

85TH ANNUAL

Sanibel

SHELL FESTIVAL

Featuring the Longest Running Shell Show in the World

MARCH 3, 4 & 5, 2022

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

The Community House
2173 Periwinkle Way
Sanibel Island, FL



photo by Melanie Moraga

DO YOU KNOW YOUR BIRTHSHELL?

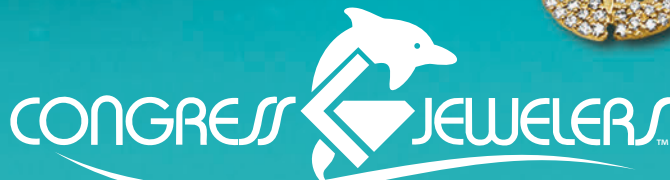
March: *The Olive Shell, Aquamarine*, The Olive shell is a spiral shell characterized by intense energy; those born to this shell are courageous, healthy and perceptive with a bright awareness and spiritual energy. As imaginative as they are compassionate, those born to the Olive are known as intuitive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



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85th Annual Sanibel Shell Festival

March 3, 4 and 5, 2022

Thursday, Friday and 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.
- 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 authors.
- Specimen Shell Booth.
- Professional artists on site with works for sale including Sailor's Valentines, floral arrangements and jewelry.

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.
- Raffle tickets for six grand prizes valued from \$500 to \$1,700.
- Kiwanis Kids Area – Craft and learning sessions.✱

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From left, Amanda, Olivia, Dominic and Nicolas Baker modeling the variety of styles and colors available photos provided

85th Anniversary T-shirts

The Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club has created 85th anniversary T-shirts for the 2022 Sanibel Shell Festival. Shell club member Dave Barnes created the designs that feature the sun rising on a Sanibel beach with some of the shells that can be found there.

The ladies V-neck shirts come in lavender, aqua and papaya. The unisex crewneck T-shirts come in gray. This year, children's shirts will be offered for sale at \$10 each. They come in two colors, red and blue. The adult shirts



First, second and third place ribbons won by the Baker family at the Sanibel Shell Show

are \$20 each or 2 for \$30. Proceeds from T-shirt sales, like other income from the Sanibel Shell Show, are given out in the form of grants for education and research in the fields of conchology and malacology, as well as for conservation and water quality projects, primarily in Southwest Florida.

Amanda Baker and her children accepted the club's invitation to model this year's T-shirts. All four of them will be competing in this year's Shell Show. Dominic and his mother competed in their first Sanibel Shell Show in 2018. In 2019, Nicolas and Olivia joined them. It has become a real "family affair" and their ribbons are a proof of their success. There are two Young Scientist classes in the Scientific Division and two Young Artist classes in the Artistic Division, grades K-6 and 7-12.✧



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Celebrating our 35th Anniversary*



Jon Nakamatsu, Piano

American Pianist and Gold Medalist at the Tenth Van Cliburn International Piano Competition.

March 5 - 7:30 pm



American Chamber Players Piano Trio plus Flute

Programmed by Miles Hoffman, Founder, Artistic Director, and longtime NPR Music Commentator.

March 8 - 7:30 pm



The Boston Trio

Widely acclaimed and hailed by the Boston Globe "Whenever this trio plays, drop everything and go hear them."

March 12 - 7:30 pm



The Juilliard String Quartet

Founded in 1946 and hailed by The Boston Globe as "the most important American quartet in history."

March 15 - 7:30 pm



Ken Broberg, Piano

Silver Medalist at the Fifteenth Van Cliburn International Piano Competition and winner of the 2021 American Pianists Award.

March 19 - 7:30 pm



Opera Theater of Connecticut Singing Andrew Lloyd Webber

Back by popular demand, featuring the powerful music of Jesus Christ Superstar, Cats, Evita, Phantom of the Opera, with commentary from opera and musical theatre cognoscente Alan Mann.

March 22 - 2:00 pm and 7:30 pm



Emerson String Quartet

This majestically awarded quartet has earned nine Grammys, two Best Classical Albums, three Gramophone Awards, the Avery Fisher Prize, induction into the Classical Music Hall of Fame and much more.

March 26 - 7:30 pm

*At Sanibel U.C.C. 2050 Periwinkle Way on Sanibel Island
Visit our website to buy tickets and review the discount packages.*

*Tickets at **www.sanibelmusicfestival.org**
or call 239-344-7025 or visit the box office ½ hour prior
to performances. See website for promotional discounts.*



Sanibel Music Festival is grateful for the support of
Lee County Tourist Development Council

Welcome to the 85th Annual

The Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club proudly welcomes you to the 85th Annual Sanibel Shell Festival, the longest running shell show in the world. 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. In the past, shell show ribbon winners came from as many as 60 different cities in 23 different states and from four 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!

Karen Silverstein

President, Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club

Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club Officers

President	Karen Silverstein
Vice President	Debi McBroom
Secretary	Kim Short
Treasurer	Linda Edinburg
Members At Large	Dotty Dion Elsie Malone Rabon Moore

2022 Sanibel Shell Show Committee Chairs

Shell Show Co-Chairs	Mary Burton & Joyce Matthys
Scientific Exhibit Chair	Diane Thomas
Artistic Exhibit Chair	Mary Burton
Art Exhibit Coordinator	Charles Barr
Authors' Table	Meg Born
Specimen Shells	Bruce Schulz
T-shirt Sales	Dotty Dion & Diana Wideman
Advertising & PR	Linda Friedrich
Data Entry	Linda Annesley
Hosts & Hostesses	Stacy & Linda Edinburg
Show Finances	Linda Edinburg
Sponsorships	Meg Born & Vicki Bowlus
Judges' & Awards Reception	Karen Turner

To enter the 86th Sanibel Shell Festival in 2023, log onto
<http://sanibelshellclub.com> after September 1, 2022
for exhibit rules and entry forms

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

Annual Dues

Single \$20 Family \$25

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To join online, go to the link below, complete the
online form and use PayPal to pay with a credit card,
or print the form to send your completed form and
check to the above address. [https://sanibelshellclub.com/
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The Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club is a 501(c)3 charitable organization

Sanibel Shell Festival

The Community House welcomes you to the 85th Annual Sanibel Shell Festival, a unique event that has no equal in the world of shelling. We hope you enjoy your visit to the longest running shell show in the world!

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 85th 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 \$325,276.27 – or by becoming a Community House volunteer. Please join us. Can you imagine life without our Community House?

Roger Grogman, Board President
Teresa Riska-Hall, Executive Director

Sanibel Community Association



The Community House

SANIBEL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Telephone 239-472-2155

Email info@sanibelcommunityhouse.net

2173 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel FL 33957

www.SanibelCommunityHouse.net

Sanibel Community Association
2022 Shell Festival Committee

Shell Festival Co-Chairs: Susan Schoenherr
Lynette Kelly
Raffle Committee: Sue Spohr
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

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Payment Method: Check, payable to SCA,
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or www.sanibelcommunityhouse.net/donate

Over Four Decades of Dedication

The Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club has been fortunate to have members who have continually supported the club for many years. A recent search through the club's oldest membership roster, one from 1981, revealed the names of two current members, Ruth Reetz and Anne Joffe. They have been in the club longer than any other members.

Reetz is an artist whose home is in Bloomington, Minnesota.

Although far from Sanibel's beaches, Sanibel shells have always played an important role in her art. Reetz began competing in the Artistic Division of the Sanibel Shell Show in 1982, the year after she joined the club. She has been competing ever since, winning many ribbons and awards. The jacket seen in the photo was entered in the 2020 Shell Show class for "Shell Related Needlecraft." That class is for all forms of sewing, quilting, knitting or needlepoint.

Joffe has been a Sanibel resident since 1973 and has been a member of the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club since then. There are very few people, if any, who have been more involved in shell-related activities than Joffe. She was elected president for the first time in 1976 and, over the years, served as president nine more times. She has been the Sanibel Shell Show chair 14 times and the scientific



Anne Joffe

photos provided



Ruth Reetz

division chair of the show four times. Joffe is a respected shell show judge in both the scientific and the artistic divisions, and has judged shell shows around the country. She is a past president of Conchologists of America and Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum. She is the author of three shell-related books and in her spare time has led shell collecting trips around the world. Joffe owns She Sells Sea Shells, now celebrating 47 years on Sanibel.

The Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club thanks both women for contributing to the success of the Sanibel Shell Show.✧

85th Annual Sanibel Shell Festival Magazine

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Sanibel Shell Festival RAFFLE

The Sanibel-Captiva Shell Crafters

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

Proceeds used to maintain The Community House

Drawing will be held on Saturday, March 5 at 3 p.m.

You need not be present to win

Festival Hours: March 3, 4 and 5 • 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.



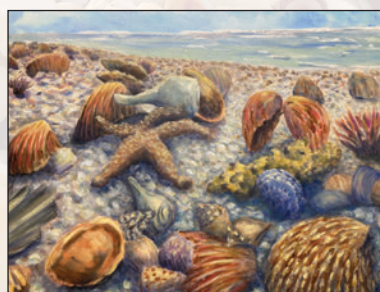
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Shell collecting field trips to Keewaydin Island mean going by boat
photos provided



Members learned about the large Calusa shell mounds on Pine Island during the field trip to the Randall Research Center

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 500 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. Members who live outside the general area can join the meetings via Zoom.

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 rental fees at The Community House for 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.

Field trips are planned throughout the season. These trips include shell collecting trips to remote areas in Southwest Florida, visiting research locations and museums and a fossil collecting trip.

Meet & Greet gatherings are planned periodically during the summer and fall to give members a chance to get together informally.

The Sanibel Shell Show is the club's largest fundraiser. It began 85 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 the top shell show in the United States and is the longest running shell show in the world.

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 profits raised by the Shell Club and shell show are given out in the form of grants to marine educational programs.

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

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

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



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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 2022 show.

Scientific Division

Student Exhibitor Grades K-6 Multiple or single shells

Student Exhibitor 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 – Self-collected

Worldwide – Any source

Educational (Intended primarily to teach) – Any Source

Land or Fresh Water Shells – Any Source

Unusual Variants (Albino, freak, etc.) – Any source

Fossils (Shells and/or other Sea Life) – Any source

Sea Life Other Than Shells (Coral, echinoderm, etc.)

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

Special (An exhibit that does not fit into any of the above classes)

Miniatures (Adult shells only, maximum size 1 inch

– Any source

First Time Scientific Exhibitor – Over 18 years old and never exhibited in any shell show

Environmental Awareness – Brings awareness to how mollusks are impacted by pollution, etc.

– Any source

Single Shell or Multiple Shell Classes

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)

Photography

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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Award winner

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

Capt. Tom Clifford Award

Best in Show – Professional

COMBINED HOBBYIST & PROFESSIONAL ARTISTIC CLASSES

Jeff Oths Memorial Award

Judge's Special Ribbons

Judge's 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

Environmental Awareness Award

Best Worldwide Shells, Any Source

Marilyn Northrop Award

Best Self-Collected Single Shell

Gene & Evelyn Spencer Memorial Award

Best South Pacific Shell, Any Source

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

Judge's Special Ribbons

Judge's 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

The Timbers Restaurant & Fish Market

Mary Burton

Coastal Watch Bags Available Again This Year

In 2020, Coastal Watch, part of the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation family, introduced a new environmental initiative – Bring Your Own Bag (BYOB) – and provided cloth bags for use during the Sanibel Shell Festival. These bags were designed to reduce the use of disposable bags on the islands while educating locals and visitors about the harm plastic bags cause to the environment. Again in 2022, these free reusable canvas bags will be given to shoppers at the shell show for their purchases.

Coast Watch partnered with Haitian company Deux Mains to have the bags made. 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 facility that is 100 percent solar powered.

For more information on the efforts of Coastal Watch, visit www.sancapcoastalwatch.org.



Reusable canvas bags designed by Coastal Watch and manufactured in Haiti will be available to shoppers at the shell show
photo provided

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SCIENTIFIC JUDGES

José H. Leal, PhD

Dr. José H. Leal is science director and curator at Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum, which he directed between 1996 and 2013. He received his PhD in marine biology and fisheries from University of Miami. His love for shells and sealife goes back to his childhood years in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

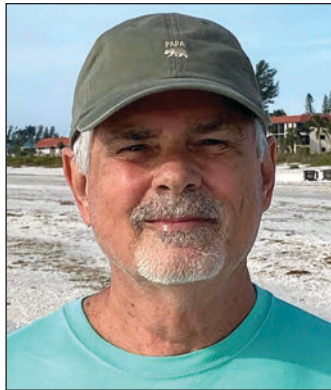
Dr. Leal was visiting professor at the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris and postdoctoral fellow at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History. He holds honorary faculty positions at University of Miami and Florida Gulf Coast University, where he is an affiliate member of Coastal Watershed Institute. He is past president of the American Malacological Society, current president of Conchologists of America, past board member of Florida Association of Museums, accreditation peer reviewer for American Alliance of Museums, and editor of *The Nautilus*. Under Dr. Leal's leadership, the shell museum was awarded its first accreditation from the American Alliance of Museums.✧



John Chesler

John Chesler is a native Floridian who began studying shells as a child during family vacations on Sanibel in the 1950s. He has served as president of the Broward Shell Club as well as other positions within the organization. His main study of focus is western Atlantic Mollusks and the Muricidae family. As a scuba diver, Chesler has been able to further his study of shells throughout the Caribbean.

Chesler has been judging shell shows for almost 20 years and this will be his third stint judging the Scientific Division of the Sanibel Shell Show.✧



ARTISTIC JUDGES

Shannon Webster

Shannon Webster grew up shelling Florida's east coast and began competing with her shell art in 2008. She has won many major awards and is passionate about creating intricate mosaic Sailor's Valentines and other forms of shell art. She is a qualified judge with a discerning eye for detail.

Prior to retirement, Webster owned a yacht charter business that allowed her to beach comb around the globe. She is a fifth-generation Florida pioneer whose great-great grandmother was a full-blooded Seminole Indian.✧



Marci Chamberlain

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

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

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

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



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World-Class Beachcombing With Sanibel Sea School



by Shannon Stainken, MA,
Youth Education Director

There's no better beach to comb than the shores of Sanibel. From bright orange Florida Fighting Conchs (*Strombus alatus*) to mysterious finds like gastropod egg cases, there is much to discover on these islands. While some treasures are easily identified, others are tricky for 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 eager to share interesting facts about the common shells found on the beach.

A favorite find during Discover Beachcombing walks are Lightning Whelk egg cases. Lightning Whelks are marine gastropods with a distinct lightning-bolt pattern. Females can reach almost 16 inches in length, rivaling our largest snail in the gulf – the Florida Horse Conch (*Triplofusus giganteus*). More unique than their size is the fact that they are "left-handed," meaning they spiral in a counterclockwise direction (sinistral coiling) with the



Sanibel Island is a sheller's dream

photos provided

opening (aperture) to the left.

At first glance, people often mistake their egg cases for snakeskin. Finding one provides a wonderful opportunity to talk about how an animal makes the spiraled shells we love to find and how they start their lives. After mating, female Lightning Whelks deposit their eggs in intricate casings, which can be up to three feet long. The egg casings have a yellowish tint and consist of a long chain of hundreds of oval-shaped capsules with rough edges. The ideal place to lay her eggs is in shallow water, often in or near seagrass beds. She anchors one end of the egg case strand to the ocean floor to prevent the casings from

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Marine science educators share interesting facts about commom shells during Discover Beachcombing walks

washing ashore. If you ever spot one while wading, do not pull it out of the ground! In the water, they're soft and almost gooey. In each capsule are teeny-tiny juvenile Lightning Whelks that are receiving nourishment while they develop until they're ready to hatch.

Of course, not all laid eggs will hatch; the casings detach and wash ashore. When we find casings on the beach, they're typically dried out and crunchy to the touch. However, this does provide a cool opportunity to collect tiny Lightning Whelk shells. Usually, you can shake the dried casings and find quite a few.

Sanibel is not only an excellent destination to discover



Lightning Whelk shell casings are always fun to find and often hold many tiny shells

a wondrous diversity of 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 the perfect opportunity to learn more about shells and local wildlife. It's offered weekly at Sanibel Sea School and in partnership with Sanibel Moorings Resort. A parent or guardian must accompany children. Register online at www.sanibelseaschool.org.

Sanibel Sea School is part of the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation family, which is dedicated to the conservation of coastal habitats and aquatic resources on Sanibel and Captiva and in the surrounding watershed.*



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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 over 3,000 or so 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 out in the form of grants for marine educational programs.

Shell Club members spent two days filling these



Volunteers hand select shells from a variety of 40 to 50 shell species

photos provided

little bags at Sanibel Congregational United Church of Christ.

Using shell donations from both members of the community and members of the shell club, the first chore is to sort all these shells by type and size. Then comes the labor of filling each bag with approximately one dozen shells, selected from a variety of 40 to 50 shell species, inserting a thank you note from the shell club and sealing the bags.

Thirteen 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 33,000 bags.

We hope you enjoy this year's 85th Annual Sanibel Shell Show and your little bag of shells.

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



One of the bags of local shells with a thank you note from the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club

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Exhibit At Shell Museum Spotlights Water Quality



Red macroalgae off the coast of Sanibel in 2006

photo by Andrew West, *The News-Press*

The exhibit *Red, Blue, Green: An Introduction to Water Quality in Southwest Florida* is on view through June 12 at Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum. Produced in partnership with Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation, and *The News-Press* and *Naples Daily News*, the works in the exhibit serve as a visual introduction to the dynamics of water quality in the region, from Lake Okeechobee to the Everglades to the Gulf of Mexico.

Through photographs, maps, timelines and other formats, the exhibit illustrates phenomena such as red tide and blue-green algae, the legacy of managing water flow in the region, and impacts of both good and poor water quality to ecosystems, wildlife and the economy. Many of the photographs featured were taken by award-winning photographer Andrew West, who has documented changes in Southwest Florida's ecosystems and related issues for over 20 years. The exhibit also spotlights work by local organizations dedicated to improving water quality and building awareness of these issues for Southwest Florida.

There is also a children's activity table with art projects related to the exhibition.

A conversation with the photographer, Andrew West, will be held on Wednesday, April 6 at 5:30 p.m. at the museum. The program, *Paradise Considered: Photographs of Nature and Change in Southwest Florida*, is open to the public. Cost is \$10; no charge for members. Register online at www.shellmuseum.org.

The exhibition is made possible by a gift from Joe and Jo Anne Orndorff. Additional support is from the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club.

Also on view at the museum this season is the exhibit *Blackwater Moments: Nocturnal Photography of Open-Ocean Mollusks*, which runs through May 30.

Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum is located at 3075 Sanibel-Captiva Road. It is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Permanent exhibitions include the Great Hall of Shells, Beyond Shells living gallery of aquariums and over 50 species of marine life. For more information, visit www.shellmuseum.org or call 239-395-2233.✧



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Artist's Work Reflects Love Of Seashells



by Kathy Kurtz Ferrari

It's fair to say there are many people attending the Sanibel Shell Festival who love shells.

But Fort Myers artist Ginny Dickinson literally has shells on her heart.

She has created what is probably the world's largest shell-covered heart, which she calls *In My Heart of Hearts*. It will be hard to miss as the

centerpiece of this year's Shell Festival.

"In my heart of hearts, I just love shells," Dickinson's artist's statement notes.

Being asked to create a piece for this year's show, she took that sentiment and drew up a design, contacting a fiberglass company in Tampa to make the heart form.

"I sent him a sketch of it, and I said, 'It's a puffed heart.' And the guy was like, 'A what?' So I said it's like a mylar balloon, like what you could buy at Publix. That's what I want," she explained as she took a break from working on the piece in January.

The heart, made of fiberglass covered steel, has a surface of about six feet tall and nearly as wide at the top. It is welded onto a metal post with an eye hook to allow



Artist Ginny Dickinson worked for months to create *In My Heart of Hearts*, the centerpiece artwork for this year's Shell Festival

photos by Kathy Kurtz Ferrari

portability, granted by heavy equipment. The heart was bolted on a jack to be able to move it up and down, side to side during the creative process. Dickinson often had to



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climb a ladder or sit on a wheeled dolly to do her work.

"I always start with fighting conchs," Dickinson said, as she pointed to a row of shells glued to the piece. Most of the countless number of shells are from Southwest Florida.

She worked on the project for months in her "shed," located at RV Boat Storage Works, a business she and her husband opened recently in Fort Myers.

Dickinson has a collection of not only shells in boxes, bins and bags, but many other materials from nature.

She has been collecting shells all her life, and she laughed when she opened a box and saw a note inside saying how many shells and where she found them.

"I call this money," she joked, as she grabbed a handful of colorful tiny shells and jingled them in her palm.

Work involved glueing not only large, attractive shells on the heart, but also minute ones that she must have placed with tweezers to fill gaps. At one point, she was getting a little nervous that she didn't have enough, so she



The artist found herself high on a ladder to glue shells in place

and her husband ate mussels from Publix. The blue shells added a nice touch.

"My goal is to leave no shell behind. I want to put every single one I own so I don't have to keep it in a box," the artist said. "This is like my personal jewelry box."

Once all the shells were in place, Dickinson completely covered the piece in shiny art resin, making sure to fill every nook and cranny.

Her collection has benefited from the generosity of others who have given her shells from all over the world. Unusual Pacific shells on the piece came from the Rex Bigford family, who lived near reefs when their father was in the military.

Dickinson's portfolio includes a shell-covered manatee mailbox she donated for the Manatee Madness fundraiser

continued on page 26



Ginny Dickinson spent part of the project sitting on a wheeled dolly to work around the bottom of the heart

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2022 Sanibel Shell Festival

Authors' Table Schedule



Karen T. Bartlett



Amanda Collett



Megan McCormick



Jane Kirschner



Jennifer Schiff



James Usavage



Harlan Wittkopf

THURSDAY March 3

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

Amanda Collett

Harlan Wittkopf

Jane Kirschner

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

Jennifer Schiff

Karen Bartlett

FRIDAY March 4

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

Megan McCormick

Jane Kirschner

James Usavage

12:30-4 p.m.

Amanda Collett

Harlan Wittkopf

SATURDAY March 5

9 a.m.-12 p.m.

James Usavage

Harlan Wittkopf

Megan McCormick

12-3 p.m.

Karen Barlett

Amanda Collett

photo by Harlan Wittkopf

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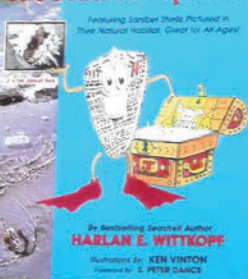
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of seashells and friendship



Harlan E. Wittkopf



Ginny Dickinson started her shell overlay with fighting conchs as seen here in the center of the heart photos by Kathy Kurtz Ferrari

From page 23

Love Of Seashells

for Community Housing and Resources last year. It was on display at Bailey's for several months. Dickinson's pieces have helped raise over \$60,000 for charities.

After seeing her manatee, Shell Festival organizers asked Dickinson if she would be interested in doing something for this show.

"We were thrilled to have her. She is such a great gal," said Mary Burton, Shell Festival co-chair and head of the artistic division. "We thought this would be a non-competitive thing that people would be excited to see.



Tiny colorful shells used for the heart are held in the palm of the artist's hand

We're excited to have her. But, of course, we'll be holding our breath until it's in place!"

For most of her 59 years, Dickinson had never really done anything artistically. She had been working in the corporate world, holding the position of chief financial officer of City Mattress.

"My 50th birthday is what triggered all this," she said. "It was hard. But I felt like when I turned 50 and I'd been sitting behind this desk working all these years for somebody else, I wanted to do 50 new things, and I did."

Dickinson felt her large shell collection really didn't have a purpose at the time.

"It was a burden. I kept looking at my garage at all these

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boxes and all these shells and thinking, 'What is the point of this? Just to collect?'"

Then she saw a call for artists to decorate 50 seahorse sculptures as a fundraiser to build Golisano Children's Hospital in Fort Myers.

"I told my husband I'm going to put all those shells on that thing and it'll be cute," she remembered.

Since then, despite never having taken any formal art training, the spigots opened on her untapped talent. She has gotten into photography and works with other materials besides shells.

After the Shell Festival closes, the heart will be on temporary display at the Sanibel & Captiva Islands Chamber of Commerce welcome center. Dickinson has no idea where it will ultimately end up.

"Ideally, if I could have my dream come true, it would be in a public space where people could go see it and touch it. It's highly tactile. And someplace close so I can go see



Tiny shells glued onto the heart create delicate patterns across the entire piece



Ginny Dickinson looks over her collection to choose the right shell for her creation

it," Dickinson said.

Her own heart will always be filled with shells.

"Every single one of those had a living animal in it," she said while looking at shells on the heart with awe. "When you think about the variety and the colors, you may not need to believe in my god, but you need to believe in some higher being, because how does that happen? That you can bend down and find something like that on this earth. Thank you!"✧

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A Brief History of Florida's Strawberry Industry

by John A. Wolff

When it comes to strawberry production, Florida is one of the largest strawberry producing states in the nation, coming a distant second behind California.



The Sunshine State's strawberry industry is only growing stronger and more successful each year.

According to the Florida Strawberry Growers Association, Florida lays claim to approximately 8,000 acres of strawberries and Plant City (located about 25 miles east of Tampa and 60 miles southwest of Orlando) is widely recognized as the Winter Strawberry Capital of the World because it grows more than three-quarters of the nation's winter strawberries. Many people are surprised to learn that the growing season for the Florida-grown fruit runs from about Thanksgiving to Easter, or the end of March, and March is typically the best month for Florida strawberries. That's when they're most affordable to consumers.

Thanks to its mild subtropical climate and fertile soil,



March is typically the best month for Florida strawberries

photo provided

Hillsborough County's Plant City is a perfect place for winter strawberries to thrive.

The fruit was introduced to the area in the late 1800s, and although it began as a simple garden crop grown by residents, it quickly became a hot commodity. Strawberry farmers started to multiply in the community and as shipping methods improved, so did the berries' condition at markets, which only enhanced their appeal. Plant City's reputation as the Winter Strawberry Capital of the World was solidified shortly thereafter.

As a result, it's easy to see why Plant City hosts the Florida Strawberry Festival each March. The festival was created in 1930 by members of the Plant City Lions Club to celebrate the community's bountiful strawberry harvest. It

continued on page 30

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From page 29

Strawberry Industry

took a six-year hiatus during and immediately following World War II, but it's been an annual event since 1948, and all signs point to it staying that way.

The nine-day celebration features live entertainment; livestock shows, sales and contests; parades; and, of course, plenty of strawberry-related events and exhibits like the Florida Strawberry Growers Association's strawberry production display and "Ask A Farmer" booth. Plus, the festival offers ample opportunities to sample and savor the celebrated fruit with fresh strawberries, strawberry shortcake, strawberry milkshakes, chocolate-dipped strawberries, strawberry jam, strawberry lemonade and many other treats readily available. For more information on the festival coming up the first week of March (3 to 11), visit www.flstrawberryfestival.com.

And here is a recipe that might make you want to get some of our fresh Florida strawberries and put them to good use:

Strawberry Pretzel Tart

Crust:

2 cups crushed pretzels

1 ½ sticks (¾ cup) melted butter

¼ cup sugar

Preheat oven to 350°F. Combine and press firmly into a 10-inch tart pan (I use a heavy glass with a flat bottom to press it down well). Bake for 10 minutes and allow the

crust to cool completely.

Cream Cheese Filling:

8 ounces softened cream cheese

¾ cup sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla

1 ½ cups whipped cream

Beat the cream cheese and sugar until smooth. Add vanilla. Fold in the whipped cream and spread into completely cooled crust.

Strawberry Topping:

½ cup sugar

½ cup water

1 tablespoon corn starch

1 ½ tablespoons strawberry jello mix (or 4 teaspoons pure gelatin and ½ teaspoon of pure organic strawberry extract)

1 pint fresh strawberries (stemmed and halved)

Combine the sugar, water and corn starch and bring to a full, rolling boil on the stove. Boil for two minutes, whisking constantly. Remove from heat. Add the jello and whisk until combined. Allow to cool slightly. Arrange the berries on top of the cream cheese layer and then drizzle the mixture over the berries, trying to cover each berry. Refrigerate at least a few hours or until the jello layer is firm.

John A. Wolff is the resident chef of the Culinary Education Center of Sanibel at The Community House. He enjoys sharing culinary knowledge with future chefs of all ages. Contact him at kitchen@sanibelcommunityhouse.net or call 239-472-2155.✴

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Inaugural FISH Vice President

FISH begins full-fledged service to Islanders

By David Meardon

FISH, Friends in Service Here, is charting a path on the Islands as an organization dedicated to helping people.

In its first week of full fledged operation, FISH volunteers, ready to help 24 hours a day, provided such services as transportation for a caller's weekly therapy session at Shell Point Village and aid in solving a simple household crisis (a rodent problem).

"We have had a great variety of calls," said FISH president Marilyn Bradley, who stressed that FISH is prepared to respond to the needs of the community.

Some of the services the more than 40 volunteers provide include companionship and help for the sick or disabled; aid in household tasks; and transportation for shopping excursions. FISH volunteers lend an ear or a hand to those in need. The service is strictly confidential, Bradley stressed.

"We can do lots of things. The organization is really in good shape. We are more than happy to give help at no cost

whatsoever," she said.

Bradley said the organization will relieve the police of calls for police at the scene and require response.

Since its organization, more than 40 people of all ages have volunteered.

A five-week training program will be the first general meeting of the organization.

meeting and get-together. "We are your friends and neighbors," FISH vice-president Emily Bradley said.

calling FISH, you're just getting into a work of friendly neighbors. FISH volunteers are distributing letters, throughout the Islands, their service. Donations are appreciated.

For more information, call a friendly neighbor, call at 472-0404, or write to FISH, P.O. Box 33957, Sanibel, FL 33957.

article from
The ISLANDER

Tuesday,
April 6, 1982

"We are thrilled to celebrate 40 years of fulfilling the promise made so many years ago. Here's to 40 more!"

—Maggi Feiner
FISH President & CEO

MISSION

FISH of SanCap enriches the lives of all people in Sanibel and Captiva Islands by neighbors helping neighbors with food programs, island based education, social & senior services, and helping hands & financial assistance.

It began as simple acts of kindness over 40 years ago, in the kitchens and out of cars of island neighbors.

Today, FISH is the comprehensive social service organization on Sanibel and Captiva. As we've grown with the years, our look has changed, our scope of assistance has evolved and our impact has broadened. But our mission is as clear as it was when we began.

the first
FISH logo



2430-B Periwinkle Way, Sanibel FL 33957
239.472.4775 • fishofsancap.org



40 year timeline

- 1982** — March/April First full week of operations; Ready to help 24-7; original phone number is still in use
- 1983** — First annual meeting at Gulf Pines
- 1984** — Hurricane Committee Established
- 1986** — First Friendly Faces Event
- 1987** — Volunteers jump to action before Hurricane Floyd
- 1988** — "Person-to-Person" calls established
- 1992** — FISH celebrates 10 years of service
- 1999** — New FISH President, Norman Bowles steps in after 12 years of volunteer work
- 2003** — adopted motto of "Neighbors helping Neighbors"
- 2007** — New logo reflecting community focus; opened first Walk-in Center
- 2008** — Food Pantry opened & Walk-in Center relocated
- 2009** — FISH becomes a United Way Partner
- 2011** — Backpack Program established
- 2012** — "30 Rocks!" FISH 30th Anniversary Celebration
- 2015** — New Walk-In Center opens & FISH has a "Home of its Own"
- 2017** — FISH assists record numbers following Hurricane Irma
- 2020** — New logo and Mission Statement



The Atlantic Fig Snail



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

The Atlantic Fig Snail, *Ficus papyratia* (Say, 1822), has a thin shell that is shaped like a slender fig. The shell opening, or aperture, tapers gently toward the end of the anterior canal. The snail is cream colored with dark and whitish spots. There is no operculum.

When the snail is out of the shell, its mantle almost completely covers the shell; the siphon can be seen on the left in the photo of the living animal. The continual, repeated expansion and withdrawal of the mantle over the shell works to keep it free of algae and animal encrustations. Fig snails are carnivorous. Some of the species in the genus *Ficus* perform autotomization, being capable of, when under stress, releasing parts of the mantle to confuse predators. After that happens, they are able to quickly regrow the missing part.

Fig snails have separate sexes. Their flattened, milky-white, translucent egg capsules have fluted, wavy edges and are a little less than an inch in diameter. They are laid in succession, stacked on top of each other, and are attached to a rock or other hard structure.

The detail photo shows one single egg capsule containing about a dozen individuals already at the early larval stage. (To boot, egg capsules of the Mauve-mouth Drill, *Calotrophon ostrearium*, with pink-red larvae inside, are visible on the surface of that Atlantic Fig Snail egg capsule.)

Read more about local mollusks and their shells at <https://www.shellmuseum.org/shell-guide> and <https://www.shellmuseum.org/blog>.

Dr. José H. Leal received his PhD in marine biology and fisheries from University of Miami and has served at Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum since 1996. Under his leadership, the museum was awarded its first accreditation from the American Alliance of Museums in 2010.✧



Atlantic Fig Snail eggs are laid in succession and stacked on top of each other. They are a little less than an inch in diameter.

photo by José H. Leal



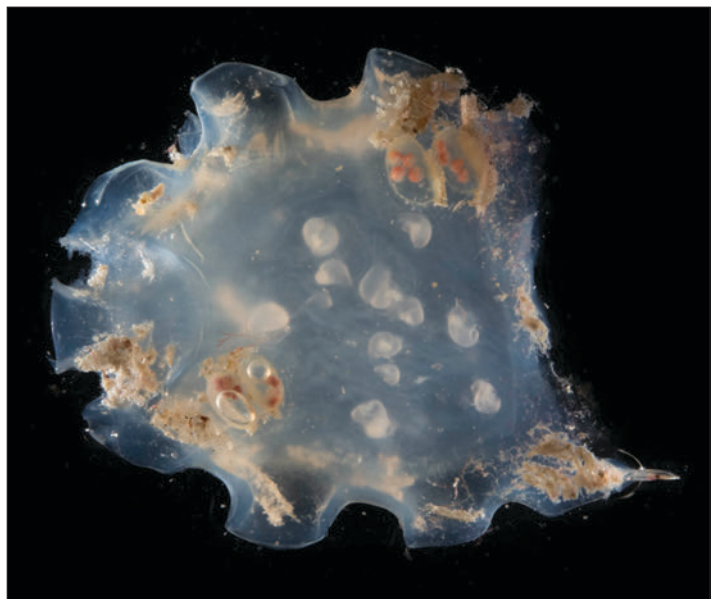
Atlantic Fig Snail, *Ficus papyratia*

photo by José H. Leal



A living Atlantic Fig Snail. Note the siphon on the left.

photo by Amy Tripp



Detail of a single egg capsule containing about a dozen individuals at early larval stage. Note the egg capsules of the Mauve-mouth Drill on top of the Fig Snail capsules.

photo by José H. Leal

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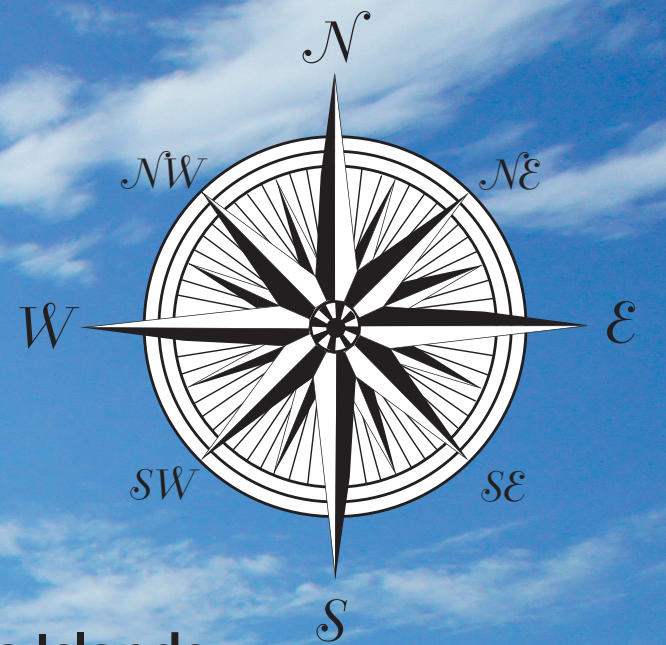
Captiva Island

McCarthy's Marina

Jensen's Marina

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.



Sanibel and Captiva Islands offer over 17 miles of beach.
The Best Shelling in the World.

Turner Beach

Blind Pass Beach

LEGEND

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

Bowman's Beach

Sanibel Island

Pine Island Sound

Tarpon Bay

Public Restrooms

San-Cap Chamber of Commerce

San Carlos Bay

Boat Ramp

Sanibel Marina

Fishing Pier

Sanibel Lighthouse

Lighthouse Beach

WEST GULF DR.

Tarpon Bay Beach

Gulfside City Park (Algier's Beach)

EAST GULF DR.

PERIWINKLE WAY

DUNLOP RD.

CASA YBEL RD.

ALGIER ST.

MIDDLE GULF DR.

TARPON BAY RD.

WEST GULF DR.

Tarpon Bay Beach

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Tarpon Bay Beach



Cayenne
keyhole
limpet



Chestnut
turban



Tampa top
snail



Colorful moon
snail



Shark eye



Coffee bean
trivia



Florida fighting
conch



White slipper
snail



White baby ear



Spotted slipper
snail



One-tooth
simnia



Scotch
bonnet



Lettered
olive



Horse
conch



Fargo
worm snail



Florida
worm snail



Nutmeg



Banded
tulip



lightning
whelk



Crown
conch



Pear whelk



Rough pen shell



saw-tooth pen shell



ponderous ark



Lightning whelk
egg cases



Turkey wing



sunray venus



Pointed venus



American carrier snail



West Indian
false cerith



Flyspeck
cerith



Dark
cerith



Costate
horn snail



Ladder
horn snail



Atlantic
slipper snail



Atlantic
fig snail



Humphrey
wentletrap



Angulate
wentletrap



Brown-band
wentletrap



Boring
turret snail



Apple murex



Pitted
murex



Rose
murex



Gulf oyster
drill



Tampa
drill



True
tulip



Lace murex



Sharp-rib
drill



Tinted
cantharus



Ribbed
cantharus



Calico
scallop



Alphabet cone



Broad-ribbed
carditid



Purplish
semele



Junonia



Bay
scallop



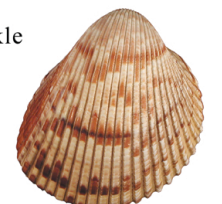
Rose petal
tellin



Florida
prickly
cockle



Painted
egg cockle



Atlantic giant
cockle



Lightning pitar



Alternate
tellin



Buttercup lucine



Fall in love with the journey.

There are so many unique, beautiful shells on our beaches, choosing the best can be overwhelming. The same is true when it comes to booking your vacation accommodations. Royal Shell makes that decision easy. We'll help you experience this paradise in the privacy and luxury of a vacation home. We'll provide five-star guest services while you enjoy your favorite beaches, restaurants, shops and fun destinations. Enjoy the festival and stop by to see us! [#RoyalShellStyle](#)



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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 profits from the Sanibel Shell Show. Last year, these grants totaled \$31,000. In addition to the grants, the club has supported graduate students in the University of Southwest Florida (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.

In December of 2021, the shell club donated a total of \$31,000 to local organizations and universities from the proceeds of the 2019 Shell Show and 2020 Virtual Shell Show. Below are the recipients, the amount awarded and a brief description of the funded projects.

Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum: \$5,000 to support the Adopt-a-Class program and \$2,600 to support the temporary exhibit Red, Blue, and Green: An Introduction to Water Quality in Southwest Florida.

University of Florida Foundation: \$1,500 for the study of microscopic malacofauna in Pinecrest Beds in Sarasota County through the Florida Museum of Natural History.

University of South Florida: \$3,552 to investigate the sources of microplastics and their chemical constituents in Tampa Bay mollusk communities.

Florida Gulf Coast University: \$4,600 for a project



Sam Ankerson, executive director of the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum, accepts check from Meg Born, grants committee member photo provided

aiming to determine the efficacy of vertical removal of toxins of red tide organism *Karenia brevis*.

Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation: \$5,000 for the study of optimal potential sites for the location of hard clam spawning sanctuaries to promote reproduction in Pine Island Sound.

The following amounts were disbursed for multi-year commitments made by the club in previous years:

Conchologists of America: \$1,000 for the ongoing commitment to create a scholarship.

Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum: \$7,750 for the Specify computer program license and renovations in 2019-20 that included the new Living Gallery.✱

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Connect with us!



The Sanibel Historical Museum & Village is located at 950 Dunlop Road, Sanibel, FL 33957

How Scientific Exhibits Are Judged

Awards are given to the best exhibits entered in shell shows. Scientific Shell Show exhibits can feature a single shell or multiple shells. This guide will help you understand how exhibits are judged.

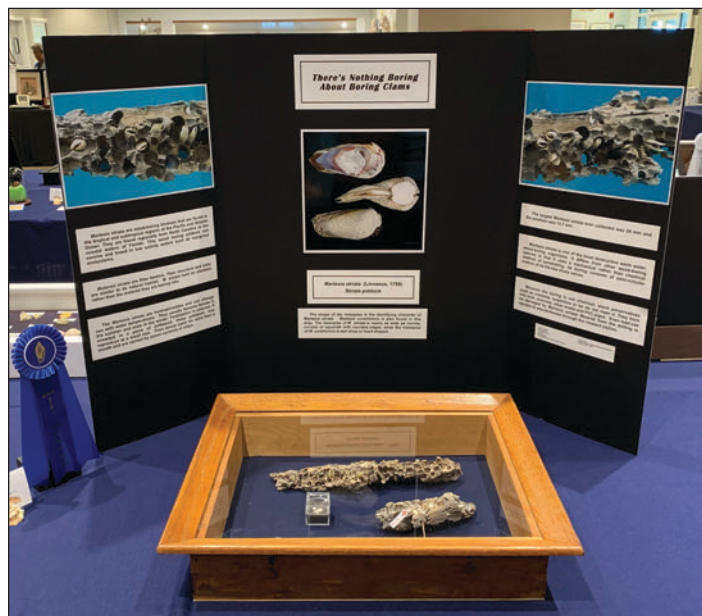
Scientific Exhibits: The shells in a scientific exhibit may be self-collected or from any source, meaning they could be purchased, obtained in a trade or received as a gift. Some judges may use a point system when evaluating the exhibits, with 100 points being the highest possible score. Points are awarded 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)



Diane Thomas
Scientific Division Chair



Cindy Lee from Chapin, South Carolina won a blue ribbon in the class for educational exhibits with this interesting exhibit about Boring Clams

photo provided

(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

continued on page 36

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Sitting Bunny

by Anne Joffe, She Sells Sea Shells

The Sitting Bunny is easy to make and a fun craft for children, especially for Easter. You can paint a couple of Auger shells orange to make the carrots.

Materials

- 1 pair large Cockles (body)
- 1 medium Cockle (head)
- 1 cotton ball
- 1 pair 6mm wiggle eyes
- 1 pair Mussel shells (ears)
- 1 Button shell (nose)
- Fishing line

Glue the larger Cockle shells together for the body. The widest end of the Cockle shell is at the back.

On the single medium Cockle, glue the two Mussel shells for ears. Get them to stand up straight with the points down. Glue the smaller Cockle shell head onto the



Sitting Bunny

photo by Anne Joffe

body shells, point down, just above indented cheek of the Cockle pair.

Glue on eyes, about a third of the way down from top.

Cut 3 pieces of fishing line into 3-inch strips and glue them on as whiskers, 3 on each side of the nose.

Glue on the Button shell nose, over the center of the whiskers.

Glue the cotton ball on the rear for a tail.

Once completely dry, glue onto a wood slab or base of your choice, and add other decorations.

Visit www.SheSellsSeaShellsSanibel.com.✽

From page 35

Scientific Exhibits

infractions include capitalizing the specimen name, incorrect use of parenthesis, omitting a comma between the author and the date, failing to set off species names (italics, bold or underlining) and typographical errors.

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

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

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Fine Jeweler Todd Alan Returns To Shell Festival

by Kathy Kurtz Ferrari

One of the most elaborate and precious items in Sanibel Shell Festival history will be back on display this year, as wire-bending fine jeweler Todd Alan returns with his mermaid crown.

Considered his life's masterpiece, Alan has worked on the headpiece for decades, putting in countless hours.

Not really intended to be worn, the mystical crown is woven with unusual 14-karat green gold and platinum, accented with diamonds, sapphires, green tourmalines and gold-encrusted shells. It is worth over a half-million dollars, according to its creator.

The crown made its world debut at the Shell Festival in 2020. It drew a crowd as it was displayed in a bullet-proof case with security. It has not been shown publically since then.

"I've done some more work on it since the last show. A piece like that never really feels finished," Alan said, explaining he has added "hundreds" of more jeweled



The Mermaid Crown by Todd Alan
photos courtesy Todd Alan Studios



Todd Alan at work

droplets, as well as tiny shells cast in gold.

The casting process involves making a mold from actual seashells, then injecting melted gold into the mold to create a life-like, glimmering replica.

For this year's festival, Alan will be selling a variety of shell-themed jewelry, created at his studio in Sarasota. This includes rings made from coral, intricately cast in gold and embellished with gemstones. The coral line is new for his collection.

"People love them. They are pretty involved," he said of the work to create an item in the design.

As a master of wire-bending jewelry, Alan's collection of woven rings and wedding bands is expansive and he will bring many beautiful options.

"That's what I'm really known as, a ring maker," he

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A Todd Alan original sealife ring

said. His work is popular on wedding sites and people contact him from around the world to have custom wedding bands made.

The craftsmanship involved in the woven process is hard to imagine, but Alan's meticulous work can be witnessed on his new YouTube channel. He and his daughter, Lyra, launched the effort during the pandemic lockdown, which happened right after his visit to the 2020 Shell Festival.

"I had been wanting to do videos for a long time, and it was just a matter of having the time and equipment and all that. It became the perfect opportunity," he explained.

The attractive, professional videos feature the craftsman working at his bench, firing and bending metals and wire. He carefully places and solders gemstones into place to create one-of-a-kind treasures.

"People watch the videos and they realize how much really goes into every piece," he added.

For this year's show, Alan has created a stunning necklace adorned with a 56-carat Ethiopian opal and



Todd Alan is known for the fine workmanship he puts into rings, particularly wedding bands



To create unique pieces, Todd Alan casts real sealife in gold and adds gemstones

smaller AAA-quality opal beads, on which he has worked for the past year. The price had yet to be determined when this story was written, but Alan suggested it would be around \$16,000.

"It has a lot of beautiful, beautiful opals and a lot of gold work in it," he said enthusiastically.

This is the third time Alan and his daughter will be vendors at the Shell Festival, which is the only show they do. His work is popular with this audience, and he said

continued on page 40



A new line of coral jewelry is part of the Todd Alan collection being shown during the Shell Festival



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Shell-A-Brate A Reflection Of Imperfection

poem by Jeanette Bruck

She spots a "perfect" tulip while walking on the sand.
Stoops to pick it up, turns it over in her hand.
The waves have etched the shell with cracks and jagged lines
She throws it toward the waves, it's not perfect in her mind.

Shelling too that morning, the shell she tossed I find
To me the imperfections are perfect to my mind
You see, just like this precious shell, we've all been etched with lines
So "Shell-a-brate" your reflection in this imperfect mirror of mine.

*Jeanette Bruck is from Madison Township near Middletown, Ohio. After a career in education, she became a snowbird in 2013. Staying within walking distance of Fort Myers Beach allows her to participate in her favorite sport, shelling. As a school counselor, she taught character education to young children. When she decided to enter a mirror in this year's Shell Show, memories of those lessons stressing kindness and acceptance came back to her. Her poem reminds us that just as we should embrace the outward appearance of ourselves and others, we should not "toss" those seashells etched by the waves of time.**



Todd Alan mixed yellow, white and rose gold to create this one-of-a-kind sealife pendant photo courtesy Todd Alan Studios

From page 39

Todd Alan

he is glad to be able to give back to the show's fundraising efforts.

"The shell show is special to us, it's dear to our heart," he stressed, adding he loves the area and is even in the process of building a home on Pine Island.

"So I'm kind of a neighbor," he said with a laugh. He will continue to work and have his shop in Sarasota.

"We enjoy supporting this show and being there. It's a nice chance to show the crown because we don't show it very often at all," he said. "I haven't even shown it in the shop in Sarasota."*

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How Artistic Exhibits Are Judged

Awards are given to the best exhibits entered in shell shows. 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.

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



Mary Burton
Artistic Division Chair



The 2020 Best Single Sailor's Valentine Award and Best In Show Award in the Artistic Hobbyist Division went to Joy Henderson of Laceys Spring, Alabama in collaboration with Judy Dinnick of Toronto, Canada, who painted the mermaid while Henderson did the shell work

photo provided

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

continued on page 43

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by Tracie Lantz, Three Crafty Ladies

Sanibel & Captiva's stunning sunsets and shell-lined beaches inspire the imagination for all who visit. Beachgoers often wonder, "what can I make with all of my found treasures?" Luckily, there is a great product on the market called alcohol ink. This solvent-based dye can be used on a variety of surfaces to create even the most intricate of designs with ease. A few colors of alcohol ink and a simple assortment of embellishments can skillfully turn Neptune's treasures into one-of-a-kind pieces of art.

Sanibel's seashells make the perfect canvas. They can be painted and displayed on their own, or turned into framed keepsakes to be hung or worn as jewelry. Seashells can also be displayed in their natural state in a wooden shadowbox.

Novice and seasoned artists are encouraged to register for an Alcohol Ink Workshop to learn just how fun and versatile mixed media art can be. Visit www.ThreeCraftyLadies.com.✧



A few simple steps will transform your beach treasures into one-of-a-kind works of art
photo provided

From page 42

Artistic Exhibits

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.

Artistic exhibits will be judged on the following criterion:

Quality of craftsmanship - 50%

Quality and choice of material used - 25%

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

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'The World is Still My Oyster!'



by Matt Asen, Restaurateur

It's been nearly two years since the world has changed. To quote the Grateful Dead, "What a long, strange trip it's been." It's given a third new meaning to the initials BC; the second being Before Causeway. More recently, I have used it when writing my memoirs or speaking to younger folk, where it means Before Cell phones, which to many of my

employees and relatives was before they were born! To quote another rock group, REM, "It's the End of the World as We Know It." Truer words were never written or sung. Yes, it will be different but things will endure, and may even be better. One of those things is oysters.

The popularity of oysters has been growing steadily over the years and the supply has been buoyed by the many new oyster farms from Maryland to Maine and from California to British Columbia. While Mother Nature, in the form of hurricanes (Gulf oysters) to rising temperatures (West Coast oysters), has caused the loss of millions of oysters, COVID cannot be caught by or transferred to humans by oysters! Of course, in the height of the pandemic, it was hard to find an oyster bar where one could share the sociality of eating oysters and drinking adult beverages in the company of strangers

who would soon become friends, joined by their love of oysters. This camaraderie has been referred to as "The Oysterhood." Being in the business and an oyster lover, I have been referred to as an "Oystafarian." I have also been unofficially designated a "Mermellier," similar to a "Sommelier," as I have been tasting "naked oysters," sans sauce, and keeping notes on the different nuances.

Ten years ago, I was awarded a blue ribbon at the Shell Show for my display of over 200 different oysters from North America (all of which I had eaten at oyster bars around the country). While there was a slight pause in my collecting during COVID, I traveled to Europe and Asia and added oysters from France, Great Britain, Vietnam and China, among other North American varieties. My collection now totals over 1,000 different oysters from 16 states, five Canadian provinces and 15 countries.

The best part about collecting these sumptuous bivalves is the joy of being among the oysterhood in a new oyster bar or restaurant, meeting and sharing the joy of oysters with people who I soon will call friends. I look forward to the time we can add the initials AC (After COVID) to our vocabulary, and feel comfortable to travel around the world and slurp a juicy cold one with a new friend who was previously a stranger. I hope you do the same!

An Oyster Toast

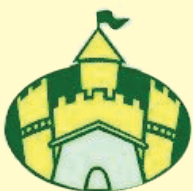
*"Here's to a long life and a merry one,
a quick death and an easy one,
a passionate lover and an honest one,
a cold juicy oyster and another one!"***

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Shell Club Brings Back Mollusk Count to Celebrate Milestones

by Kathy Kurtz Ferrari

As most Shell Festival attendees know, Sanibel and Captiva are known as some of the best shelling destinations in the world. The islands' beaches, particularly Sanibel's with an unusual east-west facing geography, are a collection bin for tiny trinkets caught in gulf currents.

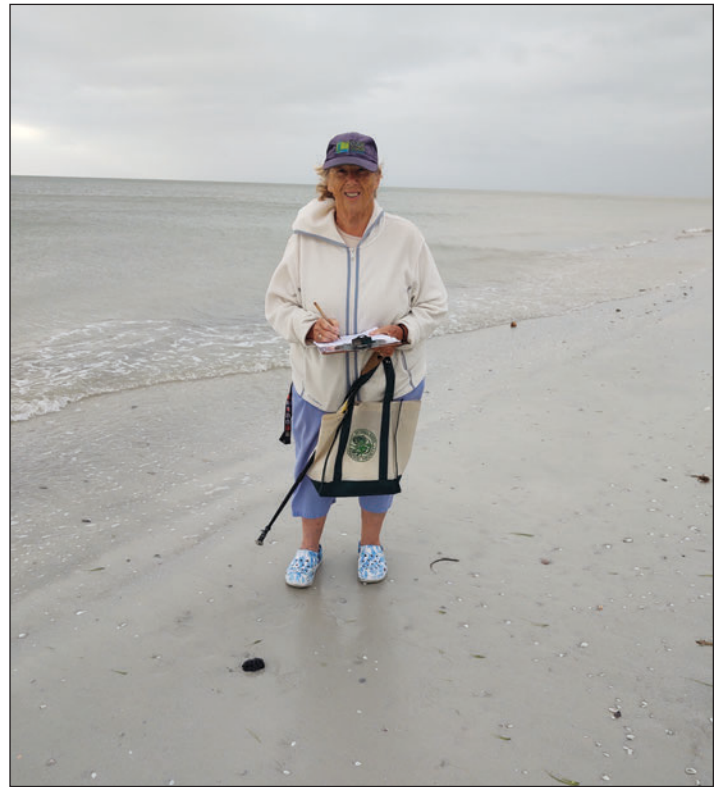
Over 400 species of mollusks – meaning live animals inside their shells – have been found on the sands of these islands.

How can anyone possibly know how many shell species are here?

In 1962, the same year as the Shell Festival's 40th anniversary, the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club held a count of shells on island beaches. It was described by the club as "an event to study mollusk population trends and number of species." Seventy-one volunteers spread out at low tide across the beaches of Sanibel and Captiva to count as many shells of a single species as they could over a given amount of time. The results totaled 128 species, with 20 new varieties being sent off to experts for identification, according to the club's historic documents. The next year, 84 volunteers found 124 species and 22 new species.

Counts were held nearly every January for many years, with new species being discovered through each effort.

"The Shell Fair and the shell count are two of the most



Judith Rapacz took part in the recent live shell count for the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club
photos by Bill Smith

popular and talked about events on the island and around the whole of Florida," a notation from the Shell Club's

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archives explained.

The last official count from that era was held in 1989.

Realizing it was not only the 85th anniversary of the Sanibel Shell Festival, but also the 60th anniversary of that first shell count in 1962, this year's Shell Festival Co-Chair Joyce Matthys and other members of the shell club wanted to do something to recognize the milestones. Matthys thought about resurrecting the shell count but with a major change: Only live mollusks – shells with live animals inside – would be counted.

"Last year, I was talking with Dr. José Leal, (science director and curator of Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum) and I told him what I was thinking. Would a live mollusk count be of interest? And he said, 'Yes, it would.' So I took it from there," Matthys said.

The club sought volunteers for the count, and Matthys worked with an island map of mile markers to cut the beaches into 23 half-mile segments. On the blustery morning of January 3 during the lowest tides of the season, about 50 volunteers were assigned a beach section, armed with forms and rulers for scale to tally as many species as they could find in two hours. The tabulation came to 56 different species found.

Volunteers were to count one of each species, not the total number of live shells in a section, although Matthys said there may have been some confusion for one volunteer.

"When he turned in his sheet – I took a picture of it – it was something like 326 of this one, and 200-and-something



Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club member Joyce Matthys picking up trash during the live shell count on January 3

of that. He counted every one!"

Matthys noted it was interesting to see how various beaches had different types and numbers of mollusks.

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A ruler shows the large size of this live True Tulip found on one stretch of beach

From page 47

Shell Count

Some volunteers found only three species, where others found what they described as too many to count.

Matthys, an energetic senior who has been involved with the Shell Festival since 2007, even did a trial run the day before the count to make sure the idea would work.

"I asked myself, 'Oh, what have I gotten myself into,'" she joked of the task. "I told one of my friends, 'If I ever have another idea, remind me of this day.'"

She not only took part in the official mollusk count, she



Species like this Sunray Venus must be identified and measured to be included in the mollusk count

spent part of the time picking up trash on the beach. "I always have my trash bags," she said.

Shell club member Joseph Heitz worked on the data for about three weeks. The most common species were Coquinas and Florida Fighting Conchs. There were also a lot of Giant Atlantic Cockles. No new species were discovered during the live count.

"It sort of gives us a picture, although it's a snap-shot," Matthys explained of the results. "Considering that we had not had any strong winds in the days prior to the count,

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that wasn't bad. Now, if we were to go out after a northwest wind, we would have had a completely different count. We would have had a greater variety of species because the northwest winds blow the surface waters offshore and that creates an undertow. This current moves the mollusks in from the ocean floor."

All data and results were shared with the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum for documentation.

"Grass roots efforts such as the shell count are very beneficial, and from many different angles," said Leal by email. "It helps determine what species and how many of each were present at that particular moment. Those counts can actually reveal the presence of species until then unrecorded in the area. Comparisons among different counts can help inform about the health of local molluscan populations. It also helps raise an awareness of mollusks and their natural environment and, if nothing else, they foster a sense of community, care and ownership of our natural resources."

Matthys said there may be enough interest to do the count annually.

"That's what people are talking about. In fact, some people thought we should do it twice a year, seasonally. It's sort of at the beginning stages."

Matthys would be the first to tell you it was a lot of work, and it may be too soon to ask if she'd be involved in the future.

She said, "It was a labor of love, I'll tell you."✱✱



Shell Club members noticed many Atlantic Giant Cockles washed up on one of the beaches during the recent live shell count

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Walk On The Wild Side



by Chris Lechowicz, Director,
SCCF Wildlife & Habitat
Management Program

Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF) was formed in 1967 by residents and other interested parties as a land trust to buy and preserve wildlands on Sanibel and Captiva. Since the early days, SCCF has expanded its efforts by adding a native plant nursery (Native Landscapes and Garden Center), wildlife research departments (Wildlife & Habitat Management, Coastal Wildlife), a marine laboratory, policy department, and climate change and coastal resilience staff. Land acquisition continues to be a critical SCCF program – 84 acres were acquired in 2021.

The community's collective effort to preserve wildlands is what makes Sanibel so special. Because of the efforts of the City of Sanibel, JN "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge and SCCF, approximately 70 percent of Sanibel Island is comprised of conservation lands that are protected from development. To date, SCCF has acquired 1,943 acres – mostly on the island – with an additional 443 acres purchased in partnership with Calusa Land Trust. SCCF works diligently to restore and maintain many preserves, while others, such as mangrove islands, remain wild.

In the last few years, SCCF has acquired land on North Captiva (12.46 acres), Cape Coral (44.27 acres) and on the McGregor Boulevard mainland at the Sanibel Causeway entrance (25.25 acres). On Sanibel, restoration has begun on the 12.25-acre Puschel Preserve and Gretchen C. Valade Preserve (2.2 acres), both acquired in 2021. The Stanback Preserve (24.1 acres) on Dixie Beach Boulevard is conserving mangrove forest, which requires little maintenance.

Most SCCF properties are closed to public access, though there are a variety of public trails open daily from sunrise to sunset:

Erick Lindblad Preserve: Starts in the SCCF main office parking lot, 3333 Sanibel-Captiva Road, and features several trail options and an observation tower;

Bob Wigley Preserve: Located south of Periwinkle Way on Casa Ybel Road – includes three different parcels with short trails that either run along the Sanibel River or lead to a scenic marsh overlook or a gazebo;

Periwinkle Preserve: A .6-mile loop through a tropical hammock just west of Casa Ybel Road on Periwinkle Way;

Shipley Trail: A .25-mile hiking trail that bisects Bailey Homestead Preserve on Periwinkle Way and connects Roadside City Park to Pond Apple Park Trail;

Two public trails have shared ownership with the City of Sanibel:

Sanibel Gardens Trail: Located off Island Inn Road;

Frannie's Preserve Trail: Located south of Bailey's on Tarpon Bay Road. Learn more at www.sccf.org.



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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.✱

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Shelling Out History Over 85 Years at Sanibel Shell Festival



Shelling in 1948 photos courtesy Sanibel Community Association

by Kathy Kurtz Ferrari

Welcome to the 85th annual Sanibel Shell Festival! Although organizers are celebrating a milestone anniversary, the roots of the shell show go back even farther than 1937. All those years are not only a testament to the history of collecting and studying seashells, but to



The Live Shell Exhibit always draws a crowd
the islands themselves.

According to the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club, whose archives provided information for this article, island residents and visitors have gathered to display their treasures from the sea as far back as the late 1880s.

Shell enthusiasts would put their finds out for display on the porches of early hotels Casa Ybel and the Matthews House (later named Island Inn). A friendly competition began to see who could find the most beautiful and unusual samples.

In 1925, native shells were a major part of the first community fair held on the grounds of Island Inn. The fair



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became an annual event and included food, homemade crafts and gift items.

The fair's popularity was the seed to establish a gathering place, and The Community House was built in 1927. The community fair was hosted there in March each year, and while shells were on display in the main hall, no competition was allowed according to the organization's charter.

Visitors traveled to the island by ferry from Punta Rassa as word of the fair grew. The event included live mollusk and sealife displays, and an article from a 1936 issue of the *Islander* newspaper described a seahorse giving birth while in the live tank.

Shelling became a hobby or more serious pursuit for nearly everyone on the islands. Malacologists and conchologists flocked to the beaches searching for new and rare species.

But it wasn't until 1937 that Dr. Louise Perry, a medical doctor from Ashville, North Carolina who studied malacology, established the first official Sanibel Shell Show. For a time, it was the only one of its kind in the world.

In 1944, a new charter was drawn up which allowed competition in The Community House. At that time, ribbons may have only been awarded to children, as they were a big part of helping with the show.

Formal competition started roughly around 1958, with awards given out mostly for a shell's beauty. The next year, the show expanded to three days.

The Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club was officially established



Former *Today Show* personality and Captiva resident, the late Willard Scott, took part in Shell Show events

in 1961, and rules and categories for competition in both scientific and artistic areas were decided.

The 25th anniversary in 1962 found the show offering free admission and transportation by ferry to the fair.

continued on page 54



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Island Inn

photos courtesy Sanibel Community Association

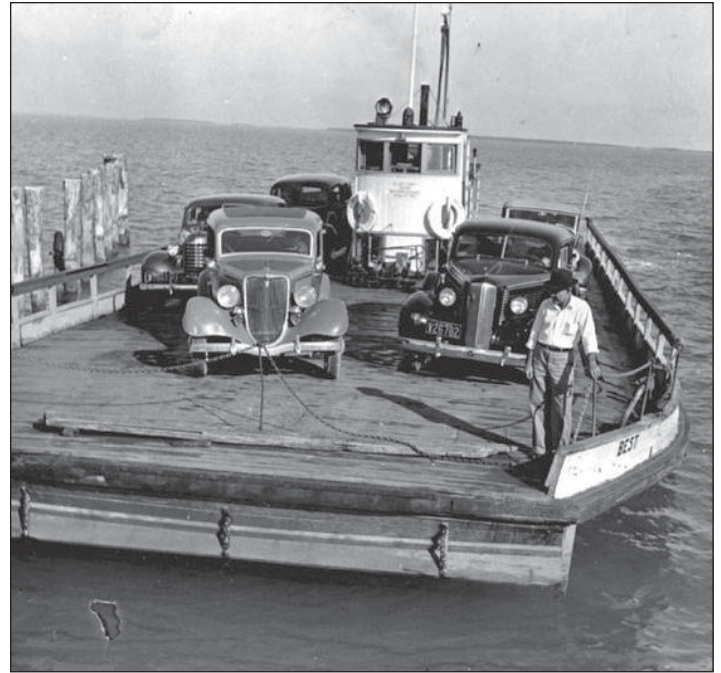
From page 53

History

Work began on the causeway in 1963, which “should result in much greater attendance at next year’s fair,” the club’s archives note.

The fair included a raffle for a shell box created by club members. Later, a shell table was made for the cause. All proceeds went to the Sanibel Civic Association.

Those attending the show signed a guest book and in 1965, the book included over 3,000 signatures from 50 states and several foreign countries. There were 12 categories in the scientific division, ranging from shells found on the beaches of Sanibel and Captiva, to worldwide marine and land shells, to “fossils, miniatures, and oddities.” There



Sanibel ferry, circa 1930

were seven different categories in the artistic division.

The shell club added a shell booth selling specimens in 1971 to add funds to The Community House coffers.

In 1975, after Sanibel was designated a city, the attendance to the show reached a record 10,000.

The show’s 40th anniversary in 1977 found ground being broken for an addition to The Community House. A



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Hall of Fame for past blue ribbon winners was established.

Live shelling was allowed until the late-1980s, when a Sanibel Shelling Rule was passed to restrict collecting to two live shells of a species per person per day. In 1995, all live shelling was prohibited on Sanibel's beaches.

The show's name was changed in 1982 from the Sanibel Shell Fair to the Sanibel Shell Show. Around the time of the show's 75th anniversary in 2012, its name was changed to the Sanibel Shell Festival.

Facing recent challenges never before imagined, COVID-19 hasn't deterred contemporary organizers. The 2021 shell show was held as an online photo contest and informative videos were posted on the club's website. Some associated events were held outside.

This year's show will have fewer international entries, masks will be required and other precautionary measures will be in place. To recognize the 85th anniversary, the club held a contest for a publicity tagline. "Cheers to 85 years," submitted by Debi McBroom, was chosen.

Over the years, thousands of volunteers have been involved to make the show a success, many taking on leadership roles annually. Local conchologist Anne Joffe has been involved for over five decades. Most recently, Mary Burton and Joyce Matthys, this year's co-chairs, have dedicated nearly two decades to the event. The two have decided to retire after this show.

While it takes many hands, the torch will be passed to a new generation of those who not only love shells, but the islands themselves. Cheers to many more years!✱



The first Sanibel Shell Show porch display in the 1920s



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Holly Dunn



Georgette LaForet



Carol Saunders



Jeff Oths



Jeanne Stuteville

Shell Club Loses Members

Holly Dunn and her husband Bill moved to Sanibel in 2016 and she immediately became active in the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club. She was the T-shirt chair in 2019 and 2020. She capably handled the whole process, from ordering the shirts, getting them folded, to selling them at the Shell Festival. Holly was always willing to help where she was needed. She was a beachcomber and delighted in taking early morning walks on the beach searching out shells to use for crafting flowers and figures.

Georgette LaForet was going to be recognized in this magazine as being one of three Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club members who have been in the club the longest period of time, over 40 years! Georgette played an active role in the Shell Club during her lifetime. She had many jobs during the shell shows. She was responsible for filling the cashier and hall monitor positions for many years. In addition,

Georgette sold T-shirts, took tickets at the door, and filled in at the Authors' Table when there was a spot that needed to be filled. She died in November, three months before her 100th birthday.

Carol Saunders was an avid beachcomber and shell collector. She donated many bags of shells that were used to fill the little bags that are given away each year to people donating to enter the shell show. She was a dedicated and dependable volunteer in the Scientific Division Exhibit Hall for many years. Carol frequently entered exhibits in the scientific division competition and received awards for the beautiful seashells that she gathered on Sanibel. Local residents knew her as "The Shell Lady."

Jeff Oths had been an avid shell collector for decades before he moved to Sanibel in 2003. He became an active member of the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club and served as both club vice president and club president. In 2013, he served as the shell show co-chair. Jeff was an artistic judge

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multiple times. He won ribbons and awards in both the scientific and artistic divisions with his exhibits. He had unique collections of antique mother-of-pearl shell art and antiques. He spent hours walking Sanibel's beaches and, on Christmas Day in 2009, he discovered a long-spined star shell *Astrarium phoebium*, later determined to be a new species on Sanibel Island.

The Shell Crafters meet every Monday at The Community House on Sanibel to create beautiful articles made from shells. The profits from the sale of these articles are used to maintain The Community House. Two of the shell artists are no longer with us. **Jeanne Stuteville** won many awards at the Sanibel Shell Show. She passed away in Newburgh, Indiana. **Kandee Grossman** created beautiful shell art and also did glass fusion. She was a Sanibel resident.✱

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.

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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Sanibel Beach Artist Shares His Talents



by Allison Havill Todd

Retired landscaper Tim Starke and his wife, Pat, have been vacationing on Sanibel Island for 14 years. They started spending one week a year here, but with Pat's coaxing, they now enjoy our island oasis for a month every year, always returning to the same beachfront accommodations.

At first, it was a bit challenging as the two enjoy separate leisure activities. Pat describes Tim as being "fidgety and chatty, always looking for something to do," while she prefers to relax on the beach under an umbrella with a good book. They do share one thing in common though, their love of the beach, and they never cease to be fascinated by the view of a big, wide open sky. Tim started fiddling around with items he would collect from his walks on the beach, such as shells, coconuts, driftwood, seagrass and other native elements, transforming them into creative and unique characters. This began to attract the attention of other beachgoers, and they would stop and chat with the artist during their strolls. The first year, Tim formed about a dozen different characters to fill his time and provide an outlet for his



An alligator sculpted from shells and other native materials surrounded by other characters on the beach

photo by Allison Havill Todd

creative endeavors and, over the years, this has grown to over 60 creations during his most recent visit. Fans may discover forms resembling a squirrel, owl, octopus or alligator cleverly crafted out of coconuts, shells or driftwood. But each year, Tim starts with designing "the Mayor of the Village," who oversees the rest of the cast of characters. In response to the question of which one was his favorite, he replied with an impish grin, "I can't do that; it would be like picking a favorite child!"

Tim's naturally outgoing and friendly demeanor makes
continued on page 60

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Paper Mache Picture Frame

by Anne Joffe, She Sells Sea Shells

These premade picture frames are perfect for decorating. They come in rectangle, oval and heart shapes, with backs for standing. This is also a wonderful project for kids on a rainy day. No two need ever be made the same way; allow your creativity to shine through.

Materials:

Paper mache frame
Glue gun or tacky glue
Shells, starfish, seaweed or other beach finds
Crystal clear glaze

Directions:

Remove the clear plastic piece where the picture goes before you begin gluing.

Starting at the top of the frame, begin to glue the shells on, cover the sides and go around the entire frame. Make sure the shells fit into each other so no spaces show. Put the glue on the shells, not on the frame.

Add any special touches such as starfish or beach glaze.



Paper Mache Picture Frame

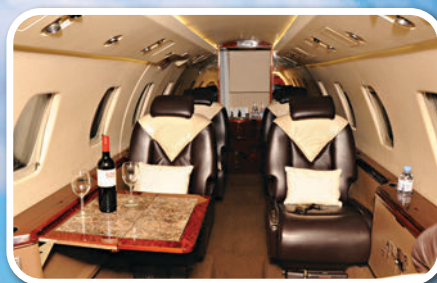
photo by Anne Joffe

Spray the shells with the glaze to give them a shine and bring out the color, and let dry completely.

Reinsert the plastic piece along with your picture.

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From page 58

Beach Artist

it easy for him to engage with the variety of people he meets each day on the beach. The couple has found that his hobby of creating beach art enables him to keep busy and stay socially active while providing Pat with some quiet time to herself, relaxing in a beach chair with a favorite novel.

Tim is often so busy chatting with others during the day, that he and Pat don't have a chance to catch up with each other until the end of the day.

Tim is committed to using only items he finds on the beach to incorporate into his creations. While most pieces are natural elements, he will occasionally use a stray pair of sunglasses or hat that was left behind in the sand by a vacationer. Being respectful of nature, his artwork does not involve digging any holes or interfering with sea turtle nesting season. Before returning to Fort Wayne, Indiana at the end of their vacation, the Starkes dispose



The Mayor of the Village

photos by Allison Havill Todd

of any non-natural items used in the beach art and leave the native items in their natural environment.

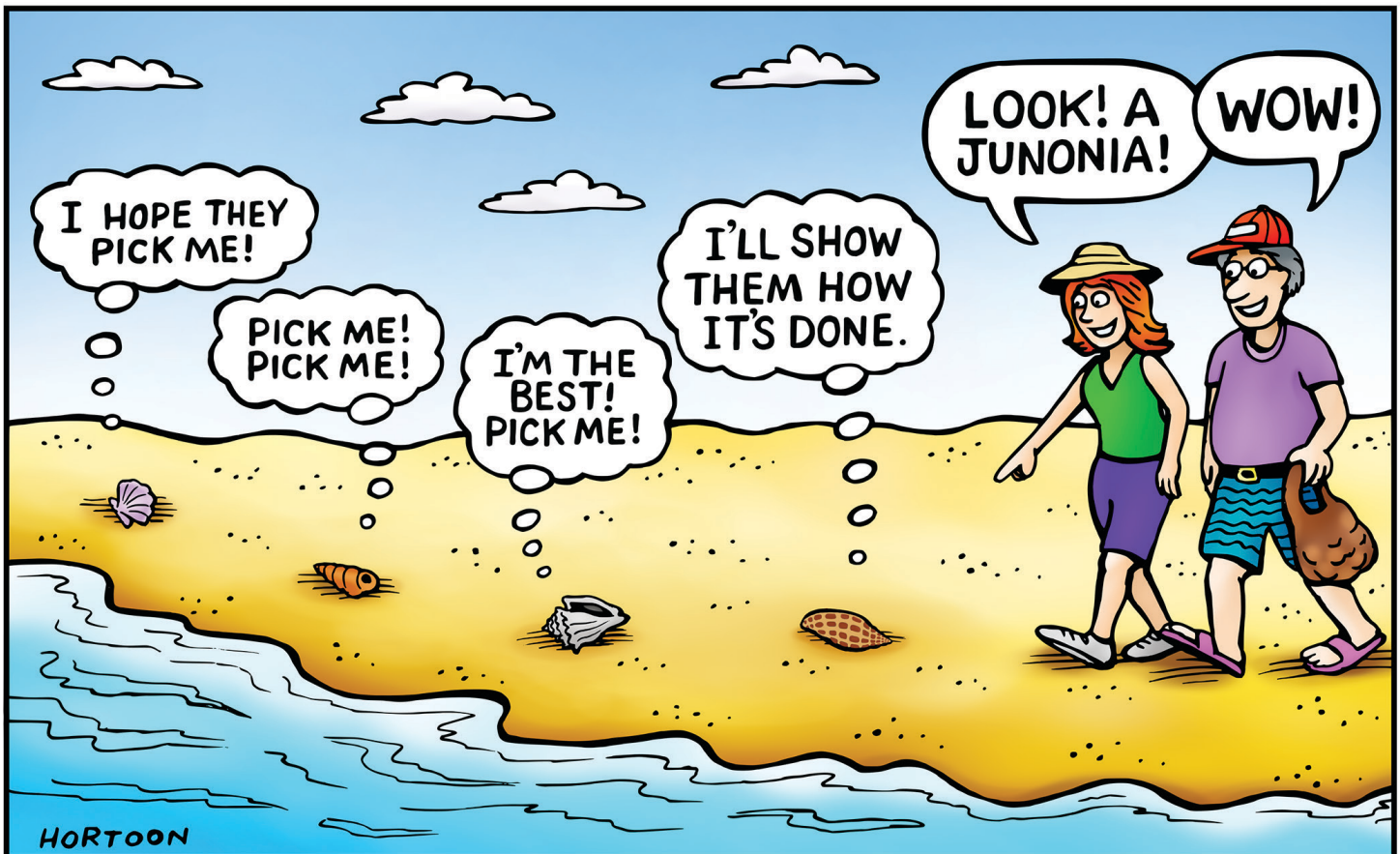
The two hit the beach every day before sunrise and remain until after sunset with only short breaks for refreshments. Visitors on the east end of the island can easily spot the artist by his mane of wavy, white hair

and deeply tanned skin. He welcomes conversation and enjoys chatting with those he meets. When asked what keeps him inspired to pursue his talents day after day, every year, regardless of the weather, Tim shared, "If it makes somebody laugh or smile, it makes my day."

Unfortunately, the beach artist was not aware that his creativity was in violation of a city ordinance. He was asked by a beach patrol officer to dismantle the configuration of characters. Starke respectfully complied, and the creations disappeared without a trace. Though, I understand most of the villagers were adopted into new homes by Starke's friends and followers.✧



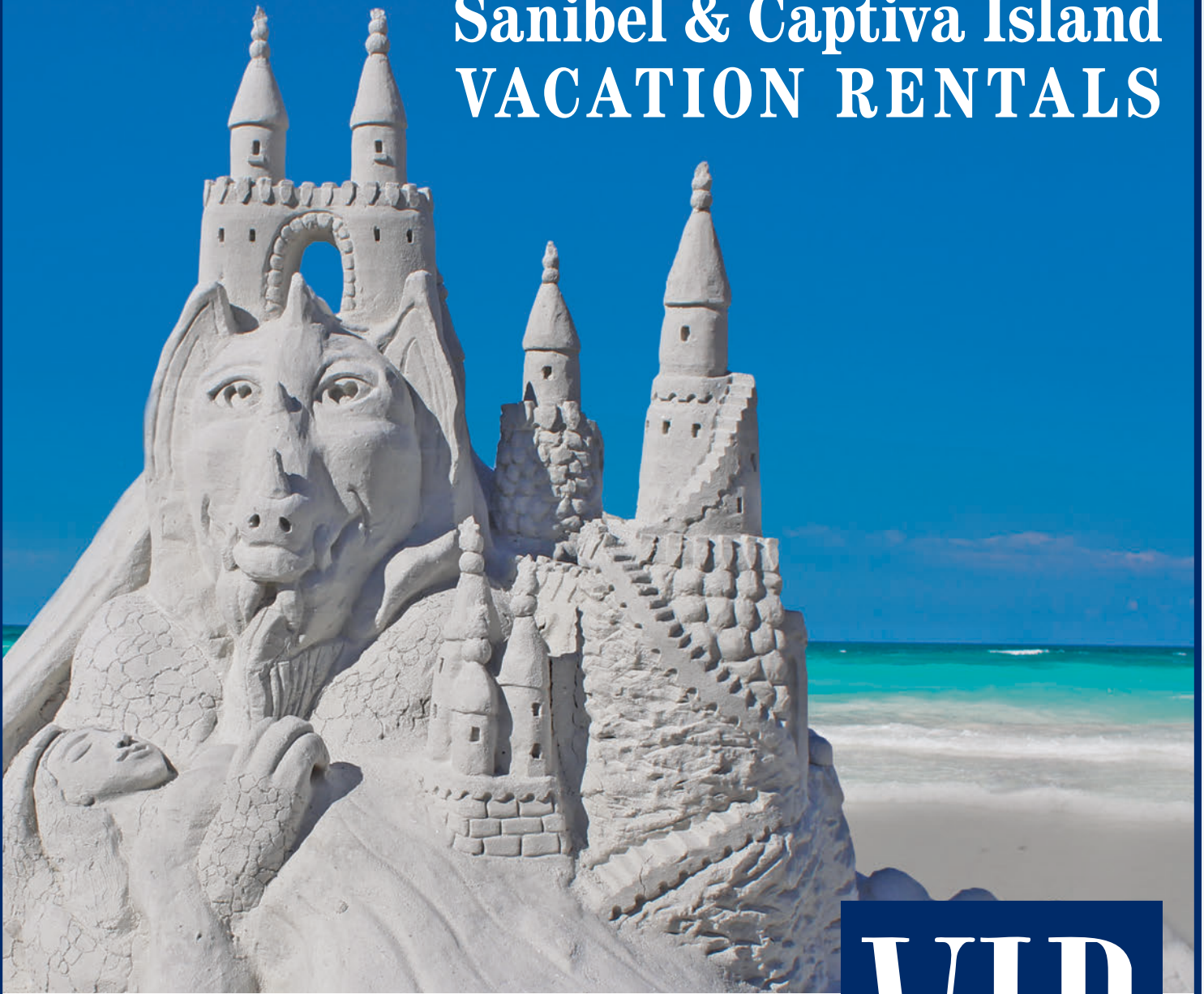
Pat and Tim Starke



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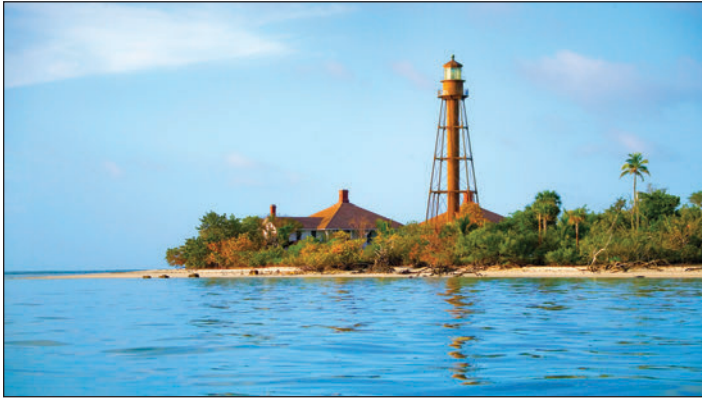
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Sanibel Shelling Regulations



Sanibel Lighthouse

photo by Nick Adams Photography

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.

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