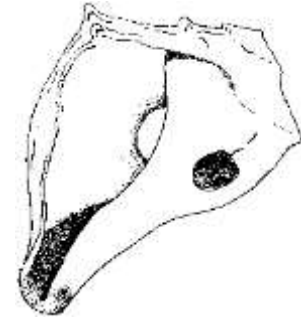


# Southwest Florida Archaeological Society Newsletter



BETSY MCCARTHY, EDITOR

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## SWFAS JULY MEETING

The July meeting of the Southwest Florida Archaeological Society will be held at the Bonita Springs Community Center at Old 41 and Reynolds Street on Wednesday, July 20, 2005, at 7:30 pm. As always, the public is invited to attend this meeting.



John G. Beriault, local archaeologist, will talk about an interesting and important collection of artifacts now largely curated at the Historical Association of South Florida Museum

in Miami. The Charles Del-Ask Collection consists of between 166-170 artifacts, most of them apparent pre-historic Indian material purportedly from an Indian site near Marathon, Vaca Keys, in central Monroe County, Florida Keys. This collection was donated to the Pioneer Museum in Florida City by Del-Ask in 1964 and has reposed there until recently. It is noted that the extant collection items are all "good to spectacular" unworn and unbroken examples of many of the major artifact groupings found in South Florida Indian sites. Slides will be shown of some of these arti-

facts and a discussion of their significance presented.

John Beriault is a many-times former president of SWFAS and now works for the Archaeological and Historical Conservancy of Davie, Florida.

## TRIPS OF INTEREST TO SWFAS MEMBERS

Thursday, July 28 – Archaeological Kayak Tour to Josslyn Island – 10am to 2pm - \$40 per person. Visit Josslyn Island, located in Pine Island Sound about two miles south of Randell Research Center. The Calusa Indians inhabited the island for about 800 years. See the mounds and unusual plants – a real history lesson about this fascinating culture. This tour is sponsored by the Randell Research Center at Pineland on Pine Island. To make reservations, call GAEA Guides at (239)694-5513 or go to:

[www.gaeaguides.com](http://www.gaeaguides.com)

A portion of the proceeds will go toward the support of the Research Center. Visit their website at:

<http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/anthro/sflarc/pineland.htm>.

Also of interest is the “Cross Florida on the Okeechobee Waterway” Kayak Tour. It will be approximately 5 days and will take us on the nicest, most scenic, sections of the waterway from the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic Ocean. We will stay at hotels along the way. This will not take place until later in the year (November or December). If you are at all interested in this tour, call Connie, GAEA Guides, 239-694-5513, or out of area toll free 866-256-6388.

Email: GAEAKayaks@aol.com

### **BONITA SPRINGS AT IT AGAIN!**

Once again Bonita Springs argues against preservation of historic/ pre-historic sites.

A 5,200 square foot home is being built on a 110-foot by 175-foot lot on what is thought to be the city’s oldest archaeological site. The “Strader Site” is known to be a shell midden dating from about 3500 years ago.

The possibility of losing the history behind the location has Charlie Strader concerned about the need to strengthen the historic preservation ordinance in Bonita Springs.

A new home or a new road may be built, but not a new archaeological site. This is the argument Strader has been making to the Bonita Springs City Council and others for several years. Though the Council has held several discussions over the possibility of a stronger historic preservation ordinance, they decided and ordinance that would infringe on private property rights was not wanted.

“Unfortunately, (Ben) Nelson may be correct that it will take a ‘different City Council’ to change our city’s vision – I hope not, as we will lose too much in the meantime. I do agree with him that there is a need and, I would even add, an obligation to the future, to preserve history. I hope he is wrong in his assessment that there is no public will for historic preservation”, said Charlie Strader.

### **JUNE FIELD TRIP**

Saturday, June 25, was a day of memories and discovery for about 40 SWFAS members who attended a field trip to a very large shell structure located within the current Bonita Bay community in the western part of Bonita Springs in Lee County, FL. The structure is located within and around Estero Bay Park near the current end of Bonita Bay Boulevard. Five golf courses roam the region around the shell structure and golf buggy trails within this gated community provide access to remote parts of it. Today, SWFAS members hoofed it.



SWFAS Members at Estero Bay Park

Joining us on this field trip were many members of the Bonita Springs Historical Society.

For all it was little short of miraculous to see, where once there had been fields of palmetto and other native vegetation, scores of individual homes tucked behind lush landscaping and multiple apartment buildings rising high above the trees and bushes. Center of the visit was a roofed-over community pavilion placed at SWFAS' disposal by the Bonita Bay Group which years ago had been presented SWFAS' Frank K. Craighead, Sr., award for the exemplary respect it paid the many evidences of the past its property guards. Notable features include a Calusa residential area, canoe canals, a burial mound, and a low horseshoe-shaped mound of shell (visited today), a type of feature currently being analyzed by archaeologists in much of coastal Florida.

SWFERs years ago had swung machetes to clear site lines through solid palmetto growth for six weeks under the direction of John Beriault as they mapped the feature for the state registry in 1992. This included a plane table survey under the direction of the late Joe T. Long, producing a large, very accurate, and detailed contour map of the site.

Again today, Beriault led our exploration

of the U-shaped shell mound, also sometimes known as the "five acre mound" because of its size. Officially, it is Bonita Bay enclosure site 8LL717. Material found at the site seems to have originated around 4800-4900 B.P., but radiocarbon dates are limited. Another indication of great age is the general lack of pottery. This leads to speculation that the people who built it didn't use pottery or that for reasons unknown they didn't bring it to the mound site. Shell tools found were unhafted. Was this because the people hadn't yet developed the technique?

Charlie Strader, Theresa Schober and Corbett Torrence discussed the many issues and puzzles raised by this mound and others like it. While many shell mounds appear to be residential with royalty on the highest parts and commoners living on lower or surface areas, this mound may have never been a permanent dwell-



John Beriault describes Historic Features



ing site and used only for ceremonial purposes.

Whatever the explanations for these anomalies, it is clear that the civilization that built 8LL717 was more primitive than the sophisticated and powerful Calusas who controlled most of south Florida when the Spanish arrived. Perhaps future archaeologists will find answers to many questions in the soil around the pavilion in Estero Bay Park.



Estero Bay Park Pavilion

The Park is close to the water of Estero Bay and we visited a pleasant pier extending into the bay where there is a beautiful vista of Bonita Beach on the Gulf from Bonita Beach Road north to Big Hickory Island. This pier is on the site of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century historic structure known as "Naples Pier", not to be confused with the current popular beach structure off 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue South in Naples.

The old pier, built around 1905 and abandoned a quarter-century later, was the terminal for barge traffic

through Matanzas Pass from a rail-head in Fort Myers. Freight and supplies were transferred to horse-drawn wagons or early trucks for the 15-mile trip south to the tiny village of Naples. When the Tamiami Trail was completed to Fort Myers, need for the barge link ended and the original pier was abandoned.

Following our tour of the site, we returned again to the Park pavilion to enjoy our picnic lunches and discuss what was learned.

Photo by Jack Thompson

#### ABOUT SWFAS

The Directorate:

President – Corbett Torrence

1<sup>st</sup> VP – Theresa Schober

2<sup>nd</sup> 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

Finance – Charlie Strader

Publicity – Victoria Rans

To Join: Address your check to:

The Southwest Florida Archaeological Society,

PO Box 9965,

Naples FL 34101.

Dues are:

Individual - \$20. Sustaining - \$50.

Family - \$35. Student - \$15.

QUESTIONS, comments or contributions to the newsletter: Betsy McCarthy, 909-8 Augusta Blvd., Naples, FL, 34113, or e-mail:

[popismom@hotmail.com](mailto:popismom@hotmail.com)

or [groucho@naples.net](mailto:groucho@naples.net)

Board meetings: 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month at 7 PM, Hampton Inn, Bonita Springs  
All welcome