

November 21, 2006

Thanksgiving week found the Texas Woehrs back in Cincinnati visiting the Ohio Woehrs. With a full week in town I made time to collect some fossils. Fellow DPS member Frank Holterhoff also hails from Cincinnati and has family there so we plotted a couple outings together while we were on our home turf. Our first trip was a dawn rendezvous at a northern Kentucky hillside under construction. The outcrop was dominated by gray shales typical of the Ordovician Kope formation, possibly the Southgate member (440 MYA). At one point Frank had found a "logjam" of crinoid stems at this locality which produced several *Ectenocrinus simplex* crowns, and we were hoping for a repeat.

Good finds were sparse for most of our time there, allowing the 26°F climes to creep in from our toes. I picked up a couple decent orthocone cephalopods and some *Cryptolithus tessellatus* "lace collared" trilobite glabella (heads) in the first hour. Just as Frank was walking my way to announce that his toes were about to fall off due to frostbite I found a 3 foot circle cluttered with crinoid stems eroding out of the inclined exposure. Just as I pointed out the arm of an *Ectenocrinus* crown Frank pointed out several complete crowns inches away. I picked all these coveted crowns off the surface after freeing them from the frozen ground with my hot breath and then bulk sampled 5 gallons of the eroded shale for later scrutiny. This little zone made the entire trip for me.



FIGS 74-79: Crinoid crowns and columnals *Ectenocrinus simplex* from a nest in the Southgate member of the Kope fm of northern Kentucky (Site 363)



FIGS 80-83: Another view of *E. simplex* crowns taken from a nest in the Kope fm above, *Cryptolithus tessellatus* trilobite fragments in limestone shell hash middle, pygidium (tail) of trilobite *Acidaspis cincinnatiensis* lower left, hypostome (mouth piece) of trilobite *Isotelus maximus* lower right (Site 363)

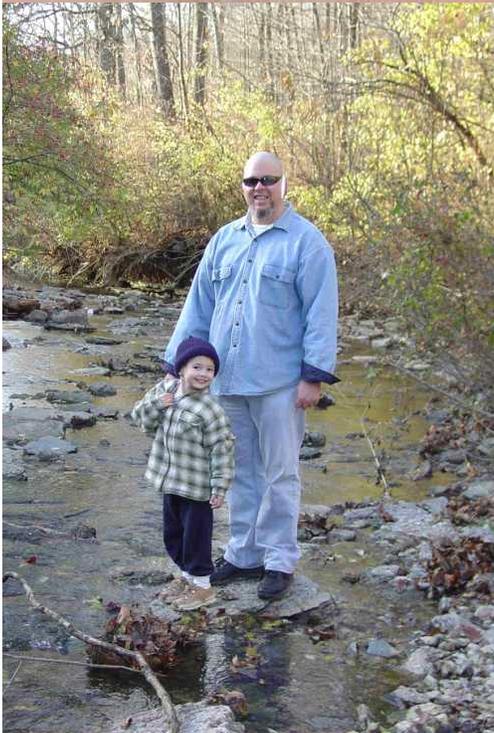


FIGS 84-85: Well preserved orthocone cephalopods from the Kope fm above, graptolites below (Site 363)

Next we headed to a road cut near the middle of town which produced a *Pychnocrinus* crown, big *Isotelus* pygidia, and lots of cephalopods for me in the past. This fauna may be indicative of the Bellevue or Corryville formations, but I'm no expert on this Ordovician stuff. Our finds were disappointing at this site as were the footprints of other collectors we found there. Frank did manage to find a fragmented crinoid crown but there were no other noteworthy finds.



FIGS 86-87: Orthocone cephalopods left and *Constellaria* sp. bryozoans right from Bellevue formation Site 292



FIGS 88-89: Bellevue fm gastropods *Cyrtolites* sp. and *Cyclonema bilix* top left, brachiopod *Platystrophia* sp. top right, Steve and Weston Woehr in the field below (Site 292)

Back at my parents' house my brother was there but my wife wasn't so we grabbed my 4 year old son and hit the field again for another hoorah. The finds in this creek were rolled and abraded but we got to hang out in the woods for a while and snag a few cephalopods.

November 23, 2006: Thanksgiving Morning Assault on Hoosierville

Frank and I met again at dawn on Thanksgiving morning, this time at a road cut in southeastern Indiana where I had picked up lots of *Flexicalamene* trilobites on past trips. The frozen footprints made it clear that a roving band of fossil collectors had moved through like a migrating herd of caribou not long before us. Seeing foot prints is disheartening, but seeing kneepad prints just socks my enthusiasm. There were many fine brachiopods to be had and I did lift a large and heavily damaged *Isotelus* trilobite from the light gray, broken down Waynesville/Liberty clay, but true satisfaction came when I worked the far end of the trilobite zone and landed a small but perfect enrolled *Flexicalamene meeki* trilobite.



FIGS 90-93: Liberty/Waynesville formation (Ordovician) trilobite *Flexicalamene meeki* above, *Isotelus pygidium* (tail) lower left, brachiopods *Strophonema planumbona* and *Hebertella occidentalis* lower right (Site 291)

With that we headed 30 miles or so to an exposure of Osgood limestone and shale (Silurian period, approximately 400 MYA). I was happy just to be looking around a locality of an age I've never collected. We were short on time, but Frank was able to produce several good finds including a nice *Holocystites* cystoid, a *Dicalamene* trilobite, and a cool crinoid double holdfast. I picked up several nice brachiopods, a couple crinoid holdfasts, and perhaps a couple rough cystoids of my own. With family obligations we had to peel away before we were ready, leaving lots of Ordovician exposure farther south unexplored.



FIGS 94-95: Osgood fm exposure (Silurian) near Napoleon, Indiana (Site 364)



FIGS 96-99: Osgood fm fossils including orthocone cephalopods *Dawsonoceras annulatum* above and middle left, crinoid holdfast middle right, cystoids *Holocystites* sp. (left) and possibly *Triamara ventricosa* (right), Site 364



FIGS 100-104: 2 more views of Osgood cystoid above followed by crinoid stems second row, horn corals *Holophragma?*, brachiopod, and gastropod center, brachiopods below (Site 364)

November 26, 2006: The Home Stretch

1000 miles and several days later I rose early while the family slumbered in southern OK. Dawn found me at a Woodbine sandstone exposure (95 MYA) that was one of the few Cretaceous terrestrial plant exposures that I know of in TX. An hour or so gave me time to find leaf bearing clumps of sandstone and clay matrix that had tumbled down the slope. I then climbed to the source 15 feet up the vertical exposure to hack chunks out of the wall and let them tumble down while I hung on to tree roots with one hand. Picking through the crumbles produced lots of interesting and distinguishable leaves, but few complete specimens. In addition I grabbed several hard sandstone concretions which turned out to have nice leaves inside once I cracked them open at home.

Special thanks to the late Don O'Neill for providing me with enough detail about the site to make the visit successful. Without his generous advice months ago I would not have had the confidence to put the effort into this site.



FIGS 105-106: Fossil leaves and Woodbine fm Site 365 which produces them



FIGS 107-112: Fossil leaves and possibly a seed from Woodbine fm Site 365



FIGS 113-115: Fossil leaves from Woodbine fm Site 365 and a rolled mosasaur vertebra from Ozan fm Site 58

After successful negotiations with the wife I was able to take my son Weston doggypadding through the quagmire under the Hwy 24 bridge at the North Sulphur River a couple hours later. This exposure is mapped as Pecan Gap formation (72 MYA), but I was probably looking at lots of Ozan float in the river as well. Our one hour tromp was a sloppy one, and I had to pull Weston's vacant boots out of the mud on several occasions and carry him through stretches of cold water. Keeping one eye on him made collecting efforts less than efficient, but that's OK as he had a blast and I found one rolled mosasaur vertebra.

This brought to a close not only a long road trip but also a month of varied finds. Once home and settled back in I plan to turn both guns on some Pleistocene exposures before year's end and hopefully provide a loving home for a lonely mammoth tooth.



FIGS 116-119: Bonus images – Unidentified cystoid above and cystoid *Eucalyptocrinites* sp. from the Silurian Waldron Shale near Nashville, TN found by Frank Holterhoff, two nacreous *Yezoites* sp. ammonites found by Brent Dunn in the Arcadia Park fm of the Dallas, TX area