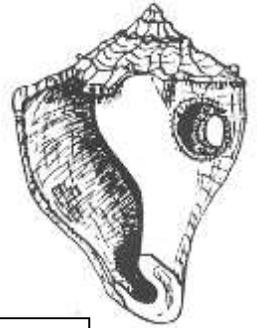


SWFAS

NEWSLETTER

THE SOUTHWEST FLORIDA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



JOHN G. BERIAULT, ACTING EDITOR

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JULY, 2001



SIGN OF THE TIMES: Here is a sight that will probably not be seen again in South Florida – an abandoned artesian well gushing water in 1964 at an old citrus grove site dated to circa 1910 in Northern Collier County. Most of these deep wells have been capped to conserve water, a move most of us in these drought-ridden times would approve, even if it destroys an interesting historical/archaeological feature.

**YO MAMA ...
CORBETT TORRENCE
TALKS ABOUT THE
IMPORTANCE OF
MATRILINEAL
DESCENT IN CALUSA
SOCIETY**

– it's never dull, always imaginative and challenging to the intellect of those hearing it. Who would have thought the topic of matrilineal descent could be made into a spirited discussion that would keep you at the edge of your seat, let alone awake! Corbett took a passage

Some things you can always say when Corbett Torrence gives a presentation

from Hahn's *Missions to the Calusa* for his June 20th talk concerning the succession of Don Felipe to the Calusa kingship after the killing of the previous king, Carlos, by the Spanish under Menendez in the mid 1560's and rendered it into a proof that the Calusa, like most tribes in the Southeast and the Caribbean based "royal" descent from the female rather than male side. But more than this, he made the event come to life and we looked at the social and personal ramifications. I don't think Corbett has ever talked in a monotone, or are his presentations ever "monochromatic"! Dramatic, educational, and thought-provoking is more like it! Corbett, we'll expect more of the same as soon as you can make it back to speak before us!

Inside this Newsletter

- 1 We are Moving! Florida Gulf Coast University will be the new site of our General Meetings**
- 2 Splashdown – Part Six! Read Dr. Robert Gore...**

THE DATE BOOK

July 11thth SWFAS Board Meeting – Hampton Inn, Bonita Springs, 7:00 PM

July 18th, 2001 General Meeting – HELD AT FGCU MAIN CAMPUS – TAKE EXITS 19 OR 20 EAST OF I-75

(see Map this issue)

About SWFAS

The directorate: President Betsy Perdichizzi, first vice president Don Taggart, membership secretary Charlie Strader, treasurer Charlie Strader, recording secretary Jo Ann Grey, directors Steve Tutko, Sue Long, Dottie Thompson, Jo Ann Grey, Charles Dugan, Jack Thompson, Tom Franchino, John Beriault, Charlie Strader and Dr Michael McDonald.

The committees: Field: Beriault, 434-0624; Hospitality: position open; Membership: Charlie Strader; Publicity: Dottie Thompson, 597-2269; Sales: position open; Finances, Jack Thompson 597-2269, 774-8517; Lab: (774-8517), Art Lee, 261-4939, Walt Buschelman, 775-9734, Jack Thompson, 597-2269.

To Join: Address your check to the Southwest Florida Archaeological Society, P.O. Box 9965, Naples, FL 34101. Dues are: Individual \$20, Individual Sustaining \$50.00, Family \$35, Student \$15.

Any questions, comments, contributions to the Newsletter: John G. Beriault, acting editor, P.O. Box 9074, Naples, FL 34101-9074 or Email to: JGBeriault@aol.com.

DUES ARE DUE!

Friends, it's that time of year again to remind you that SWFAS membership dues are due and payable January 1st, 2001. We're not like the phone or power company – can't remind you by turning off the utility. We hope you will see this notice and sit right

down and send us a check payable to the **Southwest Florida Archaeological Society**, P.O. Box 9965, Naples, FL 34101-9965. As a group we've had a positive impact in informing people, preserving our historic and prehistoric resources, and just plain enjoying each other's company and having a good time! Please help us by staying with us and sending in your dues. Thanks!



POTSHERDS AND POTSHOTS... AN ONGOING SERIES BY ROBERT GORE

BIRDSHOT AND THE BEACHBALL. VI.

We can briefly consider two more aspects of anthropological meteoritics, viz. What are an individual's chances of seeing one hit the earth? And what are the chances of being struck by one? The answer to both questions, in a very general sense, is: not much. Which is to say not exactly impossible, but certainly with a low probability. However, this conclusion, based on

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probability statistics, comes with a caveat. Determining the odds of any particular event happening depends on several complex and continually varying factors, among them 1) the number of times the event has previously occurred, 2) the number and distribution of individuals in a delimited area in which the event has either happened, or by extrapolation might happen, and 3) the number and distribution of the objects in both space and time that might cause the event to take place. Using a comical analogy we can ask: What are the odds of getting struck by an automobile 1a) while hiking across Florida in 1821, or 1b) while walking on the bottom of the sea; 2a) while walking down a street in New Delhi, India in 1999; 2b) while strolling alone across the Arctic tundra in any given year; 3) while wandering through a modern-day junkyard; or 3b) while walking down 1-95 in Miami-Dade County at rush-hour.

Probabilities are merely a sophisticated form of prediction. Instead of using chicken entrails or tea leaves we use mathematical formulae and the history of similar events. This devolves to a curious conclusion. As Table 4 demonstrates, one has about the same probability of being struck today by a meteor as dying in a passenger plane crash. That may be of indifferent comfort to air

travelers trying to rack up Bonus Miles. It's also substantially easier to buy flight insurance at the airport than meteor insurance anywhere. That's because more people have died in plane crashes (thousands) than have been killed by meteors (0), and the Insurance probability tables are geared to the number of previous occurrences happening to a known or projected number of people which might be affected by such an occurrence. The possibility of buying a combination policy insuring against the probability of your

occurrences. It's kind of like betting the dealer at a blackjack table at the Seminole Casino that the next card she deals will be the earl of red spades.

But--and It's a big "but," unlikely situations do occur, as Mrs. E. Hulitt Hodge can attest. More about her in a moment. As noted in a previous article, at least 20,000 tons of space dust fall onto earth every year, with some amounts estimated to

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same amount, equivalent to about 23,600 quadrillion pounds. There are two fortunate things about this weight gain. First, thanks to atmospheric friction much of the weight of any incoming object is ablated away--a good thing when huge asteroid-sized meteoroids are involved. Second, the total amount of material that has reached earth comprises about 0.5 thousand millionths of Gaea's present total weight, or in other words, not anything requiring her to join Slender Life. On the other hand, the downside is that if you were lounging on the beach at Chicxulub 65 million years ago, or were going oystering on the DelMarVa peninsula some 35 million years ago, and had just bought a multimillion dollar policy against meteoric impact, your survivors could retire in ease. The question of insurance fraud might have been raised--it is probable that neither you nor the impactors survived as objects larger than small fragments buried deep in the earth after the impact explosion and crater excavation. This is a common situation in meteors weighing upwards of 10-100 tons.

So it goes with witnessed meteor falls. As might be expected, such falls are more apt to be observed and correctly interpreted in today's highly populated, technologically-connected

TABLE 4
ODDS AGAINST DYING FROM CERTAIN CAUSES IN THE UNITED STATES

Cause	Odds
Food Poisoning	1 in 300,000,000
Fireworks Accident	1 in 1,000,000
Venomous Animal Bite or Sting	1 in 100,000
Tornado	1 in 60,000
Flood	1 in 30,000
Passenger Plane Crash	1 in 20,000
Meteorite Strike (averaged)	1 in 20,000
Electrocution	1 in 5,000
Firearms Accident	1 in 2,500
Fire	1 in 800
Murder	1 in 300
Motor Vehicle Accident	1 in 100

Data adapted from Poag, C. W., 1999, *Chesapeake Invader*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.

plane being struck by a meteor, for example, might seem attractive, but it would be hard to find a company who took you seriously. The possibility is not zero (in an infinite universe it can never be) but the probability is certainly extremely low--based on the number of previously observed

range between 35,000-100,000 tons annually. This means that since the earth was first formed and cooled some 4.5 billion years ago, more than 11 trillion tons of debris have fallen onto it. Looked at another way, Mother Gaea has increased her weight by that

world than, say, 2,000 years ago when populations were more dispersed, and falling stones were considered supernatural objects or stray shells from heavenly artillery duels. Information transfer, such as it was, might take weeks or months. In fact, the name "meteor" refers obliquely to the belief (held as recently as the late 1700s) that meteors formed as concretions in the atmosphere and fell to earth of their own weight. Times change, and within just the last two decades, for example, scores of notable meteor falls have been seen, recognized, and recovered, including a huge fireball weighing 2,360 pounds that struck near Norton, Kansas in February, 1948, and a 1.7 ton meteorite that fell near Jilin, China in March, 1976. A third meteorite presumably exploded after traveling slowly over central Oregon in October, 1987, but its remains have not yet been recovered. Most of the known meteorites in museums and private holdings have been recovered long after they fell.

So it also goes with being struck by falling stars. Since the late 1790s towns in France, Italy, Normandy, and New England have been hit by observed showers of meteoritic stones but no injuries or deaths were reported. This does not mean there weren't hazards. By 1804, after a fall of more than three thousand stones on a village in Normandy the origin of meteors became demonstrably extraterrestrial. Six decades later about 20 stones were recovered from a fall near a small village in

southwestern France. Another but more spectacular fall took place in 1868 when an estimated 100,000-300,000 stones cascaded down over the Polish town of Pultusk. The tiny pebbles that were recovered were named "Pultusk peas." In the late 1880s the state of Iowa was recipient of three separate falls at Amana (100 + pieces, up to 74 lbs.), Estherville (5,000 marble-sized "nuggets," and several larger up to 470 lbs.), and Forest City (some 1,800 small stones and several ranging between 4 and 80 lbs.). Sixty years later the Sikhote-Altin area of Siberia was bombarded with more than 25 tons of meteoric iron, producing over 100 various sized craters, and blasting the forest's trees. In February 1969 the Mexican town of Pueblito de Allende was host to a major meteor fall that covered an estimated 180 square miles and produced more than two tons of high-carbon stones. In short, more than 50 different falls have been observed at different points on earth, many comprised of hundreds of falling objects. Chicken Little was, indeed, not only right-but prognostic too, as we shall now see.

People and their possessions have been struck by meteors. It's always a newsworthy event usually played to the groundlings for

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Its maximum catastrophic potentiality. In 1860 at New Concord, Ohio a fall of about 100 stones killed a colt at pasture. In June, 1911 another fall in Nahkla, Egypt killed a dog. Recall that the Tunguska Event executed dozens of Siberian reindeers, so the moral might be for the animals--better pay attention to Chicken Little. She seems to know the probabilities.

So should humans. For example, in April, 1971 a 12 ounce stone fell through the roof of a house in Wethersfield, Connecticut and became stuck in the living room ceiling. Showing how probability tables need to be taken with a grain of salt, 11 years later a second house in Wethersfield was hit by a six-pounder. The odds of this happening in the same town, let alone to a nearby house (before either event) would be, to coin an oxymoronic phrase, astronomically small. The fact that this house was less than two miles from the first ought to convince anyone that probability tables are just that--probabilities. In none of these incidents was anyone injured. But 17 years earlier, in November, 1954, two stones fell on Silacauga, Alabama. The larger, weighing more than 8 pounds, resulted in the worst (and only) injury ever reported to a human in modern times. Mrs. E. Hulit Hodge, napping

on her sofa, was awakened by the crash and sound of splintering wood and felt an object bounce off her hip. She sustained serious bruises but undoubtedly avoided greater injury because the roof of the house, her radio, and the two quilts she lay under, had absorbed most of the impact. The fourth curious incident involving people took place in 1992 when a 26 pound stony meteorite fell on Peekskill, New York, and smashed through the trunk of Michelle Knapps 1980 Chevrolet Malibu. The teenager was on the scene immediately and recovered the still warm stone. Showing how probabilities compete with perversities, word of the fall spread rapidly and a consortium of three bidders bought the stone from Michelle for \$69,000! But it got even better. Her 12-year old car, worth about \$300 prior to the event, but now severely damaged by a visitor from outer space, was purchased by another collector for a rumored \$10,000!

So how does all of this relate to Floridan anthropology? There are several possibilities. First, excavators of middens and burial mounds should always be on the look-out for foreign stones, some of which may be both small and nondescript. Suspect objects can be submitted to an expert at any of the federal or state museums who could probably determine whether it is terran or extra-terran in origin. Second, aboriginal individuals almost certainly have witnessed spectacular meteor showers. Unfortunately, we would

have almost no way of knowing this unless some sort of record could be correlated with the event, or some object (in a grave, as an amulet, in a medicine bag) turned up. Even more difficult, if not impossible, would be to determine if any of the native peoples ever suffered injury or death from falling stars. Again, with only a vocal record available it might prove hard to substantiate. One wonders, though, whether the assiduously record-keeping friars might have made some note which, now forgotten, is moldering away in the dusty Archives of the Indies in Seville.

Focusing more ethnographically, Dr. William Sturtevant has shown that the Mikasuki Indians have an extensive botanical pharmacopoeia for treating a multitude of sicknesses, most with esoteric names such as "rainbow sickness, wolf sickness, mist sickness, sun sickness, thunder sickness" and the like. Yet there seems to be none associated with seeing shooting stars or finding meteorites. Certainly both objects must have been observed and had great portent, particularly if they fell nearby. But perhaps this happened so rarely as not to cause a physiological problem, or perhaps because innately the falling objects were harmless. Still, at least

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three meteorites have been found in aboriginal burial mounds. Which raises at least three more questions. Were portions of any of these stones chipped away; and if so, for what reason? And finally, if they were so portentous, why were they buried with a deceased individual and not kept for the benefit of the tribal survivors? The entire subject of meteoritics and their importance throughout the New World nations would seem to be a rich but as yet unsampled field of research.

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SO WHERE IS IT, ALREADY?

I've been asked to run again the map and directions where to find our "new" meeting site on the FGCU campus. Take I-75 north (or south) till you come to Exits 19 (or if you're coming from the north) Exit 20. Go east just a few short blocks to Ben Hill Griffin Parkway. Take the Parkway to the FGCU Campus Entrance. Go east about 2 blocks to the cross-street. Turn left (north) and go to the third parking lot (P4 on the map). Follow the elevated boardway/walkway south to where it ends at Building AB3. Go through the front door into

Carpool Volunteers

It has come to our attention that several SWFAS members are unable to travel to our meetings at Florida Gulf Coast University due to inability to see to drive at night, basic lack of transportation, etc. It seems a shame that several of us couldn't offer rides to those folks, as long as it's not too far out of our way and the understanding is that the arrangements can be flexible (i.e. no guarantee we have to do this for *every* meeting). Here's a chance to get to know each other better and become firm friends!

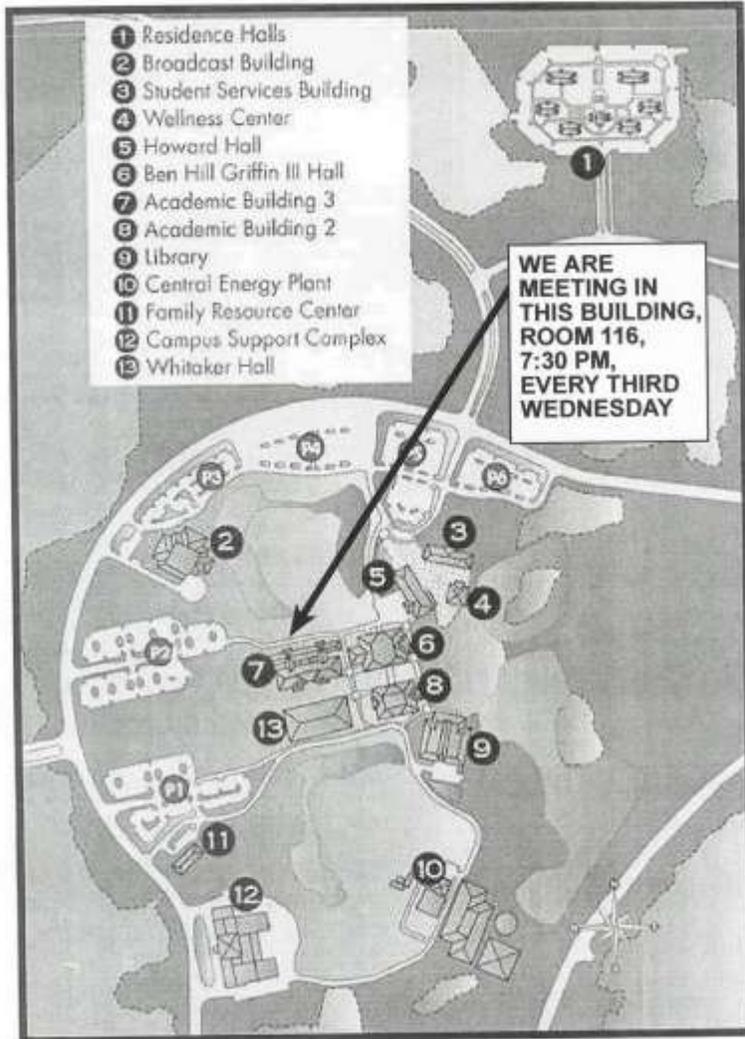
We will ask for a show of hands – or provide a sign-up sheet at the next two general meetings for those willing to provide a lift. We'll need to know where you live, as to match those needing and those providing rides. This is a kind and neighborly thing for you to do and would be greatly appreciated.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dr. Ryan Wheeler, author of "Treasure of the Calusa", will

the lobby, turn right and the classroom 116 is about the second on your right. Look for some of the other members. Sounds tiresome, but finding us is easy, trust me!

\$75.00, you can request a letter from us (as a non-profit 501(c)3 organization) giving you a deduction for your tax situation. You can earmark how or for what you would



Endowment Fund

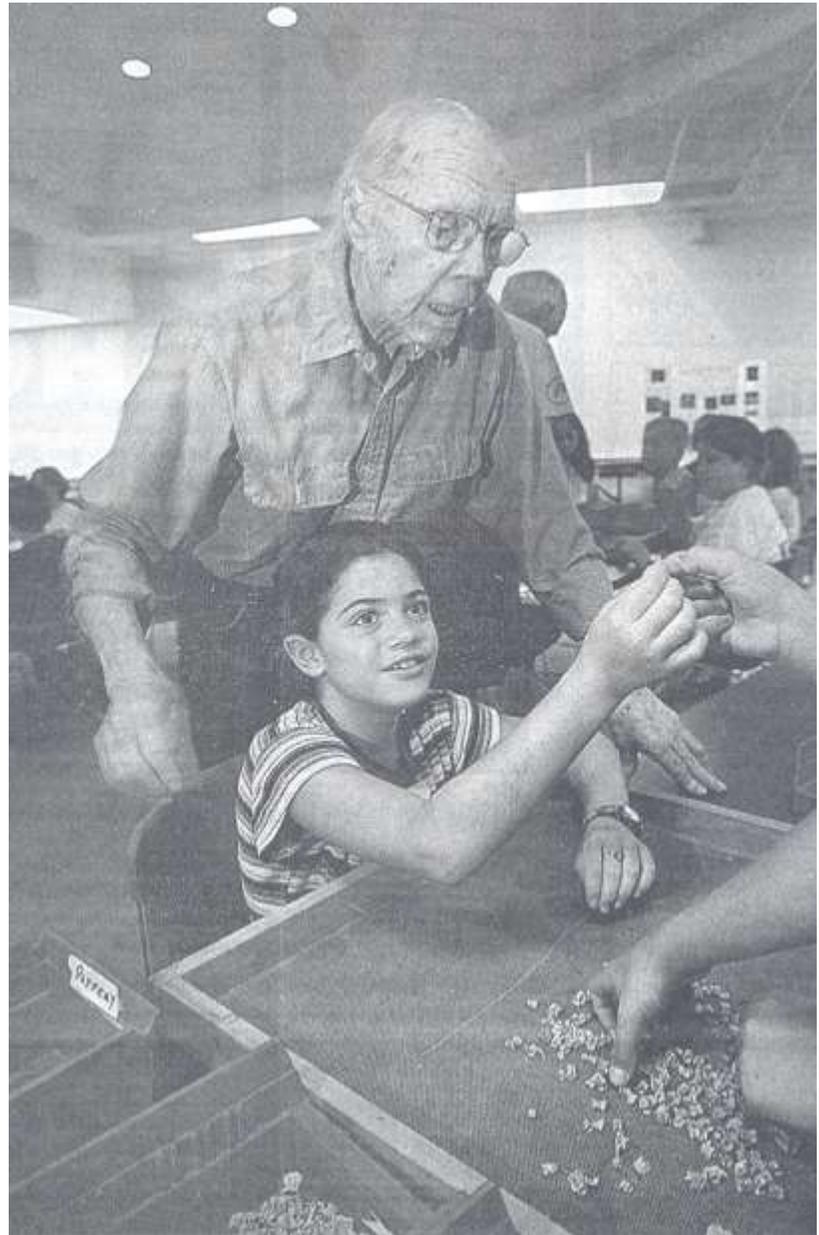
You've heard of the TV show *So You Want To Be A Millionaire*? The premise is that most of us wouldn't mind being one. Well, at SWFAS, you don't have to be one to set up an endowment fund. It can be a modest amount, and if it's over

like your money spent: the Craighead Laboratory, Speakers, General Operations, a specific project or activity such as C-14 dating – you name it. If you are interested, see our treasurer, Charlie Strader, and he will furnish the details and happily accept your contribution. Thanks!

be the speaker at the Wednesday, July 18 meeting of the Southwest Florida Archaeological Society. The group will meet at Florida Gulf Coast University in Building Academic III in Rm. 116 at 7:30 P.M. Dr. Wheeler will report on the first thorough inspection of the 100 year old Johnson Collection of Mound Key artifacts. Archaeologists believe that Mound Key, located to the south of Ft. Myers, is Calos, the ancient Capital of the Calusa Indians.

He is editor of the Florida Anthropologist, and most recently led the State of Florida investigation of the Miami Circle.

Avocational and professional archaeologists as well as those interested in history are welcome to attend.



FUTURE AND VETERAN ARCHAEOLOGISTS AT MUSEUM CAMP Here is a picture courtesy the June 20th issue of the *Naples Daily News* and photographer Gary Coronado of our Lab Director Art Lee assisting a young future archaeologist in faunal identification during the recent Lab session given during the Collier County Museum's Museum Camp.