



March 2008 Volume 5 Number 3

Palm Island—April 7

Picnic—April 22

See you Oct. 28

www.EnglewoodShellClub.org

President's Message—

It has been a delight to serve as your president for the last two years. Thank you all for making the time so rewarding. I hope you have enjoyed the many activities as much as I have. The new beach walks spearheaded by Brenda Steele have been so nice and have given a great opportunity to get acquainted in a relaxed setting. The spring's excursions have been exceptional, varied, and numerous; we all owe thanks to Ruth Middlebrooks and Debbie Freeman. Thanks to Jane Guy for initiating the fun slogan contest and to Bill Notto for suggesting we have another home tour to view shells. My appreciation to those who opened their homes and to the planning committee (see story). The expanded web site has been wonderful and we truly appreciate all the members who are receiving their newsletters from the web site. Thanks, Freeman Crosby, for being such a fine web master. We even have a newly revised constitution, thanks to Helen Gardner and her committee. Membership is at an all-time high of 126 members, as of 2-28-08, according to Linda Powers, vice president and membership chairman. The second annual Newcomer's Coffee, this year at Marilyn Boyd's home was a big success with nearly 20 people in attendance. Thanks Marilyn for sharing your home and lovely shells with us.

I look forward to the spring picnic, which will be Tuesday, April 22 at Englewood Gardens Beach Club and thank Nancy Weborg for chairing that event. Appreciation to Doris Lyons who will chair the 2008 Christmas Party. The Nominating Committee chaired by Jackie McLean has been busy this spring because all four officers will be turning over their responsibilities to others for the coming year (see story). Thanks to Ann Madden and Christina Anglin who have presented excellent mini-shell talks about purple snails and pearls; Joe Bao will "Wow us" in March when he shares olives from his collection. Marilyn Boyd outdid herself planning outstanding programs (see story). As always the Study Group meetings have been fun and informative; thank you Barbara Myers and Dick Forbush! And as usual, we had so much fun and gained so many ideas from the ShellCrafters; thanks to Christina Anglin and Eleanor Langlois. Outreach continued the excellent work they began last year; thanks to Jane Guy and Amie Barnicle for leading that group. I could go on and on, but space just doesn't allow it. Please know how much I appreciate all the great ideas and follow-through that make this club so fantastic!

Anita Wilson

Club Donates to Others—

Englewood Shell Club has made several donations to others this spring. The picture shows Eunice Herr, Club Librarian, giving a copy of "Florida's Living Beaches" to Toni Hopper, librarian at Elsie Quirk Library, the Englewood branch of Sarasota Public Libraries. The club donated the same book to Tringali Library in Charlotte county. Lynda Citro accepted the book on behalf of the library. The Club has also given donations to The Bailey-Matthews Shell Museum in Sanibel, Cedar Point Park and its parent organization Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center, Inc., the Conchologists of America, and to the Marine Science Program and Carefree Learner of Sarasota High School. All donations were designated for educational programming and/or equipment used in educational programming. The Club sees these donations as further Club Outreach Activity of a monetary nature. As we give, so do we receive. Thanks to Betty Myers, a volunteer at Lemon Bay Park, who gave the club library a book on ocean life and a box of Florida shells, which can be put to several uses. Nancy Weborg donated a beautiful book on sea glass and Linda Powers gave us one on shell crafting.



Come to the Picnic—

The annual spring picnic will be Tuesday, April 22 at Englewood Gardens Beach Club, 2560 Beach Road, Manasota Key. It is about 0.6 mile north of the roundabout in front of Chadwick Park. The gates will open at 11 A.M. so people can shell if they desire, according to Nancy Weborg, chairman of the event. We plan on appetizers about noon; lunch is scheduled for 12:45. The club provides hamburgers, beverages, condiments and paper goods. Members sign up at the March meeting to bring salads, desserts, and appetizers to share. Call Nancy at 493-3255 if you wish to come, but didn't make the March meeting sign-up.

Crackers, Classes and More for Outreach—

The Outreach Committee had a display at Englewood's Cracker Fair Saturday, February 9 on Dearborn Street.

The Fair is part of the Lemon Bay Fest, a celebration of Englewood history.

Shell Club members who worked the



Cracker Fair included Amie Barnicle, Diana Leonhardt, Eunice Herr, Betty Turner, Jane Guy and Jan Plummer. There was a steady stream of visitors (more in the morning); all were very interested, they liked the shell and craft exhibit, asked questions and took samples, as well as information about the club.

Amie Barnicle has taught three classes of students for Boca Grande Island Charter School. Grades 1 & 2 discussed common names of four shells and



Amie gave a presentation and led a hands-on shelling activity after reading a story about boys shelling on Cayo Costa. Each student received three shells of their own and there

was time for some to talk about their own beach shelling experiences. The Grade 3 & 4 presentation centered around definitions/descriptions of mollusk, bivalve and univalve and discussion of their habitats, how they move, and find food. The gastropod operculum and bivalve muscle scars were stressed. Questions and additional explanations were made during the small group hands-on activity sorting bivalves from univalves. The primary mission in the grades 5 & 6 class was information and experience in assisting students' appreciation of local mollusks and their environment. The presentation included how the shell is created, shell movement and sustenance, anatomy, mollusk development, and bivalve life cycles. Local egg cases were shared, identified and discussed.

Members continue to delight the community with talks about shells. Christina Anglin spoke to 65 Red Hat women in late January about Shells and Art. The program brought lots of questions and rave reviews just as others have. Anita Wilson addressed 30 members of Chapter HH-PEO on February 15 with a talk about Sailor's Valentines. She shared Valentines made by Debbie Freeman and Ruth Middlebrooks during her talk. Ruth Middlebrooks and Marilyn Boyd taught a class on making magnolia flowers from Buttercup Lucines to another community group on February 18. Thanks to all!

Thanks to the Nominating Committee—

The nominating committee had a very busy month, since all major offices in the club will have new officers for the upcoming year. Our sincere thanks to Jackie McLean who chaired the committee and to Audrey Grant, Ruth Middlebrooks and Sue Rundle who worked so hard! Their slate of officer nominees are Doris Lyons, President; Christina Anglin, Vice President; Patti Mahalik, Secretary; Nancy Weborg, Treasurer and Eunice Herr, Ann Madden and Brenda Steele, at-large elected board members. Thanks to these people for saying "Yes, We'll help out!" There were no additional nominees from the floor at the February meeting, however additional nominations will be accepted at the March meeting before the final vote is taken and new officers are installed by the outgoing incumbents Anita Wilson, President; Linda Powers, Vice President; Doris Lyons, Secretary, Joe Bao, Treasurer, and Marie Gallant and Jane Guy, board members.

Home Tour Was a Hit—

Helen Gardner, Jane Guy, Bill Notto, and Linda Powers opened their homes to club members for the first Home Tour the Club has held in several years. Thanks to Betty Turner and Kim Duperault who chaired this event and to those who helped the host and hostesses with the tours. The newsletter went to press before the March 12 tour, so we don't have any pictures to share of this wonderful event, but each of us carry wonderful pictures in our mind's eye!

Club Meeting Nearly Ready to Begin—

This picture was taken right before one of the spring meetings. A hefty gavel rap is usually needed in order to get folks' attention!



Spring's Shelling Ships—

Shown top to bottom are the *Tropic Star* which took the group to Useppa Island, the *Carefree Learner* which escorted us around Sarasota Bay three different days, and the *Albion* which dropped us off on Shell Key off Pass-a-Grille.



Enjoy Palm Island—

The latest and last excursion of the year planned by Ruth Middlebrooks will be Monday, April 7. The trip to shell Palm Island will commence when we meet via carpool at the Palm Island Car Ferry off Panama Blvd off 776 (Placida Road) at 7:30 A.M. We will take our cars to Palm Island and then drive north to the headquarters building where each four people will pick up a golf cart and map of island trails for the day. After instruction, we are free to shell anywhere on the island, but golf carts cannot be taken on the beach per se, only to the end of the golf cart paths.

We will then meet once again for luncheon at Rum Bay Restaurant, where we will have three choices: Admiral Burger, Shrimp Salad Melt or Seaside Salad; each includes beverage (nonalcoholic), and tip. Each car pool/golf cart group is free after lunch to continue shelling or to return at a designated time to the mainland. All golf carts must be turned in by 4 P.M. The day which includes car ferry, golf cart, lunch, and shelling is \$30/person payable to Joe Bao, but reserved with Ruth Middlebrooks, no later than the March 25 meeting. Feel free to call Ruth to be put on a waiting list after that time, in case there are cancellations. **WEAR YOUR NAME TAGS**; those will be proof to the ferry operator that you have indeed qualified for the half price ferry ride. See you then!

Shell Key Highlights—

It was definitely a day to go out and do something fun—after all, it was March 4th! So 49 ESC shellers made plans to get up early, board the bus to Shell Key at 6:15, transfer to the ferry and spend a great day shelling! It was a fun, relaxing day, but windy. We were all alone on the key as waves pounded the shore. It was warm and the rain held off until we were eating restaurant lunch after shelling was complete. Shell finds included a few great and sunrise tellins, moon snails and collars, baby's ears, chestnut turbans, long worm shells, lovely wavy macoma?, common egg cockles, dwarf surf clams, channeled duck clams, murex, baby horse conch and brittle stars. There were more lightning whelks and olives plus lots of bubbles and coffee melampus. There were myriad sand dollars, pen shells, Atlantic giant cockles, sunray Venus, surf clams and buttercup lucines.

Orange and yellow jingles were literally everywhere. We had great views of a dolphin, interesting ships and unusual birds. Thanks, Ruth, for arranging a wonderful trip!



Coon oysters, Ostra frons are indeed a favorite food of raccoons which climb up on mangrove prop roots to get them.

Harry Wins Again and Again—

Harry Berryman won the Mote Gold Award at the Sarasota Shell Fiesta this year! Congratulations! Everyone who attended the Sarasota show this year, and there were many, said it was one of the very best shows ever! Congratulations, sister club, on a very well executed event. The picture is one of more than fifty that Christina Anglin took of crafts alone.



But that is not all—Harry also won the COA Award at the St. Petersburg Show for his exhibit “Superfamily *Stromboidae*, complete” AND he won the Shell of the Show award for his *Strombus oldi*! Jane Santini who gave the club our lovely Sailor’s Valentines book in exchange for coquina shells won the Double Sailor’s Valentine category at St. Pete’s show. This is the same show Debbie Freeman judged artistic entries last year. Harry shared many of his secrets with the club at our November meeting. As a result, several club members entered the Sanibel Show in both the scientific and craft areas. Good luck to all! We went to press before the results of the Sanibel show were known, so get the oral update at the March meeting.

“The Shell Seekers” is our Slogan!

“The Shell Seekers” is the Club’s new slogan; winners of the contest were Doris Lyons, Ruth Middlebrooks and Anita Wilson, who all three independently submitted this slogan idea. The slogan was selected by the membership at the February meeting and we look forward to inventive uses of the slogan—incorporated in a bumper sticker, on a t-shirt or tote bag, on a banner for our educational displays or meeting room, etc! Thanks to Jane Guy for the great idea and to Jane, Ruth Middlebrooks, and Nancy Weborg for serving on the committee that culled entries to the final five. The final five slogan entries in the contest were Gone Shelling, The Shell Seekers, A Sheller’s Dream, Dedicated Shellers, and Shells R Us. The people who submitted these ideas were Jane Guy, Doris Lyons, Ruth Middlebrooks, Brenda Steele, Nancy Weborg and Anita Wilson. Shell prizes were given to the finalists and larger shells to the winners. Remarkable consensus was reached in this contest. Not only was this the choice of a vast majority of members voting, but in addition to the three people who entered “The Shell Seekers” as a suggestion, Doris Brown submitted both “Happy Shell Seekers” and “Crafty Shell Seekers”, so she was also awarded a shell for coming so close to the final winner!

Brenda Organizes Local Beach Walks—

Brenda Steele has organized local beach walks monthly for members. The first was February 20 from 11 A.M. to 2 P.M. at Blind Pass Beach. About fifteen members spent a delightful three hours under the bright fish windsock chatting, having lunch AND shelling! The shelling turned up loads of the usual southwest Florida shells (jingles and scallops to buttercup lucines and prickley cockles just to name four) as well as moon snail shells and an almost perfect collar (egg case), both lace and apple murex, gaudy asaphis, an orange banded tulip, keyhole limpet, a very large egg cockle, several spiny slipper shells, calico clams, alternate tellins, and a perfect sand dollar.

Thanks so much Brenda! What a great new revival of an old club tradition!

Marilyn Price, many of us still remember the walks you led for us in years

past. The March walk was Thursday, March 20 from 9 AM until noon at Manasota Beach. If you haven’t come to these fun events, we’ll see you in April!



This Month’s Game—

Match the scientific names of the shells below with the common names of the shells mentioned in the article above. *Trachycardium egmontianum*.—*Crepidula aculeata*.—*Terebra dislocata*.—*Polinices duplicatus*.—*Chicoreus florifer dilectus*.—*Diodora cayenensis*.—*Laevicardium laevigatum*.—*Anomia simplex*.—*Argopecten gibbus*.—*Cerithium atratum*.—*Macrocallista maculata*.—*Mellita quinquiesperata*.—*Ficus communis*.—*Anodontia alba*.—*Chicoreus ponum*.—*Fasciolaria liliun*.—*Tellina alternata*.—*Asaphis deflorata*.

Amelia Island Was Fun—

On the Amelia Island trip February 8-15, everyone found plenty of baby’s ears and limpets. Shirley Rose came home with a huge lion’s paw. There were many channeled and knobbed whelks found as well as wentletraps and angel wings. The condos were fine and the evenings, full of card games. The beaches were being renourished and several docks were being rebuilt which meant the shelling was not as good as it might have been. They enjoyed the historical home tour in Fernandina Beach, it’s restaurants and shops plus the state park, its fort and other historical sights in the area. After Amelia Island, Andy and Audrey Grant went on up to the Charleston, S.C. area where we have gone shelling the last two springs. They reported that renourishment was in full swing there as well and the beaches were absolutely clean—not a shell to be found. So the club chose the right year for a new venue. Thanks, Debbie Freeman, for planning this trip. Ideas for next year are welcome!

Outstanding Programs Enhance our Knowledge—

Debbie Freeman presented a spectacular multi-media program at the January 22 meeting. She called her talk “The Naked Shell” because she taught us about mollusk anatomy and physiology as well as sharing stunning slides interspersed with video clips showing live shells in action. Debbie did a beautiful job of clearly defining terms so all members could understand the discussion. For example, she called the mollusk’s mantle (the correct name for the soft body), the defining character of the shell. She explained and showed examples of how the mantle polishes the shell and how its action results in shell patterns. Deb pointed out how and why the gastropod shell edge thickens as the shell grows older. She called Marginellas the “turkey vultures of the beach”, as she showed their voracious dining habits. No one will forget that the Angel Wing has no hinge after seeing her pictures; nor will anyone think that worm shells are drab after seeing the live animals swaying in the current. After covering both gastropods and bivalve shells, she spent time on cephalopods, such as cuttlefish and squid, with their internal shells and finished with beautiful pictures of nudibranchs which have no shell at all. The newsletter editor was so fascinated, she kept forgetting to take notes for the article. We included a picture of Debbie giving this talk to a community club earlier in the year, so we didn’t include a picture here. Thanks Debbie!



Larry Strange of Sanibel addressed the topic of unusual shells of Southwest Florida at the February meeting. He showed us both world-record *Junonia* and carrier shells. We were amazed at the Gold Banded Cone, found only on Sanibel. Larry has seen only two, one found by a fellow snorkeling off the lighthouse last

year. He showed a lovely albino true tulip, a piece of black coral and many beautiful scallops. Other treasures included a large blood-red brachiopod that hasn’t even been named and a group of smaller white brachiopods. Larry suggested that shellers get permission to check lobster traps for attached shells. He also gets deep-water shells from shrimpers. Shell values have increased fifty percent in the last two years! Larry generously brought about 50 lovely and uncommon moon scallops, *Amusium laurenti* (Gmelin 1791) which are found off shore in 50-200 meter-deep water. He purchased them recently from Ft. Myers shrimpers. Thank you, Larry, for the gift shells as well as an entertaining and fascinating talk. The picture showing Larry and his wife Carol was taken last fall

at the cocktail party they hosted for club members during the November Sanibel shelling trip.

Joyce Matthys, also of Sanibel and Salem Oregon, will address “Tales and Trails of Florida Shells” at the March meeting. Thanks, Marilyn Boyd, for arranging the year’s fantastic programs!

Useppa Island Delights—

Perfect weather, 38 congenial ESC members, a delightful island and interesting shells marked the Club’s first visit to Useppa Island on January 30, 2008. The *Tropic Star* picked us up right on time and we enjoyed sightseeing past Gasparilla Island, Cayo Costa, Cabbage Key and into Useppa Harbor, which boating guide books call “an ultra-exclusive private island, home to the Useppa Island Club. Don’t expect to be allowed to dock here!”, But we did. First we walked the paths past private bungalows to the Historical Museum. Each of us toured the museum with our own hand-held recording describing what we were seeing. We learned about the island’s last 12,000 years; archeological discoveries indicate human habitation at least that far in the past. From 12,000-8,500 years ago, the area was cold and dry; Useppa was actually 60 miles inland. Useppa became an island 7,500 years ago with more rain and warmer conditions. A 3,800 year old tool shop has been excavated here and we saw several tools made from shells. By 1500 A.D., the Calusa Indians controlled all of southern Florida from their Charlotte Harbor community. Modern history was also fascinating. It began in 1911 when the Isaac Walton Club was formed.

Collier lived here from 1911 to 1939. Zane Grey was a visitor. The Bay of Pigs forces trained here for the Cuban invasion.



A room in the Collier Inn could be had for only \$11 as recently as 1970. The Island was hard hit by Hurricane Charlie a few years ago.

We had luncheon at the Collier Inn; the food, service, décor, and views were splendid. Following lunch we were free to wander the island and beaches where members found many cones, bubbles, buttons and even rose tellins on the beach and land snail shells around island vegetation. We boarded the *Tropic Star* again at 1:30 for our return to Boca Grande.

Carefree Learner Trip Report—

It was interesting to compare the three Carefree Learner trips of January 21 and 23 and February 19. The weather was fiercely cold and windy on Monday Jan. 21 for our regular trip, but the minus tide plus the wind created more dry land in Sarasota Bay than most of us had ever seen. By Wednesday the 23rd, when we went with the Sarasota Club to explore new areas of the bay with Tommy Young and his new replacement Rebecca, the day was warm and absolutely still, but cloudy after torrential rain on the way to Sarasota from Englewood. Even though the tide was still very negative, the lack of wind and barometric pressure kept water in the bay and we waded most of the morning. Monday's shellers in our usual shelling locations found lots of sand dollars and live baby ears as well as many blood red worms making tracks on the sand. There were some starfish, a few sea cucumbers and lots of slippers. There were many sulfur sponges both days and a few bubbles and live olives. On Wednesday we noticed that the sponges and some other sealife were actually sunburned from the long dry sunny, but cold exposure of the previous days. We stopped first at Whale Island on Wednesday, which is farther out than our usual destination. This island had lots of banded tulips and a few true tulips and marginella, as well as some huge sea pork and lots of crabs. Next we went way north in the bay; here there were many ceriths making tracks in the sand. We were delighted to find many live young horse conch six to ten inches long, and baby crown conch popping all over the sand as it became exposed. Eva Furner found a small octopus in a dead shell and brought it back to the boat so we all had a chance to see it both on land and swimming. The birds were fantastic on Wednesday with sightings of almost all the shorebirds, herons and egrets common to the area as well as white and brown pelicans, wood stork and even a roseate spoonbill. Both days found the bay clear with lots of sea grasses.

A month later when we went out again on Feb. 19 to the usual islands, it was again cool and breezy. This time we watched hundreds of small Jasper cones popping up everywhere, and we saw at least 15 big conch and whelks laying long egg casings! There were many, many marginella of several species as well as live bubbles and, once again, many ceriths were making trails through the sand. Many of us were amazed watching live cross-barred venus clams making three lined trails. We found many articulated prickley cockle shells with brilliant purple interiors,



live scallops, many pear whelk, pen shells, sunray venus, a few angel wings and many huge dead sand dollars. There were fewer sulfur sponges, seastars and anemones than the month before and once again, few sea cucumbers. As members talked with Tommy Young about the health of the bay, he mentioned that there appears to be at least one benefit from the last severe red tide outbreak; green mussels have disappeared from the bay.

Debbie Freeman has already set dates for next year's trips; they will be December 12 and January 12. Thanks, Debbie for all your work on the Carefree Learner trips.

ShellCrafters Create Beauty—

The February ShellCrafters featured wall hangings and decorated boxes, while March members created beautiful wreaths.

However one of the delights of ShellCrafters this year has been the variety of projects and the wealth of ideas we've gotten at each meeting.

Attendance at recent meetings has been so good, we actually have collected more money than we needed to pay for the room. We may be able to reduce the fee for a session next year. Thank you Christina Anglin and Eleanor Langlois for chairing ShellCrafters this year.



Bring Back Library Books—

Don't forget to bring back the library books you have checked out of the club library. The rule (which I doubt if we mentioned this year) is that you can check a book out for one month. It is due the next meeting. We are supposed to assess a fine if it is not returned in a timely fashion. Books definitely are not to be kept over the summer. So if you still have one, please bring it to the picnic or one of the last field trips. Thanks!

The Last Page—



Useppa Beauty



Marj Battista

It is with great sorrow that we announce the passing of long time Englewood Shell Club member, Marj Battista. She died Friday, March 7 after a week's illness. She was with us recently on the Carefree Learner and on Amelia Island. The picture was taken last fall on our Sanibel Trip. Marj will be sincerely missed.

Sanibel Show Winners—

Harry Berryman won his fifth Master's competition in a row at Sanibel March 6-8! Along with Harry's trophy, Marilyn Boyd won a third place ribbon with her lovely fossil decorated mirror! Congratulations to both of you!



More from Amelia Island—

Other big name shells found by the Amelia Island group in addition to those reported earlier in the newsletter include sea pansies, West Indian simnia, oyster drills, false angel wings, large shark's teeth, large purple barnacles and green mussels.



Amie's Teaching Aids

Home Tour Addendum—

On tour at Helen Gardner's Home. Carol Myers, Brenda Steele, Eunice Herr, Marilyn Boyd, Trudy Miles and Patty Womeldorf helped the home tour hostesses with the day.



ShellCrafter Creation

Englewood Shell Club

Rich & Anita Wilson

935 Bayshore Drive

Englewood, FL 34223-2203