

## Stones and Bones

Key fossils and the people who discovered them tell the story of life on Earth

<b>Course #</b>	20FST
<b>Format:</b>	Seminar
<b>Moderators:</b>	Dottie Rosenthal, Jim Scott
<b>Date and Time:</b>	Monday, 9:30-11:30 10 weeks, starting September 21
<b>Location:</b>	Applewood in Amherst, meeting room
<b>Maximum number of participants:</b>	18
<b>Auditors accepted:</b>	Yes, up to 2

**Purpose:** The purpose of the seminar is to learn the history of life on Earth through fossils that represent important landmarks in the evolution of life and to learn of the people who made those fossils famous.

**Description:** We will focus on key fossils that represent important landmarks in the history of life on Earth, and the person closely associated with the discovery of each of the fossils. The fossils reveal an amazing story of biological diversity and adaptation to changing environmental conditions. As we take up our examples in the order in which they appear in the fossil record, we will learn about how major groups of organisms evolved and the basic process that led to the evolution of the species we have today. We will begin with stromatolites, structures built by microscopic algae, that are among the first indications of life, and end the story with Otzi, the "Ice Man," who lived between 3400 and 3100 BCE, and whose frozen body was found in 1991. Along the way, we will learn about the first land plants, fish that walked, ancient aquatic reptiles, an extinct giant rhinoceros, and "Lucy," an early human.

**Role of participants:** Participants will select a topic from a list provided by the moderators and make a presentation on the topic. Examples of topics are *Marine Reptiles* and Mary Anning; *Archaeopteryx and Charles Darwin*; and Otzi: *The Ice Man* and Martin Sikora.

**Resources:** This seminar was inspired by the book, *The Story of Life in 25 Fossils* by Donald R. Prothero (2015). Every fossil in the book tells a story, not only of the history of life on Earth, but of the discovery of the fossils and of the people behind their discovery and interpretation.

**About the Moderators:** Dorothy Rosenthal has been a member of Five College Learning in Retirement since 1999 and has moderated or co-moderated over two dozen seminars, mostly related to biology. Co-moderator Jim Scott, formerly a teacher of sciences, has been active in 5CLIR for two decades as a participant and moderator of seminars, mainly in science and history.