

**Fossil Club
Of Lee County
Newsletter
October 2005**

Message from the President

Hello!!! Time for another meeting of the Fossil Club of Lee County. Last month we had a very good meeting, with one of our own, Debra Powell, doing a hands-on matrix display. Members were able to fossil hunt right there at the meeting. Lots of folks found very interesting fossils, both vertebrate and those other kinds!! If you missed the meeting, you missed a good one !!!

This month we are having a talk by Lenny Canterbury. He is a fossil hunter, collector and dealer, and has been there-done that!! Lenny is an interesting fellow and should be informative

The Orlando Fossil Club will be hosting their annual fossil show this weekend, I hope that many of you will attend this show, not only to have a great day seeing (and possibly buying) lots of cool fossils, but also to get an idea of how a fossil show event is conducted. These guys have done this a few times and we can learn from them. I sincerely hope that the majority of our members participate in our own fossil festival on Dec. 10 and will see how it goes. This is YOUR club, so the more you put into it, the more you will enjoy it. We will be discussing progress and needs about the festival at this month's meeting.

Please avail yourselves of our web page. Curtis has put a lot of effort into it and it looks great. There are links to other sites, which also are fossil related, and we are planning more to come, so check it out occasionally.

Ray Seguin has finally started to recover from his total knee replacement surgery. (I think he's really been fine all this time, just wanted attention!) so tell our treasurer hello when you see him!! Jerry and Loretta Graham have finally relocated back into their home. They were devastated by Hurricane Charlie and have had a year long haul of it trying to rebuild. Carl and Amber Fricke are also almost finished putting the pieces back together as they were flooded out by the Orange River during the storm. Charlie and Jane Patton, the last I heard, were still waiting for a roof!! Some others of our members also suffered last year and I sincerely hope they are all back to normal. These hurricanes, as we all now know, can be terrible and in a few hours change lives forever. I have been through quite a few, when living in South Louisiana, and I am glad I wasn't there for the last two!! Leslie and I just returned from a two week visit to Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana to visit and check on our family. Such devastation!!! I want to thank all the members who gave donations at the meeting for Katrina victims, and then decided to contribute them to my family members in need. Believe me when I say that you guys touched my heart and made me proud!! Thanks so, so much, for my family.

I want to see some show and tell from you guys this meeting. If you got something from the Orlando show, or last month's meeting, or went hunting recently or in the past, bring it and show it!!!! We all gain from seeing each other's fossils and always enjoy the stories of discovery. If you are too shy to speak, let me know and I, or someone else can present them for you.

Thanks to Joan for the great refreshments last month. This is something everyone should take a turn or two doing. The club will pay for your (reasonable!) expense, if you want, so it's just a little of your time we need. Again, don't be shy!!

See you at the meeting, Louis Stieffel, president, FCOLC

October Meeting

Our October Meeting will be held on Thursday, October 20th at 7:00 p.m. at the Calusa Nature Center located at Ortiz and Colonial Blvd., Fort Myers, Fl. The speaker will be Lenny Canterbury.



MINUTES OF MEETING OF LEE COUNTY FOSSIL CLUB

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: September 15, 2005

MEETING TIME: 7:00 P.M.

MEETING PLACE: Calusa Nature Center

Number in attendance: a lot

Louis Steiffel, President, presiding.

No Handy Phil this month. Contact Michael Orkin to get in, except Feb. 18, 2005.

Proceeds from refreshments go to Katrina victims in the Steiffel family.

December 10, 2005 Fossil Show. Michael Orkin is in charge of the Fossil Show/Festival.

Each member is to ask one patron for a raffle prize, ideally a gift certificate. Will have a silent auction. Saturday 2 weeks before festival, will pick up raffle donations. Also, for a donation of \$100 or more can be a corporate sponsor.

Dr. Charles O'Connor with the Lee Co. School District will speak at upcoming meeting.

Thanks go to Debra Powell for an excellent hands on presentation regarding searching matrix for fossils.

Show and tell
Secretary

Club 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: 489-2891
Jerry Graham: (941) 423-0803

Committees

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

We had a very interesting meeting in September involving fossil matrix. Three members volunteered to write articles about this activity.



Chuck Ferber



Debra Powell

Searching For Treasure In Handy Phil Matrix

by Chuck Ferber

At the September meeting, Debra Powell gave an excellent presentation on searching for fossils in matrix. Debra provided matrix to the club from Handy Phil pit to search for small fossils that would ordinarily be overlooked. The matrix is shelly fossiliferous sand to gravel sized particle that is dug from the fossil location. The matrix was placed on paper plates for sorting. Then picked through for its treasures. I do not know what everyone else found, but what I recall was many gar fish (Ganoid) scales, fish bones, fish teeth, amphibian? rib bones, fish skull roofing bones, and many different kinds of small shells. Are these tiny shells just the immature phase of the creature in the shell or the tiny shell the full-sized adult? Who knows? It was interesting to see all the small fossils in the matrix.

Matrix besides being interesting to see what is in it, is useful to scientists to date the deposits. The science of biostratigraphy uses fossil assemblages to date deposits. Individual species of fossils have discrete time intervals during which they first appeared in the fossil record and after which they went extinct (if they did). Certain fossils for which these time periods are known are called index fossils. A fossil assemblage of index fossils can be used to specifically date a fossil deposit. Often, radiometric dating is used to initially date index fossils.

Also, matrix fossils can be used to study the paleoecology of a fossil deposit. The species present give clues as to the environment in which the fossil organisms lived. Was it a lake, river, terrestrial, or marine? Because organisms can be transported after they die and deposited in another

environment before they are fossilized, collectors need to be careful not to assume that the presence of a marine snail with freshwater species means that it was marine. It could have been freshwater and a storm from the nearby coast washed marine fossils into the river or lake. As always, who knows?

We are all grateful to the time and effort Debra put into her presentation. It was very interesting.



Ian Bartoszek



Ray Seguin, Frank Grieco, Donna Johnson

September Fossil Club Dig by Donna Johnson

Sometimes it takes creative minds to think outside the box to make the impossible happen. That is what Debra Powell did for our membership at the September meeting. Since it has been impossible to have members enjoy a promised fossil hunt at the Peace River because of high water, Debra brought the dig to us.

Upon entering the meeting area on September 15th, I knew something exciting was afoot. Buckets of matrix were on each table along with scoops, individual plates and some tools to explore the material and make your finds. Debra explained that each bucket was rich with fossils. All one had to do was take a small cup of material, place it on your paper plate and look carefully. She showed examples of bone, turtle shell and gar fish scale that she found right out of the same matrix which was a mix of crumbled shell, small whole shell and black pieces that when viewed carefully, turned out to be a variety of different fossils. We were about to experience a fun “make and take” activity...or more correctly, a “find and take”.

The six of us at my table eagerly took small scoops of the material to explore. Frank Grieco found a small shark’s tooth right away. Sandy Schwarz found a vertebrate, and so did I along with some bird bone. I did not have a tweezer with me and Debra generously loaned me hers. I’ll be buying one just like hers as it was a perfect tool to push the little pieces around, pick up interesting ones to inspect and to generally pretend to be very professional.

All six at my table found many gar fish scales...I mean like 30 or 40. Debra showed us how we could glue them in place as they would be naturally joined and display them in the pattern of a gar fish. She also demonstrated how vertebrates could be lined up so you could better represent the bone structure. Louis went table to table and helped with identifying.

It was after 9:00 before any of us realized. Time to lock up. We stopped our hunt and left the meeting with small bags of treasures, great memories and a lot of knowledge to use in the future. Thank you so much Debra!



Mystery Member, Leslie Stieffel, Mary Southall Sorted fossils from the matrix

Our Indoor Fossil Hunt

by Linda Grispino

As "promised", it was a very different, innovative and fun meeting in September. Our club has had some difficulty with weather, water levels, etc. in scheduling field trips, so our fossil club brought the "field trip" to our own comfortable Nature Center room. Debra Powell did a great deal of work for us all by digging up, washing, screening and sieving the matrix material, so it would be ready for our "field trip" experience. When asked at the meeting if I thought it would be a good idea to do this again, I enthusiastically said - yes!". It's not just the air conditioning, nice chairs (easier on our knees), matrix all dug, cleaned and waiting and the friendly group, but also some very knowledgeable people who are willing to help you identify your finds and encourage you to keep going - "Look at all the fossils you missed!". I sat next to Leslie and Louis sat across from us, so I had help in identifying my "finds" and fun chatting about them. I always had a little pile of "finds" waiting for Debra to make her next "pass" around our table so I could ask - What is this? and How do you spell it? - a very patient lady! I came home with a great little bag of fossils I got from my "treasure bucket", as did everyone at the meeting! But, I also came home having learned more information to help me in identifying my future finds. I'm sort of new at fossil hunting, but I've collected shells all my life. I found some small vertebrae, ray plates with teeth, many different types of fossil shells and shark's teeth so small you needed the magnifying glass to see them.

I became fascinated with miniature and "micro" shells when I was out on a dig trip with Mark Renz and he asked me if I ever looked at the small material that I washed out of my bigger fossil shells - I've never thrown out that matrix material again without sieving and sieving! I find some wonderful and perfect shells and teeth so small I have to display them under a magnifying box or paper weight?

On our meeting nights, I almost always bring along a little bag of my finds that are driving me "nuts", because I can't identify them. And, there's always someone who is willing to talk, to look, to be interested and to encourage you at our meetings! A **BIG THANKS** goes out to Debra Powell for all her efforts!! It was a fun meeting for everyone.

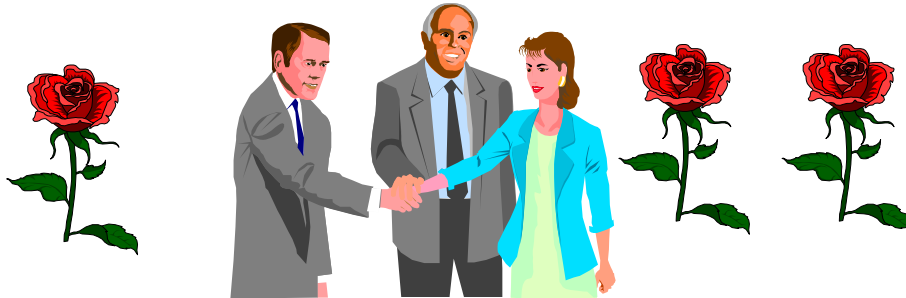
Books for your library

The club has purchased 4 interesting and informative books to make available to our members at below retail cost. These books will help you to identify your finds and give information on locating sites to hunt.

Vertebrate Fossils: A Neophyte's Guide by Frank A. Kocsis Jr.

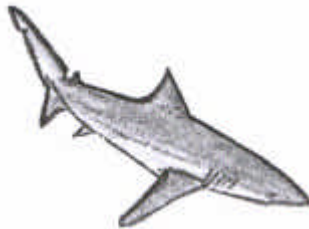
\$15.00

Fossilized Shark's Teeth and Fossils by Bron Fink \$ 4.75
Fossil Shark Teeth of the World by Joe Cocke \$15.50
Fossil Diving in Florida Waters or any other waters containing Prehistoric Treasures by Dr. Robert Sinibaldi ***** **Dr. Sinibaldi will speak at our club in January 2006!** \$12.



Thank you
From the bottom of our hearts
For your kindness

We sincerely appreciate the
Generous donations to Louis' family in
Waveland, Mississippi
that were devastated by Hurricane Katrina.
Your kindness means more than we can say.
With our heartfelt thanks, Louis & Leslie Stieffel



Coming Events

Florida Fossil Hunters will have a Fossil Festival on October 15th and 16th at the Central Florida Fairgrounds, Exhibit Building A. Hours are Saturday 9-5, Sunday 10-4. Adults \$3., children \$1. For more information, see www.floridafossilhunters.com