President’s Message
By Dave Green

November is always a Special month on the calendar. It represents a time of Thanksgiving and the gratitude we have for all our blessings in the previous months of the year. One could easily say that there hasn’t been a lot of good in the year 2020, but when you stop and look back to examine the details of 2020, there are probably many things in your life that you can give thanks for. It is always easy to see the negative things that have happened to us, but we sometimes struggle to see all the positive things that have occurred over these past months.

Certainly, 2020 has put many of us to the supreme test of our endurance. COVID-19 has changed our world and our daily lives for sure, and it doesn’t seem to be getting any better at the present time. We have lost over 230,000 Americans to this virus and they predict the count will go much higher before we return to the lifestyles we were living prior to COVID-19. I think we all are hopeful a vaccine will be available in 2021 and we can start to recover our standard American style of living. It will be interesting to see how this plays out going into 2021. The main thing we all need to do at this point is stay safe and continue practicing our social distancing, washing our hands and wearing our masks.

Stop and look back at 2020. I think you will see many situations that you can be thankful for in your daily life. The first thing that should hit you is that you are still alive and healthy at this point. Give thanks that you have your health. Stop and think about all our fellow Americans and thousands of people all around the world that are sick and confined to hospitals. Many of those people will never go home again or even see their families and loved ones. That should be the very first thing you should give thanks for. I still hold hope that a vaccine will come along in 2021 and these world health issues will no longer change and modify our daily lives.

Yes, 2020 has been a real test and a struggle for all of us, both in the United States and around the world. But we should stay positive and look ahead to 2021 and beyond. It is so much easier to be positive than it is to be negative and look for excuses and reasons to blame. That is the real message I want to make in this month’s president’s message. Enjoy life but keep your guard up going forward. When you sit down to the family table on Thanksgiving Day to celebrate with turkey and dressing and all the trimmings, stop and give thanks to the Almighty for all your blessings and don’t forget about all the people in this world that are critically ill and may never go home again, and also the millions of people that don’t have the food and bounty we have on our table and are hungry every day. Yes, even with COVID-19, we still have so much to be thankful for. Just stop and look around and I think you will catch where I am trying to go with this message.

Wouldn’t it be so nice to see each other and spend time with our fellow shell club members? I know I certainly would like to see everyone again. We all miss that socialization in our lives. Stay positive,
Continued from page 1  maybe that will be a part of what happens in 2021. In closure, I hope you have a Safe and Wonderful Thanksgiving with family and friends, or maybe it will be time with just you and your immediate family. Regardless, give thanks for all you have in your lives. Best wishes to all.

December Newsletter

Since we are not going to be able to have a Christmas party this year, let’s share our shelly/beachy Christmas decorations. If you decorate a tree with shells, take a picture of it. Maybe you don’t decorate your entire tree with shells, but you have a few favorite shell ornaments, take a picture. If you have a Christmas wreath or other decorations with shells, please take a picture and send them to Lucy Clampit at lclampit@comcast.net. Feel free to write a few sentences to go with the picture.

Example: This is a sparkly Tun shell given to me by one of my favorite library volunteers.

The deadline for contributions will be December 10. Let’s have a Shelly Merry Christmas!

Beach Report

By Darwin Alder

I have had a chance to go to the beach a few times. The tide has been variable as has the conditions of the water and drift line. My finest finds have been beach toys. I have a mermaid, The Hulk, Woody, molds of shells, fish, and sea horses. I have seen high energy waves and the water almost glass smooth. From East Beach to Matagorda and San Luis pass, I have seen Oliva sayana, a thais sp, Dosinia discus, mercenaria campechiensis, and even one nice Epitonium angulatum. IT HAS BEEN GREAT!
Fuzzy Recollections of My Love for Shells – My Journey into Conchology

by Leslie Crnkovic

About 1970, when I was 8 or 9 years old, and my oldest sister Diane was a Junior at South Houston High School (SHHS) in a Marine Biology Class with instructor ‘Nathan Veatch’, she was building a Texas shell collection as a class assignment. As a wonderful big sister, she shared with me about her shells and how she had them packaged and cataloged. Her enthusiasm and our special connection left me with a passion for shells. A few years later she gave me the collection, which I kept until 1984 and then loaned it out, with no return. My interest in the ocean and marine life continued, and it was evidenced in my school work through elementary and intermediate schools. When we picked a State for a school project, I picked Florida. I also picked the Miami Dolphins as my team, ...well, because of the Dolphin, and I remember having a Dolphin’s ski cap for many years. Around this time, we took a family camping trip to Pensacola Beach where I gathered a few beach shells. In 7th grade art (1974), I created an underwater scene.

At SHHS ‘Mr. Veatch’ became my teacher for: Biology, Zoology, Geology, Physical Sciences, and then the much-anticipated Junior year, spring of ‘79 ‘Marine Sciences’ course. We took many field trips to Galveston area bays and beaches, UT Port Aransas Marine Science Inst., and TAMU College Station. As the high point of my entire High School experience, I was convinced to follow a career in Marine Biology; however, between low pay for the few jobs and deep cuts in government funding, I was counseled into other career paths, becoming a Business major (yawn).

Stepping out on the Sheller’s Journey: Starting in the summer of 1980, I frequently worked in Galveston, and collected shells after work. In 1983 I was working at UT Pharmacology in Galveston and enjoying the local history and culture: exiting Ashton Villa through the Gift Shop, I found a copy of Jean Andrews’ “Shells and Shores of Texas”. This book became my foundation guide for all-things seashells.Marveled by this book I read the shell collecting down-the-coast narrative and maps in the back of the book. The Brazosport Museum of Natural Science was featured, so I went for a visit in 1983, probably September, where I met Mildred Tate and joined the Sea Shell Searchers of Brazoria County (SSS), and immediately started attending meetings! Mildred told me about the Houston Conchology Society, sending me to visit Connie Boone at HMNS in December 1983, then joining HCS in January 1984. After meeting Darwin Alder, we sometimes carpooled to the SSS meetings.

Around this same time, my father bought me two books: “Shells” by Roderick Cameron (1972), and Abbott’s “Kingdom of the Shell”. They are still in my library with much fondness. Around this time, I purchased my first shell, a large Cassis cornuta for $20 at the Flea Market in the old Sage Store building on the Gulf Freeway.

Continued on page 4
Continued from page 3  

Crossing the Line to Conchologist: 1986-1988 became the years of transition from abject novice to Obsessed Collector, with very frequent field trips with HCS and SSS along the Texas Coast, and to Florida and Belize. In '86, I had a beach house in Matagorda; in '87 I became a diver, bought a large amount of shells and cases from Art de Mer as they were closing, and worked in Corpus Christi; ‘88 was my first COA Convention in Ft. Myers FL, first FL fossil trip, I bought a collection with a nice library, and my first dive trip to Honduras; …and it all kinda spiraled out-of-control from there!

Beautiful Shells
Enjoy these gorgeous, bicolor specimens of *Spondylus visayensis* (Poppe and Tagaro 2010). The yellow one with red stripes is 106.11mm, and the one with red spines on a yellow body is 121.42mm. They were collected on a hookah dive at 30 to 40 meters deep on Nocnoca Island Bohol, Philippines. They belong to Tonis Pattichis, from the country of Cyprus, who posted the pictures on the “Beautiful Marine Molluscs” Facebook page and permitted the editor to share them with you. In addition, he sent a short video of his collection of *Spondylus americanus* that you can view on the HCS website at [www.houstonshellclub.com](http://www.houstonshellclub.com) on the Publications Page.
Sanibel Shell Show

“This past year has certainly turned everything upside down. The Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club cancelled our show at the Sanibel Community House and instead is hosting a free 2021 Virtual Sanibel Shell Show on the Sanibel Shell Club's YouTube channel. It will be a blast, and with tons of social media promotion, it will attract a global audience. On schedule for March 5-6 from noon to 3pm EST are educational and entertaining videos, a shell photo contest, DIY shell projects, door prizes, and more!”

Clair Beckmann
2021 Virtual Sanibel Shell Show Chair

Here is the link if you would like to enter the shell photo contest. If it doesn’t work, contact Lucy Clampit at lclampit@comcast.net.

https://sanibelshellclub.com/2021-sanibel-shell-show-favorite-shell/

Molluscs on Stamps
by John Jacobs

There are an estimated 10,000 stamps and postal stationary depicting various molluscs. New issues are released every year, and Australia has had numerous, miniature works of art with many species portrayed. On August 17, 2020 they released a set of 4 stamps and a souvenir sheet showing four different fossils. What made these special was that the fossils shown had all become opalized. Opals are found only in Australia, and are a precious gem, highly prized for their intrinsic beauty. One of the stamps depicts an opalized fossil moon snail. In fact, what we usually see with fossil shells this old are trace fossils, in this case, an internal mold.

These stamps are currently available from the Australia post office via the web site www.auspost.com.au. I was very pleased to be able to add this stamp to my collection.

(Editor: John is a longtime HCS member who resides in Florida, and he is an avid collector of shell stamps. You will see more in future newsletters. John, thank you for sharing.)
Throw Back to 1992

The Grey Major family in Little Rock, Arkansas contacted the HMNS about donating George Major’s shell collection to the museum. In early 2020, arrangements were made for Tina Petway and another employee to go to LR to get the shells. Any shells that the HMNS didn’t need were go to HCS and COA. Members present at the February 2020 HCS meeting voted to provide funds for four club members to rent a U-Haul and retrieve the HCS/COA shells. Then the pandemic hit, so all plans were cancelled. This summer the family packed the shells and delivered them to the HMNS.

Included in the collection was a former World Record Size Conus gloriamaris, Chemnitz, 1777. Connie Boone wrote a story about the shell for the October 1992 Texas Conchologist. Here is part of the article and a current picture of the shell by the picture that was included in Connie’s article.

(Editor: Picture by Gary Kidder. The current WRS is 17.40 cm.)

RECORD "GLORY OF THE SEAS"  

By Constance Boone

The huge specimen, perfect and live-taken with operculum, of Conus gloriamaris, Chemnitz, 1777, purchased by Houston Conchology Society member Natalee Howard of Seabrook, Texas, on her spring trip to the Philippines, has been properly measured and recorded with Standard Catalog of Shells Editor Robert J. L. Wagner. The size makes it the largest to date on record in the list of world size records of shells kept by Mr. Wagner.

The cone was measured by Dr. T. E. Pulley, malacologist and director emeritus of the Houston Museum of Natural Science, and proved to be 15.00 cm. This is .25 cm. larger than the listed record of 15.05 cm.

Natalee's beautiful shell was purchased in April, 1981, at Cebu from Emmanuel Lacanienta, Jr., a young dealer who brought some nice shells to our resort for our party to see and purchase. "Junior" was sure it was a record size.

Natalee had already purchased one large Conus gloriamaris but couldn't resist the record sized specimen. She is "The Shell Lady" with her business located at 1814 First Street, Seabrook, Texas 77586. Go visit her and see the specimen; that is, let her know you are coming so she will have it out of the vault!

Although more and more Conus gloriamaris specimens are on the market today and the price is no longer the $2,000 once paid (in the 1960's), a good specimen today of four inches or more still commands a price of $400 to $500; and, of course, a record sized specimen goes for more than that. Nice three inch specimens can be bought for $200 or so, and smaller ones can be bought for less than that. It is still a rare shell to have in one's collection.
**Spirula spirula**

How many of you have found one of these mysterious things on the beach? It is the internal shell of a squid. “The New York Times” recently published a story and video of the critter.

“They’re Calling You on the Squid Phone’

Cephalopod researchers were surprised by the sighting of a ram’s horn squid, a peculiar animal never before filmed in its natural environment.”


(Editor: The spirula pictures are from the “Femorale Shells” Facebook page.)