Southwest Florida Archaeological Society Newsletter

"Native American Medicinal Plants" Presented by FPAN's Michele Williams at January 19 SWFAS Meeting in Bonita Springs

"Native American Medicinal Plants" is the subject of the presentation at the next SWFAS meeting, to be held on Wednesday, January 19 at the Bonita Springs Community Hall at 27381 Old U.S. 41 (by the banyan tree). The meeting begins at 7:30; refreshments are available at 7.

Native American Medicinal Plants
Medicinal plants have a long history of use and are still the most commonly used medicine in the world today. Come learn about medicinal plants used by Native Americans; these plants can be an interesting, and beautiful, addition to your landscaping plan.

Michele Williams , Ph.D., RPA is the Director for the Southeastern Region of Florida Public Archaeology Network at Florida Atlantic University . Dr. Williams has participated in excavations throughout the southeastern United States for the past 20 years. Her specialty within archaeology is the use of plants by prehistoric Native Americans.

Upcoming at SWFAS

February: Spanish Fishing Ranchos, with Meg Stack

March: Barron Gift Collier 1873-1939
David Southall, Curator of Education of the Collier County Museum, will talk about the life of Collier's County's founder, Barron Gift Collier.
Raised in "genteel poverty" in post Civil War Tennessee, Barron Gift Collier quit school at the age of 16 to work as a railroad freight agent. He left Memphis for New York in 1893 already a successful businessman with streetcar advertising franchises in 24 Southern cities. By the age of 22 he had made his first million dollars.
Learn about the accomplishments of this resourceful, successful, and generous man who became the founder of modern Collier County.

Don't forget - SWFAS memberships expire this month!

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

Horr's Island Indian Mound Subject of Suit

From the Nov. 18 Naples Daily News:

MARCO ISLAND — Conservancy of Southwest Florida is suing Key Marco Community Association and the City of Marco Island, asking a judge to halt all vegetation removal and permits and to require the community to file a signed copy of a 1990 conservation easement.

Without the easement, the complaint alleges, Key Marco has "assumed ownership and control" and refuses to allow conservancy officials to inspect the property to determine if guidelines have been followed to ensure no damage occurred at a more than 5,000-year-old Indian burial site and native habitat preserved there.

To read the full article:
http://www.naplesnews.com/news/2010/nov/18/conservancy-sues-key-marco-indian-mound-landscape/

SWFAS Newsletter by E-Mail

If you're online, you can get the SWFAS newsletter sent to you as a PDF via e-mail. Many SWFAS members have already made the switch -- it saves quite a bit on printing and postage costs. If you would like to get the newsletter by e-mail, please note it on the sign-in sheet, e-mail Charlie Strader *(cesxplor@aol.com)* or let Charlie, Annette Snapp or Karen Nelson know at the next meeting.

SWFAS Annual Meeting in January -- Nominees For Trustees and Officers

The SWFAS general membership votes for the ne Trustees and Officers at the January monthly meeting, which serves as SWFAS' Annual Meeting.

The SWFAS Nominating Committee, comprised of Board Members, has nominated the following candidates as Trustees and Officers in 2011.

If members would like to nominate additional candidates, nominations from the floor can still be accepted until the vote.

OFFICERS:
President: Annette Snapp
First Vice President: Meghan Prenderghast
Second Vice President: Alison Elgart
Recording Secretary: Kathryn Betz
Treasurer: Charlie Strader
Membership Secretary: Charlie Strader

TRUSTEES:
First year of 3 year term:
Tom Franchino
Jim Oswald
Matthew Schuld
Paul Backhouse

Second year of 3 year term:
Theresa Schober
Matthew Betz

Third year of 3 year term:
Betsy Perdichizzi
Liz Clement

Trustee Emeritus:
John Beriault

Digital Archaeology: Future Lab

By Jack Harvey

Future archaeology labs will use technology to eliminate much of the human caused GIGO (Garbage In, Garbage out) that requires tedious proofreading and meticulous data validation that bored so many of you in the Data Entry story. It will do it by taking the human out of data entry.

No typos. No putting data in wrong boxes. No problem with distractions between reading the lab ID form and hitting the right keys.

That's right, no keyboarding.

But then how do the data get from the lab ID forms into the computer?

By eliminating the antiquated lab ID forms, of course!

Horrors! We can't do that, lab ID forms are required so that we can file them away in binders for the lab archives. And if we don't fill out the forms, how can experienced reviewers check them to see if the data are reasonable and complete? No, my friend, we must have the messy and often illegible traditional lab ID forms.

Oh all right, if you must have lab ID forms, the computer will print them for you, and they won't be messy and illegible either.

But what about the artifact sketches our lab workers often put on the forms?

The Future Lab will handle those too. Here, why don't I tell you how all this works? Then maybe you'll see what I'm talking about.

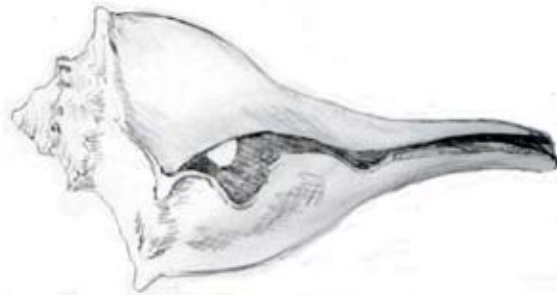Good idea, because I sure don't have a clue now.

Ok, it will work in many different ways, but let's assume bags of material recovered from a Chokoloskee test unit on 02/11/2039 are being analyzed by students. After being washed and dried, they sort the material into trays, one tray per aggregation of like material from a single test unit location. For example, Betty McCoy's tray contains a shell hammer recovered from Test Unit 1, Level 2. It will also hold a computer-printed paper slip with provenience data.

Betty then places the tray on a workstation platform that weighs it and automatically sends the total weight to the computer. Adjacent to the weighing platform is a touch-screen display with operation selections.

Above the tray platform is an optical scanner. Betty's operation selection tells the computer to use the optical scanner to read the unique identification number appearing in a barcode on the tray itself. This allows the computer to look up the previously recorded weight of the empty tray and subtract it from the current total weight, giving the net weight of the hammer on the tray. The scanner also reads a barcode on the paper slip bearing the provenience data.

The touch-screen display then shows a list of items the tray may contain (potsherd, tool, shell, bone, etc.) Betty selects "Gastropod Hammer E" and the display changes to a list of possible species. She selects "Lightning Whelk" and now the computer has a full identification with provenience

Future computer generated lab ID form displaying data automatically stored in an archaeology database.

and weight.

The optical scanner can do much more than read barcodes, however. It can also generate a high definition 3D color digital photograph of the tray contents and software in the computer can then store this image as part of the final record. Other software examines the image to measure the hammer's length, completing the minimum information required.

The touch-screen now displays a selection of optional items that can be added to the record for this aggregation. McCoy selects "Add Sketch" and places her pencil sketch of the hammer on the tray for the optical scanner to digitally photograph and add to the record. Then she selects "Add Comment" and a typing keyboard appears on the touch-screen. She keys in "Hardly yused", free-form commentary included in the record. The computer corrects her spelling.

Finally, Betty taps the "Done" circle on the touch screen. Software checks that all required information has been obtained and prompts if additional is needed. It adds the date and time the analysis was done as well as the name of the student doing the work along with the project ID. When complete, it prints a unique identification slip to be included in the permanent storage bag for this artifact. (It can print a fully filled out lab ID form too, if wanted.) The final record is stored on the lab computer and also sent across campus to another computer as a backup record.

Betty McCoy's instructor can retrieve the computer record

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including 3D photo and sketch to her monitor to check her work.

All the technology to do this exists today, but the archaeological laboratory market is far too small to justify adapting it for our needs. However there are many other markets, such as medical testing and research, DNA analysis (medical and forensic) and well as countless industrial applications. General purpose software, analogous to our common database programs like Excel and Access, will evolve to sell to all these myriad markets. Like setting up a spreadsheet in Excel to record our specific kinds of data, we will set up the touch-screen displays we need to automate our archaeology lab data entry.

Will I live to see this?

This will probably happen in two or three decades, largely ending the GIGO problem. But our student still has to correctly identify the shell species and hit the correct touch-screen circles. Getting the computer to identify species from the digital photo is much farther in the future. Stay tuned.

January 2011 Newsletter

The Southwest Florida Archaeological Society
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