

Paleo Footnotes

Newsletter of the
Paleontological Society of Austin

Austin and Central Texas



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President's Note

Hello again! With the lovely weather we've been having I hope everyone has had the chance to slip away and do a little collecting. So many local places are good again after the rains we've had. I know I've sampled a few.

On the 23rd, 24th and 25th of this month the AGMS is holding GemCapers. Our club is to have a table at the show and we need volunteers to sit in chairs and talk to people. It is a chance to talk to people who go to shows and advertise for our own shows and it takes little real effort. And you get into a good show for free! While collecting is certainly the best part of our club, we are all supposed to do something for the club from time to time. This is YOUR club and if it is to be successful it's going to take some participation by the membership. We don't ask much -- a few hours of your time every once in a while. And this should be fun. You don't need to be an expert, just friendly. If you're not going to the field trip, please give a few hours to benefit the club. If we don't all give a little, this club won't last long. Thanks! Ed

Next Meeting – Tuesday October 20, 2009

Digging Deeper into the Badger Fossil Record

by Pamela R. Owen, Ph.D.

7:00 p.m. at the Austin Gem and Mineral Society building, 6719 Burnet Lane, Austin, TX

BRIEF BIO

Pamela R. Owen, Ph.D.
Senior Paleontology Educator
Texas Natural Science Center
The University of Texas at Austin

Dr. Pamela R. Owen is Senior Paleontology Educator with the Texas Natural Science Center (TNSC), The University of Texas at Austin. She is a vertebrate paleontologist and mammalogist with a research focus on the evolution of the Carnivora. Dr. Owen is a native Californian who has been from an early age, interested in natural history. Her formal education includes a B.A. and M.S. in Biology from California State University, Long Beach. Dr. Owen conducted her master's thesis research on saber-toothed cats, American lions, coyotes and dire wolves at the Page Museum of La Brea Discoveries (the infamous "La Brea Tar Pits") in Los Angeles, CA. In May 2000, Dr. Owen was awarded a Ph.D. in Geological Sciences from The University of Texas at Austin. Her dissertation focused on the evolution of American badgers and included a detailed description of a new fossil species, *Chamitataxus avitus*.

Throughout her career, Dr. Owen has been sharing her knowledge of vertebrate anatomy and evolution. She has taught laboratory sections in biology, geology, and paleontology, and developed a new course in mammalogy at The University of Texas at Austin. More recently, Dr.

Owen has been an invited speaker for several Continuing Education and Community Outreach programs at UT. Dr. Owen currently serves as an Associate Editor for *Mammalian Species*, a publication of the American Society of Mammalogists. She has provided training in mammalogy for the Capital Area Master Naturalists for the past three years and has been a guest presenter at meetings of local organizations including the Austin Regional Group of the Sierra Club, Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center, Llano Uplift Archeological Society, and the Paleontological Society of Austin.

Prior to her appointment as the Senior Paleontology Educator in 2003, Dr. Owen was the Collections Manager for the Vertebrate Paleontology Laboratory of the TNSC. Not only did she fulfill the standard collections management duties, she also developed and implemented collection-based teaching and outreach programs. Dr. Owen continues that aspect of her work today as a participant in docent training and several education programs at the Texas Memorial Museum, notably *Evolution Professional Development*, *Museum Express*, *Identification Day*, and *Family Fossil Fun Day*. She is also the manager and staff supervisor for the TMM *Paleo Lab*.

FOSSIL STUFFING PARTY!

COME ONE - COME ALL - to the Fossil-stuffing party of the year! October 20, 2009 at 6:00 pm. We need to stuff 1000 sandwich bags with a flier and a fossil before the meeting commences at 7:00pm - so the more bodies the better!! Come an hour before the regular club meeting and show your club spirit! Please bring any extra small, clean, identifiable fossils you have lying around along with you - after all - we're going to need 1000! Any extras will be used for the dig pit or the spinning wheel, so don't worry about us having too many! Hope to see everybody there!

Linda McCall
VP / Show Chair

**Prior to the monthly meeting at 6:00 p.m. at the Austin Gem and Mineral Society building,
6719 Burnet lane, Austin, TX**

Next Field Trip October 24, 2009

Lake Texoma

We will be meeting at the gate/info office at Eisenhower Park at 8:00 AM

PSoA September 2009 Meeting Minutes

SPEAKER

Ann Molineaux presented *Watch Your Formation: An Introduction to the Geological Formation, the Basic Unit of Stratigraphy*.

MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 8:43pm by President Ed Elliot. The meeting minutes from August were approved.

Accounts - Treasurer David Lindberg reported \$14,946.60 combined from both accounts.

OLD BUSINESS

Tri-City Gem & Mineral show – Erich Rose and Ed Elliot signed up for the fossil display case. Ed will speak with Sue Postlethwait of AGMS about borrowing a case for the show.

NEW BUSINESS

Fossil Fest – Linda McCall stated that sign-up sheets will begin soon for Fossil Fest display case and building Teacher's Kits. A new 4-way flier will need to be made to include advertising for Fossilmania on the reverse side.

Fossils Wanted – Linda McCall requested fossils for the Gem Capers fliers – they just need to be small and recognizable fossils. Also, fossils are needed for the Teacher's Kits which should be a lot of something nice.

Gem Capers –A Fossil/Flier Stuffing Party will be held on Oct. 20th at 6pm (1 hour before next PSoA meeting) at the AGMS Building. Need volunteers for AGMS Paleo Table (same weekend as Texoma trip) Oct. 23 – 25.

Fossilmania – Joan Crane reported that 76 tables have been sold for Fossilmania. Fossilmania is Halloween weekend in Glen Rose, TX.

Omnibus Bill - Linda McCall mentioned that the Omnibus [Public Land Management Act of 2009] bill passed that says it is a crime if you collect on government land. This applies to invertebrate / vertebrate. It also says that they can seize tools used in the gathering of fossils.

Linda O'Neill – Linda O'Neill will be moving soon and notified Linda McCall that club members are welcome to collect the fossil material in her yard before she moves.

National Geographic Genome Project – Linda McCall watched this National Geographic show where you can submit your DNA (i.e. spit) and they will trace your genome back to find out where your line originated. It costs \$100/kit. She and Bruce ordered the kits for each of them. You can find out more information about the Genome Project on National Geographic.

September Field Trip Report Whiskey Bridge

It was a beautiful morning for collecting with ten members in attendance, Gary and Cathy Rylander, Linda McCall, Melody Barnett, Rosemary Smith, Dennis and Morgan Stock, Melvin Noble and myself. (I couldn't find my list, so the names are from memory. If I missed anyone, I apologize.) It had recently rained so it was a muddy mess and the glauconite was wetter than I like. None of that impeded us in our pursuit of a good time digging up those beautiful little fossils.

To list every name of every fossil found would fill a long page. A few highlights are certainly in order. The man next to me (who was on a trip from Minnesota and staying in Galveston) found a very nice large *Conus sauridens*. I found a large beautiful *Athleta petrosus*, one of my favorites. Several people picked up *Archohelia singleyi* (coral) pieces. Gary located a shell hash layer that contained a lot of shark teeth and Melvin joined him in excavating that hillside. I had found a fairly big tooth (*Cretolamna*?) and soon after Melvin came up and showed me a huge one. Later on I went up to the hash layer and found two (*Galeocerdo* sp) more. Gary and Melvin had picked up 7 or 8 each. Also, there were an incredible number of otoliths (fish ear bones) in that hash layer --probably because they were flat and heavy and sorted by wave action. Linda and I also found some really polished ray teeth.

We met another gentleman named Steve on the outcrop. He's a geologist (gas exploration) and was curious as to what we were doing in all that mud. He dug for an hour and had a good time finding fossils and talking about the geology of east Texas. Said that he might bring his son down there some time.

The Stone City Formation is younger than the Weches Formation that we hunt in East Texas, but is still middle Claiborne Group, Eocene. Facing the Brazos River -- on the far right (downstream) the beds are oldest, with the river bottom being the non-marine Sparta Formation. As you go to the left, the beds get younger with the far left crossing over to the Wheellock Member of the Cook Mountain Formation. This outcrop is considered to be 43-46 million years old.

We may have left muddy but we also left happy. I've been to "Whisky Bridge" quite a few times and each time I leave, I do so thinking about next time. I'll see you at Texoma!
Ed

The purpose of the **Paleontological Society of Austin**, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is the scientific education of the public, the study and preservation of fossils and the fossil record and assistance to individual, groups and institutions interested in various aspects of paleontology.

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.

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

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PALEONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTIN

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DATED MATERIAL – MEETING NOTICE

FIRST CLASS MAIL