

# Paleo Footnotes

Newsletter of the  
Paleontological Society of Austin

Austin and Central Texas



Volume 1, Number 2 – December 2006

## From the President

The holidays are upon us! If that is stressful to you, do yourself a favor and give yourself the gift of getting out there and collecting some place familiar. That can be so relaxing, and it gets you away from all the hoopla. And then, when you are oh so relaxed, come on back to party at the **P. S. A. Xmas party, Friday, December 8**. Bring a side dish and a dessert, and bring a wrapped fossil-related item for the "Chinese gift exchange. The society will provide the main meat dish and the drinks.

**The society has elected three new members at large to the board.**

### **Congratulations to Erich Rose, Diann Strout, and Jamie Young!**

I want to thank all who participated in the second book auction that was held at our November meeting. This was the end of Ed Bowden's donated books. The \$208.50 is now added to the monies from the previous auction, for a total of \$814.50 collected from his estate's books. Add this to the \$1125.00 cash donations, **Ed's memorial scholarship** grand total stands at **\$1939.50**. My hope is to put up his fossil collection to be sold at auction sometime in the first quarter of 2007.

## Next Meeting

# *Christmas Party*

*Friday December 8<sup>th</sup>, 6:45 p.m.*

*Pot Luck and*

*White Elephant Gift Exchange*

Austin Gem & Mineral Society Building  
6719 Burnet Lane, Austin, TX

## Minutes of the November Meeting

Minutes of the October meeting published in the November newsletter were approved.

John Hinte handed out ballots to those present to elect three members to the Board of Directors. (Ballots were counted after the meeting and the three newly elected members are Erich Rose, Diann Strout, and Jamie Young.) Additionally, the following committee chairmen were elected at the meeting: Ed Elliott, Field Trips; Diann Strout, Programs; and Erich Rose, Newsletter Editor.

Final Fossilmania 2006 Accounting:  
Income           \$3,443.00

Expenses        2,738.14

\*Profit               704.86

\*to be shared between Austin and Dallas paleo societies.

Linda McCall announced that she is going to research the Edwards clay site in the construction zone at I-35 and RM-2243, and plans to publish a paper on this subject. We need to give her any help we can.

John Hinte gave a report on the Lake Texoma field trip in October. We saw a

nice specimen of the jellyfish Kirklandia.

John Hinte mentioned the college fund for Don O'Neill's son, Shawn. Action on this fund was tabled until Hollis Thompson attends the next business meeting.

Jamie Young had a sign-up sheet for volunteers for the Austin Gem & Mineral Society Show to demonstrate cleaning and give away fossils on December 1-3, 2006.

Our Christmas party will be held in this building on Friday, December 8, 2006, at 6:45 p.m. Bring one main meat dish or one or two side dishes. We will have a (fossil or fossil-related) Chinese gift exchange which will allow any gift to change hands (be swiped) twice after originally being opened.

Speaker fees of \$75-\$100 and mileage reimbursement for speakers from out-of-town were discussed. The board will tackle payments for these at their next meeting.

The business meeting concluded and the balance of Ed-Bowden's books were auctioned.

## Places to Be...Things to Do

Jan 22 – 23 Fredericksburg Rockhounds Show, Lady Bird Johnson Park

Jan 27 – 28 East Texas G&MS Show, Tyler

Feb 24 – 27 Fiesta of Gems, Southwest Gem & Mineral Society Show,  
Freeman Coliseum, San Antonio

April 28 – 29 Waco Gem & Mineral Society Show, Heart of Texas Fair Complex,  
4601 Bosque Blvd., Waco

## ***Belemnite Before Christmas***

by Carl Mehling

New York Paleontological Society Newsletter 12-98  
1st Place AFMS 1998 Poetry Contest

‘Twas the night before Christmas, 72 million B. C.,  
Not a creature was stirring. Not even *Pycondonte*.

The Cretaceous creatures lived in the oceans aware that the prophetic comet soon would be there.  
The oysters were nestled all snug in their beds, while visions of the Holocene danced in their heads.

*Protocallianassa* in her burrow and I in my shell had just settled our brains waiting for time to tell.

When out over the sea there arose such a clatter, I sprang from the mud to see what was the matter.

Away to the surface I swam like *Enchodus*. *Ishchyrhiza* rose as I pushed back *Hybodus*.  
The moon on the skin of the undulating flow, gave a luster of mid-day to us critters below.  
When, what to my compound eyes did appear, but the doomsday comet, the bringer of fear!  
With an unearthly glow in the southernmost sky, I knew in a moment we all surly would die!  
More rapid than mosasaurs, the warning it came, I whistled and shouted and called everyone by name:

Now *Clonia*! Now *Serpuld*! Now *Exogyra* & *Anomoedus*!  
On *Cretolamna*! On *Belemnitella*! On *Hoplopria* & *Brachyrhizodus*!

As sea weeds before the wild tsunami fly, when they meet with an obstacle mount to the sky.  
So under rocks and mud the fearful they swam, with souls full of terror the sky went KABLAM!

And then in a twinkling, I heard with a jolt, the cracking and banging of bolt after bolt!  
As I drew in my eyes and was turning around, an explosion of light reached down to our ground!  
The sky was lit up from Deep East to Deep West, and the sea grew angrier from wave crest to wave crest!

Whole schools of fish were flung on the shore, and it looked like the overstocked Fulton fish store!

The sky, how it twinkled as the land gave a shudder!  
I put my claws over my eyes and cried for me mudder!  
The sand swirled around like a great gyre to hell.  
As part of the sea bottom collapsed and just fell!

The edge of a rock I held tight to my side, as clouds of mud encircled my head in the tide!  
I held on for dear life, getting sick in my belly, as the whole bay shook like a bowl full of jelly!  
I was creeping slowly beneath the rock shelf, trying as hard as I could to protect my wee self!  
But the shock and surprise that I wasn't yet dead, soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread.

I spoke not a word but spied the Great Air, and found in the water my friends still there!  
Still in the mud, I realized my small blunder, and giving nod, became sure it was just thunder!  
The storm sprang to the North to plague us no more, and away flew the clouds like a scared pterosaur.

Then the fauna heard me exclaim ere the moon returned bright.  
Happy Christmas to all & to all a good night!

## More Sweet Christmas Bits...

### The Legend of the Christmas Robin

Although European robins aren't the same bird as the robins of North America, this is an inspiring Christmas Legend from a cross the Atlantic.

A long time ago, on the night of Christ's birth, a fire kept the manger warm while the Child slept. Up high in the rafters where no one had looked, a bird of brown had flown in from the cold.

It gazed on the scene below and saw that the fire was losing its glow. So it fluttered down. With its wings extended, the bird beat them swiftly back and forth until, once again, the flames were strong.

Time and time again the bird tended the fire, the colorful flames reflected on its breast.

For the bird's devotion, God decided to mark the bird with a fiery glow. This is how the plain brown bird came to be the robin redbreast.

~~ Therese Gmyrek,  
Auburn Massachusetts, Birds and Blooms,  
Fall 2002

### A Lovely Light

A candle's but a simple thing  
It starts with just a bit of string  
Yet dipped with patient hand  
It gathers wax upon the strand  
Until complete and snowy white  
It gives at last a lovely light.

Life seems so like that bit of string  
Yet day by day, if on life's strand  
We work with patient heart and hand  
It gathers joy, makes dark days bright  
And gives at last a lovely light.

~~ The Calgary Lapidary Journal, Dec 1991.  
Trudy Martin, Ed.

### Poinsettias – The Christmas Flower

Let your mind drift back – long before MTV, jet airplanes, Super Nintendo and frozen turkeys.

The year is 1915, and the Christmas sights and sounds include shoppers strolling Los Angeles' Sunset Boulevard in a festive mood. Some stop at German immigrant Albert Ecke's stall where bouquets of fresh poinsettia blossoms are offered for sale. There's not a potted poinsettia in sight; that treat wouldn't come for years.

Harvested from his farmland a few miles away, Ecke's bright red Christmas cut flowers were considered a holiday treat at the turn of the century. Today, we can thank Ecke and one other person for bringing us the poinsettia as we now know it.

The other person was Joel Poinsett, who saw this colorful plant growing wild when he was ambassador to Mexico in the early 1800's. Plants he sent home to South Carolina flourished and soon Poinsett was sharing the shrubby plant that blossomed dependably each Christmas season, with his friends. Horticulturists tagged it as the "poinsettia" in the ambassador's honor, even as a German taxonomist formally tagged it as "*Eurphorbia pulcherrima*."

Today, Albert Ecke's descendants ship millions of cuttings from the Paul Ecke Ranch in Encinitas to growers in over 40 countries. Some 500,000 finished plants are produced by the Ecke Ranch for consumers in California, Nevada, and Arizona and nearly 40 million are grown worldwide.

~~ taken from an article in The Sacramento Bee, Dec. 12, 1992, via CFMS Newsletter, Jan 1993

## Is Everyone Receiving E-Mails?

The following e-mail addresses are failing when Michael Smith does his e-mail blasts. If you recognize yours in the list please contact Mike (msmith17@austin.rr.com) and either confirm that it “should be working,” is incorrect or has changed. Our system of sending out the Newsletter as well as any time-critical announcements for meetings, field trips and events only works as well as the info we have.

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The purpose of the **Paleontological Society of Austin** is the scientific education of the public, the study and preservation of fossils and the fossils record and assistance to individual, groups and institutions interested in various aspects of paleontology.

The meetings of the **Paleontological Society of Austin** are held the third Tuesday of each month, 7:00 p.m. at the Austin Gem and Mineral Society building, 6719 Burnet lane, Austin, TX. The public is cordially invited to attend.

Dues: \$15/individual, \$20/family and \$10/associate (non-voting, receiving newsletter)

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The Paleontological Society of Austin is a member of and affiliated with:

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**PALEONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTIN**

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DATED MATERIAL – MEETING NOTICE

**FIRST CLASS MAIL**