

The Paleo Times

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President's Corner

We're off to a good start finding new speakers to address our club this year! Dr. David Schmidt of Westminster College (Fulton, Missouri) will speak to us this month on vertebrates of the White River formation (think oreodonts- a diverse group of crazy looking mammals). Dr. James Chiffbauer of the University of Missouri will speak in late spring on soft tissue preservation, Lagerstätten and other subjects; and we have Dr. Andrew McDonald returning to update us on his field work including progress on producing a paleo related video that may feature some work going on near the STL area.

I also want to begin planning a 3-day weekend trip to visit a museum in Springfield, Indianapolis or Chicago. Be thinking of what month works best with your vacation and family and be ready to throw out some suggestions to me at the next meeting.

Abby

Congratulations!

Congratulations go out to John and Dorothy who have been awarded a lifetime membership by the EMSP board of directors. This award is presented to long-time members who have exhibited sustained outstanding service to our club. Congratulations John and Dorothy!



DUES are DUE

Dues are payable in January and are \$20.00 per household per year if receiving the newsletter by e-mail or \$25 for those receiving the newsletter by regular mail. **We will carry 2015 members until the end of February. After that, those who have not paid will be dropped from the mailing list and will not be eligible to attend field trips or other events.** See Rick at the February meeting or mail a check (payable to Eastern Missouri Society for Paleontology) to:

**EMSP
P.O. Box 220273
St. Louis, MO. 63122**

February Meeting

Our next meeting is **Friday, February 12, 2016** at 7:30 pm in the New Earth and Planetary Sciences building on the Washington University campus. Our speaker for the evening will be Dr. David Schmidt from Westminster College in Fulton, MO. Dr. Schmidt earned a B.S. in geology at the University of Missouri at Kansas City in 1999 and an M.S. in geology at Fort Hays State University in 2002.

In 2009, he graduated from Texas Tech University earning a Ph. D. in geology. Dr. Schmidt became a member of the Westminster faculty in the fall of 2013. Prior to this, he taught at Wayland Baptist University (Plainview, Texas) for five years and assisted in the development of a new geology program there. Current research interests include: vertebrate paleontology of Chadronian, Orellan, and Hell Creek stratigraphy; invertebrate paleontology and sedimentology of the Blackwater Draw Formation.

Please join us for what should be a great program.

Fossil of the Month



The February fossil of the month is the blastoid, or more specifically, blastoids of the genus *Pentremites*. *Pentremites* is an extinct genus of the phylum Echinodermata, which includes crinoids, starfish and echinoids. The phylum is the largest animal group without any freshwater representatives. Members are recognizable by their five-point radial symmetry.

Pentremites range in geologic age from Upper Pennsylvanian (where two species are known) to the Upper Mississippian, where there may be more than 60 species. They are very common fossils in some beds of Chester Series (Upper Mississippian) rocks in an area known as the Illinois Basin which includes Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, northern Tennessee and eastern Missouri.

Pictured clockwise from upper left are: *Pentremites buttsi*, *P. gemmiformis*, *P. symmetricus*, *P. godoni major*, *P. godoni* and *P. welleri*. These specimens were collected in the early 1980's along Prairie du Long creek near Floraville in St. Clair County, Illinois.

THANK YOU!

A big **Thank You** to Dr. Bruce Stinchcomb for his interesting and informative presentation on the Owl Creek formation and fossils found at his Ardeola dig site in southeastern Missouri. If you missed the January meeting you also missed seeing a great display of fossils from the site, including the giant ammonite that everyone drooled over. Who's up for a field trip to Ardeola?

The Fossils of Floraville

Of the many fossil localities in southwestern Illinois, exposures along Prairie du Long Creek east of Vogel School and 1/4 mile northwest of Floraville in St. Clair County are probably the best known. This site, historically known as the Floraville locality, has more recently been erroneously referred to on specimen labels as Millstadt. Known primarily for abundant blastoid specimens of the genus *Pentremites*, the Floraville site has produced well-preserved Upper Mississippian fossils for more than one hundred fifty years. In addition to several species of *Pentremites*, many brachiopods, horn corals, bryozoans and rarely, crinoids, edrioasteroids, echinoids, starfish, trilobites, and obscure blastoids have been found.

This site has seen its heyday, however. Once immensely popular, interest in this locality has declined in recent years. Several factors are contributing to its demise. Overzealous collecting has undercut the strata allowing slumping overburden to cover nearly all fossil-bearing layers. The changing creek channel no longer scours away overburden, allowing woody vegetation to establish a foothold. Finally, property owners are no longer as amicable to visitors as they once were because of a few individuals digging in the road or blocking access to farm fields.

Historically, the strata exposed at Floraville have been collectively called the Paint Creek Formation (S. Weller 1913). The formation was later redefined (Swann 1963) as the Paint Creek Group, containing the Downeys Bluff, Bethel, and Ridenhower formations. This is the nomenclature generally accepted today.

The shale, siltstone and occasional thin limestone lenses exposed along Prairie du Long creek represent the Ridenhower formation. Fossils are found throughout the exposure, particularly in the lower shale and limestone lenses. Blastoids, brachiopods and corals are particularly abundant in some layers.

Calendar

Jan. 29-Feb. 14	Tucson Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show Tucson, Arizona
Feb. 12	EMSP Monthly Meeting. 7:30pm Washington University
Feb. 19-21	Cabin Fever Show Kirkwood Community Center Kirkwood, Missouri
Feb. 19-21	GeoFest Indiana State Fairgrounds Indianapolis, Indiana
Mar. 11-13	Assoc. of Earth Science Clubs Show KCI Expo Center Kansas City, Missouri
Mar. 25-27	St. Louis Rock Hobby Club Show Machinist Hall Bridgeton, Missouri
Apr. 1-3	MAPS EXPO Sharpless Auction Facility Iowa City, Iowa
Apr. 9-10	S. Illinois Earth Science Show City Pavilion Marion, Illinois
May 28-29	40 th Annual Mineral & Fossil Show DuPage County Fairgrounds Wheaton, Illinois
July 1-30	Paleotrek Garfield County, Montana
August 7	Club picnic at Kirkwood Park

LOST and FOUND

A soft-side cooler and its contents were left at Carl Campbell's house after the holiday party. It will be brought to the February meeting should the owner wish to claim it.



We have received word that former club member **Jere Cadoret** of Rolla, Missouri, passed away on December 29 after an extended illness. Condolences go out to his wife, **Cheryl**, and family.

Rick's Ramblings

It's that time again when the great migration to Tucson, Arizona takes place. A few members of our club will make the trip this year. For those not familiar with Tucson, the ultimate destination is the Tucson Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show which officially begins on January 29th and runs for two weeks. The show, actually many shows (this year 43 separate locations throughout the city) draws people from all over the world and may be the largest event of its kind anywhere. Many venues are open to the public, but some are wholesale-only and are restricted to licensed buyers. Venues include most hotels in the downtown area. Additional sites are parking lots where large tent cities have been erected. Some locations concentrate dealers of a particular type of thing, such as fossils. Others offer a variety of products.

One of my favorite venues, formerly called Electric Park, is the Keno Gem & Mineral show at the Keno Sports Complex. This site, covering several hundred acres, contains a large number of tents (some large enough to hold a football field) where practically anything legal can be purchased. It resembles a giant flea market offering mostly rocks, minerals, fossils and jewelry, however, some very unusual non-hobby items can also be found. This venue includes a large tent where nearly everything for sale is a Moroccan fake. Good learning opportunity!

Cash is King in Tucson and a substantial discount is possible by paying with cash. The term used to describe the discount is "keystone". For those in the know, a "K" on the price tag means the price to buyers with a retail sales license is 1/2 the sticker price. Some discounts are even better. Price tags reflect the quality or rarity of items for sale and range from just a few dollars to hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Because mass quantities of fossils (and minerals) are offered for sale, anyone can find affordable specimens for their collections; one reason why our club purchases specimens in Tucson for resale at the St. Louis shows.

I highly recommend attending the Tucson show at least once in your life. The experience is incredible and there are many other things to do and see in the area.

The Eastern Missouri Society for Paleontology (EMSP) is a Missouri registered not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting the enjoyment of fossil collecting. It is open to all individuals interested in learning about the history of ancient life on earth. The club membership includes professional paleontologists as well as amateur hobbyists. The EMSP provides an open forum for the exchange of information and access to expertise on collecting, identifying, preparing and displaying fossils.

EMSP meetings are held on the second Friday of every month (except July, August and December) at 7:30pm in the Earth and Planetary Sciences Building on the campus of Washington University. Each meeting includes an informal exchange of information and speakers on a variety of fossil-related topics.

Weather permitting, field trips to fossil collection sites are held each month. Led by experienced collectors, these trips are a fun way to augment discussions at the monthly meetings. The club participates in joint field trips with other paleo clubs, visiting fossil sites throughout the United States. EMSP is also proud to be involved in partnerships with the St. Louis Science Center and the Greater St. Louis Association of Earth Science Clubs, Inc.

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