

82<sup>nd</sup> Annual

# Sanibel

## SHELL FESTIVAL

March 7, 8 & 9, 2019

**Shells  
Crafts  
Books  
Shell Art  
Judged Artistic &  
Scientific Exhibits**

**The Community House • 2173 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel, FL**

photo by Melanie Moraga



# DO YOU KNOW YOUR BIRTHSHELL?

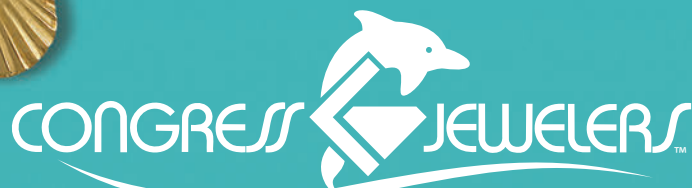
**March: The Olive Shell, Aquamarine,** The Olive shell is a spiral shell characterized by intense energy; those born to this shell are courageous, healthy and perceptive with a bright awareness and spiritual energy. As imaginative as they are compassionate, those born to the Olive are known as intuitive and kind.



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# 82nd Annual Sanibel Shell Festival • March 7, 8 and 9, 2019

Thursday and Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. • Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
The Community House, 2173 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel, FL 33957

## Inside The Community House

- A \$5 donation includes a bag of local shells, packaged by Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club members, and one free admission to the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum redeemable during the 2019 Sanibel Shell Festival (up to \$15 value). Funds raised from donations are awarded in grants to local educational and conservation organizations, as well as marine science scholarships for students at local universities.
- Artistic and Scientific Division Exhibition Halls. The judged competitive shows are open to shell collectors and artists around the world. Prizes and ribbons are awarded in a variety of categories.
- Authors' Table featuring book signings and book sales with local and national authors.
- Specimen Shell Booth.
- Gently worn jewelry sales table with all the proceeds going to the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club scholarship fund.
- Professional artists on site with works for sale including Sailor's Valentines, floral arrangements and other shell creations.

## Outside The Community House

(no admission charge)

- Sanibel-Captiva Shell Crafters have shell crafted items on display and for sale.
- The Shell Tent where shells can be bought for as little as 25 cents.
- Sixth graders from The Sanibel School share their knowledge of local shells at the Live Shell Exhibit.
- Commemorative Sanibel Shell Festival T-shirts available in a variety of sizes and colors for \$15 each.
- Raffle tickets for 6 grand prizes valued from \$250 to \$1,000.

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Welcome to the

82nd Annual

Sanibel Shell Festival

The Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club proudly welcomes you to the 82nd Annual Sanibel Shell Festival, the longest running shell show in the country. The origins of the shell show date back to the 1920s, as does The Community House where the show is held. We encourage you to come inside and experience a blend of historical and modern Sanibel. The exhibits you will see are divided into two divisions. The Artistic Division features incredible works of art created primarily with shells and other sealife and is further divided into professional and hobbyist categories of competition. The Scientific Division focuses on single shells and collections from Florida and around the world. Each division has special categories for elementary and high school students. Of course, people who were students a long time ago are welcome to show their beautiful shells as well. In 2018, we had an exhibitor who was 100 years old. Happily, the interest in shells spans many generations.

The mission of the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club is to exchange information in the field of conchology and malacology, to foster public education and intelligent conservation, and to encourage and support studies and research activities in those fields. The Sanibel Shell Show provides an opportunity for exhibitors to share their passion for the wonderful world of shells with each other as well as the many visitors who support the show.

One hundred percent of the profits from the show are distributed as gifts, grants and scholarships. Past recipients include Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum, Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation, Florida Gulf Coast University, University of South Florida and the Florida Museum of Natural History.

On behalf of the entire Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club, I invite you to step inside The Community House and visit the world of shells!

Tom Annesley

President, Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club

The Community House welcomes you to the 82nd Annual Sanibel Shell Festival, a unique event that has no equal in the world of shelling. We hope you enjoy your visit.

The Community House was built in 1927 by the residents of Sanibel to serve as a gathering place and center of the community’s civic and social life. It soon became the home for Sanibel’s annual “shell extravaganza,” which has been held here ever since.

In addition to hosting the annual shell festival, The Community House hosts shell collector and shell-crafter activities throughout the year. The Sanibel-Captiva Shell Crafters organization meets here every Monday year-round to create the lovely and whimsical shell art you will find at the shell festival. All revenues from the sales of the Shell Crafters’ creations at the shell festival go toward operation of The Community House, which is run by the nonprofit Sanibel Community Association (SCA).

In the summer of 2016, SCA embarked on a major restoration and renovation of The Community House and its grounds, ensuring that this historic facility can continue to serve future generations of shell enthusiasts for years to come. We are celebrating The Community House and are delighted to be commemorating our 82nd Sanibel Shell Festival.

You can support the house by becoming a member of SCA, by making a tax-deductible donation to our restoration fund or by becoming a Community House volunteer. Please join us. Can you imagine life without our Community House?

Lew Gould, Board President  
Teresa Riska-Hall, Executive Director

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Vice President

Secretary

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Past President

Members At Large

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Karen Silverstein

Kim Short

Linda Edinburg

Karen Turner

Connie Jump

Ramona Novitski

Carol Periard

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Co-Chairs

Scientific Chair

Artistic Chair

Art Exhibit Coordinator

Authors’ Table

Mary Burton & Joyce Matthys

Tom Annesley

Mary Burton

Charles Barr

Ramona Novitski

& Jennifer Schiff

Donald Dan

Holly Dunn

Karen Silverstein

Linda Annesley

Connie Jump

Stacy & Linda Edinburg

Karen Turner

Linda Edinburg

Mary Burton & Joyce Matthys

To enter the 83rd Sanibel Shell Festival in 2020, log onto

http://sanibelshellclub.com after September 1, 2019

for exhibit rules and entry forms

YES! I would love to join the

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www.SanibelCommunityHouse.net

Sanibel Community Association

2019 Shell Festival Committee

Shell Festival Co-Chairs:

Susan Schoenherr

Lynette Kelly

Marcia Simmons

Raffle Committee:

Teresa Riska-Hall

Melissa Congress

Appreciation Luncheon:

SCA

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## T-Shirt Sales Benefit Grant And Scholarship Programs

The Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club has created a new T-shirt for the 2019 Shell Festival. It features shells that can be found on the beaches of Sanibel and Captiva and was created by Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club member and graphic artist Andrea Schopf. The ladies V-neck shirts come in aqua, coral and lavender. The unisex and crewneck T-shirts come in heather blue, light gray and aqua. All the shirts sell for \$15 each and are available at the Sanibel Shell Festival.

One hundred percent of the profits from the T-shirt sales, like the other income from the Sanibel Shell Show, are given out in the form of grants to marine science-related programs and scholarships to the Marine Science Departments of the University of South Florida and Florida Gulf Coast University.✧



Robin Harris and Rick Batt model the 2019 T-shirts

photo provided



*Sailor's Valentine Studio*  
by Sandy Moran



A photograph of Sandy Moran, the owner of Sailor's Valentine Studio, sitting in her studio. She is a woman with short white hair, wearing a white long-sleeved top and white pants. Behind her are shelves filled with numerous small, clear plastic containers, each containing different types of seashells. In the foreground, several octagonal wooden frames are displayed, each containing a unique mosaic made from seashells. To the left of the main image, there are three circular inset images showing close-ups of different shell mosaic designs.

For class schedule and to view the gallery, visit Sandy's website at  
[www.SailorsValentineStudio.com](http://www.SailorsValentineStudio.com)



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# Sanibel Shell Festival RAFFLE

**Co-hosted by The Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club  
and The Sanibel-Captiva Shell Crafters**

**Raffle Proceeds To Benefit The Community House**

**Ticket Donation: \$5 each, 3 for \$10 or 7 for \$20**

**Drawing will be held on Saturday, March 9 at 3 p.m. You need not be present to win.**

**Festival Hours: March 7 and 8, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. • March 9, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.**



From left, Sarah Jacobson, Sanibel Community Association director of marketing and events; Sue Schoenherr, Sanibel Shell Festival chair; Lynette Kelly, Sanibel-Captiva Shell Crafters; and Melissa Congress, Sanibel Shell Festival raffle chair with some of the raffle prizes  
photo by Jeff Lysiak

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One of a kind shell wreath. Created and donated by the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Crafters. **Valued at \$250**

## **Specimen Shell**

Large *Murex Ramosus* in lucite display case. Shell donated by Larry Strange, Sanibel Seashell Industries. Lucite case donated by Ann Arnoff, Charles Lister and Bill Schecker. **Valued at \$450**



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## What The Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club Is All About



From left, Amanda, Dominic, Olivia and Nicholas Baker, members of the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club, with some of their favorite finds they brought for "Show & Tell"

photos provided

Twelve members of the island community founded the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club in 1961. Today, the club has more than 300 members from across the United States, Canada and Barbados.

Shell Club meetings are usually held on the second Sunday of the month, October through April, at Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum. However, this year the museum is being renovated and the meetings have been moved to The Community House. The March meeting will be held on the 17th because the club will be busy breaking down the shell show on the second Sunday of the month.

The meetings begin at 1:45 p.m. with refreshments and a half-hour silent auction of shells and shell-related items. The money raised at the silent auctions is earmarked for the Shell Museum's outreach program Mollusks on the Move. The program takes shells and live mollusks to schools that are too far away to visit the museum, the Golisano Children's Hospital of Southwest Florida, retirement centers and local events.

Each meeting features a speaker who increases members' knowledge of the shell world. There is also an informative monthly newsletter, which generally comes out October through April.

The meetings are open to anyone who is interested in collecting and studying seashells and mollusks, the animals who create them, or working with shells as an art form.



Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club President Tom Annesley presenting a \$15,000 check to Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum Director Dorrie Hipschman

Members range from beachcombers with shells they have found on a beach to knowledgeable collectors with valuable worldwide collections. They may be permanent residents from the surrounding area, seasonal residents or simply visitors who want to support the club. Shell collecting can be a lifelong professional interest or a happy diversion for one's spare time.

The Sanibel Shell Show is the club's largest fundraiser. It began 82 years ago when a few Sanibel shell collectors decided to have an exhibit of their shells on the porch of the Island Inn. Today, it is considered one of the top shell shows in the United States, and exhibitors come from around the world to enter exhibits in the Scientific and Artistic Divisions of this show. It is an intricate part of the Sanibel Shell Festival. All the profits raised by the shell club and shell show are given out in the form of grants to marine educational programs.

The purpose of the club is to promote the study of mollusks and the shells they create, to give assistance and information to others interested in this subject, and to promote and encourage the understanding of ecology and conservation. Members are responsible collectors devoted to increasing knowledge while searching for perfection and diversification in shell specimens.

The objectives of the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club are to provide a forum for the exchange of information in the field of conchology and malacology, to foster public education and intelligent conservation of those and related ecological resources, and to encourage and support studies and research activities in those fields.

Anyone with an interest in mollusks, shells, marine environments and shell art is encouraged to join the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club. More information can be found online at <https://sanibelshellclub.com>.✱



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*Welcome to the  
Shell Festival*





# The Chairs Of The Sanibel Shell Festival



Sanibel Community  
Association Shell Festival  
Chair Sue Schoenherr



Sanibel Shell Show  
Co-Chair Joyce Matthys



Sanibel Shell Show  
Co-Chair Mary Burton

## The Sanibel Shell Show: What You Will See

Exhibitors from around the United States and Canada have traveled to Sanibel to enter their shell collections and artistic creations in the prestigious and highly competitive Sanibel Shell Show. There are two major divisions of competition, the Scientific Division featuring single shell exhibits and multiple shell exhibits, and the Artistic Division including creations made from shells and other sea life. The competition is open to everyone. The following is a list of the different classes of competition in the 2019 show.

### SCIENTIFIC DIVISION

#### Student Classes

Grades K-6 – Multiple or single shells  
Grades 7-12 – Multiple or single shells  
Single Shell Classes (one specimen only)  
Sanibel-Captiva – Self-collected  
Florida-Caribbean – Self-collected  
Florida-Caribbean – Any source  
Worldwide – Self-collected  
Worldwide – Any source  
Unusual Variants (Albino, freak, etc.) – Any source  
Fossils (Shells and/or Other Sea Life) – Any source  
Sea Life (other than shells) – Any source

#### Multiple Shell Classes – Two or more specimens

Sanibel-Captiva – Self-collected  
Florida-Caribbean – Self-collected  
Florida-Caribbean – Any source  
Worldwide – Any source  
One Superfamily, Family or Subfamily – Any source  
One Genus – Any source  
One Species to Show Color, Form and/or Growth – Self-collected  
One Species to Show Color, Form and/or Growth – Any source  
Sea Life Other Than Shells (Coral, echinoderm, etc.) – Any source  
Special (An exhibit that does not fit into any of the above classes)  
Miniatures (Adult shells only, maximum size 1 inch – Any source  
Best of the Blues (Must have won a blue ribbon at a previous Sanibel Shell Show)

Anne Joffe Sanibel Superstar Award (Limited to exhibits that previously have won a major award)

Multimedia (Shell photo, painting or other artistic rendering)

Collectables (Antiques, fine art, unusual artifacts using shells or shell motifs)

#### Single Shell Or Multiple Shell Class

Best of the Blues (Must have won a blue ribbon at a previous Sanibel Shell Show)

Anne Joffe Sanibel Superstar Award (Limited to exhibits that previously have won a major award)

### ARTISTIC DIVISION

#### Hobbyist Classes & Professional Classes

Flower Arrangement – Made of shells  
Flower Arrangement – Sea life with or without shells  
Single Flower  
Single Stem of Flowers  
Miniature Flower Arrangement  
Miniature Picture  
Lamp  
Tree or Topiary  
Jewelry – Single piece of jewelry in a covered case  
Jewelry – Multiple pieces of jewelry in a covered case  
Shell-related Needlecraft  
Holiday Decoration  
Single Sailor's Valentine  
Single Miniature Sailor's Valentine  
Single Medium Sailor's Valentine (Professionals only)  
Traditional Single Sailor's Valentine  
Double Sailor's Valentine  
Traditional Double Sailor's Valentine  
Novelties  
Flower Picture  
Picture or Mosaic Other Than Flowers  
Mirror  
Wreath, Non-holiday  
Multimedia (Shell photo, painting or other artistic rendering)  
Shell Table  
Shell Box  
Miscellaneous (Not applicable to any of the other classes)  
Collectibles (Antiques, fine art, unusual artifacts using shells or shell motifs)  
Student Exhibitor Grades K-6 (Any of the above classes)  
Student Exhibitor Grades 7-12 (Any of the above classes)\*



## Shell Club Silent Auctions Support Mollusks On The Move

by Joyce Matthys

**"L**et's try it." That was the response last spring when it was suggested that the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club have a silent auction of shells and shell-related objects at each club meeting.



The club depends on donated shells for their silent auctions. This beautiful Spondylus was donated by Dick Willis. photos provided

Many new club members are just starting their collections while many members have been collecting for a long time. Those who have large collections often have duplicates of a species. Now we are giving club members and other collectors a chance to share their extra shells by donating them to the silent auctions.

This fall, the club decided to earmark the proceeds from the silent auctions to Mollusks on the Move, the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum's outreach program. Last



The van is equipped to guarantee the live animals stay healthy in route to their visits

year, the club donated \$15,000 to help purchase a van for the program. The money raised by the silent auctions will be used to help defray the program's expenses such as gas and supplies for trips to schools that are too far away to come to the museum on a field trip. Mollusks on the Move also takes shells and mollusks (the live animals that create the shells) to the Golisano Children's Hospital of Southwest Florida, retirement centers and local events.

Have the silent auctions been a success? Yes, the first two auctions this season netted \$2,074. However, the last of the shells that have been donated will be auctioned off at the March meeting. If you have good quality shells that you would like to donate to the club's silent auctions, contact email [joycematthys1@gmail.com](mailto:joycematthys1@gmail.com) or call 503-871-1082.\*

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## 2019 Sanibel Shell Show Awards & Sponsors

*"Thank you to all the Class Sponsors for your continued support"*



The Anne Joffe Sanibel Superstar Award pin is designed and donated by Congress Jewelers

### HOBBYIST ARTISTIC DIVISION

**Ann Arnoff Memorial Award**  
Best Shell Flower Exhibit  
**Best Miniature Flower Arrangement**  
**Best Picture or Mosaic**  
**Flo Ioreo Award**  
Best Lamp  
**Wanda Will Award**  
Best Jewelry Exhibit  
**Dorothy K. Putnam Award**  
Best Mirror  
**Best Single Sailor's Valentine**  
**Best Miniature Sailor's Valentine**  
**Best Double Sailor's Valentine**  
**Bettie K. McGowan Award**  
Best Holiday Exhibit

### Best Shell Related Exhibit

**Daniel E. Malone Award**  
Best Exhibit in Student Classes  
**Best In Show – Hobbyist**  
**Terri Gosselin Memorial Award**  
Best Miscellaneous Exhibit

### PROFESSIONAL ARTISTIC DIVISION

**Best Single Sailor's Valentine**  
**Best Double Sailor's Valentine**  
**Bill Jordan Award**  
Best Miniature Sailor's Valentine  
**Best Medium Sailor's Valentine**  
**Best Flower Exhibit**  
**Meta Neujahr Award**  
Best Miniature Flower Arrangement  
**Best Picture or Mosaic**  
**Best Miscellaneous Exhibit**  
**Capt. Tom Clifford Award**  
Best in Show – Professional

### COMBINED HOBBYIST & PROFESSIONAL ARTISTIC CLASSES

**Judges' Special Ribbons**  
**Judges' Merit Ribbon**  
**People's Choice Award – Artistic**

### SCIENTIFIC DIVISION

**DuPont Trophy**  
Most Outstanding Entry  
**Conchologists of America Award**  
Entry That Best Furthers Interest In Shells  
**Best Sanibel-Captiva Shells – Self-Collected**  
**Best Florida-Caribbean Shells – Any Source**  
**Best Fossil Shells – Any Source**  
**Howard Sexauer Award**  
Best Worldwide Shells – Any Source  
**Marilyn Northrop Award**  
Best Self-Collected Single Shell  
**Gene & Evelyn Spencer Memorial Award**  
Best South Pacific Shell – Any Source  
**R. Tucker Abbott Award**  
**Shell of the Show – Any Source**  
**Shell of the Show – Fossil**  
**Elsie Malone Award**  
Best Student Exhibit  
**Best of the Blues**  
**Anne Joffe Sanibel Superstar Award**  
Best Entry  
**People's Choice Award – Scientific**  
**Judges' Special Ribbons**  
**Judges' Merit Ribbon**

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Island Sun  
Mary Burton  
Matzaluna and The Timbers Restaurant  
Doug and Kathy Kapp



## A Look At Some Of The 2018 Artistic Division Entries



Cynthia Skelly of Fort Myers won first place last year for her angel sculpture  
photos by Jeff Lysiak



Viginia Marcellus won the 2018 People's Choice award for her seashell castle



*Urchin Temple Guardian* by Andrea Schopf won second place last year



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### SCIENTIFIC JUDGES

#### Dave Green

**D**ave Green and his wife Linda are traveling from Houston, Texas to judge the Sanibel Shell Show this year. Dave will be judging the Scientific Division and Linda will be judging the Artistic Division.

Dave has been involved in the study of conchology and malacology for over 45 years as a collector of mollusks and as an exhibitor in shell shows. His interest in shells started with a variety of families, but today, he only collects cones, abalone and olives from around the world. He has won numerous major awards in Florida and Texas shell shows, including several DuPont, Conchologists of America, Shell of the Show and educational awards. He has served as a scientific judge at numerous shell shows in Florida and Texas.

Dave is a member of the Conchologists of America, where he has served as president, vice president and secretary. He is also a member of the Houston Conchology Society, the Sea Shell Searchers of Brazoria County, Astronaut Trail Shell Club, Sarasota Shell Club and the San Diego Shell Club. He holds a bachelor's degree and a master's degree, plus post master's work towards his PhD.✱



#### Duane Kauffmann

**S**anibel-Captiva Shell Club member Duane Kauffmann grew up on a small dairy farm in the middle of Illinois, graduated from Goshen College and then completed a PhD in social psychology at the University of Illinois. He taught at and retired from Goshen College. There he had the good fortune to become friends with two biologist faculty colleagues who had started a marine biology program in which he became involved and ultimately added to his teaching responsibilities.

Fascinated by the tiny snails found in a clump of algae, Duane has focused on finding, photographing and identifying very small species. He recently completed a draft of an identification guide to some 150 micro species from western Florida. He is also an active member of the Sarasota Shell Club, coordinates the activities at the "club table" at the Sarasota Shell Show and has exhibited miniature shells at several shell shows.✱



### ARTISTIC JUDGES

#### Marci Chamberlain

**M**arci Chamberlain, always an artist in different mediums, got her master's degree from the University of Massachusetts and worked in the advertising world until she started her own company in graphic art. After selling the company, she decided to devote her time to Victorian shell work.

Marci fell in love with shell collecting when she had a summer cottage on Cape Cod back in the 1980s. After she saw her first Sailor's Valentine, she said she was hooked. She started researching the history of Valentines and then began to amass an extensive collection of large and small seashells.

Her crafts have been shown in several venues in Rockport and Newburyport, Massachusetts as well as here in Florida. Sandra Bullock and Adam Sandler have purchased her work.

For the last 11 years, Marci and her husband Joe have shared their time between Salem, New Hampshire and Palm Beach County, Florida. She joined the Broward Shell Club in 2013 and has since been honored with the Best of Show trophy four of those years.✱



#### Linda Green

**L**inda Green grew up in Cleveland, Ohio and fell in love with shells when she moved to the Orlando area in 1982. Her attention to detail when judging probably stems from her mathematics background. She received a bachelor's degree in math from Kent State University, a master's degree from Southern Illinois University and then went on to become a computer programmer.

Linda has judged shell shows throughout Florida. She has won many awards at shell shows for her magnificent shell-themed quilts.

Linda has served as president, vice president and secretary of the Conchologists of America. She is also a member of the Houston Conchology Society, the Sea Shell Searchers of Brazoria County, Astronaut Trail Shell Club, Sarasota Shell Club and the San Diego Shell Club.✱





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## Aww Shucks! It's A Pearl!

by Jeff Lysiak

You've heard the expression "Finding a needle in a haystack," right? The phrase is used to emphasize a rare or unusual discovery, against staggering odds.

Such is the case of a recent food find here on Sanibel, when Luke Timmons, the oyster bar counterman and "master shucker" at The Timbers Restaurant & Fish Market, was busy at work on February 1. According to Matt Asen, the restaurant's owner, Timmons soon experienced something he hadn't before.

"After shucking literally thousands of oysters over the past couple of years, Luke found one with a pearl inside still attached to the shell," said Asen. "And that's only the second one I've ever heard about in my 40 years in the restaurant business."

Timmons cracked open the Cedar Key oyster to reveal the shiny mollusk gem, which measures nearly one-half inch across.



Oyster with attached pearl  
photos by Matt Asen



Luke Timmons with the rare find

So how rare is it to find a naturally-produced pearl inside of an oyster shell? Only one in about 10,000 wild oysters will yield a pearl. Of those, only a small percentage achieve the size, shape and color desirable to the jewelry industry.

Asen plans on displaying the rare oyster/pearl pair at The Timbers, located at 703 Tarpon Bay Road on Sanibel.✪

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Marine Biologist Rebecca Mensch pictured next to the aquarium containing three live Junonias at the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum photos courtesy Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum

## Live Junonias A Landmark Discovery For Shell Seekers

by Jeff Lysiak

Ask any shell enthusiast visiting Sanibel Island what species they would most enjoy finding, and the answer would almost universally be the elusive Junonia.

Ask any marine biologist what species of shell they know the least about, and they might give the identical answer.

Despite its popularity, very little is known about Junonias. That is, until recently.

Rebecca Mensch, one of the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum's marine biologists, was invited last winter to participate in a research cruise fronted by Dr. Greg Herbert, associate professor at the University of South Florida (USF) School of Geosciences and USF's Florida Institute of Oceanography. Dr. Herbert, who is also on the museum's board of trustees, is engaged in a project mapping the mollusk community of the Florida Gulf Shelf.

According to Mensch, she was hoping to target three of the most popular local shell species – the Junonia, Scotch Bonnet and Lion's Paw – and how they might be featured within the major renovation project at the museum, which plans to include between 10 and 15 aquarium tanks filled with live mollusks and other seldom seen marine critters.

After consulting with Dr. José H. Leal, the museum's science director and curator, Mensch soon learned that finding images of live Junonias was rather difficult. It took Dr. Leal two days to find any photographic evidence of the rare deepwater mollusk while it was still alive.

"How do we know if the depiction of a live Junonia we have on display in the museum is accurate?" asked Mensch. "There's an obvious gap in knowledge here."

During the research expedition, which ran from February 22 to 26, 2018, there were 30 dredges of marine material conducted around the clock some 100-plus miles out into the



Rebecca Mensch holding one of the three live Junonias being studied at the museum



Rebecca Mensch reaching into the aquarium containing three live Junonias

Gulf of Mexico at depths of 65 to 1,100 feet.

"Sometimes you get nothing, and sometimes there's a lot," Mensch told the crowd. "But we didn't find a single live Junonia... we found three!"

During the four-day excursion, Mensch and other research scientists found three live Junonias amongst the marine materials pulled up from the bottom of the Gulf. She was able to document the landmark find on video and in several high-resolution images.

After pointing out some of the physical features of the mollusks in action, Mensch also shared a number of other revelations:

Junonias lack an operculum, but do have an epipodium covered in small papillae;

The mottled coloring of the Junonia body probably helps it camouflage;

Junonias have a short siphon which does not protrude out of the sand when they bury themselves.

"So if you look at the Junonia display here at the museum, we actually got it right," Mensch added.

Following her announcement on March 14, Mensch and other scientists at the museum have been monitoring the movements, habits and day-to-day activities of the Junonias. She has posted frequent updates on the mollusk's status.

"The movement of decorations in the tank indicates the Junonias may be more active at night," the museum's Facebook page noted on April 26, 2018.

Despite the lack of public access to the aquarium where the Junonias are living, there remains great interest in tracking what those shells are doing.

"Locally, there's been a lot of interest," said Mensch. "And we've been very transparent that these shells are not on display. But people still ask if they'll be part of a tour or if they can see them. Really, they're not very visible even to us (staff)."

Additional updates posted by the museum include:

April 12 – The museum is happy to announce that we can confirm the 1971 work by Bayer and Voss; Junonias do indeed eat Lettered Olives!

April 19 – Like some other gastropods, the Junonia is a



predator. Some people may see predators as “mean,” but they play crucial roles in keeping ecosystems healthy. May 3 – Junonias, like Lettered Olives, lack an operculum. Even though these species share this trait, they belong to different families. Junonias, unlike Lettered Olives, each have a papillae-covered epipodium which is clearly visible when the animal retracts into its shell.

News of the museum’s groundbreaking discovery has reached far and wide. One malacologist based in Russia, looking to publish a paper on the anatomy of Junonias, contacted Dr. Leal to inquire about details of the live shells.

According to Mensch, she checks on the Junonias about once per week, monitoring their movement, feeding habits, mobility and overall health. None of the shells have been identified either male or female, so any breeding experiments have been put on hold.

“They only feed about once a month, which isn’t too surprising,” she explained. “But it has been surprising how little we see them. It’s kind of like a zombie movie... you’ll see them come up out of the sand. Sometimes they’ll move up along the sides of the tank, but then they’ll go right back and bury themselves.”

In addition to continuing to study the Junonias’ temperature needs, substrate, water flow and water quality needs, Mensch stated that they are planning to do some lighting experiments. “We’ll be using a night vision camera to monitor their nighttime activity, she added.



**Junonias have a papillae covered epipodium, which is clearly visible when the animal retracts into its shell**

While the most common question Mensch hears about the Junonias is whether the museum has any plans to put them on display for the public to see them, she reiterated that these shells spend most of their day buried underneath a layer of sand. Still, the excitement of the discovery of live Junonias keeps her inspired to learn more about these mollusks.

“It’s really exciting when you see so many people that are interested in them,” added Mensch. “And I kinda get excited knowing that we’re the first people to see this stuff.”

The best way for shelling novices, aficionados and professionals around the world to monitor the Junonias is via the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum’s Facebook page or website at [www.shellmuseum.org/junonia](http://www.shellmuseum.org/junonia).✧



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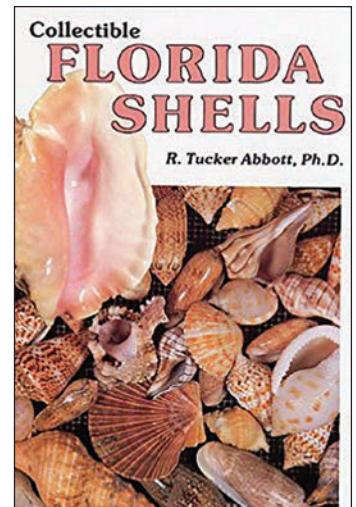
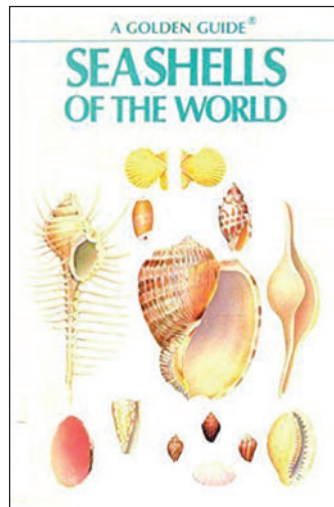
Anne Joffe with R. Tucker Abbott at the Authors' Table in 1995  
photo and images courtesy Anne Joffe

### The Life And Times Of R. Tucker Abbott

by Anne Joffe

This year marks the occasion of the 100th birthday of "Mr. Seashells," Dr. Robert Tucker Abbott.

It was Tucker's dream to have a Shell Museum on Sanibel, and in 1992, he was named the first director. Through his knowledge, contacts and past careers, he was able to make



this become a reality, unfortunately, one he did not live to see come true.

Author of hundreds of shelling, educational and identification books, Tucker was to the world of shelling what Audubon was to birding. He judged all the major shell shows, was a sought after speaker, and sat at our Authors' Table many times. After eight years as curator of mollusks at the Smithsonian, he served as the director of the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia from 1955 to 1969, and the Delaware Museum of Natural History in 1970, before retiring to Melbourne, Florida and then to Sanibel. He also owned



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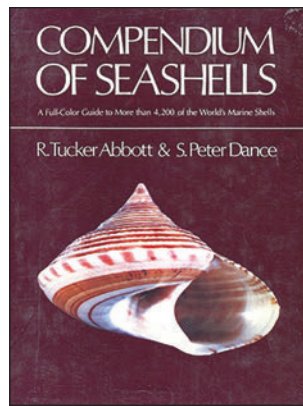
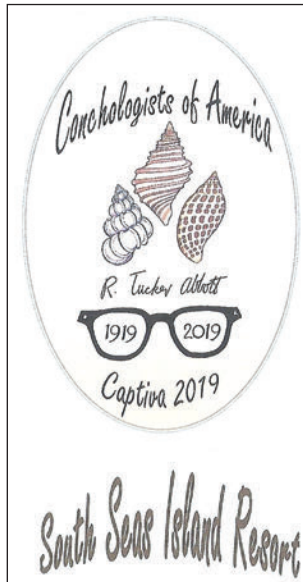
## 82nd Annual Sanibel Shell Festival

American Malacologists, Inc., publishing company.

To honor his remarkable life, career and celebrity status in the field of conchology, we are honoring him in many special ways. Since he was the person responsible for initiating both the DuPont Trophy and Conchologists of America Award for scientific entries, this year we will have a new major award in his name: the R. Tucker Abbott Award. Being donated by Anne and David Joffe of She Sells Sea Shells, it will be given to the Best Exhibit Exemplifying Worldwide Educational Interest in Shells.

The national shell organization, the Conchologists of America, will be hosting its annual meeting from June 17 to 23 at South Seas Island Resort on Captiva Island. It will be a huge birthday party and celebration of Tucker's life. It was his vision for this organization to be the place for shell collectors, scientists and anyone concerned with the oceans. This meeting is open to all interested in the world of seashells, and information can be found on the website, [www.ConchologistsOfAmerica.org](http://www.ConchologistsOfAmerica.org).

It is hard to imagine anyone who loves shells, not to have been effected by this truly remarkable man.✧



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# The 2019 Sanibel Shell Festival Authors' Table Schedule

## THURSDAY March 7, 2019

9 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.

Anne Joffe

Harlan Wittkopf plus  
Ken Vinton (illustrator)

12:30 – 4 P.M.

Hatsue Iimuro

Karen Bartlett

## FRIDAY March 8, 2019

9 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.

Ron Base

Pete Krull and  
Adrian González-Guillén

12:30 – 4 P.M.

John Mills

Bev Dolezal

## SATURDAY March 9, 2019

9 A.M. – 12 P.M.

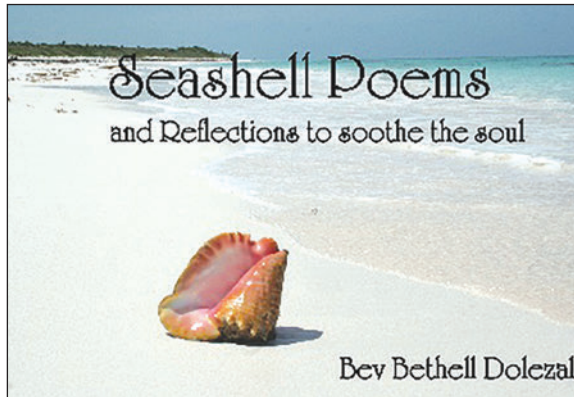
Blair and Dawn  
Witherington

Jennifer Schiff

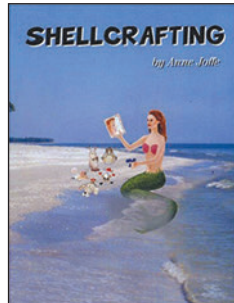
12 – 3 P.M.

Blair and Dawn  
Witherington

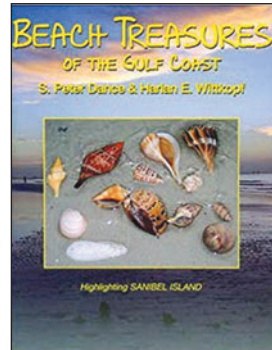
Alice Cypress



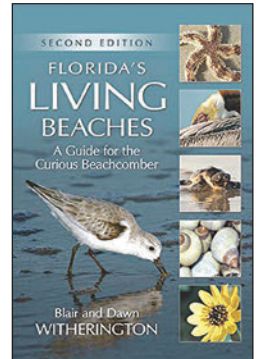
Seashell Poems by Bev Bethell Dolezal



Shell Crafting  
by Anne Joffe



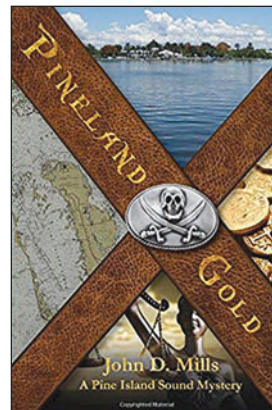
Beach Treasures  
by S. Peter Dance and  
Harlan E. Wittkopf



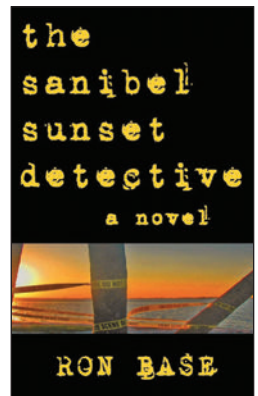
Florida's Living  
Beaches by Blair and  
Dawn Witherington



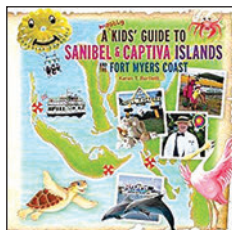
Sailors Valentine  
by Hatsue Iimuro



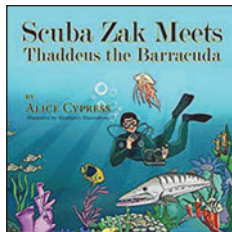
Pine land Gold  
by John D. Mills



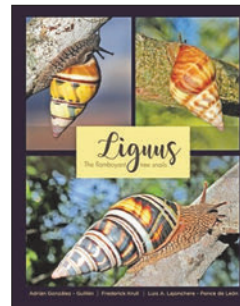
Sanibel Sunset  
Detective by Ron Base



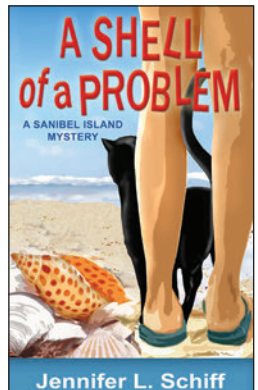
Mostly A Kids Guide  
by Karen T. Bartlett



Scuba Zak  
by Alice Cypress



Liguus  
by Adrián González-  
Guillén, Frédérick Krull  
and Luis A. Lajonchere  
-Ponce de León

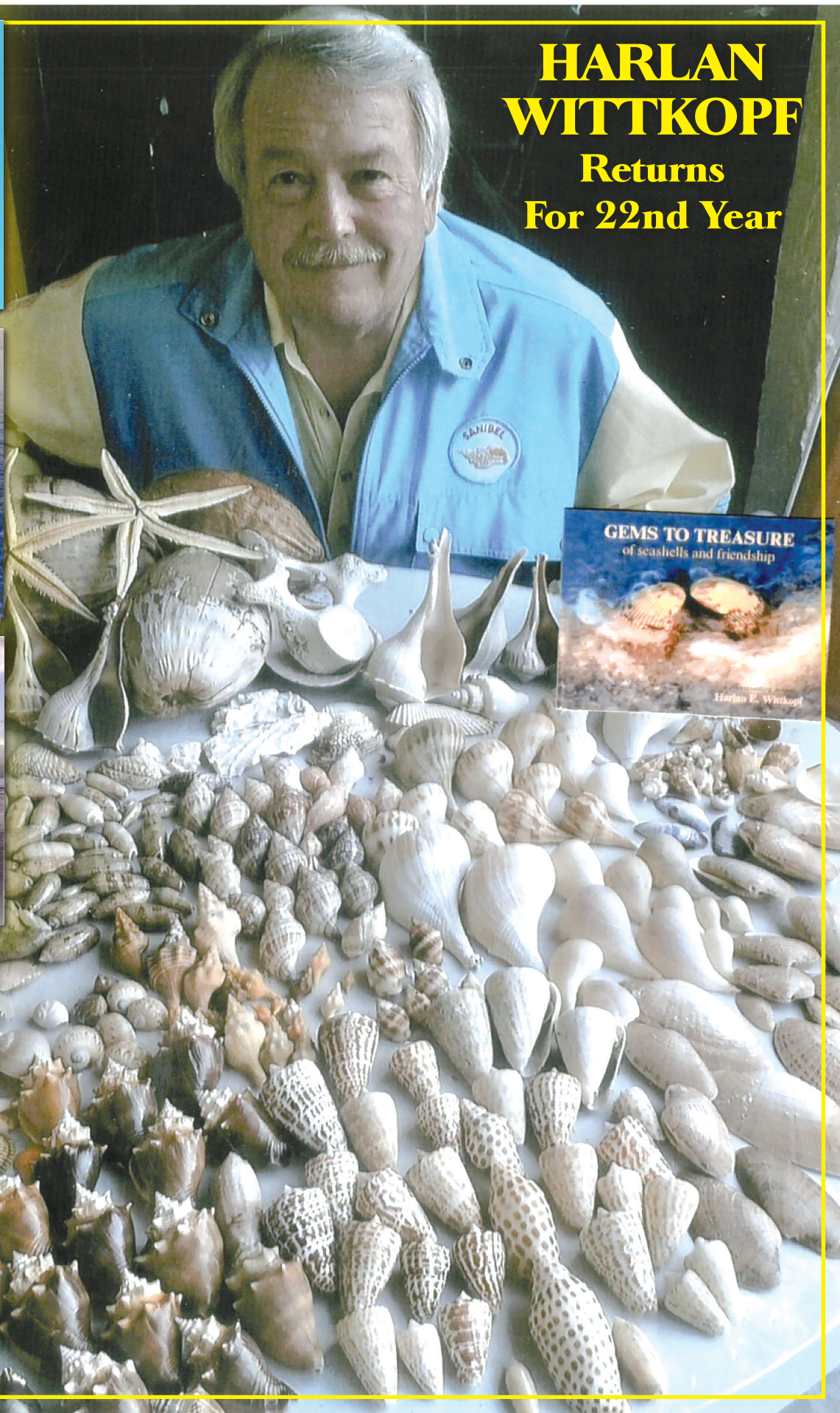
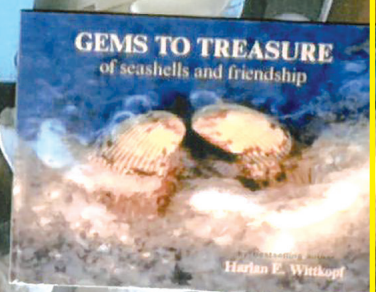
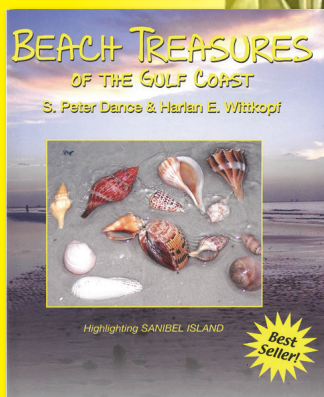
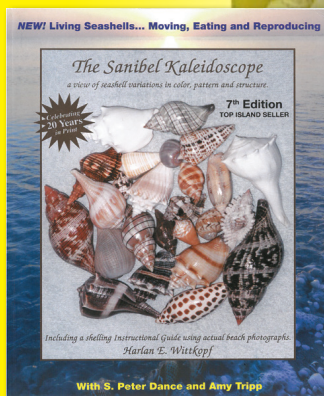
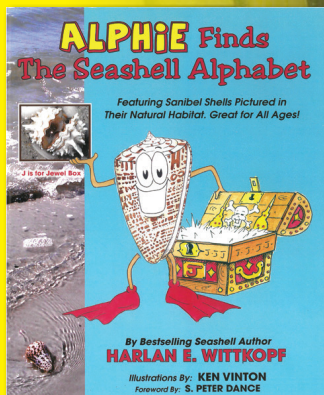


A Shell of a Problem  
by Jennifer L. Schiff



# HARLAN WITTKOPF

## Returns For 22nd Year





## Self-Taught Sailor's Valentine Artist At Top Of His Trade

by Jeff Lysiak

Little did he know 15 years ago, when David Rhyne submitted his first artistic entry into the Sanibel Shell Show, that he would soon become one of the most prolific, honored and decorated seashell artisans featured at the prestigious annual showcase.

"My wife and I were shoe designers living in New York City," said Rhyne, who specialized in designing bridal and evening shoes. "But after we retired, we moved into our vacation home in Sarasota."

A graduate of Ringling School of Art, where he met his wife Victoria, Rhyne had long been an admirer of Sailor's Valentines after seeing them at art and antique shows.

"I always thought they were very pretty," explained Rhyne. "We had been shell admirers for a very long time, so we had amassed quite a collection."

The self-taught artist began making flowers and floral arrangements out of shells before he approached the long and arduous task of making the intricate designs contained within Sailor's Valentines.

"Everything I create is an original... I never copy anything," said Rhyne, who estimates each Sailor's Valentine he makes takes approximately 500 hours. "I get



David Rhyne holding one of his Sailor's Valentine creations  
photos courtesy David Rhyne

my inspiration from lots of places... books, magazines, architecture. And with a broad background in art, I can make my creations very detailed and more intricate."

During his tenure as a master craftsman, Rhyne has

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earned dozens of ribbons, trophies and awards for his Sailor's Valentines entered in shell shows across the country, including Philadelphia, Sarasota and Sanibel. He was also featured during a segment of *The Martha Stewart Show* in 2007, when he personally hand delivered his blue ribbon award-winning double Sailor's Valentine, *Will You Be Mine, Till The End Of Time* – which also won Best in Show at the 2007 Sanibel Shell Show – to the TV program which was recorded in New York City.

Rhyne's creations often feature floral arrangements, mermaids, birds, butterflies, majestic tall ships, Oriental and Victorian designs. Oftentimes, he includes a minutely detailed, hand-carved piece within the design. For this year's Sanibel Shell Show, he plans to submit three entries: a 19-inch Sailor's Valentine, a miniature two-and-a-half inch Sailor's Valentine and a Victorian oval-shaped shell picture.

"It's a full-time job for me," added Rhyne, who enjoys working alongside his wife when creating his latest Sailor's Valentine. "She sorts out all of the shells for me, laying them out in rows by size and by color. That allows me to really focus on my work. It's a fun thing to do together."

For more information, visit [www.DavidRhyne.com](http://www.DavidRhyne.com).✱



Right portion of one of David Rhyne's Sailor's Valentines, titled *Heart's Desire*



Detailed closeup of Rhyne's *Madame Butterfly* Sailor's Valentine

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## A Look At Some Of The 2018 Scientific Division Entries



photos by Lorin Arundel



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## Favorite Stop On Sanibel

For all those who have ever searched for the perfect shell, the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum is a rare find: a museum dedicated to the fun, appreciation and study of shells and mollusks, inspiring each of us to look closer at the natural world beneath our feet.

In addition to its vast collection of shells and more than 30 exhibits, this accredited natural history museum also offers live tank talks, arts and crafts, movies and educational programs every day.

The Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum proudly offers guided beach walks at the Island Inn throughout the year, as well as guided excursions at Bunche Beach during the summer months. The beach walks are led by the museum's shell experts who are knowledgeable about shells and the mollusks that create them, and passionate about protecting our oceans' biodiversity. Call the museum at 239-395-2233 or visit [www.ShellMuseum.org](http://www.ShellMuseum.org) to register today.

One of the first exhibits visitors see in the Great Hall of Shells is the World Record-Size Shell display sponsored by the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club. It includes the world's largest horse conch, which is the Florida state shell, collected off Sanibel. New exhibits present mollusks not only as the



**Great Hall of Shells exhibit**

photos courtesy Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum  
creators of beautiful shells but also as diverse and resourceful creatures. Journey to the Center of a Shell explains shell growth, feeding and the lifestyles of mollusks. Amazing

## Cottages to Castles

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Adaptations describes remarkable, recently discovered life strategies and resources used by some of our favorite animals to better cope with their environment and with other animals around them. On the ground floor, visitors are greeted by a set of panels explaining the wonders of shelling on Sanibel and Captiva, and how to make the most of your shelling experience on the islands.

Thanks to its members and community sponsors, in 2004 the museum began offering the Adopt-a-Class field trip program to Lee County public school fourth graders. This program gives young students a special opportunity to experience environmental education at the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum at no cost to the students or school. In order to expand the educational reach throughout Southwest Florida, in 2017 the museum created Mollusks on the Move. To date, the Mollusks on the Move program has reached more than 3,000 children in Lee, Collier, Hendry and Sarasota counties at schools, festivals, camps and county parks, with the mission of connecting local students with the natural world through their love of seashells. The program focuses on mollusk ecology, behavior and reproduction to foster lifelong learning and respect for the sciences.

The Museum Store features a premier collection of gifts. Its fine décor offerings reflect the latest trends in home accessories, designed for Florida living at its best. The museum's shopping consultants can assist in finding an exquisite piece of jewelry from Congress Jewelers' Sealife



**Marine Biologist Rebecca Mensch leads an Adopt-a-Class field trip**

Collection for yourself or someone special. It also offers unique children's gifts, including colorful beaded bracelets, fossilized shark teeth, and books for young and old on seashells, marine life, fish and sea mammals. The Museum Store is the perfect place to grab a souvenir as a reminder of your visit to Sanibel and the museum.

The Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum is located at 3075 Sanibel-Captiva Road. Call 239-395-2233 or visit [www.ShellMuseum.org](http://www.ShellMuseum.org).



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Live Common Nutmeg on Kice Island, Florida photo by Amy Tripp

### The Common Nutmeg

by José H. Leal, PhD, Science Director and Curator,  
Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum

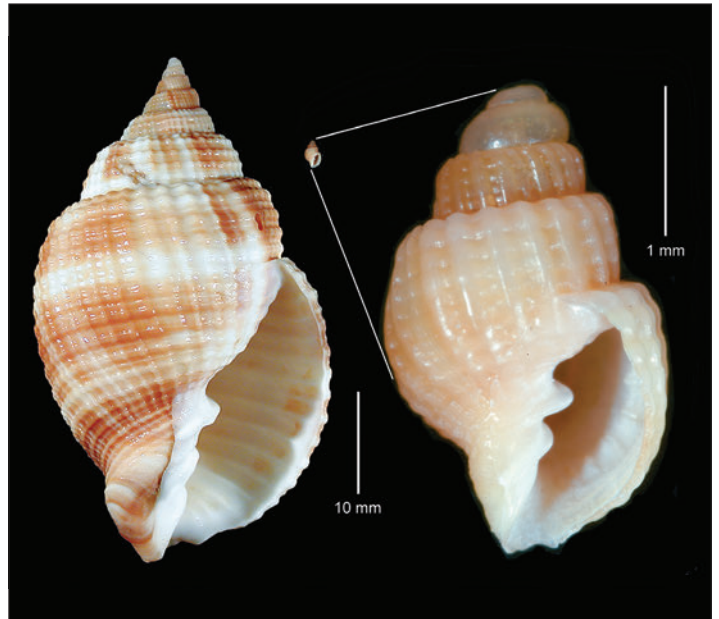
The elegant Common Nutmeg, *Cancellaria reticulata* (Linnaeus, 1767), is one of the most coveted local species, always representing one of the “best finds” at the end of a successful shelling day on Sanibel, Captiva or any of the barrier islands of Southwest Florida for that matter. The species name evokes the reticulated shell sculpture and, although the Nutmeg’s food and feeding mechanisms remain unknown, the configuration of the digestive system suggests a diet of soft tissue or fluid. The Common Nutmeg belongs to the family Cancellariidae, a group of marine snails known to feed suctorially, “sucking” soft tissue, fluids or blood with the assistance of specialized feeding organs. The photo of the live Common Nutmeg was taken by citizen scientist and Shell Ambassador Amy Tripp on Kice Island in Collier County, Florida.

**A Young Nutmeg** – After settling to the bottom (in the case of snails with a planktonic, free-living larva) or hatching from an egg capsule (when there is no planktonic larval stage), young marine snails often resemble adults of their species, though sometimes with different proportions, colors or shell textures. The illustrations of Common Nutmegs show, on left, a 50 mm (about 2 inches) adult nutmeg; on top-center, rendered at the same scale as the adult shell, a 3 mm (0.12 inch) juvenile (collected by Kimberly Nealon on Captiva); and, on right, a magnified version of the young shell. In the magnified version, the protoconch, or larval shell, can be seen on top of the juvenile shell. Learn more about mollusks and their shells at <https://shellmuseum.org/southwest-florida-shells> and <https://shellmuseum.org/blog>.

**Albinistic Common Nutmegs** – An albino or albinistic shell is a shell that lacks the usual organic pigments that contribute to its color patterns; they are usually white,



Albinistic Common Nutmeg from Sanibel photo by José H. Leal



Adult and young Common Nutmegs. Young Nutmeg collected by Kimberly Nealon on Captiva Island, Florida. photo by José H. Leal

revealing the prevailing color, or absence thereof, of the calcium carbonate crystals that comprise the bulk of the shell structure. For unknown reasons, albinistic Common Nutmegs are not uncommon in parts of Southwest Florida, in particular in Marco Island and along the barrier islands of Collier County.\*

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Ribbed cantharus

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Pear whelk

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### How To Find Shells...

- Assemble tools of the trade: mesh collection bag, small shovel, magnifying glass, metal sieve, shell scooper net, small rake/claw, field notebook, waterproof pen, collection bottles for tiny specimens, small plastic bags for shell storage, insect spray, sunscreen, water bottle and lightweight backpack.
- The collection of live shells is prohibited and strictly enforced in Lee County. If you aren't sure if a shell is alive, first try the sniff test – dead critters have a strong odor. Place it in a tide pool or at the surf's edge and observe. If the critter feels safe, it will extend from the shell and begin moving. If the animal is alive, return it to the same spot where it was collected.
- Best time to find shells is 1-1/2 hours before low tide until 1-1/2 hours after low tide.
- Best days of the month are the new moon and the full moon.
- If you don't find shells on one beach, try another area of the island.
- Start by zigzagging the beach, walking from the high tide line to the surf line and back until hot spots are identified.
- Many shells are found right below the surface of the sand. Telltale bubbles indicate that a creature waits below. Enjoy their color, structure and habits and return them to their home.
- Tidal pools are a haven for marine life. Check under rocks, logs, driftwood and in sponges or clumps of seaweed. Be sure to return the habitat to the state in which you found it.
- Intertidal mud flats are great for burrowing mollusks and sea snails.
- As a mollusk moves, a trail may be left behind. Look for tracks in the sand. Leave live mollusks alone.
- Snorkeling during low tide is a great way to collect shells that haven't been damaged by the surf.
- Examine the cliff-like ledge revealed as the tide recedes. Shells become trapped or buried there.
- Look along the tide line in shell grit. Use the sieve to separate grit from small shells.
- Check out large piles of shells. Don't assume they've already been picked over.
- The roots of mangrove trees provide safe harbor for many mollusks. Observe them, but leave them alone.
- Avoid crowds and competition by shelling with a flashlight at low tides occurring after dark.
- Storms are a calling card for great shelling. Winds out of the northwest produce bountiful shelling.✧

### How To Clean Shells...

- Wash shells with water to remove sand, loose debris and salts.
- Soak shells overnight in a solution of 50 percent water and 50 percent bleach. Solution may be used several times before discarding. Do not use bleach on shiny shells. It will remove their glossy finish.
- When working with bleach or removing dead animals, wear a mask, gloves, goggles and old clothes.
- Soaking time is dictated by the type of shell, the quantity of shells, and how heavy the periostracum (outer covering of the shell) is. Generally, soaking overnight is sufficient.
- After soaking, scrub the shell with a brush. Clean spiral shaped shells with a small, curved wire brush like a baby bottle brush. Use dental pick to remove barnacles or clean shell ridges.
- Rinse off debris and bleach and let dry.
- To bring out shell color, rub with a cotton ball soaked in mineral oil. Let stand about 30 minutes and remove excess oil with a dry cotton ball.
- Coat sand dollars, sea urchins and fragile shells with a solution of 50 percent water and 50 percent school glue. Apply to one side with a paint brush, dry and repeat on other side. Apply three coats. This will strengthen the shells.✧

### How To Safely Transport Shells...

- Fill plastic medicine bottles with sand to cushion small shells.
- Protect hinged bivalves by stuffing with cotton. Use transparent tape to secure. After traveling, remove tape.
- Use plastic peanut butter, mayonnaise containers or zippered bags to pack larger shells. Wrap shells in toilet paper or bubble wrap.
- Styrofoam peanuts and crumpled up newspaper work well as filler for packing larger shells.
- To mail packages, use heavy corrugated boxes, reinforce boxes on the corners and line with corrugated material. Reinforce the sides with crisscrossed pieces. Place box inside another box, with crumpled up newspaper serving as a shock absorber between the two boxes.✧



Courtesy of Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum





# SHELLING ADVENTURES



## CAPTIVA CRUISES



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### Shell Club Grants Program

Each fall, the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club gives away all the profits from the spring's Shell Show. Last year, these grants totaled \$29,000. The recipients of the grants funded by the 2018 Sanibel Shell Show include Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum, Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation Marine Laboratory, Mote Marine Laboratory, Adopt-A-Class (at Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum), Florida Gulf Coast University's Department of Marine and Ecological Science, Conchologists of America Scholarship Program and Florida Museum of Natural History.

In addition to these grants, the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club has supported graduate students in the University of South Florida's (USF) College of Marine Science for many years. The club's first contribution was in 1982, which made it possible for this college's first PhD, Dr. Bruce Barber, to purchase equipment that was critical to his dissertation. In 1985, the club voted to establish an endowed fellowship that would support research by USF Marine Science graduate students. What began with a modest contribution in 1985 (\$500), has grown to become a significant endowment and one that supports cutting-edge research by some of USF's brightest marine science students.

Similarly, in 1992, Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club members Mary and Al Bridell established a fellowship in marine

continued on page 35



Travis Mellett accepts the \$10,000 Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club/Mary & Al Bridell Memorial Fellowship from Jacqueline E. Dixon, Dean of University of South Florida's College of Marine Science. Mellett won this Fellowship in 2017 and 2018 for his research in biogeochemistry. photo courtesy University of South Florida

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4 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil  
1 onion (coarsely chopped)  
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½ fennel bulb (diced)  
1 red pepper (diced)  
3 cloves garlic (minced)  
1 leek (thinly sliced)  
1 ½ cups tomatoes (seeded and diced)  
Pinch saffron  
4 sprigs thyme (leaves removed)  
½ cup white wine  
2 cups fish stock  
16 mussels  
12 shrimp  
1 pound clams  
½ pound firm fleshed fish such as tuna, salmon or swordfish

Heat oil in a large pan. Add onions, celery, fennel and peppers; cook and stir over medium high heat for 5 minutes. Add the garlic, leeks and thyme; cook for 5 more minutes. Add tomatoes, saffron, white wine and fish stock, then bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Add the seafood and simmer until the mussel and clams are open and the fish is cooked.

Serve with crispy polenta or bread.

*Resident Chef Jarred Harris heads the Culinary Education Center at The Community House on Sanibel. For volunteer opportunities or questions, contact him at [kitchen@sanibelcommunityhouse.net](mailto:kitchen@sanibelcommunityhouse.net) or call 472-2155.✱*

From page 34

### Grants Program

science at USF "to help graduate students in the Department of Marine Science who need financial support to explore new ideas/ concepts about biological, chemical, geological or physical aspects of ocean/ atmospheric systems."

In 2009, the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club and Mary and Al Bridell decided to consolidate their funds to maximize the support available to the fellowship recipient. It became the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club/ Mary & Al Bridell Memorial Fellowship in Marine Science. The endowment is now self-sustaining.✱

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**Mary Burton**  
Artistic Division Chair

## An Introduction To Viewing Shell Show Exhibits

Awards are given to the best exhibits entered in shell shows. Scientific Shell Show exhibits can feature a single shell or multiple shells. Artistic exhibits vary from a single stemmed flower to magnificent arrangements and intricate Sailor's Valentines. This guide will help you understand how the exhibits are judged.

### Scientific Exhibits

The shells in a scientific exhibit may be self-collected or from any source, meaning they could be purchased, obtained in a trade or received as a gift. Some judges may use a point system when evaluating the exhibits, with 100 points being the highest possible score. Points are awarded in the areas of aesthetics, specimens, labels and text, and educational value. Single shell entries may also be judged on a point system. Although most judges do not keep an actual score card for each exhibit, the following information will give you an idea of what the judges think is important.

### Multiple Shell Exhibits

**Aesthetics** (Attractiveness: 20 points) (Neatness: 5 points): Exhibits with aesthetics appeal attract viewers. Not only do the shells contribute to attractiveness, but also their arrangement and surroundings. Labels, cases, backgrounds and color schemes should complement the specimens, rather than distract from them.

**Specimens** (Choice of specimens: 20 points) (Completeness: 10 points): Since shells are the focus of the show, the best shells will count most in the judging.

**Labels and Text** (25 points): All errors in text, whether they are on the backboards or specimen labels, will result in a lesser exhibit score. Major infractions include misidentifications and impossible locality data. Minor infractions include capitalizing the specimen name, incorrect use of parenthesis, omitting a comma between the author and the date, failing to set off species names (italics, bold or underlining) and typographical errors.

**Educational Value** (Clarity: 10 points) (Scientific accuracy: 10 points) (Interest/Originality: 5 points): Clarity, accuracy and interest are the essential ingredients of educational value. Scientific accuracy consists of even-handedness, completeness and precision.

### Single Shell Exhibits

(Specimen: 80 points) (Display: 20 points): Single shell specimen judging is based on two things; the quality of the shell and how it is displayed. The quality of the specimen is important, but the rarity of the shell is also considered. A rare shell will be given more points than a more common shell.

### Artistic Exhibits

Artistic entries are judged by the quality of craftsmanship, choice of material used, arrangement, beauty and originality of the creation. Quality of craftsmanship is a major criterion. The judges will look for the presence of excessive glue showing, broken and dirty shells, symmetry of the shells, any material not marine related, dust, originality and presentation. Each entry must adhere to the requirements of the class entered.

Artistic exhibits will be judged on the following criterion:

Quality of craftsmanship - 50%

Quality and choice of material used - 25%

Arrangement, beauty and originality of creation - 25%.✪

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## Discovering The Wild Side Of Sanibel's Shells



by Leah Biery

Sanibel is a shell seeker's paradise, but shells are not just for collecting. Before they wash ashore, they are home to some fascinating organisms that most people know very little about. On a recent Discover Shelling walk with Sanibel Sea School, participants learned a bit of shell biology – and where to find them too!

Discover Shelling walks are led by Sanibel Sea School's marine educators, who know an impressive amount about the bivalves and gastropods we find on our islands, and why they end up here. On a recent trip to the beach with her students, educator Shannon Stainken explained why the King's Crown Conch can be hard to find on the gulf side of the island. "It's a predatory gastropod, or sea snail, that usually inhabits the mud flats around mangroves and oyster beds, so that's actually the best place to look for its shell. I'd recommend visiting Bunche Beach in Fort Myers, or looking around Blind Pass, where they are sometimes pushed out of the bay with the tide."



Maddie Hickey with a Lightning Whelk

photos provided

Stainken also explained why the shape of Sanibel makes it a prime shelling destination, and was eager to answer her group's questions. There were many gastropod egg cases washed ashore on the day of the excursion, and she identified which species each came from and talked about the incredible amount of energy required for female individuals to produce such a large mass of eggs relative to her body size.

"It's definitely rewarding to teach people about the shells they are so excited to find, from a biological perspective,"



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**King's Crown Conch**

said Stinken. "I think that knowledge leaves them feeling even more enthusiastic about their future shelling adventures, and I love to inspire and support them in going out to enjoy the beach and search for their favorite shells."

Discover Shelling walks are offered weekly at Sanibel Sea School and are open to all ages. Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Sanibel Sea School is a 501(c)3 nonprofit whose mission is to improve the ocean's future – one person at a time. To learn more, visit [sanibelseaschool.org](http://sanibelseaschool.org) or call 472-8585.✱

## Become A Shell Ambassador

To become a Shell Ambassador for the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum, volunteers complete an initial one-day training and demonstrate their knowledge through formal assessments. Content addressed in the training includes knowledge of Southwest Florida shells, interpretation of beach ecosystems, effective public relations, and response to legal and ethical dilemmas. Study materials are provided in advance so participants can arrive prepared for the shell identification assessment.

One-day training sessions (8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.) are scheduled throughout the year. Participants need only attend one of the dates. Upon successful completion of all components of the training, Shell Ambassadors are authorized to wear the official Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum Shell Ambassador apparel. Additional apparel is available for purchase.

A \$100 registration fee includes advance study materials, a full day of training, continental breakfast and lunch, and your initial Shell Ambassador moisture-wicking T-shirt (awarded upon successful completion of all training and assessments). After 20 hours of volunteering as a Shell Ambassador, you will receive a complimentary Golden Olive Membership valued at \$100.

For more information or to register, visit [www.shellmuseum.org](http://www.shellmuseum.org) or call 239-395-2233.✱



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## Oysters: Some Like 'Em Hot



by Matt Asen,  
The Timbers  
Restaurant

**“W**hat is your favorite oyster?” is a question I am often asked. My answer is, “the last cold juicy one I ate

at the source,” be it a Chincoteague in Virginia, a Wellfleet on Cape Cod or a Samish Bay in Washington State. The first oyster is always eaten naked so I can taste the flavors and feel the texture of the oyster. While cocktail sauce is the popular topping in the states, mignonette (a mixture of vinegar, pepper and shallots) is the choice in Europe.

Many people prefer their oysters cooked, which firms up the meat and adds a new flavor. The classic New

Orleans oyster is topped with garlic butter and Parmesan cheese and cooked on an open grill.

I like my oysters every way, so I have included a recipe for chilled oysters (Oysters Ceviche) as well as one for cooked (Oysters Carnegie). Whichever you prefer, make sure you start with fresh, large oysters (3 to 4 inches) for cooking as the meat will shrink some as it firms up.

The largest oyster I have ever eaten was a size 10 from Malaysia. It was bigger than my size 10 shoe!

One advantage of preparing a cooked oyster is that if you are uncomfortable with shucking the oyster, you can put it on a grill (or oven) for a couple of minutes until it pops open easily with a butter knife. It will NOT open like a cooked mussel, but will be easily pried open.

If you can shuck your own oysters, that will save you a step in preparation.



Oysters Ceviche



Oysters Carnegie

photos by Matt Asen

### Oysters Ceviche

12 fresh oysters  
3 lemons  
3 limes  
1 red onion  
1 red pepper  
1 yellow pepper  
2 Tbls. sugar  
1 bunch cilantro  
Hot sauce

Finely chop the onion, peppers and cilantro and mix in a bowl, adding the juice of the lemons and limes and the sugar. Add hot sauce to taste and mix. Add the freshly shucked oysters (saving the shells). Let the oysters marinate for at least 15 minutes but for no longer than an hour. Place the marinated oysters back in the shells and serve with a spoonful of the mixture.

### Oysters Carnegie

12 fresh oysters  
1 bunch of arugula  
2 Tbls. butter  
4 strips bacon  
½ cup of shredded Parmesan cheese  
Coarse ground pepper

Cook the bacon, drain and place the bacon on paper towels to absorb excess oil. Chop the arugula leaves (avoiding the larger part of the stems) and sauté in butter. Chop the cooked bacon and add to the sautéed arugula and mix well. Remove from heat. Spoon a teaspoon of the arugula/spinach mixture on top of each oyster, sprinkle with coarse ground pepper and shredded Parmesan. Cook on a covered grill until the cheese has melted and the oyster liquid is bubbling (5 to 7 minutes depending on the heat of the grill and the size of the oyster). Be careful, as the shell will get very hot!\*



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## Shell Club Members Bag Giveaways For Attendees

Visitors who attend the Sanibel Shell Show love the little bags of shells they receive as a thank you for their donation of \$5 to enter the Artistic and Scientific Division exhibition halls. Those shells, unfortunately, don't just jump into the bags by themselves. One of the many labor-intensive jobs in preparation for the shell show is the filling of those 2,800 or so 4-inch by 4-inch plastic bags to be used at the front gate. Most show attendees do make the requested donation to visit the indoor exhibits at The Community House. All of the net profit from those gate donations is given away in the form of marine science grants and educational scholarships.

Shell Club members spent two days filling these little bags at Sanibel Congregational United Church of Christ. Using shell donations from both members of the community and members of the shell club, the first chore is to sort all these shells by type and size. Then comes the labor of filling each bag with approximately one dozen shells picked from a variety of 40 to 50 shell species, inserting the club's thank you note, and sealing the bags.

We hope you enjoy this year's 82nd annual Sanibel Shell Show and Festival and your little bag of shells.

For more information about the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club, visit <https://sanibelshellclub.com>.



Linda Edinburg among the many boxes and totes of shells that have been donated to the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club. She has been in charge of filling over 27,000 bags of shells since she took over the project 10 years ago. photo provided

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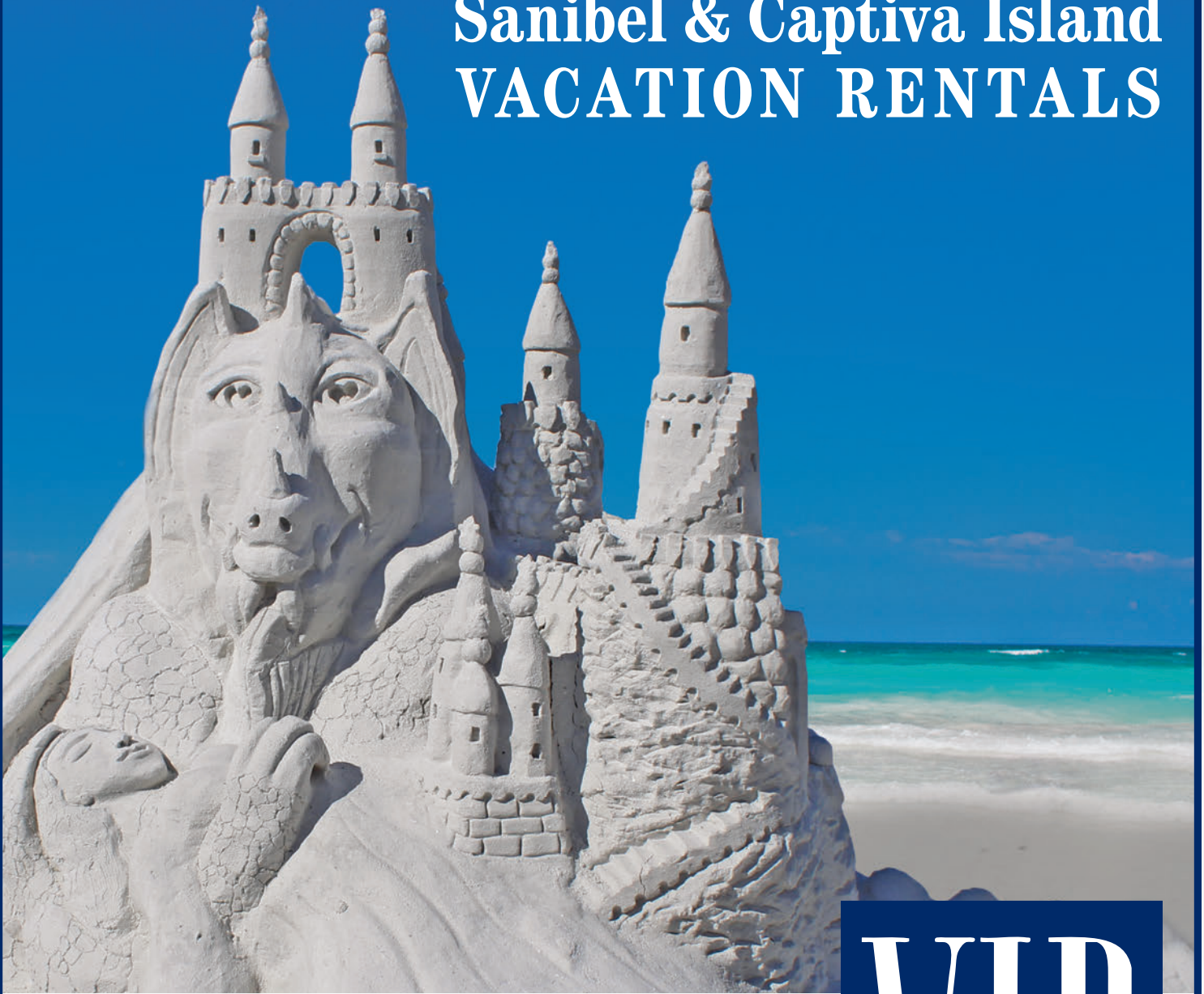
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Sanibel School sixth grader Kristian Schafer pointing out a banded tulip at the live shell demonstration area photos by Jeff Lysiak

## Shell And Mollusk Studies With The Sanibel School Sixth Graders

by Leigh Gay, Outreach Coordinator,  
Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum

Island children attending The Sanibel School are taught at an early age to appreciate the amazing diversity of shells in their "backyard." A partnership between the



Marianna Tyson and Mia Martinez sharing their knowledge about live shells at last year's show

Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum, the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club, and The Sanibel School helps sixth grade students to understand and answer some of the world's most intriguing questions:

Where do shells come from? Why does Sanibel have so many shells? What ARE shells?

For several weeks, the Bailey-Matthews National Shell



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Museum's Outreach Coordinator Leigh Gay teaches Shell Studies lessons to The Sanibel School's sixth graders to prepare them to answer these and other questions at the 82nd annual Sanibel Shell Festival. The students focus their learning on mollusks, the animals that create the islands' beautiful sea shells.

Gay, along with Nancy McDole, The Sanibel School's Family Science teacher, teaches about the biology, ecology and reproduction of mollusks. Mollusks are born with their shell and continue to grow with it throughout their lives, making it physically impossible for a mollusk to switch its shell or outgrow it. The students also watch an educational video, *Mollusks in Action*, provided by long-time museum volunteer and co-chair of the Sanibel Shell Show Joyce Matthys.

After understanding the basics, the sixth graders get more in-depth by learning about the different types of mollusks: bivalves (clams, mussels, oysters, etc.); gastropods (snails and slugs); and cephalopods (squid, octopuses, nautilus and cuttles).

In the final week of the Shell Studies course, the students take a trip to the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum to cement their knowledge and see some mollusks up close. They view mollusks in small, personal-sized tanks to identify important features of their anatomy (foot, operculum, eyes, siphon, etc.), learn about mollusk reproduction through

continued on page 47



Tampa Bay Top Snail (*Calliostoma tampaense*) thriving in one the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum live tanks. The shell is a little less than an inch wide. photo by José H. Leal





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Crowds filled the north room of The Community House on March 3, 2018 for the opening day of the 81st Annual Sanibel Shell Show, where award-winning artistic exhibits are put on display

photos by Jeff Lysiak

## Treasures For All At The Sanibel Shell Festival

Seashells come in many sizes, shapes, colors and a multitude of patterns. You will see an abundance of them at the 82nd annual Sanibel Shell Festival. It is the major fundraiser for both the Sanibel Community Association and the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club.

This well-known event draws shell enthusiasts from across the United States and Canada, and from all over the world.

Festival attendees have the opportunity to purchase shells and intricate shell-crafted items at the festival. Throughout the year, volunteers meet outside The Community House to sort donated seashells. Inside, the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Crafters create elaborate floral bouquets and other shell craft items. The funds raised from the sale of these items are used to support The Community House. There are also various craft demonstrations held on the grounds throughout the festival.

The Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club sponsors the Sanibel Shell Show inside The Community House during the festival.



Outdoors, shoppers had a wide variety of shell crafts to select from



Sanibel Shell Show attendees winding through the Scientific Division exhibits

In the Scientific Division, visitors have an opportunity to see shells from around the world. In the Artistic Division, festival-goers will be amazed at the creations made from shells and sealife that have been entered in the show. There are floral arrangements, shell tables, Sailor's Valentines and a myriad of other items. This judged competitive show is open to all shell collectors and artists.

In addition to the scientific and artistic exhibits, there is a specimen shell booth, and professional artists have Sailor's Valentines, floral arrangements and other shell creations for sale.

There is no entrance fee to the sales and activities on the shell festival grounds. A \$5 donation is requested by the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club to visit the shell show inside the building. Funds raised from these donations are given out in the form of grants to several local educational and conservation organizations, to the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum, and to support marine scholarships at both University of South Florida and Florida Gulf Coast University.

For more information, visit [www.sanibelcommunityhouse.net](http://www.sanibelcommunityhouse.net) or <https://sanibelshellclub.com>.✧



One of last year's award-winning Scientific Division displays





Shell Dish

photo courtesy Anne Joffe

### Shell Craft: Shell Dishes

by Anne Joffe, She Sells Sea Shells

These dishes can be used for many things; soap, hair clips, even jewelry. You can use any large type Clam Shell, and since there is no right or wrong way, they always look great.

#### Materials

- Large Clam Shell
- Lots of assorted shells, sea life, pearls (your preference)
- 1 good size Scallop Shell
- Glue gun or tacky glue
- Triple glaze

#### Directions

Glue the Scallop Shell onto the center bottom, wrong side of the Clam Shell. This makes a base for the dish, and it should stand perfectly balanced.

Begin to glue your small shells at the top, start on the left side. Glue a few across the top of the Clam.

Fill with smaller shells, so no spaces show through and shells fit snug.

Fill in with your pearls, sea stars or your special touches. Spray with the glaze.

For more information, visit [www.SheSellsSeaShellsSanibel.com](http://www.SheSellsSeaShellsSanibel.com).✧

From page 45

### Mollusk Studies

hands-on science and search for knowledge in the Exhibit Hall with a specialized Scavenger Hunt.

The students will earn grades by participating in the field trip and by volunteering at the Shell Festival, while they learn important values like giving back to the community. Stop by and see these outstanding students in the Live Shell Exhibit outside of The Community House during this year's Shell Festival. They are eager to share their mollusk expertise and get others excited about learning.✧



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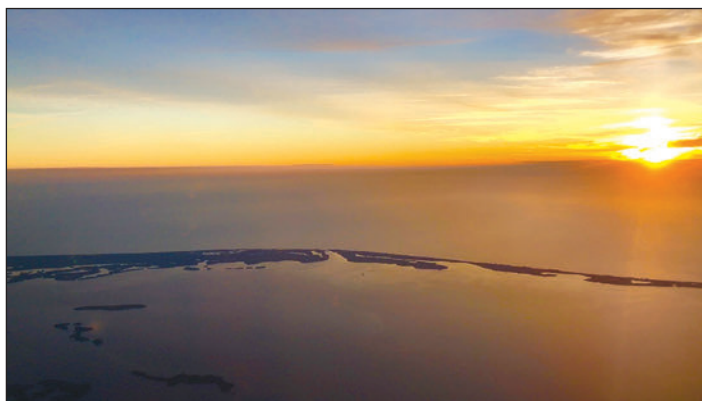
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## 82nd Annual Sanibel Shell Festival



Aerial view of Sanibel

photo by Diane Thomas

## Sanibel

by Bev Bethell Dolezal

From *Seashell Poems and Reflections to Soothe the Soul*

Oh Sanibel, you're a favorite of mine  
You try so hard to slow the time  
One way in and one way out  
RELAX – that's what I'm talking about!

Not at all interested in those who hurry  
You're void of stress and things all a-flurry  
Like curious tourists your tides come and go  
It's cathartic watching the sea ebb and flow

With millions of shells that come to your shores  
It's a special place, so hard to be bored  
Take time to reflect, slow down and be awed  
By the wonderful treasures you have in store

Every year in March you put on a show  
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## Crank Up The Color With Alcohol Ink



by Traci Lantz,  
Three Crafty Ladies

Anyone can be an artist with alcohol ink! These solvent-based dyes pack a serious punch on a wide array

of surfaces. Half-ounce bottles with built-in applicator tips make for easy travel, and eliminate the need for paint brushes. Put your seashells, spare ceramic tiles or boring glass votives to better use by embellishing them with alcohol inks. Stop by Three Crafty Ladies for a demonstration, or sign up for the Painted Seashells or Alcohol Ink Suncatcher Activities.

What better way to remember



**Create handmade works of art on a variety of surfaces including seashells** photo provided  
your time on the islands, than with a handmade piece of art? Whether you love to sew or are an avid painter, beader or mixed media crafter, you are sure to find something special in this little slice of paradise.

Additional activities and classes are offered throughout the year. Check the website at [www.ThreeCraftyLadies.com](http://www.ThreeCraftyLadies.com), stop by our location in Heart of the Island Shops or call 472-2893 for more information.✧



L-R: Willy Ocasio, Rob Lisenbee, Robbie and Geoff Roepstorff, and Pam Edwards

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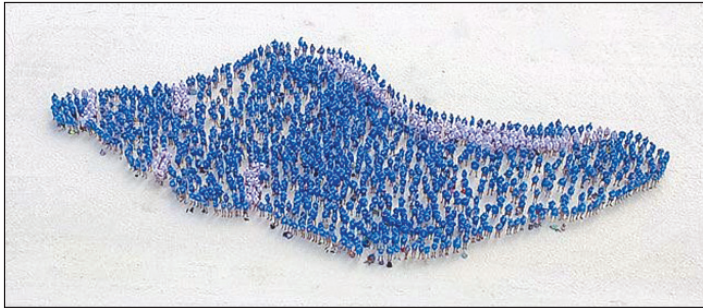
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Closeup of the giant human Junonia on Fort Myers Beach  
photo courtesy Lee County VCB

### Seashell Day Stunt Shatters World Record

by Jeff Lysiak

As part of the 3rd annual National Seashell Day festivities, organized by the Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau (VCB), hordes of shelling enthusiasts gathered on Fort Myers Beach in an attempt to break the world record for Largest Human Image of a Seashell.

On the morning of June 21, 2018, more than 1,000 people gathered at the Outrigger Beach Resort, where VCB officials, event volunteers and a representative from the *Guinness Book of World Records* helped coordinate the new record attempt.

"Currently, this record is held by the Shell Oil Company. It consisted of 855 participants and was achieved on October



One of the final groups of participants being escorted to their designated zone  
photo by Jeff Lysiak

17, 2017," a press release from the VCB read, in part. "As the seashell capital of the world, the VCB believes this record should be held by The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel."

Several days prior to the event, the VCB announced that they had reached maximum capacity of 1,500 participants.

Beginning at 9:30 a.m., organizers called for groups of approximately 50 people – clad in either white or turquoise National Seashell Day T-shirts – to be escorted out onto the sand, where they stood in place while other groups were added to the throng. Slowly, the human mass began to take the shape of a giant Junonia.

"The reason we're doing this today is to show the whole world what a great community we live in," Tamara Pigott, executive director of the VCB, told the crowd who began arriving at the event shortly after 6:30 a.m. "And when you



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post on social media, you can say you live in the most beautiful place in the world!"

Finally, after more than an hour of funneling participants into an area cordoned off in the designated shape of a Junonia, the group was required to stand in place for five minutes while cameras – attached to drones hovering high above the crowd – took pictures to document the attempt.

It took about a half hour to confirm the results.

"After reviewing all of the evidence and verifying the measurements and the head count, I am ready to announce the official results," Christina Conlon, official adjudicator for the *Guinness Book of World Records*, told the crowd around 11:30 a.m. "With a confirmed total today of 1,093 participants, we have set the world record!"

According to VCB officials, the youngest registered participant was 6-week-old Quin Simpson of Lehigh Acres. Attendees came from as far away as Germany and Switzerland.

Participants received a commemorative 2018 National Seashell Day T-shirt, hat and seashell necklace for taking part in the record attempt.

The 2018 event wasn't the first time that locals attempted to shatter a shell-related world record. Back in 2012, as part of the Sanibel Shell Festival's 75th annual Shellabration, more than 800 people gathered at Bowman's Beach on Sanibel while attempting to shatter the existing record mark in the Largest Treasure Hunt Game category.



The official world record image, taken with a drone camera by NJF photo courtesy Lee County VCB

For more than the required 30 seconds, the mass of shell seekers bent over on the sand, performing the "Sanibel Stoop" under the watchful eye of *Guinness Book of World Records* representatives and volunteer witnesses to the display.

Sanibel's record for Largest Treasure Hunt Game stood for several years until a gathering in Greece, held in February 2017, established the new mark with 1,384 participants.✧

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Nina Brown, co-founder of the Sanibel Shells Facebook group, painting new shells at her home  
photos provided

### Shell Seekers Group Growing In Popularity

by Jeff Lysiak

A game of hide-and-seek started less than two years ago by a pair of frequent visitors to Sanibel Island has grown to a group including more than 5,000 participants and admirers from across the country... and beyond.

Created by Nina Brown and Ursula Purvis, two retired elementary school teachers that live in Jacksonville, Florida, the Sanibel Shells Facebook was officially launched in May 2017.

"The two of us discovered Sanibel in 2006 and have been returning for one week every summer since then, leaving behind our families and our cares," said Brown. "We share a love of the ocean, shelling, crafting and teaching."

"We love exploring the island, so we tried to leave a few shells everywhere we went," recalled Purvis. "I love seeing the smiles from the kids that found them. We hope that there will be enough people to continue hiding, finding and possibly re-hiding to keep it going!"

According to Brown, the friends started Sanibel Shells Facebook after hearing about the Duval Rocks Facebook page – based in Duval County/Jacksonville – which features a similar activity in which people decorate rocks with paint and messages, leaving the mementos behind in public places for others to discover.

"One day, a lightbulb went off and it occurred to us that we could meld this idea with our love of shelling, crafting and Sanibel," said Brown, who noted that she and Purvis have a plentiful supply of locally-collected dosinia shells. "When the weather outside was frightful and we couldn't go to the beach, we began painting."

Before long, the friends had produced almost 100 individually painted shells.

"We encourage folks to paint, find, move, re-hide and simply enjoy the shells," said Brown, who along with her creative partner paints some 100 new shells every month.



Ursula Purvis, co-founder of the Sanibel Shells Facebook group, spraying some newly painted shells with clearcoat

Before long, the Sanibel Shells Facebook group grew to more than 150 members. By the end of their first year, that total topped 1,000 members. Currently, the group has more than 5,400 followers. Members hail from just about each state in the country as well as around the globe.

"I'm just overwhelmed," Purvis said of the group's growth in only a few short years. "We now have members in 49 countries around the world. And it's really been blossoming; we're getting over 100 new members every week."

Since the group began, "shellers" started posting pictures of their finds and telling stories about where they were discovered.

"I found (a painted shell) at the Periwinkle Place shops under the plant," said Cape Coral, Florida resident Martina Labbe. "I loved it because it put smile a on my face and also happened to be my favorite color. It's a fun thing to look for with my son when we are out and about."

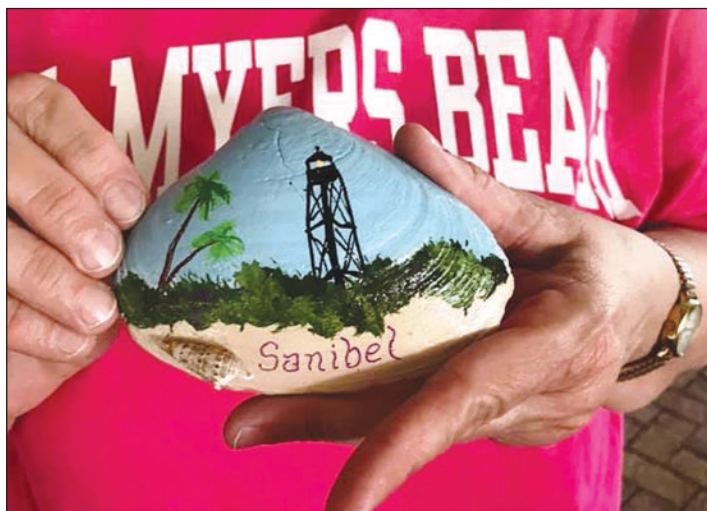
Sheri Mills, who vacationed here with her family of five from Southlake, Texas, joined the Sanibel Shells Facebook group to become better familiar with the island. When they arrived on the island, all three of her children were eager to find them.

"My middle child, Tyler Marie, found the first one after leaving the Lazy Flamingo restaurant; she found her shell under the pelican at the bank," said Mills. "Not to be outdone, my third child, MJ, immediately started his search. It took 24 hours, but he found his while biking home from Sanibel Sea School on a newspaper stand."

Mills also noted that the shells contained inspirational messages. "MJ's shell read 'Namaste' on the front and 'Just Breathe' on the back," she added. "What was particularly cool is that Tyler Marie's shell read 'Bloom where you are planted,' which is something her coaches talk about with her cheer team; and that philosophy is something that has proved personally true for us."

Purvis explained that she enjoys seeing pictures posted on the group's Facebook page, and she encourages people to use





Lisa Schockemoehl from Minnesota found this seashell decorated with the Sanibel Lighthouse

the hashtag #sanibelshells before they hide them.

"Everyone loves to know when his or her shells are found, but please understand that not everyone is on social media. This is more about making someone smile than it is Facebook recognition," she added. "We thought it would be a fun and positive way for lovers of Sanibel and shells to share their love and 'pay it forward.'"

Brown also wanted to give credit to the locals – whom she calls "Shell fairies" – who assist in hiding newly painted



This mermaid shell was discovered by Lori Leigh

shells shipped from the group's founders and other out-of-town artisans.

"We couldn't do the work without them," said Brown, who has been told by several businesses and area chamber of commerce officials that the Sanibel Shells Facebook group is making a positive impact on the community. "We're kind of like a PR machine for Sanibel. Of course, that makes us very happy because we love the island!" ✨



Maggie Jenkins of Cape Coral hiding one of her mermaid shells at Lighthouse Beach

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Shelling expert and enthusiast Kelle Covington's entire home is adorned with shells  
photos by Jeff Lysiak

## Few Match Enthusiasm Of 'Shelle Kelle'

by Jeff Lysiak

To say that Kelle Covington is obsessed with seashells might actually be a bit of an understatement.

The Bonita Springs, Florida resident, a shell collector for her entire life, is known to her friends and fellow shell collectors as "Shelle Kelle." In fact, that moniker is her Instagram handle.

Shelle Kelle, by the way, has more than 29,000 followers on the social media platform.

"I'm all about tropical-positivity," said Covington, who grew up collecting seashells as a youngster on the New Jersey shoreline. "I feel grateful beyond belief to go beachcombing just about every day on subtropical islands surrounded by



A hutch in Covington's front hallway is filled with shells she collected since she was a child

natural beauty. I love doing the Sanibel Stoop for hours... it's the perfect way to revitalize your body, mind and spirit."

As a youngster, Covington spent many vacations combing the beaches of California and Oregon with her mother and sisters, collecting driftwood and seashells of various sizes and species. But as an adult, her passion for shelling not only continued... it flourished.

"When my husband (Bob) and I were looking for a place to retire, we wanted to find a neighborhood that was near the water, a place where I could go shelling every day," said Covington. "Once we found a place here in Bonita (Springs), I still didn't know about the quality of shelling you have here in Southwest Florida."

Soon, Covington was combing local beaches – from Sanibel south to Marco Island – five days per week, developing a routine of finding pristine shell specimens along with making friendly connections with fellow shelling enthusiasts. While attending the Sanibel Shell Festival, the assistant director of the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum, Melanie Moraga, took her picture. Their subsequent conversation led Covington to becoming a Shell Ambassador at the museum.

"I walk the beaches every day and I've met a lot of friends," said Covington, who noted that she also became a member of the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club. "Shelling really has changed my life. At the museum, I serve as a Shell Ambassador in the Great Hall of Shells. I go to classes and lectures on shelling. I've gone on field trips and fossil digs. And I've also become a First Mate for Treasured Shell Seekers, a tour company out of Goodland. My whole life is shelling. That's why I like to say 'Shellebrate every day!'"

It's hard not to become enraptured by Covington's



bubbly personality and devotion to her hobby. She welcomes conversations with strangers and fellow seashell enthusiasts alike, sharing stories about finding her first alphabet cone or giving directions to one of Sanibel's top shelling sites with equal intensity.

"For me, every day I go shelling presents an opportunity to discover a new treasure," she said. "It's a form of meditation for me... I enjoy listening to the sounds of the surf coming upon on the shore... seeing birds and dolphins... seeing someone new to shelling discover something they've never seen before. Who wouldn't enjoy all of that?"

Covington recalled the day when she witnessed a shelling novice combing the beach alongside a group of die hard shell seekers. When she saw the novice standing all by herself, clutching an unseen object to her chest, she walked up to her with curiosity.

"Is this one of those special shells?" the woman asked her, opening her hands slowly to reveal a splendid example of a junonia. She also stated that the shell had simply rolled up in a wave at her feet, as if by divine intervention.

"To see her experience that moment was amazing," added Covington.

One of her favorite duties each year is serving as a greeter at the entrance to the Sanibel Shell Festival, where she welcomes guests to The Community House with her signature painted buckets filled with seashells to share.

Make sure to say "Hello, Shelle Kelle!" ❄️



Kelle Covington stated that she goes shelling at least five days each week

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### Sanibel Shelling Regulations

courtesy City of Sanibel

All Sanibel beaches and nearshore waters to one-half mile from shore are protected by Chapter 68B-26 of the Florida Administrative Code. This rule prohibits the harvest and possession of live shellfish. Sand dollars, sea stars (starfish) and sea urchins are also protected. All shelling is prohibited within the waters of the JN "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge.

Violators are subject to a \$500 fine and 60 days in jail for a first offense.

#### Sanibel's Shelling History

With more than 400 species of shells, Sanibel has long been known as a world-class shelling destination and the expectation of finding these treasures lures thousands of visitors each year. In the late 1980s, in order to protect this important biological and economic asset, the city petitioned the Florida Marine Fisheries Commission (MFC) to restrict live shelling. As a result, the MFC passed a special Sanibel Shelling Rule (MFC Rule Chapter 46-26) restricting live shell collection to two specimens of any one species per person per day. This rule also required all non-residents to possess a state saltwater products fishing license, a little known and often ignored regulation. This rule was in effect for six years and was of value from an educational standpoint. However, enforcement was virtually impossible and collecting in excess of these limits



Sunrise at the beach along Middle Gulf Drive

photo by Joyce Matthys

occurred regularly.

In 1993, the city further petitioned the MFC to establish a complete ban on live-shelling for Sanibel offshore to the city limits (one-half mile from shore). This more stringent rule was justified considering the extraordinary ecological and economic values of this resource and the expansive consequences should populations collapse due to over-harvest. The new rule was approved at a final public hearing in October 1994 and went into effect January 1, 1995.

In January 2002, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission approved the Lee County Commission proposed ban on the collection of all live shells within Lee County. The change took effect on March 1, 2002.

For more information, visit [www.mysanibel.com](http://www.mysanibel.com).✧

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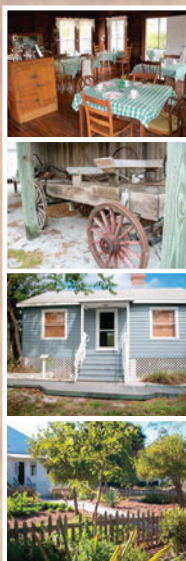
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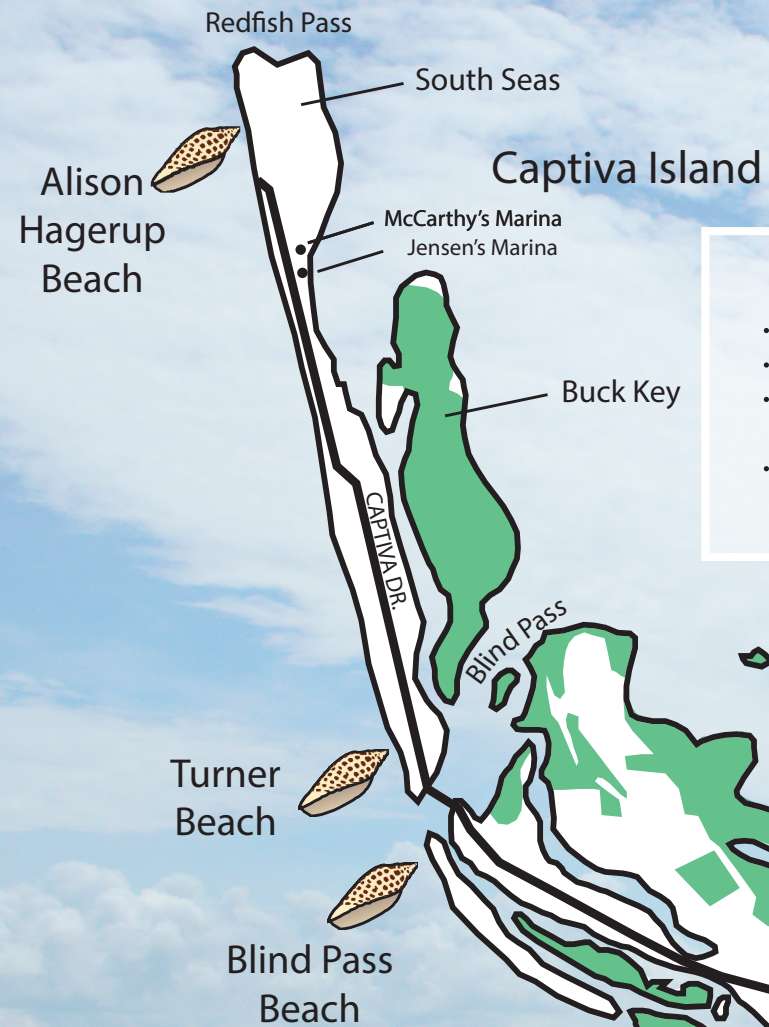
Step back in time and experience a glimpse of Sanibel and its people from the 1880s through the 1940s. The island's way of life is recreated in a village of 9 historical structures – relocated, restored, and preserved.

Come visit a pioneer home, fishing cottage, post office, schoolhouse, tea room and packing house (the only reproduction). See the Bailey's Model T truck.

The Sanibel Historical Museum and Village is located at 950 Dunlop Road, Sanibel.

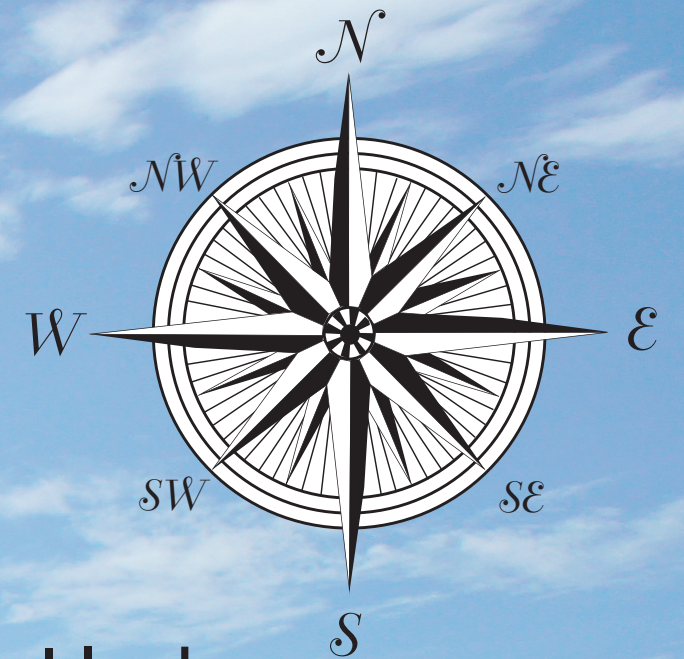
Hours open: May through July: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tuesday – Saturday. Mid-October through April: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday – Saturday. Closed holidays. Admission: \$10 per adult over 18; under 18 and members admitted free. For more information, visit [sanibelmuseum.org](http://sanibelmuseum.org) or email [info@sanibelmuseum.org](mailto:info@sanibelmuseum.org).





### Shelling Tips & Essentials

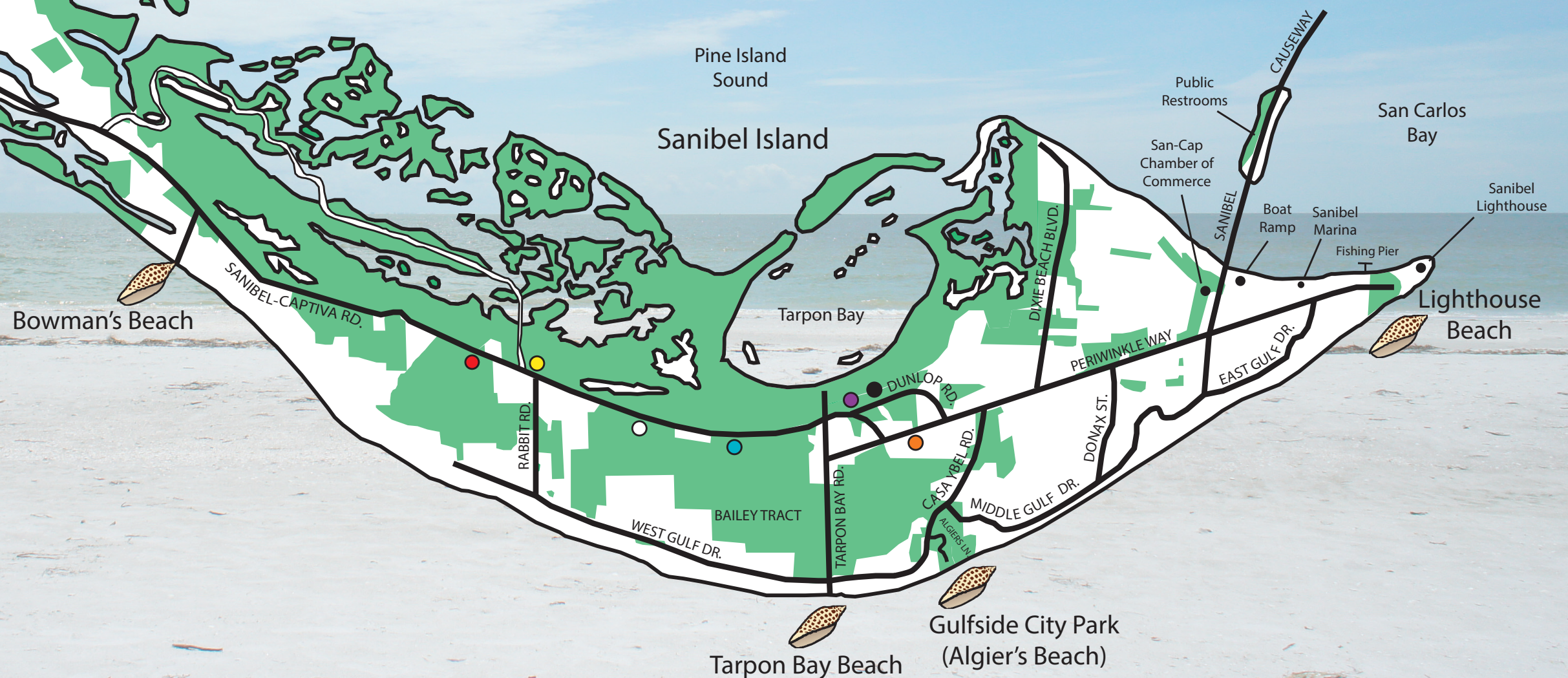
- Bucket, net bag and scoop
- Sunscreen, sunglasses and hat
- Best time to go shelling is after a storm, at low tide and in the morning just before dawn
- Do not collect live shells; It is illegal. If found, place shell gently back in the water



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### LEGEND

- Conservation Lands
- Shelling Locations
- Parking Lots
- All Sanibel beaches have restrooms except Blind Pass
- JN "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge
- Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum
- SCA Community House
- Sanibel Public Library
- Sanibel Historical Museum & Village
- Clinic for the Rehabilitation of Wildlife
- Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation







Artistic rendering of the new exterior of the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum, to be completed in early 2020

images provided by Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum

## Major Changes Under Way At National Shell Museum

by Jeff Lysiak

An idea that was born three years ago has finally begun, but you'll have to wait until next year to see it fully completed.

"The idea behind this started with our Touch Tanks," Dorrie Hipschman, executive director of the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum, explained at a private gathering of select museum staff and supporters last March. "(Museum biologist) Rebecca Mensch built an eight-foot tank, which we installed on the first floor in 2015. But we learned very quickly, with more than 60,000 visitors every year, that it just wasn't going to be possible to do everything we wanted to do. The Touch Tank demonstrations are very popular; in fact, for many people it's life changing. People come here thinking shells are just rocks, but when they learn that they're living things, it really opens their eyes."

Initially, museum leaders discussed the idea of adding a large aquarium within the Great Hall of Shells, located on the second floor. However, given the terrific weight such an amenity would require, as well as the limited space available, other options began being explored.

"We had to think about how we could maximize the space within our building," said Hipschman. "We can't expand the footprint of our building, so we had to look into how we could use our ground floor best."

That's when the idea behind the Your Museum Comes Alive! project really took off.

Hipschman and other museum representatives met with island architect Amy Nowacki and City of Sanibel Building

Department official Harold Law. During that meeting, Law pointed out that because the building is supported by columns rather than walls, none of the interior walls of the structure were load-bearing.

"As long as the aquariums are contained underneath the extension of our roof, we can add them to our first floor," Hipschman noted.

Back in January, the shell museum hosted an official groundbreaking ceremony for the Your Museum Comes Alive! campaign. Guests were invited to peruse three artistic renderings that detail what the facility will look like once the massive renovation is completed in early 2020. As Hipschman pointed out, the aquarium that will be dedicated to live mollusks will be the first of its kind in the world.

The first rendering featured the new exterior of the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum, with extended glass windows and relief renderings of mollusks and ocean animals carved into the walls. A second image included a drawing of people interacting with multiple live aquarium displays. The third rendering showed visitors interacting with touch tanks and other hands-on displays.

Preliminary plans call for "between 10 and 15" live aquarium tanks – with capacities between 100 and 1,000 gallons – to be installed at the museum.

"We're planning to build a natural ecosystem of mollusks, fish and other marine creatures that you might not know that much about or haven't seen before," said Hipschman, who offered that the tanks might be occupied by octopuses, cuttlefish, giant clams and squids. "We want people to look closely – we want them to be amazed."

By adding a living collection of mollusks to its already extensive shell collection, the museum aims to better inspire and educate its visitors and community. The aquarium will





The museum hopes to add 10 to 15 live aquarium tanks

include additional exhibit space to emphasize current environmental issues and flexible educational program areas designed to help its educators become even better at connecting people to nature.

"Make no mistake, this project will transform the museum," Hipschman told the crowd. "It will transform our community and the world. It really is not a stretch to say that we can change the world. It's not a stretch to believe that Sanibel can be a world leader in ocean conservation through our work."

Construction work at the museum will take about six months, with an additional six months for aquarium and exhibit design and installation. During construction, the museum will be closed for a couple of weeks, but will be operational during most of the construction phase. In addition to private donations, the aquarium project is sponsored in part by the Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, the Florida Council of Arts and Culture, and the State of Florida. The museum is raising the remaining funds needed to complete the project. Once operational, the new facilities pay for themselves and can be used to underwrite children's educational programs.

Enthusiasm for the Your Museum Comes Alive! campaign quickly spread across Sanibel and across the shelling community.

"We have the opportunity before us to transform the way we teach residents and visitors about the ocean and our local habitat. Caring for the environment is important for each and every one of us," said Chris Davison, past president of the museum's board of trustees. "The aquarium addition will help us inspire the next wave of ocean leaders."

"And it's great for them to be taking this step out and going from being just a museum where you can learn about these pretty shells," said C. Mark Eakin, Coral Reef Watch coordinator for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), "to understanding better how the shells are formed, the life of the shells and the importance of the ecosystem they live in."

Hipschman also called the project a "one-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

Visitors can check out [www.shellmuseum.org/alive](http://www.shellmuseum.org/alive) for construction progress and schedule updates. For more information, call Executive Director Dorrie Hipschman or Assistant Director Melanie Moraga at 395-2233.✿

## The Shell Collectors' Code of Ethics

I realize that mollusks are part of our precious national wildlife resources, therefore:

**I WILL** make every effort to protect and preserve them not only for my own future enjoyment but for the benefit of generations to come.

**I WILL** always leave every shelling spot as undisturbed as possible.

**I WILL** take only those specimens needed for my collection.

**I WILL** leave behind the live specimens so that they may live and multiply.

**I WILL NOT** collect live egg cases.

**I WILL** practice and promote these conservation rules in every way possible.

The Shell Collectors' Code of Ethics *first appeared in the Shell Club's archives in 1976. At that time the island was divided on imposing a live shelling limit or ban.*





## Shell Craft: Passion Flower

by Anne Joffe, She Sells Sea Shells

These take a bit of work to make but they come out very nicely. You can put it in a pot, or make a small trellis and attach these to really be lifelike because they are a vine flower.

### Materials

5 medium size Horse Mussels  
5 smaller Horse Mussels  
50 thin Sea Urchin Spines  
3 small arms from a Sea Star  
3 small Tusk Shells  
White, light green and yellow water-based paint  
Paint brushes  
Glue gun or tacky glue  
Triple glaze

### Directions

Using a worksheet, put a large dab of glue on sheet and glue in the points of the 5 large Mussels.

Alternate the smaller 5 Mussels into the glue. You may need to add more glue as you go.

In center of the Mussels, add a dime-size blob of glue. Carefully, glue in a Sea Urchin spine all around this glue blob and on top of second row of Mussels.

Repeat this step, adding more spines but alternate their placement.

Break off the long pointed end of the Tusk Shells. On top of this glue blob, glue the 3 Tusk Shells, evenly spreading them.

In between these Tusk Shells, add another small blob of glue and add the Sea Star arms in between the Tusk Shells. Let dry.

With green paint, outline around all of the edges of the Mussels. Paint the same green on the Sea Star arms and Tusk Shells, plus the built-up glue blob.

Paint with yellow, only the end of the 3 Tusk Shells. Paint a small row around the end of the arms. Do not paint the whole Tusk Shell.

Carefully paint a white circle completely around the Sea Urchin spines. Spray the flower with the glaze. For more information, visit [www.SheSellsSeaShellsSanibel.com](http://www.SheSellsSeaShellsSanibel.com).



Passion Flower

photo courtesy Anne Joffe

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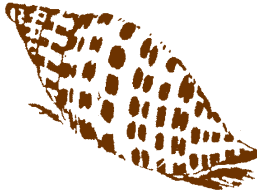
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