



## Southwest Florida Archaeological Society (SWFAS)

OUR 46th YEAR

July 2026 Newsletter

<https://swflarchaeology.org/>

### PRESIDENT'S CORNER *By John F. Furey M.A., RPA, [jffurey@charter.net](mailto:jffurey@charter.net)*



Remember to celebrate America's 250th Anniversary on the 4th this month. There are many ways to celebrate depending on your location, especially with the 4th falling on a Thursday and, for many of us, an especially long weekend. Support your local celebrations. The scout troops, American Legion, and VFW Posts will be putting out American flags on our veterans' graves at the cemeteries.

This is also the time of year that archaeological excavations are taking place across the country and in Europe and the Middle East as Universities close down for the summer. Many of these excavations are seeking volunteers to help out at the sites. A European excavation/vacation, or even Egypt, with a week or two extra as a tourist is an excellent and exciting way to travel. It will cost a bit more but by combining the two you will always remember it. In Florida it is hot, dirty summer work, but you don't know what you'll find, it's highly rewarding, and you could make lifelong friends. Check it out on line for something local and don't forget that there are local cemetery stone cleaning and recording classes and put on by FPAN.

### RECENT RESEARCH

#### ***MASSIVE 100 ROOM VILLA DISCOVERED IN POMPEII: THE CASA DEL TIASO***

The Director General of Pompeii, Gabriel Zuktryigal announced the recent discovery of an estimated 100 room villa in Pompeii. The excavated portion contained the red painted 'Ruby Red Banquet Hall' with frescoes of Dionysian figures to the Greek god of wine, a theater, hot private bath, sauna, cold plunge pool, and boiler room. Archaeologist Sophie Hay said that the 79 A.D eruption of Vesuvius that buried the villa still leaves one-third of the city unexcavated. Source: *Naples Bay* at <https://naplesbay.it/en/2025/05/08/pompeii-casa-del-tiaso-new-archaeological-discoveries-and-a-tourism-boom/>

#### ***PREHISTORIC PEOPLE BRED DOGS THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO***

The diversity of many modern-day dog breeds emerged thousands of years ago. An analysis of ancient skulls reveals a distinctive dog skull shape – a shortened snout and widened face, compared to wolves – first seen in nearly 11,000-year-old fossils. Not long after, researchers say, there was a boom in the variety of dog skull shapes and sizes, capturing more than half of the diversity in today's breeds. An analysis of the genomes of ancient dogs suggests that ancient humans valued distinctive features, took their canine companions with them when they moved around and traded dogs with useful characteristics with their neighbors. Source: *Science Journal* at

[https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.aba9572?\\_gl=1\\*usja2v\\*\\_up\\*MQ..\\*\\_ga\\*MTM1NTgwOTAxLjE3ODA0MTA5ODY.\\*\\_ga\\_KQG7WRFJWG\\*cze3ODA0MTA5ODUKbzEkZzAkDDE3ODA0MTA5OTQkajUxJGwwJGgw](https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.aba9572?_gl=1*usja2v*_up*MQ..*_ga*MTM1NTgwOTAxLjE3ODA0MTA5ODY.*_ga_KQG7WRFJWG*cze3ODA0MTA5ODUKbzEkZzAkDDE3ODA0MTA5OTQkajUxJGwwJGgw)

### SWFAS DUES REMINDER 2026



SWFAS dues for 2026 are due. Thanks to everyone that has already renewed their 2026 tax deductible membership. Your support of archaeology, history, preservation, and education in Southwest Florida is critical. Our sole source of revenue is your dues and gifts as we strive to offer educational programming in the area of archaeology and history free to all members of the public.

SWFAS is a 501(c)(3) registered non-profit organization. If you have not done so, we have two ways, you can renew online with a credit card at <https://swflarchaeology.org/>. On the Home page, go to "Select Member

Level” and then “ Add to Cart.” Or send a check to: Charlie Strader, SWFAS Treasurer, 27655 Kent Road, Bonita Springs, FL 34135. If you have question re membership status, you may call/text Charlie at 239-992-6133.

## **SWFAS PRESENTATION SCHEDULE 2026**

*Note that all SWFAS presentations are free to the public*

*Also note that newsletters will be distributed each month*

**JUNE – OCTOBER – NO LECTURES**

**NOVEMBER 18, 2026, 7:00 PM, BONITA SPRINGS FIRE STATION 24**

**(enter building in front by the flag poles. Parking is in front.)**

**Lecturer: Steve Koski**

**Presentation: TBA**

**DECEMBER 5 OR 12, 2026**

**Field Trip: TBA**

## **ARTICLES - PREVIEW**

### ***ARCHAEOLOGISTS UNCOVER TOMB OF TE K'AB CHAAK, FIRST RULER OF ANCIENT MAYA CITY CARACOL***

Te K'ab Chaak was the founder the first dynasty in the Belize city of Caracol, which was a major political player in early Mayan history and dominated the southern part of the Yucatan Peninsula from 560 through 680 AD before being abandoned in 900 AD. His tomb reveals the extent of the contacts that Caracol had throughout Mesoamerica. See below.

### ***EGYPT'S GREAT PYRAMID REAL BUILDERS REVEALED BY ANCIENT INSCRIPTIONS***

According to Dr. Zahi Hawass, famed Egyptian archaeologist, the pyramids were not the work of 100,000 slaves but were built by a workforce of skilled paid laborers who were supervised by master builders. Fed and housed next to the construction sites, professional stonemasons cut and ground the wonderful stonework, statues and funerary objects needed for the afterlife, and evidence found etched on the the pyramid's stones points to this conclusion. See below.

### ***ANCIENT DNA SUGGESTS ANCESTORS OF ESTONIANS, FINNS, AND HUNGARIANS LIVED IN SIBERIA 4,500 YEARS AGO***

Based on a database of 1,300 previously analyzed ancient people, the DNA evidence indicates that these Uralic speakers immigrated from northern Eurasia between the Mesolithic period and the Bronze Age 11,000-4,000 years ago. Linguists were interested in that these Uralic speakers differed from the Indo European speakers all around them. See below.

## ARTICLES

### **ARCHAEOLOGISTS UNCOVER TOMB OF TE K'AB CHAAK, FIRST RULER OF ANCIENT MAYA CITY CARACOL**

By Laurie Fickman, University of Houston

July 10, 2025

From Phys.Org at <https://phys.org/news/2025-07-archaeologists-uncover-tomb-te-kab.html>



Archaeologists from the University of Houston working at Caracol in Belize, Central America have uncovered the tomb of Te K'ab Chaak, the first ruler of this ancient Maya city and the founder of its royal dynasty. Now in ruins, this metropolis was a major political player in Maya history, dominating the southern part of the Yucatan Peninsula from 560 through 680 AD before its abandonment by 900 AD. The discovery is the first identifiable ruler's tomb found in over four decades of work in Caracol, the largest Maya archaeological site in Belize and in the Maya lowlands.

Te K'ab Chaak, who acceded to the throne in 331 AD, was interred at the base of a royal family shrine with eleven pottery vessels, carved bone tubes, jadeite jewelry, a mosaic jadeite mask, Pacific spondylus shells, and other perishable materials. Pottery vessels in the chamber included a scene of a Maya ruler holding a spear and receiving offerings from supplicants in the form of deities. Another vessel portrays the image of Ek Chuah, Maya god of traders, surrounded by offerings. Four of the pottery vessels portray bound captives (similar vessels also appeared in two related burials). Two vessels supported lids with modeled handles of coatimundi (pisote) heads. The coatimundi, or tz'uutz' in Maya, was used by subsequent Caracol rulers as part of their names.

A team led by husband and wife collaborators Arlen F. Chase and Diane Z. Chase of the University of Houston has been excavating at Caracol for more than 40 years; this field season was carried out in concert with Belize's Institute of Archaeology and was supported by the Alphawood Foundation, the University of Houston, the Geraldine and Emory Ford Foundation, and the KHR Family Fund.

The Chases estimate that at the time of his burial the ruler was of advanced age and approximately 5'7" in height. He had no remaining teeth. Their investigations at Caracol's Northeast Acropolis show that Te K'ab Chaak's tomb was the first of three major burials dating to about 350 AD, a time of early contact with the central Mexican city of Teotihuacan, some 1200 kilometers distant. By 300 AD, Teotihuacan was a huge city that traded throughout Central America. "One question that has perplexed Maya archaeologists since the 1960s is whether a new political order was introduced to the Maya area by Mexicans from Teotihuacan," said Diane Z. Chase, archaeologist and senior vice president for academic affairs and Provost at the University of Houston. "Maya carved stone monuments, hieroglyphic dates, iconography, and archaeological data all suggest that widespread pan-Mesoamerican connections occurred after an event in 378 AD referred to as the 'entrada.'" "Whether this event represented actual Teotihuacanos in the Maya area or Maya using central Mexican symbols is still debated. The Caracol archaeological data suggests that the situation was far more complicated."

A cremation placed in the center of Caracol's Northeast Acropolis plaza, recovered in 2010 and placed after Te K'ab Chaak's burial has been dated to AD 350 by radiocarbon analysis and included artifacts from central Mexico. It contained the remains of three individuals, as well as two large knives, six atlatl points, and fifteen pristine blades of green obsidian from Pachuca, Mexico (north of Teotihuacan); several pottery vessels also likely came from central Mexico. Additionally, a carved atlatl projectile tip, atypical for the Maya but typical for a Teotihuacan warrior, was included in the cremation. The cremation itself and its placement in the center of a residential plaza are also more typical practices for a high-status Teotihuacano and do not accord with standard Maya burial practices. Based on other ceramics in this cremation, the main individual was likely a Caracol royal family member that had adopted central Mexican ritual practices. This individual may even have served as a royal Maya envoy who had lived at Teotihuacan and returned to Caracol.

A third burial—the tomb of a woman, also covered with hematite and containing four pottery vessels, a spondylus bead necklace, mirror fragments, and two Pacific spondylus shells—was recovered in the northern building of the same residential group in 2009 and is similarly dated.

The three burials interred in the Caracol Northeast Acropolis all cluster at AD 350, at least a generation before the previously recognized Teotihuacan presence in the Maya area. They demonstrate that early Maya rulers were fully enmeshed in Mesoamerican-wide contacts prior to the Teotihuacan entrada recorded on Maya monument[s]. "Both central Mexico and the Maya area were clearly aware of each other's ritual practices, as reflected in the Caracol cremation," said Arlen F. Chase, professor and chair of Comparative Cultural Studies at the University of Houston. "The connections between the two regions were undertaken by the highest levels of society, suggesting that initial kings at various Maya cities—such as Te K'ab Chaak at Caracol—were engaged in formal diplomatic relationships with Teotihuacan." The royal dynasty established by Te K'ab Chaak continued at Caracol for over 460 years.

The Chase's findings also indicate that ancient peoples in the new world were travelers. A trip between Teotihuacan and Caracol today by car would take over 23 hours. The one-way walking time may be estimated to be approximately 153 days.

Research continues on the contents of the chamber with the reconstruction of the jadeite death mask and with ancient DNA and stable isotope analysis of the skeletal material. The Chases will present results of the 2025 Caracol field season at a conference on Maya–Teotihuacan interaction hosted by the Maya Working Group at the Santa Fe Institute (New Mexico) in August 2025.

### ***EGYPT'S GREAT PYRAMID REAL BUILDERS REVEALED BY ANCIENT INSCRIPTIONS***

*By Michael D. Carrol and John O'Sullivan*

*July 3, 2025*

*From the Daily Express at <https://www.the-express.com/news/science/176427/egypt-s-great-pyramid-built-slaves-new-inscriptions-reveal>*



Archaeologists have made a groundbreaking revelation within Egypt's Great Pyramid, debunking the myth that slaves built the ancient edifice 4,500 years ago, according to MailOnline. The astonishing find by famed Egyptologist Dr. Zahi Hawass and his team indicates that the pyramid was not the work of 100,000 slaves as once suggested by Ancient Greek historians, but rather constructed by a workforce of skilled, compensated laborers under stringent oversight. "These findings confirm that the

builders were not slaves. If they had been, they would never have been buried in the shadow of the pyramids," Dr. Hawass stated on the Matt Beall Limitless podcast. "Slaves would not have prepared their tombs for eternity, like kings and queens did, inside these tombs."

The inscriptions were located in hard-to-reach areas, suggesting that only those with advanced knowledge could decipher them. "They were found in chambers that are difficult and dangerous to access, and they use writing styles that only trained Egyptologists can accurately interpret," Dr. Hawass said. "It's nearly impossible that someone in recent times could have forged something like this. You must climb about 45 feet and crawl through tight spaces to even reach those chambers."

The team's exploration south of the Great Pyramid unearthed more than just graffiti; they found the final resting places of the laborers who built the pyramid, complete with tools like flint instruments and pounding stones, and statues that immortalize the workers heaving huge stone blocks. Some tombs even bore titles such as "overseer of the side of the pyramid" and "craftsman."

Dr. Hawass has also shed light on the actual construction methods of the pyramid, revealing that the limestone was sourced a mere 1,000 feet away. The materials were transported using a system of ramps made from rubble and mud, traces of which were discovered southwest of the monument. "The ramp had to come from the southwest corner of the pyramid and connect to the quarry," Dr. Hawass explained. "We excavated this area, and in the site labeled C2, we found remnants of the ramp, stone rubble mixed with sand and mud. When the ramp was dismantled, they didn't remove every trace, and what was left behind is what we uncovered." The Great Pyramid of Giza, erected under Pharaoh Khufu during the Fourth Dynasty of the Old Kingdom, stands as the largest among the trio on the Giza Plateau and continues to be one of humanity's most astonishing architectural achievements. Despite its fame, many details of its construction have been enigmatic—until these recent discoveries.

"There's a popular myth that the workers ate only garlic, onions, and bread, but we found thousands of animal bones at the site," Dr. Hawass disclosed. "An expert from the University of Chicago analyzed them and found that the Egyptians slaughtered 11 cows and 33 goats every day to feed the laborers. This diet was enough to support around 10,000 workers per day."

Dr. Hawass is now gearing up for a new expedition, bankrolled by podcast host Matt Beall - marking the first time in modern history that a robot will be dispatched deep into the pyramid to unearth more of its mysteries.

From folklore to fact, these recent discoveries are dramatically reshaping our understanding of how the Great Pyramid was constructed - and by whom.

## ***ANCIENT DNA SUGGESTS ANCESTORS OF ESTONIANS, FINNS, AND HUNGARIANS LIVED IN SIBERIA 4,500 YEARS AGO***

*By Kristina Killgrove*

*July 27, 2025*

*From LiveScience at <https://www.livescience.com/archaeology/ancient-dna-suggests-ancestors-of-estonians-finns-and-hungarians-lived-in-siberia-4-500-years-ago>*



Present-day speakers of Hungarian, Finnish and Estonian have substantial Siberian ancestry, a new study of ancient genomes finds. These roots likely spread westward from a group of people living in the forest steppes of the Altai Mountains of Central and East Asia 4,500 years ago. Ancient DNA revealed that this group was patrilineal, or organized based on descent from fathers. However, while ancient DNA can show where a group moved over time, it's challenging to use genetics to track language. So experts have noted that the results do not

definitively prove a link between speakers of these languages and the ancient DNA pattern.

### *Migrating out of Siberia*

In a study published July 2 in the journal *Nature*, researchers analyzed 180 people who lived in northern Eurasia between the Mesolithic period and the Bronze Age (11,000 to 4,000 years ago). The team then added these individuals to a database of more than 1,300 previously analyzed ancient people, and then compared these genomes to those of modern people. One significant finding came from the genomes dating to the Late Neolithic to Early Bronze Age (4,500 to 3,200 years ago). They discovered that the geographical locations of ancient people with a DNA pattern they termed Yakutia\_LNBA were "unambiguously associated with ancient and present-day Uralic-speaking populations," the researchers wrote in the study.

Uralic languages are a group of more than 20 tongues spoken by millions of people, but the most prominent are Estonian, Finnish and Hungarian. Linguists have been interested in these three major Uralic languages because they are different from the Indo-European ones spoken in the countries around them. "Neighboring populations speaking Indo-European languages tend not to have Yakutia\_LNBA ancestry, or any other kind of East Asian

ancestry," study lead author Tian Chen Zeng, a graduate student in human evolutionary biology at Harvard University told Live Science in an email. "Yakutia\_LNBA ancestry is the only East Asian ancestry present in the genetic makeup of almost all present and ancient Uralic-speaking populations."

The researchers identified the Yakutia\_LNBA group in the bones of people who lived between 4,500 and 3,200 years ago in Siberia. They may have been part of the Ymyyakhtakh culture, an ancient culture in northeast Siberia that had ceramic technology, bronze objects and arrowheads made of stone and bone.

Archaeologists had previously found that Ymyyakhtakh pottery spread south to the forest steppes of the Altai-Sayan region near the intersection of modern-day Russia, Mongolia, Kazakhstan and China around 4,000 years ago. The researchers suggested the Yakutia\_LNBA DNA pattern may therefore be tied to prehistoric Uralic-speaking cultures.

"A straightforward interpretation of this is that Yakutia\_LNBA ancestry dispersed from East to West alongside the Uralic languages," Zeng said. "We show that Yakutia\_LNBA may serve as an excellent tracer dye for the spread of early Uralic-speaking communities," the researchers noted in the study. The scientists also found that this group, which eventually spread westward, may have been organized by patrilineal descent, based on Y chromosome patterns in the ancient DNA.

#### *The challenges of tracking languages*

But the association between genetics and language is complicated to prove, particularly in the past. "One's genetic make-up offers no insight into the range of languages one might speak, nor which of these one considers their primary language," Catherine Frieman, an archaeologist at Australian National University who was not involved in the study, told Live Science in an email. Because people communicate in complex ways, "I think we need to consider how multilingualism, including across language families, may have shaped or affected language spread and change," Frieman said.

While the researchers do not address multilingualism in their study, Zeng said that "it is extremely likely that ancient populations were multilingual." However, he said, "extensive language change would have likely involved migration — or at the very least the integration of a substantial fraction of linguistic newcomers into populations across a region — to a level that is likely to leave some genetic impact." But Frieman cautions that we need to be careful not to equate a genetic cluster to a specific language or family, particularly when thinking about how past people lived their lives.

Although the study presents "an interesting and welcome focus on [ancient] DNA from eastern Eurasia," Frieman said, "this particular manuscript was largely designed to answer questions about population genomics," not language, Frieman said.

## **SWFAS OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR 2026**

### **Officers**

President: John Furey  
First Vice-President: *open*  
Second Vice-President: *open*  
Treasurer: Charlie Strader  
Secretary: Susan Harrington  
Editor: John Furey  
Craighead Lab Director: Susan Harrington

### **Directors**

First of 3-year term:  
*open*  
Second of 3-year term  
Dr. Tiffany Bannworth  
Amanda Townsend  
Third of 3-year term:  
Theresa Schober (Chapter Rep.)  
Mary Southall

***Find us on Facebook at Southwest Florida Archaeological Society!***

***Check out our website at <http://swflarchaeology.org/>***

## **SWFAS AND FAS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS**

We encourage those interested in Florida archaeology to become members of The Florida Anthropological Society (FAS) and The Southwest Florida Archaeological Society (SWFAS). Annual dues are due in January and membership applications to both organizations are attached. Membership in the FAS provides you with four annual volumes of *The Florida Anthropologist* and occasional newsletters on anthropological events in Florida in addition to the annual statewide meeting. More information on FAS can be found online at: [www.fasweb.org](http://www.fasweb.org). Membership in SWFAS offers you a local series of talks on archaeological and anthropological subjects that you can attend. The SWFAS monthly newsletter keeps you up to date on local events as well as other important archaeological topics. We urge you to support both with your membership. The SWFAS Lecture Series is open to all members of the public at no charge.



# JOIN US!

## The Southwest Florida Archaeological Society

<http://swflarchaeology.org/>

The Southwest Florida Archaeological Society (SWFAS) was founded in 1980 as a not-for profit corporation to provide a meeting place for people interested in the area's past.

Our goals are to:

- Learn more of the area's history
- Create a place for sharing of this information
- Advocate for preservation of cultural resources

Its members include professional and amateur archaeologists and interested members of the general public. Members come from all walks of life and age groups. They share a lively curiosity, a respect for the people who preceded them here, and a feeling of responsibility for the conservation of the places and objects they left behind.

The Society holds monthly meetings between October and April, attracting speakers who are in the forefront of archaeological and historical research. Occasionally members join in trips to historical and archaeological sites.

A monthly newsletter, Facebook page, and website keep members abreast of our events and happenings.

The organization is a chapter of the Florida Anthropological Society, a statewide organization that publishes quarterly newsletters and a journal, *The Florida Anthropologist*, and holds an annual conference.

**I want to help The Southwest Florida Archaeology Society preserve and interpret Florida's heritage!**

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Check One:

Individual (\$20) \_\_\_\_\_ Sustaining Individual (\$50) \_\_\_\_\_ Family (\$35) \_\_\_\_\_

Student (\$5) \_\_\_\_\_ Life (\$500) \_\_\_\_\_

Donation to Support SWFAS Speakers and Programs \_\_\_\_\_

Skills, training, interests: \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby agree to abide by the rules and bylaws of the Southwest Archaeological Society. I further release from any and all liability due to accident and injury to myself, dependents and any property owners cooperating with the society.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check out to SWFAS and mail to:

Charlie Strader  
SWFAS Treasurer  
27655 Kent Road  
Bonita Springs, FL 34135

REV. 12052017

# FAS Membership Categories

Membership in the Society is open to all interested individuals who are willing to abide by the Florida Anthropological Society Statement of Ethical Responsibilities, which can be found on our website [fasweb.org](http://fasweb.org). *Membership is for one year.* SELECT LEVEL BELOW.

<input type="checkbox"/> Student*	\$20	<input type="checkbox"/> Institutional	\$50
<input type="checkbox"/> Regular	\$40	<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$45		

\*Student membership is open to graduate, undergraduate and high school students. A photocopy of your student ID must accompany payment. \*\*Add \$25 for foreign addresses.

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Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ FAS Chapter: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please choose how you wish to receive the quarterly journal, *The Florida Anthropologist*.**

Digital Only (via a password protected web link) Note: Student members only receive digital access.

Both Digital and Printed

**This is a Gift Membership from:** \_\_\_\_\_

In addition to this Membership, I also wish to make a donation to:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Dot Moore/FAS Student Grant Fund      \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Florida Archaeology Month Account

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Florida Anthropologist Monograph Fund      \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Florida Anthropologist Endowment Fund

**Total Enclosed: \$** \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to abide by the Code of Ethics of the Florida Anthropological Society.

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Signature

Date

**Send Membership Form and Dues Payment to:**

**Florida Anthropological Society, P O Box 1561 Boynton Beach, FL 33425**

*You can join online or pay Membership dues renewals via PayPal on our website [fasweb.org](http://fasweb.org).*

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