

On the Rocks



A Newsletter of the Michigan Basin Geological Society
E-mail version

2001-2002 Number 5

www.mbgs.org

January 2002

EVENTS

December 25, 2001: *Merry Christmas!*

January 1, 2002: Happy New Year!

January 9, 2002: MBGS Meeting-The presentation is "The Origin and Evolution of Whales" by Dr. Mark D. Uhen. *This meeting is open free to any children of the members that wish to attend.*

February 13, 2002: MBGS Meeting-The speaker is Dr. Kandia Balachandran and his topic will be "Shear Wave Techniques as Exploration and Development Tools".

March 10-13, 2002: AAPG annual meeting, Houston, Texas. Professor Emeritus at U of M and honorary MBGS member James E. Wilson will receive the 2002 Sidney Powers Memorial Award.

October 6-8, 2002: AAPG annual Eastern Section meeting, Champaign, Illinois.

ERRATA: Professor Alan F. Arbogast is with the Department of Geography at Michigan State University.

The January MBGS Meeting will take place on January 9, 2002 **not** January 2, 2002 as indicated in the December Newsletter.

The Origins of Whales

Dr. Mark D. Uhen
B.S. from University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh
M.S. & PhD. from University of Michigan
Currently Curator of Paleontology and Zoology
Cranbrook Institute of Science.

Research in paleontology and genetics on whales, dolphins, and porpoises has placed the time of origin anywhere from around 80 million years ago to around 55 million years ago. One reason for the broad range of origination times is confusion over what marks the origin of cetaceans. From a genetic perspective, it is the time of the split between whales their closest living relatives. From a paleontological perspective, it is the time of origin of animals that had acquired distinctly cetacean characteristics. From the perspective of modern whale researchers it is the origin of the two groups of modern whales, toothed whales and baleen whales. Central to all of these perspectives is the Archaeoceti, a group of early cetaceans which is thought to be ancestral to modern cetaceans. Archaeocetes existed for about 10 million years and encompass the transition from the terrestrial to the aquatic habitat. Dr. Uhen will discuss how many of the characteristics common to modern whales arose in Archaeocetes, how Archaeocetes can help address questions about the origins of cetaceans, and how the characteristics of later Archaeocetes inform us about the origins of toothed and baleen whales.

Field Trip Director

The MBGS is still looking for a person to take over as Field Trip Director. Tim Cowen held this position for many years and has done a great job. This is an opportunity to set up trips to areas that you may have wanted to visit. The Society is also open to nominations for this position. The MBGS can only continue to exist if its members are willing to contribute some of their time to keep it going so I urge you to seriously consider the job.

MEETING CANCELLATION POLICY

Monthly meetings will be automatically cancelled whenever the National Weather Service issues a "Storm Warning" for the Lansing area. If driving conditions are poor but a "Warning" has not been issued please contact any member of the Executive Committee for the status of the meeting.

Letter from the President

Last month I remarked on the occasion of ten present and past presidents of MBGS being in attendance for our MBGS-SPE Mentors meeting. Well, brain-fade (not his stealth) led me to overlook our eleventh president in attendance - namely Mark Wollensak. My excuse is that Mark has done such a fabulous job as field trip director and electronic publications director that his term as president completely escaped me. But there is nothing new there.

On another note, our speaker in December was Dr. Alan Arbogast, a geomorphologist from the MSU Department of Geography. Not only did he give a fascinating and well-received lecture on Michigan Sand Dunes but he doubled the number of Geographers in attendance, myself being the other. Some of our mentors will remember that at MSU the Geology and Geography Departments were combined until, as recently, as 1955. This may seem odd to some but it still occurs where numbers cannot justify two separate departments. And if you go back into the 19th century the distinction between the two becomes blurred to the point of being indistinguishable. It was in the 20th century that Geography evolved into, predominately, a social science, although, the natural science branch of Geography was always well represented by the Geomorphologists and Climatologists. And, today there seems to be a bit of a resurgence in the natural science wing of Geography.

Len Espinosa

MBGS Meeting

January 9, 2002

Location: Mountain Jacks
5800 W. Saginaw Highway, Lansing, Michigan

Schedule: 4:30-5:30 PM Executive Committee Meeting
5:30-6:15 PM Cash Bar
6:15-7:15 PM Dinner
Presentation after Dinner

Cost \$25.00/member \$10.00 Student (includes dinner)

Topic: “The Origin and Evolution of Whales”
by Dr. Mark D. Uhen

MBGS Dinner Meeting Reservation

Name _____

Number attending _____

Enclosed Registration Fee _____

Please make your check out to the MBGS.

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