



# Fossil Club of Lee County

October 2007

## Message from the president

Happy Fall!!

Yes, I know, fall is not something we see much of down here in South Florida, possibly a day or so, but there are still nice days nonetheless. The temperature is finally bearable, so I hope all you folks are enjoying it by fossil hunting! The Peace River is at record lows for this time of the year, and this upcoming dry season should see it almost dry!! The rains help make surface collecting in pits and landsites better, but we all like to hunt the Peace River!! The water is very clear right now at Venice beach, for you divers out there, and you know you can always load up on a small pile of shark teeth there!! The Orlando Fossil Show will be held before our meeting so I know lots of you guys will be there. I hope you get some great additions to your collection and that you bring all your show and tell finds to the meeting!!

This month's meeting will NOT have a speaker!! Last year, Debra Powell, a member and now president of the SW fossil club, brought a lot of washed shelly matrix from a pit for all of us to hunt!! I have been asked repeatedly to have this sort of activity again, so that's what we will do at this month's meeting!! I have gathered together washed, sieved shelly matrix from inside large Pliocene shells as well as washed, sieved micro gravel from

## October Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on Thursday, October 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at the Calusa Nature Center located at Ortiz and Colonial Blvd. We will be examining washed matrix collected by Louis Stieffel. Bring tweezers and a magnifying glass or two and of course, your show and tell.

In November, Bruce McFadden will be speaking to us.

rich gravel beds in the Peace river. This will be available, at the meeting, for members to hunt through. Bring some sort of magnifier if you have one, and extras if you have them, for those without, and you get to keep what you find. You may want to look into getting a riker case or two from the club, to display your finds. We sell them at just about our cost to the members, as another service we provide to you guys. Come to the meeting and fossil hunt!!

Louis

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF FOSSIL CLUB  
OF LEE COUNTY**

A general 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: September 20, 2005

MEETING TIME: 7:00 P.M.

MEETING PLACE: Calusa Nature Center

Number in attendance: Good showing for September

Louis Steiffel, President, presiding.

Mike did raffle table.

Sandy provided refreshments. Bill is doing refreshments for October; Pam is doing refreshments for November.

Peace River is still huntable.

Thanks go to Frank Ponzo for his excellent talk on "beads and Indian artifacts."

Treasury has \$5,386.49.

Louis says to be careful as almost all Chinese fossils are fake. Also most rare Moroccan fossils are fake.

Orlando show is October 13 and 14.

Show and tell.

Secretary

**Officers**

Louis Stieffel, President (239) 458-9818  
or e-mail: Cape 187@earthlink.net

Al Govin, Vice President 541-2845  
and cell 910-2339

Ray Seguin, Treasurer, 989-1921 or  
936-5019

Chuck Ferber, Secretary 489-2891

**Board Members**

Leslie Stieffel 458-9818

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

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**Interesting Website**

I want to pass on to you guys a website for a guy selling fossils, yet has an excellent section on fossil fakes. I highly recommend you checking this out, so as to stay informed on the proliferation of fake fossils in the marketplace. Knowledge is power, folks, so look at this: [www.PaleoDirect.com](http://www.PaleoDirect.com) <<http://www.PaleoDirect.com>> John McNamara has graciously given permission to pass on to you this website address, as he is serious about helping others learn about fossil fakes. We will put this site on our own website under the links section.

Louis

**Calusa Nature Center  
Volunteer Opportunitites**

I received a call the Calusa Nature Center looking for volunteers for their **Hal-loween Program**. People are needed for Saturday and Sunday, October 20 and 21 and again on October 27 and 28, also a Saturday and Sunday. The time needed is 2:15 to 6:30, the program runs from 3–6. If you would like to dress up, that would be even more fun. They will have pony rides, a craft table, face painting and a magician. I have volunteered several times, it involved sitting at the entry and taking entry fees and referring people to a membership table at times. You can choose what you want to do, including clean up. It is fun and helps us meet a goal to provide a meeting place for our club in exchange for person power. Call Kim Pierce at 275-3435 or e-mail her at [Kim@calusanature.com](mailto:Kim@calusanature.com)

*Refreshments*

October: Bill Shaver

November: Pam Plummer

Christmas Pot Luck: Everyone

Here is a really interesting article **by Dolores Jardine** that I borrowed it from the Tampa Bay Fossil Club and hope you will enjoy it.

**Extraordinary Finds In Utah and Wyoming**

In September, 2006, my daughter, Jeri, and I took a fossil trip out to Utah and Wyoming. I flew from Florida to Denver, Colorado to meet her, where she had driven from Boston for a conference. She had motored, instead of flying, because we knew we would have hundreds of fossils to bring back. In Utah we stopped at Arches National Park and enjoyed the beautiful scenery and the Fremont Indian Petroglyphs, depicting pot-bellied people lassoing a mountain lion trying to catch some sheep. Then we traveled very desolate country across Utah to the center of the state, to Price, and visited the dinosaur museum where we viewed the Utahraptor and other dinosaurs found in Utah.

Next day we continued across state road 50—"lonliest road in the U.S.—past the volcano fields, south of Kanosh, where the Mountains are all black cinder cones, and arrived at Delta, in Millard County. We hired a guide from U-Dig-Fossils to take us the 50 miles into the desert toward Death Canyon to a steep quarry, and assist us with digging trilobites. This is reported to be the best trilobite area in the United States. The 4-wheel drive truck jugged over the rocks and cliffs and finally ended up in a deep quarry in the middle of nowhere. There were few other people digging there themselves, who had paid to dig and who drove themselves out to the quarry, and brought us huge slabs of the slate type rock, which he pulled out of the walls to split for the

trilobites. We collected fabulous samples and filled three whole cartons with trilobites. Some were quite rare, as the tiny “roundheads.” He instructed us in all their proper names. We spent about 5 hours collecting, and then were tired, so he drove us back to our hotel.

Delta is an area where there are a great deal of attractions, although the town is one block long with one super market, one hotel and 2 restaurants. However, surrounding area has a volcano park, great fishing, ancient Lake Bonneville, Fossil Mountain, Topaz Mountain for gem collectors, Great Basin National Park, and numerous museums.

The next day we drove to Kemmerer, Wyoming, which I am sure everyone knows is in the Green River formation, famous for its fossil fish. However, in a prior year, we had stopped there for a very short time and dug Warfield’s Quarry for a few Knightia (herring) and one nice Piscarara—a flat round fish, something like a perch. This time we made arrangements for a guide with Ulrich’s to let us into a quarry where they usually do not take tourists, as they dig it with jackhammers and lifts to remove the large Gar fish and Paddle—fish. The guide asked permission to allow us to take at least 18 fish including the large Mistomysus, a scoop-mouthed bottom feeder; a Diplomysus, a top-feeding fish with a pointed upper lip; and a couple of slabs of multiple fish. They usually do not allow this as these single fish sell for \$800-\$1,000 and the multiples for \$1500. The guide split some large slabs of these while we split some smaller slabs. The age of the fossils is 40 million years.

After we had our fish, the guide took them to a shed and squared off each piece with a saw so they would be ready for mounting. Then he took us on

A tour of the roundhouse where they have a retail store and showed us the prices the fish sell for. After that he took us downstairs to the preparation room where a skilled technician showed us a Gar fish he was preparing with tiny tools, chipping the 36 inch fish out of the matrix. This was being prepared for a Japanese museum, which was paying \$15,000 for it. There were other slabs in the workroom being prepared, some with 15 fish on them, and others a single huge fish. I purchased a special chipping knife and another tool to take home to work on my fish, and the technician showed me how to work on them. It was a wonderful experience and although it cost \$200 to have the guide, the experience and the learning was much better than the first trip.

Later, we continued on to Chicago, where we visited the Field Museum and viewed an exhibit which replicated the environment of the same fossils we had just dug up. In New York State, we took a tour of a fossil shop where we purchased a scorpion and a fern fossil, then drove back to Boston. The trip was two weeks altogether, and was one of the best experiences of a lifetime.