

Shell Museum News

Number 57

www.shellmuseum.org

Winter 2006

Decade of Success for the Museum!

"Ten years ago, The Bailey-Matthews Shell Museum opened its doors. In ten years, the Museum has grown and prospered. It has been an honor and a privilege to volunteer with all old and new friends. Thank you!"

-Letter from Harry Weiler,
Great Hall of Shells volunteer exhibit docent
(Tuesday and Saturday afternoons since 1995)

Dedicated, decade-long volunteer Harry Weiler's sentiments were echoed by hundreds of Museum members, friends, and visitors on Saturday, Nov. 19, 2005. A daylong open house and an invitation-only evening party successfully celebrated the start of the Museum's second decade. During the afternoon of the open house, Museum director Dr. José H. Leal introduced guest of honor Dr. Geerat J. Vermeij.

A University of California-Davis distinguished professor of geology, Dr. Vermeij specializes in marine ecology and paleoecology, and the functional

morphology of marine mollusks. He was accompanied by his wife, Edith Zipser Vermeij, who is his research collaborator.

An overflow crowd filled the Museum meeting room to hear Dr. Vermeij speak for 45 minutes on his new theory that biological observations from his fossil studies can apply to human endeavors as well. He then answered many questions from the audience and signed Museum store copies of one of his books, *A Natural History of Shells*.

Throughout the day, visitors were assisted by Museum staff members, exhibit docents, and education docents. *Mollusks in Action*, the acclaimed video by education docent Joyce Matthys, played continually in the meeting room. Several education docents staffed the group education area on the ground floor and explained highlights of Museum programs.

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"Under the Sea" committee chairwoman and Museum trustee Anne Joffe found a little bit of time to enjoy the event with her husband, David Joffe.

Second Annual 'Under the Sea' Held

The Bailey-Matthews Shell Museum held a fun-filled and fund-filling Second Annual "Under the Sea" fund-raiser on Sunday, March 5, 2006, at Sundial Beach Resort on Sanibel. Museum director Dr. José H. Leal and his staff give heartfelt thanks to the board of trustees, museum members and volunteers, the public and the media for a terrific turnout of 147 people, and also for so many wonderful donations.

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From the Director

In a note to local newspapers after our very successful ten-year celebration, I wrote that The Bailey-Matthews Shell Museum has much to be thankful for, and we are looking forward to our next ten years. Currently, the trustees' long-range planning and accreditation special committee is working with me to prepare a new strategic plan for the Museum.

It is interesting and enlightening to take a look back at the Museum's previous long-range plan, which had been adopted in November 1998. That plan outlined educational and scientific goals for the years 1999 to 2003. A major component stated, "Education has been and will remain the major goal of the Museum and, since 1998, the Museum has greatly expanded

and diversified its educational programs."

A glance at recent statistics shows that during the 2004-2005 academic year, a total of 2,073 Lee County public school fourth graders took part in the Museum's fully-funded field trip program. Much of that funding comes from the annual Adopt-A-Class campaign.

Additional Museum education programs include the acclaimed video *Mollusks in Action*, which is now shown six times daily; the continuous video for children, *Shells of the Sea*, and the Shell Club/Museum evening lecture series held monthly from October through April.

The 1998 plan also recommended that "A major
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Museum News

Museum Sponsors Live Shell Exhibit

Keeping with tradition, Sanibel Middle School sixth graders Carly DeGennaro and Julia Leal helped their classmates take turns being "Live Shell Experts" at the 2006 Live Shell Exhibit. The exhibit was part of the 69th Annual Sanibel Shell Fair and Show held March 2-4 at the Sanibel Community House. Museum education volunteers Joyce Matthys, Char Walonick, Sue Sprout, and Rick Sprout devoted hundreds of hours planning and implementing malacology lessons for the students. The volunteers taught at the school for several weeks leading up to the show, and the Sprouts set up and monitored the exhibit tanks. The students had additional guidance from their teacher, Sanibel Middle School enrichment specialist Peggy Drennan.

Photo: Dr. José H. Leal



Director...from page 1

portion of research at the Museum is a result of or should result in collection activities." The ever-increasing number of visits by scientists, students, etc., continues to be ongoing evidence of the comprehensive scope and importance of the Museum collection department. In the past few years, the Museum has implemented record-entry in its scientific collection database (catalogue), and posts all catalogued records online.

In July 1999, as recommended in the 1998 plan, the Museum liquidated its original debt, and in May 2000, established its Cultural Endowment Fund, which at the closing of 2005 consisted of funds in excess of \$850,000.

(In August 2000, the Shell Museum and Educational Foundation Inc. was designated a Cultural Sponsoring Organization by Florida's Division of Cultural Affairs. Such designation allowed the Museum to apply for a \$240,000 matching share from the Division of Cultural Affairs'

Cultural Endowment Program, which the Museum should receive within the next few years.)

The Museum library's records are constantly appended to the online catalogue of the Sanibel Public Library. The Museum is a member of the Southwest Florida Library Network, which pays for installation, access, usage, and maintenance for the shared interlibrary loan ordering system. During 2005, the Museum filled a total of 93 interlibrary loan requests. For the first two months during 2006, it has already filled 34 requests.

The Museum established its website (www.shellmuseum.org) in 1998. The continually updated site provides a sample of what awaits the visitor. It includes exhibits, scientific and public programs, cross-links to related organizations, and a growing identification guide of Southwest Florida shells, which already became the standard reference for near-shore mollusks from the area.

The Museum also publishes *The Nautilus*, the oldest English-language malacological journal in

the world. Searchable tables of contents of all issues have been added to *The Nautilus* link on the Museum website. Inquiries have been made aiming for the implementation of an electronic version of the journal.

The 1998 plan recommended that the Museum "should engage in the accreditation process sometime within the next five years." Since approval of the 1998 plan and as a result of the implementation of its recommendations, the Museum has enrolled in evaluation and review procedures that aim to assist in the accreditation process with the American Association of Museums.

In January 2003, with help from a grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services, the Museum underwent Stage One Institutional Assessment of the AAM Museum Assessment Program. In 2004, also with funds from IMLS, the Museum underwent the Conservation Assessment Program, administered through Heritage Preservation.

The new strategic plan will present an itemized narrative of the objectives and timelines that will guide the Museum through the next stages of its existence, providing a formal framework for the continuation and expansion of its programs. To be sure, exciting times are in the works for the Museum's next ten years!

José H. Leal, Ph.D.
Director

Success...from page 1

Veteran volunteer exhibit docent Louise Danforth adds: "Ten years have passed - people come from all over the world and information sheets in different languages helps make their visit enjoyable. Slide shows and now videos have been created to give more information. Outgoing visitors again and again praise the Museum!"

As Dr. Leal told newspapers, "The Bailey-Matthews

Shell Museum has much to be thankful for. I and the staff want to thank the media for doing such a terrific job publicizing the ten-year anniversary, and we want to thank the public, trustees, volunteers, and members for a super turn-out and so many generous donations. We are looking forward to our next ten years!"

'Under the Sea'...from page 1

Dr. Leal and staff particularly want to applaud the hard work of "Under the Sea" committee chairwoman Anne Joffe and "helpers" Mary Jo and Rodger Bunnell, Irene Longley, and Diane Zimmer.

The following individuals and businesses generously donated silent auction and/or raffle items:

Frank and Ruth Abramson, BIG Arts, Billy's Bikes, Cedar Chest, Luc Century, Cheeburger Cheeburger, Bob Cipriani, Comfort By Design, Cotton Veranda, Donald Dan, Al and Bev Deynzer, Phyllis Diegel, Phil Dietz, Doc Ford's, Bev Dolezal, Henry Domke, Florida Repertory Theatre, Friday's Jewelry, Jerry Harasewych, David and Anne Joffe, Grog Shop, Gully's, Sue Hobbs, Interiors by Decorating Den, Island Cow, Island Pursuit, Jacaranda, Friedrich Jaeger, Bill Jordan, Lazy Flamingo, and Paula Mikkelsen.

Also, Jeff Oths, Peach Republic, Pearl Gallery Etcetera, Sanibel Café, Sanibel Fitness Center, Sanibel Steakhouse, Sanybel's Finest, Schoolhouse Theater, Seaside Inn, Graig Shaak and the Florida Museum of Natural History at Gainesville, She Sells Sea Shells, Susan Schmidt, Shell Net, Susan Thomas, Three Crafty Ladies, Timbers, Susan Trammell, Tween Waters Inn, Jim and Carolyn VunKannon, Char Walonick, Anne Walter, West Wind Inn, Westwind Surf Shop, Wilford & Lee, Fred and Diane Zimmer, and Judie Zimomra.

Dr. Leal and staff also want the following individuals and businesses who so generously

gave funds:

Dr. and Mrs. Charles Adair, Mr. David Adler, Mr. and Mrs. Delbert Allen, Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Avery, Mr. Sam Bailey, Mr. Francis Bailey, Ms. Denis Bicardi, Ken and Linda Boyce, Mary Jo and Rodger Bunnell, Ms. Amanda Cross, Mr. and Mrs. Lowell Devasure, Mrs. Gretchen Delman, Ms. Phyllis Diegel, Ms. Karen Ellington, and Ava and Robert Feldman.

Also, Sam and Kathy Galloway, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Gavrish, Judy and Herb Goldenberg, Mr. Bill Haggard, Ms. Sue Hobbs, Mrs. Margaret Hoel, Mr. and Mrs. John Jacobs, Ronald and Frances Kemper, Ms. Jean Knox, Ms. Carol Kosobucki, Frank and Beverly Kumershek, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Lawrence, Dr. Harry Lee, Mrs. Irene Longley, and Carol and William Lyons.

Also, Mr. Dave Mathews, Mary and Larry McIntyre, Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Mihaly, Col. and Mrs. J. Morris, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Owen, Mr. Eric Pfeifer, Mr. Colin Redfern, Mr. and Mrs. James Reynolds, Ms. Robbie Roepstorff, the Sanibel-Captiva Trust Company, Sanibel Spirits, Mr. and Mrs. Jack Schork, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Silverglide, and James and Janet Sommerville.

Also, Ms. Dolores Stelljes, Joni and Herbert Stover, Mr. David Sutherland, Jon and Beverly Thompson, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Van Horn III, Bill and Ann Vanderbilt, Mr. and Mrs. Jim VunKannon, Mrs. Char Walonick, Mr. William Waters, and Mr. and Mrs. Fred Zimmer.

See you at next year's "Under the Sea"!

Museum News

Vacationing beachgoers report they are thrilled that the Museum and Museum store are now open an hour later each day, until 5 p.m. The new opening time was approved by the Board of Trustees and became effective on Wednesday, Feb. 8. The transition has worked like clockwork, thanks to the Museum's dedicated staff members and volunteers at the front desk, in the Great Hall of Shells, and in the Museum store.

Museum director Dr. José H. Leal enjoyed being interviewed during a new Sirius satellite radio program on Jan. 11. Lauren Pressley, of Morning Living Radio, invited him to be on the show to talk about shells with Hannah Melman, an editor of *Martha Stewart Living*.

Also in January, Dr. Leal gave a talk to the Marco Island Shell Club, titled, "Tell-Tale Shelling." He was a judge at the Sarasota Shell Show from Feb. 17 to 19, and gave a talk on "The Seashells of Southwest Florida." He plans to give a talk at the Conchologists of America Annual Convention from May 31 to June 4 in Mobile, Alabama. Dr. Leal currently heads the COA Grant Committee.

On June 17 and 18, Dr. Leal will be a judge at the Jacksonville Shell Show. From July 29 to Aug. 3, he will attend the joint American Malacological Society/Western Society of Malacology meeting in Seattle. SUNY-Geneseo Professor Emeritus Dr. James Scatterday, of Sanibel, and Dr. Leal will present a poster titled, "What Is So Exciting About Boring Bivalves?"

The Museum has welcomed aboard a few new faces in recent months. Sanibel resident Mary Jo Bunnell is the Museum's new business manager. She previously worked for St. Michael's Episcopal Church on Sanibel, and is married to Museum trustee Rodger Bunnell. Longtime employees Debbie Frederick and Tina Yorgey are no longer working for the Museum. Ms. Frederick had been the business manager and was the Museum's first employee, having started in 1993. Ms. Yorgey worked as the business manager for a few months and for eight years before that, was Museum director Dr. José H. Leal's administrative assistant, managing editor of the *Nautilus*, and Museum webmaster. Most recently, Sanibel resident Ruth Gamble has replaced Wendy Harriman as a part-time front desk employee. Ms. Harriman is continuing to volunteer as an education docent, which is how she originally became associated with the Museum.

Dr. Leal and Museum trustee Dr. M.G. "Jerry" Harasewych, of the division of Mollusks at the Smithsonian Institution, recently collaborated on a paper. It was published in the

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Group Education Area Dedicated to Anna Marie Nyquist

The Museum group education area on the ground floor is named after recently retired group tour and education coordinator Anna Marie Nyquist. During the November dedication of the area, Museum director Dr. José H. Leal showed the plaque to Mrs. Nyquist.

Photo: Ginny Avery





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Post Office Box 1580
3075 Sanibel-Captiva Road
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electronic journal *Zootaxa* and is titled "*Tractolira delli*, a new Volutidae (Mollusca: Gastropoda: Neogastropoda) from the abyssal plains off Antarctica." The paper discusses a new deep-sea species of Volutidae in the genus *Tractolira*. It is named from material collected by the United States Antarctic Program in and around the Ross Sea, eastern Antarctica, and from one locality in the Subantarctic region.

Fort Myers Beach Chamber of Commerce employee Lena Drummond is translating the Museum exhibit information sheet into the Swedish language. She is a native of Malmö and has lived in the United States for many years.

From Jan. 9 to 11, Dr. Alan Kohn, Professor Emeritus of zoology at the University of Washington, revisited the Museum. He added more Museum Collection Department data to his work on Western Atlantic cones.

"Diving and Shelling in Papua New Guinea" was the topic of the Jan. 31 meeting of the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club, which was held at the Museum. The slide presentation was given by Gene Everson of Louisville, Kentucky. A retired Pan American Airlines pilot, Mr. Everson is known to his friends as the "Super Sheller." He spent two weeks in Papua New Guinea in March of 2005.

On March 28, Museum education volunteer Joyce Matthys spoke about "Shell Collecting in the Philippines." She and her husband, Ken, visited five major islands in the Philippines for three weeks in October 2005. Mrs. Matthys is the creator of the

acclaimed video, *Mollusks in Action*, which is shown hourly at the Museum.

Sanibel Realtor J.B. Novelli Internationale sponsored a section of footage about the Museum in a Sanibel-Captiva promotional video. It was made by Paradise Advertising of Sanibel for the Bonita Bay Group. It was produced by Katrina Solokar, and co-directed by Ms. Solokar and Patricia McIntosh.

Museum Mourns Many

Last fall, the Museum lost dedicated supporter and former trustee **Sam Ford**. "Sam Ford was one of the early working trustees at the time the Museum opened," said Dr. Leal. "He and his late wife, former Museum trustee Gertrude Ford, were devoted in their work with the successful School Shell Kit program." Longtime Great Hall of Shells volunteer Barbara Hansen noted, "Sam and Gertrude were instrumental in the founding and growth of the Museum. Sam continued to support it with dedicated interest and hands-on work, with leadership skills, and personal generosity whenever it was needed. Both Sam and Gertrude are greatly missed."

The Museum has recently lost dedicated supporters **Richard "Dick" Bird**, husband of store volunteer Nancy Bird; **Norma Chuback**, who volunteered in the Collection Department when the Museum opened; **Dennis Dworak**, who volunteered in the Collection Department when the Museum opened; longtime Collection Department volunteer **Jean Highsmith**, and longtime Great Hall of Shells docent **Mary Kraemer**.

The Museum wishes to thank the following donors who recently contributed \$1,000 or more in designated and undesignated funds: Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Avery, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Bowden, Mrs. Charles Bruning, the Community Foundation of Sanibel-Captiva/Bailey Society, Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Delman, Dr. James A. Hartman, the Estate of Marguerite Howard, Mrs. Louis B. Kohn, Dr. Harry G. Lee, Mr. J.R.H. Lightbourn, the Marmot Foundation, Mrs. Phyllis L. Mason, Garwin and Marilee McNeilus, Mr. George Nyquist Jr., Mr. Harold Payson III, the Sanibel-Captiva Kiwanis Club, the Sanibel-Captiva Shell Club, Ms. Donna Schubert, Mrs. Merle B. Smith, the Southwest Florida Community Foundation Arts and Attractions Fund, Mr. and Mrs. Jon L. Thompson, Dr. Margaret A. Thorsen, Ms. Sheila Turner, Ms. Roxanne Van Bokkelen, Mrs. J. Howard Wood, and Mr. and Mrs. John D. Zimmerman.

Funding to print this newsletter provided by the Community Foundation of Sanibel-Captiva/2005 Bailey Society Grant

Sponsored in part by the State of Florida,
Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs,
the Florida Arts Council, and the
National Endowment of the Arts



Editor: Libby Grimm

Museum's 10th Anniversary Celebration



The 10-year anniversary celebration was a busy weekend for the Museum, as these photographs show! At top right is guest of honor Dr. Geerat J. Vermeij, in the Collection Department with his wife and research collaborator, Edith Zipser Vermeij. All additional photos, from left to right, are of the evening party or Dr. Vermeij's afternoon lecture: Evelyn Spencer and Ralph Moore; and Museum trustee and Sanibel School principal Barbara Von Harten, Museum director Dr. José H. Leal, Norm Zeigler, and Rick Von Harten. Second row: Museum trustee president Jon L. Thompson and Francis Bailey; Dr. Vermeij and Alice Monroe; Georgette Laforet, Biddy Dean, and Kathy Cook. Third row: Dr. Vermeij, Harold Payson III, Joyce Matthys, and Stephanie Payson; and Louise Danforth, Myra Legg, Cherie Pierce, and Carol Berninger. Fourth row: Dr. Leal, Georgette Laforet, and Ralph Moore; Pat Moreman and store manager Kim Nealon; and former business manager Tina Yorgey, public relations manager Libby Grimm, and volunteer and photographer Sheila Nugent.

Photos: Sheila Nugent and Dr. José H. Leal

