

ROCKHOUNDS HERALD

920 Yorktown Road, Dothan, AL 36301-4372

www.wiregrassrockhounds.com

February 2014



Words from...

The President

The January meeting was a great start to 2014! A big crowd made some big decisions regarding our way forward. There is still lots of work to do, however, as we continue to get ready for this year's show...especially with the change of venue. Speaking of which, if you have yard signs that need updating with the new address, we need them back as soon as possible. Please bring them to the **meeting on Sunday, February 23rd**. Also, here's another reminder for the meeting. This is the first month we'll be doing Potluck Refreshments. If you plan to attend the meeting, be sure to bring your favorite snack to share.

As you'll see near the end of the newsletter, February is a big month for birthdays in our club—we have 11 members who were born in February! Here's an odd fact, it seems almost 40% of our current members were born in February, March and April (11, 11 and 10, respectively). Don't know what that means exactly. I just found it interesting that nearly half our club members have early spring birthdays.

Kids Corner this month is a cool set of Fossil Cards from Mini Miner! It isn't labeled "Kids Corner" because we didn't want the title to obscure any of the cards, but you'll find it in the usual place near the back.

One last thing, I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome new members, William, Barbara and Jaycee Gainey. It was great to have you officially join us last month. See you all on the 23rd. Jeff

Announcements

Program for February Meeting – Arnie Lambert will be presenting a short talk and slideshow on photographic images of specimens in his collection that were taken through a microscope.

Upcoming Shows

February 21 – 23	Treasure Coast Rock & Gem Society	Vero Beach, FL
February 22	Imperial Bone Valley Gem, Mineral & Fossil Society	Lakeland, FL
February 22 – 23	Mississippi Gem & Mineral Society	Jackson, MS
March 7 – 9	Aiken & Augusta Gem Mineral & Fossil Society	Augusta, GA
March 7 – 9	Suncoast Gem & Mineral Society	Largo, FL
March 14 – 16	Rome Georgia Mineral Society	Rome, GA
March 15 – 16	Tampa Bay Fossil Club	Tampa, FL

Meeting Minutes – January 2014 – by Secretary

The meeting was called to order by President Jeff DeRoche at 2:04 PM. There were 34 members + 3 mini members in attendance. Jeff wished happy birthday to all of our January birthday members.

CORRESPONDENCE: The club received a thank you letter from the church for our 2013 end-of-year donation. We also received a flyer about a new quarterly rock hounding magazine. The magazine, *American Rockhound*, is based in Ashville, NC and is focused on promoting rock, gem, mineral and fossil collecting. Here is a link to the magazine if you want to subscribe: <http://www.wncrocks.com/resources/AMERICAN%20ROCKHOUND%20MAGAZINE%20HOME.html>.

OLD BUSINESS: The November minutes were approved without changes. Diane Rodenhizer presented the treasury report and Jeff reminded everyone that January is the month to pay annual club dues. Vice President Anne Trice provided a recap of the officers meeting she hosted on Saturday, January 4th. JoAn Lambert provided an update on the upcoming show preparations since Arnie absent due to being set up as a vendor at the show in Panama City. Our show is officially set for April 5th & 6th at the Houston County Farm Center. Garry Shirah helped negotiate a good rate for the club.

NEW BUSINESS: JoAn asked that all show signs be returned by the February meeting. Due to the change of venue, some signs will have to be altered to reflect the new location. Please bring your old signs to the next meeting, if you have any. Philip Kaiser, the new State Director elected to represent all the Alabama clubs in the Southeastern Federation of Mineralogical Societies (SFMS), is planning a trip to Dothan from his home club in Mobile. He plans to visit all the clubs in the state during the coming year. No date for the visit has been provided yet.

One outcome of the officers meeting at Anne's house was the goal to present a program of at least of 15-20 minutes at each meeting. Anne has a roster started and asks that members pick a topic to discuss. To start off, Grady Dunn volunteered to give us a club history lesson. Our club will soon celebrate 40 years in existence and Grady is one of the few founding members still attending meetings. He also volunteered to later give a program about my personal favorite, opals.

For those who would like to present a program, please contact Anne (334-718-4838) to reserve a spot. Anne also volunteered to let us use her workshop for any classes or club activities we might want to do. A new officer position, Club Liaison, has been created. The Liaison will be responsible for interacting with officials outside of the club. Garry Shirah was appointed to be the first Club Liaison.

SHOW & TELL: JoAn started off Show & Tell with a fabulous necklace she got at the Panama City show. Janie Schings did the wire wrapping and Anne gave her the chain. Joe Cody & Ben Childress brought some beautiful fossils they collected from the pile of chert in L. J. Ward's backyard. Ben also brought some petrified sand dollars and a modern one for comparison. Jane & Elliot Whitton put together a really nice display of rocks they collected while traveling around the Mediterranean. They had samples from Pompeii, Santorini, Rome, Athens, Ephesus, and the Virgin Mary's Home. Elliot made a great display from a cedar tree cut on his property.

Anne Trice brought a very nice "mystery" necklace she made. She passed it around so people could guess the material it was made from. Turns out it was melted plastic which picked up small bits of stone from a bonfire. Ida Ward showed us a necklace that L. J. wire-wrapped for her. He bought the lapis at the sale Chris Holderith had at our meeting a few months ago. Chris also brought several lapis necklaces he made. He is learning to wire warp and doing a nice job. He also disassembled a stretchy lapis bracelet and is interweaving the lapis chips into patterns with decorative copper discs. You will have to look at the pictures to see how nice they really are. My description doesn't do them justice.

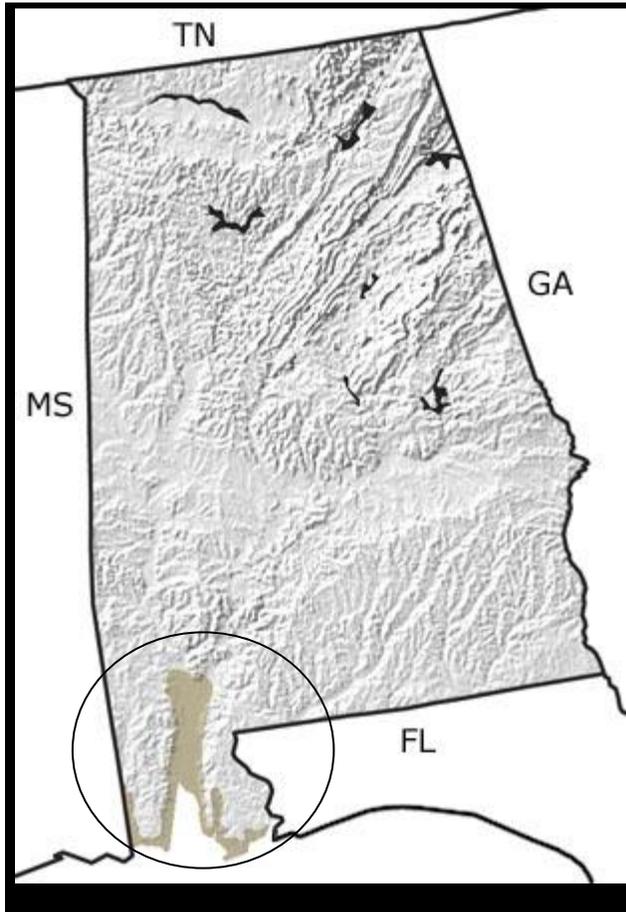
Jeff brought in a stash of things he got at the Panama City Show. He had a nice piece of fluorite, blue topaz, some aquamarines and..... surprise, surprise a bag of emeralds! Jeff mentioned—for those of you who are not already watching—the Weather Channel is running a series called *Prospectors*. Several of the prospectors are collecting aquamarines similar to his. The shows are well worth watching and you can catch the older ones in re-runs.

PROGRAM: After refreshments, graciously provided by Margie & Joe Cody, we had a short program titled *Eye Witness, Rocks & Mineral* narrated by Martin Sheen. Several of us hung out and socialized after the program. We discussed some upcoming programs, activities and potential trips.

Respectfully submitted by Pat Leduc

Alabama – Cenozoic and Mesozoic Eras

The Quaternary in Alabama, US – (today to 1.8 million years ago)



Quaternary Period

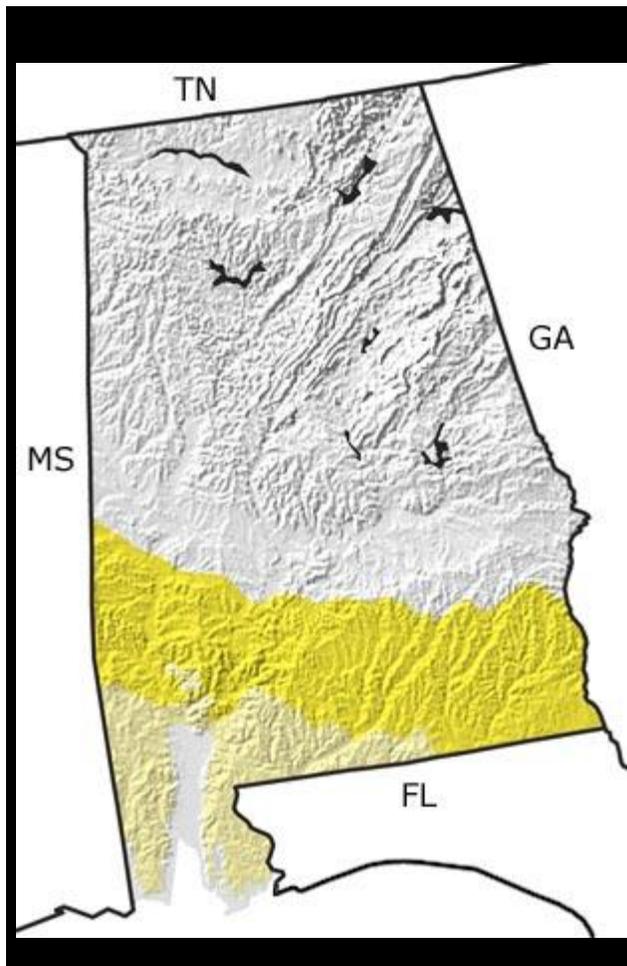
During the Quaternary, sea level fluctuated, as glaciers grew and melted in the northern part of North America. Although these glaciers never extended to Alabama, they impacted both the climate and biodiversity of the state.

Forests of northern conifers such as spruce covered northern Alabama, while mixed, drought-tolerant forests and grasslands dominated the south.

Fossils of huge animals such as mammoths, mastodons, and giant ground sloths are routinely discovered in streams and sinkholes across the state, testifying that these huge beasts called Alabama home during this time.

This map indicates the presence of Quaternary rocks across a broad area of the southern part of the state.

The Tertiary in Alabama, US – (1.8 to 65 million years ago)



Tertiary Period

The southern part of Alabama has some of the best sections of Tertiary marine fossils found anywhere in the world.

Evidence of near-tropical, coastal forests of the Early Tertiary is preserved in layers of lignite (brown coal) that surface in curving bands across the southern counties.

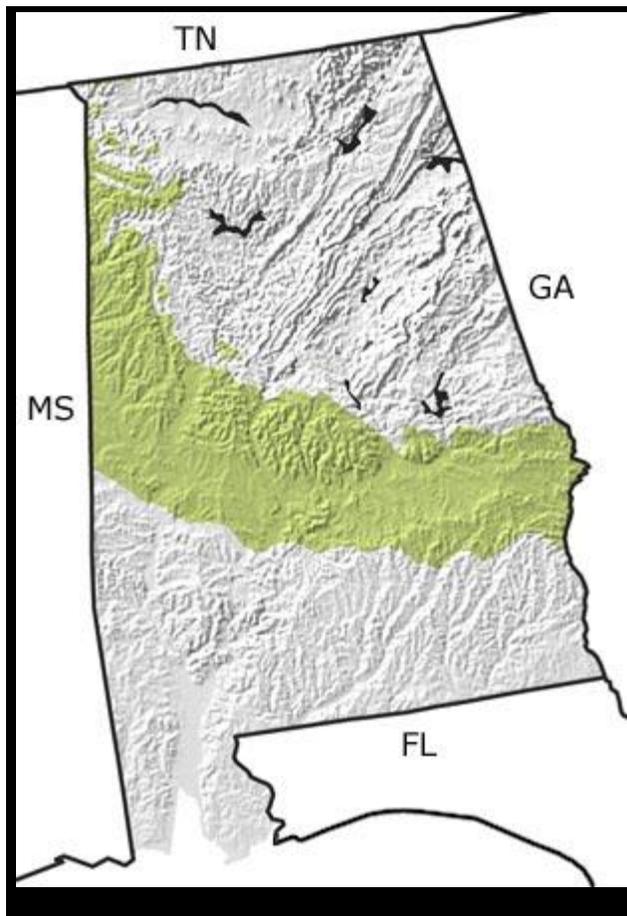
Studies of pollen grains preserved in the lignite and in other sediments show that during the middle part of the Tertiary, Alabama's forests were more like those of today.

This change from near-tropical to temperate forests was probably a response to a cooling climate.

Note: The 2013 International Geologic Time Scale does not recognize the Tertiary period, but the name has a long history and is widely understood. Geologists continue to wrangle over this development, and the U.S. Geological Survey has retained the Tertiary in its latest standard of 2010.

Source: http://geology.about.com/od/geotime_dating/a/Geologic-Time-Scale-Cenozoic.htm

The Cretaceous in Alabama, US – (65 to 146 million years ago)



Cretaceous Period

Rocks from the early part of the Cretaceous Period are all deeply buried in Alabama, but the last half of the Cretaceous is well preserved at the surface.

These rocks contain both freshwater and nearshore sediments, indicating that the shoreline of the Gulf of Mexico lay far inland from its present position. This sandy shoreline ran from near Auburn in the east to just north of Montgomery and Tuscaloosa, then curved northward to just west of the Muscle Shoals area.

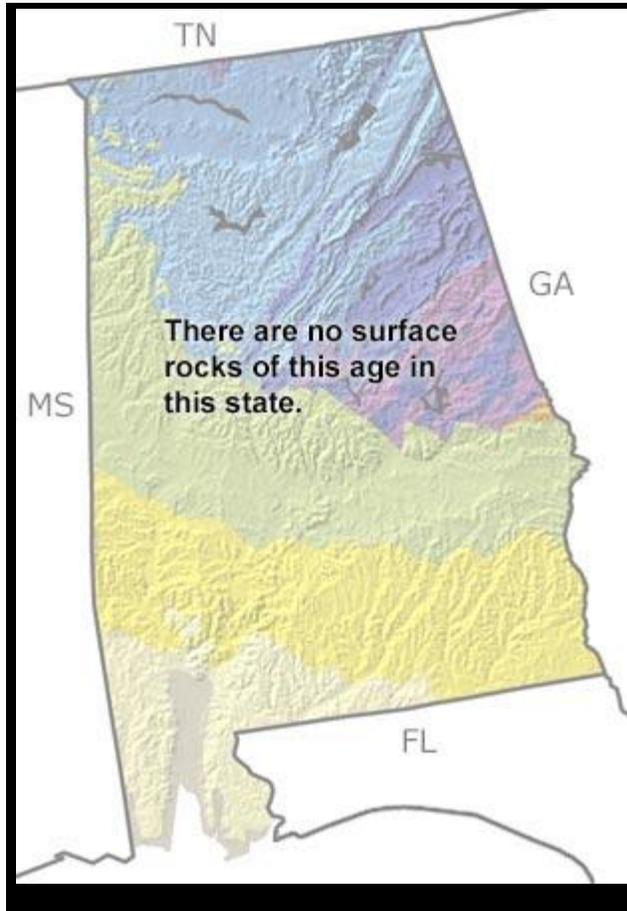
Fossil leaves from these sedimentary layers suggest that near-tropical forests covered the part of the state not inundated by the sea.

Offshore lay a rich, warm ocean filled with marine life that left behind many fossils of clams, snails, ammonites, nautiloids, and even some complete skeletons of marine vertebrates such as turtles, fish, and mosasaurs.

Fossils are so abundant in these layers that Alabama is recognized as one of the best locations in the world for collecting a variety of Cretaceous marine fossils.

The Jurassic in Alabama, US – (146 to 208 million years ago)

The Triassic in Alabama, US – (208 to 245 million years ago)



Jurassic Period

There are no surface rocks of Jurassic age in Alabama. Analysis of drill cores indicates that fluctuating sea levels caused intermittent flooding of the rift valleys formed earlier in the Triassic.

At times, rates of evaporation exceeded rates of water inflow to these areas and the sea dried up, leaving behind beds of pure salt. Eventually the sea persisted, creating the young Gulf of Mexico.

As the Gulf widened and deepened through the Jurassic, rich deposits of hydrocarbons—formed primarily from decaying single-celled organisms—accumulated in the sediments.

These hydrocarbons became the valuable petroleum and natural gas deposits now found across the modern Gulf States and Mexico.

Triassic Period

There are no surface rocks of Triassic age in Alabama. Analysis of drill cores indicates the formation of numerous rift valleys during this time as the supercontinent of Pangea began to pull apart.

The rocks in these now-buried valleys include red beds, conglomerates from alluvial fans, beds of evaporation minerals, and intrusions of basaltic lava.

Club Meeting – January 2014

Photos by Pat



We had a big group for the first meeting back from the holidays. New members, too!



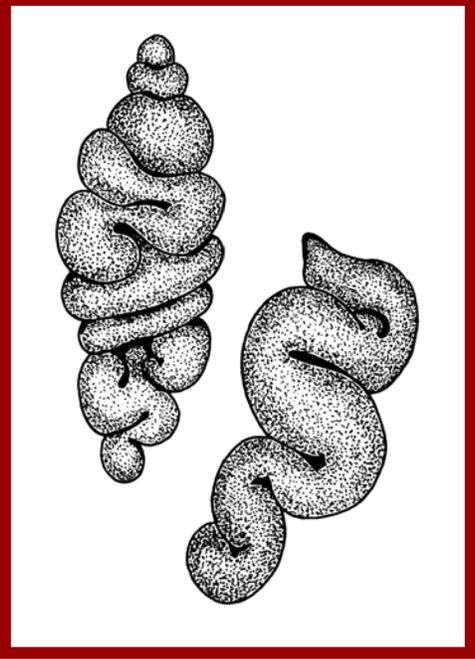
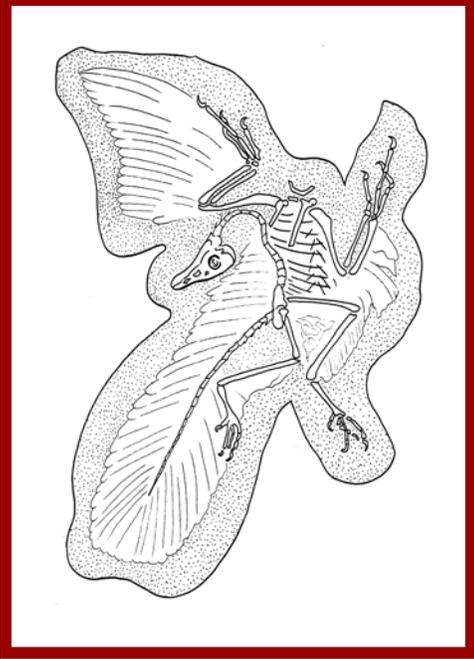
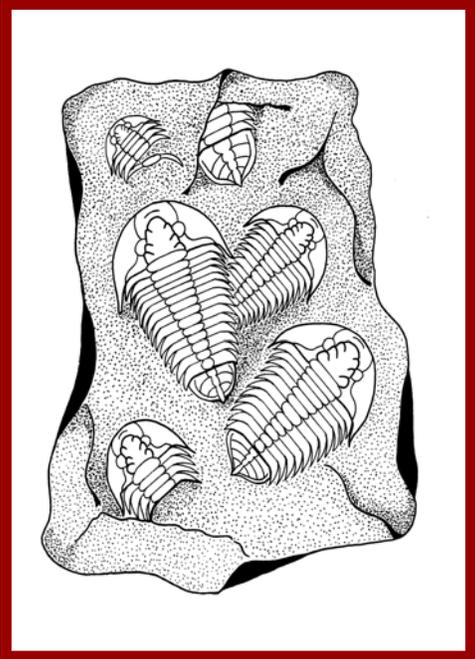
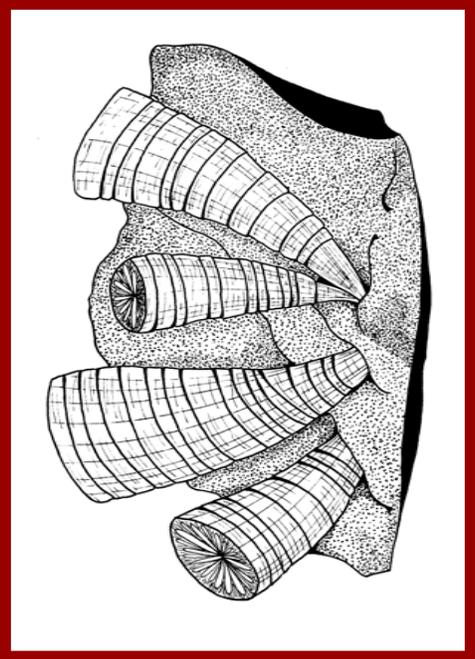
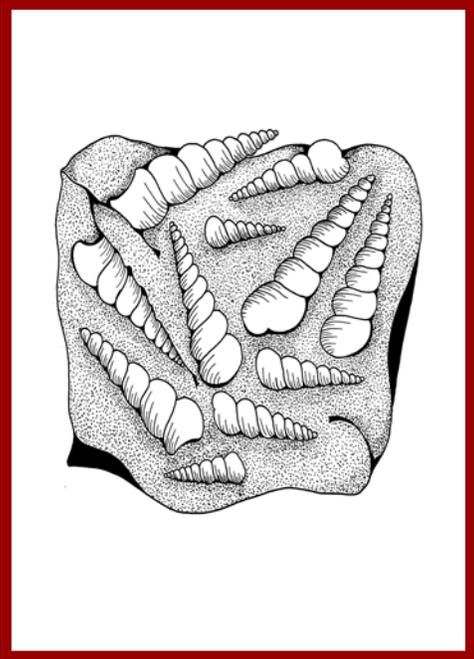
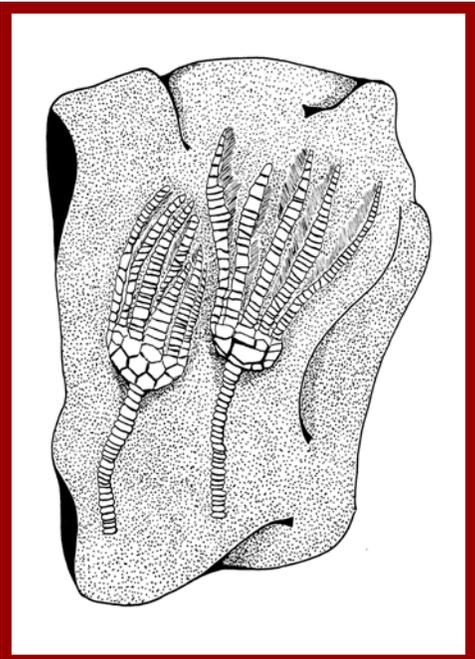
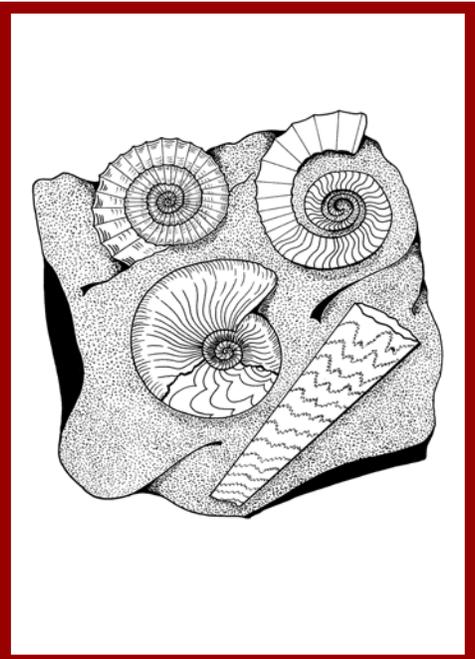
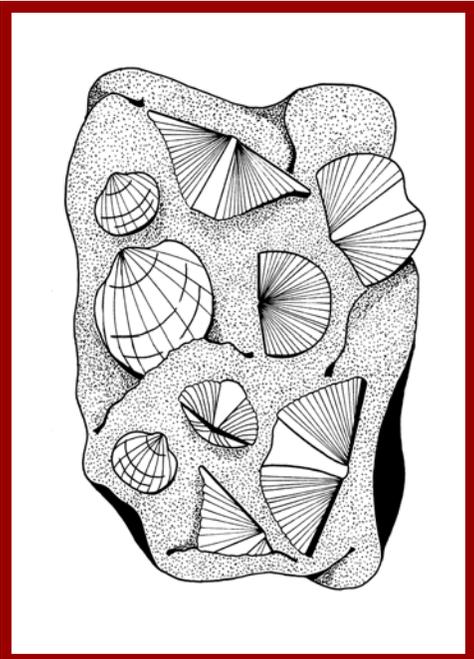
Lots of business was discussed, as well. A new club officer was added. We reinstated the program portion of the meeting, and voted in Potluck Refreshments.

More Club Meeting – January 2014

Photos by Pat



Some really beautiful items for Show & Tell!!! A mixture of old finds and new purchases from nearby and v-e-r-y far away.



Crinoids

The name "crinoid" comes from two Greek words that mean "lily form" because crinoids look like flowers with "roots," a long "stem" and a "flower" on top. Don't be fooled, though: a crinoid is NOT a flower, it is an animal. Modern crinoids can live in shallow water, but have also been found at depths of 6,000 meters. The earliest known crinoids come from the Ordovician Period (over 450 million years ago).

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Ammonites

Ammonites are part of a class of organisms called "cephalopods" which means "head-foot." They are extremely common and are one of the best-known groups of fossils. Ammonites are extinct, but they are related to the modern octopus and chambered nautilus. They first appear in rocks that are 400 million years old, a geologic time called the Permian Period. They became extinct and disappeared from the rock record 65 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period.

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Brachiopods

Brachiopods are bivalves which means that they have two shells or "valves" that fit together. They were marine organisms. We say "were" because most brachiopods became extinct during the great Permian-Triassic Extinction that took place over 250 million years ago. It is estimated that over 90% of all marine organisms and nearly 70% of all land-dwelling vertebrates became extinct during this event.

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Trilobites

One of the best known - and most popular - of the marine fossils are the trilobites. The name "trilobite" means "three lobes." Look at a trilobite and you can see three sections: one lobe is the head (called the cephalon), one lobe is the body (called the thorax) and the third lobe is the tail (called the pygidium). When a trilobite needed to protect itself, it would roll up in a ball, like an armadillo does today. There are approximately 17,000 known trilobite species!

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Rugose Coral

The Rugosa Coral (also simply called "Rugose Coral") is an order of extinct coral. They lived in warm, shallow seas in the Middle Ordovician through the Late Permian Periods. Their common name is "Horn Coral" because rugosa fossils look like horns. They first appear in the fossil record in rocks over 540 million years old, in the Cambrian Period. Just like modern coral, they formed extensive reefs.

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Gastropods

Gastropods include snails and slugs (think of a slug as a snail without a shell). They live both in the sea and on the land. Gastropods have coiled shells. The coils are called "whorls." Gastropod literally means "stomach foot." They are named this because it looks like the move around on their bellies. It is estimated that there are over 15,000 different species of gastropods! The earliest gastropods lived in the oceans.

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Tyrannosaurus

The fossil record shows that dinosaurs were the most important 4-legged animal on Earth for over 150 million years! They were the "Kings" of the land throughout the Mesozoic Era. The name "dinosaur" was created by the British scientist, Sir Richard Owen, in 1842. It means "Terrible Lizard." Tyrannosaurus Rex was a carnivore. This means that it ate meat, most likely other dinosaurs.

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Coprolites

Coprolites look like something your dog would leave in the backyard. Yes, coprolites are fossilized dinosaur dung. Surprisingly, there is a lot of fossilized dinosaur droppings in the rock record. They turn out to be very important fossils. Paleontologists have discovered that when the dung was fossilized, much of what was trapped inside was also fossilized. When coprolites are studied under a microscope, a paleontologist can discover what a dinosaur ate.

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Archaeopteryx

Archaeopteryx is one of the most important fossils ever discovered anywhere in the world. The name comes from two Greek words that mean "ancient wing." It has feathers and wings like a bird. However, the skeleton is much more like a dinosaur. This fossil is believed to be a step in the evolution of dinosaurs into birds. That is why paleontologists call this a "transitional fossil."

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Who What Where When Why How

February Birthdays

FEB 3 Patrick Nealey
FEB 3 Jason Solowes
FEB 15 Steven Ward
FEB 20 Gary Meredith
FEB 23 Roxanne Pollan
FEB 23 Chris Wisham
FEB 24 John Webber
FEB 26 Samantha Merino
FEB 27 Pat Whittaker
FEB 28 April Rockwell
FEB 28 Bill Tharpe

Random Fossil Facts

Alabama has much to offer the fossil world. The only dinosaur egg found east of the Mississippi was located in Alabama in 1970 by a high school student, and appears to have been laid by *Lophorhodon*, a hadrosaur.

Cretaceous strata near Phenix City recently have yielded amber and fossil feathers.

Cenozoic mollusks have been considered Alabama's greatest claim to fame among invertebrate paleontologists. For the Paleocene and Eocene epochs especially, these shell beds rank among the very best in the world.

Source: <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Article.jsp?id=h-1152>

Meeting Information

Time: 2:00 PM
Date: Fourth Sunday of each month (except June, July and August)
Place: Fellowship Hall – Tabernacle United Methodist Church
4205 S. Brannon Stand Road
Dothan, AL

Website: www.wiregrassrockhounds.com

Officers

President – Jeff DeRoche
334-673-3554

Vice President – Anne Trice
334-718-4838

Secretary – Pat LeDuc
334-806-5626

Treasurer – Diane Rodenhizer
334-447-3610

Bulletin Editor – Joan Blackwell
334-503-0308
Tfavorite7@aol.com

Webmaster – Pat LeDuc
334-806-5626

Membership Chair – Diane Rodenhizer
334-447-3610

Show Chair – Arnie Lambert
334-792-7116

Field Trips Chair – Bruce Fizzell
334-577-4353

Hospitality Chair – JoAn Lambert
334-792-7116

Club Hostess – Loral Meints
334-723-2695

Club Liaison – Garry Shirah
334-671-4192

Objectives

To stimulate interest in lapidary, earth science and, when necessary, other related fields.

To sponsor an educational program within the membership to increase the knowledge of its members in the properties, identifications and evaluations of rocks, minerals, fossils and other related subjects.

To cooperate and aid in the solution of its members' problems encountered in the Club's objectives.

To cooperate with other mineralogical and geological clubs and societies.

To arrange and conduct field trips to facilitate the collection of minerals.

To provide opportunity for exchange and exhibition of specimens and materials.

To conduct its affairs without profit and to refrain from using its assets for pecuniary benefit of any individual or group.

Classified Ads

Looking for an item to round out your rock collection?

Got a specimen, tool or handicraft for sale or trade?

Submit the pertinent details to me by the 10th of each month and your inclinations will be made known to the membership in the next bulletin.

N. J. Blackwell
28 Lakeview Trail, Apt. C
Daleville, AL 36322
Phone: 334-503-0308
Email: Tfavorite7@aol.com

Annual Dues

Single \$15
Family \$20

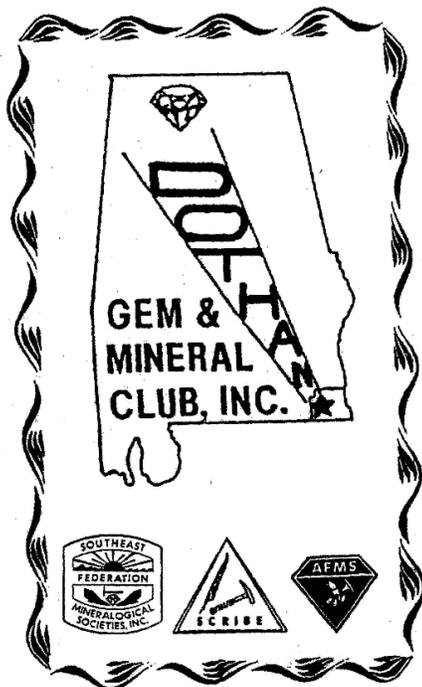
Refreshments

FEB 23 – Club Potluck

ROCKHOUNDS HERALD

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Daleville, AL 36322

www.wiregrassrockhounds.com



Where you might hear...

Fossils found in the Triassic-Jurassic Rift Basins of the Southeast's Blue Ridge & Piedmont (1) may include:

fish:

*semionotids, coelacanths,
palaeoniscids*

dinosaurs:

*footprints and trackways, rare
bone and skeletal fragments*

plant remains:

*cycad fronds, ferns, ginkgos,
conifers*

insects:

*rove beetles, caddis-flies,
water bugs, thrips*

clam shrimps: *conchostracans*



Source:

http://geology.teacherfriendlyguide.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=55&Itemid=196

Member of
Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Inc.
American Federation of Mineralogical Societies