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September 17 at SWFAS: John Beriault on Archaeology and Plants

“Archaeology and Plants: Beating the Bushes for Archaeological Sites in Southwest Florida” will be the subject of John Beriault’s September 17 SWFAS talk at 7:30 p.m. in Bonita Springs.

John, a life-long Collier County resident, founding member of SWFAS, and contract archaeologist will present a slide show illustrating how archaeologists look at vegetation to locate archaeological and historical sites. Beriault has

been a life-long avocational archaeologist and has worked professionally for the last ten years for the Archaeological and Historical Conservancy of Davie, Florida.

The main premise of the talk is above-ground native plant formations and associations that can reliably mirror below-ground archaeological sites and material, and how astute archaeologists use the information to locate, investigate, and hopefully preserve area archaeological sites.

October SWFAS: Rachel Wentz on Florida’s Ancient Pond Cemeteries



At the October 15 SWFAS meeting, Dr. Rachel Wentz will be talking about: “Beneath the Surface: Exploring Florida’s Ancient Pond Cemeteries”.

Over 7,000 years ago, Florida’s early inhabitants were using the numerous natural bodies of water found across the state for the interment of their dead. This presentation explores these fascinating sites, including the wealth of information that has resulted from the analyses of their remains, the beautifully preserved artifacts that were buried alongside those interred, and the possible meaning behind the use of these ponds and springs.

Currently the Director of the East Central Regional Center of FPAN, Dr. Wentz specializes in the bioarchaeological analysis of human remains with foci on ancient disease and population health. She graduated from Florida State University with a Ph.D. in Anthropology. Her master’s thesis was an analysis of fracture frequencies among the Windover skeletal population, a 7,000-year-old site in Titusville, Florida. Her doctoral dissertation was a bioarchaeological assessment of the same population using the Western Hemisphere Health Index.

Dr. Wentz has also analyzed remains from Little Salt Spring and Calico Hill, both prehistoric sites in Florida. She has done skeletal work in St. Croix, England, and Ukraine. She obtained experience in forensic anthropology at the C.A. Pound Human Identification Laboratory at the University of Florida, Gainesville and received training in the analyses of stable isotopes at the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory at Florida State University. Dr. Wentz has taught courses in physical anthropology, human osteology and forensic anthropology at Florida State University.

Archaeological Currents: Alligator Summer

By John G. Beriault

The movie, "Field of Dreams" has the memorable quote, "If you build it, they will come," applicable in many circumstances besides baseball fields. When I configured my property seven years ago in preparation for residence there, I created a small pond. The pond is as natural and as artificial as can be. Artificial in the sense the pond remains "wet" the entire year since I first lined it with 40 mil visqueen; natural in the sense I have planted it extensively with native wetland plants and tried to create the look of a natural pond. A couple of weeks ago, I performed my usual bi-yearly de-weeding/de-mucking operation. I like to maintain a certain amount of "open" water (else why have a pond). So, I waded out into the pond, and hauled ashore a certain percentage of excess floating plants, algae, just plain scum and muck. The pond varies in depth from approximately a foot to as much as five feet in two distinct "holes." The bottom is uncharacteristically slick (remember the visqueen lining).

Well, a couple of weeks ago, in early summer. I was doing the demucking/deweeding. Kept hearing something making noise in the far northern end. After I quit wading, I went to see what it was making the noise...and...beheld... a five-foot alligator hissing in displeasure at having seen me in its "personal space"...

Yes, the fabled beast of yore had found its way into my pond. Allapattah... corrupted from the Muskogean to "alligator." The inspiration for two pieces from the Key Marco site. Davy Crockett had boasted he was part horse and part alligator... and here the alligator portion was occupying my pond!

Alligators during the first seven or so years of their life grow at the rate of a foot a year, and thereafter somewhat

more slowly. Alligators can grow to at least fourteen feet and weigh half a ton. Big alligators can be fairly dangerous; a recent article detailed a teenager losing an arm to an eleven-foot gator, and there were three deaths last year in a matter of weeks in the Dade County area due to alligator attacks.

I have given myself the summer to think over the implications of this visitation, and this event has caused me to think about the relationship of the prehistoric Indians to the alligator. One of the first and most memorable images created by early French explorers was of a group of north-Florida Timucuan Indians ramming a pole down the throat of a remarkably huge alligator. I know that in the coastal shell middens and the deep Everglades sites, remains of moderate-sized alligators are routinely noted. The wooden artifacts of Key Marco include a box/maskette of an alligator head, and the realistic drawing on the lid of another box of a "horned" alligator. I have to believe local Indians were respectful of the immense potential power of the alligator, avoiding the very biggest just as wading birds somehow avoid approaching a "sleeping" alligator too closely.

In prehistoric times, the big alligators, like the Indians, and the bears and panthers, were at the top of the food chain. Later this pyramid of dominance shifted from being a truncate, flat-topped affair to one with a sharp peak with Man and his newly-acquired firearms becoming the sole dominating organism. Alligators became hunted for their hides and a large industry flourished locally till alligators became almost extinct in the wild and the stuff of near-legend.

I give my present guest as wide a berth as I can and hope the summer rains will fill the slough-flow-way crossing my property. Maybe the alligator will leave as quietly as he arrived down the cypress sloughs his ancestors have always traveled.

Summer and Fall programs at the Marco Island Historical Society

- September 2 -- Felix Rodriguez of Cape Coral, Native American Wood Carver. 7 p.m. Mackle Park. Felix will share his heritage of Cibonet and Calusa ancestry. Mr. Rodriguez is a wood carver and creates paddles with carvings that reflect the ancient people of our area. This will be an informative and worthwhile talk. He will also bring some examples of his work, which is shown on Wildchildartgalerie.com
- October 2 -- Panel of "Old Timers" explore "Roots of Marco's Past." A panel of old-timers who lived on the

island before the 1950s will discuss their memories of Marco Island, Goodland and Caxambas. Panel members are: Henry Lowe, Lois Howard Crews, Carson Bomar, Marilyn Simes Sims, Michael Griffins, Lucille Doxsee Thompson, Curtis Wyman Bostick, and Nellie Hamilton Whitehurst. The panel will be moderated by local attorney, Craig Woodward, whose family moved here in 1967.

- November 4 -- Bill Marquardt of the Florida Museum of Natural History, 7 p.m. Mackle Park, talks about collections and the preservation policies for a museum.

Upcoming SWFAS Programs

- November 19th – Margo Schwadron, "Mound Complexity in the 10,000 Islands"
- December 13th – Annual Picnic at Roberts Ranch in Immokalee.
- January 21st, 2009 – Phyllis Kolianos, "Early Maritime Travel and Coastal Habitation on Old Tampa Bay"
- February 18th – TBA
- March 21st – Trail Speaker Event at the Collier County Museum

Long Key, from right

distance into the sawgrass Everglades.

The Center itself was designed to educate both the public and Broward County's schoolchildren, who, like SWFAS, have been and will be conducted there on fieldtrips. Exhibits are state-of-the-art and are heavily weighted toward exploring prehistoric and historic Indian interaction with Long Key

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SWFAS July Field Trip to Long Key Interpretive Center in Davie

On Saturday, July 12, 2008, sixteen members of SWFAS met at the rest stop/visitor's station at Mile Marker 35-36 on Alligator Alley, halfway to Fort Lauderdale. The purpose of this meeting was to proceed to the Broward County Parks and Recreation's Long Key Interpretive Center in western Davie, a suburb of Fort Lauderdale.

After car-pooling, the party set forth, arriving at the Interpretive Center a little before noon. The Center is large, modern, impressive and newly constructed, having opened to the public in May. The main building is at the site of the Kapok Tree Restaurant, a local landmark for years. The Center is surrounded by the Long Key ridge, once an elevated island "chain," a



Above: Large tabletop recreation of what the islands of prehistoric Long Key would have looked like. Left: The exhibit area with a mural and artifacts/replicas from the Tequesta. The Seminole are also represented. Below: John Beriault created ceramic replicas of several Marco masks for the exhibit entryway.

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Long Key

and the Everglades, the role of the historic pioneers in the changing ecology of the Long Key area, and interactive exhibits concerning the natural history and ecology of the eastern Everglades. Bob Carr, director of the Archaeological and Historical Conservancy (AHC) conducted the tour. AHC was largely responsible for creating/directing the

13,600-year-old Tulum skeleton found

At the August World Congress of Archaeology in Ireland, the discovery of "Eva of Naharon" was announced by a spokesman for paleontologist Arthur Gonzalez. The remains were located in clear water in a cave located about 27 miles to the southwest of the town of Tulum. The woman died at age 45 and has an antiquity of 13,600 years.

The caves started forming about 125,000 years ago when sea level was approximately 400 ft. below its present level. About 18,000 years ago sea level started slowly rising. This slow sea level rise stabilized at about 7,000 years ago, flooding most of these caves.

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archaeological and ethnobotanical exhibits.

The members of SWFAS enjoyed the tour of both the Center and the beautiful mature live oak hammock behind the Center. We ate our bag lunches at the Center and then hit the road for home. I've been told that the Marco Island contingent led by Betsy and Bill Perdichizzi especially enjoyed the tour as it gave them ideas for their future Museum on Marco Island.

The age given to this skeleton is similar to the one established for the ones Tom Dillehay found in southern Chile, and to some found in Alaska and northern USA.

Physical anthropology studies reveal that the skeleton is not related to Maya groups, but to Asian, specifically, from regions near India. The place where we found the skeleton determines that Ice Age humans looked for locations far away from the entrance to place their departed, which was not a common practice in America at that point.

Charlie Strader sent this from Aztlan; see Charlie for more info.

About SWFAS

The Directorate:

President - Theresa Schober
1st VP - Tom Franchino
2nd VP - James Oswald
Recording Secretary - Jo Ann Grey
Treasurer - Charlie Strader
Membership Secretary - Charlie Strader

Trustees:

Rebecca Austin, Jean Belknap, John Beriault, Liz Clement, Alison Elgart, Betsy McCarthy, Betsy Perdichizzi, Jack Thompson

SWFAS Committees:

Field - John Beriault
Lab - Jack Thompson
Hospitality - Jeanne Sanders
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*

Learn more about SWFAS at:

<http://www.explorationsinc.com/swfl-archaeology/index.html>

Board meetings are usually held prior to the regular meeting on the third Wednesday of the month at the Bonita Springs Community Hall at 27381 Old U.S. 41 (by the banyan tree). All are welcome. Board meetings begin at 6 p.m. Regular meetings begin at 7:30 (with coffee served at 7).

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The Southwest Florida Archaeological Society
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