



# SHELL-O-GRAM

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## Upcoming programs

The club will meet on the customary fourth Thursday (January 26, 2017) at the usual (7:00 PM) and place (Southeast Branch, Jacksonville Public Library <<http://www.yelp.com/biz/jacksonville-public-library-southeast-regional-jacksonville>>). Paul Jones will present the Shell-of-the-Month, *Mercenaria*. He'll deal with both of the local species, *M. mercenaria* (Linnaeus, 1758) and *M. campechiensis* (Gmelin, 1791). The two figure



conspicuously in the past and present culture of **our** species in North America. Harry Lee will present a talk entitled "The genus *Morum*: A to Z." As well as treating every known Recent species, he'll discuss several other facets of the biology of the group, which is among the most favorite of "minor" genera among conchologists. On the L is a 37 mm specimen of *Morum exquisitum* (A. Adams and Reeve, 1848), one of the most iconic of all seashells.

The February 23rd, 2017 meeting will convene at the above hour and place. The Shell-of-the-Month will be *Clathropsis* Cecalupo and Perugia,

2011. Although a "new" genus described from the Philippines, it turns out it's been around for at least 3,000,000 years and is a Florida native. Rick Edwards will share his most recent NE Caribbean travelogue. He and wife Roz easily qualify as yeomen sea cruisers, having plied three of the Seven Seas in luxury. As we have seen from earlier reports, Rick exploits every opportunity to beach, snorkel, or SCUBA collect at ports-of-call.

This itinerary will include St. Kitts, Puerto Rico, and Labadee, Haiti. His new underwater movie camera, already proven up to the task, will be put to use on his latest foray, which will begin later this month.

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This club meets monthly at the Southeast Branch of the Jacksonville Public Library, 10599 Deerwood Park Blvd., Jacksonville, Florida <<http://jpl.coj.net/lib/branches/se.html>>. Please address any correspondence to the club's addresses above. Annual membership dues are \$15.00 individual, \$20.00 family (domestic) and \$25.00 (overseas). Lifetime membership is available. Please remit payment for dues to the address below and make checks payable to the Jacksonville Shell Club. The club's newsletter and scientific journal, the *Shell-O-Gram* (ISSN 2472-2774) is issued bimonthly and mailed to an average of 15 regular members and friends by specific request and no less than ten scientific institutions with permanent libraries. An electronic (pdf) version, identical except for "live" URL's and color (vs. B&W) images, is issued the next day and sent to about 200 individuals who have demonstrated an interest in malacological research. These pdf's (ISSN 2472-2782) have also been posted to <<http://jaxshells.org/letters.htm>> since November, 1998. We encourage members and friends to submit articles for publication. Closing date for manuscript submission is two weeks before each month of publication. Articles appearing in the *Shell-O-Gram* may be republished provided credit is given the author and the *Shell-O-Gram*. As a courtesy, the editor and author should receive a copy of the republication. Contents of the *Shell-O-Gram* are intended to enter the permanent scientific record.

### **True Grit: sand shortage may produce exotic collecting**

A January 3 article on page B3 of Jacksonville's *The Times-Union* reports efforts by the Florida delegation of the U.S. Congress, who supported the 2016 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), which authorizes the Corps of Engineers to study the potential of using foreign sand, e.g., from the Bahamas, to widen shorelines and protect coasts, notably in Florida, from the erosive effects of the sea. In its "Shrinking Shores" investigation last year, the Naples *Daily News* reported Miami-Dade and Broward Counties had used up their offshore sand deposits (at least under present economic and environmental constraints). A federal study located enough sand (mostly from inland sources) to last the jurisdictions another 50 years, but local authorities feel the sand is too dark. Existing legislation bans the use of federal monies for beach restoration projects that use foreign sand, which makes the importation of that resource a non-starter.



Accordingly, U.S. Rep. Lois Frankel (D-Boca Raton) co-sponsored legislation aimed at ending the ban. Although the ban remains in effect, the Corps of Engineers is expected to complete their study before 2018, when Congress is to re-authorize (or not) the WRDA, which may then be stripped of the foreign sand restriction.

Readers who recall the renourishment campaigns along Jacksonville's beaches a few decades ago can attest to the conchological benefits of having sediments delivered from ten nautical miles offshore (at the ten fathom isobath) to their feet (and buckets). How about some shell-rich coralline sand from Eleuthera or GBI? The situation has the potential for a host of outcomes: on the one hand, a transient and misleading biodiversity windfall for beachcombing shellers – on the other, unwanted introductions of pest species.

Clearly the Corps may expect to be handed an assignment involving with a great complexity of calculi and ample constituencies to placate. We, as environmentalists and malacologists, are similarly challenged.

**Membership Dues are payable in September each year.**

**If you're not paid up, please send in your dues: Individual \$15.00; Family \$20.00, to  
Harry G. Lee, Acting Treasurer, JSC  
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### Fred Gilbert Thompson (November 13, 1934 – December 27, 2016)



Malacology has lost one of its giants. Dr. Fred G. Thompson, Curator Emeritus of Malacology, later Invertebrate Zoology, at the Florida Museum of Natural History (FLMNH), died recently in Ocala, Florida.

Fred's work on American Hydrobiidae, particularly of the southeastern states, as well as New World and Paleotropical terrestrial mollusks was pioneering and exemplary.

As a curator he was welcoming to the amateur community and always willing to help sort out malacological conundra as well as to demonstrate the use of museum methodologies to allow many of his informal students to optimize use of his and other institutional collections. Members of the Jacksonville Shell Club partook in perhaps half a dozen field trips to the FLMNH beginning in the mid-1970's. Each of us always returned more enlightened and energized to extend our scientific endeavors.

I was fortunate enough to conduct field work in Fred's company both in the Austroriparian province of our country, e.g., the Paint Rock River

<<http://www.jaxshells.org/freshwat.htm>> and its shores, as well as Honduras, Central America. While laboratory procedure, museum collections work, and didactic encounters play an indisputable role in biological studies, the experience of exploration and discovery in coordination with a truly gifted naturalist like Fred Thompson is an indelible intellectual asset always to be treasured. As with many others with whom Fred Thompson's life intersected, I valued his wisdom, intellect, counsel, and good cheer and shall miss him greatly.

But a few of Fred Thompson's published works:

Thompson, F.G., 1968. *The aquatic snails of the Family Hydrobiidae of peninsular Florida*. University of Florida Press, Gainesville. i-xv + 1-68 + pls. [largely based on his dissertation work]

Thompson, F.G., 1980. Proserpinoid land snails and their relationships within the Archaeogastropoda. *Malacologia* 20(1): 1-33. <<http://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/47357#page/19/mode/1up>>

Thompson, F.G., 1984. *The freshwater snails of Florida: A manual for identification*. University of Florida Press, Gainesville, FL. 1-94. 2004 on-line edition: An identification manual for the freshwater snails of Florida. Florida Museum of Natural History, Gainesville, FL <<http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/malacology/fl-snail/snails1.htm>>.

Thompson, F.G., 1987. [Giant carnivorous land snails from Mexico and Central America](#). *Bulletin of the Florida State Museum* 30(2): 29-52. 1 April.

Thompson, F.G., 1995. New and little-known land snails of the family Spiraxidae from Central America and Mexico. *Bulletin of the Florida Museum of Natural History* 39(2): 45-89.

## Shelling in St. Augustine Inlet, December 2016

by Paul Jones

I managed to get in a couple of recent low tide shelling trips around the St. Augustine Inlet area during the Full Moon minus tides of December 2016 and found the results to be a bit of a mixed bag, a “Best of Times/Worst of Times” type scenario. The two main operative concepts in shelling; that is, “Shells are where you find them” and “Location, location, location,” both seemed to come into play for me on these excursions, big time!

My first destination was an area that I have had some decent success at in past years – the southwest shores of the inlet, at the entrance to Salt Run. Access to this area is by way of Inlet Drive on Davis Shores/Anastasia Island, just across the Bridge of Lions (a few blocks north of the Conch House Restaurant/Marina). This area is a very challenging location to shell at minus low tides with some fairly large oyster bars/beds mixed in with muddy flats where one can sink up to one’s shins in pluff mud. There are many live oysters here as well, so great care must be taken to maintain one’s footing or else a fall could prove very problematic! On the lowest of these minus tides, one can also gain access to a large area of huge boulders and jetties that protect the million dollar homes built right along the bank of the inlet.

I ended up doing pretty well here on each of my two excursions to this area. Most of the time, I was shelling less than 100 feet away from homes being repaired from major Hurricane Matthew damage! I came away with several large, specimens of *Strombus alatus* (Gmelin, 1791) (R), both crabbed and empty. A couple were to 115 millimeters in size. Although none had original inhabitants in them, they were all in excellent condition, almost live-taken quality in some cases.



On one of the oyster bars, I unexpectedly came upon a large colony of live *Stramonita floridana* (Conrad, 1837) (top p. 6, R), including a couple of large, beauties in excess of 75 millimeters. They were indeed some of the nicest ones I have ever seen in this area. Practicing conscientious collecting though, I only took a couple of the several dozen live shells I saw in the colony.

Those two immediately found their way into my collection!

Other notable shell species found in this area were: one large, empty pair of *Perna viridis* (Linnaeus, 1758) (**below**) that measured 80 mm in size and was in perfect condition. It was the only one of this invasive



species I saw in the area, however. I also found a large, empty *Busycotypus canaliculatus* (Linnaeus, 1758) (**L, below**) that measured a very respectable 135 mm in size, along with a lovely 125 mm crabbed specimen of



*Busycon contrarium* (Conrad, 1840) (**R, below**). My collecting bucket ended up almost full from this lucrative expedition!

Unfortunately however, my next St. Augustine Inlet destination was quite the opposite in terms of fruitful collecting. I spent about two hours one afternoon



combing the low tide under the Usina Bridge that connects Vilano Beach and St.



Augustine (the west side, near the Florida School for the Deaf and Blind), coming away with next to nothing... :o(. I saw about a gazillion *Mercenaria* clams, e.g., (**L**), and *Crassostrea* oysters, but virtually no gastropods of any kind - alive, dead, crabbed, or indifferent ... ;o). My collecting bucket this time contained only three fresh dead and paired *Mercenaria* clams with especially pleasing purple color inside.

The *Mercenarias* were about 99% dead or just half shells, and about 1% were alive. There were so many of them everywhere, though, that even at 99 to 1 percentages, I still saw a few dozen live ones (although none was taken). There were lots of live oysters as well. Virtually nothing else, though - disappointing. I doubt I will return to the area under the Vilano Bridge again for a while, as I seem to do so much better in other areas.

Apparently, the Army Corps of Engineers changed the inlet's habitats significantly in this area a few years back when they dredged the channel through the main inlet. The resultant effect on current and tidal flow in this area adversely impacted the delicate grassy areas under the bridge that were previously such good molluscan

environments. Only dead, yet still visible, remains of these areas are left now. I think I will confine my future searches to the Davis Shores area from now on.

### John Lott remembered

In the 1970's the median age of a JSC member was considerably less than at present, and a number of members in their 20's, 30's, and 40's played major roles in the organization's activities. Recently, news has reached us that John Lott, a member of that then youthful demographic, has died. His obituary discussed his work as an industrial arts teacher (printing) and later business activities. Of particular interest was mention of his (with then wife Susan) winning the DuPont Trophy for his display of Muricidae at the 1977 (13<sup>th</sup>) Jacksonville Shell Show, which was held at the Bicentennial Flag Pavilion in Jacksonville Beach. Thanks to the abiding attention to JSC archives by late Club Historian, Gertude Moller, we have a memento of the occasion:



L to R Judges Bob Morrison and Russ Jensen, Susan and John Lott with their DuPont Trophy, and Judge Selma (Sammy) Lawson.



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