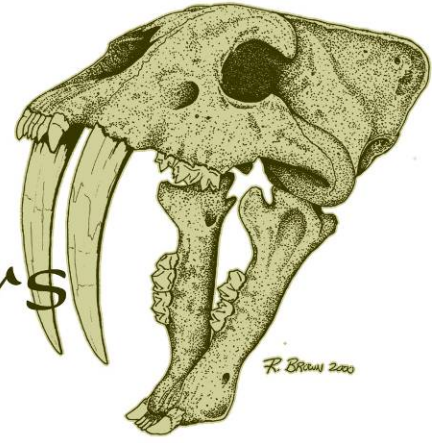


# NEWS

## Florida Fossil Hunters



Volume 20, Number 7

August 2010

### Prez Sez

It is a dream for any scientist to become the most recognizable name in their field. It takes hard work, hours of dedication, and some miraculous victories over journal review boards. Once you've reached that spot, you are met with nothing but the respect and admiration of your peers. It is with that respect that I must firmly declare:

Jack Horner is completely insane and must be stopped.

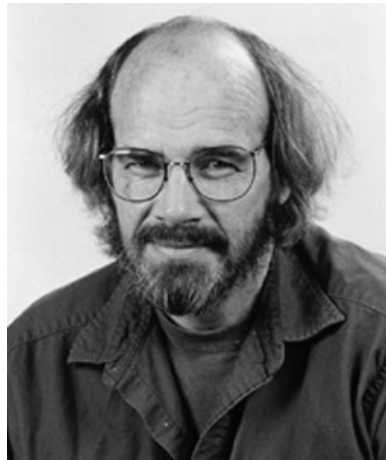
There was a time in my life when I wanted to BE Jack Horner. His discovery of the *Maiasaura* established dinosaurs as caring parents instead of the passive cannibalistic reptiles of antiquity. His research into dinosaur egg nesting patterns (which he also discovered) proved that dinosaurs—like many modern birds—establish comfortable nesting sites and use them again and again. And he achieved mainstream status with his insight and advisory on the Jurassic Park films.

But then, there's all that crazy he did, too.

This is the same guy who thinks that a 6.5 ton carnivore with a wolf's eyesight, that has left visible toothmarks (and sometimes teeth) inside the healed remains of its escaped prey, and that had a family pack hunting *modus operandi*, must only pick up and eat things that are already dead.

He's the guy who also seems to think that there are too many species of dinosaurs. We've discovered 1,498 species of mesozoic bird-ptiles, and a fraction of a fraction of the number needed to support 160 million years of biodiversity. But Horner has a nasty habit of routinely combining similar dinosaurs into the same dinosaurs.

One of the first times was when he tried to convince the world that *Nanotyrannus* was just a baby *T.rex*. (It wasn't.) Just a year ago, he decided that [Stygimoloch](#), [Stegoceras](#), and the brand-newly discovered [Draconyx](#) were all just *Pachycephalosaur* Jr. According to this research, dinosaur morphology changed drastically with each stage of life. (cont'd page 3)



*He can't see you if you don't move.*



*Hey, let's throw a ceratopsian in there, too!*

### Coming Events

#### MEETINGS SATURDAY

at the Orlando Science Center

**August 21, 2010**

2:00pm Kids' Fossil Blast

3:00pm Meeting, Speaker:

Alex Hastings on Crocodilians

Sept. 18, 2010

3:00 Meeting

Sept. 20, 2010

Deadline for Tshirt orders

**Fossil Fair**, October 9th and 10th

For more info...

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

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# Fragments

## June Fossil Auction

Our Fossil Buck Auction was a success. A BIG thank you to Roy Singer for presiding as auctioneer - he always makes sure laughter is part of the fun. Thanks to Dave Dunaway, also, for handling the payment of fossil bucks throughout the year and organizing the items.

### ....more thanks

Another big THANK YOU to Dave Dunaway for hosting our club cookout at his house in July. There were people drooling over his collections, kids splashing in the pool, dogs barking, chickens running, large quantities of yum-mies being consumed, interesting discussions on fossil discoveries and digging locations, folks exploring the fort, rides on the ATV, fireworks booming.....fun was had by all.

*Thank you, too, to all the folks who brought such good food to eat.*

## August Meeting

Our meeting this month...Saturday, August 21st, at 3 pm...will feature Alex Hastings as our speaker. His presentation will be on Cretaceous Crocodylians. You don't want to miss this....there have been some exciting finds.

Be sure to bring in any alligator or crocodile fossils you have.... as well, as any finds you have made this summer. We are always eager to see what each other has discovered.

### More good news....

Chris DeLorey, who is the head of education there at the Zoo, will be giving a presentation to our club at our November meeting.



## Kids' Fossil Blast

It's going to be a special "Show & Tell" edition of our Kids' program this month. Bring in the treasures you have found this summer.....from the Peace River, from the beach, from the museum, from walks in the woods or your backyard. We want to see what you found and hear about your adventures.

Our meeting will be on Saturday, August 21st, at 2 pm, before the regular club meeting.

## Brevard Zoo - Free Saturday Evenings

The Zoo is offering free admission on Saturday evenings through August 28th. The hours are 5 pm to 9 pm. This is a great opportunity to experience this wonderful facility. They are located at 8225 N. Wickham Rd., Melbourne, 32940. For more info, go to [brevardzoo.org](http://brevardzoo.org) or call 321-254-9453.

## Evolution of the Whales

Be sure to check out the August issue of National Geographic. It has a good article on whale evolution and great pictures of the fossils discovered. There are also some nice pictures of fossils associated with the cover story "Bahamas' Blue Holes".

**Juanita (Nita) Barfoot** passed away peacefully on August 1st. Long time members may remember Juanita used to come to the meetings with her daughter, Sharon Barfoot Reagan, and granddaughter, Saralinda. Our sympathies go out to the family.

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## Prez Says cont'd from page 1

But the thing that brings me to this article today was the announcement made just this week—when the long-standing *Torosaurus* was removed from the nomenclature, and filed under *Triceratops*. The ruling documents—by one [Jack Horner](#). As before, the argument is that the shape of the skull would change as the dinosaurs reached their golden years. What we've been calling *Torosaurus* was really just a *Triceratops* that made it to retirement.

Never mind that the only *Torosaurus* skeletons ever found were all smaller than *Triceratops*, and rarely found in the same locality. But then, I suppose they just discovered the Cretaceous period's answer to Boca Raton. Personally, I think they've had difficulty finding young *Torosaurus* because the *T. rexes* were all hunting them.

You may say that he's done more than anybody to keep the science of dinosaurs exciting for the general public. And perhaps you're right. But that's like celebrating the life of somebody who points his garden hose at the ocean because "It's looking a little dry."

Ultimately, Jack Horner's work has helped to keep young paleonuts thinking and imagining what the ancient world was like. He's even doing some positive crazy things, working with the team in Canada that's trying to regress chicken and emu genes to produce a modern dinosaur, and he did help Mary Schweitzer prove her findings of *Tyrannosaurus* blood cells in a femur in 2005.

If Jack Horner wants to keep making news, then he should be spending more of his time and energy in the important areas of his field—expanding the breadth of knowledge about prehistoric animals and making discoveries that advance our understanding, not revise it. If future paleontologists look back and say that there was only one type of Lion, and it includes Panthers, Tigers, and their juvenile form: the housecat, we'd take issue with it, right? So why should that logic apply to animals that don't exist anymore?

And seriously Jack, what was with JP3? Pteranodons with teeth? Really?!

Happy Hunting! Jimmy Waldron  
President, Florida Fossil Hunters



# PREHISTORIC PINE HILLS

## Prehistoric Pine Hills, Part Four

This is the continuing saga of the Pine Hills fossil story. In the last article, we had gone up to the Florida Museum of Natural History to draw on the knowledge of the top experts of Florida's vertebrate and invertebrate fossils.

Roger Portell is the Coordinator of Museum Operations, Division of Invertebrate Paleontology at the Museum. He knows his shells and crabs. In our display at the Orlando Science Center, he had already noticed an un-described species of crab that Jeremy Smith had discovered in Pine Hills. Looking at the other fossils from the site that we had brought to Gainesville, he thinks there may be another 3 or 4 species that have yet to be described as well. Roger pointed out that certain of the invertebrate fossils indicate an age near the border of the Pliocene/Pleistocene, with other fossils from the Miocene.

A fossil mold of a giant scallop, *Chlamys nematopleura*, of the family of Pectinidae was the proof that the bottom layer of the Pine Hills site was Miocene. The other Pectins (scallops) had formed a solid layer of shells higher up in the strata. These Carolina Pectins, along with a species of *Ecphora*, were from the Pleistocene.

Richard Hulbert, Jr., Collection Manager for the Division of Vertebrate Paleontology at the Museum, informed us that the one horse tooth was from the 3-toed *Nannippus* species which co-existed with *Equus* during the late Pliocene.

A small tapir molar caught Richard's eye. It could be from a dwarf species, *Tapiravus polkensis*. Based on fossils found in the Bone Valley region, tapirs are considered to be from the mid-Miocene, but specimens of *T. polkensis* have been collected from the early Pliocene. It's discovery in Pine Hills may mean that this species continued to live into the Pleistocene Era. Precise measurements must be taken and further study conducted to make sure that this fossil is not a milk tooth or un-erupted tooth from another species of Tapir.

As for myself, I'm just an amateur fossil collector....sharks are my passion. The species of sharks found in the lowest layer were from the Miocene, as represented by *C. megalodon*, *I. hastalis*, Extinct Mako, *Hemipristis serra*, and the extinct Tiger-*Physogaleus contortus*. Even the rare, deep-water, 7-Gilled shark - *Notorynchus primigenius*, has been found in these deposits. But this species of shark has been around before the Miocene and still exists today. In the higher layers, other species of sharks were found. These, along with other fossils, indicate that Pine Hills was submerged beneath the waters of the ancient oceans several times up to the Pleistocene.

*Next month - Part One... The Beginning*

Russell Brown

Note: New dates for the epochs are: Pleistocene- 12,000 yr to 2.6 mya; Pliocene- 2.6 to 5.3 mya; Miocene- 5.3 to 23 mya .

## *Book Review.....*

### **Mary Mae and the Gospel Truth,**

by Sandra Dutton, is a 129 page, fast read book about a 10 year old girl that is conflicted between what she is learning in school regarding fossils and her Fundamentalist working mother.

The story takes place in Ohio amongst the trilobites and Ohio Arch. The busy mother has no time to dissect the Bible but her inquisitive daughter has questions. Mother finds it easier to believe the simplified Fundamentalist biblical concepts. Nothing is more than 6000 years old. Granny is more laid back. She thinks God was in no rush.

Time doesn't matter, "ain't something we can pin down that good". Granny plays her guitar and makes up songs with Mary Mae about trilobites.

Mary Mae tries to count the 20 year intervals of begats in the Bible but gets confused because some didn't have children until into their 100's.

Were fossils placed to "trick us"? Dad doesn't want to go to church if that were the case, as mom says.

How does Mary Mae resolve the issues? She likes Church but has questions. She loves to listen to her teacher and absorb the amazing history of life but her mother wants to withdraw her from school.

The characters in the puppet show and on the stage of life help resolve Mary Mae's conflicts.

Actually, Granny is probably the sage of the story. I would have told Pastor Tillsbury that opinions are fine but science rules. Through acceptance of belief variations, in a literalist philosophy, Mary Mae now has the backing she needs to study science and spread the word.

I am out there every week discussing evolution so I really enjoyed reading this book and also liked its trilobite poem and its interview with a trilobite.

Valerie First

# Interview with Dr. Matt.

## Assistant Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology, Carnegie Museum of Natural History

By Griffith Wittschen

During my vacation to Pennsylvania I visited the Carnegie Museum of Natural History. I was excited to interview the Assistant Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology, Dr. Matthew Lamanna. He has worked at the museum since 2004. We met in his office that overlooks the *Apatosaurus* area of the museum's dinosaur exhibit, Dinosaurs in Their Time. My Juvenile *Apatosaurus* Rib Bone Number 2 is in its dinosaur in that hall. Dr. Lamanna's office had lots of fossils and casts, including some of the ancient bird *Gansus yumenensis*. His cabinets held several dinosaur figures he helped to create. One of these was *Caudipteryx*. *Caudipteryx* is a feathered dinosaur. Dr. Matt and I both like feathered dinosaurs. He says that all birds are dinosaurs, but not all dinosaurs are birds. He was nice enough to give me his very own figure. The interview had been going very well and was just getting better.

In Matt's office was a poster of *Gansus yumenensis*, which is a Chinese swimming bird. In 1981 a single foot was found, dating from 115 million years ago. In 2004, Matt, four of his friends and a digging team went to the Changma Basin, China. The first fossil they found was two feet together. Then they found about forty more fossil bird bodies, but they were all headless! Later they found as many as five fossil heads and necks. The pieces of the birds were found in different places because of decomposition in the water. Matt showed us a really funny slide show his friend made of this happening. He told us that a TV show called "Rise of The Feathered Dragons" was shot in China during their dig. At that time I had learned a lot about feathered dinosaurs. We have not even gotten to the really awesome parts of the interview yet.

After leaving his office we went to the Paleo Lab. The Paleo Lab is the first exhibit anyone can see right outside the Dinosaurs in Their Time hall. To my total excitement Matt showed me around the inside of the lab. The first thing he showed me was a cast of the upper arm bone of *Paralititan*, a sauropod he helped discover in Egypt. Matt said it took four people to turn the real fossil over. The bone was taller than me. *Paralititan* must have been a really huge animal, even in its time. We were not done in the Paleo Lab yet. Matt was talking about a new kind of sauropod. This sauropod is so new it does not even have its own name yet. He picked up a foot bone and to my surprise carefully handed it to me. The fossil felt very heavy and rough. I was nervous! Matt said he was impressed I could hold the twenty-five pound fossil. He placed it back on its padded area. We also looked at a fossil neck bone



of this new dinosaur. This bone was also very large. I thought the tour was over. Then Matt said he had one more thing to show me. So I followed him out of the Paleo Lab.

We went down the stairs to the basement. On our way down, Matt was telling us the museum storage was being improved all the time, to better protect the fossils for the future. He also told me there are places in the museum he ends up that he has not ever been before. He also thinks how he gets to his office after all this time is probably not the shortest way. The museum is that huge. Down a hallway, around a corner, through a door we came into a room called the Big Bone Room. There on the shelves were real fossils! Matt began to open a row of big metal compartments. Each one held different fossils! He got to the one he was looking for, and smiling, asked if we would like to see a really special fossil. I could not believe it when he lifted down the lower right jawbone of a big meat eater. Matt explained this was one of the pieces of a *Tyrannosaurus rex* discovered in 1902. This very fossil skeleton was the first one to be named *Tyrannosaurus rex* – it is the name-bearer of its species! The eight original fossil pieces of the first *Tyrannosaurus rex* skull, along with the other preserved parts of the

(cont'd page 7)

**Interview with Dr. Matt (cont'd from page 5)**

skeleton, were sold to the Carnegie Museum in 1941 for seven thousand dollars. The original owner, the American Museum of Natural History in New York, wanted to sell this first *Tyrannosaurus rex* because they had found a more complete skull and skeleton of this dinosaur in 1908. The fact that the Carnegie Museum has the original *T. rex* today is lucky for everyone, including me. On June twenty-sixth of 2010, I, Griffith Wittschen, was invited to touch a real piece of Earth history. I got to feel the huge teeth, they still had grooves on the edges for cutting and ripping meat. Some of them were bigger than three of my fingers put together. The jawbone part of the fossil felt smooth and solid. I do not think I would have wanted to be in that mouth for any reason. Dr. Matt and I talked about *Tyrannosaurus* being a meat eater, and how it was alive during the Cretaceous Period. It was all very exciting! I felt very happy that I got to touch the real and very important first fossil of the great *Tyrannosaurus rex*.

My visit to the Carnegie Museum of Natural History, meeting Dr. Lamanna and touching the past were some of the greatest things I have done so far and I am only eight. Dr. Matt was great to meet, funny to talk to and knew what anyone would think was cool to see in his museum. I really appreciate him taking time to do everything in this story. I hope everyone has a chance to visit the Carnegie someday and see the awesome Dinosaurs in Their Time. I cannot wait till next summer and my next visit to see my dinosaur friends. I will be attending the Fossil Hunters meeting in August and can answer any questions you have.

**2010 Fossil T-shirts**

Russell has come up with incredible design for this year's shirts. Since we ended up with so many shirts left over from last year, we are only going to print the number of shirts we get orders for.

**IF YOU WANT A SHIRT, WE MUST RECEIVE YOUR ORDER FORM BY SEPTEMBER 20TH.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email or phone#: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mark the number of shirts you want per size.**

**Kid** Small \_\_\_\_\_ Kid Med \_\_\_\_\_

**Adult** Small \_\_\_\_\_ Med \_\_\_\_\_ Lg \_\_\_\_\_

XL \_\_\_\_\_ 2X \_\_\_\_\_ 3X \_\_\_\_\_

**Adult w/Pocket-**

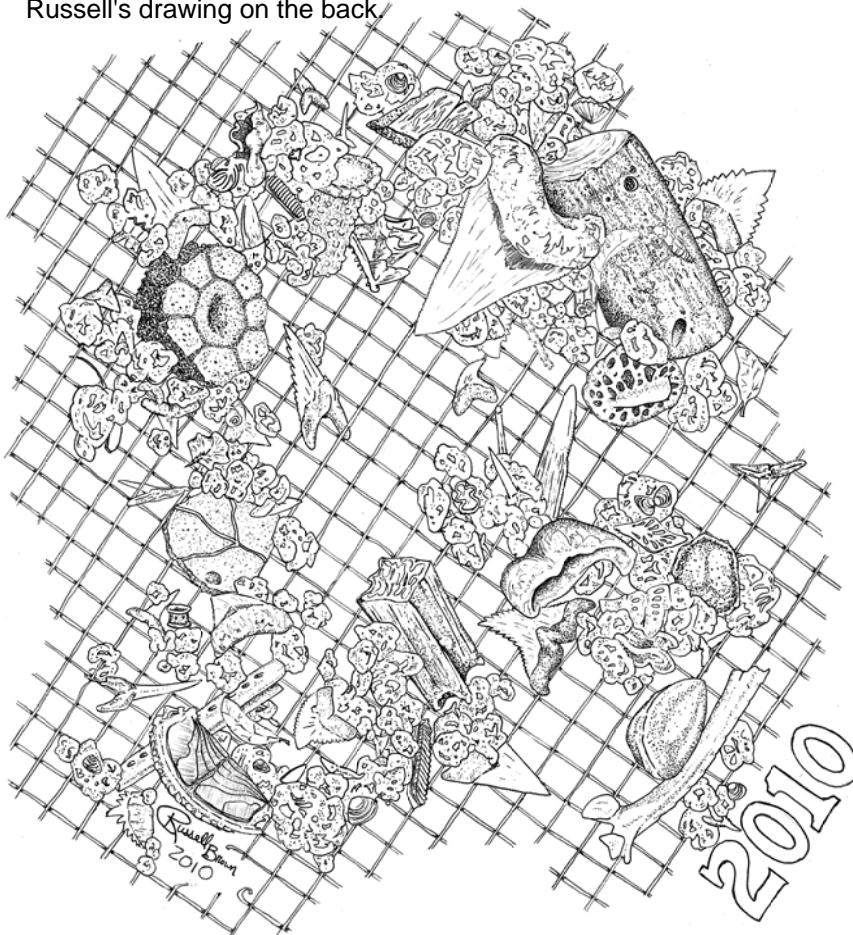
Small \_\_\_\_\_ Med \_\_\_\_\_ Lg \_\_\_\_\_

XL \_\_\_\_\_ 2X \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of shirts ordered \_\_\_\_\_

@ \$10.00 each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ due

The shirts will be a light green, pocket shirts will be grey, and kids' shirts will be light blue with the usual sabercat design on the front and Russell's drawing on the back.



**Piece on the Peace**

The river has gone down to 6 ft during the last week. If this keeps up, it will be possible to dig there during August. As always check the water level via the link on our website before you drive all the way down there. Happy hunting.

# 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	Jimmy Waldron	(386) 212-5814
Vice President	Russell Brown	(352) 429-1058
Secretary	Glory Kerr	
Treasurer	Sara Morey	(407) 353-8675

**Chairs:**

Education	Melissa Cole	(407) 834-5615
Field Trips		
Fossil Fair	Valerie First	(407) 699-9274
Fossil Auctions	Dave Dunaway	(407) 786-8844
Fossil Bucks	Dave Dunaway	(407) 786-8844
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	Joanne Maio	(407) 375-3635
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John Jelks	(407) 568-5558
Roy Singer	(407) 645-0200

# 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@lisedreams.com. Articles can be sent as text in the e-mail or in Microsoft Word files (\*.doc).

*Please note in subject of email 'FFH'.*

# Florida Fossil Hunters Mark Your Calendar

See page 2-3 for more information on events.

## **August 21, 2010**

2:00pm Kids' Fossil Blast

3:00pm Meeting, Speaker:

Alex Hastings on Crocodilians

## **September 18, 2010**

3:00 Meeting

## **September 20, 2010**

Deadline for T-shirt orders

**Fossil Fair**, October 9th and 10th

*Watch for Vulcan field trip schedule*



Join Our new facebook group:

Search [Florida Fossil Hunters](#)

## **Be Green**

We are *emailing* the newsletter each month. If you want to participate, just email Bonnie at [bjrb48@netzero.com](mailto:bjrb48@netzero.com) or sign up at the meeting. If you want to continue to receive a paper newsletter in the mail, you don't have to do anything.



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