



SHELL•O•GRAM

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January Meeting

The Thursday January 24th meeting of the Jacksonville Shell Club will be held at the Southeast Branch Public Library at 7:00 PM.

Harry Lee will present the educational program on "Rare Shells" – a topic with which he is intimately familiar.

Bill Frank will present the Shell-Of-The-Month on *Strombus listeri* T. Gray, 1852 (Lister's Conch) – a formerly rare shell known from only a handful of specimens for over 300 years.

February Meeting

The Thursday February 28th meeting of the Jacksonville Shell Club will be held at the usual time and place.

Charlotte Lloyd will present the educational program on the comparative anatomy of the marine snail animals.

The Shell-Of-The-Month will be a surprise presentation.

Mark your calendar now and plan to attend!

Backyard Snailing Revisited

By Harry G. Lee

Early in November, 2001, impelled by the recent interest expressed in the pastime of "snail-trapping" on the Internet (specifically on the shellers' list-serve called "Conch-L") and at the urging of shutterbug/snailer Bill Frank, I brought my quarter-century-old "snail-trap" out of retirement. This device is nothing more than a 4 ft. by 5 ft. by 5/8 in. (formerly; now edited by the depredations of termites, etc.) plywood. Despite languishing in a shed for about 20 years, the "trap" produced results in only ten minutes! Bill got about 78 shots of the White Snaggletooth, Depressed Glass, Minute Gem, Florida Liptooth, and Southern Flatcoil - all actively crawling on the undersurface when we flipped over the board.

I live on the bank of a small river, and the water table is not far below the surface of the back yard. Early that afternoon, as is not unusual, the lawn was still a little moist with dew, which percolates slowly into the sodden ground. Things were approximately the same in 1977, when I routinely placed this board on the grass and examined its underside every morning or so - after the sprinkler had wet the lawn down at night. No baiting was involved; any use of beer, etc. was limited to consumption by the investigator. The program was prosperous indeed - I saw over 100,000 snails and harvested most of them (to conservation-inclined readers, this is about 1/100,000 the decimation produced by one application of insecticide, which I, natch, have avoided). Of course most species are tiny - in the case of the Blade Vertigo, I weighed 446 shells at 0.1273 grams or 0.285 mg. per shell, which means it would take about a billion to match the world record *Tridacna gigas* in mass). The following are the species (in "systematic order") I found: (Continued on page 3.)



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The **Shell-O-Gram** is issued bimonthly and mailed to all regular members. Annual membership dues are \$12.50 individual and \$15.00 family (domestic), and \$20.00 (foreign). Lifetime membership is available.

Send dues to: Teresa St. John, Treasurer
2605 Emily Court
Jacksonville, FL 32216-5101

The club meets each month, excluding December, at the Southeast Branch Public Library, 10599 Deerwood Park Boulevard, Jacksonville Florida. Please address any correspondence to the club's address shown above.

Closing date for article submission is two weeks prior to the first of each month of publication. Articles may be republished provided full credit is given the author and this newsletter and one copy of the complete publication in which the article appears is mailed to Editor at the above address.

Upcoming Event

****Jan. 18-20 - Space Coast Shell Festival**, Melbourne, FL at The Melbourne Auditorium, 625 E. Hibiscus Blvd. Contact Jim & Bobbi Cordy, 385 Needle Blvd., Merritt Is., FL 32953, E-mail: cordy@yourlink.net or Phone (321) 452-5736

Welcome New Members

Grace & Ed Van Frachen,
7602 Baymeadows Circle West #92
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Danielle Harvey
10010 Skinner Lake Dr. #732
Jacksonville, FL 32246
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Cathie Wenderoth
30 Red Fox Lane
Flagler Beach, FL 32136
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Club News

By Billie Brown

Hi everybody! Hope this will be a healthy, Happy New Year for all. We had our traditional Shell Club Christmas Party at the home of Chris and Judy Blocker the evening of December 15th. Everything at their home was lovely and we were made to feel very welcome, beginning with the warm greeting of the parking attendant.

Everyone visited and enjoyed a variety of snacks and hors d'oeuvres with drinks of choice. However, there was no Fishhouse Punch – a favorite of a lot of us – but we managed. It could have been a blessing in disguise.

It was soon time for the gift exchange. That always brings a lot of discussion about the rules for the Chinese game. Everyone picked a number to determine the order in which to choose a gift and everything was proceeding fairly well until it was Dee Dee's turn. She absolutely defied anyone to even think about taking the gift from her grasp. The gift she chose turned out to be a pillow covered in a beautiful shell pattern fabric with a trim of fringe – a handmade treasure by the talented Barbara Moon. Sly person that she is, Dee Dee began negotiations to obtain a second pillow for her couch. Don't know the outcome.

There was a lot of good-natured banter, conversation and sharing of memories of years' passed. We also took time to recognize special days in December for some of our members including birthdays and anniversaries. Paul and I were celebrating (sort of) our 13th wedding anniversary that evening. I had offered to take him away for the weekend but, on no, he loyally chose the Christmas Party instead.

After singing Happy Birthday and anniversary, everybody was in a sing-a-long mood. The usual Christmas carols were sung interspersed with patriotic songs. It created a nice note on which to end our evening. There were many heartfelt goodbyes and wishes for a Merry Christmas and a wonderful New Year. We were thankful for blessings and time to be together. We missed those who could not be with us and hoped it not for health reasons. We mentioned at one time or another maybe we should consider an afternoon get together next year for our Christmas Party. Distance and night driving has become a problem for some.

Thanks again to Chris and Judy for being our hosts!
Best, Billie.

Backyard Snailing Revisited (Continued from page 1.)

Leidyula floridana (Leidy, 1851) Florida Leatherleaf
Gastrocopta pentodon (Say, 1821) Comb Snaggletooth
Gastrocopta rupicola (Say, 1821) Tapered Snaggletooth
Gastrocopta tappaniana (C.B. Adams, 1841) White Snaggletooth
Pupisoma dioscoricola (C.B. Adams, 1845) Yam Babybody
Vertigo milium (Gould, 1840) Blade Vertigo
Vertigo ovata Say, 1822 Ovate Vertigo
Vertigo rugosula Sterki, 1890, Striate Vertigo
Strobilops aeneus Pilsbry, 1926 Bronze Pinecone
Strobilops texasianus Pilsbry & Ferriss, 1906 Southern Pinecone
Succinea unicolor Tryon, 1866 Squatty Ambersnail
Philomycus carolinianus (Bosc, 1802) Carolina Mantleslug
Helicodiscus parallelus (Say, 1821) Compound Coil
Deroceras laeve (Müller, 1774) Meadow Slug
Glyphyalinia solida H.B. Baker, 1930 Imperforate Glyph
Glyphyalinia umbilicata (Singley in Cockerell, 1893) Texas Glyph
Hawaiiia minuscula (Binney, 1840) Minute Gem
Nesovitrea dalliana (Pilsbry & Simpson, 1888) Depressed Glass
Zonitoides arboreus (Say, 1816) Quick Gloss
Dryachloa dauca Thompson and Lee, 1981 Carrot Glass
Euconulus trochulus (Reinhart, 1885) Silk Hive
Euglandina rosea (Férussac, 1821) Rosey Wolfsnail
Daedalocheila avara (Say, 1818) Florida Liptooth
Polygyra cereolus (Mühlfeld, 1816) Southern Flatcoil
Polygyra septemvolva Say, 1818 Florida Flatcoil
Allopeas gracile (Hutton, 1834) Graceful Awlsnail
Opeas pyrgula Schmacker & Boettger, 1891 Sharp Awlsnail

That's 27 species, nearly 40% known from our region of Florida (see www.jaxshells.org/checklis.htm for a complete listing), many by the hundreds of individuals, some by the tens of thousands. With this kind of return, you're bound to learn things. Two species, a Striate Vertigo and a Florida Liptooth, were represented by hundreds of specimens including a single perfect sinistral individual of each. Some readers might have note the anachronistic "1981" in the litany above. That's because *Dryachloa dauca* Thompson and Lee, 1981, the Carrot Glass, wasn't named until after the 1977 snail trapping campaign. In fact, the species was described

based on "trapped" specimens, and the plywood is/was arguably the type locality!

A few weeks later, on Thanksgiving Day, while attempting to busy myself with yard work (in forced exile from my wife's kitchen), I noticed a line of drifted wrack along the riverbank in back of my house - just a few feet from where the snail-trapping device had been deployed earlier. Following instincts shared by many of us, I harvested the stuff (about a pint), sifted it, and spread it out under the microscope. Shortly before sitting down for the annual feast, I had extracted the following empty shells from among the Styrofoam nuggets, insect parts, stems, seeds, and other plant debris:

Gastrocopta rupicola (Say, 1821) Tapered Snaggletooth (7 shells)

Gastrocopta tappaniana (C.B. Adams, 1842) White Snaggletooth (5 shells)

***Pupoides modicus* (Gould, 1848) Island Dagger** (1 shell)

Vertigo ovata Say, 1822 Ovate Vertigo (7 shells)

***Vertigo oralis* Sterki, 1898 Palmetto Vertigo** (2 shells)

Strobilops texasianus Pilsbry & Ferriss, 1906 Southern Pinecone (1 shell)

Succinea unicolor Tryon, 1866 Squatty Ambersnail (2 shells)

Hawaiiia minuscula (Binney, 1840) Minute Gem (1 shell)

Nesovitrea dalliana (Pilsbry & Simpson, 1888) Depressed Glass (1 shell)

***Ventridens demissus* (A. Binney, 1843) Perforate Dome** (2 shells)

Polygyra cereolus (Mühlfeld, 1816) Southern Flatcoil (29 shells)

Allopeas gracile (Hutton, 1834) Graceful Awlsnail (1 shell)

***Huttonella bicolor* (Hutton, 1834) Two-tone Gullela** (1 shell)

plus the one shell of each of these two aquatic species: *Rangia cuneata* (G. B. Sowerby I, 1831) Atlantic Rangia
Mytilopsis leucophaeata (Conrad, 1831) Dark Falsemussel

I have indented the names of 4 of the total 13 landsnail species because they not only were they never found among the 27 species/100,000 individuals (list above) found clinging to my snail trap, they had never before been found in my yard at all. What a surprise!

But maybe not so shocking. Landsnails can live very close to freshwater, but when swept into such watercourses are often doomed to perish by drowning. Both living and dead landsnails tend to float, and the abundance of this material in freshwater "drift" is

legendary among collectors (see: *Dream Stream Stems Teem With Stenotremes* on the internet at www.jaxshells.org/freshwat.htm). Thus I cashed in on a method to expand the diversity of my yard collections. Here are some factors relating to my catching the "new" species:

(1) *Pupoides modicus* likes disturbed, dry habitats not found in my yard. There is, however, a railroad cut (right down to the river) just a few hundred yards from my place, and I've found this species very close to the river along the railroad tracks.

(2) *Vertigo oralis* is a "swamp beast," occurring on palmettos and in very damp leaf litter in swamplands typically along rivers around here. That habitat is not present in my yard but is visible a few hundred yards away.

(3) *Ventridens demissus* is a special critter. I and a few other collectors have witnessed this native species actually extending its range through northeast Florida over the last quarter century. It reached Duval Co. in the last decade (about the same time as the Eurasian Turtle Dove), and it has a penchant for disturbed habitat (like *P. modicus*). It may be in the process of colonizing my back yard by rafting in.

(4) *Huttonella bicolor* is a non-indigenous species (like *Allopeas gracile* above); the dynamics of its appearance are likely similar to *V. demissus*.

As I reflect on my good fortune, I see a moral for collectors located almost anywhere in the world, of almost any age and level of experience:

- (1) You can enjoy collecting with thrift and simplicity.
- (2) There will always be something "new under the sun."
- (3) The wisdom of the Yogi Berra-style aphorism "shells are where you find them," is again demonstrated.

Note: See www.jaxshells.org/backyard.htm on the club web site for color images of many of the species cited.

