

# Fossil Club of Lee County

December 2006

## Message from the President

Merry Fossilizing Christmas!!!!!!

To all you elves in the club, I hope to see you guys at the December meeting. It is always a nice meeting to attend. We get to socialize more than the other meetings and we get to eat great!!! Yes, it's the annual Christmas pot luck meeting. Bring a dish to share. The club provides plates, napkins and utensils. Sandy will "do" a turkey and Chuck will smoke a pork loin. I will get the water and sodas, so you guys bring the veggies and munchies and salads and desserts. Yummm!!!!!!

We do a modified sort of gift exchange. Bring a gift, get a gift. Do it if you want, no pressure, but it's a good way to do a trade, and maybe get a neat fossil, or something else, for your collection. Please mark it fossil or non-fossil so the trading will be fairly equal.

This meeting will also be our show-off-and-tell!!!! Bring your best of your best. Bring 5, 10 or 15 of your best and share with the club. We will have a great opportunity to see everyone's fossil treasures. I can't wait to see all your neat fossils!! Don't be shy, please. You spend all that energy, time and money collecting and now you get to show them off!! Tables will be set up around the sides of the room, so you should have lots of room to lay out your items. Bring a towel or something soft to place them on. We will have a very nice couple of door prizes this month. You get a ticket automatically, just for showing up, but this month you get an extra ticket if you bring some show and tell!! What a deal!!

This meeting only there will be no \$1 raffle. Save your donations until the January meeting.

In January our speaker will be Greg Herbert. He is an invertebrate paleontologist from the University of South Florida, in Tampa. Greg has hunted extensively in our area and is very knowledgeable about fossil shells. Our speaker in February will be Jonathan Bloch. He is the Assistant Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology at the Florida Museum of Natural History in Gainesville. Jon will talk about fossil whales in Florida. March will be our annual fossil auction. We will accept donations for the auction at this month's meeting. Please, if you plan to donate, do not wait until the last

## November Meeting

Our December meeting will be held on Thursday, December 21st at 7:00 p.m. at the Calusa Nature Center located at Ortiz and Colonial Blvd.

This is a pot luck/show and tell dinner meeting. Please bring a dish to pass and your very best fossil to show.

together, list the items with item numbers, and print the bidding sheets. I need enough lead time to do this right, so, like last year, I am telling you guys now, do not bring auction items the night of the auction and expect to see them that night in the auction. Thanks.

The annual membership renewal is due on January 1st, so plan on renewing soon, starting at the December meeting. These dues and our auction are our fund raising events for the club. We have a strong treasury and like to keep it that way. We also believe in sharing with the members, thus the refreshments at each meeting, and the club paid canoe trip last year, and the newsletter expense, etc. We may also help the ID website with funding if the University of Florida gets it on track.

A canoe trip is planned for January 20, 2007. As before, the club will pay the costs of the canoe rental. We feel this date gives the river lots of time to stabilize at a low water level good for fossil hunting. The place has not yet been determined, but Michael Orchin is putting the pieces together.

Werner Grabner has volunteered to help with t-shirt design so the club will have new t-shirts to wear. He has sent me a few nice sketches, and at the board meeting last week we reviewed them. Thanks, Werner. We will definitely incorporate your ideas in the new design. A t-shirt order will be placed shortly, so we should have them, hopefully, by the January meeting.

Al Govin has volunteered to do refreshments for January. We need someone for February and March. Please help. Don't be shy. The club will pick up the expense, but be reasonable, is all we ask.

The Cape Coral Friend of Wildlife will have their annual Owl fest on February 17. We man a booth at the show and

will need a couple of volunteers for two or three hour blocks. It's fun!! Do it!!

Lastly, don't forget to volunteer at the Calusa Nature Center. We need to try for 4 hours per member per year. So far most of the members have responded well to this request, and have had a good time doing it, but we still need to urge all who have not to please give a little time.

Thanks, and see you at the meeting.

Merry Christmas!!!

Louis Stieffel, president F.C.O.L.C.

**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  
Michael Orchin 574-6318

**Board Members**

Leslie Stieffel 458-9818  
Sandy Schwartz 772-8015  
Trip Director: Michael Orchin

**Committees**

Newsletter: Sandy Schwartz  
Speakers: Louis Stieffel  
\$1. raffle: Jose Langone  
Auction: Louis Stieffel  
Web Master: Curtis Klug

**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: November 16, 2005

MEETING TIME: 7:00 P.M.

MEETING PLACE: Calusa Nature Center

Number in attendance: A lot

Louis Steiffel, President, presiding.

Butvar and books for sale at meeting.

Thanks to Stephanie who brought refreshments.

December is a pot luck meeting.

Peace River water level is low.

Treasury is sound, \$4105.58.

Members have to volunteer 4 hours per year to Calusa Nature Center as part of Club membership. The Nature Center needs volunteer for their Christmas lights.

John Worth spoke on Calusa Indians. Mr. Worth works for the Randall Research Center. Thank you for the excellent talk.

Show and tell.

Due renew in January.

Possible January canoe trip.

January speaker will be by Dr. Greg Herbert an invertebrate paleontologist at the University of South Florida Tampa.

Jonathon Block will speak in February.

Election in April.

The Club fossil auction is in March.

Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife Owl Festival is on February 17, 2007. Need volunteers for a booth at the festival.

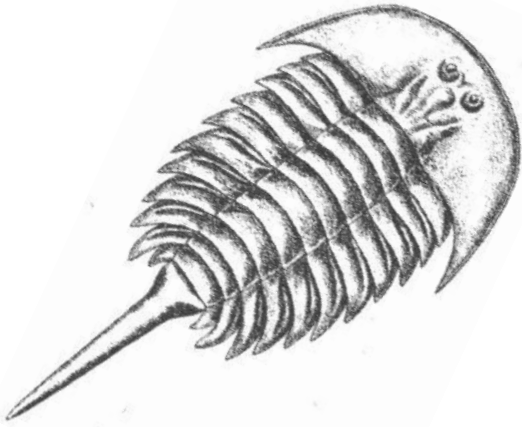
Secretary

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**Inquiring Minds want to know...**

On Monday evening, December 4th, Charles "the chuckmiester" Ferber and I were privileged to talk to a troop of cub scouts about fossils. The troop leader requested Chuck speak to them, as Chuck's involvement in fossil hunting and collecting was well known in scouting circles. He asked me if I would join him and so we gave a little show and tell and answered lots of questions. Hopefully we made an impression on these young minds, as they were very curious. We brought enough fossils to give so that they all were able to take home a couple. I have to tell you, fellow fossilers, that if presented with a similar opportunity, take advantage of it and give the talk!! It is very enjoyable to see the enthusiasm and quest for knowledge from these youngsters

and you get more out of it than you give. Now if we could only find the correct answer to the question: **what did dinosaurs taste like??**



### Coming Events

FCOLC Canoe **Trip Jan. 20th** Details to be determined.

FCOLC Annual Auction **March 15th** at the Calusa Nature Center.

Tampa Bay Fossil Club FossilFest **March 10 and 11th, 2007**. Call (813)

## *Volunteer Hours*

Call **Kim Pierce at 275-3435** to volunteer at the **Calusa Nature Center**. Kim is there Sunday to Thursday from 8:30—5:00.

You can enjoy the Christmas lights on the **5th Annual Wink/Lite 93.7 Holiday Arbor Lites Nature Walk Program** for free while earning volunteer hours. **Holiday Helpers** are needed for boardwalk attendants, face painters, laser show attendants, parking attendants, children's craft table, hot chocolate servers, membership/admissions table and Santa's helper.

There will be 100,000 holiday lights strung along 1/2 mile of cypress boardwalk with a Santa, cookies, hot chocolate, music and more. It is a great way to get the volunteer hours in and have a good time as well.

Please then send your volunteer hours along with the dates to me at [cameraqueen@earthlink.net](mailto:cameraqueen@earthlink.net)

Our total club hours stand at 98.5. Thank you to the members who have participated.

Sandy

# Fossil Is Missing Link

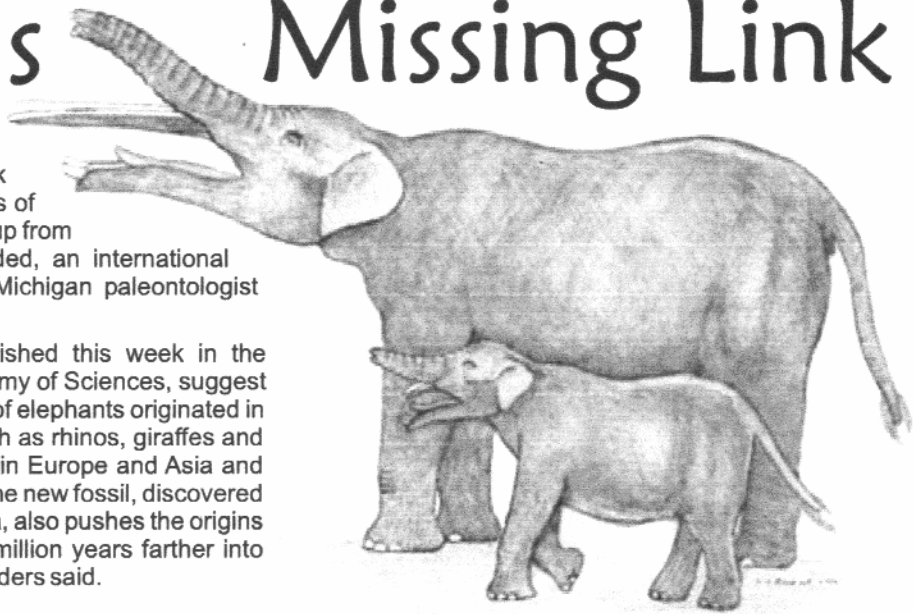
A pig-sized, tusked creature that roamed the earth some 27 million years ago represents a missing link between the oldest known relatives of elephants and the more recent group from which modern elephants descended, an international team that includes University of Michigan paleontologist William J. Sanders has found.

The group's findings, to be published this week in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, suggest that mastodons and the ancestors of elephants originated in Africa, in contrast to mammals such as rhinos, giraffes and antelopes, which had their origins in Europe and Asia and migrated into Africa. The dating of the new fossil, discovered in the East African country of Eritrea, also pushes the origins of elephants and mastodons five million years farther into the past than previous records, Sanders said.

From 35 to 25 million years ago, representatives of the group known as proboscideans (which includes elephants, mastodons and their close relatives) lived only in Africa and Arabia, and most of them were palaeomastodonts. These animals were shorter and smaller than today's elephants, with short trunks and tusks and simple teeth that were all in place at the same time, as human adult teeth are.

After 25 million years ago, larger proboscideans such as mastodons and gomphotheres—the ancestors of modern elephants—dominated the scene. Elephant-sized, with long tusks and trunks, these advanced proboscideans had more complex teeth that emerged more slowly, so that each quadrant of the mouth had only one or two functional teeth in place at a time.

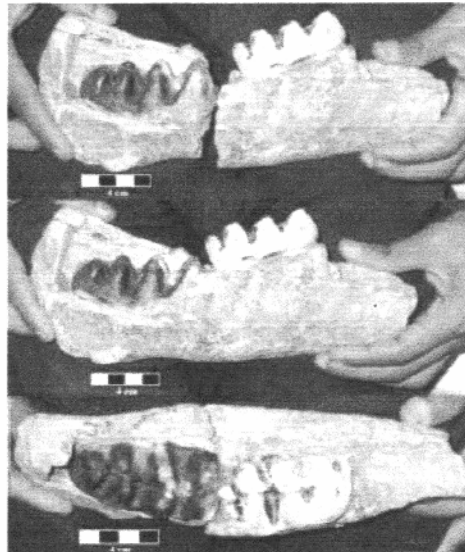
"The new fossil from Eritrea is important because it shows aspects of dental anatomy in common with the advanced group, including molars with more cusps and complex crowns and the delayed maturation and emergence of molars," said Sanders, an assistant research scientist in the U-M Museum of Paleontology. But the creature that the new fossil represents also had characteristics in common with palaeomastodonts,



## In Elephant Lineage

namely smaller body size and a jaw structure that suggests shorter tusks and trunk.

"In age and anatomy it is exactly the sort of intermediate evolutionists would expect to bridge the gap between archaic and advanced proboscideans," Sanders said.



The teeth of the newly described *Eritreum melakeghebrekristosi* are a tip-off to its position as a missing link in the elephant family tree. (Image courtesy of University of Michigan)

In addition to Sanders, the research team included Jeheskel Shoshani of the University of Asmara in Eritrea and the Elephant Research Foundation in Bloomfield Hills, Mich.; Robert Walter of Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Penn.; Michael Abraha and Tesfalidet Ghirmai of the Eritrean Ministry of Mines and Energy; Seife Berhe of Global Resources in Asmara, Eritrea; Pascal Tassy of the Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris; Gary Marchant of the Elephant Research Foundation; Yosief Libsekal of the National Museum of Eritrea; and Dietmar Zinner of Deutsches Primatenzentrum in Gottingen, Germany.

Sanders received financial support for participation in the project from a Scott Turner Award from the U-M Department of Geological Sciences.

