

Penn Dixie Chronicle

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE HAMBURG NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Winter 2018

SITE:

4050 North Street
Blasdell, New York 14219

MAILING:

Hamburg Natural History Society
3556 Lakeshore Rd. Ste. 230
Blasdell, NY 14219

HOURS:

Closed to the Public
Members welcome anytime

PHONE: 716-627-4560

WEBSITE: penn Dixie.org

SOCIAL MEDIA: @penn Dixie

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Director's Note

Hello again! Just like that, 2018 is upon us. The cold, rain, and snow have made their presence felt in Hamburg. We've already experienced blizzard-like

conditions, single digit temperatures, and the infamous lake effect thundersnow. I miss August.

I'd like to begin my update with a public service announcement. This Thanksgiving I was involved in a car crash caused by a distracted driver. I survived, but many aren't so lucky. On U.S. roads, 66 people die each week due to distracted drivers. That's the same death toll as the Las Vegas concert shooting -- repeated every six days. Please keep that statistic in mind and stay safe out there.

The road to recovery has been challenging and I thank our dedicated office staff (Holly, Elizabeth, and Matt) for covering in my absence. Though Penn Dixie is closed, there is much planning underway for our next season. I'm thrilled that Erie County has increased our funding in 2018. We need a permanent educational facility on site and these taxpayer dollars will help us to plan, write grants, and fundraise towards this goal. We thank Legislator Lynne Dixon, County Executive Mark Poloncarz, and the entire legislature once again for their support.

We're also pleased to announce something really neat this summer: Penn Dixie will attempt to set the Guinness World Record for largest fossil dig!! There's a lot of planning involved

at this stage and we'd love to hear from you if you'd like to share your thoughts or help with the committee.

Finally, I'm happy to report that all 15 seats on the newly expanded board of directors have been filled with excellent candidates. Following our November elections, the board welcomes Bryanna Gwitt, Patty O'Shei, Tammy Russell, Dan Sheldon, and Mimie Value. With a full crew of directors and key staff, board meetings have become lively affairs and there is no shortage of good ideas, constructive feedback, and enthusiasm. I'm looking forward to the upcoming year!

Phil

Penn Dixie will reopen on weekends beginning Saturday, April 21st.

Fossil collecting will be available
Saturdays: 9 am to 5 pm
Sundays: 10 am to 5 pm
Open Daily (9 to 5) beginning June 11th

Holidays:

Penn Dixie will be open 10 am to 4 pm
Memorial Day: (Monday, May 28th)
Independence Day: (Wednesday, July 4th)
Labor Day: (Monday, September 3rd)

We return to weekend-only hours following Labor Day and will close for the season on Sunday, October 28th.

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DIG INTO MEMBERSHIP!

BENEFITS INCLUDE:

1. Support conservation of the Penn Dixie Site, a 54-acre preserve in Blasdell, NY
2. Unlimited free admission to the #1 fossil park in the U.S., science lectures, and for most special programs and astronomy nights
3. Discount admission for summer camps, Dig with the Experts, and other special programs
4. Receive The Penn Dixie Chronicle newsletter
5. Receive Penn Dixie eNews updates
6. Merchandise and partner discounts – see our website for the latest info
7. Support the science education efforts of the Hamburg Natural History Society, a 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofit

Membership Categories:

- **STUDENT** (*K-12 or College*):
1-year \$25 • 2-year \$35
- **SENIOR** (*65 & up*):
1-year \$25 • 2-year \$35
- **INDIVIDUAL**
1-year \$30 • 2-year \$45
- **FAMILY** (*2 adults and all household children*):
1-year \$45 • 2-year \$70
- **GRANDPARENTS** (*2 grandparents and 5 grandchildren*):
1-year \$50 • 2-year \$85
- **ASSOCIATE** (*includes fossil set*):
\$80/year
- **CORPORATE** (*includes fossil set and guided tour for 10*): \$100/year
- **PATRON** (*includes fossil set and guided tour for 10*): \$100/year

JOIN ONLINE AT
penndixie.org

Complete an application at the site, or call 716-627-4560 to request a paper application via mail.



Educator's Note

Happy New Year!! I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season! I was lucky to celebrate an eventful 2017 with family and friends. As I look forward to 2018, I can't believe that my one-year anniversary with Penn Dixie is quickly approaching. Winter is allowing me to prepare for another great season filled with fossils and visitors. This winter we also look forward to our science lecture series. It's another fun way to learn about different aspects of science. We are lucky to have some very interesting talks lined up on a variety of topics.

This winter I would also like to grow Penn Dixie's volunteer base. I'm excited to work with Penn Dixie volunteers over winter to prepare for our busy season. Penn Dixie relies heavily on volunteers throughout the year. We couldn't do all that we do without help from our wonderful volunteers. Stay tuned for information about volunteer trainings and social events during winter. Volunteers often help at off-site events like Burgerfest, during school

field trips, or at Penn Dixie during our special events. We have volunteer opportunities for every interest! If you are interested in volunteering for Penn Dixie or have any questions, please contact me at (716) 627-4560 or holly@penndixie.org.

Teachers make your field trip reservations now for your end of the school year field trip! Engage your students with a hands-on learning experience. Field trips can be tailored to your school's needs. Penn Dixie can also bring our Earth's history right into your classroom with our in-

school programs! With both our field trips and in-school programs, your students will have a better understanding of what Earth was like 380 million of years ago, along with their very own fossils to take home with them. For more information on site visits, to book your group visits, or anything else please call me at (716) 627-4560 or email at holly@penndixie.org.

Holly
Director of Education



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EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

SPECIAL UPDATE

In the spirit of conservation, HNHS has decided to switch to a paperless newsletter. We feel that this decision is consistent with our mission and will continue to look for ways to be more respectful of our natural resources.

We will produce the Penn Dixie Chronicle in a full-color PDF format on our website and in our monthly mailings to our members. If you're not already signed up, email Phil Stokes at penndixie.org and we'll add you to the list.

We recognize that some of our members who do not utilize email may wish to receive a paper copy of the newsletter. If you do not utilize email and wish to receive the newsletter, please contact our office at 716-627-4560.

This is the Final Paper edition.

Penn Dixie Winter 2018 Calendar

UPDATED
1/10/18

WED., JANUARY 31, 7 PM

PLACODERM FISHES, MUCH MORE THAN EVOLUTIONARY DEAD ENDS

Join us for a winter science talk by James Boyle, PhD Candidate, Department of Geology, University at Buffalo. James will give us an overview of the diversity and success of placoderms and the recent resurgence in research on the group since they are now recognized as a paraphyletic grade of early vertebrates.

This will be an illustrated presentation in the auditorium of the Gateway Executive Office Building, 3556 Lake Shore Rd., Blasdell, NY. \$5/person, FREE for members. Registration not needed.

WED., FEBRUARY 28, 6:30 PM

AQUARIUM OF NIAGARA TOUCH TANK

You've dug up their fossilized relatives, now you can experience arthropods, echinoderms, and other marine animals up close! The Traveling Touch Tank program is suitable for all ages. After a brief lesson, participants will be able to touch the animals using a gentle two finger touch. After participants interact with the animals, an aquarium educator will present a few incredible animal artifacts that everyone will be able to hold and feel.

The touch tank presentation will be held in the Gateway Auditorium, 3556 Lake Shore Rd., Blasdell, NY. \$5/person, FREE for members. Registration not needed.

SAT., MARCH 24 AND SUN., MARCH 25

PENN DIXIE EXHIBIT AT THE BUFFALO GEM & MINERAL SHOW

Located at the Events Center at the Erie County Fairgrounds, Hamburg, NY.

WED., MARCH 28, 6 PM TO 8 PM

PENN DIXIE VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION

Penn Dixie would not exist without our volunteers! To keep growing, we're always on the lookout for help with programming, school visits, community engagement, site maintenance, and administration. No experience necessary. We will provide all the training needed! Learn about Penn Dixie from our staff and experienced volunteers and receive the tools that you will need to make a difference.

We'll meet in the Gateway Auditorium, 3556 Lake Shore Rd., Blasdell, NY. Dinner and refreshments included. Email holly@penndixie.org to register.

SAT., APRIL 21

PENN DIXIE REOPENS TO THE PUBLIC

Saturdays, 9 am to 5 pm and Sundays, 10 am to 5 pm

SAT., APRIL 21, 10 AM

EARTH DAY AT PENN DIXIE

Join our team of volunteers as we perform the annual cleanup of Penn Dixie and prepare to reopen the site to the public. FREE to members and no preregistrations required.

SAT., APRIL 21

PENN DIXIE EXHIBIT AT KIDABALOO

Located at the Events Center at the Erie County Fairgrounds, Hamburg, NY

MON., APRIL 23, 10 AM TO 1 PM

HOMESCHOOL DAY AT PENN DIXIE

Learn about the geological history of Western New York at Penn Dixie. This special program for homeschoolers includes a complete educational tour of Penn Dixie led by our trained educators. Students can take home all the fossils they find! Admission is \$5 per student. Students must be accompanied by an adult. No experience necessary. Program is for grades 1-12. Pre-registration is required. To register email Holly at holly@penndixie.org. Register by April 9 and receive \$1 off admission.

FRI., MAY 18, 6:30 PM

DINOSAUR CSI

PaleoJoe takes you on a trip back in time to learn about the victims and perpetrators, life and death of the prehistoric. Learn the techniques used in the investigation of how these creatures lived and died. See the evidence and discover the stories that are told through Dinosaur CSI.

This is an illustrated presentation by Joe 'PaleoJoe' Kchodl, Paleontologist, from Midland, MI in the Gateway Auditorium, 3556 Lake Shore Rd., Blasdell, NY. \$5/person, FREE for members. Registration not needed.

SAT., MAY 19 AND SUN., MAY 20

9 AM TO 4 PM

DIG WITH THE EXPERTS

Join us for our signature event — Penn Dixie's Dig with the Experts! This is our very popular and yearly opportunity to unearth the best, most complete, and most unexpected fossils at Penn Dixie. We'll have equipment on-site to do the heavy lifting and scientific experts on site to help with locating and identifying the best fossils. You'll have to do your share of splitting and digging, of course, but you're guaranteed to find something cool and interesting. See penndixie.org/dig-with-the-experts/ for full information.



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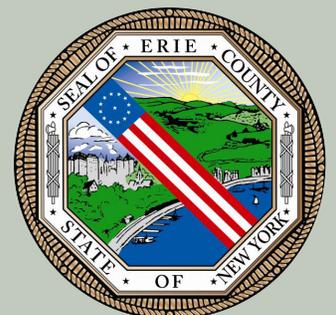
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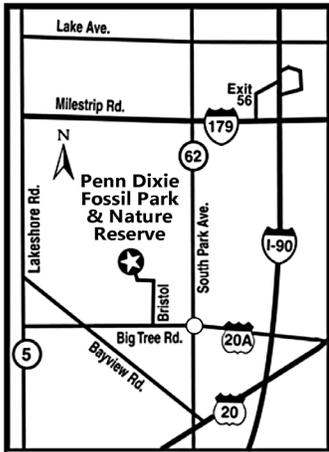
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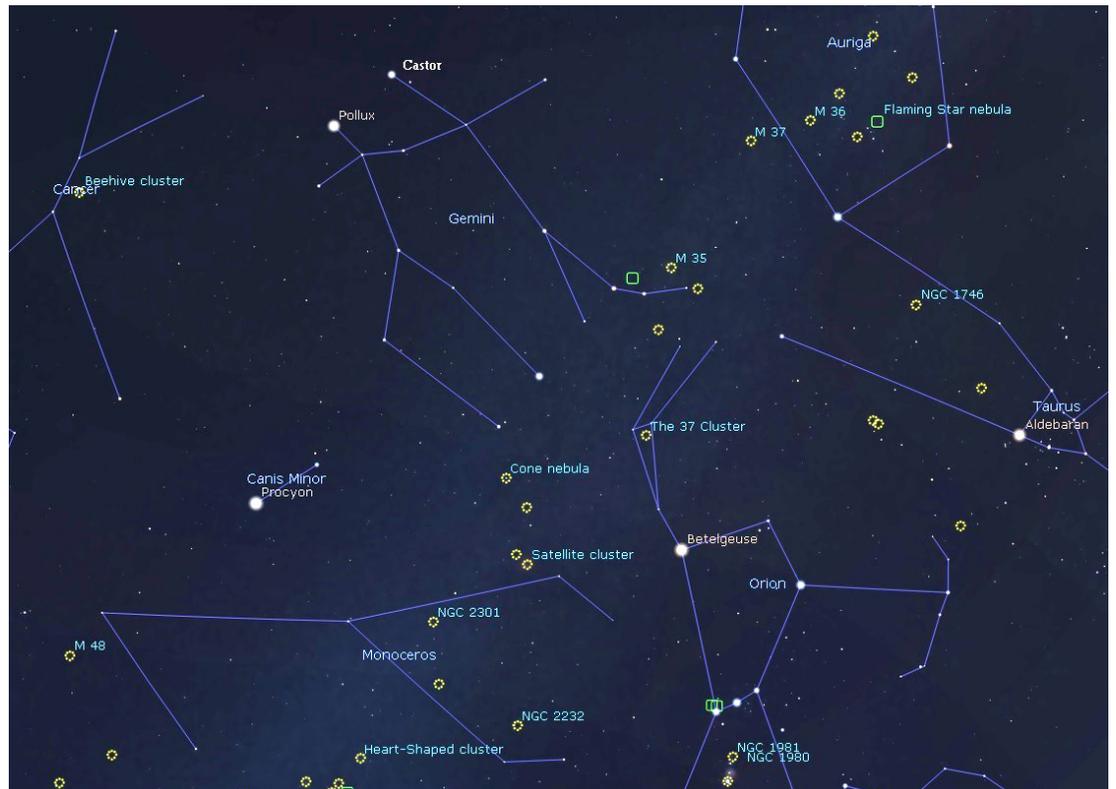


Constellation: Gemini ‘The Twins’

By Rich Switzer

MYTH: Pollux and Castor are the famous twin brothers of the Greek mythology. Their sister is the famous Helen of Troy. The twins would become Argonauts, who joined Jason in his quest for the golden fleece. While raiding some cattle, Castor’s cousin Idas became enraged at Castor and killed him. Pollux was so grieved over his brother’s death that he asked his father Zeus to send them together to share the heavens and be close to each other forever.

WHAT TO VIEW: The Star Propus is near the location of the summer solstice which is where the Sun reaches its furthest journey north around the celestial sphere. The only Merrier object is M-35, or NGC 2168 -- it lies about 2,500 light years away. About 250 stars make up this cluster. The Eskimo Nebula (NGC 2392) is around 10,000 light years away and looks blue-green in a small scope. In a very large scope you can see the “face” of this furry-looking nebula.



Looking overhead around mid-March about 9 pm.