

83<sup>rd</sup> Annual  
*Sanibel*  
SHELL FESTIVAL  
MARCH 5, 6 & 7, 2020

FEATURING  
Shells • Shell Art • Crafts • Books  
Judged Artistic and Scientific Exhibits

The Community House • 2173 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel Island



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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# 83rd Annual Sanibel Shell Festival

March 5, 6 and 7, 2020

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 50% discount admission to the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum redeemable during the 2020 Sanibel Shell Festival. 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, and fossils too.
- 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 \$300 to \$1,400.
- Kiwanis Kids Area – Expanded this year with crafts as well as fun learning sessions for all.

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## Souvenir T-Shirt Sales Benefit Grant And Scholarship Programs

The Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club has created a new T-shirt design for the 2020 Sanibel Shell Festival. The design was created by Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club member Joe Timko and features shells that can be found on the beaches of Sanibel and Captiva.



The ladies V-neck shirts come in aqua, papaya and lime. The unisex/men's crewneck T-shirts come in heather blue and jade. All 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, is 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. ❄



Joe and Barbara Ann Timko modeling the 2020 Shell Festival T-shirts


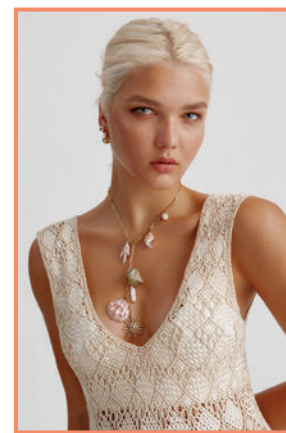

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# Welcome to the 83rd Annual Sanibel Shell Festival

The Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club proudly welcomes you to the 83rd 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. It is further divided into professional and hobbyist categories of competition. The Scientific Division focuses on single shells and shell collections from Florida and around the world. Each division has special categories for elementary, high school students and adults. Last year, Shell Show ribbon winners came from 60 different cities in 23 different states and from 4 different countries."

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 83rd 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 \$4 million 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 83rd Sanibel Shell Festival.

You can support the house by becoming a member of SCA, by making a tax-deductible donation to our restoration fund – our debt is currently \$670,000 – 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*

Sanibel Community Association

## Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club Officers

President	Tom Annesley
Vice President	Karen Silverstein
Secretary	Kim Short
Treasurer	Linda Edinburg
Past President	Karen Turner
Members At Large	Linda Sutherland Ramona Novitski Carol Periard

## 2020 Sanibel Shell Show Committee Chairs

Co-Chairs	Mary Burton & Joyce Matthys
Scientific Chair	Diane Thomas & Carol Periard
Artistic Chair	Mary Burton
Art Exhibit Coordinator	Charles Barr
Authors' Table	Ramona Novitski & Meg Born
Jewelry	Heather O'Keefe
Specimen Shells	Donald Dan
T-shirt Sales	Holly Dunn & Linda Sutherland
Advertising & PR	Karen Silverstein
Exhibit Entries	Linda Annesley
Hospitality	Karen Turner & Abby DeLoache
Hosts & Hostesses	Stacy & Linda Edinburg
Show Finances	Linda Edinburg
Trophies & Sponsorships	Mary Burton & Meg Born

To enter the 84th Sanibel Shell Festival in 2021, log onto  
<http://sanibelshellclub.com> after September 1, 2020  
for exhibit rules and entry forms

## YES! I would love to join the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club

Annual Dues  
Single \$20      Family \$25

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to:  
Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club  
P.O. Box 355  
Sanibel Island, FL 33957

The Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club is a 501(c)3 charitable organization

  
**The Community House**  
SANIBEL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Telephone (239) 472-2155  
Email [info@sanibelcommunityhouse.net](mailto:info@sanibelcommunityhouse.net)  
2173 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel FL 33957  
[www.SanibelCommunityHouse.net](http://www.SanibelCommunityHouse.net)

Sanibel Community Association  
2020 Shell Festival Committee

Shell Festival Co-Chairs:	Susan Schoenherr Lynette Kelly
Raffle Committee:	Teresa Riska-Hall Melissa Congress
Appreciation Luncheon:	SCA

## Become a Member Today!

Simply fill out the information, mail or drop off at The Community House, or use the Become a Member tab online

Member Registration

☐ \$50      Individual Membership

☐ \$100      Includes two adults and  
children in household

☐ \$150      Business Membership

☐ \$500      An extra level of community support,  
thank you for your giving

or  
☐ \$1,000

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Member 2 \_\_\_\_\_

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Payment Method: Check, payable to SCA,  
or Credit Cards by calling 239-472-2155  
or [www.sanibelcommunityhouse.net/donate](http://www.sanibelcommunityhouse.net/donate)



# Sanibel Shell Festival RAFFLE

## The Sanibel-Captiva Shell Crafters

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

*You do not have to be present to win.*

Proceeds used to maintain The Sanibel Community House

**Drawing will be held on Saturday, March 7 at 3 p.m. You need not be present to win.**

**Festival Hours: March 5 and 6, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. • March 7, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

### Sanibel Captiva Beach Resorts

Five-night vacation for two on beautiful Captiva Island. Some restrictions apply. Donated by 'Tween Waters Island Resort & Spa. **Valued at \$1,400**



**Sanibel Seashell Jewelry**  
Shell pendant in Silver or Gold. Handcrafted on Sanibel Island. Gift certificate. Donated by Congress Jewelers Sealife by Congress Designs. **Valued at \$500**



**Specimen Shell**  
Large *Murex Ramosus* on display. Donated by Sanibel Seashell Industries. **Valued at \$350**



**Private Tour of Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum**  
Behind the Scenes & Collection Tour for four with lunch. Gift certificate donated by Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum and \$150 gift certificate for lunch donated by Traders 2. **Valued at \$500**



### Shelling Excursion

Let the ocean guide you on beautiful Cayo Costa. Four-person half-day shelling cruise with lunch on Captiva Island. Donated by Captiva Cruises and Stilwell Enterprises. **Valued at \$300**



**Treasures From The Sea**  
Cone shaped sculpture with shell and sea life created by Shell Crafter Artisan Beverly Visnesky. Donated by Susan and Tyler Schoenherr. **Valued at \$750**



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Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club President Tom Annesley introducing guest speaker Clair Beckmann and her program, *Shell Collecting from A (Africa) to V (Venezuela) – A Real Adventure*

photo provided

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

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 and Canada.

Shell Club meetings are usually held on the second Sunday of the month, October through April, at The Community House.

The meetings begin at 1:30 p.m. with refreshments and a half-hour silent auction of shells and shell-related items. The money raised at the silent auction is used to help pay for renting The Community House for our meetings.

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.

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 83 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>.✱

If you find a special shell, stop by our office on Sanibel at 1640 Periwinkle Way, Suite 2 or email [Press@IslandSunNews.com](mailto:Press@IslandSunNews.com) so we can put your picture in the paper.



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# 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 2020 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)

Sanibel Platinum 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)\*





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# 2020 Sanibel Shell Show Awards & Sponsors

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## HOBBYIST ARTISTIC DIVISION

**Ann Arnoff Memorial Award**  
Best Shell Flower Exhibit  
**Best Miniature Flower Arrangement**  
**Best Picture or Mosaic**  
**Best Lamp**  
**Wanda Will Award**  
Best Jewelry Exhibit  
**Best Mirror**  
**Best Single Sailor's Valentine**  
**Best Miniature Sailor's Valentine**  
**Best Double Sailor's Valentine**  
**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**  
**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**  
**Best Worldwide Shells, Any Source**  
**Marilyn Northrop Award**  
Best Self-Collected Single Shell  
**Gene & Evelyn Spencer Memorial Award**  
Best South Pacific Shell, Any Source  
**Shell of the Show, Any Source**  
**Shell of the Show, Fossil**  
**Elsie Malone Award**  
Best Student Exhibit  
**Best of the Blues**  
**Sanibel Platinum Award**  
Best Entry in Class 27  
**People's Choice Award – Scientific**  
**Judges' Special Ribbons**  
**Judges' Merit Ribbon**

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Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum  
Phyllis Sharp  
The Clifford Family  
Bailey's General Store  
Island Sun  
Doug & Kathy Kapp  
Matzaluna and The Timbers Restaurant  
Mary Burton





A visitor trying on Sandy the Sunbather manikin for a photo opportunity at last year's Shell Festival photos provided

## Free Photo Opportunity Brings Howls Of Laughter

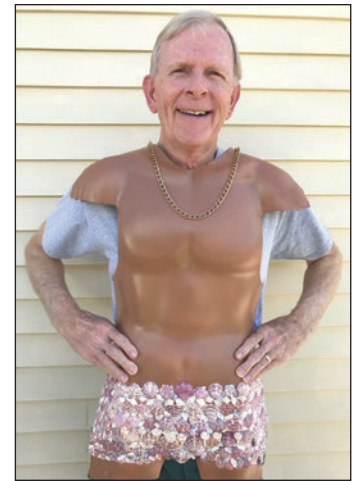
If you followed the sound of laughter in the exhibit halls at last year's Shell Show, it would have led you to people waiting in line to have their photos taken in a shell bikini.

It all began when Shell Club member Clair Beckmann found a half-manikin for sale at the Goodwill store in Louisville, Colorado. Immediately, she thought that it could be used for something at the Shell Show. Another club member, Joyce Matthys, took over from there, and with the help of her shell crafting neighbors, Sandy the Sunbather was born.

"If you don't like it, just erase it," festivalgoers were



Jim Lee with Hank the Hunk manikin, a new addition



Jim Lee as Hank the Hunk

told as they handed their personal cell phones to acting photographer, Susan Janz. Did anyone erase their photos? Probably not, because they looked surprisingly real. How real? Real enough for the *Island Sun* to receive a written complaint because they "gave so much attention to the woman in a bikini" when they included a photo of Matthys as "Sandy" in the paper. On the other hand, lots of people planned to use their photos on their Christmas cards.

This year, Hank the Hunk is joining Sandy. Bring your cell phones and look for them inside The Community House exhibit halls.

The bathing suits for the manikins were created by Cindy Lee and Jessie Bissey.\*

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Sanibel Shell Festival

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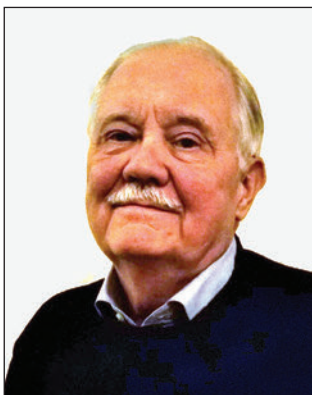
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## SCIENTIFIC JUDGES

### MG "Jerry" Harasewych Washington, DC

Jerry Harasewych has retired, but remains Emeritus Curator in the Department of Invertebrate Zoology at the Smithsonian Institution. He continues to publish research papers on slit shells, neogastropods and land snails of the genus *Cerion*. He has authored or co-authored several popular books, including *Shells, Jewels of the Sea* and *The Book of Shells*. An abridged version, *The Little Book of Shells*, will be published in May.✱



### Harry G. Lee, MD Jacksonville, Florida

Harry G. Lee, MD, began his pursuit of conchology at age 6. He is known for his remarkable memory regarding shell identification and data. Dr. Lee is the author of *Marine Shells of Northeast Florida* (2009) and numerous scientific papers. He has judged the Sanibel Shell Show many times, as well as other shell shows throughout Florida. Dr. Lee will be holding shell identification clinics through the Shell Show in the Scientific Exhibit Hall.✱



## ARTISTIC JUDGES

### Sharlene Totten Clearwater, Florida

Sharlene Totten is originally from Michigan, but she has resided in Florida for the past 32 years. She has taught a variety of arts and crafts classes in the adult education programs of the Pinellas County School System. Her use of shells, pearls, precious stones, sterling silver and gold metals in designing original jewelry and in stained glass pieces has won her many awards. Her original pieces are sold at many of the shell shows here in Florida. Totten has been an artistic judge at many Florida shell shows during the last 13 years.✱



### Phyllis Gray Orlando, Florida

Phyllis Gray has a longtime interest in the ocean and the outdoors. Her first Girl Scout badge was the Sea Life Proficiency badge. She has been a member of the Central Florida Shell Club since about 1970 and has served the club in most offices and committees through the years. She currently is the club's representative to the Conchologists of America and the co-chair of the COA Convention to be held in Melbourne, Florida in June. She is a recent member and current vice-president of the Astronaut Trail Shell Club. Gray has won awards for both her scientific and artistic exhibits, and has judged artistic entries for eight different Florida shell clubs.✱



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## Get Your Coastal Watch Reusable Bag At The Shell Festival

by Sam Lucas, Coastal Watch

Coastal Watch's Bring Your Own Bag (BYOB) initiative is designed to reduce the use of disposable bags on the islands and educate locals and visitors about the harm plastic bags cause to the environment. Free reusable canvas bags are distributed at events and stores throughout the island. To date, over 20,000 bags have been distributed.

Coastal Watch has continued its partnership with Haitian company Deux mains. Deux mains produces ethical fashion collections and employs Haitian artisans to not only make something valuable for others, but a meaningful life for themselves. All raw materials for the bags were sourced in Haiti, crafted by local Haitian artisans, and were manufactured in a factory that is 100 percent solar powered.

This new round of bags will be available for visitors at the 83rd annual Sanibel Shell Festival.

Coastal Watch thanks Bailey's General Store, Dan Hahn Custom Builders, Sanibel Captiva Community Bank, Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF), Sanibel Design Center, Sanibel Moorings, Sanibel Sea School, Sanibel Siesta, Soon Come, Inc., MacIntosh Books & Paper, Traders T2, Sundial Beach Resort & Spa, and The Brooks Family for their sponsorship of the BYOB initiative. For more information, visit [www.sancapcoastalwatch.org](http://www.sancapcoastalwatch.org).✧



Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club members Holly Dunn and Joyce Matthys display Sanibel Shell Festival T-shirts and Coastal Watch reusable canvas bags  
photo provided

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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 handed out 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



Linda Edinburg photos provided



The Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club bagging crew

shells, selected from a variety of 40 to 50 shell species, inserting the club's thank you note and sealing the bags.

Eleven years ago, Linda Edinburg accepted the responsibility of getting these little bags of shells filled. She sorts shells that are donated to the club at her home during the winter and then she looks for volunteers to help her fill them. Since that time, she and her crew have filled over 30,000 bags.

We hope you enjoy this year's 83rd 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>.✱

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# Master Jeweler Brings Life's Masterpiece To Shell Festival

by Kathy Kurtz Ferrari

People have been fascinated with the legend of mermaids since the time of ancient mariners. The mythical beauties of the sea have been the focus of literature, art and movies.

Humorous accounts have even been documented where a mermaid sighting turned out to be a manatee. Of course, eyeglasses may not have been common in those days.

While those familiar with waters around Sanibel and Captiva probably wouldn't make that mistake, visitors to this year's Shell Festival have a chance to see what a mermaid might wear, in a masterpiece fit for a queen of the sea.

Master jeweler Todd Alan, known as one of the finest wire-bending jewelry makers in the world, has created a mermaid's crown, woven with unusual 14 karat green gold and platinum, accented with diamonds, sapphires, green tourmalines and gold encrusted shells. Nothing short of breathtaking, the spectacular piece is on display, along with other handcrafted jewelry by Todd Alan, in his vendor's booth. He will also have a shell-themed wedding band set in this year's artistic competition.

Todd Alan has always had a penchant for imagination. Living in Ohio, he began a jewelry making business in 1986. For the next 20 years, he created whimsical



Artist Todd Alan working on the mermaid's crown photos provided  
accessories like scepters, wands, crowns and tiaras as a vendor at annual medieval reenactment events.

"During that time period I did tons of costuming," he said, explaining that making detailed items became part of his life. "I really started developing a skill for these much more elaborate pieces. And I think that's probably part of



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the history why (he created the mermaid's crown).” His talent and precision for weaving and braiding metal led him to specialize in woven wedding bands, and he developed an online business where he sold over 16,000 wedding rings from 2005 to 2015.

“What would get me through each day making more rings was how perfect could I make it, as opposed to making something new. You’re focusing on the quality of it,” Todd Alan said.

During that time, he would occasionally travel to Florida, drawing from the tranquility of the sea.

Deciding to dedicate a chunk of time to create something truly special, he brought his workbench, tools and equipment to Key West, renting a house for a month there.

“I just really had the desire to do something elaborate,” the 57-year-old remembered. “I have all these different styles I invented and created over the years and so I thought if I could put all these different styles and all this work into one piece, it would be a way I could truly show my work. Sort of like a pinnacle of a lifetime of study.”

Working eight to 10 hours a day “with nothing but the idea of dedicating to this piece,” the framework for the mermaid’s crown was born.

After spending the month there, he had the basic framework for the crown.

“I was very pleased, because with a piece like that, there’s no hit and miss. There’s no way to foresee a piece like this.”

Over the next five years, whenever he was inspired, he



**Front view of The Mermaid Crown**

would work on it more and add another detail.

It seemed that to finish the project, he and the crown continued to hear the call of the sea.

“The dream was to settle in Florida with a little shop, and be a corner jeweler in some beautiful ocean town, and just enjoy life,” he said.

So three-and-a-half years ago, he and his daughter, Lyra, settled in Sarasota, where he started a new jewelry line using real shells, casting them in gold and silver to create beautiful pieces – all while continuing to work on the crown.

“Until I hit the point where I said, ‘All right, I guess I

continued on page 25

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# 2020 Sanibel Shell Festival

## Authors' Table Schedule



Ron Base



Karen T. Bartlett



Amanda Collett



Alice Cypress



Bev Dolezal



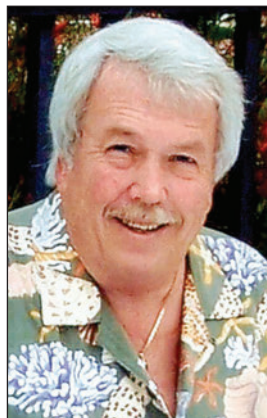
Jane Kirschner



Jennifer Schiff



James Usavage



Harlan Wittkopf

### THURSDAY March 5, 2020

**9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

Jennifer Schiff  
Harlan Wittkopf and  
Ken Vinton (illustrator)

**12:30 p.m.-4 p.m.**

Jane Kirschner  
Karen Bartlett  
Ron Base

### FRIDAY March 6, 2020

**9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

Jennifer Schiff  
Amanda Collett

**12:30-4 p.m.**

Ron Base  
Amanda Collett  
James Usavage

### SATURDAY March 7, 2020

**9 a.m.-12 p.m.**

Bev Dolezal  
Alice Cypress

**12-3 p.m.**

Karen Bartlett  
Alice Cypress



From page 23

## Master Jeweler

could keep working on this forever but I think I'm going to call it finished," he stated, admitting after hundreds of hours of work, he still wants to add a few things, including a leather binding on the inside to make it more comfortable to wear.

Of course, specializing in shell jewelry, he discovered the Sanibel Shell Festival, (an "Oh-my-god show," he called it) and became a vendor three years ago.

This year's Shell Festival is the debut of the finished mermaid's crown.

"We are just very excited to have the crown at the show this year," said Shell Festival Co-chair Mary Burton, who is one of the few people who has held the magnificent piece. "It's very heavy. When you see the amount of precious metal on it, you can understand why it's heavy. Oh my gosh, it's just a work of art."

With an insured value of a half-million dollars, the crown will have special security. The display case is completely hand built with thick walls and half-inch thick, bullet proof acrylic glass.

But is it for sale?

"It was not made with that intent, and I'm not putting a price tag on it," the artist said. "I want it to travel. I want it to go places, I want people to see it."

He is hoping to tie it into ocean education and awareness of water issues, and perhaps land in a museum



Side view of The Mermaid Crown

some day.

"It really is a one of a kind thing. There is and never will be anything like it," he noted.

Todd Alan doesn't know if he'll take on another project like the mermaid's crown again. If he does, he said it would be something "totally wild," like a giant silver scepter, laced with stones.

For now, he's letting the crown have its time.

"There are all kinds of possibilities, the crown is just beginning its journey. It's its own story and it's going to create its own story," Todd Alan explained with reflection in his voice. "It will probably long, long outlive me."✧

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## Shell Dealer Donald Dan's Expertise Benefits Shell Club

by Kathy Kurtz Ferrari

Those attending this year's Shell Festival will have the opportunity not only to expand their knowledge of shells, but also to support research and other endeavors in marine education by expanding their own shell collection.

Inside The Community House, Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club member Donald Dan, one of the world's most prolific shell dealers, will be selling collectible specimens and sharing shell information with those stopping by. All proceeds from the sale will go directly to the Shell Club, which in turn supports grants, scholarships and gifts for education and awareness in the fields of conchology and malacology.

By entering Dan's name in any search engine on the Internet, he is noted as one of the world's foremost shell experts and dealers in the world, having tracked down the rarest treasures from the sea, from all reaches of the earth.

"There are much more illustrious scientists than me. I'm just one of many shell enthusiasts," Dan said with a humble laugh during a phone interview from his home in Fort Myers.

Born in China, Dan moved to the Philippines as a teenager. While shells are not found on beaches there, some of the rarest specimens are found there by divers. It was during Dan's youth in that region where he found an



Donald Dan with some of the special shells for sale at the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club table at the Shell Festival

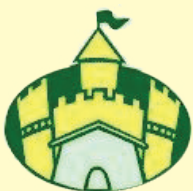
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interest in shells, which sparked a lifelong passion.

Immigrating to the United States, Dan earned his master's degree at Michigan State University. He had a successful career as a business strategist, working for many corporations all over the United States.

"I always had shells as a hobby, and when I retired in 1981 from the corporate world, I decided I'm going to move down to Florida – Southwest Florida particularly – because this is where the concentration of shell interest is," he said.

While he is certainly passionate about shells, he is not a collector, and doesn't look for shells on the beach.

"When I became a dealer, I decided I should not collect shells, because if I collect shells, then I'm in competition with my customer," he said, noting the distinction. "So the customer is my main focus, of course."

And he certainly knows what his customers want, and has been able to garner some of the rarest shells ever found.

That is why members of the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club say they are lucky to have his involvement. For the past 10 years, Dan and his assistants, Jeff Oths and Mary Beth Harper, have managed the Shell Club sale table at the Shell Festival, where shells, corals, fossils, minerals and some shell jewelry are sold. Using club funds, Dan procures shells to sell to the public.

"I select the really attractive items, so the business is very, very good. And part of it is because I know what sells," he said, stressing that he couldn't do it without the help of his assistants.



Getting ready for the Shell Club table sale are, from left, Jeff Oths, Donald Dan and Mary Beth Harper

One hundred percent of those profits go directly to the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club and its endeavors. Proceeds from the sale table over the past 10 years have totaled over \$63,000, not including this year's show.

"I've worked with him for years, and he's just a genuine and generous person," said Joyce Matthys, co-chair of the Sanibel Shell Festival, adding that Dan works countless hours on the effort. "Through his efforts in buying shells for us, we've raised money that translates into grants and scholarships, all through his hard work and generosity."

As a shell dealer, Dan travels all over the world, attending over 600 shell shows and visiting dealers to find unusual specimens. Dan is a member of the Conchologists

continued on page 30

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# The Interesting Atemoya

by Resident Chef Jarred Harris, The Community House

The atemoya (at-uh-MOY-uh) is a hybrid tropical fruit that is a member of the Annonaceae family. Atemoyas are actually a cross between two fruits native

to the Americas, the cherimoya and the sugar-apple. The atemoya was created at the United States Department of Agriculture's subtropical laboratory in Miami during the early 1900s.

The atemoya is round with soft spike-like leaves and looks similar to an oversized artichoke. The inner flesh is creamy white with a smooth texture, similar to cantaloupe or pear. The fruit has a mild, sweet flavor and tastes like a combination of banana, mango and very ripe pineapple, with a hint of vanilla. The fruit also contains large black seeds, which are inedible. When the atemoya is ripe, it becomes soft to the touch and can be cut in half, and the flesh removed with a spoon.

The atemoya is a good source of dietary fiber and

minerals such as calcium, magnesium, iron and phosphorus. It contains powerful antioxidants and is also a natural antihistamine.

Atemoya can be found fresh at south Florida farmers markets and ethnic grocery stores from early August until late November. It can also be found frozen in many supermarkets.



Atemoya

photo provided

Here is a simple recipe to try (frozen cherimoya is a good substitution if you are unable to find atemoya):

## Atemoya and Avocado Ice Cream

1-14 oz. package atemoya or cherimoya pulp (thawed)

Pulp of 2 small avocados

2 tbsp. agave nectar or honey

1/4 tsp. sea salt

### Method

Place all the ingredients into a food processor.

Pulse until creamy and smooth.

Taste and adjust the sweetness as desired.

Remove the ingredients from the food processor and place in an ice cream maker and freeze according to the manufacturer's instructions.\*



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From page 27

## Shell Dealer

of America, where he is its longest serving board member, committing much of his time as the director of the organization's endowment fund.

Considering his travels, one would be curious how the Sanibel show compares to others around the world.

"Each show is unique. It has its own peculiar feature," he said. "Sanibel is the longest, continuous running show in the world, and I would say the largest show. And Sanibel has a superb contingent of shell art, which is unique."

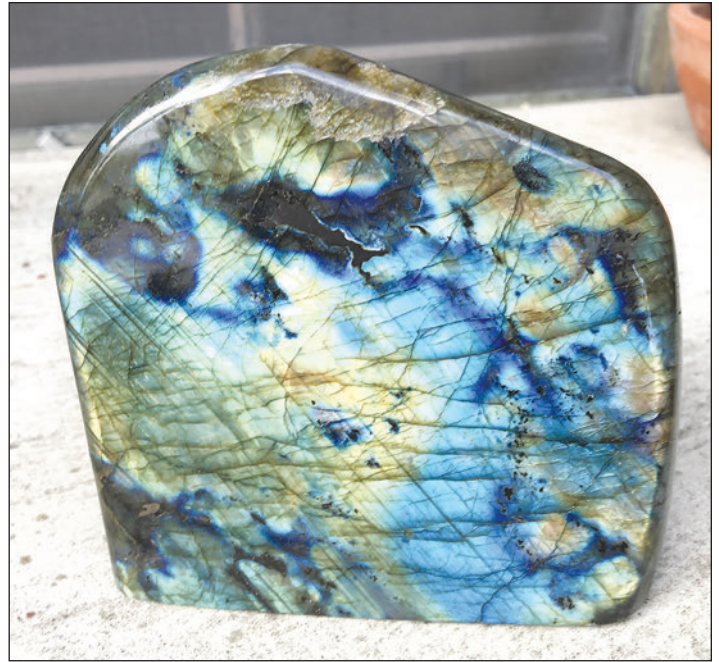
Another asset to the Shell Festival is the involvement of the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum, which is another organization Dan is dedicated to supporting.

"The presence of that museum is definitely a draw," he explained.

Dan also noted the work, time and monetary investment the Shell Festival requires for participants, due to the length of the show during peak tourist season.

"It's more challenging than any other show that I know of, and in spite of that fact, we are very lucky to have a lot of volunteers who really pitch in," he added. "It's very unique."

"We are lucky because Sanibel draws a lot of retirees from the north, and many of the people who are interested in shells up north, when they retired, they moved down here. They kind of help out. It's quite unique, from just



This piece of Labradorite, mined from Madagascar, was among the items at last year's sale table photo by Lorin Arundel

a demographic point of view. Sanibel is a truly unique situation."

Clearly, of all the places in the world to call home, there is a reason Dan chooses to live in this area.

"The Sanibel Club is my dear home club," he said. "It's something that is very dear to me."✧

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## Shell Craft: Curly Hair Mermaid

by Anne Joffe, She Sells Sea Shells

You can use any color hair, and these directions show a silk flower in her hair; however, you can add a small Starfish, or whatever you like.

### Materials

- 1 Large Fig shell
- 2 Sliced Maple Leaf shells (same size)
- 1 Wooden bead doll head, with painted face (28mm)

Gold cord

Silk Poinsettia or Starfish

Mini curl doll hair (any color)

Glue gun or tacky glue

Small shell (for center)

### Directions

Glue the head into the middle of the Fig

shell, the wide end, and the narrow end hangs down.

At the narrow end, glue one of the Maple Leaf slices. The pointed end faces down; angle them a bit. Glue on the other one; arrange for her tail.

Cut a 6-inch piece of cord, tie ends together into a knot, and glue the knot onto the doll head bead in the center. Some of these beads have a hole in them; if so, just glue the cord into the hole.

Glue hair onto the bead head. Start at the top, go down the sides and all the way down to cover the upper part of her body, so she ends up with long, flowing hair.

On one side of her hair, glue the Starfish or Poinsettia.

In the center of the body, glue your single shell so it looks like she is holding one up. Greenery is optional.

Visit [www.SheSellsSeaShellsSanibel.com](http://www.SheSellsSeaShellsSanibel.com).✧



**Curly Hair Mermaid**

photo by Anne Joffe

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# The Stiff Pen Shell

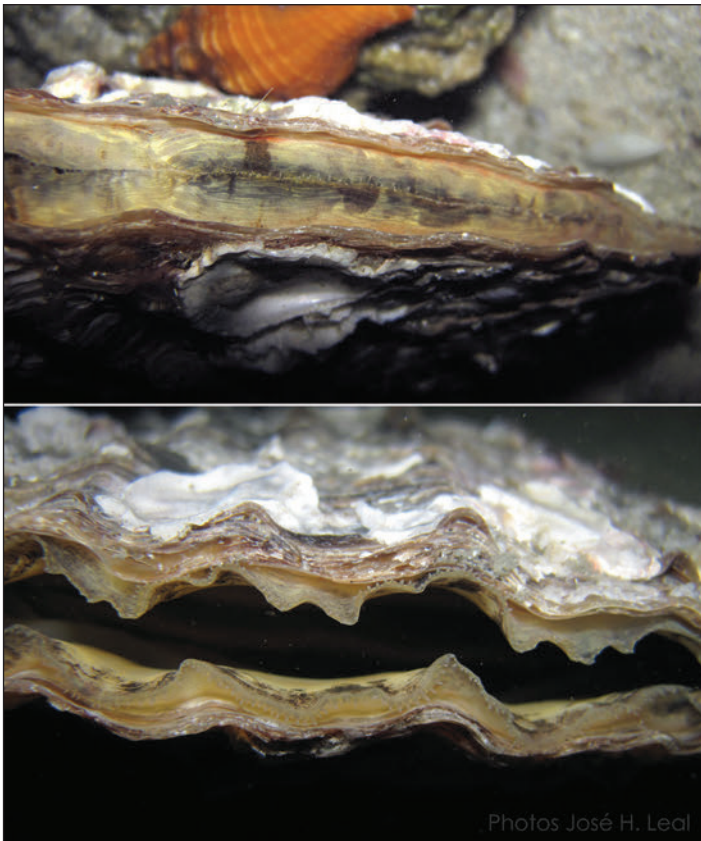


by José H. Leal, PhD,  
Science Director and Curator,  
Bailey-Matthews National  
Shell Museum

**S**tiff Pen Shells, *Atrina rigida* (Lightfoot, 1786), may be found in large quantities on the beaches of Southwest Florida during winter months, when storm waves detach the living bivalves from the bottom, depositing them on the beaches.

Pen shells anchor themselves to the sandy bottom using a bundle of silky fibers called a *byssus*. The bivalve is buried about three quarters of its length, with the “pointy end” of the shell oriented downward. Despite being a common local species, a few attributes of this species (and of pen shells, family Pinnidae, in general) contributed to my choice for this year’s featured shell.

Like most bivalves, pen shells are filter feeders. But unlike many other bivalves, pen shells lack well-defined *siphons* for the uptake and discharge of water during filter feeding. Instead, the water flows in and out via openings created by the mollusk along its *mantle edge*. The photos below show a live Stiff Pen Shell viewed from above. It illustrates how the animal is able to join both sides of the mantle edge to help regulate and direct the incoming flow of water, in a process akin to a natural “zipper.” In contrast, the second image shows the *mantle cavity* momentarily open, probably to flush out sand, silt and other debris.



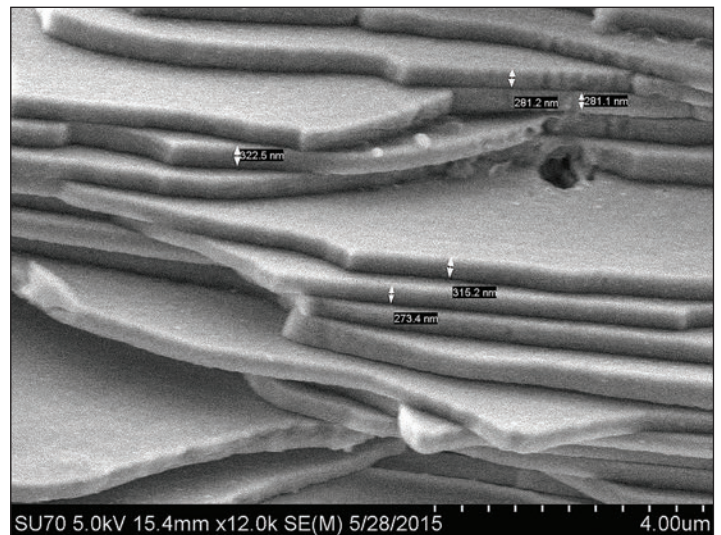
Two closeup views of the top part of a living Stiff Pen Shell. Above, mantle edge is closed, “zipped-up;” below, mantle edge is open to allow for water circulation.  
photos by José H. Leal



Views of a large Stiff Pen Shell from Sanibel. Shell length = 22 cm (about 8.7 inches).  
photo by Patricia A. Starkey

The *nacreous* shell layer of pen shells imparts the trademark, dark iridescence that is so typical to the inner surface of pen shells and other bivalves. The nacreous layer, or mother-of-pearl, consists of thousands of exceptionally thin, flat, colorless, translucent calcium carbonate crystals (also known as *tablets*). These flat crystals cause light to scatter and reflect back at different angles, creating the rainbow-like, iridescent sheen characteristic of mother-of-pearl. (This species and other pen shells are known to produce irregularly shaped, dark pearls.)

The nacreous tablets are separated by thin layers of organic “adhesive,” and this combination constitutes a strong, resilient, and lightweight composite material that served as a model for high-tech engineering materials. A couple of years ago, National Shell Museum friend Dr. Peter Bush from the State University of New York at Buffalo visited Sanibel, taking home a local Stiff Pen Shell. In his lab, he examined the shell’s nacreous layer under a high-power scanning electron microscope (SEM). The result is shown below. The SEM image shows the regular and parallel nature of the nacreous layer tablets. (Due to the features of the SEM technique, transparency of each layer is not evident in the final photos.) The measurement units on the image are *nanometers*. Each nanometer equals 1/1000 of a micrometer, which in turn is 1/1000 of a millimeter; 1mm = 0.04 inch. Read more about local mollusks and their shells at <https://www.shellmuseum.org/shell-guide> and <https://www.shellmuseum.org/blog>.✧



Ultra-high magnification view of Stiff Pen Shell nacreous layer tablets under a scanning electron microscope  
photo by Peter Bush



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turret snail



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simnia



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murex



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whelk



Crown  
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Pear whelk



Rough pen shell



saw-tooth pen shell



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ponderous ark



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Pear whelk



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saw-tooth pen shell



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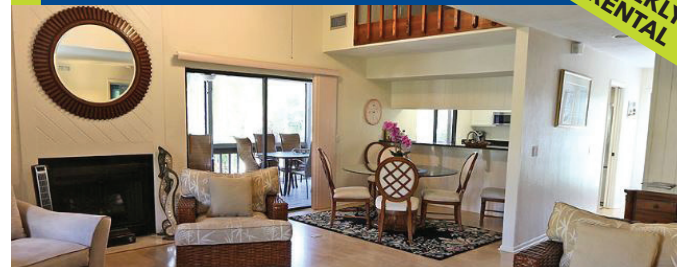
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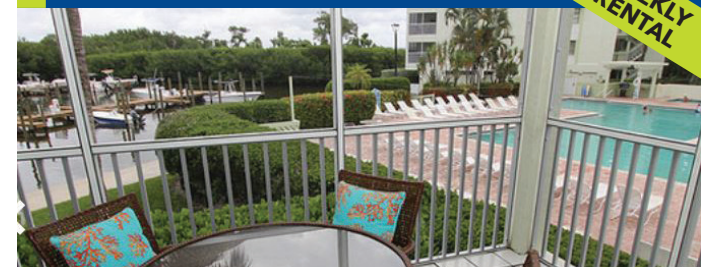
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## How To Find Shells...

- 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





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## Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club Grants Program And Awards

Each fall, the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club gives away all the profits from the spring's Shell Show. Last year, these grants totaled \$30,612. In addition to the grants listed below, the club has supported graduate students in the University of Southwest Florida's (USF) College of Marine Science for many years through the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club/Mary & Al Bridell Memorial Fellowship. What began with a modest contribution of \$500 in 1985 has grown to become a significant endowment. Each year a \$10,000 fellowship is awarded to one of USF's brightest marine scientists.

The Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club 2019 Grant Awards went to:

### **Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum Adopt-A-Class (\$4,000)**

Funding will go towards covering some of the costs of the \$58,000 a year interactive mollusk education program which is split between

students visiting the shell museum and the Mollusks-On-The-Move van visiting their own classrooms.

### **Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum Digital Imaging Project (\$1,500)**

The Digital Imaging Project was completed in 2018, cataloging over half a million shell specimens. In late 2018, the catalog was converted into a modern, user-friendly cloud-based system. This grant is for the fee for hosting the cloud-based database for one year by Specify Software, which includes images generated by the Digital Imaging Project.

### **Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum Capital Work (\$6,250)**

In early 2019, the shell club board voted to fund \$6,250 per year for four years as a major donation to the shell museum's construction/aquarium project.

### **Conchologists of America (\$1,000)**

This grant is for the seventh installment of a \$10,000 perpetual grant award that will be called the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club Award on the 10th year. Parameters will be

determined at that time. Conchologists of America is an organization for molluscan enthusiasts around the country and internationally. Their grants are similar to the shell club's but broader based from a geographic perspective.

### **Florida Gulf Coast University (\$4,000)**

Research on the potential link between coastal nutrients and red tide blooms will be funded with this grant. More specifically, the project will include taking water samples from the Caloosahatchee, groundwater wells and several locations along the Southwest Florida coast in the Gulf of Mexico. The unique "isotopic" signatures of the water and associated nutrients will be analyzed so that the magnitude and relative importance of different groundwater sources to nutrient inputs along the Southwest Florida coast can be quantified.

### **Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (\$5,000)**

Sanctuary sites for southern hard clams in San Carlos Bay, an area classified as prohibited for hard



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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).



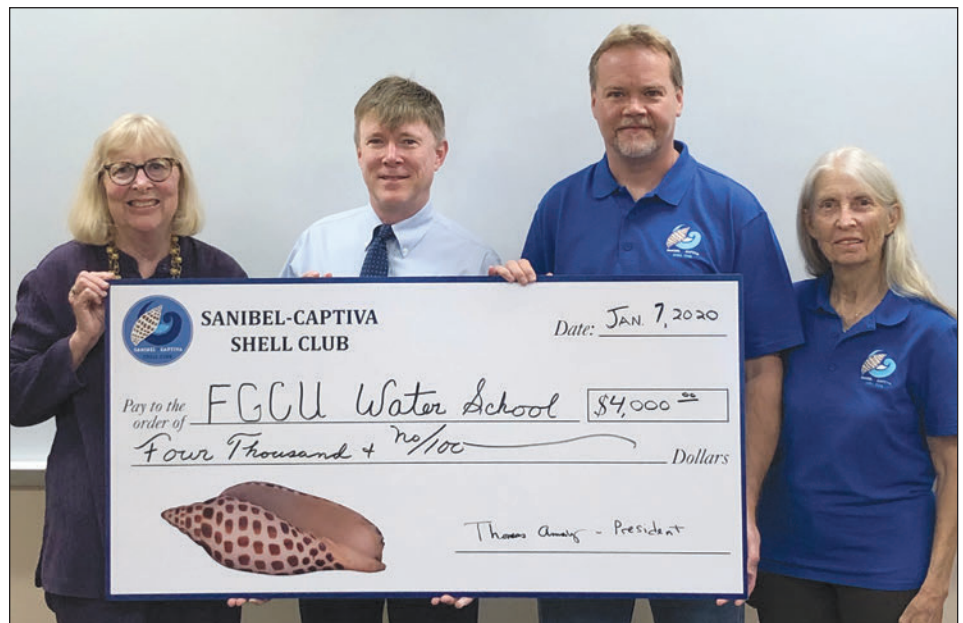
clam harvesting, will be established using funding from this grant. The sites will be monitored for clam development. The goal is to use the clams to improve water quality.

**University of Florida – Dr. Tobias Grun (\$2,000)**

This grant award will go towards the study of the dietary needs of helmet snails in the Gulf of Mexico, which feed almost exclusively on sea urchins (sand dollars in particular). The hypothesis is that helmet snails feed not only on the soft tissue but also the calcareous skeletons of the sand dollars, which is necessary to produce and maintain the massive shells of helmet snails.

**University of South Florida – Graduate Student Nicole Seiden (\$2,462)**

Funding from this grant will be used to study life history traits of the Florida Horse Conch to determine how rapidly they reach reproductive maturity, and how long they live and reproduce. Populations in west Florida are declining and this study will help determine what level of



Florida Gulf Coast University Water School Director Dr. Gregory Tolley, second from left, accepts a grant from Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club Grants Committee members, from left, Clair Beckmann, Joe Timko and Karen Turner

photo provided

commercial harvest is sustainable.

**University of South Florida – Graduate Student Jamie Rogers (\$4,400)**

A comparison study of modern vs. historic oysters to determine how they have changed over the last 200 years

will be conducted using this grant.

Tampa Bay has lost approximately 90 percent of its oyster reefs since the early 1900s, and this study will assist with efforts to restore the reefs by providing answers to gaps in the current understanding of oyster biology.\*

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# 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,



**Diane Thomas**  
Scientific Division Co-Chair



**Carol Periard**  
Scientific Division Co-Chair



**Mary Burton**  
Artistic Division Chair

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%.✱

## Become A Shell Ambassador At The National Shell Museum

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).✱



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# You Never Know What You'll Find On Sanibel's Shell-Laden Beaches



by Nicole Finnicum,  
Director of Operations,  
Sanibel Sea School

Sanibel's beaches are a treasure trove of shells and interesting ocean finds. From perfectly spiraled lightning whelk shells to more mysterious finds like a snail operculum, there is always something waiting to be discovered. Some treasures are easily identified but others, like a snail, or gastropod

operculum, are more recognizable by the trained eye.

Sanibel Sea School's Discover Beachcombing walk is a perfect opportunity to hone your identification skills and learn more about the fascinating biology of shells.

Marine science educators at Sanibel Sea School know their mollusk biology and are always eager to share interesting facts about the common shells found on the beach. On a recent Discover Beachcombing walk, educator Alex Cook shared some fascinating facts about some of Sanibel's most iconic shells.

One of the first shells in the wrack line was a perfectly intact lightning whelk. Cook explained how lightning whelks are a little different than other snail shells we might find on the beach.

"Lightning whelks are left-handed shells because their shell



Common shells found on Sanibel Island

photo provided

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coils to the left, which is known as sinistral. Most other snails coil to the right, or have a dextral shell – like the Florida horse conch,” she said. Cook went on to explain how gastropods protect themselves from predators and desiccation, or drying out.

“The aperture on most gastropods is covered by a hard, fingernail-like structure called an operculum. If a snail is being pursued by a predator, they can shut their ‘trap door’ and protect their soft bodies from predation,” she said.

Later, on the beach walk, we found an operculum from a Florida horse conch that was almost the size of the palms of our hands. “Florida horse conchs are the largest gastropods in North America,” said Cook.

Sanibel is not only an excellent destination to discover beautiful shells, but also a great place to encounter more interesting ocean finds that allow us to gain a better understanding of structure and function of different creatures.

Discover Beachcombing is offered weekly at Sanibel Sea School at both our flagship campus and satellite campus at Sundial Beach Resort & Spa. Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Register online at [www.sanibelseaschool.org](http://www.sanibelseaschool.org).

Nicole Finnicum, MS, manages day-to-day operations and communications at Sanibel Sea School, part of the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF) family. SCCF is dedicated to the conservation of coastal habitats and aquatic resources on Sanibel and Captiva and in the surrounding watershed.✧

## Featured Drink: Swarm Of Bees

by Greg Baldia,  
Mixologist, Cielo

### Ingredients

1.25 oz. gin  
.75 oz. orange vanilla  
syrup  
.25 oz. lemon juice  
.25 oz. orange juice  
1 egg white  
3 dashes orange bitters  
1.5 oz. Prosecco  
.25 oz. Campari  
1 orange peel expression

### Directions

In a mixing tin, add all ingredients except Prosecco and Campari.

Shake without ice.

Add ice and shake again.

Add Prosecco to Nick and Nora glass, then slowly pour mix from tin on top of the Prosecco.

Sink Campari through the middle of glass.

Express one orange peel and garnish as you however you see fit.

Drink. Enjoy. Impress your friends.✧



Swarm of Bees

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## Art Through Inspiration



by Traci Lantz,  
Three Crafty Ladies

Sanibel is often described as an artist's paradise. Beautiful sunsets, powder-soft sand beaches scattered with shells, amazing foliage and a vast array of wildlife make Sanibel Island the perfect destination for inspiring the imagination. Whether you enjoy drawing, painting, knitting, quilting or anything in between, you have found a picturesque utopia to immerse yourself in creativity.

Mixed media art is a passion of ours. We search for ways to successfully combine a variety of products together to create a single cohesive piece. Consider trying your hand at mixed media shells. It's a great way to repurpose shells of all shapes and sizes.

To complete this project, you will need an assortment of clean, dry shells, a paint brush, paper glue or decoupage glue, 3 to 5 bottles of alcohol inks in a range of colors, and embellishments. Your embellishments can be anything from glitter to sequins, metal charms, die cut paper designs, glitter glue, rice or tissue papers to decoupage, permanent ink pens, etc.

Begin by layering your alcohol ink colors to create your background. Whether it be modeled after a Sanibel sunrise



Island inspired mixed media art

photo provided

or the ocean floor, there are plenty of combinations to choose from. Inks will set quickly, so once they are dry, you can get to work adding your embellishments to create a piece of art that can be cherished for years to come.

Another great way to combine multiple mediums is by joining printed rice paper, alcohol inks, fibers, shells and a canvas board to create a frameable collage.

We offer self-guided activities, which are perfect for families and friends to create a quick souvenir. Visit [www.ThreeCraftyLadies.com](http://www.ThreeCraftyLadies.com) for more information.✱

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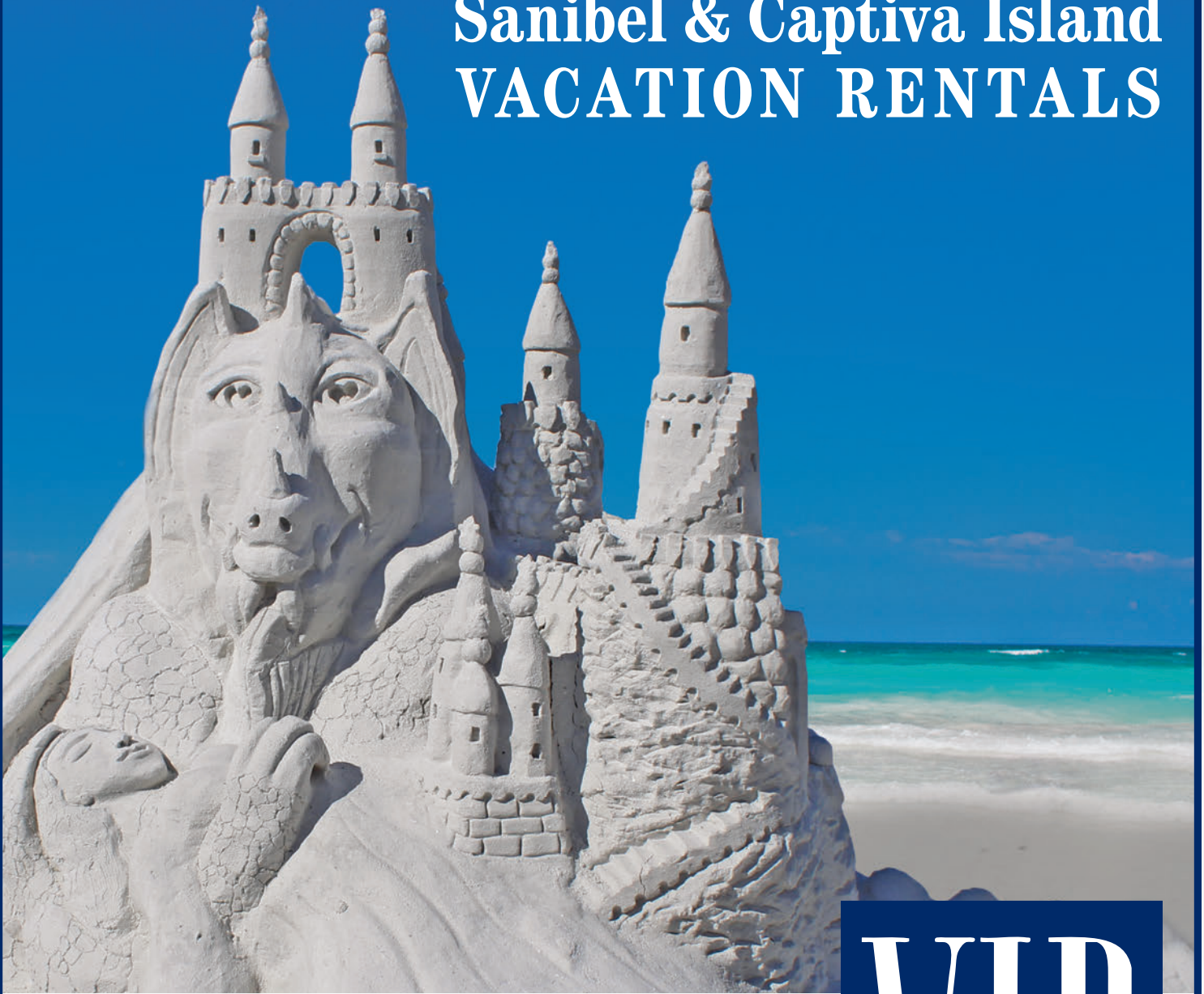
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## How Artistic Exhibits Are Judged

Subtleties of craftsmanship that make the difference between first and second place ribbons may not be obvious to the untrained eye.

**Artistic Division General Art Works:** The overall aesthetic appeal of an exhibit is of the utmost importance in shell art. This includes the mastery of the artist's technique and the choice of the shells that they used. The judges look at correctness of form and color; accuracy of the rendition; composition and technical proficiency. The suitability of the technique used in relationship to the materials and the theme that the artist has chosen are also considered.

**Artistic Division Sailor's Valentines:** Accurate symmetrical designs; (in double Valentines) balance between both sides; and, balance of colors and densities are important in all Sailor's Valentines.

In traditional Valentines, the judges look for the use of Barbadian shells, other authentic materials and the use of acknowledged historical techniques. A traditional theme should be used such as romance, dedication to faraway partners, the seafaring life, or longing for home.

In contemporary Valentines, the judges look at the choice of shells and other materials; the originality of the theme; the proportions of the elements; and the execution of non-shell-based parts. They also look at the grading of shell sizes, consistent posing of shells, color blending and shading; calligraphy and typography; and the artist's skill in gluing and other construction techniques.✱



The 2019 Best Holiday Exhibit award in the Artistic Division went to Andrea Schopf of Lancaster, Pennsylvania for a shell-encrusted heart, which was dedicated to her lifelong friend photo provided

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# State Shells Of The United States



Florida State Shell, Horse Conch

photo by Melanie Moraga

Alabama – Junonia, *Scaphella junonia johnstoneae*  
Connecticut – Eastern Oyster, *Crassostrea virginica*  
Florida – Horse Conch, *Triplofusus giganteus*  
Georgia – Knobbed Whelk, *Busycon carica*  
North Carolina - Scotch Bonnet, *Semicassis granulata*

granulata  
Massachusetts – Wrinkle Whelk, *Neptunea lyrata*  
decemcostata

Mississippi – Eastern Oyster, *Crassostrea virginica*  
New Jersey - Knobbed Whelk, *Busycon carica*  
New York – Bay Scallop, *Argopecten irradians irradians*  
Oregon – Oregon Triton, *Fusitriton oregonensis*  
Rhode Island – Northern Quahog, *Mercenaria mercenaria*  
South Carolina – Lettered Olive, *Oliva Sayana*  
Texas – Prickly Whelk, *Sinistrofulgur pulleyi*  
Virginia - Eastern Oyster, *Crassostrea virginica*

Members of Florida's shell clubs suggested many species for adoption as an official shell. Some were too rare or too small; some were found in only a few areas of the state; others were too widespread – common in other states or the Bahamas as well as Florida.

Floridians wanted a symbol unique to Florida.

The Horse Conch ranges along all of Florida, only marginally into neighboring states. In central Florida, people even find fossilized shells of conchs that lived during the Miocene Epoch, 12 million years ago.

Horse Conchs have little commercial value. Larger specimens have been used as trumpets, but are prized mostly by shell collectors. They can be eaten, but the flesh has a peppery taste. In fact, it was once known as the "pepper conch."

Horse Conch shells range in color from creamy white to a beautiful orange, but the animal's body is usually orange. What shell could better represent the Orange State?

The Palm Beach County Shell Club asked Representative William James to sponsor a Horse Conch bill. Other Florida shell clubs then added their support. They gave James 161 conch shells – one for every legislator: 120 representatives and 40 senators. The biggest one of all was reserved for the governor.

Eighty-nine legislators voted on the conch, with just four "nays." (Reporters had a field day with the "neigh" voters for the horse conch.)

The Horse Conch was adopted as Florida's state shell on June 18, 1969, the governor signing his name in orange ink.\*

## Sweeping Gulf Views...



## and Rave Reviews

Reverend George Barnes probably never imagined that the place he built in the late 1800s would become the premier island resort and restaurant that it is today. The Thistle Lodge Beachfront Restaurant at Casa Ybel Resort still boasts spectacular views of the beach, serving the very finest cuisine in a casually elegant heirloom setting. You too will be whisked away to an enjoyable evening of fine wine, succulent seafood, premium-aged beef and just desserts. Open daily for lunch and dinner. Also serving Classic Sunday Brunch.

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# Shell Craft: Rudolph Reindeer

by Anne Joffe, She Sells Sea Shells

This is a fun craft for kids of all ages to make for holiday gifts or home decorations.

## Materials

Albican shell (approx. 2 inches, with some brown in it)

2-Sliced Bursa shells (approx. 2 inches)

Green metallic holly gold beads (5mm)

Thin red pekoe ribbon

Metallic red pom pom (half-inch)

Eyes (12mm)

24K gold spray paint

Glue gun

## Directions

Spray front of Bursa shells with gold paint. Let dry.

Spray back of Bursa. Let dry.

Place the Albican shell in front of you with the rounded edge as the bottom, and the wing as the top.

Glue a sliced Bursa shell to each top side wing of Albican shell. These should be positioned with the points facing up and angled like the hands on a clock (10 a.m. and 2 p.m.). Re-glue around the base and the top of wings.

Take 3 metallic holly leaves, glue them to the base of the left ear and spread the tops of the holly like a fan. Pick out 3 gold beads for the holly berries. Glue two at the base of the left ear, on top of the base of the holly. Place one gold bead centered on top of these two others, like a triangle.

Glue red pom pom nose 1-inch up from bottom of



Rudolph Reindeer

photo by Anne Joffe

Albican shell, centered.

Cut a 5-inch piece of the red pekoe ribbon for the hanger and glue ends together on the back of the Albican shell, at top center. Add a dab of glue to the front center and secure hanger at this point to balance.

Visit [www.SheSellsSeaShellsSanibel.com](http://www.SheSellsSeaShellsSanibel.com).✱



*Sailor's Valentine Studio*  
by Sandy Moran



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# Sanibel Shelling Regulations



Sheller at sunrise

photo by Joyce Matthys

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 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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# Treasures Galore 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 83rd 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 throughout the festival.

The Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club sponsors the Sanibel



Judy Dinnick of Canada won a second place ribbon last year for her *Sailor's Valentine*

photos by Lorin Arundel



Dr. Rick Batt of Cape Coral, Florida won the award for Best Single South Pacific Shell in 2019 for his Australian Trumpet

Shell Show inside The Community House during the festival. 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



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Debi and Barry McBroom from Sebring, Florida won a blue ribbon in 2019 for their exhibit in the Scientific Division titled *'Twas the storm before Christmas...*

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 and to support marine scholarships at both University of South Florida and Florida Gulf Coast University.✧



Shanti Moore of Pompano Beach, Florida won the Ann Arnett Memorial Award for Best Shell Flower Exhibit last year for her arrangement titled *Wedding Centerpiece*

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Shell artist Susan Lloyd sits among some of the pieces she plans to show at this year's Shell Festival

photo by Kathy Kurtz Ferrari

## Susan Lloyd Takes Shell Art In Unique Directions

by Kathy Kurtz Ferrari

Shell artist Susan Lloyd looks at shell projects a little differently than most. To use the word "unusual" to describe her shell-encrusted creations seems too limiting. Her work is like the old saying, "You really need to see it to believe it."

Luckily, Lloyd and her award-winning creativity will be at the Sanibel Shell Festival for the 14th year in a row, with a coveted spot inside The Community House.

Lloyd has been creative nearly all her life, from knitting, to making jewelry, to gardening. A graduate of the prestigious Rhode Island School of Design, she has degrees in several art fields including jewelry and metalsmithing, "those really handy degrees," Lloyd jokes.

Growing up on the beaches of Connecticut, Lloyd enjoyed finding sea glass. She used those little treasures for art projects, like adorning birdhouses to make attractive garden ornaments.

Vacationing for many years on Captiva and Sanibel with her family, she discovered a love of shells, and transitioned to using them for her artwork.

"This is the one. This has rung true for me," she says of shellwork with enthusiasm, admitting she is now hooked on shells.

She brought a shell-encrusted birdhouse to the Shell Festival in 2005, where she won her first award. It was the first of many she would win over the years here.

While passionate for working with these ocean gems,

continued on page 50





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From page 48

## Susan Lloyd

she won't be found doing the "Sanibel Stoop."

"I'm not a collector. I don't travel the world looking for shells, because then I wouldn't have time to work. I buy them, mostly," she says, adding she finds exotic samples in rare colors and shapes from various dealers and on eBay.

"None of these you find on the beach," says Lloyd, pointing to a delicate angel wing specimen adorning a box she decorated. "There's so many different shells. I like the textures and the colors, and the combinations, and shiny versus rough, and just the crazy color combinations."

No longer making birdhouses, her work now runs the gamut between gorgeous, traditional items like boxes, mirrors and mosaics featuring unusual and colorful shells, to boxed figurines that some may call odd, and maybe even a little scary.

"The first weird thing I did that scared the heck out of everybody was skulls," she says, describing her surprising work of covering lifesize plastic skulls with shells of all sizes and colors. As perhaps morbid-sounding as it may be, the shell covered skulls take on an almost glamorous look. She even made one skull into a lamp, where the eye sockets glowed eerily, although it would certainly not offer much comfort as a nightlight in a child's room.

"Every time I made one, I could sell it," she says. And she does plan on bringing one to this year's show.

Other similar shell-adorned works over her career



An antique porcelain doll head sits inside a shell encrusted box designed by Susan Lloyd

photos provided

include a skeleton which stood about 30 inches tall, and the skull of an alligator, complete with original teeth. Those unusual figures morphed into the creation of small coffins measuring about a foot long, with little skeletons peeking out. Regarded in the right frame of mind, they are at once funny, intriguing, but still a little freaky.

On almost an opposite extreme, the artist's work now features small religious statues, such as various patron saints or Mary, inside shell-covered, old wooden clock boxes Lloyd finds online or in antique shops.

Some of the saint figures are quite unusual. For example, one piece features Saint Lucia, who holds her eyes on a

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tray after they were poked out.

"I'm not religious at all. I'm not Catholic. But I really love the stories of saints," Lloyd explains of the work. "I've yet to have somebody religious be offended. It's the skulls that bother people."

Lloyd also has placed antique porcelain dolls' heads inside shell-covered boxes. One box had the head on a swivel, which could definitely win an award in the "Creepy" category if there was one.

While yes, a little odd, each piece is in its own way beautiful, involving what must be hundreds of hours and hundreds of tiny, colorful shells perfectly placed to create intricate patterns to surround the item inside. Lloyd even covers the backs of the boxes.

"I enjoy making these. It's part of what I do now," she says, noting that she continues to make more marketable pieces like boxes and mirrors. "The other part is to keep myself amused, and also, not so much to scare people, but make them sit up and take notice."

Looking at her work, one would wonder how many hours go in to a project. "I never keep track," she says, adding she doesn't do these so much for making a profit, but for the love of the art. And she enjoys sharing her knowledge with other shell enthusiasts, and talking with customers who are attracted to her work.

"When you're at the shell show and somebody walks up that you recognize and they have some (of my work) at home, that's a treat," says Lloyd. Sometimes, people will ask her for advice, such as what kind of glue she uses,



Art by Susan Lloyd includes shell covered skulls



A child's bust covered in shell work designed by Susan Lloyd

which is Beacon 527. "It smells terrible but it works well for me. And mistakes can be lifted off with nail polish remover," she says.

"There's some people who will protect (the trade), but what's the point. The more people making it, especially younger people coming up, the longer it will last as an art form," Lloyd stresses.

In this year's show, Lloyd will have four pieces entered in artistic competition, including a mirror, a mosaic, a lamp and a coffin in the novelty category. Her table will also have some traditional pieces, like paper weights featuring shells suspended in clear acrylic, which retail for under \$50.

"In the end, I just like gluing shells on things," she says.✱

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Exterior view of the newly-renovated Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum

photos courtesy Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum

## Shell Museum's Stunning Expansion Features Live Animals That Create Our Beloved Shells

The Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum will unveil a major expansion this spring, adding living animal aquariums to its world-renowned shell collection here in the shelling capital of the world.

The new experience, *Beyond Shells: The Mysterious World of Mollusks*, sharpens the focus on mollusks, the live animals that create the stunning shells prized by beachgoers and collectors alike, telling the remarkable story behind the museum's displays of rare and record-breaking shells from around the world.

"Sanibel's remarkable beaches are actually the second-best places to find stunning shells," said Dorrie Hipschman, the museum's executive director. "Visitors should stop by the museum, too, because once they see these exhibits, they'll never again look at the beach the same way."

Many people associate Sanibel with its wonderful shells, but few know about the animals, more than 400 species found on Sanibel's beaches alone, that create them. Mollusks are one of the ocean's most abundant species, serving as a critical food source for marine animals and humans. They play a role in nearly all of the world's natural environments, from cold mountain springs to rainforests and the deepest ocean trenches.

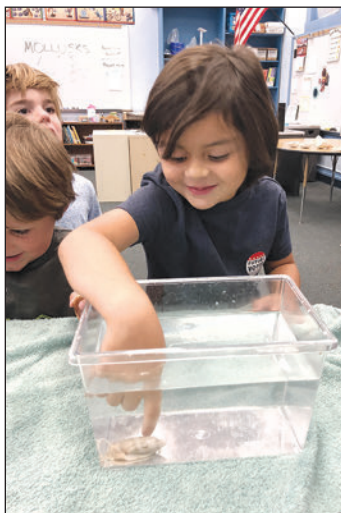
The new gallery of 11 aquariums and two 15-foot-long touch tank experiences, in addition to its world-renowned shell collection, will transform visitors' experiences by

connecting them to these little-known live animals that create stunning shells. Interactive interpretive exhibits will reveal fascinating hidden worlds behind these species. For instance, a 15-foot-wide giant Pacific octopus is a mollusk, too, related to scallops, oysters, snails and slugs – it's just seen its shell disappear over millions of years of evolution.

Aquarium exhibits range in size from 100 to 900 gallons and their residents include gastropods, octopuses, nudibranchs, giant clams and nautilus. Touch tanks let young visitors get their hands wet as they explore the world of mollusks. Visitors can step into a mollusk's world through a pop-up bubble exhibit that invites guests to experience a 360-look at invertebrates and fish. All animals were sustainably sourced or aquarium-bred to avoid contributing to declining natural populations.

Visitors will learn more about the important role these animals play in our ecosystem, and the urgency needed to protect them. Rising ocean temperatures, habitat loss and overharvesting are causing these shell-builders to go extinct faster than scientists can name and describe them. Mollusks are so widespread that as they decline, so too will other iconic marine species, such as whales and dolphins. The new experience furthers the museum's educational efforts that already reach thousands of schoolchildren each year. To connect her community to the natural world and spark a desire to conserve it, the museum's education coordinator, Leigh Gay, works with students and teachers at The Sanibel School to develop lesson plans and provide programs centered around these small animals that not only create Sanibel's well-known shells, but support an entire ocean ecosystem. At the beginning of each school year, through feedback forms, and environmental





Children get to see and feel the mollusks



Students learn about the importance of mollusks



Students learn about mollusks as part of the Mollusks on the Move program

education meetings, Gay works with teachers to develop lesson plans that align with Next Generation Sunshine State Standards for each grade level.

An educator or volunteer reads *What Lives in a Shell?* by Kathleen Weidner Zoehfeld to kindergarten students. Then, students participate in "Shell and Tell," holding large shells and describing their texture and color. First grade students take part in shell identification and exploration activities. Second-graders watch a puppet show called *The Life Cycle of Lightning Whelks*. In third grade, students learn the difference between two types of mollusks (gastropods

and bivalves) and sort shells into the two categories based on their physical characteristics using a shell guide. Fourth-graders become part of a food web, showing how mollusks are an integral component to Southwest Florida ecosystems. Fifth grade students get to be malacologists-in-training, learning to observe mollusks, illustrate their anatomy and infer functions of different body parts.

After the hands-on activities in each grade level, every student gets the opportunity to touch live mollusks! Some

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Students identify shells and learn about the animals that created them through the Mollusks on the Move program

From page 53

## Museum Expansion

are enthusiastic about these slimy creatures, and others need reassurance and guidance. Mollusks on the Move, the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum's mobile outreach program that brings live mollusks to classrooms throughout Lee and Collier counties, creates a safe learning space, where questions are always encouraged, and experiences are always new. In 2019, museum educators



A Museum Shell Ambassador guides visitors on a beach walk to explore shells, mollusks and other marine life that wash ashore  
drove the rocket snail van 5,800 miles and reached more than 9,000 students!

Gay continues to reach out to new teachers and schools to join the program. She and her team of educators and volunteers seek to expand the program to include more middle and high school classes to instill a love of the natural world and the mollusks that inhabit it at all age levels.

As the only museum in the United States devoted solely to shells and the animals that create them, no other



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**Museum Shell Ambassador Joyce Matthys talks about shells found during a beach walk**

organization is better prepared to lead this knowledge transformation. The museum is home to a world-renowned malacologist, highly trained marine biologists and a passionate staff that will lead visitors and program participants toward a wealth of knowledge about the scientific, cultural and historical importance of mollusks. Since opening in 1995, the museum has welcomed more than one million visitors. As it prepares to celebrate its 25th year, the museum is unveiling a refreshed visitor experience, too. After closing last spring for renovations, the museum reopened in December with a redesigned



**Museum Shell Ambassador Paul Gulbrandsen shares his knowledge of shells and mollusks**

entrance that features two-story glass walls, a renovated second floor to provide additional exhibit space and a remodeled staircase to transport visitors into a bright and modern new space.

These features not only benefit the museum, but their partnerships with local organizations, too. The Clinic for the Rehabilitation of Wildlife (CROW) collaborates with the museum to provide veterinary services to the museum when needed, while CROW's interns get the rare opportunity to learn firsthand about invertebrates. One of

continued on page 56

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Museum staff, from left, Executive Director Dorrie Hipschman, Environmental Educators Jorden Falker, Melissa Dills and Toni Gynac, Education Coordinator Leigh Gay, and Aquarium Curator Rebecca Mensch prepare to welcome visitors to the new experience this spring

From page 55

## Museum Expansion

the largest impacts of this partnership is that during hurricanes, the museum's new storm-resistant walls and rebar-enforced floors can provide refuge for CROW's animals, eliminating the need to schedule difficult and costly off-island moves.

Revenue generated from museum admission will support Mollusks on the Move and these crucial partnerships, instilling a love of the natural world and the mollusks that inhabit it at all age levels. The Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum is ready to take visitors beyond captivating shells to the living animals that create

them, inspiring environmental stewardship and protection for the largest group of animals that support our oceans' health. After two hours in the museum, visitors will be prepared to change the world.

The museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is \$23.95 for adults (ages 18 and older), \$21.95 for seniors, \$14.95 for youth (ages 12 to 17) and students with their ID, \$8.95 for children (ages 5 to 11) and free to children under age 5 and active military. Visitors who bike to the museum receive \$1 off admission.

For more information, visit the museum's website at [www.shellmuseum.org](http://www.shellmuseum.org) or call the museum at 239-395-2233. Daily beach walks are always available and can be reserved by calling the museum.✧

# SHELLING EXERCISES



**SANIBEL STOOP**



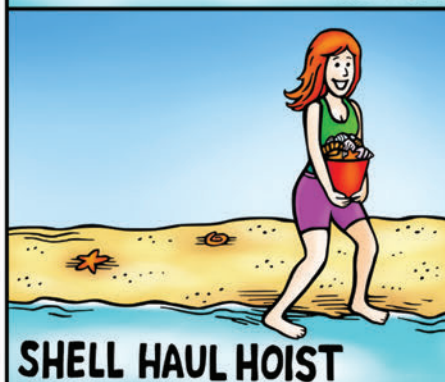
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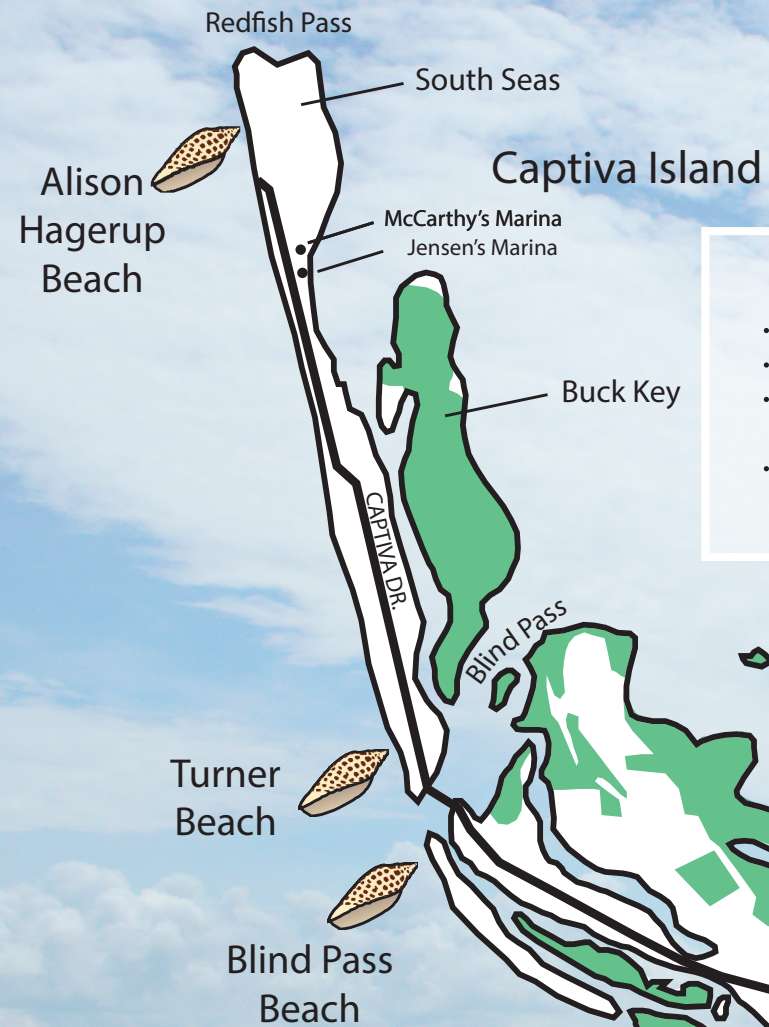
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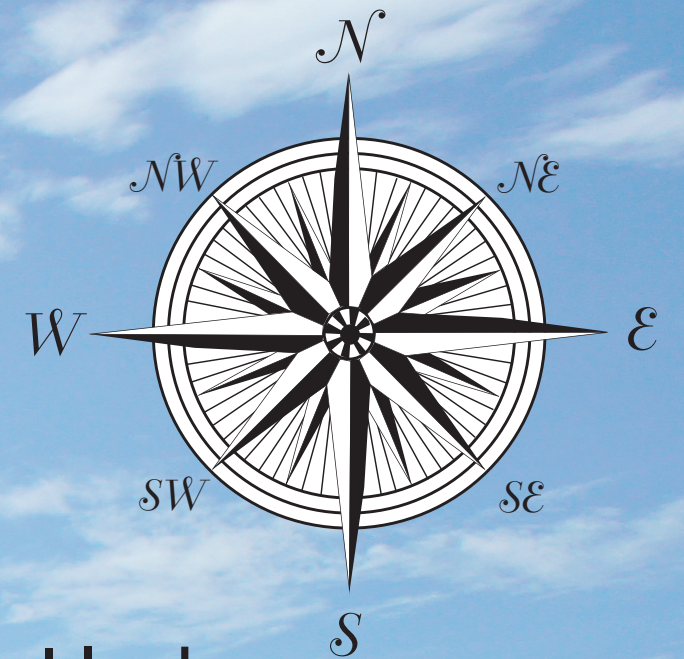
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### Shelling Tips & Essentials

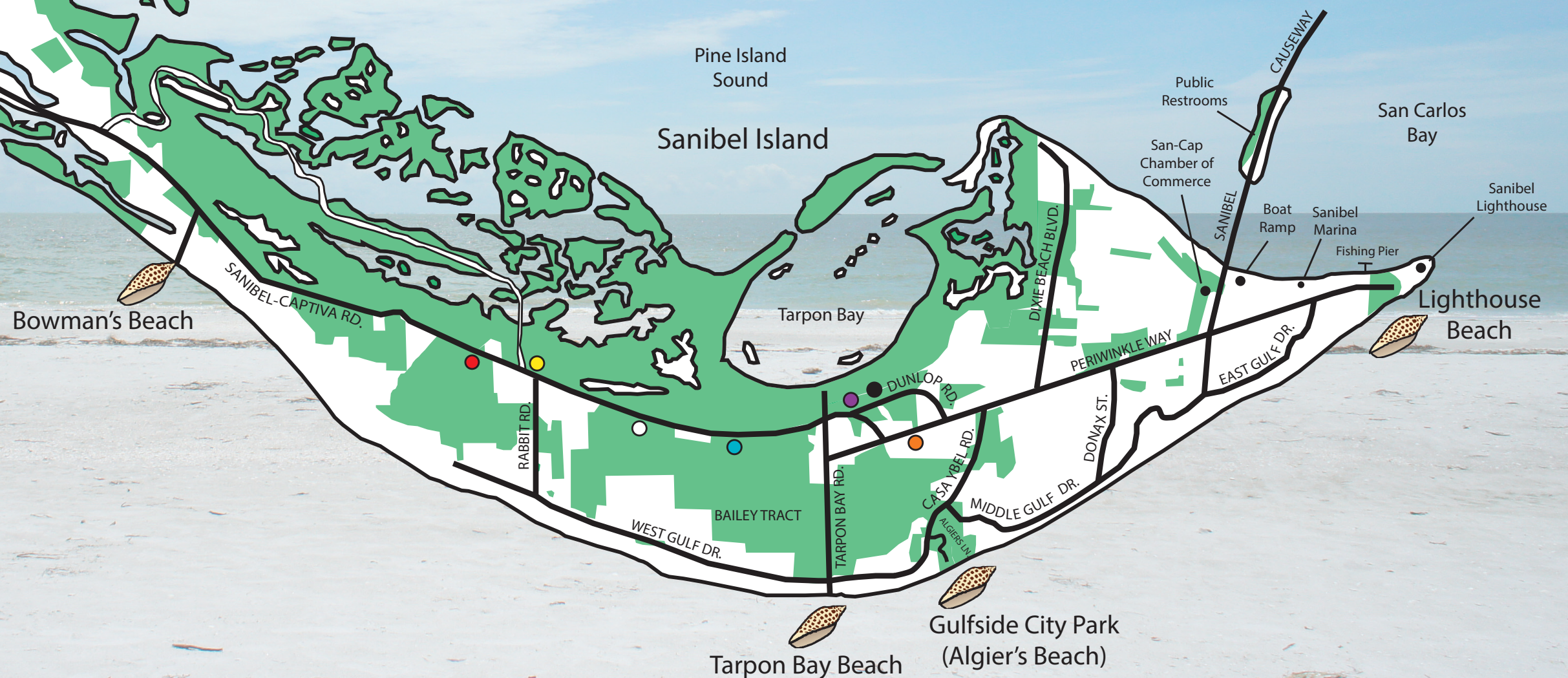
- Bucket, net bag and scoop
- Sunscreen, sunglasses and hat
- Best time to go shelling is after a storm, at low tide and in the morning just before dawn
- Do not collect live shells; It is illegal. If found, place shell gently back in the water



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- 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





# 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.*



## Sanibel Shells Group To The Rescue For Iowa Boy



Colin Abbott with the shell he found on Sanibel  
photos provided



A member of the Sanibel Shells group sent Colin the "twin" of his broken shell

by Jeff Lysiak

Like most youngsters who visit Sanibel, 12-year-old Colin Abbott spent much of his summer 2019 vacation searching for shells. But not just on the beach because, as the Bettendorf, Iowa resident and his family soon discovered, pretty shells can be found everywhere on the island.

According to Colin's mother, Amber Keckler, the family had stopped at a gas station during their stay when she noticed something unusual – a shell painted with a glittery green cartoon fish within a light blue background. She picked it up and handed it to Colin, who happens to be blind and autistic. Her son began feeling the surface of the shell, stroking his fingers across his new prized possession.

"Colin was so excited, he clapped his hands and laughed and jumped up and down," his mother recalled.

One of the reasons Colin was thrilled to have this special shell, in addition to being able to show it off to his classmates back home, was because it was part of the popular Sanibel Shells activity, started by two retired elementary school teachers – Ursula Purvis and Nina Brown – who created a Facebook page where people who find specially painted and ornately decorated shells can share their unique discoveries.

When Amber turned Colin's shell over, she discovered the message inside: "Post a pic on Facebook – Sanibel Shells – Keep or Rehide – Jayne." That same day, she posted three pictures of her son with his Sanibel Shell.

After returning home from vacation, Colin was excited to share his Florida find with his special education class and teacher.

"He proudly pulled it from deep within his pocket and handed it to every individual for them to 'see' it as he does, exclaiming its beauty and special qualities," Keckler said. "The glitter and smooth paint gave texture to the image he could freely interpret. Colin was born blind, his translation of beauty brings real meaning to 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder.' He was confident this was the most wondrous,



beautiful shell ever found.”

However, in his excitement to show off his Sanibel Shell, Colin accidentally dropped it on the tile floor of his classroom.

“It broke, and he was quite devastated,” said Keckler. “He went home without his beloved shell. The teacher (Deena Taylor) tried to glue it back together, he was so very grateful, but it took on a different texture from the cracks and glue.”

“I told (Keckler) of Colin’s infectious enthusiasm and how it took over the curriculum for the day,” said Taylor. “One student said the shell reminded them of the children’s story, The Rainbow Fish. Everyone agreed, so of course we listened to it and postponed the planned reading. Then, the group discussed the kindness shown in the story was so much like the kindness of the Sanibel Shell people who paint the treasures for others to find.”

Keckler posted a plea on the Sanibel Shells Facebook page, stating what had happened to Colin’s beloved shell, and asked if any of the members would be willing to share some new shells with her son. Within a few hours, dozens of willing shell painters requested an address where they could send Colin some artistically adorned shells.

One of the first few respondents – Sharon Welker – posted a picture of the “twin” to Colin’s original shell, adding the message, “Look what I just happen to have!” And the artist who created that shell, Jayne Witkie, also posted, “That is my green fish. PM me your address and a replacement will be on its way!”

Within days, boxes of painted shells began to arrive on Colin’s doorstep.

“The total is almost impossible to count! There are 11 boxes. Many have both painted and not,” said Taylor, who decided to turn her student’s personal story into an activity for his entire class to participate in. “We will be painting some and sending them back to the generous souls who have contributed. We are painting this week some river rocks from the Mississippi (River) and intend to hide both shells and rocks for others to enjoy.”

Among the folks from Sanibel who responded to Keckler’s plea was Ralph Quillen, whose daughters – Addison, 7, and Isabelle, 4 – wanted to pass along some of their much-beloved painted shells. Both girls said they enjoy finding and re-hiding decorated shells on the island.

“When dad read (Colin’s) story, we were sad,” said Isabelle, who noted that Sanibel Shells are “fun to find.”

Asked why she decided to send a boy she never met some new shells, Addison explained, “Because he broke his and they were special to him.”✱



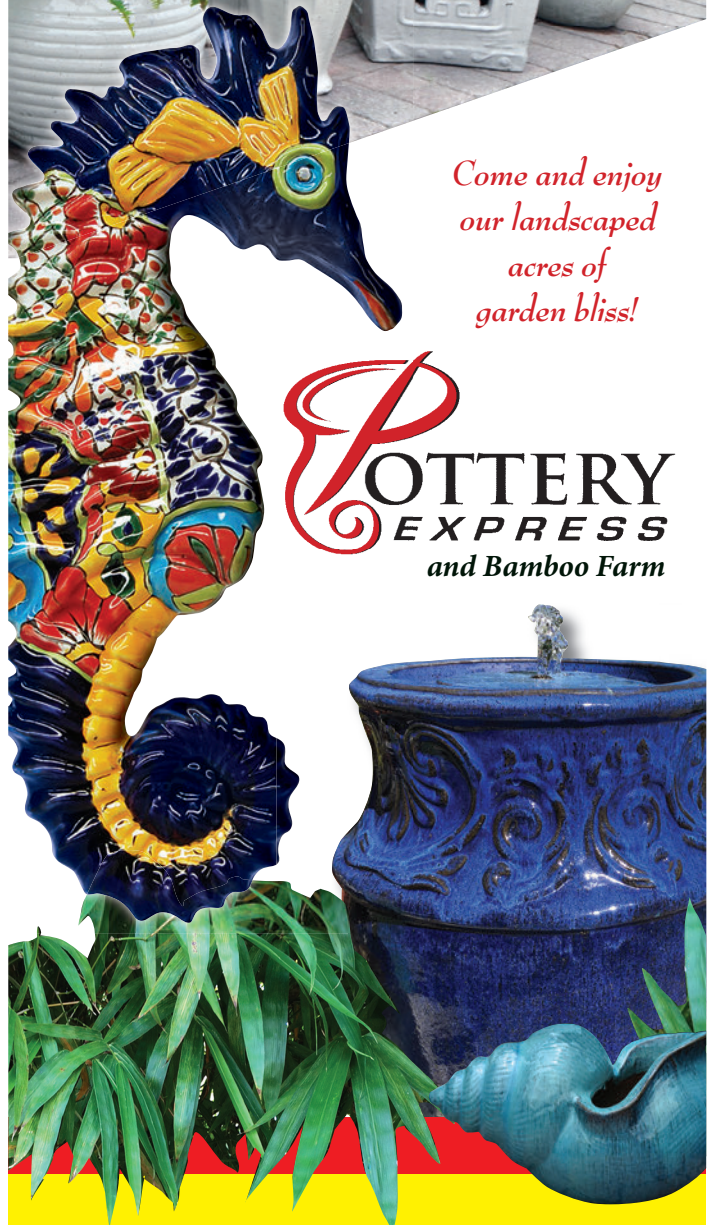
Colin Abbott painting a shell to be donated to the Sanibel Shells Facebook group



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## Shell Craft: Sliced Shell

by Anne Joffe,  
She Sells Sea Shells

With so many sliced shells out there now, it is easy to come up with a whole lot of different flowers. They are very easy, and really look nice in bouquets.

### Materials

18-sliced shells (long and thin)

1-Cat's Eye

Glue gun or tacky glue

Triple glaze

Directions

On your worksheet, add a quarter-size blob of glue, and begin to glue the first 9 sliced shells. Make sure they all go the same way. As the glue gets a bit dry and is still flexible, you can gently lift some of the shells so they are not all flat. Add more glue if needed, and alternating, glue in the next 9 shells. You can lift some of these as well. When dry, glue in the Cat's Eye to cover the center and the glue. Spray with the glaze.

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



**Sliced Shell** photo by Anne Joffe

## Sanibel Palms

by Marianne Pasqual

They start off slowly

Planted firmly

Ring by ring

Reaching into the ice blue sky

Kissed by a fireball peeking out from cotton  
clouds

Some are straight

Others crooked

But all stand tall

Swaying in the breeze never bending

Never breaking

Their trunk is thin but they never waiver

Hour by hour their emerald leaves crinkle

Blades like harp strings playing an island ditty

The tune may change but the palms stay the  
same

Slow dancing in the Sanibel Sun✱✱

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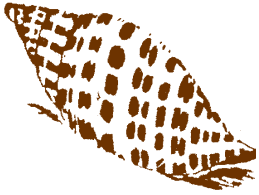
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