

Friends of the Randell Research Center

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March 2008

Gill House Restoration Receives Boost Millers and Sipprelles Announce \$50,000 Challenge Grant

by Bill Marquardt

On March 2, Paul and Warren Miller and Dwight and Susan Sipprelle jointly offered the Randell Research Center a \$50,000 gift toward restoration of the Ruby Gill House, headquarters of the Randell Research Center in Pineland. This is a challenge grant, and will be given as soon as we raise \$50,000 in matching gifts.

As reported in the September *Friends Newsletter* (vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 1-2), we need funds to complete repairs and restoration of the historic Gill House, which was badly damaged in the hurricanes of 2004. About \$178,000 in labor and donated services have been put into the house so far, provided by the Florida Museum of Natural History, the Randell Research Center, Lee County historic-preservation grants, a grant from the Southwest Florida Community Foundation Arts and Attractions fund, private gifts, and donated professional services. Still to be done are structural stabilization work, enhancement of handicap-accessibility, and restoration of the walls, ceilings, and floors. When the project is completed, the Randell Research Center will finally be able to move back into its offices and laboratories, which will be sturdier, safer, and more pleasant for our visitors and staff.

The minimal amount we need to complete the necessary repairs is \$108,000, so the Miller-Sipprelle challenge grant is a huge help. As this newsletter goes to press, we have received a little over \$19,000, or 38% of what we need to match the Millers' and Sipprelles' generous offer. In short, as soon as we raise the remaining \$31,000, we can resume restoration work on the house. If you have been considering a gift to the Randell Research Center, there has never been a better time, because your donation will be doubled.

To contribute to the building fund, simply make your check payable to Randell Research Center, indicate that it is for the building fund, and mail it to P.O. Box 608, Pineland, Florida 33945. Donations in any amount are welcome. Like all donations to the Randell Research Center, your gift is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by Federal law, and all donations to the building fund will be matched by the Millers and Sipprelles up to \$50,000.



The Ruby Gill House, viewed from the east, March, 2008. Restoration work will resume as soon as we can raise \$31,000. (Photo by W. Marquardt.)



At Calusa Heritage Day, Stacey Brown (center) helped visitors of all ages make their own pots. See inside for more photos. (Photo by R. Brown.)

Calusa Heritage Day 2008

by Michael Wylde

February 23rd was the annual Calusa Heritage Day, hosted by the Randell Research Center at the Calusa Heritage Trail in Pineland. It was a great day weather-wise, and the many participants had a great time sharing their knowledge with the public. Over 1500 people attended. Dr. Karen Walker and Dr. Bill Marquardt of the Florida Museum of Natural History and the RRC drew together an amazing array of talent for the event.



Archaeobotanist Donna Ruhl explains findings to visitors. (Photo by M. Nanney.)

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local author D.L. Havlin entertained the crowd with tales from Florida's cracker days, Gladys Schneider and Gina Poppell explained the history of the Ruby Gill House and Pineland Post Office, and Steve Tutko manned the RRC membership table.

An entire area of the site near Brown's Mound was set aside for artists and primitive technology demonstrations. Merald Clark, noted artist and illustrator who produced the striking images seen on the Trail's interpretive signs, participated, as did artists Sue Ellen Hunter, Hermann Trappman, David Meo, Dorothy Looney, Helen Donovan, Pat Townsend, and Denege Patterson. Elizabeth Neily talked to visitors while dressed as a 16th-century Spanish market woman. Calusa pottery technology was taught by noted author Robin Brown, assisted by John Beriault and Stacey Brown. Firing of the pots took place at the site a week later, on Saturday, March 1, under the supervision of John Beriault.



Dick Workman and Rick Tully demonstrated fiber technology and weaving, Terry Powell of St. Petersburg had an amazing display of Calusa shell and wood tools that he encouraged the public to try out. I demonstrated percussion flaking and pressure flaking of stone tools. Mickey Miller showed everyone how to make fire without matches or a lighter. John Paeno explained his artifact replications, and metal artist Mike Bonne encouraged kids to hammer

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Dick Workman teaches a visitor how to weave palm fronds. (Photo by R. Brown.)



(above) RRC Director Bill Marquardt (right, near sign) and artist Merald Clark (right) give a tour of the Calusa Heritage Trail. (Photo by C. Moncrief.)



Michael Wylde (left) demonstrates the art of flint knapping. (Photo by C. Moncrief.)

Replicas of precolombian whelk-shell tools. Left, Type A cutting-edged tool; right, shouldered adze. (Replicas by David Meo; photo by M. Nanney.)



Elizabeth Neily, dressed as a 16th-century Spanish market woman, and artist Hermann Trappman, dressed as himself, talk with visitors. (Photo by C. Moncrief.)



A selection of some of the many pots made by visitors during Calusa Heritage Day. The pots were fired March 1 and can be picked up at the Calusa Heritage Trail (phone 283-2157). (Photo by R. Brown.)



Mickey Miller lines up a dart on the atlatl (throwing stick) in preparation for throwing it at the target, while José Langone provides encouragement. (Photo by M. Nanney.)



Linda Stevenson (left) and Gladys Schneider visit at the exhibit on the Gill House prepared by Gladys and postmaster Gina Poppell. (Photo by G. Sajco.)

out their own metal "bait fish" to take home with them. Atlatls were thrown with assistance from Dick Hunter and José Langone, tools and baskets and cordage were made by visitors, conch horns were blown, and a good time was had by all. There were even Calusa "snacks" available: grilled mullet, local clams, oysters, and fresh papaya, all of which were on the Calusa menu.

There were also ten local environmental and eco-tourism organizations set up along the trail, and local captain Brian Holaway of Relax and Explore Tours



Just before the fire is to be lit, the Lazenby sisters – Jennifer, Emily, and Barbara Ann – say goodbye to the pots they made and wish them well in the firing, as mom Laurie looks on. (Photo by W. Marquardt.)



They really work! Merald Clark chops wood with a shell cutting tool while the tool's manufacturer, Terry Powell, looks on. (Photo by C. Moncrief.)



John Beriault uses a hand tool to decorate the pottery he is making. (Photo by M. Nanney.)

offered a four-hour boat trip to be raffled off. Tropic Star of Pine Island gave away a boat trip as well.

At 2:00 P.M., Dr. Marquardt gave a talk on "Calusa Archaeology Since Cushing" to a packed classroom, with many people hanging into the doorways to hear the talk. The entire anthropology staff from Florida Gulf Coast University was in attendance, as well as Paul Backhouse and Marion Smith, archaeologists for the Seminole Tribe of Florida. For those others of you who attended, thank you for your support; for those of you who did not, plan to be here February 21, 2009 for the next Calusa Heritage Day. It is a great way to spend a day "doing archaeology."



John Paeno plays a tune on a bird-bone whistle he made. (Photo by M. Nanney.)



Artist David Meo discusses his in-progress painting of a scene from Pineland's past. (Photo by R. Brown.)



John Beriault uses a pushing stick to move hot burning coals closer to the baking pottery. (Photo by K. Walker.)



At the artist's tent, Merald Clark explains how he went about visualizing the Calusa. (Photo by C. Moncrief.)

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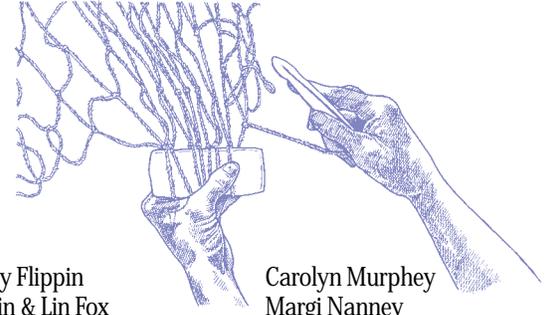
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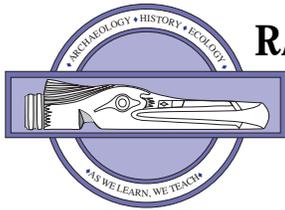
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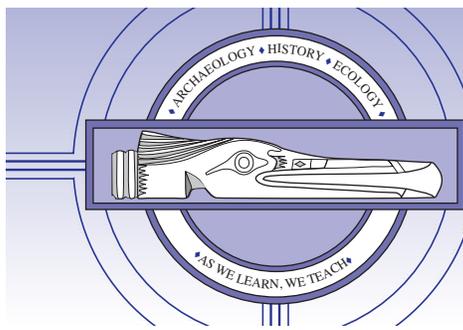
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Friends of the Randell Research Center

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Sincerely,

William H. Marquardt
Director
Randell Research Center

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