



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Mark Grisanti

## Penn Dixie Paleontological And Outdoor Education Center - February 2013 Programs

MARK GRISANTI February 1, 2013

| ISSUE: **ENVIRONMENT, CONSTITUENTS CORNER**

| COMMITTEE: **ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION**

Penn Dixie Site is **open to the public** for fossil collecting every **Saturday**, from May through October, 9 AM to 4 PM; **Sundays**, May-October, 11 AM to 4 PM; and **Spring Break**-March 29-30 & April 1-7, and **7-days a week** from Sept. 15–Sept. 3, Mon.-Fri., 9 AM-4 PM, rain or shine. Closed Memorial Day, July 4 & Labor Day September 2. Closed on Columbus Day, October 14, 9 AM-4 PM. **Visits may be scheduled at other times by calling (716) 627-4560**. Non-member adults \$7 and children 12 and under \$6, and children 2 and under and Penn Dixie members free. Penn Dixie members may visit the site anytime, but are asked to leave a message on the Society's website when you are on-site, how many are with you, and park your car so as not to block the gate. Please bring your membership card with you at all times.

**Tools and groups** wishing to schedule a field trip to the Penn Dixie Site should email [jbpendix@gmail.com](mailto:jbpendix@gmail.com) or call (716) 627-4560.

**Other groups, families, scouts, birthday parties, & individuals**, wishing to schedule a visit at other times, should call (716) 627-4560 or email [jbpendix@gmail.com](mailto:jbpendix@gmail.com). Please call or visit our web site at [www.penndixie.org](http://www.penndixie.org) for programs, upcoming events, membership & directions.

## **SPECIAL MEMBERSHIP OPPORTUNITY FOR NEW MEMBERS ONLY**

Penn Dixie is participating in a Living Social promotion beginning on January 31, 2013 and running until February 28, 2013 for **NEW FAMILY MEMBERSHIPS ONLY!** Renewal memberships will not be accepted under this promotion.

notion. New family memberships may be purchased for half price, \$20 each, during this promotion and must be redeemed by May 13, 2013. The family membership will be good through 2013. If you are not a member now, this is a great opportunity to help support a classic and unique paleontological and outdoor education center with programs in fossil collecting, geology, astronomy, birding, wetlands, and the nature sciences **“Where Science Lives Alive!”** Penn Dixie has been ranked the No.1 Fossil Park in the United States and your membership will support the programs, operations and future development of the site. Please forward this information to someone that may be interested. Your support is greatly appreciated.

## **TEACHERS & GROUP LEADERS - BOOK YOUR FIELD TRIP TO PENN DIXIE NOW**

Schools, day cares, pre-schools, scouts, recreation departments, and other group field trips to visit Penn Dixie for spring and summer of 2013 are now being booked. Please call 627-4560 or email [jbpendix@gmail.com](mailto:jbpendix@gmail.com), if you are interested in scheduling your class or group to visit to collect fossils, learn about what the area was like million years ago, and the local geology.

## **PENN DIXIE FEATURED AT WNY HOME AND GARDEN EXPO FEBRUARY 7-10**

Penn Dixie will be promoting the Penn Dixie Site at their WNY Home and Garden Expo, February 7-10, 2013. The Penn Dixie fossil dig for kids, children's activities, fossils, a telescope to view some heavenly bodies, membership and program information will be available. This is an opportunity to introduce families to the Penn Dixie Site and the many programs available.

## **EASHELLS: WHAT ARE THEY AND WHERE ARE THEY FROM? A LOOK AT THE SCIENCE OF CONCHOLOGY**

Penn Dixie is pleased to have **Dr. Rick Batt, of Buffalo State**, make an illustrated presentation on **“Seashells: What are they and Where are They From?”** on **Wednesday, February 13, 2013, at 7 PM**, in the auditorium of the Gateway Executive Office (adjacent to Woodlawn Beach State Park) at 3556 Lake Shore Road, Getzville. If you are headed south for the February Winter Break the next week and interested in where you can find seashells, this is a talk that you do not want to miss. Dr. Batt will be bringing in several seashells for you to view.

Have you ever picked up seashells on the beach and wondered about what kind of critters made them? Have you appreciated their variety of styles and colors? You're not alone. Seashells and the animals that make them (mollusks) have been appreciated by people for many thousands of years. Shells have been used for money, jewelry, tools, and even making music, and their makers have served as a major resource in several cultures, as well as a source of pigments for dyes and, more recently, a source of chemical compounds used to develop important new medicines. Many notable people in history were collectors of seashells, among them Roman emperors, Captain Bligh of the HMS Bounty, Peter the Great of Russia, Prince Albert I of Morocco, the Japanese Emperor Hirohito, multimillionaire John D. Rockefeller, and the actor Raymond Burr of Perry Mason fame. Many of the first species of animals to be scientifically described and named were seashell-producers. Even Edgar Allan Poe produced a book on seashells and how to identify them. Today, next to stamp collecting the collecting of seashells is the most popular collecting hobby. Numerous local and even national clubs and educational organizations have been organized by those who collect and study shells and the mollusks that make them, and many of these hold annual shows where the public can learn, view scientific displays, and purchase museum-quality specimens.

Just as Dr. Rick Batt uses Power Point slides and seashell specimens to present an overview of conchology, the science of seashells and the mollusks that make them. Some of the topics we'll touch on include how shells are made, seashell diversity and distribution, what the animals themselves are, fossil seashells you can collect from local rocks, human uses of shells and their occupants through history, and the importance of mollusks in ecosystems.

Dr. Batt, currently a geology professor at Buffalo State College, has collected and studied seashells for 50 years, purchasing and trading specimens collected from around the world. He and his wife, Dr. Robin Batt, are active members of Conchologists of America, an international organization devoted to the scientific collection and study of seashells and their occupants, and are also active members of several local clubs in Florida as well as in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Last summer they had the opportunity to participate in a scientific shelling trip to the Bahamas sponsored by the Bailey-Matthews Shell Museum on Sanibel Island, Florida.

This presentation is for anyone who would like to know a bit more about seashells. Hopefully you will be inspired to better appreciate the shells you might find on a future visit to the beach. If you have any shells you'd like to learn the name of, bring them along.

Dr. Batt's presentation is open to the public and **no pre-registrations are required**. Children, adults, scouts, students, families, home schools, and groups are welcome. \$4 person, Penn Dixie members are free. Call (716) 456-4560 for information and directions.

# **CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING, SNOWSHOEING OR NATURE WALKS AT PENN DIXIE FEBRUARY 16<sup>th</sup>**

Penn Dixie has the cross-country skiing, snowshoeing or nature walk events scheduled for the winter of 2012-2013. If no snow is available, there will be a nature walk around the site. The next event is Saturday, February 16, 2013, all starting at 10 AM. **Pre-registrations are required** and may be made by calling (716) 627-4560. \$3/person and Penn Dixie members are FREE. Participants must bring their own skis or snow shoes. Cross-country skis and snowshoes may be rented from Gear for Adventure at 1 Buffalo St. in the Village of Hamburg.

## **3<sup>rd</sup> ANNUAL PENN DIXIE 'THINK YA KNOW' TRIVIA/GAME SHOW FUND RAISING EVENT ON FEBRUARY 23**

*Got cabin fever? Need a fun-filled evening out?  
Want to win a one-night get-away?*

**Saturday, February 23, 2013 – 7-10 PM (doors open at 6 PM)**

**Oakwood Manor, VFW Post 1419**

**2985 Lake View Rd, Hamburg, NY 14075**

**Penn Dixie presents “The Dennis George Quiz Master Game Show”**

**Pre-sale admission \$25/person and \$30/person at the door**

**Pizza, snacks, pop, cookies, cupcakes, door prizes included (cash bar available)**

### ***PECIAL INDIVIDUAL PRIZES FOR THE “THINK YA KNOW” PLAY-OFFS!***

**including One Night Get-Away room, dinner and breakfast packages to Falls View Hotel and the Garden**

**Place Hotel, a \$150 gift certificate to the Seneca Niagara Casino, and**

**a 32-inch flat screen TV**

**\$5 additional per person to play to win**

**A 50/50 split raffle and Chinese auction will be available!**

**Bring your family, friends, colleagues and guests for a fun-filled evening.**

**Call (716) 627-4560 for information and tickets.**

**Help support the natural science programs at the  
Penn Dixie Paleontological & Outdoor Education Center in Hamburg  
including astronomy, birding, fossil collecting, geology, wetlands, wildlife, and other natural science  
programs and events.**

## **PENN DIXIE EXHIBIT AT WNY! WILD EXPO**

Penn Dixie exhibit and fossil dig will be at the WNY Wild! Expo on Sunday, February 24, 2013, from 9 AM-3 PM at the Leonard Post Jr. VFW Post No. 6251, 2450 Walden Avenue, Cheektowaga, NY. Over 17 organizations will be present providing information on their programs and activities. This will be an opportunity to learn about the many programs available in WNY and talk to the experts that will be staffing the exhibits. There will be hands-on activities for children, door prizes, a treasure map contest for children, and more. Adults are \$2 and children 12 and under are free. Come on out and learn about some of the many organizations that make WNY a great place to live and visit!

## **PENN DIXIE VOLUNTEER TRAINING PROGRAM March 16**

**Penn Dixie needs volunteers!** The programs, field trips, exhibits, and other activities of the Penn Dixie Site and the WNYNHHS have continued to grow each year and reach more children and adults. The events and programs require a large number of volunteers to provide successful programs. Several of our volunteers have moved out of the area, some have health concerns or family responsibilities and we need to augment our volunteer group to continue with the growing number of programs and activities.

Penn Dixie Site is currently recruiting enthusiastic and responsible individuals to help support its educational programs at the Penn Dixie Paleontological and Outdoor Education Center in Hamburg. This could be your perfect opportunity if you...

**Want to make a difference in your community.**

**Are looking for a hands-on volunteer organization.**

**Have three or four hours available each month.**

**Need to fulfill community service hours.**

**Are seeking teaching or mentoring opportunities.**

As the demand for programs continues, the need for additional volunteers also increases. Astronomy volunteers and volunteers to help with school groups and special events are needed! This is a great opportunity to introduce children and adults to the world of natural sciences available in our region. In 2012, Penn Dixie provided and participated in 408 on-site and off-site programs, exhibits, events, field trips, presentations and other activities that reached over 103,901 children and adults. Families and groups from 38 states and 9 countries visited Penn Dixie in 2012. Penn Dixie has a variety of programs and projects that succeed through the volunteer efforts of individuals, groups, students, scouts, seniors and retirees.

Volunteers are needed to help with school groups, astronomy programs, special events, weekends, membership recruitment, marketing, Board and committee positions, and group visits to Penn Dixie. Individuals of all ages and backgrounds are encouraged to attend. Have a few hours a month to help introduce children and adults to natural sciences? Help open up a whole new world to those who visit Penn Dixie – “**Where Science Comes Alive.**” The Annual Volunteer Training Program is scheduled for Saturday, March 16, 2013, at 8:30 AM in the auditorium at the Gateway Executive Office, 3556 Lake Shore Road, Blasdell. If you are interested in helping out with school groups, families, schools, day cares, etc. please call (716) 627-4560 or email [jbpendix@gmail.com](mailto:jbpendix@gmail.com). Pre-registration is requested. Training is free for members and \$25 each for non-members. Information on Volunteer Opportunities and an information form, that should be submitted, are available on the website under Volunteer Opportunities at [www.penndixie.org](http://www.penndixie.org).

## **PENN DIXIE SITE RANKED 1<sup>ST</sup> IN FOSSIL PARK RANKINGS IN THE UNITED STATES**

Geological Society of America Special Paper 474, June 2011, “Geobiological opportunities to learn at U.S. Fossil Parks” by Renee Clary, of Mississippi State University, and James Wandersee, of Louisiana State University, evaluated seven fossil parks and the Penn Dixie Paleontological and Outdoor Education Center in

Hamburg, NY was ranked No. 1. Page 130 lists the rankings on Table 2 and the seven criteria that were evaluated. The paper provides additional details and information on the importance of these facilities to the scientific geobiological learning and tourism.

**VISIT [WWW.PENNDIXIE.ORG](http://WWW.PENNDIXIE.ORG)  
FOR PROGRAM, MEMBERSHIP,  
AND EVENT INFORMATION**

**HELP SUPPORT THE PENN DIXIE SITE!  
TAKE OUT A MEMBERSHIP IN THE HAMBURG NATURAL  
HISTORY SOCIETY AND RECRUIT A NEW MEMBER TODAY!**