

# ST. AUGUSTINE ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION



A CHAPTER OF THE FLORIDA ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER

February 2025

### Upcoming Programs

**Flagler College, Tiffany Room**  
**7 pm**

**February 4, 2025**

Charles R. Cobb, Professor of Historical  
Archaeology, Florida Museum  
of Natural History

**March 4, 2025**

Austin Bell, Chief Curator at Museum of  
Florida History, Tallahassee

**April 1, 2025**

Emily Jane Murray from FPAN

**May 6, 2025**

Sarah Miller from FPAN and Chuck Meade  
from LAMP give their yearly update

### SAAA Mission Statement

The St. Augustine Archaeological Association promotes the discovery, interpretation, and protection of cultural heritage in the greater St. Augustine area by engaging our community in archaeological research, volunteerism, and education.

. Without knowledge of the past, the way into the thickets of the future is desperate and unclear.

--Loren Eisley, *The Star Thrower*

### LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Happy New Year, SAAA!

At our January business meeting and soiree, we welcomed new and returning officers to the SAAA Board. I am looking forward to assuming the role of your new President after

completing a previous term as Vice President, while Courtney Crum takes my place as Vice President after serving on the Board for three years. We have 3 new directors-at-large— Tina Sauvage, Jon Simon Suarez, and Carl Lindenfeld—and look forward to incorporating their new voices and ideas. We were also happy to be joined by several new and long-lost SAAA members in January, and we wholeheartedly welcome them into our community.

We received excellent responses and constructive feedback from the 2024 SAAA membership survey. Thank you to all those who completed it! During the first quarter of the year, the board will discuss how to implement some of your many great comments and suggestions.

As we get inch closer to March and Florida Archaeology Month, we hope to share upcoming events in celebration of our favorite topic! To keep up with SAAA events, you can check out our website (StAugArch.org) or follow us on Facebook (@StAugArch).

Thank you all for your continued support of SAAA, and we hope to see you soon at a spring event!

*Katherine Sims,*  
SAAA President

## Charles Cobb to Speak



Charles Cobb, Professor of Historical Archaeology at the Florida Museum of Natural History, will speak on “Recent Advances in the Archaeology of La Florida” at the next SAAA

Over the past decade, the Florida Museum has been involved in a variety of research projects related to the history and archaeology of the Spanish colony of La Florida that continue the long-term research agenda established by Kathy Deagan. This presentation will highlight three of those efforts:

First, UF’s collaborative efforts with other universities to identify the path of explorer Hernando de Soto through Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi;

Second, the Museum’s ongoing investigations at the Franciscan mission of San Francisco de Potano;

And finally, the Museum’s long-term project to make its collections related to Spanish Florida available online for research and education purposes.

Dr.Cobb received his PhD from Southern Illinois University in 1988. Following stints at Binghamton University and the University of South Carolina, he has been the Curator of Historical Archaeology at the Florida Museum of Natural History since 2014.

He has a long-term interest in colonial history and in the Indigenous cultures of the southeastern United States, with a particular focus on connections between Native American and European societies. His current research focuses on the impacts of 16th century Spanish incursions into the Southeast with related fieldwork in Mississippi being carried out in collaboration with the Chickasaw Nation.



## BREAKING NEWS

### Fish Island Preserve Ribbon Cutting Friday, Feb 7 at 11 am

Join us for the Fish Island Preserve official Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony with remarks by Mayor Nancy Sikes-Kline and former property owner, Paul Thompson. Parking is limited, so consider car-pooling.

### Marsha Chance is the Newest Recipient of the Richard Todd Award

In 1999, the SAAA established the Richard Todd Outstanding Service Award in recognition of Richard's contribution and dedication to the goals and objectives of the SAAA in St. Augustine and St. Johns County. While not necessarily awarded yearly, it is presented to an SAAA member who has displayed outstanding service and dedication to either the Association and/or archaeological efforts in the community.



This past year’s very worthy recipient was Marsha Chance. She has been a life-long St. Augustine resident and staunch supporter of local archaeology. As a professional archaeologist, she (and her husband Greg Smith), have been a fixture in our community and in SAAA. Marsha has been with our organization since the earliest days and has served the association in many capacities. These include Secretary (2011), Corresponding Secretary 2012-2016, Director at Large (2012-2013), Vice President (2017-2018), and President (2019-2020). The SAAA board is thrilled to present the 2024 Richard A Todd award to Marsha Chance.

## Basket Raffle Nets \$300 for the Eugene Lyon Education Fund

By Courtney Crum

During the annual SAAA Holiday Party in December, a raffle for three gift baskets was held, with the proceeds going to the ELEF. This year's gift baskets were created using donations from Tour St. Augustine, Jensen Pottery, Forgotten Tonic, River & Fort Restaurant and Rooftop Lounge, Pizzalley's Chianti Room/Prohibition Kitchen, Blue Hen Café, and SAAA. The raffle ticket sales resulted in donations totaling \$315.00 to the Fund. If you visit these businesses, please be sure to thank them for their support of ELEF.



The winners of the baskets were Karen Bianchi, Linda Chandler, and Donna McCarthy Jensen. Congratulations to these lucky winners and thank you to everyone who participated in the raffle. We fundraise year-round and always appreciate any donations to ELEF, as well as any donations to our gift baskets.

The ELEF was established by the SAAA to provide financial support to those conducting research in archaeology and related fields. In the first three years of the fund, we have awarded 7 grants, totaling \$3236.00. This year's applications are due on April 4th, 2025 and applications can be found on the SAAA website [www.staugarch.org](http://www.staugarch.org). If you know anyone who may be interested in applying, please share the information with them.

## New On-Line Training for Heritage Monitoring

By Emily Jane Murray

The Florida Public Archaeology Network (FPAN) is excited to launch a new online training portal for their Heritage Monitoring Scouts (HMS Florida) program. The HMS Florida Scout Portal features online training videos, presentations, and practical lessons as well as all resources for current Scouts including artifact identification resources and monitoring examples. All Scouts will be required to take the new training program, even if they've participated in the program before.

A graphic for the HMS Florida Scout Portal. It features a blue background with a white lighthouse on a rocky shore under a blue sky with palm trees. The text 'NEW! HMS Florida Online Training and Resources' is prominently displayed in white and yellow. Below this, it says 'HMS FLORIDA SCOUT PORTAL' with a life preserver icon. A QR code is present, along with the text 'Sign up today!' and 'To take training online and have access to all HMS Scout resources!'. At the bottom, there is a URL: 'FPAN.US/TRAINING-COURSES/HMS-FLORIDA/'. Logos for 'HERITAGE MONITORING SCOUTS' and 'FLORIDA PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY NETWORK' are in the top left.

The five core modules required to become a Scout will take approximately five hours and include an introduction to the program and laws and ethics that protect cultural sites. The training covers how to identify, document, and monitor cultural sites including historical cemeteries, structures, and archaeological sites and their conditions.

The training includes locating appropriate sites, identifying cultural materials, such as artifacts, and assessing site conditions based on possible threats. Trainees learn to photograph and describe sites, threats, and materials without disturbing these special places. They also receive training to use the HMS Florida Monitoring Database, an interactive, map-based website, to submit all of this information to be securely curated and used by FPAN staff and other

professionals to help make smart decisions about these cultural resources.

Once trained, members of the public are official “HMS Florida Scouts.” Scouts can continue monitoring sites using the HMS Florida Monitoring Database with FPAN staff during organized visits, in small groups, or on their own. You can find a link to sign up for the online course at [fpan.us/hmsflorida](http://fpan.us/hmsflorida).

FPAN will hold a monitoring trip to Fish Island on April 8 at 1pm. Participants are encouraged to have signed up and completed the training before the field date. If you are interested in joining, please let Emily Jane Murray know via email: [emurray@flagler.edu](mailto:emurray@flagler.edu).

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## Remembering Founder and Life Member, Mary Willis

By Suzanne Dixon



Mary Elizabeth Willis, age 94, of St. Augustine passed away peacefully on November 21, 2024 at Ponce Care Center. She was born on December 13, 1929 in Montgomery, Alabama, to the late Willie C. Tarver and Mary Magdalene Tarver.

In 1931 she moved to St. Augustine, where she remained a lifelong resident. She was a dedicated member of our community, offering her talents and time in service to others especially as a lifelong educator, retiring from the St. Johns County School system at age 70.

She became interested in archaeology when she attended a community mini-field school in 1983 on the grounds of the Oldest House directed by Dr. John Griffin. Three years later, she became a founding member of the St. Augustine Archaeological Association where she participated in many of the early digs with other SAAA members. She also served the organization for many years as secretary, saying as long as she was secretary, she wouldn't

have to become president! Her influence encouraged her daughter, Suzanne, to also become a member (and current secretary) of SAAA. Mary received the Richard Todd Award for her service to SAAA and St. Augustine archaeology in 2011.

Mary expanded her love of learning by becoming a world traveler, including going on a National Geographic tour of World Heritage Sites in 2007. She never met a stranger, and could hold a conversation with anyone.

Mary's legacy will live on through her family, friends, and the countless lives she touched with her kindness, generosity, and lifelong love of learning. She will be deeply missed by all who had the privilege of knowing her.

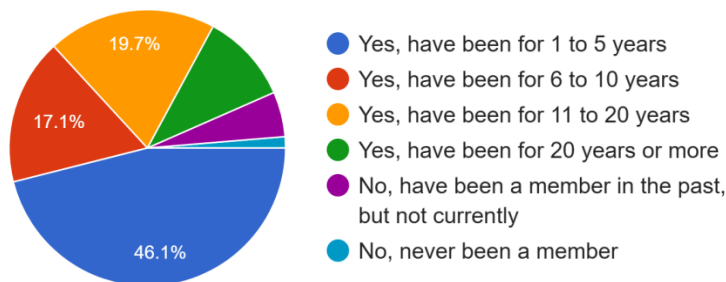
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## Long-Awaited Survey Results

Last fall a survey was emailed to all SAAA current and recent members regarding the organization. The results have been received, tabulated, and reported at the January meeting. Here is a summary—

- There are currently 128 members (not including individual family members)
- 61% live in St. Augustine, 66% in St. Johns County (It is interesting to note that 34% of members live outside the county.)
- There were 34 new members in 2024
- 76 responses to this survey

### Membership Status --



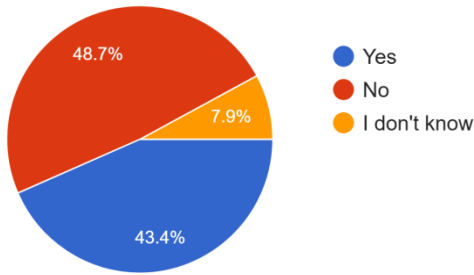
82.9% stated that raising the **membership dues** to a proposed \$20 for an individual, \$25 for a family would not cause them to drop their membership. 13.2% stated that it would, and 3.9% said maybe. Note that the dues have not been raised in 20 years.

Regarding how people **find out about meetings** and events (people could check more than one), the most find out through the direct email reminders, About 1/3 referred to the Newsletter, and a like number checked the website or Facebook page. A few also find out through word of mouth.

Nearly 60% of respondents have used the fairly new **website**. Most were looking for membership renewal, events, organization information, and ELEF. And 84% of them were able to find what they were looking for, so it appears that the design and navigation are working well.

On the other hand, only about half follow the **Facebook page**.

“Do you ‘Like’ or ‘Follow’ the SAAA Facebook Page?”

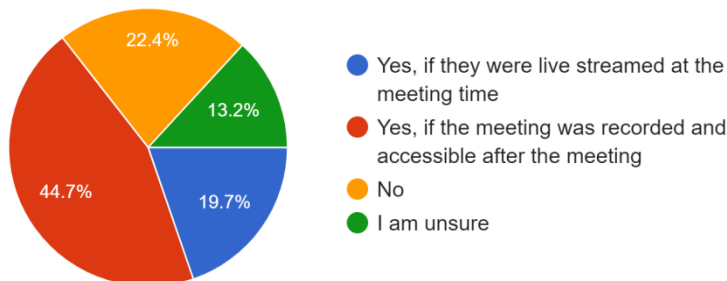


86% of respondents read the **Newsletter**, thinking it is informative and timely. 4% do not read it, and 10% were not sure.

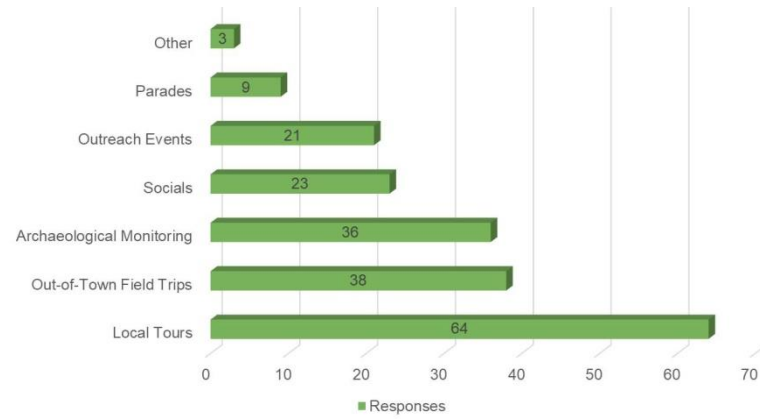
When asked about **preferred meeting lecture topics**, again respondents could choose more than one. Almost equally checked were “Local/regional” and “Florida” with “Southeast US” also rating highly. Of less interest were other regions of the US and international.

During the Covid pandemic, meetings were presented via Zoom, and the Board has been considering this again. Although only 40% of respondents had ever attended a **Zoom meeting**, there was positive response, with many citing living at a distance or driving at night.

“Would you like future meetings to be accessible via Zoom?”



Respondents were interested in attending **events** in addition to the monthly meeting.



Of events attended, monthly meetings, tours, the holiday party, and FAS conference were the most popular, followed by marker unveilings and Fish Island cleanups.

**On other topics--**

-- Only about half of the respondents had donated to the **Eugene Lyon Education Fund**, but they overwhelmingly thought the funds were being appropriately used.

-- 70% thought that the SAAA **Historical Marker** schedule was about right (one about every two years). 28% wanted the schedule speeded up (more markers), and 2% thought the town has too many markers now.

-- The opinion on **T-Shirts** was equally divided with 33% wanting the same design, 30% a new design, 30% not interested in T-shirts at all, and 7% not interested because they bought one last year.

-- 77% wanted SAAA to be more active **in policies and planning on the local level** especially on topics such as climate change, historic preservation, and local development.

The Board is going to take a close look at these responses and will be implementing many of the suggestions and results of the survey in the next year.

Feel free to email us at StAugArch@gmail if you have additional comments that were not captured in the survey.

Thanks to those who took time to help us shape the future of SAAA!

-- The SAAA Board of Directors



**HOLIDAY  
PARTY  
2024**

