FIGS 62-64: John Jackson's take of Corsicana and Glen Rose echinoids, nautiloids, and gastropods above (Site 249 and 349) followed by author's *Discoscaphites* ammonite fragment and gastropod *Striatocostatum bexarense* (Site 349)

FIGS 65-66: Various *Gyrodes* and other Corsciana gastropods above followed by bivalves including *Lima acutilineata, Lima guadalupensis, Plicatula mullicaensis*, and one unidentified below (Site 349)

FIG 67: *Gastrochaena* scaphopods from the Corsicana formation (Site 349)

Our next stop was a stroll through an Eocene creek looking for the source of the ball of 100+ shark teeth in conglomerate that John found on his last trip with me. We encountered one coyote and one water moccasin, but no more shark teeth, the dearth of additional fossils adding to the folklore of John's prior find.

With a little daylight left I took John to a played out site in the Pecan Gap formation (72 MYA) that in the past had produced some nice *Echinocorys texanus* echinoids and various ammonites among other things. I prefaced our search by noting that the Pecan Gap is stingy with fossils, but those found are often spectacular. As an experienced collector John accepted this challenge as we began randomly breaking the off-white blocks of chalk down with our hammers.

I found a *Hemiaster texanus* echinoid right off the bat, a little chipped on the margin so I left it where I found it. John then cracked a block which revealed part of the juvenile whorl of a nice *Trachyscaphites spiniger porchi* ammonite. I offered my extraction services since Pecan Gap chalk will often explode if you look at it cross eyed, its friable nature and conchoidal fracture pattern often sending cracks straight through your prized find. We ended up hauling it out in a big block for further prep under the controlled conditions provided by my garage. I finished up with a *Pachydiscus travisi* and fragmented *Didymoceras reevesi*(?) ammonite, both found by random splitting of matrix. We never did encounter one of those cool baseball sized *Echinocorys texanus* echinoids, but menacing clouds expedited nightfall and ushered us back to our vehicle.

FIGS 68-69: *Trachyscaphites spiniger porchi* ammonite found by John Jackson in the Pecan Gap formation this and next page (Site 20)

FIG 70: *Pachydiscus travisi* ammonite from the Pecan Gap fm (Site 20)

FIGS 71-72: *Didymoceras reevesi(?)* ammonite from the Pecan Gap fm this and next page (Site 20)

It was a vigorous 13 hours of collecting, but we hit paydirt at all but one stop. That one stop was an exploratory side trip, and not all such trips result in landmark finds. However you never know until you go. Rain is currently falling as lightning flashes and thunder cracks overhead, undoubtedly scouring the very areas we just surveyed…Weston and I will be ready for some remedial collecting as soon as the clouds break.

August 19, 2008: The Corsicana Calls Us Back

Weston was ready to hit the road when I got home from work. He even had a cooler packed with drinks and snacks ready to load into the truck. By 6:30 we were collecting the Corsicana formation once again, and the boy was crawling with me shoulder to shoulder in the fresh mud picking out successively smaller and more detailed 68 million year old marine fossils as the evening wore on. Sure, at one point he headed for the deepest mud he could find, got hopelessly mired up to his knees, then howled for my assistance, but for the most part overcast skies kept things comfortable, helping him stay focused on the task at hand.

FIG 73: Weston Woehr hopelessly mired in the Corsicana quagmire…perhaps this is how fossils are formed? (Site 349)

Weston was speed bagging *Hemiaster bexari* echinoids one after the other, his finds interspersed with various pelecypods, gastropods, and oysters. For over a year he has wanted to find a crab carapace, a find I have exalted with each encounter. I have planted a few for him to find on other trips, but Weston is no dummy and didn't fall for my ho-ax. Despite knee pads my knees were wearing out on the rocks so I began to walk and stoop while Weston continued his up close and personal crawl.

"OOH! I found a crab!" - and indeed he did, his first *Dakoticancer australis* carapace, and he was beaming with pride found only through goal setting and tenacity. The trouble was that it came out of the wet ground in 4 or 5 crumbly pieces, but after drying, super gluing, and scribing it it turned out to be a good find suitable for display.

FIGS 74-76: Weston Woehr posing with his first crab *Dakoticancer australis*, details next page (Site 349)

FIGS 77-78: Weston's echinoids *Hemiaster bexari* above followed by various bivalves *Plicatula, Exogyra, Neithea*, and others below (Site 349)

FIGS 79-80: Weston's bivalves *Plicatula mullicaensis* above, gastropods *Gyrodes* sp., *Pyropsis* (?) sp., *Turritella vertebroides*, and others below (Site 349)

FIGS 81: Weston's spectacular gastropod *Striatocostatum bexarense* (Site 349)

In fading light I found both halves of a crab nodule which when glued and air scribed at home revealed not one but two crabs, one on top of the other, each with a single claw intact. Despite neither specimen being perfectly preserved, the collective significance of the specimen was substantial.

FIGS 82-85: Two crabs *Dakoticancer australis*, in same nodule this and next page (Site 349)

FIGS 86-87: Echinoids *Proraster dalli* above, *Plesiaster americanus* below, this and next page (Site 349)

FIGS 88-89: Echinoids *Hemiaster bexari* (Site 349)

FIGS 90-91: Nautiloids *Eutrephoceras* sp. above, various gastropods below (Site 349)

FIGS 92-95: Various bivalves including *Neithea* and *Lima* above followed by unidentified oyster and bivalves *Trigonia castrovillensis* following page (Site 349)

FIG 96: Bivalve *T. castrovillensis* sitting atop an oyster valve (Site 349)

Our light began to fade as storm clouds began to roll in, but Weston wasn't done yet. While throwing 5 pound mud balls up in the air and running from them Weston cried out, "Ooh! I found a good one!" - and a good one it was, a wonderfully ornate gastropod *Striatocostatum bexarense* to culminate our evening of week night bonus collecting. He has done so well up to this point that I will be showcasing his better finds in his own Riker mount, which he would like to hang in his room.

August 23, 2008: Abbreviated Echinoid Grab

It had been a while since I had collected with one of my original paleo benefactors, Farley Katz, so I was happy he took me up on my invitation to collect some Glen Rose formation echinoids on Saturday morning. We kicked things off at the site where I had found the squashed *Phyllacanthus texanus* echinoid a few weeks prior, and had no such repeat luck, but we did get a handful of *Salenia texana* and *Heteraster obliquatus* echinoids each.

FIGS 97-100: *Salenia texana* echinoids from Glen Rose Site 445

FIGS 101-102: *Heteraster obliquatus* echinoids above and *Neithea* bivalves below from Glen Rose Site 445

Knowing when to pull the plug we strapped on knee pads and worked a nearby exposure for micro echinoids once again. We got 9 or 10 between us in an hour or so, all *Salenia* sp. except for the 2 or 3 squashed *Globator hancockensis* I found. Again *Isocrinus annulatus* ossicles (calcitic stalk segments) came to hand easily, as did a few crab claw fingers.

FIGS 103-106: From the Glen Rose fm *Salenia* sp. echinoids top left, crinoid crown parts(?) top right, Isocrinus annulatus crinoid ossicles lower right, echinoid spine and foraminifer lower left (Site 445)

Our next site put us back in the *Salenia texana* zone, a field of dumped piles presenting easy pickings. We walked and climbed the piles in brief but hard driving rain and our pay dirt consisted of some rather nice examples of the splendidly ornate regular echinoid *S. texana*. I grabbed one hermit crab claw tip *Paleopagurus banderensis*, then we pulled the plug for the day, our take sufficient to justify our efforts.

FIGS 107-108: From the Glen Rose fm echinoids *Salenia texana* and *Heteraster obliquatus* above (Site 436), more *S. texana* below (Site 357)

FIG 109: From the Glen Rose fm echinoid *Palhemiaster comanchei,* tip of hermit crab claw *Paleopagurus banderensis* and gastropod *Nerinea* sp. (Site 133)

August 29, 2008: Paleo Lunch Special with an After Dinner Bonus

I threw my 21 foot extension ladder on top of my car Friday morning in order to explore a high seam in a road cut through the Austin Chalk (80 MYA) near my office on my lunch hour last Friday. I only spent about 20 minutes up on the ladder, and it slid once, but I managed 3 *Hemiaster texanus* echinoids and one nice unidentified ammonite free of matrix, a rare treat.

FIGS 110-114: Unidentified ammonite from the Austin Chalk this and next page followed by echinoids *Hemiaster texanus* on the following page (Site 16)

I got off at 4, ran home, grabbed the boy, and made a beeline for the Corsicana fm (68 MYA) since 2 inches of rain had fallen there recently. Weston and I first crawled a road littered with crab corpses. Ordinarily this would have been a pretty welcome situation, but it appeared that 9 out of 10 crab carapaces had been decapitated by heavy equipment, then only recently eroded out to where they could be seen. Still, young Weston was first to spot a good one, his second to date and a bit of an upgrade from his first. The boy's Riker mount will be filling up soon.

We continued to grab *Hemiaster bexari* echinoids here and there, ultimately grabbing a few more *Dakoticancer australis* crabs each. When he got bored I let him run around with my camera shooting pictures of fossils in situ. He got a kick out of this "responsibility", and when that too became boring all I had to say was "I brought the pellet gun" and his little eyebrows raised. Thus began his first official shooting session and he was soon plinking plastic bottles alongside the Old Man.

FIGS 115-118: Weston Woehr and his second fossil crab to date, a nice *Dakoticancer australis* carapace from the Corsicana formation, this and next 2 pages (Site 349)

FIGS 119-128: *Dakoticancer australis* carapaces and miscellaneous chela and chelipeds (claws and clawed legs) in situ and prepped from the Corsicana formation, this and next 5 pages (Site 349)

FIGS 129-131: *Sphenodiscus* sp. ammonite from the Corsicana formation, this and next page (Site 349)

FIGS 132-135: Corsicana echinoids *Plesiaster americanus* above followed by *Hemiaster bexari* center and below (Site 349)

FIGS 136-138: Corsicana bivalves *Lima sayrei* and *Trigonia castrovillensis* along with gastropod *Turritella vertebroides* above, scallop *Neithea bexarensis* cemented to unidentified gastropod below (Site 349)

August 30, 2008: A Visit to Artifact Alley

I once again hooked up with John Jackson and soon after dawn we slipped his canoe into a stream where we had permission to paddle. The first bluff we encountered had lots of shell eroding out of the bank, so we crisscrossed the next bar with decent success. John picked up a perfect 2.25 inch Ensor point and a colorful “business end” of another blade while I picked up the front half of a very narrow point with delicate flaking. Not a bad start.

FIGS 139-141: John Jackson's Ensor point and the author's flint core below (Site 473)

As we picked our way downstream John continued to score nice performs while I grabbed a large core, the center of a chert nodule from which working sized flakes were taken. A few logjams later we drifted up on a large bluff with shell and burned midden rock collecting near the base. I got out and climbed around for a little while, and my eyes locked on a peculiar flat rock with a light spot in the middle…"Hey man, that's a metate!" I exclaimed as I rushed to reduce it to possession.

FIGS 142-145: The author and his metate (grinding stone) this and next page (Site 474)

FIGS 146-147: The author's unidentified point missing the base (Site 475)

FIGS 148-149: John Jackson's impressive 5 inch Archaic knife this and next page (Site 475)

FIGS 150-151: Snapshots of nature – recently vacated hog wallow above, baby water moccasin next page

John got some pictures but I guess the pressure was too much because when we got out on the next bar he pulled a knife on me…a 5 inch flint Archaic knife to be exact, and a beauty it was, its size, workmanship, and preservation making it clearly the find of the trip. The 75% complete point I found on the same bar was almost embarrassing for me to show alongside the knife.

We continued bagging performs (blade blanks, if you will) here and there and then encountered another eroding campsite with clams, snails, charcoal, and burned rock providing obvious sign for us. Again I got out and scaled the 40 foot bluff, working as far as I could before turning back. My eyes locked on a gray triangle sitting atop a silt pedestal 25 feet above water level…it turned out to be a killer resharpened needle point Castroville point, its 3.5 inches of sharp edged perfection making it a stunning find.

FIGS 152-153: The author's with his "high bank" resharpened Castroville(?) point (Site 475)

FIGS 154-156: The author's horse tooth and flint drill (Site 476)

FIGS 157-160: The author's take of points and preforms this and next page (Sites 473-476)

FIGS 161-163: John Jackson's century old snuff bottle showing bubbles in glass, hand rolled lip, etc (Site 475)

At a confluence with another stream was a bar where I had high hopes but encountered only a horse lower molar, nothing to scoff at but certainly not the 8 inch ceremonial blade I was after. The next bar downstream however managed to assuage my urgent need for just one more point as a 4 inch tan drill materialized at my feet.

I'm not very experienced with artifact collecting, but I know enough to realize a remarkably productive day regardless of experience level. The only way to make the day even better would be for me to throw a good fossil site in the ring, so that's exactly what I did. We drove an hour to a creek exposing Washita aged (100 MYA) limestone that has produced some nice *Mortoniceras* ammonites for a buddy and me a couple years prior. I found this creek by studying a geo map 3 years ago, then exploring it with a flashlight while en route to my daylight site, providing some worthwhile bonus collecting.

Since my buddy Tom and I had done quite well there one freezing winter morning a while back while wearing chest waders, I was somewhat apprehensive concerning what we might find, not knowing how fast the bedrock was to erode out new specimens. I spotted one ammonite perched on a limestone pedestal immediately as we entered the creek, then decided to hit it on the way out. Then I spotted a second *Mortoniceras* which came out rather easily. The trouble with this ammonite and most others we saw was that past floods had worn the juvenile whorls out. We left these specimens alone in search of better…

…And we found them. A 50 yard long limestone bench forming the bed of the creek gave up a half dozen keeper ammonites between us. I was ecstatic to pick up a large section of a whopper heteromorphic ammonite *Anisoceras*, a new genus for my collection. Most of the spiral ammonites had the ugly side facing up where they had been worn by water flow, but the underside of each was simply spectacular.

FIGS 164-165: John Jackson and some of his *Mortoniceras* ammonites (Site 333)

FIGS 166-174: A professorial looking John Jackson admiring his pyrite studded *Mortoniceras* followed by the author's *Mortoniceras* finds this and next 4 pages (Site 333)

FIG 175: The author's rare partial heteromorphic ammonite *Anisoceras* sp. (Site 333)

We beat on a big 12 to 14 incher that John found only to give up and move on. John will need to return to that one with heavy equipment. I got a little bit ahead to get to work on one I spotted earlier where just a few ridges of the adult whorl were exposed. Tapping that surrounding matrix with my hammer I heard the encouraging hollow report of limestone ready to let go. Compliant rock allowed me to extricate a fine example of *Mortoniceras* with not only most of the keel but part of the rostrum intact, with both sides of the specimen being "show sides" to boot. This 10 inch beauty will find its way into my house.

Having a full backpack, I urged John to try his hand at the one way up by the cars. Tap-tap-tap-flip-OOH! Another high grade *Mortoniceras*, this one studded with large pyrite cubes. John asked if I wanted it, but I have so many more ammonites than he does that it would probably get the most attention at his house. A handshake later I was on the phone with my other buddies jawing, yapping and recounting the finds of the day, just not the locality info…MUAHAHA!

<u>August 31, 2008: When the Cat's Away…</u>

After playing a round of miniature golf with the boy the wife whisked him away to her parents' place in the Hill Country early in the afternoon for an overnighter with a late return. I figured I'd just sit around the house and watch TV – NOT! I mobilized quickly, got the kayak on top of my car, and floored it down the highway, slipping the yak into one of many rivers I like to collect with several hours of daylight to spare.

I only had time to thoroughly search 3 gravel bars, but none let me down. The first and last presented slim pickings, but the second gave up a deer jaw with 3 teeth, horse molar, turtle fragments, and a few other odds and ends, no major finds but enough to justify the effort.

FIGS 176-177: Deer jaw and antler along with a horse upper molar and various turtle fragments from Site 140

FIG 178: Unidentified vertebra and unidentified pelvis fragment from Site 157

The saga is far from over….tune in next month…..