



Englewood Shell Club

The Shell Scoop

November, 2006 Volume 4 Number 1

Dues Are Due!

**Study Group 2nd Mondays 1:00
Cedar Point**

**ShellCrafters 2nd Fridays 1:00
Tringali**

President's Message—

Dear Fellow Shellers,

The year has begun well; more than 50 members attended the first meeting and the November field trips are filled to overflowing! We've signed up a dozen new members already plus one reinstatement to make a Baker's Dozen.

The Holiday Luncheon at the Manasota Beach Club promises to be a treat! Anna Croteau, luncheon chair, says November 28 is the sign-up deadline. Personally, I'm quite excited about celebrating at the Manasota Beach Club; my sister from Palm Beach tells me the Palm Beach Post has at least one article each year saying THE place to go on Florida's West coast is the Manasota Beach Club and here we are!

I have been heartened by the excellent suggestions for increasing the Club's income. Joe Bao, our treasurer, informed us at the October meeting that we have been spending at least \$500 more than our revenue in recent years. Our past budgetary surplus is exhausted. We are generous folk and now realize we have been donating two-thirds of each year's revenue to worthy area groups. That hasn't left us much for our own needs. In addition, we have subsidized new members \$2.50/individual-\$10/family for nametags. We voted at the October meeting to require that future new members pay for their name badges and we'll be coming up with other income producers soon.

Have a wonderful year shelling on field trips, attending monthly meetings and socials, ShellCrafters and study group! We're looking forward to another great Mini-Shell Show in February. Have a grand Holiday! Happy shelling to one and all.

Anita Wilson

Help Decorate the Tree—

Calling all club members to come decorate the Cedar Point Christmas Tree with our wonderful handmade ornaments! We will be decorating the tree Thursday afternoon, December 14 at 1 P.M. Take down time will be Monday, January 15 at 10 a.m. Sign up to help with these fun activities at the November meeting. In addition to the camaraderie, the best thing about helping decorate the tree is that you get all sorts of great ideas for making ornaments for your own tree! Bobbie Rodgers of Cedar Point Park says our tree will be the Cedar Point feature in the upcoming Venice Gulf Coast Living Magazine! More great publicity for the club! Be sure you schedule time for your Holiday Guests to visit Cedar Point to see our tree!



Welcome New Members—

Mary Bain, Matt and Dona Blaine, Sandy Dameron, Cindy Gettle, Sally Healey, Jackie Knighton, Rod Robinson, Bob and Kim Seats, and Brenda Steele joined the club at or since the October meeting! Welcome also to Bill Rundle, who has joined his wife Sue as a club member, and a hug and welcome back to Marj Battista, a past member who rejoined the group this year! Happy Shelling to everyone!

Last Chance for Christmas Party—

November 28 is the last day to sign up and pay for the Holiday Luncheon, according to Anna Croteau, event chairman. The luncheon will be Tuesday, December 12 at the Manasota Beach Club, 7660 Manasota Key Road. Punch and finger food will be served in the Surf Room at noon and we will dine at 12:30 in the main dining room. Cost of the luncheon which includes a choice of hot or cold soup and a buffet including chicken, fish, deli board, green salad, pasta salad, veggies, fruit, assorted breads, beverage and a dessert bar with lots of chocolate is only \$19.00 per person including tax and gratuity. Checks should be made out to Joe Bao, Club treasurer, but send the check and completed form to Anna Croteau, 1371 Kiskadee Drive, Englewood, 34224. Parking is across the street from the club. If you wish to exchange a shell-related gift, bring one to exchange; a \$10 maximum is suggested. Since the Club is right on the beach, bring along a pair of walking shoes if you plan to stroll the beach after the luncheon! See You at the Club!

Frolic with the Carefree Learner—

Field Trips aboard the Carefree Learner are scheduled for Wednesday, December 6 and Thursday, January 18. The Carefree Learner is a boat belonging to the Sarasota High School and is used for the school's marine biology program. The vessel can also be chartered by outside groups, such as Englewood Shell Club. The charter comes complete with a captain who knows Sarasota Bay like no one else and the school's biologist, Tommy Young. This team takes our group into the bay at low tide and sets us ashore on a tidal island where we can shell and explore the aquatic plants and animals to our heart's content. We can collect shells and specimens, but we ask that you take no more than two live animals or plants of a given species. Since the Captain and Tommy spend nearly every day on the bay, they are a goldmine of information and take us to the very best shelling spots.

"We sail promptly at 7 A.M. from Marina Jack's marina in Sarasota!", says Debbie Freeman who made arrangements for the trips. "We will be on the sand flats for about three hours. Dress in layers! The boat is open and it will be cold during the morning trip out into the bay. Listen to the weather report and dress accordingly!", warns Debbie. Wear shoes that you don't mind getting wet and muddy. We often wade in knee-deep water. Bring zip lock bags, rigid refrigerator containers for fragile sand dollars, pill bottles for tiny shells, and a bucket with a handle for larger shells, but remember, you must carry everything as you tromp the flats! Debbie suggests a towel and a dry pair of socks for the trip back, if desired.

Two Crafty Ladies—

Debbie Freeman and Eunice Herr were two of the members who shared their summer crafts with the group at the October general meeting. Debbie made



two exquisite, but very different, Sailor's Valentines as well as a Sea Witch. Eunice brought a lovely nightlight she made so creatively by inserting a string of cool white lights inside a glass block, and then decorating the top of the block with a shell arrangement.



Charlotte County Outreach—

Thanks to Diana Leonhardt, Irene Murray, and Regis Curtin, our club's outreach program thrived this summer. The Englewood Shell Club has provided a hands-on educational exhibit on shells for children attending the Charlotte County Historical Center. In return Diana read a very nice thank you note from the Charlotte County Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department at the October meeting. The center is in the historic Bayshore Live Oak Park on the waterfront in Charlotte Harbor. The address is 22959 Bayshore Road. If you would like to see our exhibit and others at the museum, go southbound on US 41 from Port Charlotte, turn right on Edgewater Drive and then left onto Bayshore Road.

Outreach will also present a shell program to the public Thursday, December 21 at 2 P.M. at Cedar Point Park.

Extra Pictures Wanted—

Amie Barnicle, Club Historian, would like extra pictures of club activities or publicity articles for the scrapbook. Thanks a million! Our scrapbooks are on display in the library corner at each meeting.

Isle of Palms, South Carolina—

Due to popular demand, we are once again going to the Isle of Palms outside Charleston, South Carolina for a one week shelling adventure March 3-10, 2007. The group will car pool and will stay in an ocean front villa. A four-bedroom, four bath villa has been reserved and a second can be rented if there is sufficient interest soon enough to make the reservation. Each villa has a fully equipped kitchen, living room, washer and dryer, and balcony overlooking the water. It is a short walk over the dunes to the beach.



Cost of the trip is only \$250 per person plus food and transportation. The group cooks some of its meals at the villa to keep costs down, but there will also be time to enjoy Charleston and its historic waterfront and fine food. We choose to go in early March, so it will be cool to cold, but it is the storms that bring shells to the beach. Last year our members brought home lovely maculated baby's ears, whelks, olives, angel wings, augers, wentletraps, and soft corals to name a few.



Remember, as with all trips, once you have reserved a spot and paid, you are committed. There are no refunds, because we will have paid the vendor. However, if you cannot go, you are welcome to find another club member to take your spot on the trip. That person can then reimburse you for your payment. Thanks to Debbie Freeman for making arrangements for us.

Mini Shell Show in February—

Our club will be having the second annual Mini Shell Show in February at the regular meeting. Start planning now to exhibit your favorite shells. It is suggested that you use a 17" x 10.5" shirt box, or other box of similar size that you have on hand. You can line the bottom of the box with colored paper to set off your shells. Use any type of removable adhesive to hold your shells in the box; this will allow you to remove the shells from the display after the show. It is important to have each shell correctly identified. Include a sign that includes common name, scientific name, name of the person who originally described and classified the shell, the date of original classification, and the geographical origin of the shell. You can also include the primary shell habitat and information about where you found your shell, but that is optional. For example: Lightning Whelk, *Busycon contrarium*, Conrad, 1840. S.E. United States. Subtidal to 30 m; in sand. Self collected on Manasota Key, 2005. If you choose to exhibit only one shell, you may wish to include other interesting information about the shell. For example: The Lightning Whelk is one of the few left-handed shells. It is the emblem of the Englewood Shell Club. The baby whelks look exactly like miniature adults. Remember: Prizes will be awarded for the top three exhibits as judged by all the members in attendance. Set-up begins at 12:15; judging begins at 12:30. Volunteer now to help with the day's set-up.

What a Shell!—

Have you seen the new shell sculpture in the roundabout in front of Chadwick Park at Englewood beach?



Dues are Due—

Dues may be paid by renewing members beginning at the November meeting. Dues for continuing members are \$15/individual or \$25/family. All dues should be paid before January 1. "Thanks for paying promptly!", says Linda Powers, Club Vice President and membership chairman. Checks made out to Joe Bao and be given or mailed to Linda Powers, 2700 N. Beach Road, #D-106, Englewood, 34223.

Murex Minutia—

● Many Murex snails yield the pigment we associate most with Roman Royal Purple, but in fact, the exact color obtained depends on the Murex species, the pigment strength, fabric, and dyeing method and pH. Colors range from aquamarine, to reds, purples, lavenders and pinks.

● The Roman Royal Purple was more deep red, than the color we associate with the word “purple” today.

● Cleopatra’s famous barge had Murex-died purple, perfumed sails. Byzantine royalty also favored Murex-died fabrics.

● Silk and wool, both protein-based, hold the dye better than other fabrics.

● The Murex dye industry dates back to at least the 18th century B.C.

● The “sand” of entire Mediterranean beaches is still composed exclusively of crushed Murex shells, discards of the dye industry. Sixteen Mediterranean Murex species produce dye, but only three species were widely used. They were *Murex trunculus*, *M. brandaris* and *Thais* or *Purpura haemastooma*.



● The words “Phoenician” and “Phoenix” are derived from the Greek word *phoinix*, meaning purple-red. The Phoenicians were masters of the dye trade.

● Minoan buildings on Crete whose civilization endured from 3000-1000 BC were painted with frescoes made from Murex dye.

● To dye a Roman toga deep purple required 10,000 snails.

● The pigment secretions are initially colorless or light yellow. Exposure to sunlight, alkali, and oxygen turn the secretions purple. Once a fabric is dyed, an acid wash will make the color brilliant red.

● In the New World 140 species of sea snails produce dyes; three live in the Gulf of Mexico. Most, especially *Purpura* species, can be “milked” to release their dye and the animals go back live into the sea, whereas European species must be crushed and killed to release the dye. Pre-Columbian cultures from Peru to Mexico used *Muricidae* to dye textiles and make paints. Sun and seawater help activate the purple color.

● The pigment is most potent if gathered from snails in spring-time.

● Murex pigment is related chemically to indigo pigment.

Our New Member’s Art—

The following poem was written by one of our newest members, Cindy Gettle. It is wonderful to have you with us, Cindy!

Shellers

*We walk the beaches every day
To see what we can find,
All the pretty colors, and
Shells of every kind.*

*Olives, whelks, tulip and
Cockles too,
Starfish and sand dollars
Just to name a few.*

*A sky that’s deep blue and
The sun shining bright,
These are all parts of
A sheller’s delight.*

*The sand at our feet and the ocean
breeze help us to clear our mind.
The beauty all around us,
We leave all our cares behind.*

*Other people might stop and wonder:
“What is all the fuss?”*

*They don’t know that all these
Shells are truly treasures to us.*

Cindy Gettle

Members Donate—

Englewood Shell Club members donated generously at the October meeting to the Sohoton Cove protected area of the Philippine Islands. There are 25 caves and 13 inland rain-fed lakes as well as coral-filled ocean and steep-walled islands teeming with marine life in this protected ecological wonder. Although the government has designated the area as a reserve, it provided no funding. ESC members joined forces with clubs around the country by providing funds to help the people of Sudlow village preserve this marvel, and promote it as a nature center and ecotourism destination.

Shell Sale in January—

The Club has recently received shell donations from the collections of Judy Curtin, Grace Gilbert and Audrey Grant. The tentative plan at press time is that selected shells will be packaged and sold to members at the January meeting. These shells will be perfect for craft projects. Plan to come about 12:30 to purchase those you would like. Proceeds will help replenish our dwindling coffers.

ShellCrafters meet Jan. 12—

Topiaries will be the feature at the Friday, January 12 meeting of ShellCrafters, according to Doris Brown, ShellCrafters leadership team member. The group will meet at the Tringali Center at 1 P.M. Crafters will make flowers from coquinas and use them to decorate a 3" Styrofoam ball, which will be placed in the top of a cocktail glass. More coquina flowers can be placed inside the glass or be used to decorate the stem or base of the glass. Bring your own glass (5-6" tall, 2" across top), coquina shells, glue + gun or pot, shears, tweezers and toothpicks. The club has some coquina shells, but not enough for everyone's flowers. The club will provide the Styrofoam ball, seed beads for the flower centers, and greenery for fashioning leaves. Doris suggests you bring a smooth, shiny tile to work on. She has found the flowers do not stick to the tile. Each person attending will pay a \$5.00 supply and facility charge. Sign up at the November meeting or at the Christmas Party and pick up a supply list at that time. Thanks, Doris, for getting the group started last fall and this!

Coming in January—

The club members who went to Eleuthera last May on the first ESC International Shelling Trip will provide the January 23 program. There will be a video produced by Glenn Freeman, shells, and other fun to share! Thanks, Marilyn Boyd, for serving as this year's program chairman! We are off to a great start.

November Field Trips—

Field trips for the year had a perfect beginning thanks to Marilyn Boyd who found four fantastic boats and captains to take a large and eager group of beginning and advanced shellers to the great shelling islands in Gasparilla Sound on a day with absolutely perfect weather. One of the most exciting things we saw were hundreds if not thousands of migrating ragged sea hares, *Bursatella leachi plei*, grazing in herds across the sand flats and sea grass beds. These marine slugs come to grassy shallow, protected bay waters only to lay their eggs, so seeing them *en masse* is a rarity. This species is found only on the western coast of Florida and in the Caribbean. Sea hares are hermaphroditic and each individual may lay up to half a billion eggs in tangled masses of yellow strings. As some of our shellers discovered, sea hare release purple ink when molested!



At least two shellers found angel wings and several located beautiful olives. We found sunray Venus, small horse conch, brittle stars and sea stars, many sand dollars, disk dosinea, many lightning whelk, bubbles, a few marginella and much more. After shelling two very different islands, we took off for Don Pedro. Big rollers were pounding the beach and coquinas were abundant. Rod Robinson, one of our new members, located huge piles of fascinating shells about 1.5 miles north of the picnic shelter, but no one else ventured quite that far after already mucking through the sound. Coming home our captains took the north docking boats out into Stump Pass, and then up Ski Alley along the state park and then back down the intracoastal. Thank you, so much for organizing the trip, Marilyn, and to Leonard and Shari Armstrong, Jim Boyd, Joe Bao and Dave Walsh for providing boats and serving as such skillful captains.



The fossil trip to Naples was a sell-out early in September and Dr. Gary Schmelz, our knowledgeable guide, managed to convince the pit to up the group size by 25 percent! We still left hopeful fossil finders behind. The newsletter went to press before the Saturday, November 18 trip so details will be reported orally to the group at the November meeting, but the picture shows the types of fossils the Wilsons found in the pit on a previous trip with Gary. Thanks to Ruth Middlebrooks and Anita Wilson for organizing the trip.



Attend a Shell Show—

Sign up at the November meeting to car pool to Melbourne on Saturday, January 20 to attend the Space Coast Shell Festival at the Melbourne Auditorium. This is the first big show of the year and always has wonderful scientific exhibits. Anita has received entry forms for the craft exhibition at the Sanibel Shell Show in March. What fun it would be to exhibit at the 70th annual Sanibel Show!

Englewood Shell Club
Rich & Anita Wilson
935 Bayshore Drive
Englewood, FL 34223-2203

Club Calendar—

(Clip and Post for Reference)

Wed., Dec. 6—Carefree Learner, Marina Jack's, Sarasota, 7 a.m.

Fri., Dec, 8—ShellCrafters, Tringali, 1 p.m.: rescheduled shell-decorated purse project.

Mon., Dec. 11—Shell Study Group, Cedar Point Park, 1 p.m.

Tues, Dec. 12—Holiday Luncheon, Manasota Beach Club, 12 noon.

Thurs., Dec. 14— Decorate Club Christmas Tree, Cedar Point Park 1 p.m.

Happy Holidays!

Mon. Jan. 8—Shell Study Group, Cedar Point, 1 p.m.

Fri., Jan. 12—ShellCrafters, Tringali, 1 p.m. Coquina Topiary Project.

Mon., Jan. 15—Take Down Christmas Tree. Cedar Point, 10 a.m.

Tues, Jan. 16— ESC Board Meeting, Cedar Point. 10 a.m.

Thurs., Jan. 18—Carefree Learner, Marina Jack's, Sarasota, 7 a.m.

Sat., Jan 20—Melbourne Shell Show, Car Pool

Tues., Jan. 23—Monthly Club Meeting, Lemon Bay Park, 1 p.m. Eleuthera Memories

Feb. 16-18 Sarasota Shell Show, Municipal Auditorium

Feb. 24-25 St. Petersburg Shell Show, Rec. Center, 9100 113th St. N., Seminole (Note new location)

March 1-3—70th Sanibel Shell Show. Anita has craft and scientific entry forms.

March 3-10—Isle of Palms, South Carolina Week of Shelling