Vol. 27 No. 8 November 2011

November 16 Speaker Michele Cotty Loger

Investigations into The Cape Haze Shell Mounds

On Wednesday, November 16 Charlotte Harbor Preserve State Park Archaeologist Michele Cotty Loger will present the methods and some of preliminary findings of two DHR grant projects aimed at better understanding the Cape Haze shell mounds in southern Charlotte County. Loger will discuss profiling, mapping, and sampling methods, what is hoped to be discovered in the analysis; and what comes next in broadening our knowledge of the past people who inhabited sites in the Charlotte Harbor area.

Michele Cotty Loger has been an archaeologist for Charlotte Harbor Preserve State Park, working with George Luer, for three years now. Before moving to Florida, Michele spent the past dozen years as a shovelbum in the northeast, and participated in a number of field schools and an internship in the southwest. Despite the mosquitoes and the heat, the Charlotte Harbor area has quickly become Michele's favorite research focus and she intends on staying here and investigating the local archaeology long into the future.

November's meeting will be held at the Bonita Springs Community Hall, 27381 Old U.S. 41 (by the banyan tree). The Board of Directors meets at 6:30 p.m.; refreshments served at 7:00 p.m.; speaker begins at 7:30 p.m.

December 10 Holiday Field Trip: Marco Island Historical Museum

Join SWFAS for our annual holiday field trip and picnic Saturday, December 10, at 10:00 a.m. We will begin with a tour of the Marco Island Historical Museum where we will have a first look at the museum's newest exhibit, "Against All Odds: The Art of The Highwaymen" and get a guided backstage tour of the museum. After our tour of the museum we plan to caravan to Otter Mound Preserve for a look around this unique site and then head to Goodland Park, which is atop a leveled off shell mound, for a picnic. Or, if you would rather purchase lunch, you may go to The Little Bar across the street from the park. This event will serve as our December meeting.

Please meet at the Marco Island Historical Museum at 10 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 10. Bring a picnic lunch or plan to purchase your own lunch at The Little Bar. The Marco Island Historical Museum is located at 180 South Heathwood Drive, Marco Island. We look forward to a good turn out for this educational and social holiday event!

FPAN Outreach Coordinator Hired

Melissa Timo has been hired as the Outreach Coordinator for FPAN's Southwest Florida Regional Center, hosted at Florida Gulf Coast University. Melissa is a graduate student at the University of West Florida where she is working to finish her Master's Degree. She is from Pennsylvania and served as an intern at FPAN's Northwest Florida Regional Center for three years. Director Annette Snapp reports that FPAN is thrilled to have her on board and her experience is already serving the office well.

Milanich Book on Historic Seminoles Published

Hidden Seminoles: Julian Dimock's Historic Florida Photographs by Jerald T. Milanich and Nina J. Root

Many SWFAS members were privileged to hear Dr. Jerald Milanich speak about his work on Julian Dimock's historic photos at the 2010 FAS Conference in Fort Myers. Dr. Milanich's book is now available and can be purchased through University Press of Florida at http://www.upf.com/book.asp?id=MILAN011.

In April 1905, A. W. Dimock, a New York financier, and his 31-year-old son Julian motored their boat across Chokoloskee Bay. They docked at George Storter's store in the small outpost of Everglade on the southwest coast of Florida, at the very edge of Anglo civilization.

At Storter's, the Dimocks saw several Seminole Indians who came from their homes in the interior of south Florida to shop and trade for household goods. Survivors of three wars, these proud people kept to themselves. Julian, an accomplished photographer, set up his camera and expressed an interest in learning more about their lives. Over the next five years he would amass an unprecedented photographic record of the Seminole people and their surroundings. Now archived at the American Museum of Natural History, his six thousand glass negatives, unique for the time in that they were not taken for the tourist trade, are a national treasure.

Milanich and Root relate the adventures of the Dimocks among the Seminole Indians at a time when few whites ventured into the Everglades and the Big Cypress Swamp. Reproduced in rich duotones, Julian's photographs reveal fascinating aspects of Seminole Indian life in the depths of the Florida peninsula.

Jerald T. Milanich is curator emeritus of the Florida Museum of Natural History, contributing editor at Archaeology magazine, and author or editor of many books including Laboring in the Fields of the Lord: Spanish Missions and Southeastern Indians.

GPR Historic Cemetery Research at Rookery Bay

Tuesday, Nov. 15 at 10 a.m. the public is invited to Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve to help investigate a historic cemetery. The Southwest Regional Center of the Florida Public Archaeology Network will be conducting a ground penetrating radar survey of a small cemetery east of the Kirkland Cemetery on Shell Island Road in Naples. Shell Island Road is located off SR-951/Collier Blvd 2.6 miles south of E. Tamiami Trail. Turn onto Shell Island Road and travel 2.5 miles to parking. Contact FPAN at 239-590-1476 or Rookery Bay at 239-417-6310 for more information, or look for details on the FPAN web site at http://www.flpublicarchaeology.org.

Theresa Schober Speaking on Captiva

Friday, December 9, at 9 a.m. Theresa Schober will give a talk on "Captiva's Calusa and the Chadwick Mound Excavation" as part of the Captiva Chautauqua. Captiva is hosting a Holiday Village extravaganza beginning the day after Thanksgiving. As part of the festivities, the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation is sponsoring a Captiva Chautauqua, under a "big top" at McCarthy's Marina on Captiva. McCarthy's Marina is located at the 4-way stop by Andy Rosse Lane and Captiva Drive in downtown Captiva. Make a right onto Andy Rosse Lane. McCarthy's Marina is located on the right. All Chautauqua talks are free and open to the public but there is a $5 fee for parking. No reservations required. Please call Karen Nelson at SCCF, 472-2329 with questions. For information on Captiva Holiday Village activities, visit www.captivaholidayvillage.com

Digital Archaeology: Are We Alchemists?

By Jack Harvey

Anthropology and archaeology aren't exact sciences like physics or chemistry. While our scholarly papers are often loaded with numerical tables and charts, these are usually just statistics describing particular sites or groups of areas. They aren't empirical data from reproducible experiments. Yet the various sub-fields of anthropology may be attempts to be more exact than their roots in the social sciences.

Physics and chemistry have such a past: alchemy. While we usually think of alchemy as trying to turn lead into gold, it had much broader goals ranging from medicines to metaphysics. The old Greeks said the elements were earth, air, fire and water. Alchemists built the craft basis for modern chemistry and led to an understanding of atoms. They learned much about what could be combined or separated in repeatable experiments, and they correctly identified many true elements.

Computers are used extensively in archaeology today to prepare the numerical tables and charts for scholarly papers. They turn the raw data from site material analysis into useful statistical summaries. But they aren't able to predict future finds except in the broadest approximations. Yet accurate prediction is one of the hallmarks of hard science.

Modeling is a flexible word. It may mean building a tiny ship replica, or displaying new fashions. But there is another: "Simulate a process or concept with the aid of a computer." A human society might be considered a process. Could the operation of a tribe or clan be simulated on a computer? Could the population growth and movement of a hunter-gatherer group be predicted?

Experts can often predict the existence of an archaeology site by observing the living botanicals in the area because human activities can affect the species found. The gumbo limbo tree, Bursera simaruba, often indicates human habitation in Florida because it thrives in disturbed areas. John G. Beriault has identified several other habitation diagnostic species. While not directly expanding our knowledge of aboriginals, it's a valuable craft. Someday, it might be part of a computer simulation predicting hunter-gatherer movements.

A dictionary definition of craft is "An art, trade, or occupation requiring special skill, especially manual skill." While it might be a push to claim manual skills for archaeology, there certainly is much art and special skill required. You don't become a registered professional archaeologist simply by claiming to be one. Recognized training and experience are required. Craft guild apprenticeship provided training and standards. Here we have a bit in common with the alchemists. They too had arts and skills often acquired by apprenticeship under old masters.

The transition from a craft like alchemy to a hard science like chemistry isn't assured. The crafts of woodworking and masonry advanced greatly in recent millennia but hardly became sciences. Still, some archaeologists are exploring how computers can be used for more than summarizing conventional dig data. Jennifer Lewin and Mark Gross of the University of Colorado have used computer modeling to discover and resolve ambiguities in raw site data. Google "Resolving Archaeological Site Data With 3D Computer Modeling" for their paper.

Other authors have used the terms computational archaeology and archaeological informatics to describe similar work. An international organization, "Computer Applications in Archaeology" (CAA), has annual conferences. See *www.caaconference.org* for details.

But in spite of the work by CAA, useful digital archaeological techniques seem to me to be currently limited to exposition of data or sites. Virtual Reality displays may make it easier to grasp an author's idea of the meaning of data, but it's hard to find examples of scientific prediction.

Why is this? Surely it would be useful to say with some certainty when and how a particular aboriginal tribe grew strong enough to dominate a region. Many factors influence this, such as food sources, geography, weather, tribal practices and technology or crafts. It's rumored that the Calusa dominated the Tequesta, but why not the other way around?

Could computer simulation shed light on such questions? When attempting to simulate a process with a computer program, you break the process into small bits and calculate what happens to each probabilistically. This is sometimes called the Monte Carlo Method and was used extensively during the Manhattan Project to simulate a nuclear explosion. In an archaeological simulation, you might define a bit as a person and then flip a coin (digitally) to decide if it is male or female. The computer program follows each bit of the tribe throughout individual lives, using probability determinants to decide who they marry, number of offspring, etc. The tribe is then the sum of all its bits (people). And of course the probabilities are determined by factors such as food supply, land, hurricanes, cultural rules and skills.

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The simulation program must also include competing tribes with different determinant factors. Clearly, it's a daunting project and the programming skills required are not likely to be found in university anthropology departments. Realistically, simulation of the life of an entire tribe is far too difficult for the first project in archaeology modeling. Perhaps we could start by trying to simulate migration of pottery decoration styles. Can a computer program predict what mix of sherd types will be found at a site based on its location and age? This might be a testable hypothesis.

Like alchemy experiments, data for the all important determinant factors that can make archaeology computer simulations accurate are currently being gathered, one artifact at a time.

If we are alchemists, will we make the breakthrough into a predictive science?

SWFAS Newsletter by E-Mail

You can get the SWFAS newsletter sent to you as a PDF via e-mail. Many SWFAS members have already made the switch, saving printing and postage costs. To sign up, contact Charlie Strader (cesxplor@aol.com) or let a board member know at the next meeting.

Mark Your Calender!

Nov. 16: SWFAS Meeting - Speaker Michele Cotty Loger
Dec. 10: Trip to Marco Island Historical Museum
Jan. 18: SWFAS Meeting - Speaker Karen Walker
Feb. 15: SWFAS Meeting - Speaker Jeff Ransom
Mar. 21: SWFAS Meeting at FGCU - Speaker Lee Bloch

About SWFAS

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: 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 6:30 p.m. Regular meetings begin at 7:30 (refreshments served at 7).

November 2011 Newsletter

The Southwest Florida Archaeological Society
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