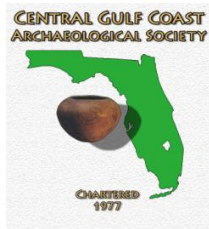

Central Gulf Coast Archaeological Society

A Chapter of the Florida Anthropological Society

www.cgcas.org



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

April 2009



Editor: David Burns

April Meeting

Thursday April 16th

at

Weedon Island Preserve Cultural and Natural History Center
1800 Weedon Dr. NE, St. Petersburg, FL 33702

7 – 8 PM.

Lost Hacienda: Reconstructing the Lives of Laborers on a Yucatan Plantation



Allan Meyers, Ph.D., Eckerd College

Large Plantation estates, known throughout Latin America as haciendas, expanded across the northern Yucatan Peninsula during the nineteenth century. Maya-speaking peasants, descendants of ancient pyramid builders, inhabited small villages on many of these properties and labored under conditions of debt servitude. A decade-long research project at Hacienda Tabi, a prominent sugar plantation that was abandoned during the Mexican Revolution, has shed new light on a forsaken town where debt laborers once lived. In this talk, Meyers recounts the rediscovery of the ruined settlement that has been reclaimed by tropical forest on what is now a state-owned ecological reserve. This program is co-sponsored by CGCAS and the Weedon Island Preserve Cultural and Natural History Center and is free and open to the public. Pre-registration is requested. Call 727-453-6500 to register and for further information.

The Last in the 2008-2009 CGCAS Lecture Series

Our lecture series for 2008-2009 concludes with our April presentation by Dr. Allan Meyers on April 16th. This has been a very successful series this last year and attendance has been excellent. The month of May will be the FAS annual meeting so there will be no membership meeting. We will resume our next series in September. Thanks to all of you and others who attended these talks.

Condolences

We extend our most sincere condolences to Bob Austin and family on the recent passing of Jonathan W. "Jack" Austin, 83, of St. Petersburg who died March 24, 2009. Continue to keep them in your thoughts and prayers.

FAS Annual Meeting is Next Month

The Pensacola Archaeological Society (PAS), in cooperation with the University of West Florida, will host the 61st annual Florida Anthropological Society meeting in Pensacola on May 8-9, 2009. Celebration of Pensacola's settlement 450 years ago by Don Tristan de Luna y Arellano will be occurring throughout the year and the FAS Annual Meeting will be a part of those festivities.

There is an excellent slate of speakers lined up as well as the other great activities associated with these Annual Meetings. For further information, go the FAS web site at www.fasweb.org.

Field Trip to Emerson Point



The welcoming sign to Emerson Point Park



We had a great turnout for this field trip

CGCAS members took a field trip to Emerson Point Park in Palmetto, Florida on Saturday March 28th. Archaeologist Bill Burger led a very interesting and informative tour of the site.

Emerson Point Park is a 195-acre park located on Snead Island in Palmetto on the north bank of the Manatee River. It is the site of a large prehistoric mound complex dating from around AD 800-AD 1500. It is composed of one of the largest temple mounds on Florida's west coast, as well as extensive middens and various "effigy" shaped mounds. Tour guide Bill Burger has made a study of this site over the years and was an excellent interpreter of the Native American component, as well as the later historic homestead sites. These include the remains of a 19th century tabby house and cistern, located atop the temple mound. This beautifully preserved park is located almost directly across from DeSoto Park, purported landing site of the expedition of Hernando DeSoto in 1539.



Alliance for Weedon Island Archaeological Research and Education

The directors of The Alliance for Weedon Island Archaeological Research and Education (AWIARE) have shown a strong presence at public meetings and in letter writing to prevent the closing of the Weedon Island Preserve Cultural and Natural History Center, Brooker Creek Preserve, and other preserves in Pinellas County. The fight is not over and we urge CGCAS members to continue writing and contacting your County Commissioners and other civic leaders. Writing them is easy. Just go to http://www.pinellascounty.org/forms/bcc_form.htm and enter your message. Last month's Special Edition Newsletter contained several talking points that you can use in your email.

Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum Receives Accreditation

The American Association of Museums has declared the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum as the first tribally-owned museum to be accredited. This has been almost 5 years in the making and many thanks to all who have been a part of this groundbreaking endeavor. There have been so many people and departments who have made this goal a reality that it has definitely been a TEAM/TRIBAL effort.

The Tribal Council has proven its dedication to the preservation of its arts, history and culture by seeking accreditation for its Museum. Accreditation recognizes that the Tribe maintains standards that follow the industry's best practices for a sustainable program.

If you would like to read the full press release, please go to www.ahththiki.com/news

In Print

The May/June 2009 issue of Archaeology Magazine contains a very informative article entitled "The Past in High-Def" that presents some of the recent developments in this growing field. Various significant archaeological sites around the world are investigated and recorded using laser scanning. Included in the article is a description of the work performed on the Miami Circle by Lori Collins and Travis Doering of USF.

Volunteer Opportunity in St. Lucia

Dr. William F. Keegan, Ph.D. from the Florida Museum of Natural History is again returning to St. Lucia to do more research there this summer season. For more information on previous projects in Saint Lucia go to his web page www.flmnh.ufl.edu, then under "Research and Collections" go to "Caribbean Archaeology"

then "Research," then "St. Lucia." Dr. Keegan will be working at the Lavoutte site on the northeast coast of the island. The exact dates are not yet set but tentatively it will be during the June 14th to June 28th time frame. Basically, all you would pay is your personal expenses -- travel, lodging, food, local transportation

If you are interested, contact Dr. Keegan at keegan@flmnh.ufl.edu

DIGITAL ARCHAEOLOGY: Search Engines

By Jack Harvey



Spiders skitter over the entire World Wide Web, exploring every strand and devouring any tidbits found. Their acquired knowledge is then pooled and used to point the way to a world of answers.

Of course there aren't literal arachnids crawling about the Internet. Web crawlers are metaphors for computer robots that (remaining in one place) browse the World Wide Web. Although the Internet is a real physical communication network, the World Wide Web it supports is pretty much a metaphor. If it exists, it consists of software links at Internet sites that, like signposts at a crossroad, point to destinations you can visit for specifics. The Web crawling robots use these signposts ("hyperlinks" in Internet jargon) to help find the jillions of pages of information. We see the signposts as words or phrases on Internet pages (usually underlined and/or in color) that when clicked take us to the new page.

As the Internet rapidly expanded, it became apparent that something was needed to help organize the information torrent. Tim Berners-Lee proposed a scheme analogous to the references in scholarly articles. The WWW scholarly references are these signposts, replacing a trip to the library with a mouse click. Since his proposal defined a software standard, it was easy for computers to explore all such references automatically.

These possibilities lead to search engines such as Yahoo!, MSN, AOL, Ask Jeeves and Google. Their robots read literally everything openly available on the Internet, indexing it all to cut your search time to fractions of a second.

They do this magic by organizing the results of reading everything on the Internet into databases. (Remember databases?) Then we can query a database to find where information we need is stored -- anywhere in the world.

For example suppose we are studying a particular type of decorated aboriginal ceramic and need to read the existing literature about it. Our query might be: "Key Largo Incised". (Include the quotes.) In less than a second, the Google search engine reports over 200 articles and publications accessible on the Internet that contain the exact phrase "Key Largo Incised". The items are then listed for you to choose from. But instead of listing them in alphabetic or random order, each item is ranked so that those most likely to be important appear first. In this case, the highest ranking item is

currently a book written by Randolph Widmer. Bingo, Google found the shoulders of a giant for you to stand on.

How can a computer robot know that Widmer's book is likely to have what you are looking for? One way is by counting the number of times your search phrase appears. Another powerful indicator is the number of signposts (hyperlinks) on web sites around the world pointing to Widmer's book since a high number indicates that many authors consider him a giant in archaeology.

But don't be fooled by the seeming simplicity of this particular archaeology example. If I omit a single word, Incised, from the search phrase making it just "Key Largo" Google reports nearly three million books and articles! The top three are about the popular tourist destination in the Florida Keys of course, and the fourth item is about a movie starring Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall. Widmer's book is probably buried far down in the uselessly gigantic pile but I can't find it.

Though extremely simple to use, search engines can't read your mind. If you add a word to our search phrase, making it "Key Largo Incised Ceramic", you get "no results found" showing that your choice for the search phrase is critical. So it is very important to learn how to use these robots. One way is to search for "Google search tutorial", finding lots of pages about how to use this robot. And by all means, try lots of things. An interesting exercise is to search for your own name and unless it's extremely unusual, you may be very surprised.

The general Internet search engines only give you lists of sites to visit where you may find what you need. They don't tell you exactly where to find your answers within a site so it might seem you still must read every word to get your target. Scholarly books and papers almost always include a Table of Contents and an Index, carefully compiled by the author or editors to help with this problem. Yet we all know the frustration of not finding a topic we need in one of these tables. But when reading a document with a computer, you can search directly for any occurrence of a word or phrase without depending on the foresight of the person who compiled the Index.

Most Windows-based programs and Web browsers offer a local search tool when you key "Ctrl F". (In Macintosh-based software, it's "Command-F" or "Apple-F".) These tools take your word or phrase of interest and find everywhere it occurs in the document you're reading. You aren't limited by what is in the document Index or even if an Index exists. This digital tool alone immediately makes far more literature rapidly useful to you so it's important to know how to use it.

And that's the catch. Just as the world had to learn to read in order to benefit from Gutenberg's printing press, we all must learn how to use the powerful new digital tools the Internet puts in our hands. Like learning to read, the new tools open new worlds.

Send comments and suggestions for topics to:jakharve@earthlink.net

FAS Membership

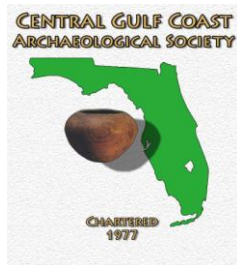
The Florida Anthropological Society (FAS) is open to persons interested in anthropology, archaeology, preservation of cultural resources and community education. Membership is made up of both professional and avocational archaeologists. Benefits of membership include the journal *The Florida Anthropologist*, the *FAS Newsletter* and participation in the annual meeting in May. More information and membership forms can be found on the web site www.fasweb.org or by writing to the Membership Secretary at P.O. Box 13191, Pensacola, FL 32591. Dues are: Student - \$15; Regular and Institutional - \$30; Family - \$35; Sustaining - \$100; Patron - \$500; Benefactor - \$2500 or more.

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Editorial Assistants	Dorrine Burns and Bob Austin		

The Society

Central Gulf Coast Archaeological Society (CGCAS) is an association of amateur and professional archaeologists and concerned citizens dedicated to the preservation and interpretation of Florida's great cultural heritage. CGCAS is a chapter of the Florida Anthropological Society (FAS) and is a state chartered non-profit organization. All contributions are tax deductible.



Central Gulf Coast Archaeological Society

P.O. Box 1563,
Pinellas Park, FL 33780-1563

Membership

Membership is open to anyone with a sincere interest in the cultural past of Florida and who is dedicated to the understanding and preservation of that heritage

Amateurs, professionals and concerned citizens are welcomed as members. Membership is yearly and all dues are payable in January. Contact Karin Lovik 1225 Jeffords St., Apt 225A, Clearwater, FL.

Dues

Regular	\$20.00
Student	10.00
Family	25.00
Life	150.00

