



SHELL-O-GRAM

Official Publication of the
JACKSONVILLE SHELL CLUB, INC.

July-August, 2001

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July Meeting

The July 26th meeting of the Jacksonville Shell Club will be held at the Southeast Branch Public Library at 7:00 PM.

Dr. Roger Lloyd of the Florida Community College, Jacksonville will discuss a very large squid he has been studying since its discovery in April, 1994 on Atlantic Beach. After careful review by Dr. Clyde Roper of the US National Museum, it appears that this specimen belongs to an un-named species. This is quite a remarkable fact - on consideration of it being the largest of the 792 species of marine mollusks occurring in our immediate area.

The Shell-Of-The-Month will be presented by Harry Lee. His topic will be on *Octopus giganteus* A. E. Verrill, 1897.

August Meeting

The August 23rd meeting of the Jacksonville Shell Club will be held at the Southeast Branch Public Library at 7:00 PM.

Cathy Williams will give a talk on her collecting experiences in St. Andrews, Scotland and Italy.

Bill Frank will present the Shell-Of-The-Month on *Otala punctata* (Müller, 1774) - a European mollusk which now occurs in Fernandina Beach.

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

Shellers' Jamboree 2001

Memorial Day Weekend (May 26th and 27th) five members of the Jacksonville Shell Club [Bill & Betsy Lyerly, Bill Frank, Harry Lee (Jacksonville), and Karen Vander Ven (Pittsburgh)] traveled to Largo, Florida to attend the Suncoast Conchologists Shellers' Jamboree. This two day extravaganza for shell collectors is held biannually and this year drew some 125 shellers from the around the country including some from as far away as Texas and New Jersey.

Some might ask, "What goes on at a Jamboree?" An appropriate answer might be "Everything which might appeal to a shell enthusiast." The number of events that can be packed into two twelve-hour days is definitely a credit to the organizational skills of the host group. This year featured a shell market, three silent shell auctions, a verbal auction of shells, a single specimen shell show, a snail parade, a shell art and craft show, programs dealing with shell collecting by well-known collectors, a shell identification clinic, measuring of shells for new world records, many door prizes, skits by the host club, awards ceremonies, etc., etc. However, despite the aforementioned, many others might say that the highlight of the Jamboree were the six catered meals provided (including the formal banquet on Sunday night). It just doesn't get any better than this if you love shells and great food.

Our own Harry Lee not only single-handedly manned the shell identification clinic on both Saturday and Sunday, but found time to enter several entries in the single specimen shell show where he won two first-place and one third-place trophy. It's hard to imagine a more spectacular fossil specimen than Harry's *Apporrhais* species from Italy that easily won the fossil category. (Continued on page 2.)



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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
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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.

A Note From Billie

By Billie Brown

Hi everybody!

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for the prayers, cards, phone calls and other expressions of concern and love for me/us during my recent surgery and now recovery. The goodies have been great too and I feel fortunate to have such caring friends.

We plan to have lunch available at our house from 11:30 AM to 2:00 PM Saturday and Sunday during the shell show. Everybody is welcome. We will have boxes available for our dealers or workers who cannot come. As in the past we ask our club members to help by bringing side dishes, finger foods, salads or desserts, etc. It will be helpful if you will give me an idea of what you plan to bring. You can call me at 241-3755.

Directions from the Brampton Inn: Go north on 1st Street North to 15th Avenue North, turn west (left), cross 3rd Street North (A1A) to 14th Avenue North and

continue west. Our house has a rail fence and is on the corner of 14th and 15th Avenue (1328 14th Avenue North). I'll post signs, balloons, etc. Looking forward to seeing you!

Best, Billie.

Welcome New Members

Pam & Amanda Rice
346 Wildwood Ln.
Orange Park, FL 32073
Phone: 264-0624

John Slapcinsky
310 N. E. 14th Street
High Springs, FL 32643
Phone: (386) 454-2037
E-mail: Slapcin@flmnh.ufl.edu

Janice White
7925 Merrill Road #2814
Jacksonville, FL 32277
Phone: 762-9129

Shellers' Jamboree 2001 (continued)

The shelling community once again owes a debt of gratitude to the Suncoast Conchologists for organizing and staging this fun event. Congratulations from the Jacksonville Shell Club five for a job well done!

Note: This article, accompanied by three color photographs, is available on the Jacksonville Shell Club Web Site at www.jaxshells.org/jambo.htm.

Rest In Peace

Jacksonville Shell Club Member Nancy Garry-Chadwick passed away the third week of June, at the age of 76, following an extended illness. Nancy had been a member of the club since 1988 and had been active in club events as recently as last July. She is survived by her son Lane Chadwick of San Francisco and her sister, Mary Muoio of Woodstock, Georgia.

Upcoming Events

****North Carolina Shell Show** – September 14th-16th at the North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores, Salter Path, NC. Contact Ann Buddenhagen, 804 Westwood Dr., Raleigh, NC 27607 or Phone: (919) 787-7103.

We shell club newsletter editors are an enterprising lot and are always on the lookout for suitable material to publish. Recently while sorting through the extensive shell collection of Mrs. Norma Carlson of Leisure City, Florida (a collection acquired by the Jacksonville Shell Club for disposal) a yellowed apparently unpublished manuscript was found. This manuscript, written by Norma during the late 1970's, was interesting in that it detailed her evolving interest in shell collecting beginning in the late 1930's, when she moved to Miami, and culminated in her main claim to fame in malacological circles – the collection of the first Recent sinistral (left-handed) cone in the Americas. Equally intriguing about the manuscript is the fact that this specimen is now in the collection of Assistant Editor Harry Lee and an image is a permanent part our club's web pages. Norma's article, slightly edited for brevity, is presented below.

Now There Are Two

We moved to Miami in July 1939 and found sunshine, flowers, blue sky, fresh air to breathe, but not many jobs available. To me Miami Beach was a city of wealthy people, big houses, fantastic landscaping, sightseeing boats, hotels and apartment buildings. The beach was a place to picnic, and a place to get away from - with children's heads full of sand, not to mention the car. Summer rents were low, and you were warned that the rates would more than double in November. We planned and wished to be employed by then, so didn't worry. The big trouble was that most houses couldn't be rented to people with children. We settled for an unfinished house, bought basic furniture, and hoped the builder would stay sober long enough to finish the house before winter. Well, he didn't and we stayed through the next January, suffering with asthma and trying desperately to keep two children warm and healthy. That winter was cold, so cold that ice formed in the bottom of the kitchen sink – many times.

My next door neighbors were sixtyish, I presumed, and introduced me to sea shells, miniatures, and all I ever saw were the tiny crabs that they coaxed out of the shells with a lighted candle, gently played back and forth under each tiny shell. Their display of shells was all labeled and neatly placed row after row on black velvet in flat boxes and covered with cellophane. At the time I couldn't be bothered or care less having more important things to do like cooking and cleaning house, and sewing for which I got paid. My children took up most of my time.

But this couple, as I recall, were happy and on the go constantly, to the Keys, wherever that was, and somewhere near Palm Beach and Miami Beach, and always came home with more crabbed shells, but always miniatures. Now that I know better, I know that they must have spent hours sifting the high tide lines. Once my four-year-old son went with them and brought back a shoebox full of beach shells. The shells finally ended up in a pile under the back porch steps. Gee, I wonder what they were. Do you suppose one could have been a left-handed cone? I wonder how many boxes of "old" shells there are hidden away in a closet, or attic, or cellar, or behind the barn, and what rare shell is there going unnoticed?

Briefly, my shelling experiences didn't begin until after Hurricane Donna in 1960 – from beach collecting to wading, to snorkeling, to diving – then trading.

It was on a visit to Marco, Florida that I found the first sinistral (left-handed) cone known in the Americas. My sinistral *Conus floridanus* Gabb, 1868 [Florida Cone] (now known as *Conus anabathrum* Crosse, 1865)) measures 33 mm, has a pink tip, over all yellow color with a white mid band. It was found while snorkeling in four feet of water, in sand, at Caxambas Pass, Marco, Florida – April 30, 1967.

A second sinistral *Conus floridanus* was found on an exposed mud flat, Buck Key, between Sanibel and Captiva Islands about 7:30 AM, low tide, in January 1976 by Eugenia I. Wright, a former Sanibel resident. Both sinistral cones were live collected. Eugenia's cone measures 33.1 mm. and is preserved with animal and periostracum.

Editor's Comments: A photograph of Norma's sinistral *Conus anabathrum* appeared on the front page the April, 1971 edition of the "Mollusk Chaser" – a defunct publication of the South Florida Shell Club, Inc. where it was proclaimed by the late R. Tucker Abbott as a "unique scientific find." To the best of your editorial staff's knowledge, the two specimens described above are the only Recent sinistral cones that have ever been found in North America.

Second Bananas

By Phil Poland

While South Florida is known for its large and colorful tree snails, restrictions on the collecting of *Liguus* and *Orthalicus* leave us with buying or trading for existing stock as our only option for obtaining specimens. Some of us prefer the hunt, whether we collect or not - that's me. Fortunately there are a lot of snails in Florida that can be legally pursued, including some very pretty arboreal ones closely related to the

“forbidden fruit” (*Liguus* and *Orthalicus*) of the family Orthalicidae.

These are snails of the genera *Bulimulus* and *Drymaeus*, which have been assigned to a sibling family, Bulimulidae, by R. Tucker Abbott in his *Compendium of Landshells*. While other authors have used different taxonomic arrangements, this recent and popular reference is followed here.

Four species of this family have been found in Florida: *Bulimulus guadalupensis* (Bruguère, 1789), *Drymaeus dominicus* (Reeve, 1850), *Drymaeus dormani* (W. G. Binney, 1857) and *Drymaeus multilineatus* (Say, 1825).

Bulimulus guadalupensis is a recent invader from the Antilles. First reported in Hialeah, near Miami, it seems to be spreading rapidly. It does well in an urban environment, very much like another landsnail, the ubiquitous *Polygyra cereolus* (Mühlfeld, 1818). It’s a tropical species, however, and its eventual range in Florida will probably be limited to the areas where winter freezes are rare.

I was visiting a fellow snailer in Miami Beach one summer, after a rain, when I stumbled across this species for the first time. His walls and shrubs were thick with them and he hadn’t noticed.

In Miami, I found it in front of Madonna’s house – no kidding, in Coconut Grove, and near Matheson Hammock.

Most recently, I found it in Goodland, on Florida’s southwest coast, on buildings and shrubs.

Drymaeus dominicus is another tropical species found in southern Florida. It has an extremely thin and fragile shell. Aestivating snails generally cannot be directly removed from trees without breaking. If the small bit of bark to which it’s attached can be removed, the combination can be soaked in water for a short time and the animal will become active.

I’ve found this species on trees throughout the Everglades, the Keys, and on the southeastern coast of Florida.

Drymaeus dormani is another arboreal species, but is limited in range to the central and northeastern parts of the state.

I first found this species while canoeing on the Silver River near Ocala. The fairly large and almost white shell stood out clearly against the wet trunk of a cypress tree. I’ve also found it on hardwoods and cypress along the Withlacoochee and Hillsborough Rivers. Last month, during a rain, I found them laying their little round white eggs in the leaf mould at the bases of trees near a central Florida river.

Assistant Editor Harry Lee’s November 1977 *Shell-O-Gram* article, entitled *On Tree Snails*, discussed this species’ positive service to citrus growers by controlling

saprophytic sooty mold in their groves. This article can be found on the Jacksonville Shell Club’s web page at www.jaxshells.org/ontree.htm.

Drymaeus multilineatus is a tropical species with a range that almost perfectly matches that of *D. dominicus*. Unlike *D. dominicus*, it prefers shrubs to trees, and fares better in developed areas.

My first memory of *Drymaeus* was of a colony of *D. multilineatus* in vines on a trellis in a friend’s yard. It was about 1956 in North Miami Beach, and we were about eight. I traded a pile of comic books for the rights to transplant the lot of them to the shrubs in my own yard. I had *Liguus* in my yard too.

I stayed at the Seashell Motel in Naples last summer and found this species on the walks, walls and shrubs there. It was my first record of this species on the west coast.

These four species aren’t always easy to find. Rain makes a huge difference. After a downpour, what had been snailless terrain can become alive with them. The color images accompanying this story (available on the club web page at www.jaxshells.org/sweet.htm) were all shot on short notice, based on reports of heavy rain in Miami.

Short Notice Visit To Ruskin’s Fossil Pit

By Mary Reynolds

During the recent Jacksonville Shell Club field trip to Orlando for the Central Florida Shell Show, club member Bill Lyerly informed the group that the Caloosa Fossil Pit near Ruskin, FL was to soon close forever and that the last two dates it would be open were the 19th of May and the 23rd of June. This announcement generated considerable interest among the group, and tentative plans were made for a club field trip during June.

Several days later Bill informed me that, contrary to previous information, the June 23rd date had been cancelled, and the pit would be open only on May 19th. I received this news Thursday, May 17th about lunchtime and decided then and there that I would try to go down on my own. I spent the rest of the day planning and packing for the short notice trip. I called Bill for more information and directions to the pit from the main roads.

I had a pleasant drive down. This was facilitated by the fact that I had just bought a new car that had a CD magazine – a feature that I had loaded full.

Foregoing the expense of a motel, I camped at Manatee River State Park that was right at the exit road to Ruskin. I visited the Manatee River and saw a lot of dead *Corbicula fluminea* (Müller, 1774) [Asian Clam]. I also saw some fossil shells in the road fill, nothing of

any great interest, but I thought it might be an indicator of what I could find the following day.

Early the following morning I broke camp and left as soon as they opened the gate to the park. After a short drive, using Bill's directions, I soon saw piles of material indicating my arrival at the pit. There was a line of cars waiting to pay their entrance fee and the pit to open. Soon all the cars caravanned in, and I followed where most of the people went. We all descended into the dugout area, where most claimed a spot and began to dig. All the people were after bones, and I saw that a lot of them had gone back to holes they had worked previously. They said that bones could be found under the shell strata.

I walked around a bit in that area and was then informed of a new cut where people had found camel bones. I moved to this area and saw several ponds where I did most of my collecting. The shells were a lot better exposed here and you could even flush out new material by splashing water on the bank. Most finds were the more common species, usually of good quality, but they were often smaller specimens. Ultimately, in addition to the fossils, I also brought back some nice fragments of dugong bones. It was in this area where I found the biggest *Neverita duplicata* (Say, 1822) [Shark Eye] I had ever seen in my whole life. This was sure to be the pick of the trip.

Shortly thereafter I sat down for a sack lunch. I was near a lady from North Carolina who was digging in one spot and was packing each shell she found in toilet paper. To me fossil collecting is a lot like looking for shells on the beach, and there was plenty to see as you walked.

I did another round of the place and even explored a pond that was higher up but did not find too much there. I decide to then call it quits because I was satisfied with my large *Neverita* and dugong bones. But as I was coming up out of the pit, I realized I had taken a different road and discovered more piles of material. There was a tall pile of large material, and the man there said it was where they piled all the rocks that were too big for the crusher. It was practically all *Mercenaria*, and I wished that I had seen it earlier because I had been specifically looking for this genus - the bigger the better. I climbed on the pile but was careful since some of it gave away and tumbled down. I picked some good large grandfather-sized specimens. I was then truly satisfied. It was about 2 PM, or a little bit after when I decided to leave for home. There were plenty of people still around, and a lot of them had been moving from one place to another. I had five hours of collecting behind me and the drive home ahead of me.

Back at the exit I did a little bit of shopping to cool down and was then on my way. The drive home was

met with a roadblock at Citra due to a fire creating a bunch of smoke, but I found a different way to go.

I am glad that I went on down to Ruskin when I had this opportunity. Moral of the story is "When opportunity comes knocking, it may be the only one."

The species found included:

- *Neverita duplicata* (Say, 1822) [Shark Eye]
- *Hexaplex fulvescens* (G. B. Sowerby II, 1834) [Giant Eastern Murex]
- *Mercenaria campechiensis* (Gmelin. 1791) [Southern Quahog]
- *Dosinia elegans* (Conrad, 1843) [Elegant Dosinia]
- *Dinocardium robustum* (Lightfoot, 1786) [Atlantic Giant Cockle]
- *Busycon contrarium* (Conrad, 1840) [Lightning Whelk precursor]
- *Cardita* species
- *Noetia ponderosa* (Say, 1822) [Ponderous Ark]
- *Arcinella cornuta* Conrad, 1866 [Florida Spiny Jewelbox]
- *Anodontia alba* Link, 1807 [Buttercup Lucine]

White Abalone Listed As Endangered Species

On May 29th, the White Abalone (*Haliotis sorenseni* Bartsch, 1940) became the only marine mollusk currently listed as endangered by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) under the Endangered Species Act. The NMFS had designated this species as a candidate for listing in 1997 for the California region south to Baja California.

The species, which can grow to a length of 10 inches but is usually 5-8 inches, lives on rocky substratum such as pinnacles, rock piles, and deep reefs in deep water (80 to over 200 feet) from Point Conception (southern California) southward to Baja California. Once occurring in numbers as high as 1 per square meter of suitable habitat, they now can be found only occasionally. Recent surveys found that densities average 1 per hectare (10,000 square meters) in the Channel Islands off southern California. As a result of a 1999 survey of White Abalone in U.S. waters, it was estimated that less than 1,700 (1,658) remain indicating that the population had declined by over 99% from former densities. Additionally, of those remaining, they are old animals and approaching the end of their life span.

A short-lived commercial fishery for the species began in the early 1970s, peaked mid-decade and collapsed in the 1980s. Only occasional landings occurred after that time. Recent studies suggest that this species has likely suffered reproductive failure resulting

from severe over-harvest. The fishery was closed in 1996.

The white abalone is a broadcast spawning species. The eggs, if fertilized, hatch after only one day. Therefore, aggregations of adults are necessary for successful fertilization to occur. Currently, the White Abalone are frequently found alone and have little chance for successful fertilization. Because populations are only small fractions of former numbers, recovery will be complicated by loss of genetic diversity from genetic bottlenecks, genetic drift and founder effects. Abalones are also vulnerable to various bacterial and parasitic infections. The fishery was historically managed using size limits and seasons, but such methods failed because they did not account for density dependent reproduction and assumed regular successful settlement of the larvae.



THE SHELL SHOW IS COMING

Brampton Inn Resort – Jacksonville Beach, Florida

Saturday, July 14th and Sunday, July 15th

The show will be open to the public:

Saturday from 9:00 A.M. until 5:30 P.M.

Sunday from 10:00 A.M. until 5:00 P.M.



**Jacksonville Shell Club
1865 Debutante Dr.
Jacksonville, FL 32246-8645**

