



January 2008 Volume 5 Number 2

Useppa Island- Jan. 30

Amelia Island- Feb. 8-15

Carefree Learner
Feb. 19

Shell Key-March 4

www.Englewoodshellclub.org

President's Message—

Welcome to a New Year of shelling! I hope your Holiday was both merry and relaxing, because shelling activities really kick into high gear now! There are excursions, wonderful programs, study group, ShellCrafters and outreach activities all ready for you. In addition it is time to enter or at least attend a Florida Shell Show.

Thanks so much to Brenda Steele and her committee for the lovely Holiday Luncheon at Manasota Beach Club. Buffy told me following the luncheon that if a group of us wanted to go shelling on Manasota Key in April or next autumn and then come for lunch at the club, she would welcome us! Thanks also to Nancy Weborg who has agreed to spearhead our spring picnic, with a little advice from Jackie McLean.

I can't wait to learn the results of our slogan contest! I can tell you already that we have some very creative members. Selection of the winner won't be easy!

Richard and I realized that we began editing the Shell Scoop, our newsletter in 2005. It is now 2008! We don't want to hog all the fun and would be more than happy to turn it over to a new person. Fresh perspectives and new ideas are wonderful. Speaking of change, the nominating committee will begin work soon. Plan to say "Yes!" when they (or the new officers) call to fill next year's leadership positions. Being an officer or committee chair is so fun in this group, because we have such enthusiastic members who are always ready to help when asked. I believe I counted 27 people's names (several mentioned more than once) who are helping with current projects in this newsletter alone!

Anita Wilson

Christmas Tree at Cedar Point—

About 15 people helped decorate the Christmas tree at Cedar Point Monday, December 10. There was a great mix of new and continuing club members just as we had for the Boca Grande trip. Almost everyone came prepared with cameras to record ideas for making more decorations at home. Both Anna Croteau and Anita Wilson brought refreshments and a festive time was had by all. A nice picture of the tree and club members was featured in the *Englewood Sun*. A smaller group put the decorations away on January 7. Thanks to everyone who helped and a special thank you to Doris Lyons and Barbara Myers who spearheaded the take-down process!



World's Oldest Animal—

A clam estimated to be 405-410 years old was recently dredged from Icelandic waters by a team of researchers according to a recent article in the *Sarasota Herald Tribune*. This animal was alive when Shakespeare was writing his plays! The previously oldest animal on Earth was also a clam, but it was only 220 years old when found in 1982 off the North American coast.

Upcoming Excursions—

Two trips were announced by Ruth Middlebrooks at the November meeting, after the last newsletter went to print. An excursion to Useppa Island will be Wednesday, January 30. We will meet at 9:15 at the Pink Elephant Boat Marina in Boca Grande where we will be transported to Useppa Island on the *Tropic Star*. Useppa, an island with intriguing history, is south of Boca Grande and north of Captiva. It was named by pirate Jose Gaspar for one of his captives. Earlier it was home to the Calusa Indians and later was an exclusive fishing and boating club. It is only recently that non-members have been allowed to visit the island. Shell Club members attending will have the opportunity to tour the Useppa Historical Society Museum and have lunch at the Useppa Island Club.

Tuesday, March 4 is the date for our excursion to Shell Key, also expedited by Ruth. We will leave Lemon Bay Shopping Center by bus at 6:15 a.m. Shell Key is a small barrier island just south of Pass-A-Grille and St. Pete Beach. We reach the island via a 10 minute ferry ride. The ferry takes us to the island 1-2 hours before it begins to transport the general public to allow us a head start on great shelling. In the last few years, this island has yielded the most diverse and the largest shell specimens of any of our trips. Upon return from Shell Key, there will be time for lunch in the quaint village of Pass-A-Grille, before the bus returns us to Englewood at 4 p.m. Cost for the bus and ferry is \$47.25/person. Bring \$1.00 tip for our bus driver. If you have not registered and paid for this trip, be sure to do so at the January meeting or send your money to Ruth Middlebrooks.

Also be sure to remember the Carefree Learner trip February 19. We are all wishing good weather and loads of shells for the group that is heading to Amelia Island for a week in February!

Shell Club Home Tour Set—

Four of our members, Bill Notto, Helen Gardner, Jane Guy, and Linda Powers have graciously offered to show their shell collections.

On March 12, they will be "AT HOME" from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. so that any member of Englewood Shell Club may visit to see their shell collections. This is a wonderful opportunity for our members to get some ideas for their own use.

Handouts with directions to these members' homes will be available at the January and February meetings. If you cannot attend these meetings, the addresses follow: Bill Notto, 6231 Daffodil Road, Venice; Helen Gardner, 429 Bermuda Isles Circle, Venice; Jane Guy, 5839 McKinley Road, Venice and Linda Powers, 2700 N. Beach Road #D-206, Englewood.

Thanks to Betty Turner and Kim Duperault for chairing the Home Tour activity.

Harry Shares His Expertise—

Harry Berryman, who has won 60 major awards in his 25 years as a shell show scientific display competitor, shared his secrets with the club at the November 2007 meeting. The first decision to make is deciding which shell/shells should be displayed and what categories to use. He said that because there are so many cones and murex, competing in these families are tough categories to score a win.



Having a shell in prime condition and keeping it that way is another secret to winning. Harry recommends original Armor All as a great cleaner; it also stops ultraviolet light from fading the shell's color. It works particularly well to enhance dark colors. The second big decision is deciding how to display your shell(s). He pointed out that you don't necessarily want the greatest contrast between background and the shell, because the background may wash out the vibrancy of the shell. For example, he used a pale blue cloth to show off a white alabaster murex. Labels are one of the most important parts of a display. Be sure you have no typos and that every shell has the currently accepted name! Harry demonstrated how to use a paper cutter to make each label exactly the same size as all the others. His tip on labels is to be short, sweet and to the point. Harry cautioned against "nailing down" your shells and signage too quickly. Play with it a while and proofread over and over (and have others proof it as well) is his advice. Fasten everything down only shortly before you head for competition. Harry suggested self-sticking Velcro or plastic putty to secure shells and double faced tape for labels when the time comes. Harry recommends a backdrop, something like a 30-inch board. The backdrop should appear to say "Hey, come see this great display!" Harry suggested we always take pictures of each finished board for future reference. He gave us tips for transporting shells and wished us luck with our shell show exhibitions. The editor could fill the entire newsletter with a synopsis of Harry's talk! These are just a few of the highlights. Thanks, Harry!

Sand Dollar Tips—

The following was received from Ann Madden. We thought you might be interested since we have collected lots of sand dollars recently.

To Cure Sand Dollars

1. Place sand dollars in a dish or pan
2. Pour hydrogen peroxide over dollars, covering completely—remove after immersion, and...
3. Dry in sunlight (turning dollars over after first hour)
4. Rinse with tap water.

To Preserve Sand Dollars

1. Prepare a small quantity of equal parts Elmer's glue (PVA) and water
2. Place sand dollars on wax paper rounded side up
3. Paint glue solution on rounded sides and allow to dry
4. Flip dollars and paint flat sides.

Slogan Contest Time—

The January 22 meeting will be the last day to submit your suggestions for the new club slogan! You can also submit ideas directly to Anita Wilson before that date. (See the article in the November newsletter.) Anita will compile an anonymous list of all the suggestions and submit it to the committee composed of Jane Guy, Ruth Middlebrooks and Nancy Weborg who will select the best five. All members attending the February meeting will have a chance to vote for their favorite of the five and the winner will be announced at the end of the meeting and in the March newsletter.

Newsletter On-Line—

There is still time to sign up to obtain the March newsletter on-line. Contact Anita Wilson at ramassociates@earthlink.net to sign up.

More on Oiling your Shells—

Harry Berryman shared an article by Richard Sedlak, entitled *Oiling Your Shells—a Compilation of Conch-L Postings* which was published in the *Busycon*, newsletter of the Broward Shell Club. Harry enclosed this article following the discussion at our November meeting. Anita has taken the liberty of summarizing and quoting from his article for you.

“Using baby oil has been quite disastrous to many of our northern Australian (and South Florida) shells”. A fungal growth actually permeates the shell surface. Richard says that he understands many baby oils are vegetable-oil-based and that is the problem. He states that some brand-name baby oils are pure mineral oil and work fine. Paraffin (what we call kerosene in this country) also is mineral-based and works well. He also finds that kerosene works well to preserve the periostracum of both gastropods and bivalves.

“I am still set on Armour All, have been using it for about 10 years or more and could not be happier. Not only does it enhance the colors, but most of all it is a sun blocker and stops the shell colors from fading. Works great on xenophoreas (whites) with sponges, etc.”

“I can tell you one success story for WD-40. A number of years ago, I obtained one of the pinkish *Conus pertusus* from the Philippines. I kept it in complete darkness, and it faded hopelessly in less than a year. On the recommendations of a dealer, I got another one and used WD-40 on it. It is still bright and many years old.” One last point “...the famous Gary Magnotte of ...long-gone Burry's Shell Museum would swear by using a 50/50 combination of mineral spirits and mineral oil. The mineral spirits helps the mineral oil permeate the shell and give it a 'natural' look without making it look like it was coated with anything at all!” “Just do not EVER use varnish!!”

Boca Grande Field Trip—

“Wentletrap” was “word and shell of the day” for the Boca Grande field trip December 13. Many of the approximately 20-25 people participating found wentletraps while enjoying a lovely sunny morning followed by a fun lunch at South Beach. It turned out to be a fairly good shelling day with a wide variety of microshells and larger shells as well. Shelling was much better than it had been earlier in the week and it was such fun to get better acquainted with several new club members.



Our Club Scrapbooks—

Amie Barnicle is our Club Historian. She thanks those who took time to provide items of interest for the 2007 scrapbook. She looks forward to receiving news clippings, photos and more that can be included in the 2008 scrapbook. Please include a note naming the event, its location and who is in the picture. In the past Amie tried to give copies of the pictures she took to members, but since so many members have cameras, it would be great if they would share. Amie's pictures can be viewed in the scrapbook, but copies won't be made for individuals. Do take time to view the scrapbooks before our regular meetings; they are usually on display in the library area.

Study Group Welcomes You—

The study group will be meeting Mondays, February 11, March 10 and April 14 at 1 p.m. at Cedar Point Park. It is such fun to exchange ideas and gain new insights about shells with this delightful group.



Outreach Report—

The Outreach committee met Friday, January 18 at Diana Leonhardt's home to gear up for spring activities. They are currently planning the classes for Nanette Hopkin's Boca Grande Island School and will begin those soon. Debbie Freeman gave two talks in November and two more in January to area groups. Anita Wilson will speak to Chapter HH of PEO February 15 on "Sailor's Valentines and Other Shell Lore" for their Valentine program.

Nominating Committee Will Convene—

Audrey Grant, Ruth Middlebrooks, Jackie McLean and Sue Rundle have graciously agreed to serve as this year's nominating committee. Plan to say "Of course, I'd be happy to help out!" when they call.

Cardita, the scientific name of cockles, comes from the Greek word for "heart".

Spring Programs—

Debbie Freeman will share the wonderful program entitled "The Naked Shell" that she has been giving around the community with the Club at the January 22 meeting. Debbie is a dedicated sheller who loves to share her passion and knowledge with others; she is the immediate past president of ESC and has an impressive and extensive shell collection.

Larry Strange of Sanibel will address the February 26 meeting. Larry was a University biology teacher before he moved to Sanibel and opened a Shell Shop there. He will speak about little known shells of southwest Florida.

Joyce Matthys will be the March 25 speaker. She had been originally scheduled for the January meeting, so you can read more about her in the November Shell Scoop. Thanks to Debbie for agreeing to speak in January rather than in March! Joyce's title is "Tales and Trails of Living Shells". All three spring programs promise to be outstanding!

The April meeting will be a picnic, strictly a social event to finish off the year. The picnic will be a mid-day event at the Englewood Gardens Beach Club, 2560 Beach Road, Manasota Key on Tuesday, April 22. Members will bring a dish to share while hamburgers, beverages and paper goods will be provided by the club. Nancy Weborg has graciously volunteered to spearhead the picnic. Sign-up will be at the March meeting.

ShellCrafters Create Beauty—

ShellCrafters made lovely shadow boxes at the January 11 meeting at Tringali Center. They will be meeting Fridays February 8 and March 14 at 1 p.m. in the same location. February promises table and wall decorations; March brings a choice of baskets or wreaths, according to Christina Anglin.



Welcome New Members—

Eleven new members have joined since we published the November newsletter! Welcome to Joy Brandt, Nancy Bradley, Margaret Buzzell, Carol Genest, JoAnn House, Judy Kauk, Richard Murgia, Frank Plummer, Rita Stonehouse, Dottie Swann, and Laura Voorhies.

The Future of Shells—

Many of us marvel at the fossil shell record; to hold a multi-millions-year-old shell in the hand in a Florida fossil pit sends shivers up our spines. So what about the future? The short article in the November 2007 *National Geographic* entitled “The Acid Threat” brought a new and different shiver. We all know that atmospheric carbon dioxide levels are rising and contribute to global warming. We’ve also read that oceans may be our salvation because daily they soak up 25 million tons of excess carbon dioxide produced by earth. But the result is that the oceans become more acidic. In the presence of acid, calcium compounds go into solution. Your editor remembers one of her basic college nutrition class demos—put a chicken bone in vinegar and a few weeks later it will bend like rubber, because the calcium has been dissolved from the bone. As the oceans become more acidic, shelled animals may perish because the shell is calcium carbonate. As the carbon dioxide forms carbonic acid, it is no longer available to form shell. In fact, it can dissolve shell. Shelled animals may begin to perish by the year 2100. To learn more, read the article on pages 110-111.

Holiday Luncheon was Festive—

The Manasota Beach Club outdid themselves once again as the setting for the Shell Club Holiday Luncheon. Everyone loved their soup whether it was chilled blueberry or hot salmon and mussel broth. The variety kept right on coming with fantastic chicken, red snapper, pasta, salads, deli board, salads, roasted vegetables and more. The dessert bar did feature lots of chocolate as promised and more besides. We ate shells everywhere—pasta to salads. It was great fun to see each other “All dressed up”, commented several people. The gift exchange was fun and treasures were many. Thanks so much to Brenda Steele who chaired the event and to her committee of Marilyn Boyd, Eunice Herr, Jackie McLean, Nancy Weborg and Mary Bain.



Shells and Computer Chips—

A Note from *IBM News* and Astronaut Trail Shell Club Newsletter—

“Taking a cue from seashells, IBM is using a pattern-creating process found in nature to manufacture its latest computer chips. The company has adapted the process that forms seashells, snowflakes and tooth enamel to make trillions of holes that provide insulating vacuums around the nanoscale wires inside each chip. As a result, the new chips work 35 percent faster or consume 15 percent less energy than the most advanced chips made using conventional techniques.”

Fun Facts for Shellers—

- Lucines live deeply buried in sand or mud. They build a tube of sand grains cemented by mucus to reach up to the ocean, through which water is drawn down to the gills of the buried mollusk. An exhalant siphon returns the water and waste to the sea. The foot which builds the sandy tube may be as long as 12 inches.
- The cockle of the old Irish ballad “Sweet Molly Malone” are still sold in “Dublin’s fair city” and all over Europe where they are a popular seafood. Our calico clams are also praised by gourmets, even though they aren’t very popular here.
- Ever wonder about the little indentation on a spiny jewel box? The animal anchors itself to a bit of dead shell or pebble when it is in the very young swimming stage of life. Later it lets loose, but the indentation remains.
- Purplish Semele shells may be rose, reddish, yellow, orange or brownish as well as purple.
- Look for common sundials, *Architectonica nobilis*, among sea pansies when you are snorkeling or diving over sandy seafloor in shallow water below the low tide mark anyplace along Florida’s coast (at least in 1975).

From the Seashell Identifier by Sonia Bennett Murray, 1975. Sterling Publishing, N.Y.

Englewood Shell Club

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