



WMS/LSS ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Vol. 30, No. 3, May/June 2019

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, July and August) at 7:00 pm. General meetings are held at the North Port Community United Church, located at 3450 S. Biscayne Blvd. The March dinner prior to the meeting will be held at the Rice House, 14287 Tamiami Tr., North Port, at 5:00 pm. Meetings are free and open to the public.

**BIOARCHAEOLOGY OF MEDIEVAL MONASTICISM
TOPIC OF MAY 14 MEETING**

We will welcome FGCU visiting professor, forensic anthropologist Xenia Paula Kyriakou, to our May meeting, who will present a program on one of her research projects titled "Bioarchaeology of Monasticism: the Unruly Nuns of Cyprus."

The presentation will cover the discovery of the human remains from the St. Theodore nunnery in Cyprus and contextualize the findings of the skeletal analysis within the socio-cultural context of medieval monasticism.

Xenia Paula Kyriakou is a Greek-Cypriot forensic anthropologist and bioarchaeologist. She studied at the University of Malta for her undergraduate degree and continued her graduate education and professional development at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland.



Bioarchaeologist Xenia Paula Kyriakou

She is currently a visiting instructor at Florida Gulf Coast University and is soon to complete her PhD at the University of Warsaw, Poland.

Xenia has worked in many countries both as a forensic expert dealing with the repatriation of those missing in armed conflict and as the bioarchaeologist on many archaeologist projects.

As a bioarchaeologist, Xenia has engaged in the study of different ancient and historic populations. She is currently working on a research project that addresses behavior and lifestyle within monastic and religious settings of Medieval Europe.

We are very fortunate to have met Xenia, who came to our January 2019 meeting with FGCU colleague Dr. Heather Walsh Haney for her presentation on "The Science and Art of Reading Bones." Someone had the foresight to ask Xenia to return to speak. And she enthusiastically accepted. SO, let's welcome her to our May meeting. Hope you can make it!

HAVE A WONDERFUL SUMMER!

We begin our June–August summer hiatus this month, as May will be our last meeting until September 10! Even more reason to join us in May. The speaker committee is working on our fall/winter program and has several outstanding presentations lined up, including:

September 10, 2019: Physical anthropologist Gene Dole will discuss his time in the Afar Desert in Ethiopia in 1973–1974 with an International Research Expedition that found our closest hominid ancestor, Lucy.

October 8, 2019: Dr. Charles Cobb, Historic Archaeologist, FL Museum of Natural History, will discuss "DeSoto's Contact

Sites and Spanish Missions in Southwest Florida.”

November 12, 2019: Dr. Anna Dixon, University of South Florida, St. Petersburg Campus, will discuss “Tattooing by American Indians.”

Off to a great start thanks to Kathy Gerace for her early diligence on contacting potential speakers! Details on the speakers will be provided in the September/October and November/December WMS/LSSAS newsletters.

ARCHAIC AND MANASOTA PERIOD POPULATIONS TOPIC OF OUR APRIL 9 MEETING

By Judi and John Crescenzo

On April 9, bioarchaeologist/forensic archaeologist Maranda Kles presented “Florida’s Archaic and Manasota Period Populations: Distant Cousins or Unrelated Neighbors?” The Archaic is a general term used to describe populations of Native Americans in Florida and other parts of the Southeastern United States from about 9,500 to about 2,500 years ago and divided into early, middle, and late Archaic. The Manasota Period is a regional, central-west Florida cultural expression of the Woodland period dating from about 500 BC to AD 700.

During her presentation, Dr. Kles mentioned the recently discovered Middle Archaic Manasota Key Offshore Site dating to more than 7,000 years ago, which was brought to the attention of the state by a local fossil hunter who found human remains while looking for sharks’ teeth in 22 feet of water more than 300 yards off shore.

She discussed sites with similar practices like Little Salt Spring in Sarasota County, Republic Groves in Hardee County, Windover in Brevard County, Bay West in Collier County, Gauthier site in Brevard County, and Bird Island. She also included Warm Mineral Springs, an earlier Late Paleoindian site where human remains were found on the 45’ ledge that were more than 10,000 years old.

The 45-foot cavernous ledge at WMS, where Paleoindian remains have been discovered, may have been above the water level of the spring 10,000 years ago. Little is known about burial practices at that early time because so few have been found. The later part of the late Early Archaic and much of the Middle Archaic people from 6,000–8,000 years ago buried their dead in wetland environs, such as springs, marshes, and ponds. Why? It can only be speculated upon as there is no population that continued the practice into historic times.

Using craniometry, the science of measuring craniums, Dr. Kles was able to compare characteristics of individuals from within and between several sites. Using Biological Distance Analysis, she was able to determine similarities and differences that could have culturally relevant meaning, indicating an indirect measure of social exchange. Cranium sizes, which are partly determined by DNA, were compared at various sites.

The sites mentioned above shared underwater burial methods over a long period of time, but research indicates they may not have been closely related. Previous research shows that WMS and Bird Island are distinct groups, but Windover, LSS, Bay West, and Gauthier overlap. Republic Groves is an unusual site and does not appear to be related to the others.



Bioarchaeologist Maranda Kles received our world famous tee-shirt from Steve Koski, and was she delighted!

She compared earlier underwater Archaic period sites with later period sites, like the upland Manasota Key Site, dating to around AD 200, and others.

In the near future we hope to publish excerpts from her research to communicate an understanding of her findings as presented.

We thank Dr. Kles for sharing her research with us. She indicated she had another presentation on the Palmer Mound at Historic Spanish Point that she would be happy to share with us, so we are making plans to have her back in 2020!

NEW DISCOVERIES OF THE EVERGLADES LANDSCAPE BY BOB CARR DRAWS CROWD AT THE MARCH MEETING

Notable Florida archaeologist Bob Carr offered a presentation on some of his latest research at our March meeting with a program titled “New Discoveries of the Everglades Landscape: Lost Creeks and Prehistoric Sites.”

Archaeological testing of agricultural fields in the eastern Everglades has resulted in the discovery of creeks and prehistoric sites buried beneath the muck. This creek system had been previously unknown and was undetected during earlier assessments. Aerial photographs taken during and after sugarcane cultivation revealed the ancient creek system and resulted in the discovery of a 2,000–3,000-year-old prehistoric midden (8PB17113) and cemetery (8PB17114). This evidence revealed an environment that existed before the Everglades ecosystem formed and persisted into historic times prior to the draining of the Everglades for agriculture resulting in an ecological disaster.

At one site the fossil bones of a mammoth were also discovered, indicating the pre-glades ecosystem supported Pleistocene megafauna. Truly fascinating. Such discoveries have implications for our understanding of settlement in the Everglades and predictive modeling for locating other sites along these creek systems.

Thanks go to Bob for sharing aspects of his fascinating research, and we look forward to a copy of his latest report.



WMS/LSSAS Vice President Kathy Gerace offers our world-famous tee-shirt to Archaeologist Bob Carr at our March meeting.



The Three Graces Fountain. (Look closely at the six gently cascading sculpted leaves.)

CHARLOTTE COUNTY ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Charlotte Harbor Anthropological Society will hold its next meeting May 23 at 6:30 at the Wintergarden Presbyterian Church, 18305 Wintergarden Ave., Port Charlotte FL. Local archaeologist Steve Koski will present “Warm Mineral Springs and Little Salt Spring: Late Pleistocene/Early Holocene Human Occupation at a Time of Environmental Change.”

For more information call 732-740-5055. Visit their new website at: <https://charlotteharboras.org/>.

2019 ANNUAL FAS MEETING AT CRYSTAL RIVER MAY 10–12

Several members attended the 2019 FAS Annual Conference held at Crystal River May 10–12 (see March/April newsletter). Proceedings will be outlined in the 2019 September/October WMS/LSSAS Newsletter.

THREE GRACES FOUNTAIN FLOWS AGAIN!

After more than 30 years, the Three Graces Fountain on US 41 and Ortiz Blvd. flows again thanks to a local grassroots effort, coordinating support from the Sarasota County Historical Resource, a financial commitment from the Board of County Commissioners, and enthusiastic support from the City of North Port. The sculpture/fountain was designed and crafted by Sophie Johnstone in 1958 and served as a welcoming gateway to Warm Mineral Springs. WMS was, and still is, promoted as “The original Fountain of Youth,” reportedly sought after by Ponce de Leon in 1513. While there is no direct historic evidence that de Leon was actually looking for such youthful waters, no one who frequents the spring will refute its therapeutic properties. It is also a great promotional story for the commercial spa, as demonstrated by the story of the Ponce de Leon that once played daily beginning in 1960 until the early 1990s at 1:00 PM. I recall the manager Helen would announce over the barely legible raspy speaker, “The Cyclorama will start in 10 minutes.” The next phase is the restoration of the sculpture itself.

WARM MINERAL SPRINGS NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION MOVES FORWARD TO THE STATE, THEN WASHINGTON

The Warm Mineral Springs historic buildings are being nominated for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. As discussed by local historical researcher Bill Goetz in his 2016 article that appeared in *North Port Magazine*, “Jack West designed the facilities to be built at Warm Mineral Springs to gear up for the [1959] Quadricentennial Celebration. The Cyclorama was the top billing and was narrated by midcentury radio legend Lowell Thomas.” While considered out of date and ethnocentric by today’s standards, the historic narrative must be taken in its midcentury context. Warm Mineral Springs has operated as a commercial spa since 1959, but residents from Sarasota and surrounding counties have been visiting the spring since the early 1900’s.

The Spring itself was included on the National Register in 1977 for its Paleoindian archaeological significance. The current nomination now includes the buildings on the property. The Three Graces Fountain could be added as a contributing resource to its significance at a later date. The site is also eligible as a National Historic Landmark, and potentially, as a Traditional Cultural Property for its devoted Eastern European population, who have been continually visiting the spring for more than 50 years. And to think there was once talk of leveling the buildings.



One of the several dioramas and murals at the WMS Cyclorama (Photo by Bill Goetz).

Thank you, North Port Commissioners, for recognizing its historic value and proceeding to nominate the buildings and rehabilitate them. And to the preservation-minded community who influenced and supported their efforts!



Ponce arrives at WMS April 12, 1513

Living proof Juan Ponce de Leon visited WMS (second from front)

NEWSLETTER EDITOR TO RETIRE IN 2020

By Steve Koski

Do you have some computer skills in typing, editing, graphic design, formatting and organizing articles? Do you like to write about interesting historic and archaeological subjects, and have a little extra time on your hands? Then Editor of the WMS/LSSAS Newsletter might be just the job for you.

After 28 years and 140 newsletters, I am backing off in 2019 and retiring after the November-December newsletter. I'll stay on to assist for a couple issues, and still contribute, but we need new blood. Through all these years, since the very first one after I took over, my proofreader Valerie Grey has been a part of almost every issue and has been a tremendous help. And she is willing to continue to assist with proofreading, layout design, computer formatting, etc.

The newsletter has had basically the same template and format for more than 15 years, and very similar the last 28 years. I recall printing, cutting out photographs and pasting them in blank spaces, and printing on perforated printer paper typed in Word Perfect. I loved that program. ("Didn't we all!" chimes in Valerie.)

While I have found the newsletter extremely rewarding, I have other important writings to finish before I hang up the trowel. I hope to still be involved on some level providing some articles and photos, and plan to stay on the Board for a couple years. But the time has come. So please let me know if you are interested. Send me an email at skoski1044@aol.com (since 1993). Thank you!

2019 OFFICERS

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Warm Mineral Springs / Little Salt Spring Archaeological Society

P. O. Box 7797, North Port, Florida 34290
wmslss.org

