



SHELL-O-GRAM

Official Publication of the
JACKSONVILLE SHELL CLUB, INC.

May-June 2009

Volume 50 no.3

Jacksonville Shell Club gets ready for 50th Year

Historical Highlights of the Jacksonville Shell Club from Gertrude Moller

During the first year of existence, and the next seventeen years, the position of club historian and publicity chairman went to Gertrude Moller. In its first year of existence it was decided to send out a monthly news bulletin to each member, which was known as the "Shell-o-Gram." Over the years this one page news bulletin has expanded into our present day "Journal" which is published every two months and has been published for fifty years.

In July, 1962, the club presented its first shell show at the Lion's Club building at 20th and Main Street. With the effort of the membership and Dr. William Clench, then Curator of Mollusks at the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard, the show was deemed a success.

By complying with Florida law, the Jacksonville Shell Club was incorporated into a non-profit organization in 1964. One of its major purposes was to promote interest and assist in public education in the field of malacology, or the study of mollusk.

More history in the next edition

Programs

This month, the Jacksonville Shell Club will meet on the **third Thursday, May 21**. The time and venue (7:00 PM at the Southeast Branch Public Library) will be as usual. For the shell-of-the-month feature, Harry Lee will report on the very recent discovery of topotypes of *Daedalochila bicornuta* (Pilsbry, 1900) in SW Hernando County. The main program will be devoted to final preparations for the 43rd annual shell show. Since this is the club's golden anniversary, special efforts for an especially memorable event are called for.

The club's next regular meeting will be on June 25. Rick Edwards will present the shell-of-the-month. He plans to select the species he determined to be the favorite of the many participants in the several St. Johns Co. beach walks he has conducted for the members and friends of the Guana-Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve (GTMNERR or GTM). Try and guess what it has turned out to be. Charlotte Lloyd and Harry Lee will report on the Club's first major publication, *Marine Shells of northeast Florida*, which is expected to be in print late in May. The project was launched with an article by William G. (Bill) Lyons in the *Shell-O-Gram* 34 years ago this (May) issue. The presentation will touch on the many aspects of this production.

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This club meets each month at the Southeast Branch of the Jacksonville Public Library, 10599 Deerwood Park Blvd., Jacksonville, Florida. Please address any correspondence to the club's address above.

The *Shell-O-Gram* is issued bimonthly and mailed to all regular members. Annual membership dues are \$15.00 individual and \$20.00 family (domestic) and \$25.00 (foreign). Lifetime membership is available. Please send checks for dues to the above address and made out to the Jacksonville Shell Club.

We encourage members to submit articles for this publication. 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 sent to the above address.

President's Corner

Hello Everybody!

I hope this finds you well and looking forward to our shell show. We always know it is coming and we find that the time always sneaks up on us. Now the time is here. My constant reminder is "don't do just the job you volunteered for - Please help in other areas when you can."

This is our 50th year as The Jacksonville Shell Club. Of the founding members our dear Gertrude Moller is the only representative. She has many interesting memories that she will be only too glad to share.

One of - or the highlight of our show will be THE BOOK!! "Marine Shells of NE Florida. We have been looking forward to it's completion and with a lot of intense, hard work it looks as though it will be finished in time for the show. There will be an award winning exhibit of NE FL. shells close by the book table to peak the interest of prospective buyers. If any of you have shells from our area this would be an excellent time to exhibit. It would also be an incentive for people to want to start their own collections.

A reminder or two - we will need some nice "Specimen" shells for our silent auction (on Saturday night) So, look through your shells and find something lovely that you can part with and donate it for the auction. (our dealers are always very generous with their donations but we need yours too.) Donations may be brought to the May meeting or on Thursday the 28th to the show. Shell related items are also acceptable.

Don't forget to bring donations for the Hospitality Room. We always need lots of sandwiches, finger foods and drinks, especially bottled water. Desserts are always very popular. Everybody has always been very generous with their donations and our members and guests look forward to visiting without having to leave the building. We receive many compliments on our hospitality.

Our Publicity Chairperson, Claire Newsome has been doing an excellent job. The posters are being placed and who knows how many fliers she has handed out! I have had several calls about the show and the callers are very excited and have promised to bring friends. We also have a sign that Paul and my son, Mark, have made. The sign should be in place at the entrance of the Morocco Temple advertising the show by the time you read this.

I have been rather "long-written." I hope I haven't forgotten anything. I know our members will band together and work our very best to present a good show. So, in advance, THANK YOU ALL!

Comments, Contributions, Questions? (no excuses)

Call me. Best, Billie 241-3755

Membership Dues are Due Now

Please send in your dues: Individual \$15.00 Family \$20.00 to

Charlotte Thorpe
1010 24th St. N

Jacksonville Beach, FL 32250

Want to know your due date? Look at your S-O-G address tag and if the date has passed or is close to today's date -Your Dues are Due

News from the Schroeders (story by Lori; images by Jeff)

The Kentucky contingent of the Jacksonville Shell Club traveled to Franklin Co., home of our state capital, to visit a facility that has a remarkable reputation for working with threatened and endangered freshwater mollusks under the direction of Dr. Monte McGregor. Members Jeff and Lori Schroeder set out Friday, November 14, 2008 for this educational field trip.

The Center For Mollusk Conservation, located in Frankfort, Kentucky, is idyllically situated on the site of a long ago mill that once provided flour to feed people as far away as the East Coast. The Forks of Elkhorn station was established in 1940 by the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) as a fish hatchery [figure 1]. The facility lies at the confluence of North and South Forks of the Elkhorn which eventually drains into the Kentucky River.

The Center for Mollusk Conservation (CMC) began in 2002 with the arrival of Dr. Monte McGregor from Virginia. His goal to propagate threatened and endangered species of fresh water mollusks, expand the populations of existing mussel beds, and populate rivers and streams where mussels have been extirpated. In the early 1900's, Kentucky, with its huge resource of fresh water mussels, became a giant in the pearl button industry. By the time the 1950's rolled around, the advent of plastic buttons had all but wiped out most of that industry. As if on cue, the Japanese came along soon after needing seed material from mussel shells for the aquaculture of pearls.

After quick introductions, Dr. McGregor gave us a tour of the mollusk collection at the CMC housed in custom cabinetry designed after the Ohio State Biodiversity program. The outer shell of the cabinetry is made of birch wood and the removable inner drawers are pine. The collection is treated with a mixture of paraffin and kerosene for preservation. Dr. McGregor says that if you want to write on your shell, you have to do this first because you won't be able to do so after treatment. He stores his best specimens in this cabinet for visitors and scientists performing research.

Dr. McGregor's office is awash with typical paraphernalia. The walls have beautiful posters of mussels. Another wall has bookcases filled floor to ceiling. Technology equipment and cameras, as well as boxes filled with material used for speaking engagements are arranged around available remaining space. A rather large *Megalonaias nervosa* (Rafinesque, 1820) sits in one corner of his desk, a two or three-pounder by feel. Two polished mussel shells sit on the opposite corner, one shaped like a fish and the other a pineapple. The latter two were great yard sale finds that pleased Dr. McGregor as he was able to procure the two items for a quarter. We saw buttons that were manufactured from harvested fresh water mussels still on the cardboard found in the notions isle at Woolworth's. In a bag he takes with him on speaking engagements, Dr. McGregor keeps a rectangular piece of a mussel, probably a washboard, small squares of unpolished mussels, and finally, very pretty polished beads that are used in Japan as seeds for the pearl industry. The process of making seed pearls begins with the large rectangular section of shell, that piece is then cut into smaller squares, and then perfectly round beads are formed and then highly polished. Dr. McGregor also showed us the skeletons of mussels used for the production of buttons - single valves with holes that had been bored for production. These items are used as visual aids at speaking engagements for explaining how the shells were once used to make buttons. A braille hook demonstration [figure 2] on how mussels are trawled in rivers was also very informative.

Most visitors are shown a six minute video. The DVD was on loan, but Dr. McGregor did show us a few videos on his computer he had put together of mussels in their natural habitat. Have you ever seen how a mussel attracts a host fish? We were able to view several different species of mollusk and the vastly unique lures (its mantle!) the animal uses for certain fish (trying to eventually infect them point-blank with larvae mussels called glochidia). The footage was incredible.

The CMC is spread out over two other buildings. The first holds a raceway where the FWS still maintains a fishery. It now houses up to 60 species of mollusks in carefully constructed environments, or mini riffles. Water is constantly flowing and is a little noisy [see figure 3]. Peering into the different bins, one can see different species of fresh water mussels. Some are buried with their two siphons barely showing, and others are lying on their sides. All are very live and thriving. It doesn't take long to see how much care and hard work Dr. McGregor puts into these imperiled species. Every shell has an identification tag, and corresponding information is carefully cataloged on each specimen

The second outer building is really the meat and bones of the operation. It is here where Dr. McGregor works his magic and has perfected two methods of producing the glochidia [figure 4; scale line is ~ 0.3 mm] of the rarest mussels on earth. Almost without exception pearly freshwater mussels in the wild have to go through a parasitic stage. The glochidia attach to a host fish and live off its tissues for several weeks. Dr. McGregor has accomplished this in his lab and discovered a method which bypasses the host fish!

Dr. McGregor and team propagate their own algae in another room. A greenhouse is currently under construction to further expand the algae production and research. It is surreal to walk into a room to see bright green tanks and barrels bubbling making the ideal recipe for the mussels.

Another small room off the algae production room is the lab. This is where the fine microscopic work is completed [figure 5]. It houses an incubator and other equipment vital to the *in vitro* process. By carefully removing the glochidia from gravid female mussels, the team effectively bypasses the host fish and cultivate the larvae in special media. This innovative system provides a way to mass-produce the stock and greatly increases the chances of a successful re-population of mussels in Kentucky's waterways.

We would like to thank Dr. McGregor for taking the time to allow us a private tour of the facilities at the Center For Mollusk Conservation.



Fig 1



Fig 2

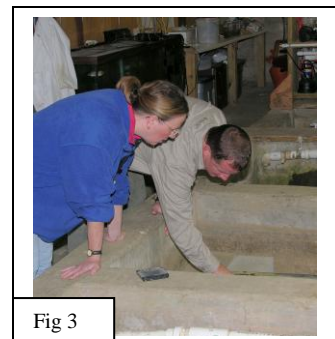


Fig 3

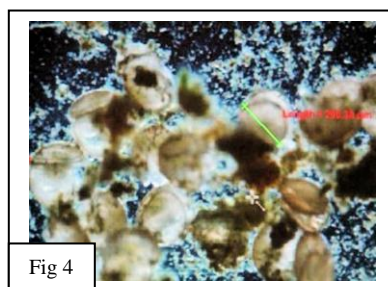


Fig 4

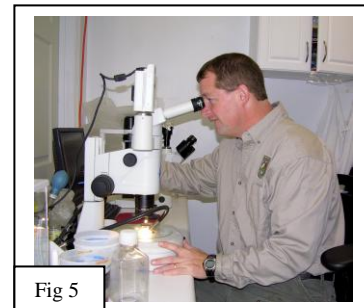


Fig 5

2009 SHELL SHOWS & RELATED EVENTS from COA
(August-December)

Following information is subject to change

- Aug. 14-16 **JERSEY CAPE SHELL SHOW**, Stone Harbor, New Jersey
 2009 The Wetlands Institute, Stone Harbor
 Karen Lelli e-mail: kjlelli@comcast.net (856) 691-5831
- Sept. 19-20 **30th INTERNATIONAL SHELLS & FOSSIL BOURSE**, Ottmarsheim, France
 2009 Salle Polyvalente, Rue de la Priscine
 Michel Rioual, 2 Rue des Vergers
 68490 Ottmarsheim, France (3) 89-26-16-43
- Sept. 25-27 **OREGON SHELL SHOW**, Portland, OR
 2009 Oregon Museum of Science & Industry, 1945 SE Water Ave.
 Donna Saffir, 10409 NW Burkhardt Court
 Portland, OR 97229 (503) 297-3009
 E-mail: dragonz@comcat.net
- Sept. 25-27 **NORTH CAROLINA SHELL SHOW**, Wilmington, NC
 2009 Cape Fear Museum of History & Science
 814 market Street
 Ann Buddenhagen, 618 Crabbery Lane
 Raleigh, NC 27609 (919) 787-7103
 E-mail: abuddenhagen@nc.rr.com
- Sept. 26-27 **ANNUAL GERMAN SHELL FAIR**, Oehringen, Germany
 2009 KULTURA Hall, Herrenwiesenstr. 12
 Kurt Kreipl, Hoehenweg
 D-74613 Oehringen-Cappel, Germany
 E-mail: meeresmuseum@t-online.de
 Tel. (7941) 62-826, fax: (7941)2065
- Oct. 10-11 **PHILADELPHIA SHELL SHOW**, Philadelphia, PA
 2009 Academy of Natural Sciences, Parkway & 19th St.
 Al Schilling, 419 Linden Ave.
 Glenside, PA 19038 (215) 886-5807
 E-mail: alsch@bellatlantic.net
- Oct. 31 **BRITISH SHELL COLLECTOR'S CLUB CONVENTION**, Essex, England
 2009 Theydon Boys community Centre, Theydon Boys, Epping, Essex
 Tom Walker, 38 Redlands Road
 Reading, Berkshire RG1 5HD, England 44 (118) 987-4294
 E-mail: tom@tmwalker.co.uk
- Oct. 31- **14th PRAGUE INTERNATIONAL SHELL SHOW**, Prague, Czech Rep.
 Nov. 1 **KULTURNIDUM LADVI** Buresova 1661, Prague 8
 2009 Jaroslav Derka, Holeckova 51/370
 15000 Praha 5, Czech Republic 42 (2) 5731 6246
 Email: jderka@volny.cz <http://cksl.webpark.cz> <http://shells.webz.cz>

**Beach Shelling and Learning
about our local Beaches**

Rick Edwards will be conducting shell walks for the GTMNERR (Guana Environmental Education Center) on July 18. If you are new to the area or are a novice collector, you may wish to consider one these guided beach walks. For information on time and meeting place contact the Environmental Center at 904-823-4500.
A \$3.00 parking fee does apply to park in the beach parking lot.

Jacksonville Shell Show
Location: Morocco Shrine
Auditorium
Date: May 29-31
Website: www.jaxshells.org
Contact phone number: 904-398-6383

**Jacksonville Shell Show & the Shell Clubs Golden 50 Year Anniversary
will be held on May 29-31, 2009.**

We will need the help of all of our club members and volunteers for the three day Show. Most of the jobs are filled, but there will be a great need for members to help in the various booths.

Please call Charlotte 246-0874, or Billie 241-3755 to volunteer.