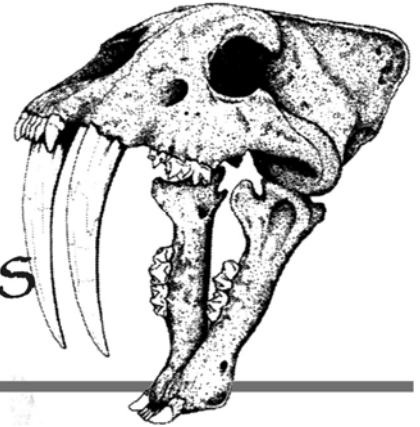


# NEWS

## Florida Fossil Hunters



Volume 18, Number 3

March 2008

### Prez Sez:

Grant Groves gave a great talk on pottery and Florida's past at the February meeting. You missed a good one if you weren't there. Next months speaker has not been scheduled yet... stay tuned.

Go to Vulcan Mine while you can before it gets too hot and the Peace River is still low so dig, dig, dig.

Field Trips: April will take us to Gator Land and the first weekend in May is our Peace River Camping Trip.

Shelley Zimmerman

### Orlando Science Center **FOSSILFEST**

Volunteer to help show our support for the Science Center.  
More info on Page 2.

### Coming Events

**Meetings held at the  
Orlando Science Center**

**March 19, 2008**

7:00pm Meeting

**April 23, 2008**

6:00pm Kid's Blast and

7:00pm Meeting

May 21, 2008

7:00pm Meeting

*For more info...*

[www.floridafossilhunter.com](http://www.floridafossilhunter.com)

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# Fragments

## **Venice Shark Tooth Festival**

Join us April 11th through 13th. The Sharks Tooth Festival takes place each spring against a backdrop of Venice's best shark tooth hunting beach, where fossil collectors from around the Southeast display and sell sharks teeth and other prehistoric fossils. In addition artists market their original works, vendors serve dishes from seafood to BBQ, and children are entertained with the Shark Tooth Scramble and the Mote Marine's hands-on exhibit.

Hours: Friday - 4 pm to 9 pm  
 Saturday - 10 am to 9 pm  
 Sunday - 10 am to 5 pm

Where: Airport Festival Grounds, Airport Ave., Venice, FL

Directions: Take I-75 south to exit 193. Turn right and take Jacaranda Blvd. to Center Rd. Turn right onto Center Rd. and go 2.5 miles (crossing over by-pass 41) then turn right onto Tamiami Trail. Cross over the waterway bridge then turn left onto Avenida del Circo, then turn left onto Airport Ave. Follow signs to the Festival Grounds.

## **Mineral and Gem Show - Free to Florida Fossil Members**

The Central Florida Mineral and Gem Society will hold its annual show on March 29th and March 30th, 2008, at the Central Florida Fairgrounds, 4630 W Colonial Dr, Orlando. The hours on Saturday and Sunday will be 9 am to 5 pm.

Admission for adults: \$4; seniors: \$3; students: \$2; and children under 12 get in free. In addition, our Fossil Club members can get in free by showing our membership cards.

There will be demonstrations of faceting, cabochoning and wire wrapping, lectures, silent auctions and a sluice mine for gems along with gems, minerals and fossils for sale.

For additional information contact John Piziak at 407-2399165 or email [annepiziak@embarq.com](mailto:annepiziak@embarq.com)

**Black Bear Festival** will be held in Umatilla on Saturday, April 12th. This is a great environmental festival featuring exhibits on animals, ecology, nature, and there is food, of course.

If you'd like to volunteer at our booth contact Ben Shaddrick at [just2ofus@cfl.rr.com](mailto:just2ofus@cfl.rr.com)

**Kelly Park 81st Anniversary Festival** Kelly Park/Rock Springs is holding their festival on Saturday, April 19th. If you would be willing to volunteer at our booth contact Be Shaddrick at [just2ofus@cfl.rr.com](mailto:just2ofus@cfl.rr.com)

## **Our Corner of the Museum**

We installed the first Florida Fossil Hunter display at the Orlando Science Center on Monday, February 18th. It consists of fossils from the collections of Russell Brown, Bonnie Cronin and Jeremy Smith and covers marine fossils. It is in one of the tall cases in the hall next to the Dinosaur exhibit for those of you who haven't checked it out yet.

Russell, Jeremy and Jimmy Waldron of the Science Center are already planning additional exhibits.

## Orlando Science Center **FOSSILFEST**

Be sure to attend and volunteer for the **Fossilfest** at the Science Center. It will be held on Saturday, March 15th and Sunday, March 16th from 11 am to 4 pm.

They plan to have tables for us and other organizations to exhibit fossils and minerals and such on all the floors of the Science Center.

This will be a great way for all of us to say "Thank you" to the folks at the Science Center for allowing us to meet there so be sure to show your support for this event.

## Kids' Fossil Blast

There were lots of curious kids checking out all the different fossils at the February meeting. Russell even brought in his latest shark jaw for all to see (and smell!). Our next meeting of the Kids Fossil Blast will be on Wednesday, April 16th, at 6:00 pm before our regular meeting.

The Kids' Fossil Blast is a fun, hands-on way to find out about fossils for kids mainly ages 4 to 14 yrs. Each meeting we focus on a different type of fossil using real fossils, replicas and printed materials. Sometimes the kids even get to take real fossils home. We meet every other month at 6:00 pm at the Orlando Science Center.

# Annual Peace River Campout

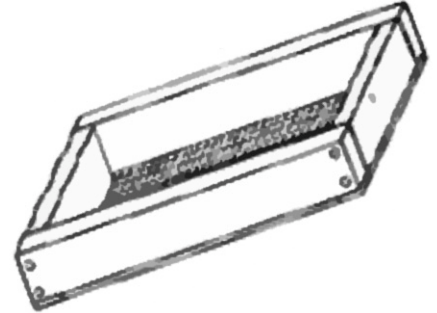
## Annual Peace River Canoe, Camping and Fossil Hunt

Spring is in the air and it's time to start planning for the yearly trip to the Peace River to hunt for fossils and camp out under the stars. This is a fun experience and a great way for novices to learn to hunt for fossils in the river and how to identify them.

It will be on the first weekend in May as usual: starting Friday, May 2nd and ending Sunday, May 4th. You can come for the whole weekend or just for a day. We'll be putting in at Bowling Green and camping at the island again this year. Details on times and where to park vehicles, etc. will be given at the March meeting.

Those of you who don't own a canoe, can rent one from Canoe Outpost (800-268-0083).

For additional information or to sign up, call Dave Dunaway at 407-786-8844.



**What to bring:** Canoe and gear OR rent a canoe, sifter, shovel, fanny pack or bag for collecting, bucket for larger items or scrap for the kids' pit. Optional: probe, stand, enough food and drinks for the time you'll be there.

Water(1 gallon per day per person for drinking and cooking) Cooler with ice to last two days. A 1 gallon milk jug filled with water and frozen works real well along with a bag of ice. Remember to drain melted water daily to keep food dry. Change of clothes in waterproof packaging(canoes do overturn at times so bag and secure all items) plus swimsuits, hats, water shoes, dry shoes, towels.

Sunscreen and insect repellent, plus personal hygiene supplies including toilet paper! This is primitive camping, folks; there are no portable toilets. First aid kit.

Cups, plates, & eating utensils.

Sleeping Bag, tarps, tent, flashlights

**Optional:** Camera, fishing pole, bait & license; chair; mask & snorkel, wet suit, marshmallows.



# Dung Happens And Helps Scientists: Scoop On Poop And Climate Change

Mead, a researcher at Northern Arizona University, is one of the world's foremost authorities on animal dung, and he's got the poop to prove it.

"You have got to laugh at this bizarre resource," says Mead, director of NAU's Laboratory of Quaternary Paleontology. "Although I don't think anyone is keeping track, I suspect we have the largest comparative animal dung collection in the world. If someone needs to identify dung, they send it to me."

The lab, part of the university's Center for Environmental Sciences and Education, has row after row of cabinets with thousands of dung pieces used by scientists to get accurate data on an array of topics, including the environmental changes that took place on the Colorado Plateau during the last 100,000 years.

"Dung is accurate for carbon dating," Mead explains. "It's a data set that typically disappears in the fossil record. All we typically get are bones, but with dung we get bio-chemistry. We can tell a lot about the climate by analyzing what plants the animal ate."

Through the digested plants, scientists can tell what was going on in the environment at the time, such as the amount of rainfall that was occurring. The data help researchers pinpoint when different changes in the environment took place.

"The plant remains in the dung allow us to determine the mosaic of plants in the local plant community. The community structure changes with changes in climate," he says.

Mead's research includes tracking and comparing ancient dung DNA samples to learn about an animal's gender, food and water sources, air pollen, parasites and community structure during the Ice Age. The data allow him to determine when and how an animal evolved and became extinct.

The collection includes dung from modern animals to pre-historic ground sloths and 40,000-year-old mammoths.

Molecular biologists in Denmark, Australia and Canada are using pieces from NAU's dung collection to compare its DNA to dung they are finding. "To understand ancient dung, one must have a modern comparative collection, and we have one of the best there is," Mead notes. "It is extremely rare to have preserved fossil dung—yet we have the best and most there are in any collection—from Siberia to Tierra del Fuego to Argentina—we have it."



*Jim Mead cradles a box of 23,000-year-old archived bison dung that came from a cave in southern Utah. Mead, director of NAU's Laboratory of Quaternary Paleontology, is an expert on researching dung for clues about ancient life. (Credit: Image courtesy of Northern Arizona University)*

Most of NAU's dung collection is dried and stored wrapped in tissue inside sturdy, archival cardboard boxes.

Mead opens a box of chunky 14,000-year-old mammoth dung and a slight scent of musty grass escapes. He points to the chomped blades of grass fossilized into the brown dried dung and surmises that the mammoth ate about 600 pounds of grass a day.

Mead currently is working with the National Park Service to figure out when bison were introduced to the plateau region. Previous research suggests bison dispersed into the Grand Canyon area more than 11,000 years ago, but with dating from dung, Mead knows that they roamed the plateau at least 23,000 years ago.

He also curates dung and skeletal collections for 22 national parks. Dung from the NAU collection also finds its way into public displays in museums, including the International Wildlife Museum in Tucson, Mesa Southwest Museum in Mesa and at the National Museum in Paris.

"It's no coincidence this dung collection is here," Mead says. "The Colorado Plateau is arid and replete with shelters and caves that are perfect for dung collection. Most other places in the world stay moist and the bacteria break down the dung."

Mead began collecting dung during his research at the University of Arizona in the 1970s. When he came to teach at NAU in 1985, Mead brought the collection with

him and has since grown it by gathering dung from zoos and remote regions throughout United States and in places such as Africa, Canada, Mexico, South America, Australia and Siberia.

"Although our research is humorous," Mead says, "the data from dung is nothing to laugh about."

Adapted from materials provided by [Northern Arizona University](#).

# Tiny Pterodactyl Fossil Found In China

CREATURE WAS SPARROW-SIZED, TOOTHLESS AND HAD UNEXPECTEDLY CURVED TOES

(AP) As pterodactyls go it was small, toothless and had unexpectedly curved toes - yet scientists are welcoming their new find as another piece in the puzzle of ancient life.

"We have this really amazing creature, sparrow sized, which lived essentially in the trees, showing us a very new, very interesting side of the evolutionary history of those animals," said Alexander W. A. Kellner of the National Museum of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

"We would never have thought of it," Kellner said in a telephone interview.

The find, by researchers led by Xiaolin Wang of the Chinese Academy of Science, is reported in this week's online edition of Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

Pterodactyls are best known from giant examples of the ancient flying reptiles, and most specimens have been uncovered in coastal areas.

Dubbed *Nemicolopterus crypticus* - hidden flying forest dweller - the new fossil was uncovered in the western part of China's Liaoning province, a region that was forested when it lived there about 120 million years ago.

"We just had one side of the story of pterosaur evolution, Kellner said. "This is now providing us with information about pterosaurs that were living deep inside the continent."

"It's a new species. It's showing us a new chapter of the evolutionary history of those animals," Kellner went on.

Speaking at a news conference in Rio on Monday, Kellner said the find "opens a brand new chapter in the history of the evolution of these flying vertebrates."

The curved toes, he said, indicate that the pterosaurs lived most of the time in trees.

"Because they were flying animals, their fossils are extremely rare. So, discoveries such as this are fundamental to understand the evolution of these winged vertebrates," he said.

It was the smallest of its group of flying pterosaurs, he said, and when first uncovered the researchers thought it was a baby.



This undated handout artist rendering provided by the PNAS/National Academy of Sciences shows a life reconstruction of *Nemicolopterus crypticus*, a small derived flying reptile that lived in the ginkgo forests that existed some 120 million years ago in present China. **(AP Photo)**

The skull was not fully fused, meaning it was not yet an adult, but the ends of the bones were developed, so it was not a hatchling either.

"How much could it grow? We have no idea," he said. "But even if it would double its size it would still be the smallest of its particular group."

The researchers said the legs and feet of *Nemicolopterus* had attachments for muscles indicating that it could grasp limbs, and unlike most pterodactyls, it lacked teeth. They speculated it might have eaten insects.

Matthew Carrano, a paleontologist at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, said some smaller specimens have been found but those were clearly younger than this animal.

"It is interesting to see some clear arboreal adaptations in this species," said Carrano, who was not on the research team. "It confirms a suspicion we had, that pterosaurs were more diverse in their habitats than we knew from the record."

"Once again, the Liaoning region is bringing out all sorts of new things," Carrano said.

# FOSSILFEST 2008

## Florida 10,000 B.C.

TAMPA, FLORIDA, February 1, 2008 - Before everything we know, prehistoric people hunted mammoths, built large pyramid mounds along our coast, and lived in fear of the saber cat, lion, and bear. On March 8th and 9th, 2008 the Florida State Fairgrounds Special Events Center will go back in time to a different land, when the Tampa Bay Fossil Club presents, Florida, 10,000 B.C.!

FossilFest is one of Florida's largest prehistoric shows where the public can view countless fossils found right here in Florida, as well as artifacts from Florida's prehistoric people. FossilFest features educational activities for both children and adults designed to teach the public about Florida's exciting prehistoric past when saber-toothed cats, giant wolves, sharks the size of school buses, and cavemen ruled Florida's peninsula. Gems, minerals and fossil shells, will also be on display. Vendors will be on hand to sell and trade fossils found both here in Florida, and from all over the world.

"Our goal is to teach Floridians about the animals and prehistoric people that were here long before us," says club president Michael Searle. "These mammoths and lions and camels and rhinos lived right here where we live today. Their fossil remains are everywhere in Florida."

On both Saturday and Sunday there will be presentations on Florida's Ice Age fossils and prehistoric people. There will also be seminars where FossilFest attendees can learn how to legally hunt for Florida fossils, identify what they find, and learn preservation techniques for these antiquities.

One of the highlights of FossilFest is the children's "Fossil Mine." Kids will have the opportunity to dig through a sand pit to recover authentic fossils donated by Tampa Bay Fossil Club members. It doesn't end there, club members then accompany the children to the "learning table" where they will have their fossils

explained, identified and bagged for the ride home. That's right, the kids will get to keep everything they find!

"It's a wonderful "hands-on" learning experience for the children," says Tampa Bay Fossil Club Director and Hillsborough County school teacher, Patrick McGirk. "You just can't believe how excited these kids get over fossils. They don't even realize they're learning!"

There will be free door prizes, silent auctions, and raffle prizes throughout the weekend.

"So many people these days are hooked on the Discovery Channel and the History Channel and the Learning Channel. Well, that's what we're all about," says Dr. Bob Sinibaldi, a former president of the Tampa Bay Fossil Club and Pinellas County school teacher. "FossilFest will appeal to anyone who frequents the Discovery Channel, loves science and nature, or has an interest in history and outdoor adventure."

FossilFest hours are from 9AM until 6PM on Saturday, and 9AM until 4PM on Sunday. Admission is \$5.00 for adults, children 12 and under are free. The Ice Age returns!

Where: Florida State Fairgrounds,  
Special Events Center

When: March 8th and 9th 2008

Time: Saturday 9AM-6PM,  
Sunday 9AM - 4PM

*Please visit us at [www.tampabayfossilclub.com](http://www.tampabayfossilclub.com)*

Michael Searle  
(813) 909-9358 - Home  
(813) 300-6129 - Cell  
[fossilnerd@juno.com](mailto:fossilnerd@juno.com)

# Florida Fossil Hunters

is a fun and educational group whose goal is to further our understanding of the prehistory of Florida. We encourage family participation and welcome explorers of all ages.

Membership is \$17 per year. Other household members may be included at no charge.

Meetings are held the third Wednesday of each month at 7:00pm, check the website for the location.

**Officers:**

President	Shelley Zimmerman	(407) 891-1260
Vice President	Paul Bordenkircher	(407) 687-3843
Secretary		
Treasurer	Sara Morey	(407) 353-8675

**Chairs:**

Education	Melissa Cole	(407) 834-5615
Field Trips	Shelley Zimmerman	(407) 891-1260
Fossil Fair	Valerie First	(407) 699-9274
Fossil Auctions	Dave Dunaway	(407) 786-8844
Fossil Bucks	Dave Dunaway	(407) 786-8844
Fossil ID Table	Andreas Kerner, intlfossils@msn.com	
Fossil Lotto	Ed Metrin	(407) 321-7462
Auctioneer	Roy Singer	(407) 645-0200
Historian	Valerie First	(407) 699-9274
Librarian	Kathy Munroe	(407) 846-7382
Membership	Melissa Cole	(407) 834-5615
	Joanne Maio	(407) 375-3635
Newsletter	Bonnie Cronin	(352) 429-1058
	Elise Cronin-Hurley	(407) 929-6297
Photography	John Heinsen	(407) 291-7672
Webmaster	Elise Cronin-Hurley	(407) 929-6297
	elise@liseydreams.com	

**Board of Directors:**

Dave Dunaway	(407) 786-8844
Jeremy Smith	(407) 293-9391
Roy Singer	(407) 645-0200
Ed Metrin	(407) 321-7462
Tom Tomlinson	(407) 290-8474

## Membership Application

Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Associate Members: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ New \_\_\_\_ Renewal

Please list any interests, experience, talents or just plain enthusiasm, which you would like to offer to the club:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Membership is \$17 per year. Our membership year runs from January to December. All renewals are done in December and January.

**Please make your checks payable to:**

Florida Fossil Hunters  
 Post Office Box 540404  
 Orlando, Florida 32854-0404

*Associate members are people in the same household, included at no extra charge, 2 adult votes per household.*

## Newsletter Policy

Articles must be submitted by the first of the month to be included in that month's newsletter. These can be mailed to the above Post Office Box or e-mailed to: elise@liseydreams.com. Articles can be sent as text in the e-mail or in Microsoft Word files (\*.doc).

# Florida Fossil Hunters Mark Your Calendar

**Tampa Bay Fossil Club, 2008 Fossilfest  
at the Florida State Fairgrounds.**

Saturday, March 8th from 9 am to 6 pm  
and Sunday, March 9th from 9 am to 4 pm  
See page 6 for more info

**Orlando Science Center Fossilfest**

11 am to 4 pm Saturday, March 15th and  
Sunday, March 16th, see page 2 for more info.

March 19, 2008

**Florida Fossil Hunters Meeting 7:00pm**

March 29th and March 30th  
**Mineral and Gem Show**  
Free to Florida Fossil Members

April 11th through 13th  
**Venice Shark Tooth Festival**

Saturday, April 12th  
**Black Bear Festival**

Saturday, April 19th  
**Kelly Park 81st Anniversary Festival  
at Rock Springs**

April 23, 2008  
**Next Kid's Fossil Blast Meeting 6:00pm**  
**Florida Fossil Hunters Meeting 7:00pm**

May 2nd through May 4th  
**Annual Peace River Canoe, Camping  
and Fossil Hunt**

Visit us online at [www.floridafossilhunters.com](http://www.floridafossilhunters.com)

Articles and comments should be sent to: [elise@liseydreams.com](mailto:elise@liseydreams.com)

Florida Fossil Hunters

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Florida Fossil Hunters News