



ROCK -N- ROSE



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Coming Shows, 2008

MAY 03-04
LUBBOCK, TX
Lubbock Gem & Min. Soc.
Lubbock Civic Center

MAY 24-25
FORT WORTH, TX
Fort Worth Gem & Min. Club
Will Rogers Memorial Center

FIELD TRIP INFO

The club has a trip planned for May 3 to the Midlothian Ash Grove Cement Quarry. Call Laura Wilson for more details, as space is limited. **903--894-6821**

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President's Message

The April meeting was well-attended. Lots of new folks and lots of goodies to eat. Haven't seen some of the "regulars" in awhile though. If you can possibly do it, I urge you to come to the new meeting place at the Discovery Science Place.

Lots of parking right next to the building. Easy access. Don Campbell gave a very informative program on the fossils of the North Sulphur River and a field trip there was planned for the following weekend. Also have a field trip to Midlothian before our next meeting. Hopefully folks will bring in some specimens to show off and maybe some extras to give to those who couldn't make the trips.

Speaking of field trips, if you know about any places that might be good for a field trip, please pass on the information to the club. Some clubs are having a difficult time finding places for field trips and getting permission from the land owners. Every chance you get let people know about ETGMS, what we do, make presentations to whoever will listen to you and generally get the public relations going. When you're on a field trip, please remember to be a good visitor. Don't leave any trash, fill in any holes you dig, close gates behind you, etc. Behave like you would want people to behave if they were on your land. Be polite/courteous to the land owner and always make sure to thank them for the privilege of hunting on their land. I know these sound like common sense things but sometimes common sense is not so common.

That's all for now. Good health and happy hunting to you all !!!!!

Robert (Rip) Criss



APRIL MEETING MINUTES

The April meeting of the East Texas Gem and Mineral Society was called to order at 6:55 p.m. on Monday, April 7, 2008 by Club President, Rip Criss. The Club meets on the first Monday of each month at the Discovery Science Place on North Broadway Ave. one block north of the Square in downtown Tyler. Approximately 35 people attended Monday's meeting, including visitors Alan Middleton, Pam Zemer, Kris Cook and her daughter, Bailey.

President Rip asked if everyone had read the minutes of the last meeting in the Rock-N-Rose newsletter and requested a motion to accept the minutes as printed. Laura Wilson made the motion to accept, her motion was seconded by Travis Phillips and approved by show of hands. There was no club treasurer's report due to the absence of the treasurer. There was no old or new club business.

Laura Wilson, Field Trip Chair, gave a report on the planned field trip to the Sulfur River on Saturday, April 12. She outlined the time to meet, what items will be needed and the best clothes to wear (old ones that can get muddy). An essential is a large trash bag to sit on while collecting and to put dirty shoes in when you get back to the car. The trash bag idea was suggested by Pete Cornell of the Fort Worth Gem & Mineral Club which is hosting the trip to the Sulfur River near Ladonia and Bug Tussle, Texas. Laura also outlined other club trips such as the May 3 trip to the Ash Grove Cement Quarry. (Full details of planned trips will be in the report by Laura elsewhere in this publication.)

There were no door prize drawings due to the lack of tickets which were loaned out to another organization and not returned. There was a really nice quartz cluster as the silent auction item. Following Laura's report and a lively question and answer session about trips, the club took a break. The break extended longer than usual due to the members examining displays on the front table, discussing the trips and enjoying a large table of refreshments.

Don Campbell's program focused on the upcoming Sulfur River field trip with a discussion about the geology, topography and fossils which may be found in that area. There was a spirited exchange concerning how muddy the river banks and sandbars will be after the recent rains and projected rains between the meeting and the trip. The footwear of choice is recommended to be sneakers or old tennis shoes; waders or boots are not suited to a river where the wearer is in ankle deep water one minute and hip deep the next. Don had his audience in stitches as he recounted how he lost his boots (and socks) one freezing night in Oklahoma. He painted a hilarious word-picture of his crawl across the rime coated mud to his truck – only a true Rockhound could appreciate. To illustrate his program, Don had brought display boxes of exhibits found in the Sulfur River environs. Recommended was a book, The Geology of Dallas County, and other books which were on display about the area. Don recounted how his interest in geology was rekindled and lead him away from a career in drafting. He said there is a wealth of information in public libraries and a person can read and do research on a particular item they are interested in and with the help of topographic maps, go right to the area where it is most likely to be found. Kris asked if there is a good place in Tyler to get books like Don had on display and he recommended college bookstores while other folks reported good success on web sites such as EBay. Don also mentioned the USGS – Bureau of Economic Geology in Texas, Austin. He said you can go online and download the entire list of publications. Part of the program was several old books and he stressed the fact that they can be a mine of information and details about a certain area. The trail of research can lead from old books and



maps to information from a geologic society to specific county maps. Don answered audience questions about maps and the standard color coding system which details ground contours and naturally occurring things like creeks – and that not all maps follow the system. A map reader is advised to check the legend printed on the map to get the best information. Don invited everyone to look at his displays of fossils, books and maps on the front table. Many of the audience stayed following the close of the meeting to ask questions and talk about the best places in the Sulfur River to find specific fossils and items of interest.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Penny Hawkins, substituting for Becky Whisenant, Club Secretary.



MAY MEETING PROGRAM

To be announced at the meeting.



Sulfur River Trip **By: Laura Wilson field tripper**

Well I have to say it was a small group from Tyler that made the trip to the Sulfur river, but none the less, we were maybe two to five minutes late! Our host Fort Worth Gem & Mineral Club with their field trip chair, Peter Cornell.

It was a beautiful day, the Masenburge family (5) the Cook family (2) and four ladies made our way down the steps into the river. Whew.... now I know why I was instructed to bring our lunches with us in our backpacks, to eat on the river banks. There were lots of things to collect, mainly shark teeth and worm stems, with some shark vertebrae, bones, and a nice Manasour tooth (way to go Pat Snell!)

There was walking up and down the river, nice sand bars (some people looked like walrus laying there sunning themselves on the beach.... but that is another story). Collectively between their group and ours, we found an ancient turtle shell, several vertebrae, a bone (unknown at this time), shark teeth from the tiniest to some pretty good size, a couple of what looked like small ammonites, a small live turtle (that was rescued), and of course your typical river debris.



Sulpher River Trip Cont'

There were several impressions in the rock, and there was LOTS of rock! Yours truly found an almost square light colored rock with intrusions of tiny sea creatures. It's lovingly being sliced for bookends; hopefully you will get to see it at the next meeting!

We had a great time, great fellowship, and can't wait for our next field trip with the Fort Worth group. Calendars please, May 3 to Midlothian Ash Grove Cement Quarry. There are still a number of places left, if you are interested, and if you've signed up and can't go, I'd appreciate a call. **We are limited from our group size to only 12.**

See you on the rocks!

Laura

From The Desk of Peter Cornell

Fort Worth Gem & Mineral Club's Field Trip Chair

Saturday, 11 hearty souls from the Fort Worth Club met in Ladonia for a field trip into the North Sulphur River. With all the recent rain it looked to be a good opportunity to hunt the river bed for fossils. We were joined by invitation, with 12 members from the Tyler Club headed by none other than the famous Laura Wilson who has been instrumental in obtaining access into previously closed areas. Our combined efforts have provided a variety of new and interesting trips benefiting both clubs. We caravanned to the river parking area and single file proceeded down the steep stairs to the river bed. The water was low enough to just wade through it and a large area of newly deposited gravel bars were immediately visible. Within minutes (literally) Susan had found a Mosasaur Vertebrae and the hunt was on. Everyone fanned out and started hunting. By 1:30 all of us were tired and we gathered to see what had been found. Laura found a nice Pleistocene mammal tooth with beautiful color and one of her friends a mosasaur tooth. A large piece of Pleistocene turtle shell was recovered by Chris and Schuyler found numerous small shark teeth. A Tyler member found a nice shark vertebrae and another a large boring sponge. What did I find? I found a nice sunny sand bar to lay down on and take a nap. I think everyone found something nice and with that we all departed for home. Looking forward to the next trip in the wonderful world of rocks.

Peter Cornell



FOSSILS and PRIMITIVE HUMAN ARTIFACTS

FOSSILS and PRIMITIVE HUMAN ARTIFACTS are a highly specialized area of collecting and interest. This section addresses important topics on the commercial fossil market, collecting fossils and various topics that define and explain this unique field. In the following paragraphs, the term FOSSILS will be used but is intended to encompass both categories of items.

Unlike more focused areas of collector interest such as classic antiquities, stamps, coins, antique furniture, automobiles, etc., the realm of collecting fossils encompasses such a broad spectrum and consequently demands a very broad knowledge and education. Knowledge is required spanning an enormous area of science. More importantly, a COMPLETE understanding to properly identify each specimen and to be able to recognize enhancement and fakes cannot be overemphasized! While the collector of fossils will, in time, hopefully gain this knowledge through their own experience and education, the burden of this knowledge along with ACCURATE and HONEST representation of what is being sold is ultimately up to the FOSSIL DEALER. Sadly, for such a vast area of world interest, FOSSIL COLLECTING exists mainly as an 'uninformed hobby'. There is a void of sufficient and readily available reference materials that address both FOSSIL IDENTIFICATION and FOSSIL AUTHENTICATION. This unfortunate lack of information fosters more widespread ignorance in both dealers and collectors than most other collector markets known. In this section, we aim to highlight some of these seldom discussed topics but in no way, can this section be considered fully comprehensive.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER so arm yourself with as much education and experience as you can if you wish to build a collection of properly identified and authentic FOSSILS and PRIMITIVE HUMAN ARTIFACTS.

FOSSILS AS INVESTMENTS:

In the field of rare collectibles, fossils certainly qualify with an ever-increasing demand and international appeal that transcends all countries, languages and cultures. This cannot be said for many other collectibles such as American pop culture items with respect to a Japanese or German collector audience. With fossil collecting finally coming into the mainstream market, evidenced by the surge in major international natural history auctions, it's likely to rank amongst the most promising investments with regards to the rarest and finest examples. Not only are deposits becoming rapidly exhausted, other factors have come into play helping make the acquisition of fresh discoveries from the ground as extinct as the fossils themselves. This will only accelerate the rising value of the best specimens, not common commercial qualities or types. Technological changes in machinery used in dredging and quarry operations now destroy fossils that were once found by more primitive manual labor. Many states and entire countries are passing legislation each year banning the collecting, owning and export of formerly important market sources. And finally, sites are being permanently destroyed by the advancement of Man with the building of new highways



and other infrastructures along with new commercial and residential structures, this all on top of prime collecting sites. What this translates to is that as more and more people each year are discovering the fine appreciation of acquiring important and rare natural history specimens, the source for these specimens is rapidly becoming depleted at an exponential speed.

From vintage automobiles to antique weathervanes, the rare collectible market offers a haven for investing if done wisely and if placed in only the finest and rarest specimens but no venue of this field has more promise than that of collecting rare fossils. In comparison to all other rare collectible markets, it is one of the MOST UNDERVALUED markets. For example, while 1960's-era American muscle-cars routinely fetch prices in the hundreds of thousands to millions of dollars, these prices are for cars that were produced by the thousands off the assembly line and only several decades ago! This irrational run-up of collectible prices can be seen in many different fields except rare fossils. Only recently put on the map with the advent of the Jurassic Park movies, the appreciation in price and interest of RARE fossils has only just begun. It's a shame in one respect since by the time many collectors will catch on to what is happening, the best opportunities to acquire new material will be gone and likely, a very finite population of truly fine grade and authentic fossils will simply change hands from one collection to the other at insane prices. The rapid emergence of [fakes and fraud](#) in the fossil market in the last decade is also a warning sign that supplies are becoming restricted.

Despite what some scientists or 'anti-private ownership' individuals may tell you to discourage the fossil trade, the highest quality and rarest fossils DO APPRECIATE and their value goes up each and every year. This is simple logic. They are not making fossils any more. Minerals, gems, natural precious metal specimens and meteorites are still forming in the Earth or dropping from the sky as you read this yet, we see outrageous prices for this material rise every year. Unlike these collectibles where the supply keeps growing, there are no more fossils! There is a very finite number on the planet. Some more rare than others but once a deposit "plays out" and is fully collected, or in some cases, is closed to the public for legal collecting, the amount of available fossil specimens to acquire suddenly ceases to grow. This transpires while collector demand for only the finest quality specimens drives onward, forcing values and prices higher as time goes on. In some instances, there certain kinds of fossils that outnumber collectors wanting them and you will always have an overabundance of the common quality, but generally speaking, most fossils are rare when it comes to the top grades which is why we advise "BUY THE BEST" or at least, the best you can afford.

Stick with the best quality you can afford and you cannot go wrong. There is a universal demand for high quality fossils and collectors exist all over the world for the best specimens. The increasing public awareness and appreciation of our prehistoric past means that the collector market continues to INCREASE while the supplies of quality fossils continue to DECREASE.

To recap, not ALL fossils are good investments - only the truly highest quality and rarest specimens. This rules out many types and certainly ALL of the commercial quality fossils. Remember, if you ever go to resell a fossil or your entire collection, it will only be desirable to a buyer if it is better material than what everyone else is currently selling! The fastest and most promising appreciation in value will be for the unadulterated, authentic fossil specimens of the absolute finest quality and rarest types ONLY. Invest in the BEST from a highly competent and extremely knowledgeable professional dealer who is well versed in fossil preparation, restoration and repair. This knowledge is needed to expertly weed out the ever-increasing fakes that plague the fossil market like it does ALL rare collectible markets. Get a guarantee in writing regarding the authenticity of the specimen and make sure the guarantee is forever and unconditional. Nothing's worse than bequeathing your collection to a museum or family member only for them to find out you have the best collection in the world of the worst fossils!!!



PRICING FOSSILS:

It may seem confusing or arbitrary as to how a specific fossil is priced. Since no two specimens are alike, minute differences can **DRASTICALLY** affect the value and price of a fossil. These differences may not be readily seen to the casual observer or neophyte fossil collector but to the market and discerning collector, subtle features **DO** make a difference and it is here where prices can vary dramatically! This is the case with **EVERY** type of fossil specimen. The presence of certain features that are not normally seen in typical specimens can cause a certain higher quality fossil to sell for **MANY TIMES** what hoards of the same type of specimen normally sells for. This is a simple example of supply and demand. The number collectors that want the **BEST** fossils far outnumber the quantity of truly top-grade specimens. There are "tractor-trailer loads" of your average grades for every superb quality **NATURAL** specimen. Whether you are talking about shark teeth, ammonites, fish fossils, flint artifacts or anything for that matter, this is always true in this business.

Years ago, we decided to focus and base our business model on providing only the higher quality material. An extraordinary amount of effort is required to do this from locating and collecting all the way to preparing the "best" specimens. Naiveté on the customer's behalf sometimes makes it hard to compete with a dealer selling a much lower quality specimen where it is being falsely represented as **NO RESTORATION, NO REPAIR, ALL NATURAL** or it is not from the source or is not even the species or type described. We see this **ALL** the time and it is disheartening. Nevertheless, we feel that if a collector focuses on **QUALITY**, the collection and hobby will be much more satisfying as the years go by. While we believe there is a place for the common specimen, we have decided long ago it only makes sense to offer and promote the better quality and more rare specimens. If we seem high priced compared to other dealers, analyze what it is they are offering. Is it honestly in the same category as a specimen we are offering? Are there ample high quality images for you to examine what you are comparing? Has the specimen been fully discussed, properly identified and has restoration or repair been honestly disclosed? A nick on a tooth, the presence of repair or restoration, artificially improving the specimen, etc., are all examples of a factor that can make a seemingly similar fossil worth only pennies to the dollar. The demand for the absolute **BEST** quality and **RAREST** fossils is insatiable and when we offer such a specimen, it is priced accordingly.

To be continued next month with the topics: **FOSSIL FRAUD, WHY COLLECT FOSSILS, WHY COLLECT PRIMITIVE HUMAN ARTIFACTS**, and the **LEGALITY OF FOSSILS FOR SALE and COLLECTING FOSSILS**.

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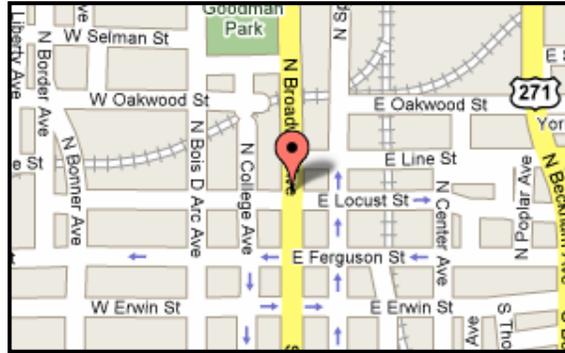
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THE EAST TEXAS GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY MEETS ON THE FIRST MONDAY OF EACH MONTH, UNLESS THAT DAY IS A HOLIDAY, THEN THE MEETING IS MOVED TO THE SECOND MONDAY. WE MEET AT THE DISCOVERY SCIENCE PLACE, 308 NORTH BROADWAY, JUST NORTH OF DOWNTOWN TYLER, TEXAS. MEETINGS BEGIN AT 6:45 P.M.

NOTE TO EDITORS

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Purpose of the East Texas Gem & Mineral Society

Is to promote the study of geology, mineralogy, fossils and the lapidary arts.

The public is always invited to attend all club meetings.

Annual dues are \$10.00 for adults and \$2.50 for juniors.