

Fossil Club of Lee County

November 2010



Bill Shaver

Message from the President

Greetings to all members and I wish everyone a bountiful Thanksgiving.

Its November; the hurricane season has come to a close, we are off daylight savings time, the rains have all but stopped and the rivers and creeks are just right for fossil hunting! What a wonderful world!

Talking about fossils, we are so pleased to have Mark Renz as our speaker for November. As many of you know, Mark grew up in this area and from an early age he was hunting fossils. He has authored several books about his experiences and he is well known for leading people on fossils hunts in the local area. His presentation this month will be a departure from his Florida hunts as he will tell us about his fossilizing hunt in Peru. We have asked Mark to bring his books to the meeting as we are sure that some of our new members will want to have their own copies signed by the author.

Another thing we would like all of our members to know is that Mark Renz was our first president when the club was formed in 1993. It was originally called the Paleontological Society of Lee County, but that seemed to be a mouthful and it was later renamed the Fossil Club of Lee County.

On December 4th, our Club will hold its annual Fossil Show and it promises to be a great show. There will be several vendors and the Imaginarium staff will conduct the Kid's Dig again this year. Several club members have committed to help with the

event, but we still need more volunteers. Please plan to attend the November meeting and sign up to help with the show. Also, bring in your items to donate for the silent auction, kid's dig, spin game, and kid's gift bags. If you are unable to make the next meeting and want to help with the show, contact any board member and let them know. You will be appreciated.

I am pleased to announce that the club now has an education committee. Louis Steiffel and Gunther Lobish, who are always bringing in specimens and sharing their knowledge with us, are now being officially recognized and will head up the committee. We are fortunate to have both of these people in our club.

Our November meeting will be held at the Iona House at the Calusa Nature Center. We will have our usual program format with our speaker, door prizes, Show and Tell, and the monthly raffle. As always, the club appreciates your donations and support of the raffle.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the next meeting.

Bill

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be held on, November 18th at 7p.m. to 9:30p.m. at the Calusa Nature Center located at the intersection of Ortiz Av and Colonial Blvd in Fort Myers, FL

OFFICERS

Bill Shaver, President, 239-834-0694
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
Michael Orchin, 239-574-6318

COMMITTEES

Cherie Neat, Newsletter
Curt Klug, Web Master
Bill Shaver, Speakers
Michael Orchin, Auctioneer
Kathy Arnold, Club Merchandise
Ray Seguin, Membership
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

REFRESHMENTS COMMITTEE

October: Thanks to Honey Archer
November: Dean Hart
December: Holiday Dinner--Members bring in a dish or dessert and the Club will provide a ham and a turkey as well as beverages.

November's Program

Mark Renz The focus of Mark's presentation will be about his fossil hunting trip to Peru. Some people who have heard him speak about this trip claim that at the end of his talk they were ready to buy plane tickets!

December's Program

The Club will have its annual Holiday Meeting on December 16th. It will be held at the Zion Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall located at 7401 Winkler Road in Ft. Myers. This is the same location we used last year for the December Club meeting and also where we held our Annual Auction in March 2010. The Fellowship Hall is located on Winkler Road south of Cypress Lake Drive and North of Gladiolus.

MINUTES OF OCTOBER MEETING THE FOSSIL CLUB OF LEE COUNTY

Date: October 21, 2010
Place: Iona House at Calusa Nature Center
Attendance: 39
Presided by: Bill Shaver, President

Bill welcomed all members and gave a brief update on the upcoming Fossil Show. He thanked Donna Johnson for her help in preparing the Show flier. Bill will pass out the fliers at the November meeting so that members can begin distribution as they see fit. Dr. Charles OConnor took the lead to announce the Show on the internet to the Lee County schools and Bill will handle the libraries. The Club has signed up its vendors for the show including a food vendor. Members were asked to see if they had any specimens they could donate to the Club for the various games and the kid's dig.

The Club is looking to hold its December meeting at the Zion Church and Bill will take action on this.

Bill thanked Honey Archey for taking care of the refreshments.

Dr. Gregory Herbert from USF was the program speaker and everyone really enjoyed his presentation their current research programs.

Show and Tell was done by Coby Pawlowski, Louis Steiffel, Ron Seavey, and Gunther Lobish. Coby held the monthly raffle.

Kathy Pawlowski, Secretary

WEB SITES & LOCATIONS OF INTEREST

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Fossil Club of Lee County: www.fcolc.com

Museum of Natural History @ Gainesville
www.flmnh.ufl.edu/

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

Southwest Florida Fossil Club
www.southwestfloridafossilclub.com

Orlando Fossil Club
www.floridafossilhunters.com

PEACE RIVER Water Levels
www.canoeoutpost.com

Mark Renz's Fossil Expeditions
www.fossilx@earthlink.net

Smithsonian Natural History Museum
www.mnh.si.edu

Florida Fossil Clubs
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

Imaginarium 200 Cranford AvE, Fort Myers
www.cityftmyers.com/imaginarium

Southwest Florida Museum of History 2300 Peck St., Fort Myers www.swflmuseumofhistory.com

The Bailey-Matthews Shell Museum, 3075 Sanibel-Captiva Rd, Sanibel, FL www.shellmuseum.org

Randell Research Center PO Box 608, Pineland, FL
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

Peace River Wildlife Center
3400 West Marion Avenue (Ponce De Leon Park)
Punta Gorda, Florida
Www.peaceriverwildlifecenter.com

Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife Burrowing Owls
www.ccfriendsofwildlife.org

FOSSIL FIELD TRIP NEWS

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It was the 25th of October and still very hot, but several club members still managed to survive the rigors of hunting for fossils in a phosphate mine. It was tough duty, but someone has to do it! As we spread out across the spoils, Coby Pawlowski began to shout---we thought he might have forgotten his water, but instead he was the first to declare he found a "meg". It was a fine specimen and as the morning wore on Coby found several other "keepers". Pamela Siegel found a real nice shark vertebra and husband Jim also found some nice specimens. One of the old hands, Louis Steiffel, found an assortments of nice fossils and will probably bring them to Show and Tell. All in all it was a great trip and everyone found something to keep. We sent a letter to our host thanking his organization for their hospitality.

For those of you who pursue fossilized sea creatures, Gunther Lobish is leading the trips to the Quality mine every Sunday so sign up if you want to give it a try. Gunther said that they have not found any vertebrate fossils recently, but you never know until you try!

It has been reported that some of our divers are making finds, but our Dive Trip Leader, Mike Siciliano, says the visibility is still not good. Call Mike if you are interested in a dive trip and if the conditions are favorable, he will set it up.

FIELD TRIP TIPS

Do some planning and be prepared. Dress for the environment. Go with someone if possible i.e. The Buddy System. Bring water and some snacks---don't get dehydrated or let your sugar levels get too low. Carry a few band-aids and first aid cream. Use good common sense and avoid risks; for example, when digging in a quarry/pit, be careful of cave-ins as the walls can give way without warning. Take a break once in a while---those fossils have been there for a long time. Don't over do it, save enough energy to get back to your vehicle and for the drive back home. Bring back some nice specimens and leave some for the next fossil hunter!

"FOSSIL HUNTING TIPS FROM LOUIS"

Finally!! It's that time of year that we can go fossil hunt the Peace River!! We've waited long enough. The water's down and the fossils are just waiting for us to dig them!! However, since I see so many fossil hunters go through all the trouble of driving there, getting to a gravel bar, and then spending hours digging and sifting, and then leaving good fossils behind, I thought I'd pass this one to possibly help. You see, whenever I get to a potential fossilly gravel bed, I first look at the piles of dried, sifted gravel on the edges of the river, left there by previous hunters. Very frequently I manage to find some nice fossils, before I even start digging! I have included a couple of pictures to show why this happens. The first one is of the back sides, and the second shows what they really are! If you don't look thoroughly, you toss out good stuff!! Always flip over a flat piece of bone. Never assume it is automatically turtle shell. In the pictures are Sting ray dermal skutes, giant armadillo skutes, fossil wood, and Glyptodont skutes. (Another frequently overlooked one is mammal earbones, but that is a story for another time)!



These seem to be the most commonly overlooked fossils, so check thoroughly before discarding. I hope this tip helps.
Happy hunting!!
Louis



FOSSIL SHOW 2010

PRESENTED BY
THE FOSSIL CLUB OF LEE COUNTY

**FOSSIL SHARK TEETH, VERTEBRATE FOSSILS,
ROCKS & MINERALS, INDIAN ARTIFACTS, BOTTLES,
GEMSTONES, FOSSIL SHELLS, UNIQUE JEWELRY.**

**MEET LOCAL FOSSIL COLLECTORS!!
FIND OUT WHERE & HOW TO HUNT FOR FOSSILS
SEE EXHIBITS!!!**

**FEATURING MANY WELL KNOWN FLORIDA VENDORS
KIDS' FOSSIL DIG - KEEP WHAT YOU FIND!!
RAFFLES, GAMES, DOOR PRIZES, SILENT AUCTIONS**

**FOSSIL TALKS BY DR. CHARLES O'CONNOR
10:00AM - *FLORIDA'S FOSSILS*
FOSSILIZATION, SABER-TOOTH CATS, MAMMOTHS, GIANT GROUND SLOTHS,
HUGE SHARKS, HOW TO HUNT FOSSILS & MUCH MORE!!!
MANY FOSSILS ON DISPLAY.**

**2:00 PM - *SHARKS*
BIOLOGY, FOSSIL TEETH & MEGALODONS - THE LARGEST SHARK OF ALL TIME!
MANY TEETH ON DISPLAY!!**

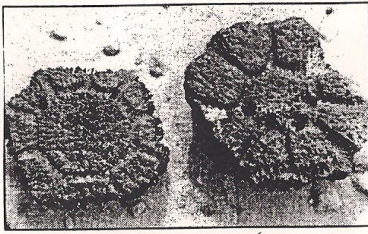


**SATURDAY, DEC. 4th
9 AM TO 5 PM**

**CALUSA NATURE CENTER &
PLANETARIUM
CORNER OF COLONIAL BLVD. & ORTIZ AVE.
ENTRANCE ON ORTIZ AVE.
Ft. Myers, 1-75 Exit 136 - Go West to 1st Light,
Turn Right, Entrance 500 Feet on Left.
WWW.FCOLC.COM**



ADMISSION \$3. (children under 12 FREE)



BY
MARK
RENZ

Finding fossils in Florida

Wading into a Florida creek or river can be like stepping into a time machine.

As these narrow bodies of water twist and turn through pine flatwoods and palmetto scrub lands, they often cut deep groves into the geological sediments of time. A foot may represent 100,000 years; 20 feet may transport you two million years into the past.

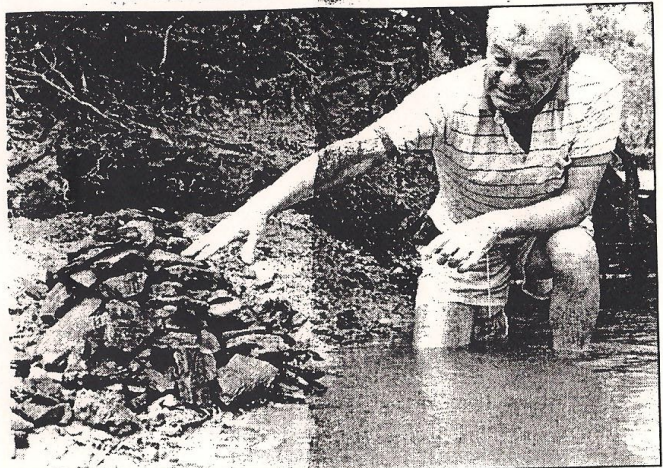
When you arrive at your destination be prepared for close encounters of the ancient kind: the remains of such strange and wondrous creatures as humpless camels, hornless rhinoceroses, 20-foot tall giant ground sloths, armadillos as heavy as a car, mammoth elephants, ferocious saber-cats and sharks the size of whales.

The ease by which one can locate their fossilized bones and teeth is probably one of the best kept paleontological secrets around.

Consider that throughout numerous glacial cycles in Florida's 54 million year history, the state was ocean, then land, then ocean again, countless times. In different epochs, the shallow seas supported long-beaked dolphins, tusked dugongs (cousin to today's manatee), 65-foot snake-like whales and giant white sharks with teeth exceeding six inches in length.

As the waters receded and the land rose, a multitude of mammals and other life forms migrated to the state for the same reason people do today — our warm, sunny climate.

If an animal died and parts of it



Southwest Florida resident Jim Farrell stacks like cordwood, fragments of shell from a prehistoric giant land tortoise. — PHOTO BY MARK RENZ

were buried quickly by sand or some other protective covering, chances are those remains would stand the test of time unmoested. Florida had no geological upheavals, no earthquakes or volcanic activity to destroy its deeply encased fossilized record.

So how do you locate these ancient burial grounds? In the knee-deep shallows of many of Florida's creeks and rivers, locating vertebrate fossils is easiest in gravelly-looking areas that contain small bits of brown and blackish bone.

As you wade through an area, stooping forward with your mask and snorkel in the water, doing what's known as the "bone bend," start looking for larger chunks of material. Turtle shell fragments and

eagle ray teeth (miniature combs in appearance) are good indications you're in a potential site.

If there's a sandy bottom, gently fan it below the pieces of bone you've already spotted, and see if more fossils might have worked their way down through the sand.

To tell if the bone you have is fossilized, tap it with a metal object. Does it sound like china? If so, it's probably taken on enough minerals in the water and various sediments to have become fossilized.

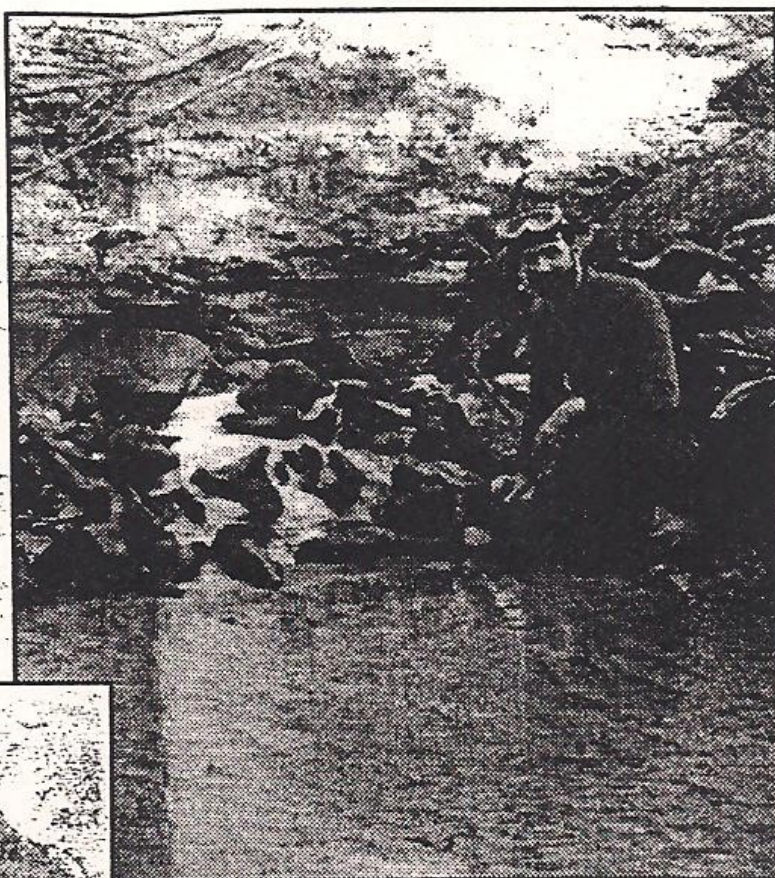
Snorkeling isn't the only way to peer into the past. Make yourself a small gold-panning-style screen with quarter-inch holes, and dig with a shovel into promising areas. Sift through the rocks and other

See FOSSILS, page 42



"Photos of shark teeth from the collection of Dr. Gordon Hubbell"

Wading into a Florida creek or river can be like stepping into a time machine.



Mark Renz examines some of the really remarkable fossils found throughout Florida's waterways.

FOSSILS, from page 41 _____
debris, and pick out the good stuff in your screen.

Pick up the book, *"Florida's Fossils,"* by Robin Brown. With it, you'll be able to identify many of your finds and learn more about the "dos" and "don'ts" of fossiling.

There are very few thrills compa-

rable to finding your first million-year-old horse tooth, giant armadillo bony armor plate, whale inner earbone, or extinct giant white shark tooth. And once you're hooked, don't be surprised if you wind up traveling back in time on a regular basis. ♦

Mark Renz is the director at large for the Paleontological Society of Lee County, and operates a business called Fossil Expeditions (368-3252) in which he takes people to Southwest Florida fossil hotspots.