It was good that we stopped because NOW they are resuming construction there! I found 7 complete horse teeth, a few shark teeth, a gator jaw and some teeth, a gator osteoderm, 2 tilly fish bones, 2 partial deer antlers, a toe bone and a few other fossils. All right on the side of the highway!! We did better in an hour there, than later on, in 3 hours in a pit!! (except for the couple hundred small extinct sand dollars). I also did a two dive boat trip with Sandy, our club's newest fossil diver!! Congrats!! We found, of course, lots of little teeth, but the big guys eluded us that day. I also did a fossil dive, right from the beach, today, with Al Govin, the club's vice president. The water visibility was very poor and the reef was covered with a foot or so of floating seaweed!! We did not find much, but you can never tell until you try!! Al and I also took a canoe trip in the Caloosahatchee River, east of Labelle. We hunted the north spoil banks about a mile east of the Hwy 29 bridge in Labelle. We found tons of nice large gar scales, a few small shark teeth, and a good bit of puffer fish mouthparts, as well as a couple of horse teeth and

a mammoth tooth enamel plate, etc. It was a nice, pleasant day on the river, but I recommend that if you go, especially in a small boat or canoe, try to do it on a weekday!! Lots of boaters and jetskiers are enjoying the river on the weekends. I stopped back at the dumped piles on Pine Island road, next to the Site station, by Nicholas Pkwy., that I mentioned in last month's article. I was surprised, to find some more fossils there!! Right next to the road!! You just never know until you try!! So, you see, even though we supposedly don't have a place to hunt, we really do if you use your imagination. Give it a go, and bring it in for show and tell!!

This month's speaker will be Terry Selari, past president of the Tampa Bay club, fossil dealer and hunter. He will bring fossils for you guys to add to your collection. We try to support our speakers by doing a little business with them, if possible. These guys travel here, sometimes, like Terry, from a long ways, and the speaker fee helps pay expenses, but a few purchases, for your collection, will also help with their expense. Terry usually brings lots of fossils to choose from, so this would be a good opportunity to make that riker case display you've always wanted (even

if you didn't know you've always wanted it!!)

See you at the meeting!!

Good luck and happy fossiling!!

Louis, pres.

Officers

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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



Transporting 4 boys and 6 kayaks was a challenge.

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: July 19, 2007

MEETING TIME: 7:00 P.M.

MEETING PLACE: Caloosa Nature Center

Number in attendance: approximately 34

Louis Stieffel presiding.

Thank you to Ethel Atanasov and Chuck Ferber for bringing refreshments for our July meeting.

The following people have graciously volunteered to bring refreshments: August (Mike), and September (Sandy).

Sandy and Donna Spoke at different kids' camps about fossils.

Treasury had \$5,599.45.

Alice Thorn spoke about trips. Gunther has a trip to Quality Pit Saturday July 21 planned.

Michael Orchin had a good idea for volunteering the he is going to look into.

We would like to thank our speaker Mr. Andreas Kerner for his excellent talk about Pleistocene Bears of Florida and about his den site. Thank you for coming all the way from Orlando to speak to us.

Show and tell.

Secretary

Coming Events

Florida Fossil Hunters 2007 Fossil Fair

Saturday October 13,& 14

Admission \$3.00 Adults, \$1.00 Children. Fossils, rocks, minerals, gems, artifacts. Kids activities and kids dig. At the Central Florida Fairgrounds 4603 W. Colonial Drive, Orlando. More information at www.floridafossilhunters.com

HELP WANTED

Great opportunity to write the newsletter and get fame and fortune. Position open immediately. It takes only 3 or 4 hours a month, and you get to sneak pictures of your grandchildren into the column occasionally. The old newsletter editor is wearing out. Help!!

E-mail Sandy at cameraqueen@earthlink.net

Refreshments

August Mike Siciliano

September Sandy Schwartz

October Volunteer needed

EVERYONE PLEASE NOTE

The Board and Executive Committee had a meeting a few days ago, to help ensure the club is sound and moving forward. Our treasury is strong, our member supplies, such as butvar, books, t-shirts and riker cases are in good supply, and we have speakers lined up for a couple of months.

However---- almost all the members present expressed a desire to have new blood in our organization next year. Even though it is rewarding to help lead the club forward, this is the third year now for all of us on the board and we want you guys to start giving some thought to "stepping up" next year. We have lots of time for you to consider, as we just took office again, in May, and new elections will not happen until next April!! But---it's never too soon to start planning. Anyone with an interest in helping keep this great club going, next year, let one of us know, so we can answer any questions and let you know, in advance, what to expect. The club is running smooth, and is headed in the right direction, with new and current by-laws, strong treasury, supplies, committees, etc. so don't be afraid to think hard about this. Thank you for listening.

Louis

Scientists uncover large mastodon tusks in Greece

Researchers in northern Greece have uncovered two massive tusks of a prehistoric mastodon that roamed Europe more than 2 million years ago—tusks that could be the largest of their kind ever found.

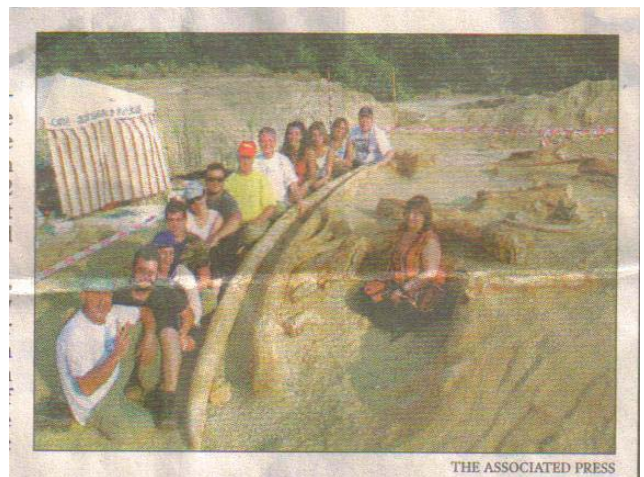
The remains of the mastodon, which was similar to the woolly mammoth but had straighter tusks as well as different teeth and eating habits, were found in an area about 250 miles north of Athens, where excavations have uncovered several prehistoric animals over the past decade.

One of the tusks measured 16 feet, 4 inches long and the other was more than 15 feet long, the research team said. They were found with the animal's upper and lower jaws— still bearing teeth— and leg bones, said Evangelia Tsoukala, an assistant professor of geology at the University of Thessaloniki, who led the team that excavated the site.

“To find a tusk 5 meters (more than 16 feet) long, that was a big surprise,” Tsoukala told The Associated Press in a telephone interview from the site late Wednesday.

“It's a very significant find because with these sections of the skeleton we can draw conclusions about this animal and its development,” she added. “We are also looking for clues about its extinction.”

Mastodons, an ancestor of the elephant, roamed Europe, Asia and North America, but how they became extinct remains a mystery. They are thought to have disappeared in Europe and Asia some 2 million years ago, but survived in North America until 10,000 years ago.



Dinosaurs and their ancestors Coexisted, research report says

Dinosaurs shared the Earth for millions of years with the species that were their ancestors, a new study concludes.

Dinosaurs arose in the Late Triassic, between 235 million and 200 million years ago, and came to dominate the planet in the Jurassic, 200 million to 120 million years ago.

Scientists had thought the dinosaurs rapidly replaced their ancestor species. Indeed, until 2003, when a creature called *Silesaurus* was discovered in Poland, no dinosaur precursors had been found from the Late Triassic.

Now, researchers report in the journal *Science* they have evidence from northern New Mexico that dinosaurs and their precursor species coexisted for tens of millions of years.

Matthew T. Carrano, curator of dinosaurian at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, said there had been a long standing debate over whether dinosaurs replaced earlier species gradually or suddenly.

"What they have is a snapshot of the transition, and it's clear there is a persistent environment with dinosaurs and these other older animals. So, at least in this place in the southwestern U.S., it was not abrupt," said Carrano, who was not part of the research team.

"Finding dinosaur precursors... together with dinosaurs tells us something about the pace changeover. If there was any competition between the precursors and dinosaurs, then it was a very prolonged competition," Randall Irmis, a graduate student at the University of California, Berkeley and co-author of the report, said in a statement.

The team reported finding 1,300 fossil

Specimens, including several complete bones, at Hayden Quarry at Ghost Ranch, an area made famous through the paintings of Georgia O'Keeffe.

There were no complete skeletons, and researchers are continuing to work at the site.

Their finds included bones from both early dinosaurs and dinosaur precursors as well as remains of crocodile ancestors, fish and amphibians, all dating between 220 million and 210 million years ago.

Included were leg bones of carnivorous *Chindesaurus bryansmalli*, a close relative of the *Coelophysis*, a well-known Triassic dinosaur. They said both worked on two legs, reminiscent of the much later *Velociraptor* depicted in the film "Jurassic Park."



July 6th, it was hot, no better place to be than in the river. **Jacob Rosenkranz** found a whale tooth, miscellaneous small teeth and a socket bone of some sort.