

Utah Friends of Paleontology

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Castle Valley "Raptor" Chapter Newsletter

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Christmas Social December 8th.

Our annual Christmas social will be held on Tuesday, December 8, 1998 at the CEU Museum class room at 7:00 p.m. As usual, we look forward to having an evening of fine food and an opportunity to socialize.

This year, we have decided to add another fun activity to the evening. In addition to the usual activities, we are asking that each person or couple bring a small gift which we will wrap and take to be distributed to a needy child.

We hope you will be able to join with us on the 8th. To sign up for the pot luck dinner, please see the enclosed flyer for details.

We look forward to seeing all of you on the 8th.

New Dinosaur - - Should This One Be Called A Crocosaur or a Dinodile?

The following article appeared in the November 13 Salt Lake Tribune:

Paleontologists' New Bad Boy

By John Yaukey - Gannett News Service

Tyrannosaurus rex has a newly

discovered African cousin: a massive, chimerical beast with the same powerful spring-loaded haunches and python tail as the famed Tyrannosaurus, but topped with a crocodilian head.

Meet *Suchomimus tenerensis*, a species of dinosaur newly described in today's edition of the journal *Science*.

The discovery, made in the remote Tenere Desert in the Niger Republic, provides legions of dinosaur lovers with an athletic new super-predator to admire while it throws scientists an especially wily curve ball from the fossil record.

Scientists add several new dinosaurs a year to the list of 375 known species, but few like *Suchomimus* - this 100 million year old specimen measuring 36 feet long and 12 feet high at the hip.

"This was every bit as large as a Tyrannosaurus, but it's got this strange head," said Paul Sereno, the University of Chicago paleontologist who led the *Suchomimus* expedition. "You could say this was a

dinosaur trying to be a crocodile. It certainly is a rarity. But make no mistake; it was a dominant predator - an incredible predator, no question. It would have eaten anything the size of a human that came its way."

Suchomimus tenerensis, which means "crocodile mimic from the Tenere (Desert)," is a member of a peculiar group of predators called spinosaurs.

It looks as though it was assembled from leftover parts, but they must have served the animal well.

Unlike *Tyrannosaurus*, *Suchomimus* had a passion for seafood, and it shows. The elongated head, ideal for bobbing, was fitted with long, straight conical teeth instead of the curved, blade-like teeth that *Tyrannosaurs* sported to tear flesh.

These straight teeth, especially long near the front of the mouth, are more effective at piercing and grabbing fish which were quickly gulped down.

A narrow snout would have kept water resistance around the head to a minimum while a long, dexterous neck would have allowed it to pluck prey from the water.

Eighteen inch semi opposable thumb claws would have helped gather or herd the prey,

probably an assortment of freshwater sharks, gar and lungfish.

The bones were excavated from a forbidding desert crossed only by nomads and bandits when the wind storms subside.

But 100 million years ago, this was a lush, dangerous Eden where broad rivers cut through dense forests. It was home to huge dinosaurs, 50 foot crocodiles, birds with 12 foot wingspans and sedan sized turtles.

The fact that *Suchomimus* was found in Africa complicates theories about how various species of dinosaurs dispersed. *Suchomimus* appears to be more closely related to a European dinosaur called *Baryonyx* than to the other southern spinosaurs around it.

This suggests that *Suchomimus*' ancestors evolved in Europe, then migrated south to Africa across what scientists suspect would have been some sort of passable land bridge or a swimmable gulf.

Bone Lab Will be Open for UFOP Members

John Bird reports that the bone lab will be open and there is plenty of room for everyone to come and do the lab work on all of the bones we took out of the field last summer.

Regular hours for the new year will be from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. every Wednesday night. John would appreciate it if you would call to let him know that you will be coming.

He can be reached at the bone lab at 637.2120 Ext. 4645. You can speak directly to John or leave a message on his voice mail.

Of course, you can also call John to make arrangements to work at the lab on other days. He would be happy to have you come. Just give him a call to make arrangements

John also reports that the Utah Raptor has been completed and is now on display at the museum. It is really a great looking exhibit that many UFOP members have had an opportunity to help dig and mount. It is well worth a trip to the museum to view.

UTAH FRIENDS OF PALEONTOLOGY
"RAPTOR CHAPTER"
MEETING - NOVEMBER 10, 1998

The meeting was called to order by our President, Byron Ray. The minutes from our last meeting were approved as written. Byron introduced the students from Geology 101 who attended our meeting. We were pleased to have them join us.

Sue Ann Martell gave a talk regarding UFOP members becoming involved in a volunteer program. She explained that if we could volunteer two hours a month it would be very helpful to the museum. You may have seen the flyer in our last mailing. Penny Arriola volunteered to be liaison for UFOP.

Roger gave the Treasurer's report. Old balance - \$1281.51 less expenses - \$79.20 equal new balance - \$1202.31.

Our annual Christmas Party was discussed and members voted for the following: We will have a potluck dinner; each couple will bring a gift for a child, cost to be between \$5 and \$10.

The date of the party will be December 8, 1998, at 7:00 pm. Joan Taylor will coordinate the party. The party will be held at the classroom in the CEU Museum. Please bring your gifts unwrapped as we will be wrapping them at the party. Please RSVP.

On January 13, 1999, the Lab will be open for volunteers on Wednesday evenings at 7:00pm to 9:00pm every week. There was a discussion about having a club meeting at the lab so that club members could observe and perhaps become involved.

We wish Clark Warren a speedy recovery after his hospitalization.

Byron introduced our speaker, Shawn Duffy, who gave an interesting talk about the Permian Era. Shawn has been with the National Park Service for the past 14 years. He recommended a visit to the Cedar Mesa Museum in Blanding, where there is an interesting display of petrified wood from the local area.

Refreshments were furnished by John Bird. Thank-you, John!

The meeting adjourned at about 9:32pm.

