



SHELL-O-GRAM



Published By The Jacksonville Shell Club, Inc.

March-April, 1999

Volume 40(2)

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Harry G. Lee, Asst. Editor

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March Meeting

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

The month's educational slide program is entitled "Shells found on Northeast Florida Beaches" by Charlotte Lloyd, Harry Lee and Bill Frank. Attendees are invited to join in the discussion and to bring any shells collected on local beaches, but which remain unidentified, to the meeting for identification.

As is customary, refreshments will be served and guests are cordially invited to attend.

April Meeting

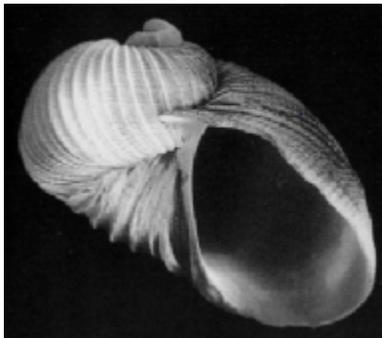
The April 28th meeting of the Jacksonville Shell Club will be held at the usual time and place.

The month's educational program will consist of a slide presentation featuring the actual color photos which will appear in the club's upcoming book "Marine shells of northeast Florida" by Harry G. Lee.

The Shell-Of-The-Month will be given by Bill Frank on *Distorsio mcgintyi* Emerson & Puffer, 1953 - McGinty's Distorsio.

Refreshments will be served. Plan now to attend and bring a friend.

Club Member Honored



Macromphalina harryleei Rolán & Rubio, 1998

Well-known amateur malacologist, shell identification guru, and Jacksonville Shell Club member Harry G. Lee was recently recognized by having a marine gastropod from Tobago, Lesser Antilles named in his honor. In naming the new species - *Macromphalina harryleei* Rolán & Rubio, 1998 - the authors cited Harry as the one who had sent them the first shell of this species and cooperated in the loan of the type material. The species is known only from the type locality (Tobago) and the holotype (which measures 4.3 x 3.0 mm.) is deposited in the Florida Museum of Natural History (FLMNH) in Gainesville.

This is the second gastropod species to be named after Harry. In 1995 Dr. Fred Thompson of the FLMNH named a terrestrial species from Honduras *Mayaxis leei*, recognizing Harry's generous support for the field work and his prodigious collecting efforts in Honduras (see Shell-O-Gram 37:2, March-April, 1996).

Club News

By Billie Brown

Hi everybody! I'm back! Temporarily. I've had several people ask what happened to my column. Well, YOU! I can't write about our club if I don't have some input from YOU. Gertrude Moller and Nancy Garry-Chadwick were about my only contributors! I know that you must be doing something that would interest your friends - whether a beach walk that proved to be fruitful or an exotic trip. Speaking of Nancy, I had a note at Christmas. She has been having health problems and been in the hospital several times. She had begun feeling well enough that she had been going to the beach a bit and even going out on the Jacksonville Beach Pier to fish. She took a tumble over the handlebars of her bicycle. She always says, "no cards or calls" when she is convalescing, so I'll use this means of telling her that we are thinking of her. (Continued on page 3.)



Jacksonville Shell Club, Inc.
1865 Debutante Dr.
Jacksonville, FL 32246-8645
E-mail: Wfrank@sprynet.com

[HTTP://home.sprynet.com/sprynet/wfrank/jacksonv.htm](http://home.sprynet.com/sprynet/wfrank/jacksonv.htm)

The Shell-O-Gram is issued bimonthly and mailed to all regular members. Annual membership dues are \$12.50 individual and \$15.00 family. Lifetime membership is available.

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

The club meets the fourth Wednesday of each month, 7:00 PM at the Southeast Branch 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.

Membership List

Welcome New Members

Dr. David & Kathy Chinoy
1407 Ponte Vedra Blvd.
Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082
Phone: 280-2225

Dr. David Hess
143 Harmony Lane
Macomb, IL 61455
Phone: (309) 837-9362

Additions

Carol Ruckdeschel
P.O. Box 796
St. Marys, GA 31558-0796

Changes

Anna Bechak
New Phone Number: 620-7220

Jules "Leroy" should read Jules "Leroi"

President's Message

This time of year finds most of us wishing for spring and the return of warm weather. I don't know about you but I'm really looking forward to being outdoors and doing some shelling, fishing and gardening once again.

We have so much on our plates to choose from this year, there is the Peanut Island shelling trip, Jacksonville Shell Club's Shell Show, fish fry, Shellers' Jamboree, COA Convention, just to name a few. We want all our members that are interested to join in as many activities as possible this year. If you have any questions about taking part in the activities listed above, just pick up the phone and call me 246-0874 and I'll gladly tell you about them.

I want to hear from you. We need your ideas about educational programs that you would like to see, shelling trips you would like to go on, and how we can make this organization more meaningful.

We have had a request from John Gorrie Middle School for a Florida shell collection similar to the one we placed in Fletcher at the beach. If you are interested in helping please give me a call.

See you at the meeting on March 24th.

Gone But Not Forgotten

Dr. Kerry Clark, Professor of Biological Sciences at the Florida Institute of Technology (Melbourne, FL), passed away at the age of 53 on January 10th due to apparent heart failure. Dr. Clark was a recognized authority on Opisthobranchs and had presented a wonderful program on Western Atlantic Opisthobranchs at the club's May 1998 meeting.

Dr. Clarence M. (Pat) Burgess of Hawaii passed away during mid-January at the age of 91. Dr. Burgess is best known for his work with Cowries and the two books he authored on the subject - The Living Cowries (1970) and Cowries of the World (1985). Dr. Burgess's extensive Cowry collection will go to the Bishop Museum in Honolulu.

In The Mail

Long-time island resident, biologist and club member Carol Ruckdeschel writes from Cumberland Island, Georgia (March 1st) that the wrack line has been littered with shells for the past couple of weeks - especially near Stafford where there have been large accumulations. Carol and her colleague are off to Padre Island, Texas to attend the annual sea turtle meetings.

From Queensland, Australia club member Jules Leroi writes that after recently moving to Dingo Beach from Townsville, he has sold his residence in Dingo Beach and is

packing up his shell collection in preparation for a further move to Brisbane - 1,000 kilometers south. Jules can still be contacted through his Dingo Beach address for the time being.

Texas Shellers' Connection Jamboree '99

The Coastal Bend Shell Club will host the Texas Shellers' Connection Jamboree '99 at the University of Texas Marine Science Institute in Port Aransas, Texas from April 30th through May 2nd. This event is quite similar to the Suncoast Conchologists Shellers' Jamboree, which is held every two years in Largo, Florida.

Cost for the three day event is \$50 for those registering before April 10th and \$55 for those registering between April 10th and April 20th. Registration forms and additional information are available from your Editor.

Club News - Continued from page 1.

Had a delightful note from Jules Leroi who lives in Australia. He was so warm and friendly during his visit to the shell show and he made many friends. One in particular, my daughter-in-law, Crickett. Crickett loves cooking southwestern foods and has a "thing" for peppers. The hotter the better. I introduced Fred Chauvin who is known to be Hot Stuff. He gave her some good 'ole datil pepper sauce, seed pods and plant. Jules promised to send pepper seeds to rival the datil peppers. He did - two different kinds. He described in detail how he harvested and packed the seeds to mail. Hours later, he made the mistake of touching his hands (that he thought had been thoroughly scrubbed) to his mouth. Set him on fire! Will let you hear the rest of the story when I do.

An interesting thought. What would cause an increase in barnacles? My son, Bill, has made friends with Cuban fisherman in the lower keys. They trap lobster and crabs and also shells that crawl in the traps. They have noted that they are finding badly encrusted lobster, crabs and shells. Why?

It is time to start thinking about shell show entries. I have gathered a few thoughts and hints from Arts and Crafts judges over the past few years. Thought this would be a good time to pass them on to you.

1. **Glue** - Hot glue, Elmer's, 427, whatever - Do Not allow drips or strings of glue to be seen on a finished product. Some of the most particular and best crafters use only Elmer's because it does not clump or string and dries clear. Elmer's takes longer and more patience but the results are worth it.
2. **Shells** - Make sure the shells you use are clean! For most projects it doesn't matter if a shell is chipped or otherwise imperfect. The shells may be turned and placed so that a flaw does not show. Make sure that you use shells that are compatible with each other and pleasing to the eye - both in color and texture. The judges have stated that they prefer shells and sealife in their natural colors, rather than painted.
3. **Mirrors** - After choosing a frame base and shells, look to make sure all wood is going to be covered. If you are using a flat piece of wood for your frame, it should not

show the thickness when all shells are applied. If you are using an old mirror frame, sometimes 1-2 inches thick, you need to place your shells so that a view from the side does not show the width of the wood of the frame. Check your mirror for smudges/dust after hanging. There might be spots or dust particles you did not notice when it was lying down.

4. **Flower Arrangements** - Choose a container that is suited to the shells you plan to use. Do not use a container that is too busy, i.e. a brightly colored vase with designs if you are going to use shells with totally opposite colors. Make sure if you are doing flowers that the stems are well attached, and, if you are using silk stems and leaves for filler that they have been wiped free of dust. Making things ahead of show time we might find that no matter how well we think we have stored them that they are dusty. Be sure the container is filled with a filler of some sort to hold the stems in place - oasis, marbles, rocks etc. When looking down into your container (after doing arrangement) make sure that you do not see the material holding the stems. Cover the oasis or whatever with Spanish moss, green florist's moss or silk greenery. I have spread a thin layer of glue and sprinkled coquina from the beach on top. Sometimes a wooden base or mirror enhances your arrangement, or a nice piece of chiffon, or a shell matching ones in your arrangement.
5. **Christmas Ornaments** - Again, no glue showing. Most important! You are limited in this category only by your imagination. Display in a pleasing manner. Use a piece of driftwood, a small Christmas tree or frame to enhance your work. This is much more desirable than laying ornaments on the table or in a case. If you do have to display in a case, add a touch of velvet or something to provide some dimension.

When you fill out your entry form, be sure to note if there is something extraordinary about your entry besides the fact that it was made by you. This could include self-collected shells, shells found in one locality or on a special field trip - something to impress on the judges that your entry is unique. If there is not space on the entry form, write on the back of the form or attach a small note. The clerk can note your special information on the judge's sheet. There are probably many things that can be added to this to share with others. Good luck!

The Walkers have a wedding anniversary on March 18th - their 54th. March 17th is Bill Lyerly's birthday, St. Patrick's Day. It's appropriate as he is so full of blarney at times. April birthdays include Chin Frank (3rd), Teresa St. John (22nd), Paul Brown (27th), and Betsy Lyerly (30th). Happy days to you all! Best, Billie (241-3755).

Zebra Mussels Found In Florida



This past fall, state officials made the first confirmed sighting of the non-native problematic Zebra Mussel in Florida. Officials discovered the mussels, believed to have been transported from Lake Champlain in New York, during a

routine inspection of a bait-and-tackle shop in Eustis. They confiscated and destroyed the mussels and expect no infestation from that source.

Zebra Mussels are thumbnail-size bivalves with black and white stripes that first arrived in North America in 1986 in the bilge water of Russian freighters. They have wreaked environmental and economic havoc throughout the Great Lakes states and have worked their way down the Mississippi River as far as New Orleans.

The mussels are the only freshwater mollusks that attach themselves to solid objects. Once established, Zebra Mussels clog up intake pipes, water lines and pumps, forcing costly clean-up programs. Industrial operations in the Great Lakes states have spent millions of dollars in a clean-up effort. Also of great concern is the fact that Zebra Mussels are also a threat to native freshwater mussel and clam species as well as other aquatic animals.

Adult Zebra Mussels, which can live 10 to 15 days out of water, attach themselves to boat hulls, trailers or outboard motors. During the larval stage, a zebra mussel is free-floating and almost invisible, making it easy for them to be transported from a contaminated source.

Florida residents and visitors need to know that it is absolutely illegal to bring Zebra Mussels into the state of Florida or to even have them in your possession - being a second-degree misdemeanor that carries a \$500 fine and up to 60 days in jail.

Previous studies have identified waterways in the Big Bend region, the St. Johns River system and water bodies north of Lake Okeechobee to have characteristics that are suitable for Zebra Mussel inhabitation.

*Based upon an article in the Daytona Beach News Journal, Oct. 18, 1998, and other Internet news sources.

Kiwanis Science Fair 1999

The morning of February 16th, Club President Charlotte Lloyd accompanied by your editor, traveled to the Prime Osborne Convention Center to judge the Kiwanis Northeast Florida Regional Science and Engineering Fair on behalf of the Jacksonville Shell Club. As in past years, the club offered a cash prize of \$50.00 to the best overall project dealing with marine biology and a \$25.00 award to the runner-up. Surprisingly, for the first time in several years, there were several projects that dealt with mollusks.

After reviewing the some 435 projects, your judging duo selected the team project of Donnie Kim and Jason Park as the club's 1st place winners. This aggressive young team conducted a study of the benthic invertebrates in Gun Smoke Creek which they described as a "tributary to the St. Johns River." Their study showed that there was a diverse amount of organisms present, there were future generations coming in to replace those that expired, and overall that the creek was healthy.

Your editor is quite familiar with the creek in question as it is approximately one mile from my residence and is but one of several of its type which provides storm water drainage for several heavily populated commercial and residential areas. Their findings that the creek was healthy and supported a

healthy population of various species is encouraging. Not so encouraging is the fact that they also collected a species of freshwater bivalve that they could not identify. Their description suggests that it was probably the exotic import *Corbicula fluminea* - the Asian Clam.

The club's runner-up winner was Maricar Bana who studied the effects of light pollution on hermit crabs. Light pollution is described as the wasteful dissemination of light into the night sky and past studies has documented its effects on a wide variety of species - most notably hatchling sea turtles that become disoriented.

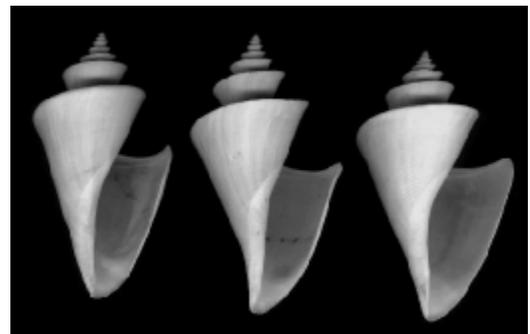
Ms. Bana found that the crabs' general reactions to the light were agitation, pacing, active antennae, stimulated eating habits, and attempts at climbing. Less clear was whether these actions were a normal reaction to light or the result of the crab's sense of danger.

On a lighter note, one of the fair entrants who was in the running for one of the club's awards for his study of the effects various anti-fouling paints have on barnacle growth on boats, was somewhat taken aback (and eliminated from the running) when his "barnacles" were identified as not being barnacles at all but instead "mussels."

All of the winners have been invited to give a presentation at an upcoming meeting of the Jacksonville Shell Club.

Japanese Wonder Shell

***Thatcheria mirabilis* Angas, 1877 - considered by many to be the most exquisitely shaped shell in the world**



Dredged from about 420 ft. off Suao, Taiwan (73-78 mm.)

In describing the species, G. F. Angas said "This very remarkable shell, quite unlike anything hitherto met with, was recently brought from Japan by Mr. Charles Thatcher," and, because Angas was at a loss to place it in a known genus, Mr. Thatcher acquired an unexpected immortality. Conchologists, puzzled by its peculiar appearance, were equally doubtful where to place it systematically and often they echoed the words of G. W. Tryon: "That this shell is a scalaiform monstrosity cannot be doubted, but what may be its normal form is not so readily ascertained."

No others were known until the early 1930's when several, exactly comparable, were fished up in Japanese waters; it was no longer a monstrosity and its systematic position was established a few years later. It is a member of the Turridae.

As more specimens were found so their commercial value

escalated and high prices were paid for them until the 1950's; from then on they were common enough to be obtained fairly cheaply. Today we know that this species lives in deep water and ranges from Japan to the Philippines. It is no longer considered rare and respectable specimens are readily available from shell dealers for less than \$10.

Texas State Shell

Texas State Senator J. E. (Buster) Brown of Lake Jackson has introduced a senate bill (Senate Bill No. 13) which would make it illegal for shrimp trawlers to retain the Lightning Whelk (*Busycon perversum pulleyi* Hollister, 1958 - the Texas state shell) resulting from their by-catch.

According to a local media outlet, the population of this species is declining. Senator Brown is quoted as saying "While there can't be a lot of meat in those shells, someone has developed a market for it. My bill goes along the line with not picking Bluebonnets (the Texas state flower) and killing Mockingbirds (the Texas state bird).

Local shrimping interests say that a bill protecting the species is "preposterous." The president of one of the Texas seafood companies said "I've never ever known one of those (Lightning Whelks) to have been sold for any purpose --- and certainly not known of anyone with enough lack of taste to eat one."

Editors Comments: Apparently the local shrimpers are unaware of, or unwilling to acknowledge the commercial off-season whelk fishery by shrimpers which exists in northeast Florida/southeast Georgia. Regardless, the bill would seem to be but "feel good" legislation, which does little to perpetuate the species - a species whose taxonomic status is now in doubt.

*Based upon messages from "Conch-L" - the Conchologists of America Listserv, Jan., 1999.

Seven Sentenced In Clam Poaching Operation

A five-year joint investigation by state and federal wildlife agents into illegal clamming activities in the Midwest ended on January 29th with the sentencing of two Mississippi Valley Shell Company (MVSC) officials of Muscatine, Iowa, and five other defendants. Fines and restitution charges levied against the defendants totaled more than \$380,000. In addition, two defendants were sentenced to jail terms (one for eight months and another for 24 months), two received lifetime prohibitions against clamming, and all were placed on probation. An eighth defendant is currently awaiting sentencing.

The convictions are the result of an investigation which began in the spring of 1995 when Illinois wildlife authorities received information about the unlawful take of freshwater mussels from the Rock River. A subsequent joint investigation by state and federal agents in Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin revealed freshwater mussels from the Rock River in Illinois and other closed waters in Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, Michigan, and Ohio were being taken in violation of state and federal laws. The mussels were then

sold to MVS, formerly the second largest shell buying/exporting company in the United States, and then exported to Japan for use in the cultured pearl industry.

In April of 1998, a Federal Grand Jury, convening in Des Moines, had indicted the defendants on a total of 72 felony violations of the Lacey Act which prohibits interstate commerce in wildlife protected under state or federal law. These counts included a total value of mussels exceeding \$1 million dollars.

Freshwater mussels are among the most endangered species of animals in North America. Of the approximately 300 species of known mussels, 30 are extinct and another 70 are either threatened or endangered.

*Condensed from a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service News Release, dated Jan. 29, 1999.

How Times Have Changed

The Jacksonville Shell Clubs held its first shell show at the Springfield Lions Clubhouse (at the intersection of 21st and Main Streets in downtown Jacksonville) on July 28-29, 1962. According to historical records, the clubs cost for staging the event totaled a staggering sum of \$79.62 which included three days rent for the facility at a cost of \$15.00 per-day. Through hard work and dedication, the club made a profit of just over \$300 during the two-day period.

By comparison, in today's world, the club budgets about \$5,000 to stage the show, and as for a profit, just breaking even is now considered as an acceptable outcome.

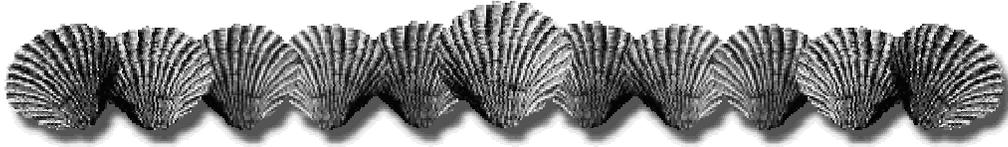
Another Peanut Island Update

As reported in previous newsletters, Peanut Island, one of the most popular and productive shelling locations in South Florida, is undergoing renovations to make it more accessible and friendly to the public.

According to recent information (January 8th) one small boat dock on the northeast corner of the island is nearly completed. Construction has also started on the concession building in the same area and pilings have been placed for what looks to be a large fishing pier. Roads have been cut around the island and a few into it. More trees have been cut with the beaches being expanded further inland. Thus far the waters and flats around the island remain untouched.

Press reports indicate that planned construction on the 79 acre island will include a 19 slip boat dock, 40 grills, two rest room buildings with drinking fountains (one with showers), a 10 foot one mile long path around the islands perimeter, 30 benches, six family picnic pavilions, a 170 foot long T-shaped fishing pier, and a campground with 20 campsites. The island will also receive electrical service.

Editors Comment: See the Jacksonville Shell Club Web Page at [HTTP/home.sprynet.com/sprynet/wfrank/peanut.htm](http://home.sprynet.com/sprynet/wfrank/peanut.htm) for a listing of the 368 species of marine mollusks which have thus far been identified from Peanut Island and the immediate area.



The Shell Show Is Coming!

The Jacksonville Shell Club will hold its 33rd Shell Show at the Ramada Inn Resort, on the ocean, in beautiful downtown Jacksonville Beach, Florida from July 31st through August 1st. The facility offers over 4,000 square feet of display space and plenty of available parking. The show set-up will take place on Friday afternoon (July 30th) with judging taking place later that same evening. The show will be open to the general public on Saturday (July 31st) and Sunday (August 1st).

Judges for the event will be Kurt Auffenberg and Roger Portell (Florida Museum of Natural History, Gainesville) for scientific exhibits and Ruth Abramson (Jacksonville) and Bobbi Cordy (Merritt Island) for craft exhibits.

Rules and entry forms will be mailed by late March. It's never too soon to begin preparing your exhibit(s)!



The Shell-O-Gram
1865 Debutante Dr.
Jacksonville, FL 32246-8645

