

SWFAS



**SOUTHWEST FLORIDA
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SOCIETY**

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2 TRIBUTE TO SHIRLEY

HOUSE The lady we all call our good friend deserves a round of thanks for the many things she does for SWFAS

3 Ambiance of Shell

Mounds: Part 6: How many bushels make a Peck and shells a mound?

4 Any Computers to Spare - Out There?

The Craighead Laboratory desperately needs a computer to replace their old broken down one - any ideas?

Gray skies seemed to threaten rain for at least part of the day, but the December 13th Pineland Picnic was a resounding success. At least 50+ people participated in the event, which involved a pontoon boat ride out to Ussepa Island to visit Barbara Sumwalt's excellent museum and an intriguing look at the careful excavating being completed there by the University of Florida under the guidance of Karen Jo Walker, Bill Marquardt and Corbett Torrence. We then returned in groups to be fed a delicious picnic lunch under the towering gumbo limbo trees amidst the shell mounds of the Randell Research Facility at Pineland. Corbett Torrence freely gave of his time to help set up the picnic, cook oysters, and lead several tours around the site. Discussing matters archaeological with Corbett is always a treat due to his wide knowledge and infectious enthusiasm. Thanks go to Bud House and Don Taggart for their cooking, carrying, hauling, and directing of the efforts that made the picnic so grand. Thanks also to Charlie Strader, our fearless captain who hauled us all out, then got us all back. Mention also needs to be made of Marion Anundson who was in the hospital after a horrific auto accident, but still saw we were provided with oysters. Who says we don't have caring, dedicated and hardworking members?



**SWFAS
PINELAND
PICNIC A
GLOWING
SUCCESS!**

Surprised, Shirley, that we think you're Special?: a wonderful picture of Shirley House by Brenda Hamilton, taken at Brickell Point (See Tribute to Shirley inside).

Pictures, Please.....

The above picture is an excellent example of what I am looking for - of SWFAS, its activities, and members. We want to share with everyone your great photos - of the sites, features, artifacts, but most of all - the people, because they're what make up our group and give it life. I want recent pictures, but will be deliberately vague on time, because if you have a great picture, and it's a few years old, well... we can maybe use it. Candid shots are nice, if they are *nice* - no fair catching anyone in a real compromising position, particularly if it's the editor! Please mail your pictures to: **John G. Beriault, P.O. Box 9074, Naples FL 34101-9074.** It would be great if they (the photos) don't need to be returned, if they do, then include a stamped, self-addressed envelope. I will scan your picture and return it right away. Please understand that I'll have to use my own faulty judgment and marvelous powers of selection to chose *which* photos, so please don't let me hurt your feelings if the amount of room in the Newsletter is too slim to allow inclusion of *all* photos sent. At the same time, please *do* send photos! The membership and I will greatly appreciate it!

Oh! and don't forget to keep those Emailed written contributions for the Newsletter coming in. The Email Address is **JGBeriault@aol.com**. Remember to include your message in the body of the Email so I can paste and copy (sure saves me the trouble of re-typing!). Thanks!

THE DATEBOOK

SWFAS Board Meeting Wed.,
January 13th 7:30 PM

General Meeting - Wed.,
January 20th, 7:30 PM, Bonita
Springs Community Center,
downtown Bonita Springs

ABOUT SWFAS

The directors: President John Stuchlik, Executive Director Kimberly Peltz, Secretary Donnie Thompson, Treasurer Wayne Flanagan, Past President Charles Dugan, Jr. Ann Gray, Valerie Flanagan, Wayne House, Don & Linda Betty Purcell: Don Tagger, and Donnie Thompson.

The committees: Field: Ronald, 251-0012, G4-0028; Interpretive: Paul and Joyce; Membership: Bill Bender, 922-6123; Publicity: Donnie Thompson, 597-2259; Sales: Valerie Flanagan, 225-8391; Finance: Jack Thompson, 597-2269, 774-4517; Lab: CITA-8517; Art: Lee, 261-0030; Web: Reichelmann, 725-9734; Jack Thompson, 597-2269.

To Join: Address your check to the Southwest Florida Archaeological Society, P.O. Box 9662, Naples, FL 34101. Dues are: Individual \$20, Individual Sustaining \$200.00, Family \$20, Student \$15.

Shirley House: A Very Special Person

There are some people in our group that we all know, and whose bright smile and sunny disposition makes getting together with them and the rest of SWFAS such a joy. Shirley House is one of those special people - and she works too! - very hard, behind the scenes to assure our activities are a success. Shirley is such a self-effacing person that someone has to "blow the whistle" on her and tell the rest of the membership just what she does for all of us. An example is the wonderful picnic many of us attended at Pineland December 13th. Shirley prepared much of the food (remember the great German potato salad?). She was tirelessly setting food out and clearing away later. I

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don't think I saw her even sit down and eat any of it. Later she felt guilty because she thought she hadn't made *enough* food and there might still be people lurking around the mounds that hadn't eaten. All of us

have been greeted by Shirley. It's like a ray of sunshine striking you. It's a little like going home when you see her because she is one of our family, a very special person.

SUSAN WHITE TO SPEAK AT JANUARY MEETING

Susan White will be the speaker at the January 20th meeting. Her topic will be "The Prehistoric Pottery of Southwest Florida". We will meet at the Bonita Springs Community Center.

Susan is a staff assistant at Archaeological Consultants, Inc. in Sarasota. She obtained her Masters Degree from the University of Florida under the direction of Bill Marquardt. Her past experience in the study of prehistoric pottery has focused on technological and formal analysis.



ARCHAEOLOGY AS I SEE IT

by John G. Beriault

AMBIANCE OF SHELL MOUNDS: PART SIX: MORE ABOUT THE SHELL MOUND ISLAND

In the last several issues we have been discussing the shell mound island, a type of very large and complex site. In fact, the word "complex" is very operable here because the sites are literally a complex of special-use features. Consider a single episode in someone's life. Let's make it modern. Suppose you (or, better yet, a friend) decides to go camping in the woods. You arrange to pick this friend up at the camping spot after he has been communing with nature for a week. When you arrive the friend has all his gear packed and ready to be loaded into the car. The gear

is loaded, and away you go. When the two of you get several miles down the road, the friend realizes he must have lost his keys at the campsite. You go back, and begin a search for the keys. While you're helping your friend find the keys, you amuse yourself by seeing what you can deduce about your friend, his actions, and habits in the evidence he left at the campsite. You find that the area is pretty well trampled from a week of coming and going; that the friend did a pretty good job of policing the trash but missed the odd candy wrapper or so; that he dropped his pocket knife without realizing it, and it would have stayed lost if you hadn't returned to hunt for the keys; that the friend had buried some of the trash in the form of food cans, etc. rather than pack it back out (what a no-no!).

The point to this rather boring rendition of the "remains" of a week's camping is that these traces, both ephemeral and lasting, multiplied in time, not by weeks but by thousands of years, are what was happening on and about the shell mound island. It is the detritus of daily lives multiplied by the millions. Keith Waterhouse and George Luer, two good friends, once performed an experiment, more in the spirit of inquiry rather than in the name of rigorous science. In doing this experiment they were fully aware of many variables and even imponderables that could not be factored into

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their efforts. We (SWFAS) were working on Chokoloskee Island twelve years ago when this exercise took place. The island is a ninety-plus acre site area comprised of shell midden, the great majority being oyster. Keith and George estimated that if the island was flattened smooth, and the high and low areas eliminated (as is sadly the case today), the overall height above bay bottom would still be 10 to 12 feet average over those 90+ acres. They then took a 5-gallon bucket (whose volumetric capacity was known) of fairly whole oyster shell from the excavations we were working on, and counted the number of shells. Knowing the oyster is a bivalve, they divided that number by two. Using their earlier estimate of the volume size estimate for Chokoloskee Island (90 acres by 10 to 12 feet), they computed the number of 5-gallon bucketloads (and number) of oyster shells for that given cubic volume. They then decided arbitrarily that the individual Indian may have eaten 50 oysters a day, day in and day out, for his entire life. "Knowing" this, and estimating the aboriginal population for Chokoloskee to have always been around 200-300 people, they arrived at the amount of time it would have taken that number of people, *each eating 50 oysters a day*, to build a massive island the size of Chokoloskee. The answer was *around two thousand years*, which is probably close to the actual time Chokoloskee was inhabited in

prehistoric to contact times. Now, this "exercise" was done in a spirit of semi-fun, knowing all the factors were not available for an accurate solution. We are uncertain of population fluctuation and changes on the large sites through thousands of years. We know there is a variable percentage of shellfish that is *not* oyster throughout the shell midden; we know that shellfish were a minor component of the Indian diet, with small fish and other things constituting the majority of caloric intake. We know that probably no normal human being, if given a selection of foods, *could or would* eat 50 oysters a day from infancy to death - and we could go on. But the point is, innovative thinking, such as the above example is what is slowly unlocking some of the mysteries regarding the very large shell mound sites - that, and advances in technology. We are finding answers to questions whose solution seemed highly unlikely even a few short years ago.

In our next installment we will attempt to get back to some of the other special-use features found on the large shell mound islands of Southwest Florida.

IT IS BROKE AND WE CAN'T FIX IT

The Craighead lab has an old computer used to enter analysis results for preparation of reports.

It stopped communicating with the monitor which makes it blind and useless. Perhaps a member will be updating equipment and will have a spare computer. We were using Windows 3.1. Contact **Art Lee at 911 -261-4939**

and tools made to SWFAS has been donated to Collier County Museum after analysis by the Lab.

A gala year-end luncheon and social was had be the staff after which we all went back to work and then "home for the holidays."

SILENT AUCTION TO BE HELD ON CALUSA PRINT

Linda Robinson, a SWFAS member has donated a limited edition print by Dean Quigley. It is his vision of the Pineland site when it was a Calusa village.

The framed print will be displayed at the January meeting, sealed bids will be accepted until February 1. Place your bid and name, address and phone number in an envelope. Some will be available at the meeting.

The posters ,unframed, sold for \$100.00.

CRAIGHEAD LAB NOTES

by Ella May Ablahat

Work on the Chokoloskee site, which we had anticipated would be near completion, is still in the works. The end-of-the-year holidays have put a crimp in the project but it is fascinating work.

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A private donation of potshards

JOHN G. BERIAULT, acting editor

Volume No. XV

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NEWSLETTER