
Central Gulf Coast Archaeological Society

A Chapter of the Florida Anthropological Society



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

June 2007

Editor: David Burns



*****June Meeting*****

!!!It's Picnic Time!!!

Saturday June 23rd

At

Home of Jack and Shanna Drwiega

12:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.?

The annual CGCAS picnic this year will be held at the home of Jack and Shanna Drwiega. They live at 917 W. Woodlawn Ave. in Tampa. The picnic will start at 12:00 P.M. with a brief board meeting in which all are invited to attend. We will start eating at 1:30 P.M. You are asked to bring a covered dish to share. CGCAS will provide the beverages.

One route to their house is to take I-275 north and exit on Dale Mabry. Go north on Dale Mabry then turn right or east on Dr. Martin Luther King Ave. This is the road just north of the Raymond James Stadium. Go across the Hillsborough River and turn right onto Poplar St. then go south to Woodlawn Ave. and turn right or west to their house. Another way would be to follow I-275 further north past the I-4 junction and exit on Dr. Martin Luther King (Exit 46). Go left or west and then turn left or south onto Poplar St. If you get lost call Shanna at 813-383-9182.

The board and officers for 2007-2008 will be elected and a general discussion of upcoming, such as the Bayshore Homes Project and the FAS Annual Meeting in 2008, will take place.

Bayshore Homes Project

We have finished excavating Test Unit 2 at 8343 40th Place in Bayshore Homes. Dr. Bob Austin gave a very informative up-date of the Project so far at the last meeting on May 24th. Shortly we will begin processing the artifact recovered from Test Unit 2 at Weedon Island. There is still time to join us in this exciting and important project. Thanks to all the CGCAS members who have taken part so far. If you are interested, please contact Dr. Bob Austin at 813-677-2280 or email him at bob@searchinc.com if you want to help.

FAS 2008 Committees

As a reminder, planning for the 2008 FAS Annual Meeting in Tampa continues. The following people have agreed to chair the committees below. They will need help and your assistance is greatly appreciated. Please volunteer on one of these committees and help make this a memorable meeting.

Program Committee: Chair, Dr. Bob Austin (bob@searchinc.com)

Local Arrangements Committee: Co-Chair, Marcie Connors (tjconnors@verizon.net); Shanna Drwiega (sdrwiega@yahoo.com)

Registration Committee: Chair, Chris Hardy (kastoagirl@yahoo.com)

Public Relations Committee: Chair, Linda Allred (lallred@mybluelight.com)

Drought Uncovers Lake Okeechobee Site

A statewide drought has bared a portion of Lake Okeechobee's bottom exposing human remains, boats and other finds that could date back to the 16th century – the time of Spanish Ponce de Leon.

The site was discovered about two months ago by a Belle Glade man named Boots Boyer. He said he discovered the site while exploring a clump of trees where the land is normally under water.

Dr. Ryan Wheeler, Florida State Archaeologist, has issued Palm Beach County a

research permit that hopefully help answer the questions of who these people are, where did they live, and why did they die. More study needs to be done before the extent of the discovery is known.

The site will only be exposed while the water level is low.

Ice Age blast 'ravaged America'

A controversial new idea suggests that a large space rock exploded over North America 13,000 years ago.

The blast may have wiped out one of America's first Stone Age cultures as well as the continent's big mammals such as the mammoth and the mastodon.

The blast, from a comet or asteroid, caused a major bout of climatic cooling which may also have affected human cultures emerging in Europe and Asia.

Scientists presented the new theory at the American Geophysical Union's Joint Meeting in Acapulco, Mexico, last month.

The evidence comes from layers of sediment at more than 20 sites across North America. These sediments contain exotic materials: tiny spheres of glass and carbon, ultra-small specks of diamond - called nanodiamond - and amounts of the rare element iridium that are too high to have come from Earth.

All, they argue, point to the explosion 12,900 years ago of an extraterrestrial object up to 5km across. No crater remains, possibly because the Laurentide Ice Sheet, which blanketed thousands of sq km of North America during the last Ice Age, was thick enough to mask the impact.

Another possibility is that it exploded in the air.

Climate cooling

The rocks studied by the researchers have a black layer which, they argue, is the charcoal deposited by wildfires which swept the continent after the explosion.

The blast would not only have generated enormous amounts of heat that could have given rise to wildfires, but also brought about a period of climate cooling that lasted 1,000 years - an event known as the Younger Dryas.

Professor James Kennett, from the University of California in Santa Barbara (UCSB), said the explosion could be to blame for the extinction of several large North American mammals at the end of the last Ice Age.

"All the elephants, including the mastodon and the mammoth, all the ground sloths, including the giant ground sloth - which, when standing on its hind legs, would have been as big as a mammoth," he told the BBC.

"All the horses went out, all the North American camels went out. There were large carnivores like the sabre-toothed cat and an enormous bear called the short-faced bear."

Professor Kennett said this could have had an enormous impact on human populations.

Population decline

According to the traditional view, humans crossed from north-east Asia to America at the end of the last Ice Age, across a land bridge which - at the time - connected Siberia to Alaska.

The Clovis culture was one of the earliest known cultures in the continent. These proficient hunter-gatherers developed a distinctive thin, fluted spear head known as the Clovis point, which is regarded as one of the most sophisticated stone tools ever developed.

Archaeologists have found evidence from the Topper site in South Carolina that Clovis populations here went through a population collapse.

But there is no evidence of a similar decline in other parts of the continent. The Clovis culture does vanish from the archaeological record abruptly, but it is replaced by a myriad of different local hunter-gatherer cultures.

Jeff Severinghaus, a paleoclimatologist at Scripps Institution of Oceanography in California, told *Nature* magazine: "Their impact theory shouldn't be dismissed; it deserves further investigation."

According to the new idea, the comet would have caused widespread melting of the North American ice sheet. The waters would have poured into the Atlantic, disrupting its currents.

This, they say, could have caused the 1,000 year-long Younger Dryas cold spell, which also affected Asia and Europe. The Younger Dryas has been linked by some researchers to changes in the living patterns of people living in the Middle East which led to the beginning of farming.

A massive explosion near the Tunguska River, Siberia, in 1908, is also thought to have been caused by a space rock exploding in the atmosphere. It felled 80 million trees over an area of 2,000 sq km.

Printed from BBC News

Members Visit Topper Site

Recently two CGCAS members spent time at the Topper Site in North Carolina. **Dr. Bob Austin** was there for a couple of days visiting with **Dr. Al Goodyear**. Also, **Bart McLeod** was able to spend the week there participating in the

excavation. He stated that it was a very interesting experience taking part in this important excavation. It is highly recommended for those who haven't had the opportunity to go there.

Site May be Lost De Soto Battleground

A Mobile archaeologist believes he has found a site in Clarke County, Alabama, that could be the Indian Stronghold Mauvilla, where Hernando De Soto fought a bloody battle in the mid-1500's.

Historians and archaeologists have long debated De Soto's route and the location of Mauvilla. Some have questioned whether it even existed.

Warriors ambushed De Soto. Soldiers battled with Indians for a day leaving more than 3,000 warriors dead. De Soto lost some 20 soldiers in the battle.

De Soto's expedition never recovered and ended after the explorer died. His men placed his body in the Mississippi River to keep it from the Indians.

Off to Guatemala

Next week CGCAS member, **Bart McLeod**, will travel to Guatemala with **Lori Collins**, **Travis Doering** and others from USF. They will spend over a month using global positioning satellites and laser scanners to create three-dimensional images of fading artifacts and vanishing sites there. Their work is helping to pioneer new ways to learn about ancient sites without having to dig them up. These techniques will preserve the site and artifacts for future study and enable access by computer simulation.

Weedon Happenings

An exhibit featuring photographs by **Dr. Jim Miller**, past State Archaeologist, is currently on display at the Weedon Island Center. The special exhibit, *Birds: The Art of Form and Function*, highlights Dr. Miller's uncanny eye in capturing the close-up images of Florida's magnificent water birds in a way most people will never see. His photographs will be on display until June 30th.

CGCAS Officers\Directors

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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.

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 Roger Block, Membership Secretary, 785 Capri Blvd., Treasure Island, FL 33706

	Dues
Regular	\$20.00
Student	10.00
Family	25.00
Life	150.00



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