



WMS/LSS ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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A 501(c)3 Corporation and Chapter of the Florida Anthropological Society

The Warm Mineral Springs/Little Salt Spring Archaeological Society meets the second Tuesday of the month (except June through August) at 7:00 PM, North Port Community United Church of Christ, located at 3450 S. Biscayne Blvd. Meetings are free and open to the public.

**THE SNAKE ISLAND SITE IN SARASOTA COUNTY TOPIC OF
MAY 10 MEETING**

Archaeologist Steve Koski will be the speaker at the May 10 meeting of the WMS/LSSAS. His topic: "Snake Island, a Story of Time, Place, Context, and Change." He will discuss more than 20 years of involvement in the discovery, research, and protection of the Snake Island Site, a late Manasota/Weeden Island and Safety Harbor Period site (c. 600–1500 CE [Common Era, think AD]) located in Sarasota County.

The Snake Island Site was discovered eroding from the shore of a spoil island located near the mouth of the Venice Inlet in 1994 during a visit to the island. There, a shell deposit was observed eroding from the southwest shore. Over time, ceramics, shell tools, and an abundance of sea-turtle bones and other faunal materials were discovered eroding from the surface of the shell deposit and sandy beach slope in an exceptional site of preservation. The site was recorded, the state and owners were informed of the discovery, and intermittent salvage collections were undertaken with permission from the West Coast Inland Navigation District, the owners of the island.

Background research indicated that the island was once connected to the mainland as a low tidal marsh. The marsh was cut

from the mainland in 1907 during the initial dredging of the Intracoastal Waterway and used as a spoil site for dredged materials. It was bisected again in the early 1960s during an Intra-coastal Waterway realignment and widening project.

Over time, the spoil site began to erode to reveal what lay beneath it. Below the marsh mud covered with spoil lay a coastal shell midden, apparently inundated by rising sea level.

In 2000, Koski served as Project Archaeologist for New South Associates on a Phase I archaeological study of Snake Island and other Intracoastal Waterway islands as part of the Sarasota Bay Restoration Project, funded by the Army Corp of Engineers for the West Coast Inland Navigation District. In late 2013 and early 2014, he served as Project Archaeologist during the Snake Island Stabilization Project for LG² Environmental Solutions on a monitoring and documentation project funded by the West Coast Inland Navigation District conducted to protect the site. Studies resulting from these projects gave further insight into the sites' occupation and utilization, resulting in two comprehensive site reports.

Snake Island is a story involving coastal habitation, discovery, long-term observations, research and interpretation, sea-level rise, erosion, loss of significant cultural resources, and stabilization and protection of the site.

Steve Koski is an archaeologist specializing in underwater prehistoric sites. He received his B.A. in Anthropology and Archaeology from the University of Massachusetts, Boston, and completed graduate studies in an M.A. program at Arizona State University. His research interests include the prehistory of Florida, coastal adaptations, and settlement and subsistence strategies through time. He is currently the part-time interim Sarasota County Archaeologist and continues to serve as part-time Site Manager at Little Salt Spring for the University of Miami.

Come to the May 10 meeting and learn about this significant and interesting site, considered eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.



Koski snorkeling at Snake Island c. 2000

MAIZE DEITY AND PAN AMERICAN CONNECTIONS TOPIC OF APRIL MEETING

Judi and John Crescenzo

On April 12, 2016, Sandra Starr presented “The Pre-Columbian Maize Deity: Art-Historic Evidence for a Yucatán–Florida–Caribbean Connection.” Ms. Starr recently completed ten years as a Senior Researcher at the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC. As Starr Research, she continues to complete research for various exhibitions, collections, programs, and publications. She plans to soon publish her 13 years of research across the Western Hemisphere.

Starr discovered a gold figure, which she named the “maize man,” in a book at the University of Florida. This led her to follow the image, which may represent an overall god from many areas, including Peru, Bolivia, Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean. The image has appeared in the art of many cultures involving agriculture and corn. Its repeated presence over distances raises the question of how the Maya may have navigated large bodies of water.

Following the “maize man” has led her around the Gulf of Mexico to South America. Pieces from the Sacred Cenote of Chichen Itza, located in the Yucatán, Mexico, are on display at the Peabody Museum. Images of the corn deity have been found in both Wakulla County, Florida, and the Pre-Columbian art of Costa Rica. The Oculate Being of Paracas on the southern coast of Peru (700 BD – 100 CE looks like a man flying with arms outstretched. He holds in his hands objects that resemble cross-sections from ears of corn.

The same dotted patterns also appear on the northern coast of Peru, where the figure is called Naymlap. He is depicted with one large eyebrow attached to a beak-like nose. In Lambayeque, Peru (100–1450 CE), the figure is credited with helping to organize civilization. He is associated with corn, and stories tell of his arrival by raft and departure by either flying off or floating away on a raft.

In Columbia and Central America (100–1300 CE), the same figure is shown with a few variations. Here he has a nose ring and flies with corn in his hands. Moving along, the figure is repeated in Mexican culture as Quetzalcoatl, who arrived on a raft with corn. He wears the same headdress as shown on a pyramid in Teotihuacan. Mission people told of a harvest dance that used a dotted pattern. Things and ideas were brought along with travelers, who cared about this deity, whom they believed would someday return. The Aztec agricultural calendar in stone shows a similarity to the gold discs of Western Mexico.

In the Yucatán, within Maya culture, the figure is called Kulkulkan, who arrived on a raft (200–1000 CE).



March speaker, Smithsonian researcher Sandra Starr, explains her information dispersion theory. (Sandra also received our world famous Tee-shirt, but unfortunately the photo did not come out).

Because the Yucatán was experiencing serious drought, the people maybe followed him by sailing away from Quintana Roo and heading toward Miami around 1200–1400 CE. These early mariners would have had to navigate dangerous waters, but if they understood the Gulf Loop currents that occur each March 25th, they could have had safe passage to Florida.

The corn-deity figures are also found on some pieces in the Dominican Republic and among the Taino of Cuba (1600–1200 CE), where they are depicted on pottery. The same image of a cross-section of an ear of corn is always associated with the agriculture/maize deity in each culture. In more recent times, Mistippee (1785–1862), son of Creek Chief Yoholo Micco, has been depicted with tattoos resembling the dotted corn image on his face.

The maize deity spread and was welcomed in the Caribbean, making a clear connection between dates and locations, which will be published in Starr’s upcoming book. We look forward to reading it and hearing more about this interesting and controversial research regarding Pan American cultural associations of the corn deity and implications for long-distance exchange, concepts, and subsistence represented through art and iconography.

FORT CENTER SITE TOPIC OF MARCH PRESENTATION

Judi and John Crescenzo

On March 8, 2016, archaeologist Rachael Kangas presented “Lend Me Your Ears: Questions of Maize Farming at Fort Center.” Kangas earned her M.A. and Maya Studies Certificate from the University of Central Florida. She is the Public Archaeology Coordinator for the Southwest Region of the Florida Public Archaeology Network, where she promotes outreach and public-archaeology programs.

Kangas’ presentation focused on Fort Center and the Woodland Period in Florida 3,000–1,000 years ago. The movement of artifacts and the ideas they represent, along with what makes a place important, were major themes of her talk. During the Archaic and Woodland Periods in Florida, long-distance trade occurred, which is proven by the presence of whelk shells from the Gulf appearing in Wisconsin. Galena and quartz crystals in Florida were also imported from the North. Trade items used for ceremonies and rituals have been found in contexts like burials and mound complexes. Because certain items were expensive and hard to get, they held special meaning, like wedding rings today.

In the Woodland Period, ceremonial and ritual items also held a sense of place. A place is considered important because of where it is and what people can get there (such as food). A modern example would be our national parks. The history of a place (such as World War II sites) and what has been built there (such as pyramids) create the importance of a place.

According to research by Thompson and Pluckhahn in 2012, Fort Center (near Okeechobee and Fisheating Creek) has a large mound complex. Numerous mounds, ditches, and earthworks give the area importance as a place. This site was used 2,000 years ago. It was continually under construction; mounds changed and more were built. This area was probably a hub for information when people moved across Florida, taking items and ideas with them.

The Great Circle and Charnel Pond at Fort Center have been the major focus for researchers. William Sears performed early research on the sites in 1982. Seeds found in the lower level of the Great Circle led him to conclude that maize was grown on the center, with surrounding ditches for irrigation and drainage. The Charnel Pond is an important place because of 300 burials there; 150 were within the pond. Burials include life-size bird totems that may have been used in preparation for burials. Mounds A and B, with ponds, may be



April speaker Rachael Kangas received our world famous tee-shirt

where bodies were prepared for burial and left on a platform on the mound.

According to Sears, Period 1 covered 1000 BCE – 200 CE, when sand- and fiber-tempered pots were made by small groups who grew maize in ditches. During Period 2, sand-tempered pots were created. Sears found burnt posts and birds at the site and concluded that that bird totems were put on a deck in the pond, which burned down. During Period 3, from 600–1200 CE, Belle Glade Plain pottery was made at the site. In Period 4, from 1200–700 CE, the construction of linear earthworks occurred. West Coast and European artifacts were found in some graves. It is probable that gold from Spanish shipwrecks was melted down and re-formed.

Controversy arose with the discovery of maize at the site. In 1982, Sears first discovered evidence of maize agriculture, indicating contact with South America. In 1994, Milanich stated that maize was not a staple for everyone but was eaten only by the elite. In 2013, Thompson and others argued for the idea of historic-period maize, saying that Sears did not support his claims. However, Seminole maize pollen was found, proving that maize existed that far back. Thompson argued that layers of earth were mixed up, confusing the finds.

The beginning of farming in Florida is important to learning when humans came here. Early theories had a clear formula for complex cultures, like the Woodland Period. But if South Florida had a complex culture without farming, the idea of complexity must be reconsidered. Current evidence raises questions. Could a culture become complex without farming? Why didn't people farm—did they have no need? Did they resist this knowledge? Did long-distance trade exist without control of food resources in Florida? How did this society become complex without control of food? So far, there are no answers to these questions, and farming is not seen in south Florida before the Seminoles. Today we have moved beyond the idea of farming as a necessity in complex society, the coastal Calua serve as an example. Ideas change along with evidence provided.

The Great Circle built after 700 BCE began as a refuse pile. It was occupied through all of Fort Center's history, continuing to change and expand. The Charnel Pond Complex is now dated at 700 BCE, the same time that the manmade pond and two mounds were built. Stone points that appear to be Archaic were found in Mound B. Some had worn edges, and some were not resharpened. Because knappable stone was only available in central to northern Florida, why were usable stones discarded? Perhaps this was a religious place where the people were so important that they were willing to break tools even when the materials were only available at a distance.

Mound A contains rare stones, also brought in from a distance, which were used to create the totems.

New mounds were built, showing an increase in trade and belief

systems during the Woodland Period. At Fort Center, complexity began with 2,000 years of trading items from the coast and beyond.

We thank Rachael for her interesting and comprehensive presentation, and hope to plan a field trip to Fort Center in the fall of 2016.

2016 FAS ANNUAL MEETING MAY 19–22

The 68th Annual Meeting of the Florida Anthropological Society will be held in Jupiter, Florida, May 19–22, 2016. Palm Beach County Archaeological Society is proud to host the meeting at the Wyndham Grand Harbourside, which overlooks the scenic Intracoastal Waterway. Guests of the FAS conference will enjoy a deeply discounted rate of \$139 per room, a stellar deal for accommodations in this 5-star hotel. To secure the special room rate, you must register by April 15th.

Accommodations include complimentary parking and Wi-Fi access. For reservations, call (561)273-6600 and indicate that you are booking for The Florida Anthropological Society or Palm Beach County Archaeological Society.

Friday Evening Reception: The reception will take place in Dubois Park, one of the largest remaining aboriginal shell mounds on the Atlantic seaboard. Recent excavations at the multi-component National Register Historic Site yielded the rare Spanish Faceted Chevron trade beads, which have been recovered from fewer than ten New World archaeological sites! Atop the mound is the recently restored Dubois Pioneer home (below). Guided tours of the site and pioneer home will be ongoing while guests imbibe wine and hors d'oeuvres.

Saturday Conference Paper Presentations will be held at the elegant Wyndham Grand Harbourside Hotel in the heart of Jupiter's bustling waterfront district.

Saturday Evening Banquet: Jupiter, Florida, is nationally renowned for its colorful history and rich cultural heritage, symbolized by the iconic Jupiter Lighthouse. Guests of the FAS conference will enjoy a rare opportunity to dine "under the stars," with the iconic Jupiter Lighthouse as the centerpiece for the affair. While we dine, the lighthouse will be illuminated, lending a unique romance to the traditional FAS celebration. Guests at the banquet will enjoy a three-course gourmet Italian meal, served buffet style, as well as beer, wine, and host chapter PBCAS's special libation, "Pirate's Rum Punch"! This year's banquet offers casual elegance at an affordable \$40 per person.

Keynote Speaker: Join Palm Beach County Archaeologist and Historic Preservation Officer Christian Davenport in a discussion on the archaeology of Palm Beach County and southeast Florida in general.

On Sunday, attendees will have a variety of unique guided tours hosted by area archaeologists and specialists. All tours will meet in the hotel lobby, at 9:00 AM and receive map directions to the tour location from the conference hotel.

A number of student-grant and prize opportunities will be available. The Warm Mineral Springs/Little Salt Spring Archaeological Society is pleased to offer two \$200 supplemental-travel grants to eligible students who present a paper or poster at the FAS 2016 Annual Meeting. The grant can be used for expenses pertaining to the meeting (including hotel, registration, and travel expenses). Students enrolled full-time in an undergraduate or graduate program and first-time FAS presenters are eligible and invited to apply. One is still available for consideration. Send a letter of request for an FAS 2016 Travel Grant with your paper or poster abstract, copy of current student ID, and proof of registration to Jodi Johnson at jodijohnsonrossi@gmail.com.

For more information on the 68th FAS Annual Meeting, registration, call for papers, hotel reservations, events, available student-research and travel grants, student-prize competition, Sunday field trips, and more, go to FASweb.org.

ARCHAEOLOGY WORKS — LITTLE SALT SPRING RETURNS JUNE 18!

Due to the success of June 2015 Archaeology Works – Little Salt Spring, a second is being planned for June 18, 2016, again to be held at the Morgan Center in North Port from 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM (see Sept/Oct 2015 WMS/LSSAS Newsletter).

More than 120 students, parents, and members of the general public came to the event in 2015, which provided a number of interactive and educational activities. Prehistoric food plants, shell-tool display, lithic-production demonstrations, atlatl mammoth hunt, Little Salt Spring artifact-photo display, archaeology information, LSS-profile selfie poster, and more. In addition, all students will receive the LSS Archaeology Activity Booklet, which was distributed to all who attended last year’s event.

The event is sponsored by the Florida Public Archaeology Network, Friends of Little Salt Spring, and the Warm Mineral Springs/Little Salt Spring Archaeological Society.

ARCHAEOLOGY DAY AT PHILLIPPI ESTATE PARK JUNE 25

Back by popular request, another Archaeology Day will be held at Phillippi Estate Park on June 25, 2016, from 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM. The event follows the archaeological excavations that were conducted January 4 and 5, 2016, when four 50x 50 cm excavation units were dug in the Prodie Site, a Manasota Period archaeological site located on the shore of Phillippi Creek. While no additional excavation will be conducted, several activities will be organized during the two-hour event to be held both inside the air-conditioned Edson Keith Mansion and outside on the Estate grounds. To name a few, the sorting and cataloging of the shell specimens and artifacts recovered during the January excavation will be conducted; a display of artifacts from the Manasota Period found at other sites in Sarasota and Manatee Counties; a display of pottery and artifact reproductions, atlatl hunting demonstrations, site tours, and more.

Staff from the Public Archaeology Network; New College of Florida; Sarasota County Historical Resources; and Parks, Recreation, and Natural Lands will be there to participate.

The event will be designed for student participation, but will be educational to all who attend. Come check out this premier Sarasota County historical and archaeological site on June 25!

WELCOME NEW 2016 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Elections were held at our March meeting and we welcome new Vice President Linda Elligott, Senior Environmental Specialist with Adams & Nichols Ecological Consulting, and new Board Members Rita Bass, Judi Bauer, Jack Bauer, and returning Board Member and past Vice President Judith Ribarick. Warm thanks and gratitude go to outgoing Vice President Jodi Johnson, who moved to Indianapolis for a university position as an international-student recruiter with her husband Paul, and past Board Members Rita Buchanan, Keith Buchanan, Sandra Heacock, Tina Docter, and Roger Hostetter. You

have provided an invaluable service to the Society and we greatly appreciate your service. We hope to still see you at meetings and events!

PAST WMS/LSSAS PRESIDENT MAKES A SURPRISE VISIT

We had surprise guest appearance at our April 30 board meeting when past WMS/SSAS President George Haag attended. George was president from 2003 to 2013 and helped guide us to the vibrant organization we are today. Great to see you, George, and thanks for stopping by. Our best to you for a pleasant retirement in Colorado!



Past President George Haag (second from right) joined several board members and guest for lunch at Alvaro’ Family Restaurant after the board meeting April 30. Left row, Judy Bauer, Hilda Boron, Al Hazelett, Kate Cattran; right row, Jack Bauer, George Haag, Ann Hanson, Judith Ribarick, Lorraine Hawkins .

2016 OFFICERS

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