



Vol. 23 No. 2

February 2007

### *Bonita Springs Historical Society: Kleinberg on Florida's 'Wacky History'*

The Bonita Springs Historical Society will present an evening lecture series funded by a grant from the Florida Humanities Council. The monthly event, open to the public, will take place at the Community Hall on Old 41 from January through April beginning at 7 p.m., with social time starting at 6:30 p.m. The theme of the series is, "The Front Porch & Stories of Florida's Unique People and Landscape." The society's goal is to educate and entertain the public about the historical and timely events that shape the culture of Florida. They hope to appeal to a broad range of citizens with outstanding guest speakers from a variety of disciplines.

#### **Thursday, Feb. 15 - 7 p.m. - Eliot Kleinberg**

Journalist, author and Florida native, Eliot Kleinberg will present a program sponsored by the Bonita Springs Historical Society on Thursday, February 15 at 7 p.m. at the Community Hall on Old 41. The program is funded by a grant awarded the society by the Florida Humanities Council. Kleinberg has spent more than 25 years in print and broadcast news and currently writes for the *Palm Beach Post*. He is author of nine books focusing on Florida. The title of his presentation is, "The Wacky History Of Florida and Why You Should Care." Kleinberg blends historical fact with humorous anecdotes that are unique to Florida culture. He is a member of the Florida, South Florida and Palm Beach County historical societies. His appearance is part of a monthly series offered free to the public.

#### **Upcoming**

On March 15, Robert Edic, a south Florida anthropologist, author and historian will present his tales of commercial fishing life collected through oral histories. He is the author of *Fisherfolk of Charlotte Harbor, Florida*. Edic is also a member of the Boca Grande Historical Society and field representative for the Florida Museum of Natural History.

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### **This month at SWFAS**

#### *Ek Balam, Chichen Itza and Balancanche Cave: The start of a trip through the Yucatan*



Stucco figure on corner of temple near summit of high pyramid Ek Balam

On February 21 at 7:30 p.m. at the Bonita Springs Community Center, SWFAS members and others will hear John Beriault, past president of SWFAS, give a presentation on three sites in the northern Yucatan: Ek Balam, Chichen Itza, and Balancanche Cave. These sites could be characterized as the New, the Well-Known, and the Underground. Ek Balam is a lesser-known though spectacular site with amazing high relief stucco decoration on its tallest temple. Chichen Itza is a well-known and well-traveled ruin that can still surprise. Balancanche Cave is an unusual cave complete with altars and offerings that had been intentionally sealed off for close to a thousand years. Beriault will give a Powerpoint presentation of the three sites, visited on the first leg of a 2003 trip through the Yucatan.

**Reminder**  
**Please renew your SWFAS**  
**membership now**

**Individual - \$20**  
**Family - \$35**

**Sustaining - \$50**  
**Student \$15**

## *Mike Russo speaking on Marco in April*

Dr. Mike Russo, archaeologist with the Southeast Archeological Center, National Park Service, will speak on the ancient shell monuments of the Everglades, Tuesday, April 3 at Mackle Park on Marco Island. This is the fourth lecture in the Marco Island Historical Society's 2006-2007 Lecture Series. The free presentation begins at 7:30 p.m. and is preceded by a reception and refreshments at 7 p.m.

Russo's presentation will focus on shell rings and other shell monuments and structures that are found buried deep in the Everglades mangrove swamps. These shell works are among the largest and oldest structures built before the arrival of Europeans in the 15th century. Russo discusses how these shell works relate to other shell structures built by Native Americans in the greater Southeastern United States. Currently, the National Park Service is identifying the most important of these shell works and is listing them as National Historical Landmarks.

Russo received his Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Florida in 1991. His dissertation was on the Horr's Island site near Marco Island, the oldest known village and mound complex on the North American coast. For the last ten years he has worked for the National Park Service, studying shell works along the southeast U.S. coastline from South Carolina to Louisiana. His focus has been on the oldest shell works – called shell rings – which date between 3,000 and 5,000 years in age. He has recently completed a National Historic Landmark Theme Study entitled "Shell Rings of the Southeast U.S." which summarizes and presents an overview of all known shell rings in North America.

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## *2007 Florida Anthropological Society Meeting*

Source: [www.fasweb.org/meeting.htm](http://www.fasweb.org/meeting.htm)

The 59th Annual Meeting of the Florida Anthropological Society will be hosted by the Kissimmee Valley Archaeological & Historical Conservancy (KVAHC) in Avon Park May 11 to 13.

Saturday, papers will be presented in the University Center at SFCC. In addition, there will be a poster contest, student paper award, exhibition hall and book room. A Chuck Wilde Scholarship Award is also being planned. Deadline for paper submissions is March 15.

Barbara Purdy, UF professor emeritus, will be the keynote speaker at the FAS banquet, Saturday evening at the Sebring Civic Center. The California Toe Jam Band will keep you entertained and get your feet moving on the dance floor.

On Sunday you will want to take advantage of seeing our area. Highlands Hammock, Florida's first state park, is in Sebring. There will be two official tours that provide bus transportation on a first-come, first-served basis for registered participants. One tour will take you to the Blueberry site in Lake Placid, a significant Belle Glade village site on the ridge. The other will be a tour of the 40 murals of Lake Placid that deal with its history, industry, and ecology. Sign up early for the busses. You may want to use your own transportation for these two tours so you can see them both.

## *Work resumes on Mound House pool dig*

Work on the excavation of the pool at the Mound House on Fort Myers Beach resumed on February 9. Volunteers are needed for work Tuesdays - Saturdays.

If interested, please call Mound House Director Theresa Schober at 765-0865 or e-mail [moundhouse@fmbeach.org](mailto:moundhouse@fmbeach.org).

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## *Tour the Acline Mound with Chuck Blanchard*

Chuck Blanchard will be leading a tour of the Acline Mound on March 11.

The tour will meet at 9:30 at Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center on Burnt Store Road in Punta Gorda (just 3 miles south of U.S. 41 in Charlotte County).

This will take a few hours including the orientation and a walking tour out to the mound site. This tour is being offered to the first people to sign up so make plans early.

Interested people should sign up by contacting Carla Kappmeyer at 941/575-5861.

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## *Marco's Otter Mound Preserve opening*

By *Melissa Henning*

The Otter Mound Preserve on Marco Island will be opening to the public on March 7. Otter Mound Preserve was purchased in July 2004 as one of the first of Conservation Collier's preserves. Since then, staff has been working to fulfill one of the goals of the Conservation Collier Program by opening the preserve for public access.

Staff and volunteers have cleared debris, removed invasive exotic plants and planted native plants, and prepared an interpretive trail. SWFAS volunteers were present to cull artifacts - under the guidance of John Beriault - from the piles of dirt shoveled for the planting of native plants.

Collier County Commissioner Fiala will speak at the 11:30 ribbon cutting; the opening celebration will be from 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. There will be a guided walking tour along the interpretive trail, a Calusa artifact display by the Southwest Florida Archaeological Society, and refreshments. Otter Mound is at 1831 Addison Court, at the southern end of Marco Island.

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## *Museum Exhibits of Interest*

Cummer Museum of Art in Jacksonville is showcasing "Temples and Tombs: Treasures of Egyptian Art from The British Museum" through March 18, 2007. For information call 904/899-6034.

Florida International Museum in St. Petersburg is exhibiting "From Wolf to Woof: The History of Dogs" from January 19 through May 13. For information call 727/341-7901.

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## **Bonita** **From Page 1**

Carrie Sue Ayvar, a nationally acclaimed bilingual storyteller will present on Thursday, April 19. Ayvar believes that stories are one of the best means of explaining and passing on the beliefs, traditions and history that individuals or communities wish to keep alive.

## *At the January SWFAS meeting*

Local archaeologist John Beriault revealed early settlement in the Bahamas through research conducted by Bob Carr at Preacher's Cave, Northern Eleuthera. The use of the cave and nearby settlement of Spanish Wells followed the shipwreck of a vessel traveling from Europe around 1635. The pilgrims were seeking religious freedom and planned to establish a colony. Once in Eleuthera, they took refuge in Preacher's Cave for five years where it was later used as a church with natural rock formations creating a pulpit and seats carved into rocks. The pulpit had square wrought-iron nails driven into it, providing a place for community notices. In later years the cave was used as a cemetery.

The current archaeological excavations represent the second phase of research conducted since 1992. Most recently, test pit transects were excavated at the mouth of the cave and in the area in front. Little material was recovered from areas outside of the cave mouth where wooden and metal objects, majolica and Spanish olive jar fragments were recovered in the upper 30 to 40 centimeters, as well as on ledges above the cave floor where a natural hole in the center of the cave roof acts as a skylight. Material culture recovered included chert from the 1600s, 1 musket flint, preserved wood-billet and torch stump, very roughly constructed abraders and cutting-edged tools, metal artifacts such as a shroud pin, shoe buckle, and thimble, as well as 1 Spanish bronze coin that may have been perforated and is hypothesized to be indicative of the presence of freed slaves. A well located near the cave entrance was largely filled in with more modern material from the last 40 years. During the cave's use, the well was excavated down to sea level with a fresh water lens accessible on top. Some evidence suggests a

defensive wall may have been built across the front of the cave at one time.

Preacher's Cave contains evidence of earlier Taino occupation, including burials, two American crocodile teeth, and a possible pictograph of a face. Today lilies and barbwire cactus serve as signals of the presence of Taino sites in much of the coastal dune ridge sites in the Bahamas.

A number of long-time Eleuthera inhabitants served as informants for the project and the field component and public outreach were the subject of a documentary. Several inhabitants of the Preacher's Cave area purportedly traveled to North Carolina on a longboat, thence to Massachusetts, where the Governor of Massachusetts helped them. The grateful settlers of Eleuthera ultimately helped fund the newly established Harvard University with a shipment of braziletto (brazil or dyewood).

## *SWFAS Board & Officers*

At the January SWFAS meeting, three new trustees were voted onto the Board: Jean Belknap, James Oswald and Kara Bridgman Sweeney.

The following slate of officers was approved:

President: Theresa Schober

1st Vice President: Karen Nelson

2nd Vice President: Tom Franchino

Recording Secretary: Jo Ann Grey

Treasurer: Charlie Strader

Membership Secretary: Charlie Strader

## *SWFAS December 'Work Party'*



*Photos by Kara Bridgman Sweeney*

**SWFAS members gathered at Charlie Strader's house to sort artifacts from the Strader site.**

## Collier Preservation Board Elects New Chairman

From the Jan. 29, 2007 Marco Island Sun Times

Collier County Historical and Archaeological Preservation Board elected Betsy Perdichizzi as chairman for 2007-2008. Perdichizzi replaces John W. Thompson, CEO of Craighead Lab [and SWFAS Board member], who served two consecutive terms as chairman.

Perdichizzi's interest in archaeology and history of the island dates back to 1995 when she was one of the founders of the Marco Island Historical Society, and led the Society to sponsor the archaeological dig on 8CR48, the site of the Pepper Hearst expedition in Old Marco. She later joined Southwest Archaeological Society (SWFAS) and was the first female president, serving two terms. She is best known locally for books on the history of the Island with Kappy Kirk: *A Girl called Tommie*, *Queen of Marco Island* and most recently *Island Voices, They Came to Marco Island*. Perdichizzi is co chairman of the Capital Campaign with her husband Bill, in the community drive to

build a museum on Marco Island.

Tom Franchino was elected vice-chairman. Franchino, of The Law Office of Thomas W. Franchino PA, served terms as past president of SWFAS, and has been a member of the Preservation Board for several years.

The Collier County Historical and Archaeological Preservation Board is an advisory board to the commissioners. Their Mission Statement: It is the intent of the Preservation Board to increase public awareness of the importance and significance of the Collier County's historical and archaeological heritage by protecting, preserving, and perpetuating Collier Counties' historical and archaeological artifacts, sites, districts, structures, buildings and properties.

During her term in office Perdichizzi will work toward the nomination of the Indian Mound on Horrs Island being placed on the National Landmark Register as well as the updating and republication of the Collier County Historical and Archaeological Sites booklet.

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## Lee County to Preserve Cayo Pelau

By Bill Spikowski

Article first appeared in the December 2006 Calusa Land Trust newsletter. For more information on the Calusa Land Trust visit [www.calusalandtrust.org](http://www.calusalandtrust.org).

On December 12, the Lee County Commission voted unanimously to purchase Cayo Pelau, a 126-acre island in Charlotte Harbor between Gasparilla Island and Bull Bay. The island will be acquired with funds from the highly successful Conservation 20/20 land preservation program, which has acquired nearly 18,000 acres of sensitive land since its inception in 1997.

Cayo Pelau is home to diverse plant communities including mangrove forests and tropical hardwood hammocks. It also has sandy beaches, a rarity in Charlotte Harbor, which make the island easily accessible to boaters without costly docks. Cayo Pelau has been the subject of absurd tales of buried treasure, which has led to unnecessary physical damage over the years. In truth, the island has been home to Native Americans, Cuban fishermen, and Columbus B. McCloud, a 19th century Audubon warden.

Acquisition of Cayo Pelau had immense community support, including financial pledges from the Calusa Land Trust (\$20,000) and the Gasparilla Island Conservation and Improvement Association (\$10,000).

Calusa Land Trust President Bud House, optimistic about favorable action, appeared before the county commission moments before the vote and presented each commissioner with a certificate of appreciation that included photographs of Cayo Pelau.

Most surrounding islands are already in public ownership. Cayo Pelau has been offered to public agencies before, but an acceptable price had never been reached. The final price of \$2,500,000 was about 5% above county appraisals, but this was a once-in-a-lifetime chance for the public to acquire this valuable and unique island. Closing is expected within 90 days.

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## Talks & Events of Interest

On February 15 at 6:30 p.m., **Dr. Jerald T. Milanich** will present a program entitled, "Weedon or Weeden? And Why Can't Archeologists Spell and Other Tales of Weedon Island Research" at the **Weeden Island Center**.

Dr. Milanich is Curator in Archaeology at the Florida Museum of Natural History, author of numerous books on Florida archaeology, and recipient of the 2005 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Florida Archaeological Council. Pre-registration for the talk is requested. The Weedon Island Center is also featuring a new traveling exhibit from the Museum of Florida History titled "Corridor to the Past." The exhibit displays archaeological discoveries from Paleo and Archaic sites east of Tampa Bay from excavations conducted prior to the construction of Interstate 75. Artifacts exhibited illustrate the evolution of early stone technology from about 12,000 to 4,000 years ago.

The February 21 general meeting of the **Institute of Maya Studies** features **Dr. Larry Peterson of the Rosenstiel School at the University of Miami** discussing the effects of climate changes on the Maya culture during the Classic Period. The meetings take place at 8 p.m. at the Miami Museum of Science & Planetarium located at 3280 South Miami Avenue across from Viscaya. The public is welcome to attend. A six dollar donation is requested of non-members.

The **AH-TAH-THI-KI Museum Distinguished Lecture Series** will feature W. Richard West, Jr. and Ben Nighthorse Campbell on February 22 at 7 p.m. speaking on the "National Museum of the American Indian: A Resource for Tribes" and Peter Nabokov on March 15 presenting, "Sacred Places: Historic Preservation of Our Lands." The talks are held at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino in Hollywood and are free to the general public. A museum members-only reception will precede each event at 6 p.m.

**Marco Island Historical Society has plans for a Spring Appraisal Faire** on Saturday, March 3 in the Civil Air Patrol

## Geology Rules: Florida Cavemen

By Jack Harvey

Bands of people need to sleep each night and seek protected places where they will be safe and comfortable. Like our relatives the great apes, treetops were popular nesting places for early humans. But treetop nests have problems. They don't protect from storms and a careless sleeper can fall. Ground nests are also dangerous.

Caves can be great nesting places. They have walls and roofs to protect from storms, marauding bears (or other bands of people), extreme temperatures and often have drinking water. Relative to trees, caves are long-lasting and a permanently resident band can improve a cave over many generations into a luxurious and well-fortified dwelling.

On the other hand, there are usually many more trees than there are good caves. A hunter-gatherer band that must move regularly to fresh territory to find food may not also find a convenient cave. It's useful to understand more about how and where caves form to see how they impact human life.

Caves are a bit "unnatural" in that they seem to defy gravity. Does the roof of a cave just fly by and land on a cavity? One can imagine a landslide or explosive erup-

tion that sends blocks of stone flying that then land so that cave-like cavities exist. And the surface of a flowing lava stream sometimes hardens while the liquid drains out leaving a tunnel or cavity under the basalt surface. But a more likely mechanism is water erosion.

In some cases, quartz sand grains and similar fine insoluble particulates may be removed by flowing water but other sedimentary rock is simply dissolved. As we saw last time, a particularly water-vulnerable rock is limestone. Rainwater can dissolve it. And Florida has plenty of both.

Rainwater is Nature's Lime-A-Way. Atmospheric carbon dioxide dissolves in it, producing weak carbonic acid that slowly breaks down limestone.

So we might expect Florida to have hundreds, perhaps thousands of caves formed in its limestone, growing larger and deeper with each rainy season. And indeed it does, except the caves are all full of water, at least in South Florida.

Carlsbad Cavern in southeastern New Mexico may be our best-known example of a limestone cave. Located in the Guadalupe Mountains, its calcite was once a reef in a tropical sea 290 to 230 million years ago, long before Florida existed. Plate tec-



Jean Belknap and Bill Royal, 1985

tonics has thrust it upward to an elevation of about 1 km (3,300 feet) so water in the cave can find many routes to flow out and much of the great cavern is dry.

See **GEOLOGY**, page 6

## OF INTEREST, from left

Hanger at the Marco Island Airport. Dr. Wes Cown, star of the PBS series *History Detectives* and senior appraiser for the *Antiques Roadshow*, and a panel of antique and collectibles experts will examine items brought by participants and provide verbal appraisals of each item. The event is expected to generate a crowd of over 500 people. Each person is limited to three items, with a charge of \$10 per item for Marco Island Historical Society members and museum donors or \$15 per item for the general public.

### Books of Interest from the University Press of Florida

Source: [www.upf.com](http://www.upf.com)

*X Marks the Spot: The Archaeology of Piracy*

Russell K. Skowronek and Charles R. Ewen, Eds., 2006.

\$55.00 Cloth.

\$24.95 Paperback.

This collection piques the imagination with historical evidence about the actual exploits of pirates as revealed in the archaeological record of such ships as Blackbeard's *Queen Anne's Revenge*, recently discovered off Beaufort Inlet, North Carolina; the *Speaker*, which sailed in the Indian Ocean; and the *Whydah*, the first pirate ship discovered in North America (near the tip of Cape Cod).

Examining excavated underwater "treasure sites" and terrestrial pirate lairs found off the coast of Madagascar, through-

the Caribbean, and within the United States, the authors explore the romanticized "Golden Age of Piracy," a period brimming with the real-life exploits of Captain Kidd, Blackbeard, Henry Morgan, and the "gentleman pirate" Jean Lafitte.

*Tatham Mound and the Bioarchaeology of European Contact: Disease and Depopulation in Central Gulf Coast Florida*

Dale L. Hutchinson, 2007. Cloth \$59.95.

This is the first systematic analysis of Tatham Mound, one of the most important archaeological sites in Central Gulf Coast Florida. Because it documents the earliest years of contact between the resident Native Americans of the area and European colonists, Tatham Mound has provided archaeologists and bioarchaeologists with a wealth of direct and indirect evidence from the early contact period - a rare occurrence in American archaeology. Hutchinson examines the skeletal remains of more than 350 burials as well as the European artifacts found within those burials. Comparing the bioarchaeological evidence and scientific data with the historic accounts of the early Spanish explorers, Hutchinson challenges the long-held theory that novel pathogens caused the immediate demographic collapse of native societies at the inception of the European colonial era. He argues that long-term political, social, economic, and biological changes - in addition to introduced epidemic disease - all contributed to the decline of Florida's native populations.

## GEOLOGY, from page 5

South Florida caves are water-filled because it is so flat. There is (currently) no lower elevation land into which cave water can drain. Scuba divers have explored a few but it's difficult and dangerous. Two well known nearby caves are Warm Mineral Springs and Little Salt Spring, both near Venice, FL. Jean Belknap of Craighead Laboratory dived these with William Royal about 30 years ago. Royal recovered a human skeleton from Warm Mineral Springs that was dated to 8050 BC (10,000 BP). His 1960 *American Antiquity* report (with Eugenia Clark) said, "Early man in this area inhabited limestone caves in now water-filled sinkholes."

The skeleton date is geologically significant. Why wasn't it, say, 2,000 years old when there were lots of Indians around? The reason is that 10,000 years ago, the planet was just coming out of the last major ice age and ice sheets were still very large. With so much of the planet's water piled on continents, the ocean level was still low. One estimate puts it 35 meters (115 feet) below current mean sea level. That lower sea level al-

lowed the water in Warm Mineral Springs and Little Salt Spring to drain into the distant Gulf of Mexico. These deep sinkholes were then only about half filled, allowing visits, ceremonial burials and perhaps residence deep within them. But sea level was rising rapidly as the planet warmed and by 5,000 years ago they were nearly full, inundating the burial place in the wall of the sinkhole and making younger burials unlikely.

Steve Koski, our SWFAS speaker for September 2005, is one of the diving archaeologists currently exploring Little Salt Spring in the University of Miami project directed by John Gifford. This project has recovered numerous artifacts from the walls of the hourglass shaped spring below the ledge separating surface waters from the 70-meter (230 foot) deep cavern. Notable examples are wooden stakes of great age.

Wood is preserved at this depth because there is no oxygen in the deep water of the spring. No oxygen means no fish and little decay. But what became of the oxygen?

There are geological reasons Little Salt Spring has no oxygen to destroy the wooden stakes Steve Koski keeps finding. How this happens will flow out next time.

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### About SWFAS

*The Directorate:*  
President - Theresa Schober  
1st VP - Karen Nelson  
2nd VP - Tom Franchino  
Recording Secretary - Jo Ann Grey  
Treasurer - Charlie Strader  
Membership - Charlie Strader  
SWFAS Committees:  
Field - John Beriault  
Lab - Jack Thompson

*Hospitality - Jeanne Sanders*  
*Education - Dr. John Worth*  
*Publicity - Kara Bridgman Sweeney*  
*Newsletter - Karen Nelson*

*If you would like to join SWFAS, please address your check to: The Southwest Florida Archaeological Society; P.O. Box 9965; Naples, FL 34101*

*Dues are: Individual - \$20; Sustaining - \$50; Family - \$35; Student \$15*

*Board meetings are the second Wednesday of the month at 6:45 p.m. at the Hampton Inn in Bonita Springs (except Dec. 2006, as noted above). All welcome. Member meetings are the third Wednesday at 7:30 (coffee served at 7) at the Bonita Springs Community Hall on Old 41 (by the banyan tree).*

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**The Southwest Florida Archaeological Society**  
**P.O. Box 9965**  
**Naples, FL 34101**