



# Friends of the Randell Research Center

July 2021 • Vol. 20, No. 2

## The RRC is 25!

### *A Brief History of the Randell Research Center, Part 1: 1988-1996*

*by Bill Marquardt*

***As part of our celebration of the RRC's 25th anniversary, we invited Bill Marquardt, RRC's co-founder and first director, to summarize some of the key events in its history.***

By asking a simple question, Patricia Randell stimulated the first archaeological excavations at the Pineland archaeological site, where she and her husband Donald and son Ricky lived. It was the fall of 1987. I had dropped by to visit with the Randells, who had purchased much of the massive Pineland archaeological site with the intention of protecting it until it could be properly investigated, and who had funded a mapping project on nearby Josslyn Island that I had done in 1983.

As we sat on the front porch sipping iced tea, Pat asked, "How old are these mounds? People ask me that all the time, and I feel like an idiot telling them I don't know."

To try and answer Pat's question, I returned with Karen Walker in May 1988. Karen's experience as a coastal archaeologist and zooarchaeologist meant she was



**The first excavations at the Pineland site took place in 1988. Pictured, standing: Betty Anholt, Bill Kemper, George Clark; in excavation: Art Lee. (Photo by W. Marquardt.)**

prepared to direct excavations and organize an open-air field lab. A small crew of local volunteers worked under our direction to dig four excavation pits over a 12-day period. Based on that preliminary work, we obtained 10 radiocarbon dates showing that the site was occupied at least from AD 300 to 1400. It was a start.

Today, a generation later, we know a great deal more about the archaeology, history, and ecology of Pineland



**Funded by a grant from the State of Florida, we brought fourth-grade school children from Lee County to Pineland. (Photo by W. Marquardt.)**

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and about southwest Florida in general. A substantial step forward was taken in the early 1990s when the State of Florida funded a series of grants that allowed us to work more extensively at Pineland and to involve school children in classroom programs and field trips to the site. Between 30 and 40 volunteers assisted us on a daily basis in a wide range of tasks.

At the time, the country was gearing up to commemorate the Columbian Quincentenary – the 500th anniversary of Columbus’ “discovery” of the New World in 1492. Our project was conceived to be a counterbalance by learning and teaching about the Native Americans encountered by Columbus and various other Europeans. It was known as “The Year of the Indian” project although, in fact, it succeeded so well that it extended over several years.

The project resulted in several published books, a video program, and many public talks. We collected oral histories with elderly fisherfolk and




**Pat Ball donated sawhorses and plywood for an open-air archaeology lab. Working on cleaning and cataloging artifacts are volunteers Reed Toomey (left) and Ray Seguin (right). In background, right is Pat Randell.** (Photo by W. Marquardt.)

mangroves, the mudflats, and the intricate relationships between the plants, animals, and people that are still important today. Our visitors were hungry for such information

quietly observed the excitement going on and made a significant decision. In 1992 they began a conversation with the University of Florida about donating 53 acres of the Pineland site so that a center for research and education could be established and operate into the future. On May 25, 1994, the Randells signed an agreement to donate their land: one third by June 30 of that year, then another third in 1995 and the final third by June 30, 1996.

Although the decision to gift the land was made in 1993 and the agreement was signed in 1994, the Randell Research Center did not become reality until July 1, 1996. That makes July 1, 2021 our 25th anniversary!

Various events are being planned to commemorate our anniversary during the coming months. Look for more information in future newsletters and on our web site. In the next newsletter, I’ll describe the eventful period 1997 to 2008, the first decade of the RRC’s existence. Finally, Part 3 will cover 2009-2021 with a look to the future. 

**We noticed that our visitors – young and old – weren’t just learning about the Native Americans who had lived at Pineland, they were also gaining an appreciation of the estuaries, the mangroves, the mudflats, and the intricate relationships between the plants, animals, and people that are still important today.**

with previous Pineland landowners. We incorporated some of the new knowledge into a permanent exhibit at the Florida Museum of Natural History in Gainesville. These were things we expected to do when we sought the grant funding. What surprised us was the impact the project had on local children and adults.

We noticed that our visitors – young and old – weren’t just learning about the Native Americans who had lived at Pineland, they were also gaining an appreciation of the estuaries, the

and genuinely excited to learn. It finally occurred to us that many of our visitors – adults and kids alike, including many teachers – were newcomers to Southwest Florida. From the time that Don and Pat Randell had moved to Pineland in 1968 to the onset of our project, Lee County’s population had tripled and the Randell’s land acquisitions had helped preserve the unspoiled nature of Pineland.

We weren’t the only people who noticed the effects. Don and Pat





# I'll look for you on the Trail!

by Cindy Bear

**I**t is impossible, to express the myriad of deep feelings enveloping me as I write this column. My reasons for writing are to say goodbye, thank people who have been important during my 11 years with the Randell Research Center, and wish the very best to my successor. After rewarding careers, my husband, Charles O'Connor, and I are retiring to travel, volunteer, and seek out new adventures.

I'm imbued with a sense of pride for a job well done, while humbled that so many people have given so much to help the RRC preserve this site and uncover the lives of its inhabitants. I'll dearly miss everyone who shares a love of this space that holds in its majestic gumbo limbo trees a deep reverence of time and place.

I never imagined I would be so fortunate when I interviewed with Bill Marquardt and shared an interest in applying my teaching skills and wildlife ecology background in creative ways to further the legacy of the people of Pineland, the Florida Museum, and the RRC. I never imagined I would become a better person by constantly learning and being challenged to find inner strength and develop new or improved skills. I never imagined I would be so happy and so sad simultaneously about leaving my job. And, I certainly never imagined so many people could keep a secret as so many did in hosting a surprise retirement event at the Trail and presenting me with an honorary bench. I was overcome with emotion and reminded again that "thank you" was the most frequent phrase I heard from people who gave



Cindy shows her appreciation for the new bench and its inscription, "Cindy Bear with Love and Respect from your RRC Family." (Photo by C. O'Connor.)

their time, talents, and/or money to RRC. They should be thanked, I often thought. Here, I learned that gratitude is often an expression of shared appreciation.

each of you brought a unique, essential, and valued set of gifts and strengths to the work we accomplished and the friendships which developed. To Annisa Karim, the new


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To Bill Marquardt and Karen Walker, your unwavering dedication, tenacity, and knowledge inspire me and made it all possible. To the staff, Linda, Andy, Jim, Jeremiah, Lois, and Dave, you are the backbone of RRC's success, partnering with you has been delightful. To the volunteers,

RRC Coordinator, you have the support of a devoted and skilled team of staff, volunteers, and UF professionals and the great fortune of carrying on this legacy. No doubt you too will thrive.

To our members, thank you all. I'll look for you on the Trail. 





## New Faces at the RRC

by Cindy Bear

**A**s we celebrate our anniversary year, we are welcoming Annisa Karim as RRC Coordinator, Charlie Cobb as Director and Michelle LeFebvre as Assistant Director. RRC co-founder and current co-director Karen Walker is turning her focus to organizing and archiving documents relating to the RRC, helping Charlie with the transition to Director, and completing academic publications. Charlie and Michelle bring diverse skills and interests that provide complementary strengths to guide the RRC and Annisa brings a wealth of experience to the daily operations.

Annisa comes to us from the Lee County Department of Parks and Recreation, where she oversaw over 40 parks and facilities. She has an M.S. degree in wildlife ecology and conservation from the University of Florida. Her research focused on the use of tropical hardwood hammock systems by migrating birds, a project which help form conservation programs in the Florida Keys. Annisa

also has a long-term involvement with the Florida Master Naturalist Program, is a certified arborist, and has a certification in archaeological resource management training from the Florida Division of Historical Resources.

Charlie is Curator of Historical Archaeology at the Florida Museum. His primary research lies in the



**Michelle LeFebvre's research has focused on coastal Florida and Caribbean islands.**

(Florida Museum photo by Kristen Grace.)

archaeology of colonial southeastern North America focusing on interactions between Native Americans and Europeans. With Gifford Waters, collections manager for Historical Archaeology, Charlie developed a website and digital archive dedicated to the archaeology of Franciscan missions in Florida and just received funding from the National Endowment from the Humanities to build a digital archive related to the archaeology of St. Augustine. Charlie's first

**Charlie holds a 16th century Spanish iron chisel found while metal detecting. The tool may be related to the Hernando de Soto expedition of 1539-1543.**

(Photo by Ashley Dumas, University of West Alabama.)



**Cindy Bear shows Annisa Karim, incoming Coordinator, the beautiful view from atop Brown's Mound.** (Photo by C. O'Connor.)

foray into the Calusa region will be based on a grant that he, Gifford, and Michelle have obtained from the National Park Service American Battlefield Protection Program (see *Friends* newsletter Vol. 19, No. 3).

Michelle is Assistant Curator of Archaeology at the Florida Museum. Her research interests are centered upon synthesizing archaeological fieldwork, laboratory analyses, museum collections, and community outreach to study ancient human-environment relationships. With a focus on coastal Florida and the Caribbean islands, she strives to inspire people to learn how the past can be used as a tool to better understand, appreciate, and protect current and future cultural and biological diversity. Michelle's current south Florida archaeological projects include work in the Florida Keys and on Calusa Island (see *Friends* newsletter Vol. 19, No. 1). Michelle is also helping to establish the TESI Environmental Leaders Fellowship to aid undergraduate students at the University of Florida in learning about Florida's environmental challenges and how they can contribute to community-based solutions.





# Friends of the Randell Research Center

Pineland, Florida • July 2021

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Email: [rrc@flmnh.ufl.edu](mailto:rrc@flmnh.ufl.edu)

## Dear Friend,

You are cordially invited to join, or renew your membership in, the RRC's support society, *Friends of the Randell Research Center*. All Friends of the RRC receive a quarterly newsletter and free admission to the Calusa Heritage Trail at Pineland. Supporters at higher levels are entitled to discounts on our books and merchandise, advance notice of programs, and special recognition. Your continuing support is vital to our mission. It means more research, more education, and continued site improvements at the Randell Research Center. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Cindy Bear  
Co-Director  
Randell Research Center



*Please check the membership level you prefer, and send this form with your check payable to University of Florida Foundation, to:*

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- ☐ **Individual (\$30) and Student (\$15):** quarterly Newsletter and free admission to Calusa Heritage Trail
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- ☐ **Contributor (\$100-\$499):** The above + 10% discount on RRC publications and merchandise
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- ☐ **Sustaining Members (\$5,000-\$19,999), Benefactors (\$20,000-\$99,999), and Patrons (\$100,000 and above):** receive all of the above + complimentary RRC publications and special briefings from the Director.
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Photo by A. Bell

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The Randell Research Center is a program of the Florida Museum of Natural History, University of Florida.  
Thank you for your support.





# Books, Videos, Cards, and RRC Gear

## BOOKS ON SOUTHWEST FLORIDA'S ARCHAEOLOGY & HISTORY

### A Tour of the Islands of Pine Island Sound, Florida: Their Geology, Archaeology, and History

by Denége Patterson. RRC Popular Series No. 2, softcover, full color, \$29.95

### The Plant World of the Calusa: A View from Pineland

written and illustrated by Martha Kendall, RRC Popular Series No. 1, softcover, full color, **SALE! \$10.00**

### The Calusa and Their Legacy: South Florida People and Their Environments

by Darcie A. MacMahon and William H. Marquardt, U. Press of Florida, hardcover, \$39.95

### The Archaeology of Pineland: A Coastal Southwest Florida Site Complex, A.D. 50-1710, edited by

William Marquardt and Karen Walker, Monograph 4, hardcover, 935 pages, 408 figures, 231 tables, bibliographic references, \$125.00

### Discovering Florida: First-Contact Narratives from Spanish Expeditions along the Lower Gulf Coast

edited and translated by John E. Worth, U. Press of Florida, softcover, \$27.95

### The Florida Journals of Frank Hamilton Cushing

edited by Phyllis E. Kolianos and Brent W. Weisman, University Press of Florida, hardcover \$49.95

### The Archaeology of Useppa Island

edited by William H. Marquardt, Monograph 3, hardcover \$35.00, softcover \$20.00

### New Words, Old Songs: Understanding the Lives of Ancient Peoples in Southwest Florida Through Archaeology

by Charles Blanchard, illustrated by Merald Clark, **SALE! hardcover \$10.00, softcover \$6.50**

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by Robert F. Edic, hardcover, \$35.00

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edited by Randy Wayne White and Carlene Fredericka Brennen. U. Press of Florida, softcover, \$21.95

### The Material Culture of Key Marco, Florida

by Marion S. Gilliland. \$22.95

### The Crafts of Florida's First People

by Robin Brown, (for ages 10 and up), Pineapple Press, softcover, \$9.95

### Water from Stone: Archaeology and Conservation at Florida's Springs

by J. O'Donoughe. U. Press of Florida, hardcover, **SALE! \$34.95**

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by J. Collins, R. Rohli and C. H. Paxton. U. Press of Florida, hardcover, \$34.95

### Sea Level Rise in Florida: Science, Impacts, and Options

by A. C. Hine, D. P. Chambers, T. D. Clayton, M.R. Hafen and G. T. Mitchum. U. Press of Florida, hardcover, \$34.95

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### Images from the Calusa Heritage Trail

Art by Merald Clark, 4"-x-6" postcards, full-color, set of 11 cards, \$8.00

### RRC postcards

Art by Patricia Randell, 4" x 6" black and white, set of 4, \$4.00

## RANDELL RESEARCH CENTER GEAR

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# The Telltale Truncatella

by Karen Walker

**S**ometimes very big stories are told by very small shells. One example is the shell of southwest Florida's minute snail, the Beautiful Truncatella (*Truncatella pulchella*). When many of their shells are found together in coastal archaeological sites, they can tell us that a storm or even a hurricane occurred in the past. This is because in life, these tiny snails live in a very specific habitat – that of dead seagrass washed ashore in strands marking the upper limit of storm-generated high water. Truncatella do not come in with the grasses, for they are land snails. Instead, they are attracted to rotting grass strands after the water recedes. Over time, the vegetation disappears but the shells of the snails are left behind after they die in place. Thus, concentrations of these tiny, hardy shells are important storm records at Pineland and elsewhere.

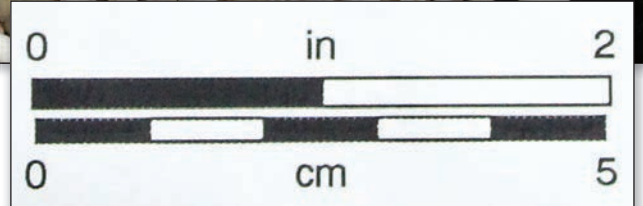
About 1,720 years ago, before the large mound complexes existed, a powerful hurricane hit Pineland when people were still living at low elevations along the shoreline. We learned this in our 1992 South Pasture excavations when we discovered remains of animals that had been brought across Pine Island Sound by a powerful surge



**Karen Walker recorded the appearance of sediments disturbed by the new post-holes, February 2014.** (Photo by W. Marquardt.)



**Hundreds of Truncatella shells at posthole #25 testify to the location of Hurricane Charley's 2004 storm surge.** (Photo by K. Walker.)



of marine water. At a nearby excavation, close to the Old Mound remnant, midden samples from the same elevation were collected and taken to Gainesville for future analysis. Some years passed before then-graduate student Andrea Palmiotto did that analysis in 2011. In one of those samples, she identified 445 individual shells of Truncatella, thus producing another line of evidence for the ancient hurricane. This was our first of three Truncatella storm records.

The second record was discovered in February of 2014. We were tasked with installing a fence along the northern boundary of the land parcel that coincides with the Randell Mound. With the help of RRC volunteers, we recorded the contents of the dirt disturbed for each post hole before inserting the fence post. Post-hole #25 was located downslope toward the shoreline. At that spot were a great



**Volunteers screened the sediments that were removed by the post hole digger. Left to right: Polly Eldred, David Townsend, Lawrence Mazzoli, Pat Yourdon.**

(Photo by K. Walker.)

many Truncatella shells on the ground surface. Few to none were found further up or further down the slope, but many more were found on the ground in a north-south line across the slope.

On my return to Gainesville, I located a photograph that I had taken of this very location shortly after Hurricane

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*Continued from page 1*

Charley's visit of August 13, 2004. The photograph dramatically documents the upper limit of Charley's high water and resulting huge wrack line, the area where *Truncatella* would colonize after the water receded.

More recently, in 2017, excavations near the modern shoreline in front of the Randell Complex revealed a water-logged midden with large numbers of *Truncatella* shells along with preserved plant remains, some appearing to be seagrasses. They are found in multiple levels within the midden, so rather than a single storm event, these



**The wrack line left by Hurricane Charley on August 13, 2004. Camera faces south, toward corner of Waterfront Drive and Pineland Road. Thousands of *Truncatella* shells remained at this location 10 years later when the fence was installed.** (Photo by K. Walker.)

## What's the difference between *climate* and *weather*?

**Weather** is about what's happening in the short term: Is it hot or cold today? Will there be rain next week?

**Climate** is more long-term and large-scale. The climate of a region is the average pattern of weather over many years.

remains may indicate several through time. Here, the timespan ranges from AD 1000 to 1450.

Readers of our publications know that shellfish remains at Pineland such as oysters, clams, conchs, and whelks,

small and large, have informed us about climate changes through the centuries. But the *Truncatella* shells show that some shellfish species can even tell us about significant weather events.

## RRC News

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