

Newsletter

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



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June meeting

"THE WHALE IN THE BACK YARD"

SUBJECT OF AUTHOR'S TALK

If you found the skeleton of a whale, a three million-year-old whale, practically in your back yard, what would you do?

What Robin Cotten Brown, M.D., of Fort Myers did, after digging it up and seeing it ensconced in the study collection of the Florida State Museum in Gainesville, was to write a book.

It's Florida's Fossils, recently published by Pineapple Press of Sarasota. Written for lay people, it tells the reader where to hunt, how to hunt, and how to preserve the fossils one finds.

Dr. Brown will tell about finding the whale and many other fossils he has uncovered in pursuit of his hobby at the June meeting of the Southwest Florida Archaeological Society at 7:30 p.m. in the Community room of the First Federal Savings and Loan of Ft. Myers, 3201 Tamiami Trail North, Naples.

Some SWFAS members will recall having visited his home and his finds some years ago.

In addition to slides, Dr. Brown will show a collection of bone and ivory tools uncovered by a bulldozer in the Alva, FL., area 20 years ago.

As a boy in Tampa, he had hunted for sharks' teeth in gravel pits and he took a degree in zoology in addition to his M.D. Paleontology became a serious interest after a visit to a rock pit near Alva where he and his wife, Jan, also a zoologist, unearthed parts of an extinct elephant, a camel's tooth and bones from a horse. The fossils ultimately became part of a traveling museum which toured area schools.

With that beginning, Dr. and Mrs. Brown became involved with the Florida Paleontological Society and started going on digs with the State Museum.

BEHIND-THE-SCENES OF CALUSA RESEARCH EXPLAINED BY WALKER

The detailed work done in preparation for, and following, field exploration was told a SWFAS audience May 19 by Zooarchaeologist Karen Jo Walker of the Florida State Museum.

Taking time out from a heavy schedule at the Pineland dig, where she conducted a field laboratory and profiled a mound side about four meters high, Walker described the experimental work which is forming a base for the Institute of Archaeology and Paleoenvironmental Studies' Southwest Florida project, directed by Dr. William H. Marquardt.

Representative of the type of background work being carried on, she told the group, is a study to determine the time of year in which clams were harvested. She showed slides revealing (See WALKER Page 2)

CRAIGHEAD LAB OPERATION REVIEWED BY COUNTY, SWFAS

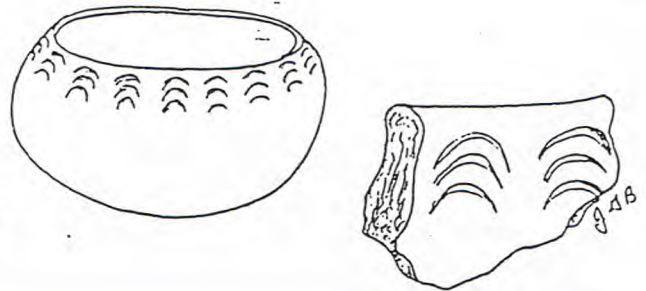
Members of SWFAS' board of directors and laboratory committee met May 26 at the Collier county museum with representatives of the county administration, museum, and the Friends of the Museum organization to review use of the Craighead laboratory building.

County Public Services Administrator Kevin O'Donnell, Attorney Chris Lombardo of the Friends' board of directors, and Museum Director Ron Jamro noted that SWFAS' use of the building was of value as an attraction to museum-goers, but requested that it be staffed more hours. O'Donnell also asked that SWFAS' scheduling be put on a more formal basis than in past. The Society's delegation, headed by President John Beriault, explained SWFAS' limitations as a volunteer organization, expressed appreciation of the county's desires, and agreed to put lab schedules in written form.

Members present included Alice Ash, Paul and Phyllis Benedict, Walt Buschelman, Art and Lynn Lee, Barbara Logie, Joe and Freda Long, Virginia Read, Leo Ruble, Charlie Strader, Keith and Anne Waterhouse, Mary Ruth Winchell and Eleanore Young.

THE POTSHERDS WE DIG

Though found mostly in the east coast "Tequesta" region of the Everglades sub-area, Opa-Locka Incised does turn up in our digs. John Beriault notes that the design seems to evolve into the later Key Largo Incised; it appears mostly on globular bowls. A variant with small, fingernail-like lunettes has been found by SWFAS at Chokoloskee and Addison Key. It dates to A.D. 600-900; Glades IIa-IIb.



WALKER (From Page 1)

light and dark striations, like growth rings, in cross-sections of clam shells gathered at different seasons to prepare a guide against which shells taken from mounds can be compared.

Also, shell taken from mounds can tell much about the environment at the time, she said. At Cash mound, for instance, study of commensals such as boring sponges and crested oysters, which are sensitive to water salinity, showed that there could have been a rise in sea level some 1,700 years ago. Similarly, times of heavy rainfall can be told by the same indicators.

THE FINE SCREEN

Dr. William H. Marquardt left June 4 for three weeks of work on a study of human occupation of a region in Burgundy, France, with which he has been concerned for some time. A book, Regional Dynamics: Burgundian Landscapes in Historical Perspective, co-edited by him and Carole Crumley, has just been published by Academic Press, San Diego. Effective July 1, Dr. Marquardt will be associate curator in archaeology of the State Museum at Gainesville; principal duty will be continuation of the Southwest Florida study.

Karen Jo Walker will present a paper Paleoenvironments and Prehistoric Aboriginal Foodways of Charlotte Harbor, Florida at the International Conference of Americanists at Amsterdam July 4-8.

SWFASers George Luer, John Beriault, Keith and Anne Waterhouse and Art and Lynn Lee June 5 attended the board of directors meeting of the Archaeological and Historical Conservancy at Miami.

Charlie and Gail Strader have moved into their new home on Imperial river; address is 12173 Orr Road, Bonita Springs.

WELCOME TO SWFAS!

The Society has welcomed to membership Paul and Eileen Arsenault of Naples; Paul, an artist, is doing a series of Calusa lifestyle paintings. Also newly joined are Reed and Barbara Toomey of Sanibel Island, and Louis J. Franks, Jr., of Pine Island and Minotola, N.J. All participated in the recent dig at Pineland.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEYING SERIES SET TO START JUNE 29

Starting at 6:30 p.m. June 29, a series of workshops on archaeological surveying will be held at the Craighead lab, conducted by SWFASer Joe Long, a civil engineer retired from the Topographic Division (now the National Mapping Agency) of the U.S. Geological Survey. He has surveyed a number of SWFAS and other sites in Southwest Florida.

The sessions will start with basics, and no special mathematical background is required. Knowledge of surveying is a fundamental skill for archaeologists.

The sessions will be held on Wednesdays, alternating with additional evening artifact-work sessions which will begin June 22 at 5:30 p.m. and continue until further notice.

Regular wash-and-sort sessions starting at 10 a.m. have been changed from Mondays to Tuesdays; 10 a.m. Thursday and 2 p.m. Saturday schedules will continue; lab committee members will be doing individual work as well during the day on a non-sched basis. Accomplishments thus far: The Bonita Bay salvage material is cleaned and marked; Pelican bay is washed, sorted, weighed, analyzed and ready for report writing; Heineken campsite is washed and re-bagged; Horse Creek is about half processed.

SWFAS coffers have been enriched by \$150, thanks to survey work John Beriault did for the Archaeological and Historical Conservancy in the Keys a couple weeks ago. The organization, at John's request, made its check out directly to SWFAS.

Development of pottery types in Southwest Florida was described the evening of May 25 at the lab by Beriault, who illustrated his talk with sherds from a collection loaned by Bill Carr of the Archaeological and Historical Conservancy, Miami. Attending were Alice Ash, Paul and Phyllis Benedict, Walt Buschelman, Bud and Shirley House, Art and Lynn Lee, Joe and Freda Long, Virginia Reed, Leo Ruble, and Charlie Strader.

Educational Committee chairman Paul Benedict has arranged SWFAS cooperation with the museum on its "Seminoles sleepover" July 15 and "Archaeology Days" Sept. 22-24.

DATEBOOK

- * June 11. Work session (washing, sorting) of archaeological materials at the Craighead lab, starting at 2 p.m. Similar sessions are planned for every Saturday. All are welcome.

- * June 14. Work session at Craighead lab, starting at 10 a.m. Similar sessions are planned for every Tuesday. Join the fun.

- * June 16. Work session at Craighead lab, starting at 10 a.m. Similar sessions are planned for every Thursday. Come! Enjoy!

- * June 16. Monthly meeting of SWFAS at First Federal Savings and Loan of Fort Myers, 3201 Tamiami Trail North, Naples, starting at 7:30 p.m.

- * June 22. First of a series of bi-weekly evening washing and sorting sessions at the lab starting at 5:30 p.m.

- * June 29. Introduction to surveying in archaeology by Joe Long. This is a necessary skill and this will be the first of several sessions on the subject. At the Craighead lab starting at 6:30 p.m. Everyone's encouraged to attend.

- * July 12. Board of Directors meeting at the Craighead lab in the Collier county museum grounds at 6:30 p.m. All SWFAS members welcome.

- * July 21. Monthly meeting of SWFAS at First Federal Savings and Loan of Fort Myers, 3201 Tamiami Trail North, Naples, starting at 7:30 p.m.

BROODABLE

"My son, this country holds your father's body. Never forget the bones of your fathers and mothers.' I pressed my father's hand and told him I would protect his grave to the end of my life. For a man who would not love his father's grave is worse than a wild animal." Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce tribe, in his memoirs, 1871.

IS IT A LAB? AN EXHIBIT? OR AN EXHIBITORY?

When the Friends of the Collier County Museum replaced a third of a wall of the Craighead laboratory building with a mullioned glass window it set up what probably is a unique experiment, the wedding of a working laboratory with a continuing exhibit.

SWFAS had agreed to giving the modest building's exterior a rustic look as the museum desired, but it had always seen the interior as a laboratory, rough but serviceable, the sort museums usually put in basements or attics. Its contractual obligation to have it "open to the public with proper supervision" it had regarded as meaning occasional tours -- not a permanent tableau vivant.

In the lab's month and a half of operation, we have scheduled wash-and-sort sessions several times a week, held a pottery workshop, helped the museum handle groups of up to 200, and programmed other joint ventures. We have guaranteed to cooperate with any special event the museum may arrange. To at least some county officials, and apparently some Friends board members, that effort has been inadequate.

We have been puzzled as to how to better our performance. Given the size, composition and location of our membership, there is no way we can staff some sort of continuing show to coincide with the museum's 46 hours a week if that, indeed, is desired. During the summer, with people vacationing, it is hard to see the employ of many more man-hours than at present.

Recent events have made it apparent that two things are sorely needed. One is an analysis of specific benefits the county realistically can expect from the lab. The other is formalization of our own goals which have thus far been taken for granted. If these two sets of needs are identified, then they can be set up against possibilities and realistic programs be achieved. For example, we have been doing our work in a certain sequence but it is possible that by programming it in another way we could better accommodate to county needs.

It has been demonstrated that nothing satisfactory can be achieved without mutual understanding and acceptance of needs and limitations. On the other hand, if both the county and SWFAS fully appreciate that we are embarked on a highly unusual venture and are willing to explore its possibilities honestly and intelligently, the potential is exciting. ARL

SWFAS, PINE ISLAND, RECOVERING FROM PINELAND DIG

Blisters are turned to callouses and sunburns to tan by now following the May 11-23 dig at the Pineland mound complex of Col. Donald Randell, which attracted 84 volunteers from all parts of Pine Island, Bonita Springs, Sanibel, Naples, Gasperilla, Boca Grande, Golden Gate, Englewood, Marco Island, Lehigh Acres, Sarasota, Lakeland, Gainesville, Fort Myers, and Englewood, in numbers ranging up to 30 a day.

They dug in five areas, in pits as large as two meters by two meters, to depths approaching two meters and in one instance to the water level. They uncovered food shell; bone of fish, fowl, mammal and reptile; stone plummets; shell tools, including a new variety; bone points, and, anticlimactically, a concrete cistern. Tons of earth and shell were taken out of the holes, screened, and later shoveled back, excepting one pit which was covered for further exploration later. Most of the potsherds were Glades Plain, but a variety of decorated forms were testament to the movement of peoples in and out of the region, and inter-tribal trade.

The effort was part of the Southwest Florida Project of the University of Florida's Institute of Archaeology and Paleoenvironmental Studies, directed by Dr. William H. Marquardt of the State Museum.

A field lab was set up and directed by Karen Jo Walker of the State Museum, where artifacts were cleaned, sorted, marked and cataloged.

Costs of the dig were borne by Col. Randell as part of his on-going effort to conserve evidences of Southwest Florida's past.

Dr. Marquardt, remarking that a good deal of material remains intact despite past exploitation of the mound for road fill, and the good preservation of organic material, described the site as "terribly important".

SWFASers participating included Paul and Eileen Arsenault, Alice Ash, Kathy Ball, John and James Beriault, Walt Buschelman, Jack Gaddy, Michael Hansinger, Bud and Shirley House, Bill Kemper, Art and Lynn Lee, Joe Long, George Luer, Joyce Moon, Linda Robinson, Leo Ruble, Gloria Sajgo, Ray Seguin, Pat Snearley, Gary and Brian Susdorf, Mary Vogenberger, Sue Watts, Lin Williams, and Eleanore Young. Most assiduous volunteers were the Houses and Robinson, each of whom worked eight days. A total of 1,782 hours were worked.