

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY - NEWSLETTER -

Travis F. Doering, Editor

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December, 1985

- THE DECEMBER MONTHLY MEETING of the SWFAS will be held at the First Federal Savings and Loan of Ft. Myers, (Community Room), 3201 Tamiami Trail North, Naples, Florida at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 19, 1985.

- Our guest speaker will be Cathy Trejo, an educator in Golden Gate. Cathy will discuss her experiences and findings during a five week stay at a BYU sponsored archeological investigation. During this past summer she was in S.W. Utah examining the occupation periods known as Pueblo I, II, & III and Basketmaker.

- Appearing over 1900 years ago, these people were the forerunners of the Anasazi. Their circular domed dwellings evolved into the famous pueblos and they were the earliest farmers in the Southwest. The "Basketmaker" are unique in that they wove excellent baskets even waterproof ones, but didn't make any pottery.

- Bring your friends for what promises to be an exciting talk about these North American natives.

- SORTING, ANALYSIS, OR SITE FORM MEETINGS - Due to the holidays, SWFAS will not be holding these monthly sessions. They will start again in January 1986.

- NOVEMBER MONTHLY MEETING - "The Ecological Natural History of the Mangrove Forest" was the main part of Florida State Park Ranger, Andy Cotellis' presentation at our November meeting. Andy also explained the Florida system of state parks and what they can offer the visitor. Special events have taken place throughout this year at all the parks to celebrate the 50th anniversary of our Florida Parks System.

- During the months of January and February a bird count is to be held at our Collier Seminole State Park which is 17 miles south of Naples. If you would like to know more about this event, you can contact Andy at the park.

- SPECIAL MEMBERSHIP NOTICE - Please help us make Jack Thompson, our Treasurer, a happy man in 1986! You can do this with very little effort by paying your dues at the December meeting or mailing them to SWFAS, P. O. Box 9965, Naples, FL 33941. See the application at the end of this newsletter for the due amounts and remember -- all contributions are tax deductible.

- SPECIAL THANKS - SWFAS would like to thank Dotty Thompson for her work in publicizing our organization and its events in the media. Because of her consistent efforts, we are attracting new members to our Society, and expanding our interests and abilities.

- BONITA BAY TRACT - Work is continuing at Bonita Bay on a regular basis. SWFAS member Joe Long's work and expertise in the area of surveying at the Oak Knoll mounds is greatly appreciated. Jim Osterling, of

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Bonita Bay Properties is also to be thanked for his on-going support and cooperation on our work in Bonita Bay. Walking tours, surface collections and topographical mapping will continue in the future and members will be notified as to when, where and how they can help.

- CANOE TRIP - January 15, 1986 a canoe trip with students from Naples High School with advisor Steve Casalino is planned to Mound Key. Information on canoes and details are available from John Beriault, 261-0295.

- JANUARY FIELD TRIP - On January 18, 1986 a trip to the Warren Ashley Pit near Sarasota will be offered to SWFAS members. This is a rock pit which contains pristine fossil shells and other objects of interest. Details of the trip will be given at the December meeting.

- THIRD SKULL FOUND - Archaeologists have uncovered a third human skull believed to be 7,000 years old at a site near Titusville and will try to determine if it contains brain tissue as did two others found last year.

"There's a 50-50 chance" the skull contains brain tissue, said project director Dave Dickel, a Florida State University anthropologist. The skull, believed to be from a middle-aged man, will undergo examination at Wuesthoff Memorial Hospital in Rockledge. Project officials are hopeful that they can detect the presence of human DNA, as was done with the earlier ones.

Scientists have unraveled some genetic codes by cloning DNA, the molecule containing the genetic blueprint for life, from the two ancient brains found at the Windover Farms dig last December.

The dig is at a 7,500 sq. yd. pond used by ancient Indians as a burial ground. More than 50 human bones have been found since the archeologists restarted operations in September after receiving funding from the Legislature.

Archeologists carefully dug up the latest skull from a muck-filled pond after exposing only a dollar-sized portion of the top of the skull and a few teeth. The skull was put in a sealed bag with nitrogen gas and then packed with ice for shipment. The rest was left in the cool, black mud to prevent any tissue from drying out or becoming contaminated.

"Last year when we found incomplete skulls, you would see broken edges," Dickel said. "This appears to be very round and smooth, so there's a good chance everything is there."

Archeologists said leg, arm, pelvis, and shoulder bones found close to the skull could be from the same person. The two brains found last year belonged to a man believed 25 to 35 years old and a woman about 45. Scientists called their recovery unprecedented.

"No other skeletal collection with the combination of this sample size, quality and antiquity are known," according to background information supplied by scientists at the University of Florida and FSU last year.

If a CAT scan examination reveals tissue, the skull will be sent to the Univ. of Florida College of Medicine in Gainesville. Researchers there would test for the presence of DNA.

Scientists from around the world have been supplied with samples of the cloned DNA. Their work may enable them to trace changes in human cell structure and learn how diseases such as cancer are related to heredity, according to Dr. Wm. Hauswirth, a molecular biologist at UF. The skulls, other bones and artifacts unearthed at the muck-filled pond also may shed more light on the life style of the Indians of the period. The site was discovered in 1982 by construction workers building a road for the residential community of 1,500 acres. Developers set aside about 12 acres for the archeological project.

- UPDATE ARTICLE ON TITUSVILLE ARCHEOLOGICAL WORK - Skeletal remains unearthed at this dig shows evidence of advanced stages of arthritis among Florida's prehistoric inhabitants, Fl. State Univ. anthropologists say.

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"We've found extreme arthritis in relatively young people (40 - 45 yrs. Old)," said David Dickel. "They worked their bodies very hard. Today, we expect extreme cases only in geriatrics."

Knees, neck vertebrae and elbows were the body areas affected most often. Use of headbands for balancing objects carried on the back could explain the neck problems, and frequent use of spears could have caused arthritis in the elbow.

But there is no ready explanation for knee problems, especially considering Florida's relatively flat terrain. The bones represent prehistoric people from newborns to the elderly, allowing scientists to examine growth and development, Dickel said.

Three intact human skulls 7,000 years old and containing well-preserved brain tissue have been discovered, the most recent Nov. 6th, at the burial pond near Titusville.

- VOLUNTEER VACATIONS - Ever wanted to go on an archeological dig or join in ecological research? Each year, nearly 100 scientific expeditions in the U.S. and foreign countries welcome volunteers. This fall, there's a dig for a Spanish mission on an island off Georgia's coast, where you assist archeologists from the American Museum of Natural History; and a wetlands study on Florida Bay, conducted by the Audubon Society. Other expeditions include research on hawks and eagles in Nevada, on black bears in No. Carolina, and on wildflowers in the Rockies.

U.S. expeditions usually run 10 days to three weeks and cost \$500 to \$1,000 per person, including food and lodgings (foreign trips cost up to \$2,000). Because you're donating your services to nonprofit endeavors, the fee and related expenses, such as transportation, are tax deductible. Minimum age is 16.

For more information, write: Earthwatch, Box 127N, Dept. BHG, Belmont, MA 02178.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM SWFAS !

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Mail to: SWFAS, P.O.Box 9965, Naples, FL 33941

Check One:

_____ Individual -- \$10.00

_____ Contributing -- \$25.00

_____ Family -- \$15.00

_____ Student -- \$ 7.50

Yes! I want to support the Southwest Florida Archeological Society in their work of preserving and interpreting the prehistoric heritage of Southwest Florida.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Interests & Abilities _____

I hereby agree to abide by the rules and bylaws of the Southwest Florida Archeological Society. I further release from any and all liability due to accident and injury to myself, dependents, and property, the SWFAS, its officers, members and any property owners cooperating with the Society.

NOTE: All dues & contributions to SWFAS are tax deductible.

Signature _____
