



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-August) at 7:00 PM, at the North Port Community United Church of Christ located at 3450 Biscayne Blvd. Meetings are free and open to the public.

**WARM MINERAL SPRINGS AND LITTLE SALT SPRING
HISTORIC TRAIL AND ANCIENT WATERS MUSEUM
TOPIC OF NOVEMBER MEETING**

Back by popular demand with a new twist, State College of Florida student Bill Goetz returns November 13 to discuss his concept for a Warm Mineral Springs/Little Salt Spring Historic Trail. Bill first revealed the concept at the general meeting of the Friends of Little Salt Spring October 16, and a motion to support his efforts was passed by unanimous agreement. To share his ideas, we decided to have him present his developing concept to our members and guests in November. See *WMS* p. 2)



Bill Goetz in front of the 1958 Three Graces Fountain sculpture on US 41 and Ortiz

**ARCHAEOLOGY OF LEMON BAY TOPIC OF
DECEMBER 11 MEETING**

Local archaeologist Dr. George Luer will be our speaker at the December 11 general meeting. His topic, "Archaeology of Lemon Bay," will focus on four of many sites located along the bay: Cedar Point, Indian Mound Park, Manasota Key Cemetery, and the Englewood Mound. George presented the topic at the 25th Anniversary Celebration at Cedar Point November 3, which was a pleasant event, with live music, games for the children, and a great lunch. WMS/LSSAS member Helen Gardner



Dr. George Luer covers a profile at Big Mound Key after examination

cornered George after the presentation and asked him to speak, and he agreed. She was at the right place at the right time. Sometimes that's what it takes. Thanks, Helen, you saved the day!

Dr. Luer has a long history in Florida archaeology and is well published in the Florida Anthropologist. He grew up on an Indian mound on Sarasota Bay. He has worked on sites throughout southwest Florida for more than 30 years and is considered an expert in his field. He was awarded an M.A degree in Anthropology in 1997 and PhD. in 2007 from the University of Florida. His dissertation was based on his field work on Big Mound Key, conducted in 1982 and focusing on zooarchaeology, depositional processes, post contact-period metal artifacts, and canoe canals; with secondary studies in geography focused on coastal geomorphology and hydrology, especially as they can help interpret archaeology.

WMS cont from p. 1.

The proposal for a Warm Mineral Springs and Little Salt Spring revitalization and preservation project is a package of individual projects including a Warm Mineral Springs Historic Trail down Ortiz Blvd. with historic markers and a much needed sidewalk. The trail would highlight a Warm Mineral Springs Historic District, a plethora of the Mid-Century Modern Sarasota School of Architecture buildings. It would start at Sophie Johnstone's 1958 sculpture, "Three Graces Fountain," and Victor Lundy's, "architectural palms design" at the Warm Mineral Springs Motel.

About halfway down the mile-long Ortiz Blvd. is a beautiful example of a mid-century Sarasota School of Architecture-inspired building that would make a wonderful Sarasota County Museum. It currently lies vacant and in need of repairs. At the end of the trail lies Warm Mineral Springs and the Jack West-designed facilities and Cyclorama building, currently used for storage and in need of repairs. As the trail begins at a fountain at US 41 and Oriz Blvd., it would end at the newly renovated fountain in front of the springhead at Warm Mineral Springs.

Little Salt Spring and Warm Mineral Springs are both in the National Register of Historic Places and both are eligible National Historic Landmarks. With the addition of the above-mentioned sites, the area may be eligible for a National Register Historic District Designation. This designation would draw national attention to the area and help to validate and preserve our historic treasures. Little Salt Spring is included in this Historical District due to the ancient prehistoric cultural ties it shares with Warm Mineral

Springs and the short distance that separates the two springs. Another leg of the North Port Historic Trail could start at nearby Little Salt Spring and the Archaic habitation site at the five-acre county-owned parcel located across the street from Little Salt Spring. Someday portions of the Little Salt Spring Archaeological and Ecological Preserve could be incorporated as well, with access to trails on the 112-acre property on a scheduled basis. The county parcel at LSS also has access to Myakahatchee Creek along an abutting city drainage right-of-way and could parallel the creek along a trail to Myakahatchee Environmental Park. This leg of the trail would be the environmentally focused extension of the trail.

COTTAGE HILL MIDDEN AT HISTORIC SPANISH POINT TOPIC OF OCTOBER MEETING

By Judi and John Crescenzo

On October 9, 2012, Ryan Murphy, Curator of Historic Spanish Point, presented "The Hill Cottage Midden: A Monumental Achievement." The Hill Cottage Midden, a Late Archaic Shell Ring located at Historic Spanish Point, dates to about 2500 BC. With a 140-meter diameter, this large midden is made up of layers of shell deposition that provide valuable evidence of early settlements, distance trade, and social complexity. Although shell rings usually have central plazas for public ceremonies, there is no evidence of a plaza at the Hill Cottage Midden.

Excavations at the Hill Cottage Midden have a long history. In 1959, the midden was excavated, and it was learned that it was not continuously occupied because 35 mm of sterile soil were found. At that time, Bullen and Bullen located no phosphate-rich lenses indicative of living surfaces, and there was no evidence of postholes large enough to support structures other than a possible drying rack.



Ryan Murphy received our world famous tee-shirt from board member Steve Koski

Orange plain pottery sherds were discovered, along with giant conch shells from the Miami area, which are evidence of long-distance trade

Two human burials contained skeletons placed in flexed positions, and one grave also contained dog bones. Both graves sites were from the Webb and Palmer Eras at Historic Spanish Point. Because Bullen hit water instead of sterile soil at 366 cm, the Hill Cottage Midden could not be accurately dated.

In 1972, James Stoltman was the first to suggest that the Hill Cottage Midden was related to shell ring sites.

Elizabeth Sarney's later excavations uncovered fauna, debitage, and botanic rock. Her discoveries included 12 pottery sherds, including one orange plain (fiber-tempered) rounded rim; one orange incised; and five sand-tempered Plain sherds from the Manasota Period. However, these artifacts were insufficient to make good comparisons. Left-handed whelks from the Manasota Period were also uncovered at every level, along with fighting conch tools, an unhafted hammer, a possible shell punch tool, 14 columnella gouges, and 41 quahogs used as multi-tools. Sarney also uncovered 30 species of mollusks; two species of crustaceans; eight species of bony fish; four species of sharks, plus large shark vertebrae; six species of mammals, mostly deer; amphibians and reptiles; and three human teeth.

Sarney's 1994 master's thesis compared the Hill Cottage Midden to other shell rings. She found that the Hill Cottage Midden was made of scallops, oysters (the highest percentage), quahog, left-handed whelks, conchs, tulip and murex shells. Clues in the midden construction show an evolving environment. There is evidence that fishing and shell gathering of many species occurred in the Archaic Period. The Orange Plain sherd was the earliest form of ceramics uncovered at the midden, and it was found along with over 1650 shell and bone tools. Emerging technologies such as these are an indication of population growth.

The midden environment also changed over time, causing cultural shifts. In 5000 BC, the sea level was 14 m lower than today, so Sarasota Bay did not exist. By 3000 BC, sea level had risen, creating Sarasota Bay and a stable food source. The Hill Cottage Midden is estimated at 2500 BC. By 1400 BC, sea level had fallen 3 – 4 m, and the midden was abandoned because the food source was lost. In 450 BC, sea levels were 1 m lower than today, and the area was reoccupied by the Manasota Culture. Early aquaculture was similar to agriculture, resulting in permanent settlements, craft specialties, and population growth.

Historic Spanish Point includes 30 acres of architectural and environmental property. In 1975, Historic Spanish Point became the first site in Sarasota County to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The site includes four archaeological components: Hill Cottage Midden, Shell Ridge, Mary's Chapel, and the Palmer site. As a follow-up to his informative presentation, Murphy will lead us on a field trip to Historic Spanish Point on October 20th (see article on following page).

MANASOTA KEY SITE TOPIC OF SEPTEMBER MEETING

By Judi and John Crescenzo

On September 11, 2012, Jean Airey, Vice President of the Lemon Bay Historical Society, presented "The Manasota Key Site." Her talk pulled together data from the 1988/89 dig at the Manasota Key site through the use of a relational database and was accompanied by a display of artifacts and photographs from the dig.

The Manasota Key Cemetery was discovered by a contractor who was digging the foundation of a new home site. When a human skull was found, the sheriff's and coroner's offices were contacted. Because a 1987 state law required that Indian burial grounds could not be disturbed, Sonny Cockrell from Warm Mineral Springs visited the site to confirm the graves as prehistoric. His efforts were totally unfunded, but several hundred volunteers, including Steve Koski and Linda Massey, worked daily for over three months at the site.



September speaker Jean Airey received our world famous tee-shirt from Vice President Judith Ribarick

In fact, the WMS Archaeological Society, now the WMS/LSSAS, was founded by the volunteers of the Manasota Key Site in 1990.

According to archaeologist George Luer (our December 11 speaker), the remains in this cemetery were not Calusa but were part of the Manasota Culture. One burial of three bodies included an unborn child. This was identified as the "pregnant woman" burial because the fetus bones were found in the partially flexed stomach area. All of the bodies were buried on the same level and were placed so that their heads touched each other. It is believed that the burials were made by people who lived on the mainland; bodies were probably transported to the island in groups several times a year. Remains of fire and clamshells led the Smithsonian Institute to conclude that a clambake was held at the time of the burial. Testing dated the bodies at 150 – 300 AD.

Linear Enamel Hypoplasia was discovered in the teeth of many adult skeletons at the Manasota dig. This condition causes ridges in teeth that were formed during a growth period when the person was undernourished. Pitting in eye sockets and thickening of skulls also indicate that people suffered from anemia and lack of iron. It was expected that shovel teeth would be a prominent feature, but only a few skeletons at the Manasota site had shovel teeth, a Native American trait.

Airey's burial report provides data analysis and a comparison of the bones. It was discovered from the osteology analysis reported in Dave Dickel's manuscript on the Manasota Key site that the "pregnant woman" was really a man, so the name was changed to the "pregnant man." Questions arose about why an unborn child was buried with a man. One possibility is that the man had a traumatic injury to his left wrist, so he could not perform male duties and therefore cared for children. The "pregnant male" was about 25 years old; he was buried with another male the same age and a 16-year-old female. The question about whether they died together remains unanswered, but future DNA testing could prove if there was a genetic relationship.

It was learned from Airey's analysis that Manasota men were between 5'3" to 5'7" tall, and women averaged 5'2" tall. Of the 120 burials analyzed, there was no evidence of violent death. Bone infection and degenerative bone diseases were common. The oldest male was 37 years old, which was not atypical at that time. The ratio of males to females shows that there was no increased death ratio for women to suggest death in childbirth.

Although few pottery sherds were uncovered, the graves held many shells that were perhaps offered as food,

or the food remains of those who buried the people. A few were also tools. Shells could be used to drill holes, to pierce skin or leather, as weights for fishing nets, and as scrapers. A large number of Florida fighting conchs were discovered in association with the bodies. In one burial, the head of a 25-year-old woman rested on a horse conch, with five whole conchs placed along her body. When the database sorted the types of shells found in the area, it was determined that Florida fighting conchs made up only 12%. This suggests that the conchs were not random but were purposefully placed in the burial site. Twenty years after the burials were discovered, the project remains incomplete due to lack of funding. Steve Koski and George Luer are working to bring the project to a resolution, with the assistance of Airey's database to help analyze and learn from the site.

FIELD TRIP TO HISTORIC SPANISH POINT FOLLOWED OCTOBER PRESENTATION

Following Ryan Murphy's October 9 presentation, WMS/LSSAS members, Friends of LSS, and guests went on a field trip to Historic Spanish Point. There we were met by Curator Ryan Murphy and Marketing Director Laura Dean, who led us on a guided tour of the property to Mary's Chapel, the Webb citrus packing house, the Cottage Hill Indian shell midden, Guptill House, Window to the Past exhibit, Palmer Gardens, and White Cottage. It was a beautiful and pleasant afternoon, and all who attended had a great time. After the event, several members went over to the Spanish Point Pub, located a couple miles south, for a splendid outside lunch in their open thatched-roofed Seminole Indian-built Chickee. A great time was had on this beautiful day. We want to thank Laura and Ryan for providing such an informative and pleasant afternoon at one of Sarasota County's premier historic and archaeological sites located on Little Sarasota Bay.

BAYFRONT BASH AT HISTORIC SPANISH POINT TO BE HELD ON NOVEMBER 11

Missed the field trip to Spanish Point and want to still be involved with an event? Sunday, November 11, is your chance during their Bayfront Bash. The event will include paddle boarding with the Sarasota Paddle Board Company, kayak excursions with Silent Sports Outfitters, lunch from Walt's Fish Market, treats by Ciao Gelato, music with WSRZ 107.9 & Sunny Jim, Florida Fish and Wildlife live-alligator demonstrations, plus fishing, games, door prizes and raffles. A Patron's Reception to follow for a small

additional fee from 3 PM to 5 PM; includes all of the above plus food and drinks from Half Shell Oyster House, tunes by Ben Hammond, and tours of the Guptill House and Pioneer Boatyard.

Tickets are \$45 for adults and teens, \$25 for children (5–12). Members save \$5. Patron tickets are \$75 and \$25. Proceeds to benefit Historic Spanish Point. For more info and ticket sales, call 941.966.5214.

FIELD TIP TO CHEC AND ACLINE MOUND SCHEDULED FOR DECEMBER 8

On Saturday, December 8, the WMS/LSSAS Society is planning a field trip to the Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center. There we will be greeted by John Aspiolea, manager of the Charlotte Harbor Preserve State Park, for a brief tour of the Caniff Visitors Center where we can see their Calusa Exhibit; then go off on a walk to the Acline Mound, a large bifurcated Indian shell mound on Alligator Creek. We made a visit to the mound several years ago with tour guide and author Chuck Blanchard, whom many of us know from his several presentations to our group and books he has written. This is a hike, nearly two miles round trip, and the mound is somewhat steep and portions of the trail are undulating. It would be best to wear long pants (no shorts or dresses), closed shoes (no flip flops), and hat. Bring water, walking stick if you use one, sunscreen, and mosquito repellent. There may be some good photo ops as well. The mosquitoes may not be too bad this time of year, but I have no idea how the chiggers are. If I haven't talked you out of it yet and you have an adventurous spirit and are still up for it, you are welcome to join us. I think it will be fun!

The Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center at Alligator Creek is located off Burnt Store Road in Punta Gorda. The address is 10941 Burnt Store Road. For more information call at (941)575-5435, or visit their website at <http://www.checflorida.org/>. From US 41, go south over the Charlotte Harbor Bridge through Punta Gorda to Burnt Store Road. Go right on Burnt Store and the entrance to CHEC is located a couple miles south on the right. From I-75, go south from Sarasota County to Exit 161 (Jones Loop Road, CR 768), go left to US 41, cross US 41 to Burnt Store and south to CHEP on right.

Members who would like to car pool can meet at the far end of the North Port Library parking lot at 8:45 AM for a 9:00 AM departure. We will meet at CHEC at 10:00 AM. A sign-up sheet will be available at the November meeting.

ANCIENT WATERS CELEBRATION AND SOCIAL EVENT PLANNED FOR JANUARY 27 AT WMS!

The WMS/LSS Archaeological Society and Friends of Little Salt Spring are planning an exciting special celebration and social event to be held at Warm Mineral Springs on January 27, featuring Keynote speaker Dr. John Gifford.

Celebrate our Ancient Waters at the Third Annual Historic Preservation Coalition of Sarasota County Social, an event hosted by the Warm Mineral Springs/Little Salt Spring Archaeological Society and the Friends of Little Salt Spring. Tickets will be \$30 (includes a free pass to WMS, a \$15 to \$20 value!). There will be limited seating for 110 persons. Ancient Waters Celebration will highlight: an afternoon light-fare sit-down dinner catered by Chef Ted Weinberger of the Evergreen Café, silent auction of valuable items, raffle of a hand-crafted replica of the beautiful Middle Archaic greenstone pendant recovered from Little Salt Spring, welcoming introductions followed by a brief presentation by archaeologist Steve Koski on the archaeological significance of Warm Mineral Springs and a presentation by Keynote speaker Dr. John Gifford on research at Little Salt Spring, and more.

MEMBERS VISITED THE SOUTH FLORIDA MUSEUM IN SEPTEMBER

A few members from the WMS/LSSAS and FLSS traveled to the South Florida Museum in Bradenton September 15 to see the exhibits and visit their gift shop. The first floor has a number of galleries representing paleontology and archaeology, including the impressive Tallant collection. At the entrance to the main hall, we were greeted by a saber-cat skeleton poised for attack, and a giant mammoth skeleton stands in the main room. A Paleoindian hunt is recreated along the far wall and numerous skeletons of extinct Pleistocene mammals are exhibited, as are individual fossil remains. A geological time line put the eons in perspective and the archaeological displays ranging from the Paleoindian through the Archaic and Woodland periods are represented.

Upstairs there is the environmental Hall, and numerous collections are in the Visible Storage Gallery. It's always fun to see Snooty at the aquarium, and on this trip he had two young guests being rehabilitated prior to being released into the wild. We were also fortunate to see Preserving Eden: Clyde Butcher's Florida's Photographs exhibit on display until December 30, and we caught a show at the Bishop Planetarium, a must-see when visiting the museum.



WMSLSSAS and FLSS members Mary William, Elizabeth Massey, Linda Massey, Lawry and Linda Reed and Steve Koski at the South Florida Museum in September

I could go on, but you get the idea. Check out their web site at <http://www.southfloridamuseum.org/TheMuseum.aspx> and make a visit to the South Florida Museum!



A saber cat is poised to attack at the South Florida Museum

WMSLSSAS YARD SALE TO BE HELD FEBRUARY 16

Yes, it is that time of the year again for our annual yard sale! The scheduled date is February 16 and will be held at the regular location at the historic Warm Mineral Spring Motel located at the corner of US 41 and Ortiz Blvd. So, please start saving the items you may not need any more, still love but no longer use, hate to part with but have no room to store, still need but are downsizing (you get the picture). While membership certainly helps keep us going (thanks to all our supporting members), it is the annual yard sale that keeps us solvent and allows us to provide monthly meetings, bi-monthly newsletters, and memberships to worthy historical organizations and locations like Historic Spanish Point, Randell Research Center, Friends of the North Port Library, Historic Preservation Coalition, Florida Humanities Council, and more (that's all I can think of off the top of my head). So please donate items to the yard sale. Please call Hilda Boron for drop-off location or pick up; items can also be brought to the November, December, and January meetings. Thank you for your years of support!

LITTLE SALT SPRING NEWS

UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI MARINE SCIENCE DIVERS VISITED LSS

During the last weekend in October and first weekend in November, UM's Dive Safety Officer Rick Gomez brought his dive class to LSS to see the site and experience diving in the spring's environment. These are students from the marine science field who may be diving in various underwater environments in their careers. They dive a variety of environments during the class, mostly marine, where they learn advanced science-diving techniques that go beyond what one would learn in a basic open-water class under the guidelines of the American Academy of Underwater Sciences.

Florida Aquarium staff member Jason Minnear and assistants Dan Rosenthal and Mike Sistrunk visited on Friday with the Aquarium's surface-air-supply equipment and gave the students an opportunity to experience what using such equipment is like, diving the middle of the spring tethered to a hose providing air from the surface with a full face mask and communications between diver and surface.



Rick Gomez's UM Marine Science Class visits LSS weekend of October 27



Students experience using surface air supply gear from Florida Aquarium dive instructor Jason Minnear



Rick Gomez's UM Marine Science Class visits LSS weekend of November 3

They also had an opportunity to tour the basin and see the areas of excavation and learned underwater archaeological techniques with Steve Koski during a mapping session at a 2x2 m excavation unit replicated on

the surface to resemble Operation 14, located 25 feet underwater on the north slope of the basin. They learned the techniques needed to excavate, map, and document specimens and artifacts prior to recovery. Some of the students will be returning in January for Dr. Gifford's underwater archaeology class, where they will be working in Operation 14 excavating, documenting, removing and processing archaeological specimens and artifacts from Op 14.

NEW COLLEGE ARCHAEOLOGIST DR. UZI BARAM AND HIS ARCHAEOLOGY CLASS VISITED LSS IN OCTOBER

During the October class visit, Dr. Uzi Baram brought his archaeology class to LSS for a visit where they toured the site. Most of the students had never visited the site and all appreciated the opportunity. After their visit, they drove over to WMS to see that site as well. Did you know that both WMS and LSS are internationally known significant underwater prehistoric sites; and believe it or not, ALL students of archaeology throughout the world read of these two sites during their studies? Kind of puts our local North Port treasures into perspective and emphasizes their global significance.



Dr. Gifford discusses LSS with Dr. Uzi Baram and his New College archaeology class

THANKS TO OUR WMS/LSSAS WHO HAVE JOINED THE FLORIDA ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY!

We would like to thank all our WMS/LSSAS members who have joined the Florida Anthropological Society. As a Chapter Member of FAS, we need to maintain 10 FAS memberships to maintain our Chapter status. Members receive the quarterly journal *The Florida Anthropologists*,

with numerous articles on the Florida Archaeology and related subjects. Our December speaker George Luer has an article in the September 2012 issue titled "A new Kind of Shell Tool in Florida, With Notes in the Cedar Point Shell Heap and Cortez Midden." Archaeologist Mike Faught has a paper co-authored with the late James Waggoner titled "The Early Archaic to Middle Archaic Transition in Florida: An Argument for Discontinuity."



Photo to left, UM marine science students learn underwater archaeological mapping techniques at LSS. If you don't know how to do it on land, you won't be able to do it underwater.

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