



Fossil Club of Lee County

September 2006

Message from the President

September already!! The year sure is flying by. I sure hope all you folks are spending most of this time fossil hunting. I know a few of you are, as I see some pretty impressive discoveries at our show and tell portion of the meeting. You better get it while the getting's good, because before you know it, old man winter will be here and we will have to deal with the frigid Southwest Florida weather. Last year the temperature plummeted down into the 40's several times. Brrrrrrrr!!!

Last month Andreas Kerner spoke to the club and told us about a discovery few of us could ever hope to find. I am always suggesting that to get the most from this great hobby you need to get out hunting. Just get in your vehicle and go look for diggings. The rains have got the rivers and creeks too high to hunt, but the heavy construction in our area is still providing opportunities for land hunting. Any where you dig down here in Florida, there is a good chance of finding fossils. So go!!!! (and then tell me where you find them!!)

I must caution you that fossils can be dangerous. Not only can it be hazardous to hunt in deep holes or high spoil piles, with reptiles in the water locales, and lightning from above, you must be careful of the fossils you bring home. A fellow fossil hunter and club member (our vice president) was, just recently, cleaning one of his finds when it bit him!!! Yes, Al Govin was bitten by a shark that has been dead for about a million years!! The beautiful great white lower shark tooth was still razor sharp after all these years, as Al found out when cleaning it. He now sports a dandy bandaid as proof of his shark bite!! So please be careful so we don't have any more injuries to our club members.

Michael Orchin and Sandy Schwartz have really been trying to line up some fossil hunting places for you guys. Several trips to the Handi-Phil pit in Englewood have produced some nice finds for those going on the digs. The next trip is scheduled to be at Ruck's pit for the beautiful crystal formations and crystal filled clams. Sandy has kept everyone current with information on these trips, via the internet, so check your e-mails occasionally so you don't miss out. Sandy also produces the newsletter, which we all appreciate her doing, especially in such a timely fashion.

September Meeting

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

Our speaker will be Curtis Klug. His talk is titled "Heart of Stone" and is on the ways in which fossils commonly found in Florida are preserved, why they are preserved the way they are, and some of the kinds of information that can be obtained as a result of the mode of preservation.

Curt is currently employed by Water Resource Solutions as Chief Biostratigrapher. He has a bachelor's degree in geology from the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, and a Masters and Ph.D. in Geology from the University of Iowa, all specializing in paleontology. He is also currently the president of the Everglades Geological Society. His primary paleontologic interests are micropaleontology and paleopalynology (fossil spores and pollen) but he is also interested in Florida invertebrate as well as vertebrate fossils (all things paleontological). Oh yeah, he is also the webmaster for the Fossil Club of Lee County.

We have asked all members to volunteer 4 hours a year at the Calusa Nature Center, so as to meet our obligation for meeting there. So far we have had a fairly decent representation of members, but we still need those who have not given some time to please not forget. Just call the Nature Center and line up a time that works for you and them, and after, report your hours to any officer or Sandy. We will publish volunteers and their hours, so everyone can keep track in case we missed tallying your hours. Don't forget to bring show and tell to the meeting. You collect them, we want to see 'em!!

Curtis Klug will be our speaker this month. He is our webmaster and has set up our web site, all on his own, for which we all thank him very much. I am still

trying to arrange a speaker for October, but in November we will have a speaker from the Randall Research Center. December will be our Christmas meeting. I have no speakers booked yet for next year, but have sent out some feelers, so hopefully soon I will have commitments. If anyone has ideas or someone they would like to have speak at our meetings, please let me know.

It is not too early to start think about our annual auction. Even though it is in March, a lot of planning goes into it to make it successful. If anyone has items to donate for the auction, bring them in and I will guard them until the auction, and be able to assign lot numbers to them. Our treasury is strong, but we depend on this annual auction as our major fundraising event of the year.

I would like to thank Ian for the refreshments at last month's meeting. He did a great job, especially considering he had to travel from Naples to make the meeting. I also thank everyone who continually steps forward and volunteers to do the refreshments at each meeting. One of our older members, Rick Piper, recently had surgery and had to miss last month's meeting. He is doing better now and we all wish him well. Another member, Bill Davis has pretty much recovered from his cancer treatments and should also be back in fossil hunting form soon. We all seem to know people who are getting older and having more physical ailments. The best preventive measure for this is active fossil hunting!!! I bet you didn't know that, but it's true. So go!!!!!!! See you at the meeting,

Louis Stieffel,

President

Officers

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Trip Director: Michael Orchin

Committees

Newsletter: Sandy Schwartz

Speakers: Louis Stieffel

\$1. raffle: Louis Kimsey

Auction: Louis Stieffel

Web Master: Curtis Klug

MINUTES OF MEETING OF FOSSIL CLUB OF LEE COUNTY

A 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: August 17, 2006

MEETING TIME: 7:00 P.M.

MEETING PLACE: Caloosa Nature Center

Number in attendance: 30

Louis Stieffel presiding.

Thank you to Ian for refreshments.

The meeting began with an excellent talk by Andreas Kerner entitled "A Carnivore Den From The Rancholabrean (Late Pleistocene) of North Central Florida.

There will be a field trip to Handy Phil call Sandy.

Secretary

This paper was presented at the Geological Society of America Annual Meeting in Boston.

Largest fossil cockroach found: Site preserves incredible detail.

BOSTON -- Geologists at [Ohio State University](http://www.ohio-state.edu) have found the largest-ever complete fossil of a cockroach, one that lived 55 million years before the first dinosaurs.

The cockroach, along with hundreds of other fossil plants and animals from a coalmine in eastern Ohio,

throughout history.

The roach lived 300 million years ago, during what geologists call the Carboniferous period, explained Cary Easterday, a master's student in geological sciences at Ohio State. Ohio was a giant tropical swamp then, but this particular site was unusual.

"Normally, we can only hope to find fossils of shell and bones, because they have minerals in them that increase their chances for preservation," Easterday said, "but something unusual about the chemistry of this ancient site preserved organisms without shell or bones with incredible detail."

Easterday presented his findings November 7 at the annual meeting of the Geological Society of America in Boston.

Among features visible in the 3.5-inch long cockroach are veins in the insect's wings, and fine bumps covering the wing surface. The roach's legs and antennae, folded around its body, are also evident, as well as mouth parts.

Loren Babcock, associate professor of geological sciences and Easterday's advisor, said scientists have only incomplete answers about what caused such extraordinary details to be preserved at the site.

Easterday said the mine first caught scientists' attention because of the plants that were preserved there, including the earliest known conifer in the Appalachian Basin.

He obtained the cockroach and other fossils in 1999 with the assistance of Gregory McComas, an avid fossil collector and geology graduate of Youngstown State University in Ohio. McComas discovered the fossil site in 1979, and named it the "7-11 Mine" because it is located at the intersection of Ohio State Routes 7 and 11.

When Easterday compared the fossil cockroach from the 7-11 Mine to cockroaches living in the tropics today, he found them similar. Though the fossil cockroach is about twice as big as the average American roach, some modern roaches in the tropics are known to grow to four inches or bigger.

Since the fossil plants and animals lived at a time when a drought was rapidly drying out their ancient swamp, Babcock and Easterday hope

further study of the 7-11 site will reveal how these organisms coped with their changing environment.

Club Trips

There is a trip planned for the 16th of September to the Ft. Drum Mine. The fee is \$30. per adult with kids free. You will be collecting crystals that have formed in rocks and clam. Information was sent out previously. If you plan to go, contact Michael Orchin at his e-mail address MORCHIN@swfla.rr.com , he will give you directions. This trip was not planned prior to the last meeting, if you know anyone who does not receive e-mail, please let them know about the trip.



Whale tooth found by Sandy Schwartz at Handi Phil in August. 4" long

Refreshments

September John and Elsa Reilly

October **volunteer needed**

November **volunteer needed**

December No speaker, pot luck dinner.

Volunteer Hours

Thank you to the members who have gotten out and done some volunteer work for the Calusa Nature Center.

It will be hard to top Eric Jacobs with his 53.5 hours.

Al Govin, Louis Stieffel, Ray Seguin, Donna Johnson, Sandy Schwartz, Jose Langone and Chuck Ferber have also gone out and put in hours to the credit of the club.

Some people have reported problems with getting additional hours of work scheduled, that is because the volunteer coordinator quit suddenly but the problem should be solved by now. Total hours so far, 71.5

Call the nature center at **275-3435** to set up a volunteer opportunity that is convenient to you.