



The Beautiful

Newsletter of the Sarasota Shell Club

www.Sarasotashellclub.com

Meetings 2nd Thursdays, September-April at Fire Station #2, 2071 Waldemere St Sarasota.



From the Prez

by Dennis Sargent

The October meeting is approaching fast. A number of items concerning the Shell Show need to be handled so there will be a special Board meeting at 5:30 pm on Thursday, October 10th at the Waldemere Fire Station. The Board will make some decisions and then they can be presented to the membership for a vote at the regular meeting at 7:00 pm.

Our new officers and board members have hit the ground running and have adopted some measures to improve our transparency and accountability to the membership. I am proud of the way that they are bringing new ideas that should help to improve the experience for all of the members of the club.

One of our biggest challenges through the years is to encourage members to get involved. If any of you would like to participate in any of the activities or programs of the Sarasota Shell Club during or outside of the monthly meetings, please let us know! I am looking forward to seeing you on Thursday.

Best wishes,
Dennis M. Sargent

Don't Drive at Night?

If you need a ride to the meetings, or are willing to drive someone to them, please call one of the Board members.

This month's meeting is October 10 at 7:00 pm at the Waldemere Fire Station. Program by Peggy Williams on Chitons

This year's shell show is Feb. 14-16, 2014

The Board will meet at 5:30 before our regular meeting in Nov., Jan. and Mar.

Board Members

Dennis Sargent	President
Sally Pepitone	Vice President
Bruce Paulsen	Treasurer
Donna Bartels	Recording Secretary
Peggy Williams	Corresponding Secretary
Board: Terry Jones, Roseane Roble, Nancy Marini, Rich Cirrintano, Annie Ferretti	

Committee Chairmen:

Artisans	Nancy Marini
Education & Librarian:	Linda Greiner
Field Trips & Membership:	Lynn Gaulin
Historian:	Duane Kauffmann
Shell Show:	Donna Cassin
Sunshine:	Suzanne Valdez

A New Librarian

Our library is being moved to the SSC storage unit (off Hwy 70, Cortez Rd in Bradenton.) **Linda Greiner** will take over as librarian. If you need a book, or want to browse the library, call her (941-355-0586) or email her (luvseashells@gmail.com.)

More details will be coming.

Needed Urgently

Small shells that will fit into 3" X 2.5" bags for shell show. Please bring them to the meeting and give to Donna Cassin.

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Field Trips

Lynn Gaulin Co-Coordinator

The Carefree Learner

is a pontoon boat belonging to Sarasota Schools; our Shell Club has sponsored it for 25-30 years. Carefree Learner trips scheduled this year are: **Dec 3 at 7:00 A.M., Jan 16 at 7:00 A.M., and Jan. 30th at 6:45 A.M.** All trips are \$5 for each person in **cash** please, to pay the captain and for gas. Maximum of 20-22. Sign up for Carefree Learner trips at club meetings on sheets provided and pick up the handout of details of time the boat leaves, how to get to Marina Jacks, and what to bring. We leave promptly... don't be late.

Reminder field trips can only be signed up 2 months in advance **in person at club meetings** and must be paid for at that time (if there is a cost for the trip).

October: Ft DeSoto Park

Our first trip of the year will be October 19th to Ft. De Soto park. Details and maps will be available at the October 9th meeting. Please plan to stay for a few minutes to arrange car pools after the October club meeting.

November: Marco Island?

Marco Island trip needs more members to meet the minimum quota of 20 required by the boat captain November 24. If you are interested please sign up at the Oct. meeting otherwise the trip will be cancelled. If it is, I will try to find another activity to take its place.

December: Carefree Learner

Carefree Learner trip December 3 leaves promptly at 7:00 A.M. Cost is \$5, cash please, no checks.

Details, map, and what to bring is in sign up folder on membership table.

Field Trip Procedures

Sarasota Shell Club members who have paid their dues for the current year and signed a release of liability may participate in field trips.

1. Members may sign up for field trips either **before or after the monthly club**

meetings. If a fee is involved, the trip must be paid by **check only at the time of sign up** except Carefree Learner trips are paid cash.

2. Members may sign up **two months** in advance except the months of Sept. and Oct. when sign up is first come, first served.

3. Members may sign up for one other member (family or not), writing their names on individual lines on the form. Payment must be received by check for both members.

4. Members selected for each trip will be based upon the order which each signed in. If the trip is completely booked a member may sign a waiting list.

5. As cancellations occur, the next person on the waiting list will be notified and have seven days to send in payment by check. If it is not, the next person on the list is notified.

6. If the minimum number needed for a trip is not met or if the trip is cancelled, checks will be returned in a timely manner.

7. If a member is unable to go on a trip for whatever reason he must notify the Field Trip Chair. If he can be replaced from the waiting list, his money will be refunded; if no one is available, the fee will not be refunded.

8. Carefree Learner field trips must be paid in **cash** for each trip at the time of sign up. No exceptions.

Membership

Lynn Gaulin

Membership dues are now payable for the 2013-14 club year. Our new form is available on our website sarasotashellclub.com or at the club meetings. Renewal dues have not changed, single is \$15 or family \$20. New membership for single is \$21.50 (includes your membership badge) and family (of 2 people living at same address) is \$33 (includes 2 name badges). Included in yearly membership is e-mailing of monthly newsletter, Beauui. **If you need to have newsletter mailed by USPS it is \$15 extra for postage.** Also, this year **to receive a roster with member information and photographs, add \$4 to your dues.** Otherwise you will receive a paper copy of membership information.

Member's dues not received by November 1st (per our constitution) will be dropped from membership roll and will not be included in either roster.

Hermit Crabs Need Shells

A conservation group in southern Taiwan's Pingtung County has called for the public to send seashells to them to save homeless hermit crabs. Many of the animals now face a life-threatening situation because the availability of the seashells they use as protection is at a very low level due to people collecting shells and the popularity of hermit crabs as children's pets.

Yang Mei-yun, director of the Houwan Preservation Association, recently initiated a "send shells to me" project on the Internet, calling on the public to send the association leftover shells from seafood restaurants. Yang said the association will clean up the shells and distribute them on the seashore at Houwan, in the county's Checheng Township, to provide homes for hermit crabs.

The July 24,, 2013 issue of Taiwan's United DailyNews stated that about 95 percent of the crabs in Houwan live in the discarded shells of giant African land snails, but these are unsuitable for the crabs because the shells are light and fragile. The crabs often face life-threatening situations from being stepped on, Yang



said that many crabs have been seen using unexpected items in place of

shells, such as cans and even plastic bottle caps. She added that because hermit crabs are popular pets for children, many people illegally trap the animals and sell them by the thousands at markets in central and northern Taiwan.

According to a study by Chiu Yuh-wen, a professor from Kaohsiung Medical University, among the 400 butcher land hermit crabs, 1,500 viola hermit crabs, and 60 indos land hermit crabs they recorded between May and July this year, only 1 percent of them were living in suitable shells.

from The Junonia, newsletter of the Sanibel Shell Club

Octopus snatches coconut and runs

By Rebecca Morelle

Science reporter, BBC News

An octopus and its coconut-carrying antics have surprised scientists. Underwater footage reveals that the creatures scoop up halved coconut shells before scampering away with them so they can later use them as shelters.

Writing in the journal *Current Biology*, the team says it is the first example of tool use in octopi. One of the researchers, Dr Julian Finn from Australia's Museum Victoria, told BBC News: "I almost drowned laughing when I saw this the first time." He added: "I could tell it was going to do something, but I didn't expect this - I didn't expect it would pick up the shell and run away with it."

Quick Getaway

The veined octopuses (*Amphioctopus marginatus*) were filmed between 1999 and 2008 off the coasts of Northern Sulawesi and Bali in Indonesia. The bizarre behaviour was spotted on four occasions. The eight-armed beasts used halved coconuts that had been discarded by humans and had eventually



The veined octopus is a meaty feast for predators

settled in the ocean.

Dr Mark Norman, head of science at Museum Victoria, Melbourne, and one of the authors of the paper,

said: "It is amazing watching them excavate one of these shells. They probe their arms down to loosen the mud, then they rotate them out."

After turning the shells so the open side faces upwards, the octopi blow jets of mud out of the bowl before extending their arms around the shell - or if they have two halves, stacking them first, one inside the other - before stiffening their legs and tip-toeing away.

Home, Sweet Home

The octopi were filmed moving up to 20 meters with the shells. And their awkward gait,

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which the scientists describe as "stilt-walking", is surprisingly speedy, possibly because the creatures are left vulnerable to attack from predators while they scuttle away with their



prized coconuts.

Surprisingly Smart

Tool use was once thought to be an exclusively human skill, but this behaviour has now been

observed in a growing list of primates, mammals and birds.

The researchers say their study suggests that these coconut-grabbing octopuses should now be added to these ranks.

Professor Tom Tregenza, an evolutionary ecologist from the University of Exeter, UK, and another author of the paper, said: "A tool is something an animal carries around and then uses on a particular occasion for a particular purpose.

"While the octopus carries the coconut around there is no use to it - no more use than an umbrella is to you when you have it folded up and you are carrying it about. The umbrella only becomes useful when you lift it above your head and open it up. And just in the same way, the coconut becomes useful to this octopus when it stops and turns it the other way up and climbs inside it."

He added that octopuses already have a reputation for being an intelligent invertebrate. He explained: "They've been shown to be able to solve simple puzzles, there is the mimic octopus, which has a range of different species that it can mimic, and now there is this tool use.

"They do things which, normally, you'd only expect vertebrates to do.

View a video of the octopi at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8408233.stm> (you have to wait through a 15-second ad for Goldman Sachs)

Travel Tales

by Peggy Williams

Tobago Southern Caribbean

The first time I went to Tobago there were three of us: me, a friend and her 15-year-old son. We planned to find Music Volutes and Short-Spined Murex. We found the right kind of area right away and searched for quite a while for the volutes without success. Then we tried for the murex among mangrove roots in a bay near a boat launch ramp, again without success.

We asked around, and someone told us to look for a guy named Mullet and how to find him. We went looking but he wasn't home.

That evening the receptionist came to our room and said, in awe, "Mullet is here." We went to the office to see him: a fine figure of a man, tall, muscular, and very, very black of skin. He said he could show us both shells and we made arrangements to go in his boat.

Looking for the murex, we went into a bay - the very same one we'd been in before. Among the mangrove roots, Mullet came up with a murex. We looked and looked, but couldn't see them unless he actually put his finger on one! We found several and were satisfied.

For the Volutes, we went out at night. We couldn't see a thing - except Mullet's cigarette. We went to the exact same area we had searched in vain in the daytime, and the volutes were erupting out of the sand where they'd been buried and gallop-

ing off on the hunt for dinner. We picked up 70 between us, plus a few other night-hunting

shells. We took them back to the room,



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sorted out the best, and took the rest to an area near where we'd found them and released them.

On that trip we also made arrangements to dive with Jayne Boyle, an American who ran a shoestring dive operation. We met at her boat and discovered that she had had engine trouble the day before, leaving her divemaster to go ashore on his own (since she couldn't pick him up) and walk home. She had borrowed an engine for our dive and jury-rigged it on the back of the bare boat. There was no ladder - we had to climb over the transom to get in the boat.

Diving in that area was drift diving, in a 3-4 knot current, very swift. However, if you went shallower it wasn't so bad, so we moved up and down during the dive. There were huge sponges, all leaning with the current. I thought when I turned my head my mask was going to come off. Sweeping along, we didn't find many shells but had a great ride!

(I am planning another trip to Tobago next spring.)

Coming Home

It seems like every trip I've taken to Honduras has a story about the trip home. When we left Guanaja for the mainland of Honduras, we flew for awhile then set down on a deserted runway, scaring off the cows on the way. There was a shack there, but no one around and no sign saying where we were. I was in the back of the plane and couldn't hear much but I caught the word, "fuego" - fire!

Some of the passengers elected to get off the plane and look for a bus, so I guess we were on the mainland and not on an island. I thought it would be best to stick around until we could at least learn more. Finally we took off again and landed at the right airport. I never did find out where we were.

Sea Urchins

Quite often a population of sea animals will "bloom" for awhile and be very common, then go back to their former population when their food is consumed. This happens with sea urchins, for better and worse.

In Brazil it was better. The first time I went, there were so many sea urchins you couldn't miss them; however, the helmet shells, which eat sea urchins, were very happy, stuffed full, and growing so quickly their shells didn't have time to get encrusted with the usual gunk, so we found some real beauties.

At the first beach we visited in Puerto Rico in 1987, there was a sign saying, "Caución. Hay erizos." I asked someone in Spanish what are erizos, and the explanation plainly described sea urchins. These were the kind with long spines, that can penetrate gloves and even dive booties, so I proceeded with caution...but not enough, since I have a lump of scar tissue to this day that grew around a sea urchin spine I couldn't remove from my leg.



My Non-Trip to Australia

In 2006 I planned a trip to Western Australia and found 5 people to come with me. It promised to be an exciting trip, with lots to see and a great variety of shells to be found.

I also signed up with another guide for a shelling trip to West Africa: Senegal and the Azores, to be finished about two weeks before we left for Australia. Senegal was beautiful, with colorful costumes on friendly people and lots of shells to be found. One day we went by ferry to a popular island and, not knowing how far I would have to tote stuff, I took only my mask and snorkel and left my skinsuit and fins behind.

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After walking on the island a bit, I decided to snorkel in the bay near the ferry dock and found quite a few nice shells. However, more and more locals came on subsequent ferries and also went in for a swim. Pretty soon I had to bull my way through people to get from one side of the bay to the other.

I think I must have scratched the skin on my leg and I picked up an infection which started to show up after we had gotten to the Azores. Pretty soon my leg began to swell and I made arrangements to go home early. The trip was a nightmare, and I checked into the hospital for a 7-day stay as soon as I got home.

Australia was obviously out for me, but I called one of the others, who agreed to

drive and lead the group. All arrangements had been made, including guides, and the group had a great time!

You Know You're a Sheller When...

- There is at least one room in your home that looks like a museum.
- You identify the craft shells in stores.
- When driving past a body of water, you spend more time looking at the water than the road as you evaluate its shelling potential.
- You're just a little disappointed when the hurricane DOESN'T hit.
- Standing in frigid water up to your waist is an enjoyable experience.
- Your car trunk contains standard gear such as head lamp, bucket, four pronged garden tool and spaghetti strainer.
- You receive a card from friends on vacation showing a beautiful ocean shore scene. You evaluate the shoreline for shelling terrain, knowing full well you may never go there.

October's Low Tides

6 Sun 8:43a .10	19 Sa 8:06a .07
7 Mon 9:30a .03	20 Su 8:45a .03
8 Tu 10:22 .01	21 M 9:25a .04
9 W 11:21 .05	22 Tu 10:08 .08
10 Th 12:29 .13	23 W 10:54 .15

Meetings

on the 2nd Thursday of Sept through April at 7:00 p.m., at Waldemere Fire Station, 2071 Waldemere St. in Sarasota. Park in small lot on the right or in nursing home lot across the street.

The Annual **Shell Show** is February 14-16, 2014 at the Bradenton Area Convention Ctr.

Dues: New members \$21.50 New Family members (2+ at same address) \$33.00.

Renewals: \$15.00 for Single, \$20.00 for Family (2+ at same address).

If you want your newsletter printed and mailed add \$15.00.



DID YOU KNOW...

Many shells exude a substance that can dye cloth (and fingers) purple or red. The Royal Purple was made from two Mediterranean murex species, which can be "milked" for this dye. There is a muricid genus *Purpura*, "Purple Snails". Sepia ink is the product of Cuttlefish (genus *Sepia*); Octopi and sea hares exude a purple "cloud" which confuses predators and allows the mollusk to escape. The substance probably tastes bad and makes the predator spit out the shell.

Sarasota Shell Club

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