



Fossil Club of Lee County

August 2008

Message from the president

Our club must be growing--I see new faces every month. A big welcome to all of our new members and thanks for joining. We are having good attendance at our monthly meetings--last month 44 members attended.



In June, we had Professor Peter Harries who delivered a very interesting and enthusiastic talk, and in July, we had our own Louis Steiffel who presented an excellent program on fossil identification. This month, another one of our members, Dr. Charles O'Connor will talk to us about one of our favorite topics---shark teeth. Charles is a well experienced diver and all around fossil hunter! You will find him interesting!

Speaking of interesting, I recently bought a book called "Roadside Geology of Florida", which was published in 2008. We will try to buy it as a club book for sale at our monthly meetings, but if you can't wait, I bought mine at Barnes and Noble. I'll bring it to the next meeting for all to see.

As we all know the Peace River is just too high and swift to hunt right now, but there are some alternatives: one place which may already too late is the "going out of business" sale of Neptune's Treasures located on Sanibel Island. The owner, Ed Hanley, who many of our members know, has decided to sell his outstanding collection of Indian artifacts, fossils and shells from all over the world.

Another thing I wanted to pass on to our new members is that our Club has fossil displays at the Imaginarium

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on Thursday, August, 21, 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 541-2845
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

Trip Director, Bill Shaver

Dive Trip Director Mike Siciliano ,
980-1406

Committees

Newsletter: Sandy Schwartz

Speakers: Bill Shaver

\$1. Raffle: Mike Siciliano

Auction: Louis Stieffel

Web Master: Curtis Klug

and at the Calusa Nature Center. Try to see them when you get a chance.

We are still finding fossils at the pits. We are restricted to only five people at the Quality Materials Mine and will continue to have sign up sheets at the meeting. We have other sites to visit and will talk more about them at the meeting.

Thanks to Al Govin for providing refreshments for July and thanks to our esteemed Treasurer Ray Seguin who has volunteered to provide extra copies of the newsletter, just in case you didn't get one. Hope to see you all at the next meeting.

Bill Shaver

Our August guest speaker is Dr. Charles O'Connor. He's a Florida native, a member of our fossil club and has been fossilling since an early age.

Charles is a retired physician, and has enjoyed a spectrum of careers, including television broadcast production and engineering, martial arts instruction, professional photography, children's counseling, landscaping, and is currently a science teacher.

He was awarded the SW Florida Audubon Educator of the Year Award, was a finalist in the Golden Apple Teaching Award, and has presented his *Bone up on Florida's Fossils* talk to hundreds of groups for over 10 years.

One of his most rewarding jobs was at the Vertebrate Paleontology Laboratory in the Florida Museum of Natural History, Gainesville, as a student assistant. Charles was responsible for sorting and washing a flood of fossils from the Leisey site near Tampa, one of Florida's most important Pleistocene sites. He later assisted Gary Morgan's studies and used a

stereomicroscope to discover extinct Caribbean vampire bat teeth.

Charles will be discussing sharks; their biology, place in the food web, shark and human interactions, and general evolution with an emphasis on Great White and Megalodon sharks. Fossil teeth will be explored in detail – growth, shape and edge advantages, and the mineralization and coloration process.

He'll show photos of his Carolina river diving trips and finds. Many specimens will be on display, including pathologic and beautiful teeth from around the world. You're invited to bring your unusual teeth in for discussion.



Photo by Zeeka, (flickr)

Welcome New Members

Alex, Melissa and Jenne Cosme, Marilyn and Ramon Villarreal, David Jaye and Michael Miller

River hunting

The water stands at 9 1/4 feet. River hunting is possible at about 4 1/2— 5 feet. Check water level at www.FCOLC.com, go to the end and select Links. Then select a location, Zolfo Springs is a good indicator.

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 17, 2008

MEETING TIME: 7:00 P.M.

MEETING PLACE: Calusa Nature Center

Number in attendance: 44

Club President Bill Shaver presiding.

Bill stated that the club will hold a 2009 Fossil show, on December 6, 2008, at the Calusa Nature Center. Leslie will take names for volunteers.

Tonight we will need to be out of the building by 9:00; not 9:30.

Ray Seguin stated the club treasury is \$4,233.88.

Bill discussed upcoming & possible field trips. In two weeks a trip will be on a Tuesday or Thursday led by Bill or Gunter. In late August or September a club trip will be held on a Saturday. Speaker: Former club president Louis Stieffel gave a very informative talk with sketch handouts on many different types of animals, titled "Form = Function". He also had a lot of nice specimens to help teach members fossil ID.

August Speaker: Club member Charles O'Conner will speak on sharks teeth.

Upcoming Refreshments: August: Donna Johnson and Pam Plummer

Bill thanked Al Govin for the great refreshments. Rick Piper & Al Govin both thanked

the club for their cards & calls after their surgeries. Dollar raffle and door prize drawing were held.

By Leslie Steiffel, 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 Fossil-Fair@floridafossilhunters.com More information and directions as we get closer in time.

Are you ready for your
Next dive?

Talk to Mike and Sandy!!



Refreshments

August—Donna Johnson and Pam Plummer

September—volunteer needed

October—volunteer needed

Little Salt Springs an important archaeological site

Originally posted on: Wednesday, July 16, 2008 by **Michelle Burdo**
Last updated on: 7/16/2008 6:46:18 PM

SARASOTA COUNTY: Scientists call Little Salt Springs in North Port one of the most important archeological sites in the United States. Scuba divers are looking for evidence of human life dating back 12,000 years ago.

Little Salt Springs in North Port seems like just a big sinkhole in the middle of nature, but the items deep in the water tell a significant story. It is 5 miles from exit 182 off I-75 and it shows the story of human life dating back 12,000 years ago.

Dive teams are searching for evidence humans existed back then. No researcher has been in the spring for three decades. There wasn't enough money - until now. National Geographic gave divers from Florida Aquarium and the University of Miami \$25,000 and one month to complete their mission.

The divers are going 90-feet underwater in their search. "That's where the water table was 12,000 years ago," said Tom Wagner of Florida Aquarium. At that point in time that was a perfect location for animals or people to go down and get food.

Finally the divers reach a 2 meter ledge. They're searching the same ledge people most likely stood on 12,000 years ago. The crew worked underwater for an hour, then brought up the evidence they found. National Geographic gets the first look at the items since they paid for the dive. So far they haven't found any human remains, but they're still hopeful.

They will take four dives a day until the money runs out.

From Friends Of The Fossil Club

We were asked me to write a short story on fossil hunting on the river, but until I find that 6 inch meg, it would be boring. I would like to say that FCOLC is one of the best. We have only been members for a little over a year and we look forward to the meetings and all the friendly people. I'm amazed that there are so many knowledgeable people that really know their "stuff" when it comes to fossils. When we joined the only thing I knew about fossils is what I found in Ohio and the shark teeth we found on the beach. We're very thankful for those of you who unselfishly go out of your way to instruct us novices about fossil hunting in Florida. We would also like to thank those fine folks that lead us into the "wilds" of the rivers and quarries in search for those elusive fossils and million year old shells. A couple of names come to mind: Louis, Bill, Gunther, Sandy, thanks so much! We are proud to be members of such a great Club that helps us pursue a hobby we LOVE to do. Thanks to everyone at FCOLC .

Don and Flo Young, Bonita Springs and Ohio



Mystery Fossil

Can you name this fossil?

Louis instructed us at the last meeting that form = function, meaning, look at the form of the fossil to see what it is capable of. Will the joint support a swivel motion or will it bend back and forth? Think of the animal that would need that motion to help you identify it. All animals (mammals), most reptiles (not snakes) and amphibians and birds, (not fish) have basically the same bones, but in different sizes as different animals have different mobility. Birds for instance have a femur but it is hollow for less weight where an elephant femur is thick and massive to support its weight. Form (shape, weight, density) therefore equals function.

Look at this fossil, 3 pictures of the same structure, and try to imagine where you would find it. It is one we find in the rivers and pits of SW Florida, fairly regularly, but lots of folks aren't sure of what it is.



WHILE FOSSILING REMEMBER TO WATCH FOR SNAKES.....

[Http: www. 247wildlife.com](http://www.247wildlife.com)

What to do if you are bitten by a venomous snake:

Opinions regarding snakebite treatment vary wildly. Some people propose extreme measures such as "apply a tourniquet above the bite, cut the bite area with a razor and vigorously suck out the poison", while others offer simple advice such as "stay calm and contact a hospital".

Here is a list of what I believe are the best measures for snakebite:

- Stay calm, and don't jump to conclusions - perhaps it was a non-venomous snake.
 - Try to stay still - exercise increases blood flow and venom spread.
 - Apply a light elastic dressing such as an ACE bandage above the bite area.
 - Some people suggest keeping the bite area below heart level to slow venom spread.
 - Some people suggest the use of cold packs or ice to keep swelling down and slow venom spread.
 - **Most important:** Contact your nearest medical facility. Anti-venom is often the only effective treatment. It will help medical personnel if you can identify the snake. Use the above photos as a guide.
- Remember, venomous snakebites are rare, and can be avoided with common sense:
- Do not handle or provoke snakes - leave them alone.
 - Do not feel the need to take action against a snake - just back away.

(continued on pg. 6)



- Beware of heavy brush and bare legs. Don't stick your hands into dark holes, etc. If you positively ID venomous snakes in your area, maintain extra caution, and try to take preventive measures.

The Coral Snake's venom is the most potent of any of North America's snakes. It has short fangs and a small mouth. It does not strike like the pit vipers but bites and chews to inject its poison. Many people use this rhyme "**red touch yellow, kill a fellow; red touch black, okay Jack.**" to differentiate the **Coral Snake** from non-venomous copycats like the Scarlet King Snake. It occurs throughout Florida, primarily in heavy brush. Average adult size is 20-30 inches, and the record is 47.5 inches.



Our Trip to the CFI Phosphate Mine

Last month, Bill was able to take 5 people to the CFI phosphate mine which is a working mine . We started on a very hot day getting safety information which included how to let a rescue vehicle pinpoint where we were, if need be, as the area was huge. We were provided with hard hats and safety glasses. We then were taken out in an air conditioned vehicle and allowed to hunt. We were shown areas that had been stripped of phosphate and then rehabilitated for wildlife. The process of

rehabilitating the area includes much more than planting a few cat tails. Wet lands need a large area to drain into the location and also well balanced nutrients. This wet land that they developed had a large number and variety of beautiful birds that the company is very proud of.

We hunted in 3 different locations as they did not want us near the area they were working. Once our driver turned his 12 foot long vehicle around on a 5 foot wide berm, it was silent except for the snapping of seat belts.

We did end up in a good hunting area, we found whale teeth, a porpoise vertebra, several makos, a deer astragalus, some good megs and many damaged ones. Also several string ray dermal scutes, larger than I have seen before. The teeth we found were not black, like the river teeth, but pretty tans and browns. Everyone had something nice to take home. It was extraordinaryly hot and we happy to climb back into the air conditioned vehicle.



Bill Shaver, Alex Cosme, Donna Johnson, Pam Plummer, and Charles O'Conner.

Every one needs to have an updated fossil permit when hunting.

Florida Fossil Permit Application

This application is for a permit that will entitle the person named on the permit to collect, for the period of one (1) year, vertebrate fossils on land owned or leased by the State of Florida. The permittee must abide by all the provisions contained in Florida Statutes § 240.516 and the University of Florida Regulation implementing this law.

Print out and mail completed application to: Program of Vertebrate Paleontology, Florida Museum of Natural History, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida 32611-7800, USA

The following are to be enclosed with the application:

- 1. Copy of applicant's identification**, either a **copy of your driver's license**, birth certificate, social security card or passport.
- 2. If you are renewing a fossil permit**, send a **list of the fossils you have found during the last year**.
- 3. Check or money order for \$5.00** in U.S. currency payable to the Program of Vertebrate Paleontology. **PLEASE DO NOT SEND CASH.**

Applicant's Name:

Address:

Telephone (include area code):

I, the undersigned, affirm that I will abide by Florida Statutes § 240.516 and the Regulations of the Program of Vertebrate Paleontology, University of Florida Rule 6C1-7.541 F.A.C.

Signature:

Date:
