



Shell Museum News

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FOSSIL FIELD TRIP A BIG SUCCESS

On December 9, 2006, 19 fossil enthusiasts boarded a bus at The Bailey–Matthews Shell Museum to go Immokalee to look for fossilized shells. The trip was led by Dr. Gary Schmelz, former Director of Education at The Conservancy of Southwest Florida located in Naples. Dr. Schmelz is also a renowned fossil expert.

Upon arrival at the pit, fossil identification booklets were handed out to the participants. The booklet explained that the shells found in the quarry were from the Pleistocene epoch (between 500,000 and 1.5 million years old). Some of the species that were found are now extinct, while many others are still found in the waters of Southwest Florida. Among the fossilized shells found by the group were milk conchs, scallops, razor clams, jewel boxes, and fighting conchs. Many times, the fossilized shells retained their patina (shine and color). Some clams were even uncovered with both halves intact.



FOSSIL PILE



HEADING INTO THE PIT

Dr. Schmelz is also presenting on two dates during the Natural History Lecture Series. For more information, please contact Barbara Knapp at (239) 395-2233.

FROM THE DIRECTOR WELCOME TO 2007!

I hope that 2007 has already been a great year for you and your loved ones. At the closing of my column on the last issue of this newsletter I mentioned that demonstrated and continued institutional improvement is required for accreditation with the American Association of Museums.

As expected for an institution of our caliber and in preparation for accreditation, the board of trustees has been assembling the Museum's new "Comprehensive Strategic Plan—Current and Prospective." The plan, prepared under the leadership of trustee Dr. Harry G. Lee, delineates the aims, objectives, and methods for the Museum along three time frames, one to two years, five, and ten years. In 19 chapters, the plan discusses all areas of the Museum mission and operation; Chapter 19 describes the process of accreditation and its advantages to an institution such as ours.

As mentioned earlier, the process of accreditation is carried out by the American Association of Museums (AAM). The accreditation program, AAM emphasizes, "strengthens individual museums and the entire museum profession by promoting ethical and professional practices." It also recognizes excellence in individual museums and in the museum community as a whole, and serves as the field's primary vehicle for quality assurance and self-regulation. Accreditation "recognizes a museum's commitment to excellence, accountability, high professional standards, and continued institutional improvement."

The process itself starts off with an application process, which, after acceptance, is followed by completion of a self-study questionnaire and compilation and preparation of documents to support it. After completion of the self-study, which takes about a year, and submission, the institution will receive the accreditation visit by peer reviewers selected by AAM. Two core questions guide the accreditation review process: (1) How well does the museum achieve its stated mission and goals? (2) How well does the museum's performance meet standards and best practices as they generally understood in the museum field, as appropriate to its circumstances?

Ideally, after review the institution will be granted accreditation. But even if accreditation is not granted in the first round, the institution will have profited immensely from the actions involved in preparation and self-study. The self-study in itself will have provided an opportunity for overall institutional evaluation and a chance to step back and look at the "big picture." The self-study also acts as a stimulus to review and revise policies and plan strategically.

If granted, accreditation will bring with it national recognition of the institution's commitment to excellence and highest standards of operation and public service. It will also increase

the Museum's credibility with funding agencies, private or governmental, and donors. It is not an easy process, but is very well worth it. Under the stewardship from the board of trustees and help from staff and volunteers, the Museum will soon be ready for it.

Best Wishes,

José H. Leal, Ph.D



RECENT MUSEUM GIFTS

The Museum wishes to thank the following donors who recently contributed \$1000 or more in designated and undesignated funds: Mary C. Anderson, Bruce and Ginny Avery, Francis P. Bailey, Charles and Kristine Barr, Robert and Dixie Bowden, Wayne Boyd, Mary Lee Dayton, Dennis Delman, Alan Gettleman, James A. Hartman, Mrs. Josephine L. Kohn, Harry G. Lee, J.R.H. and Virginia Lightbourn, The Marmot Foundation, George and Anna Marie Nyquist, Harold and Stephanie Payson III, Sanibel-Captiva Kiwanis, Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club, Merle B. Smith, Roxanne Van Bokkelen, Char Walonick, Mrs. J. Howard Wood, Bill and Patty Zimmerman, John D. Zimmerman, The Maine Community Foundation as requested by Bill and Patty Zimmerman, The Kathryn W. Zimmerman Fund of York County Community Foundation, The Marilyn Northrop Fund (Anne and David Joffe, Donald Dan, and Cecilia and Jeffrey Antle), and Past President of the Board of Trustees, Jon L. Thompson and wife Beverly, donated \$25,000 toward building maintainance and improvement. Thanks also to The Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club for making its annual donation to the Collections and Research Department of the Museum.

THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS!

ENTEMNOTROCHUS ADANSONIANUS, ONE OF 25 SPECIES OF SLIT SNAIL, IS THE NEW "SHELL OF THE MOMENT", ON DISPLAY NOW AT THE MUSEUM. A MUST-SEE!



MARCO ISLAND FIELD TRIP

February 6, 2007 - Dr. Gary Schmelz (former Director of Education at The Conservancy of Southwest Florida in Naples) will be leading another field trip for the Museum to the Marco Island Tidal Flats. This expedition will be focused on shelling and studying live mollusks in their natural habitats. This will be an all-day event, including a stop for lunch. The maximum number of attendees will be 20 and the registration deadline is February 1, 2007. Make your reservations today!

For more information please see the insert form or contact Barbara Knapp at (239) 395-2233, or via e-mail at bknapp@shellmuseum.org

THE DOCENT CHATS

January 10, 2007: Curatorial volunteers Linda Kramer and Hal Pilcher, director José H. Leal, and school group education volunteer Peg Bisignani presented the first session of the anticipated Docent Chats to a group of 15 volunteers from 4 to 5 PM. The first installment of the series was an exploration of the different areas of the Museum.

Some volunteers were unfamiliar with the workings of the Collections and Research Department of the Museum but by the end of the evening they were well versed in the cataloguing system and the role of curatorial docents.

The next stop was the ground level of the Museum, which houses the School Group Education Room. The volunteers were treated to the same presentation that the school groups get when on a field trip.

After their exploration of the Museum, some of the volunteers opted to have a group dinner at Gasparilla's before Dr. John Worth's lecture on the Calusa people. Sources say the food was great!

The next Docent Chat is scheduled for January 24, 2007 and is entitled "Mollusks 101". This discussion will be lead by Dr. Leal. Please join us!

IN MEMORIAM: MARILYN NORTHROP

The entire Shell Museum community was devastated after learning of Marilyn Northrop's passing in a diving accident in Bali. Marilyn was a past curatorial assistant at the Museum, a very active member and exhibit chair with the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club, and, drawing from my experience as scientific judge of shell shows in many years, one of the best shell exhibitors in the country and in the world.

Marilyn is sorely missed by all in the American shelling community. Museum board president Anne Joffe set up a fund to memorialize Marilyn's contributions to the hobby of conchology and to the Museum collection.

José H. Leal



MARILYN NORTHROP AND JOSÉ H. LEAL AT THE 2003 PHILADELPHIA SHELL SHOW. PHOTO BY FAY MUCHA.

LIBRARY NEWS: ANTIQUE ADDITIONS

Last September, Mr. Robert Wirick donated *The Conchologists Handbook* and *A Conchological Manual* to the Margaret Thorsen Library, located on the second level of the Museum. The books are a wonderful addition to the Museum's collection of old texts. The books came to Wirick from Stetson University's Library booksale through a friend of Wirick's son – David Wertz. Wertz discovered the books and gave them to the Wirick family – all of them Sanibel and shell enthusiasts. The Wirick family in turn, donated them to the Museum library.

The Conchologists Handbook (William MacGillivray, ESQ) was published in 1856 and *A Conchological Manual* (G.B. Sowerby, Jun.) was published in 1846. The Museum would like to thank Mr. Robert Wirick for his generous donation.

The library is also home to several shell and mollusk-related journals, magazines, periodicals, and books. The Bailey-Matthews Shell Museum's Margaret Thorsen Library is open to all Museum members and volunteers. Please stop by and utilize this valuable resource!

SANIBEL-CAPTIVA SHELL CLUB NEWS

Starting in February, the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club will be holding its meetings on Sunday afternoons at 2 PM. Shell Club members are welcome to join the guest speaker and Shell Club Board for lunch at a local restaurant. The meeting will immediately follow at The Bailey-Matthews Shell Museum.

Join the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club at its last regular meeting day and time on Tuesday, January 31, 2007 at 7:30 PM for a lecture by Dr. Harry G. Lee about "Island biogeography from a land snail's perspective". See you there!

CAYO COSTA FIELD TRIP IN FEBRUARY

Museum director Dr. José H. Leal will lead a day-long shelling and nature-watching field trip on the beautiful Cayo Costa. Home to many mollusks, abundant marine life, and other fascinating animals, Cayo Costa is located 12 miles west of Cape Coral and is accessible only by boat. Participant attire should be clothing and tennis shoes that can get wet, sunglasses, hats, and plenty of sun screen. Join us for this adventure of fun and discovery! Registration deadline is February 20, 2007(see field trip insert).

For more information, please contact Barbara Knapp at (239) 395-2233, or via e-mail at bknapp@shellmuseum.org.

MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE SHELL MUSEUM BOARD OF TRUSTEES: FRONT ROW, FROM LEFT: PRESIDENT ANNE JOFFE, IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT JON L. THOMPSON; CENTER: SECRETARY RODGER BUNNELL; BACK, FROM LEFT: MUSEUM DIRECTOR DR. JOSÉ H. LEAL (EX-OFFICIO), MEMBER-AT-LARGE DR. HARRY G. LEE, VICE-PRESIDENT DR. GARY SCHMELZ, TREASURER RICHARD PILE WAS NOT PRESENT. PHOTO BY ELLEN LAI.

THE NATURAL HISTORY LECTURE SERIES BEGINS

December 13, 2006: The Bailey-Matthews Shell Museum director Dr. José H. Leal gave the first lecture in the new Natural History Lecture Series, and appropriately spoke on mollusks. Dr. Leal covered several mollusk-related topics including the definition of the word "mollusk", the characteristics of the seven distinct classes of Mollusca, and the habits of these interesting marine animals.

January 10, 2007: Dr. John Worth, the Assistant Director of the Randell Research Center on Pine Island visited the Museum to present his lecture on "The Current Research of the Calusa". Dr. Worth complimented his lecture with a powerpoint presentation featuring colorful pictures and graphics that helped the audience envision what the Calusa were truly like. The lecture was a captivating and interactive look into the life of one of Florida's most remarkable indigenous people.

The next Natural History Lecture will be held at 7PM on January 24, 2007 at the Museum. Dr. Gary Schmelz (former Director of Education at the Conservancy of Southwest Florida, in Naples) will speak on the the "Marine Life of the Bahamas Islands". See you there!

WELCOME NEW BOARD AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE!

Following election at the Annual Business Meeting of the board of trustees on January 13, 2007, board president Anne Joffe is glad to announce the composition of the new executive committee of the board: Anne Joffe (president), Gary Schmelz (vice-president), Richard Pyle (treasurer), Rodger Bunnell (secretary), Harry G. Lee (member-at-large), and Jon L. Thompson (immediate past-president).

The Board also elected three new board members. Ava Hinojosa, from Sanibel Island, is director of operations of the Sanibel-Captiva Chamber of Commerce and is very active in the local community. Francis Bailey belongs to Sanibel's most traditional family and donated, with brothers John (deceased) and Sam, the land on which the Museum was built. Francis was a board member in the latter half of the 1990s. Also a native Floridian, William G. Lyons was a marine biologist at the Florida Marine Research Institute in St. Petersburg for many years. He contributed a large number of papers on marine mollusks. He is also a past-president of the American Malacological Society. Welcome to all!





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