





# The Epitonium

## Houston Conchology Society

 **Annual**  **Banquet** 

 **MAY 20<sup>TH</sup> 2023 – NOON** 

 **Tickets \$25 per-person** 

*To Reserve a spot call or text 713.784.7084  
or email Leslie@harf.org by end-of-day 5/14*



**MONUMENT INN  
RESTAURANT**

4406 Independence Pkwy. La Porte, TX 77571

## President's Message

Dear HCS Members,

As we wind down the HCS club year, I look forward to seeing all of you at the banquet at **noon Saturday May 20th**.

It is not too late to get your \$25 tickets! Come, spend time with your friends, enjoying fellowship and a great meal.

**To reserve your spot, you can send me an email, call, or text me by end-of-day May 14th.**

See you all soon at the Banquet!

Leslie

## 2023-24 Dues

Thanks to everyone who has paid dues. If you have not paid for next year, and you receive a paper copy of the newsletter, you will find a renewal form inside. If you read the newsletter on the HCS website, and you have not paid, you will receive a reminder email. Mail your check to the address on the form or pay at the Banquet. Please pay ASAP, so the checks can be deposited together.



**President:**  
Leslie Crnkovic

**Vice President:**  
Angela Doucette

**Treasurer:**  
Angie Haneiko

**Recording Secretary:**  
Rusti Stover

**Corresponding Secretary:**  
Jerry Clampit

Visit HCS online at  
[www.houstonshellclub.com](http://www.houstonshellclub.com)

## CALENDAR

5/20/23	HCS Banquet
5/31/23	COA Convention
8/5/23	San Antonio SC Auction
10/12-14	SSS Shell Show

## Upcoming Events:

The **2023 COA Convention** is in Wilmington, NC, **May 31-June 4**. More information is available here:

<https://conchologistsofamerica.org/conventions/>.

The **San Antonio Shell Club** will be hosting an auction on **August 5**. Once again it will be at the San Pedro Presbyterian Church: 14900 San Pedro Ave, San Antonio, TX 78232. They always have some nice shells, so let's go and support them.

## Minutes - April 16, 2023

Submitted by Rusti Stover

Vice President Angela Doucette opened the meeting at 2:05 PM. President Leslie Crnkovic joined in progress a few minutes later. Jerry Clampit made a motion to accept the minutes of the March 2023 meeting as published in the newsletter, Steven Coker seconded, all approved, motion passed. Treasurer Angie Haneiko gave the financial report and stated that the 10x10 storage room the club rents had a slight increase in rent.

Leslie reported that tickets for the end of season banquet, Saturday May 20<sup>th</sup> at the Monument Inn, are available for purchase at 25 dollars apiece. Members can pay Angie today.

Under New Business, Leslie relinquished the floor to Jerry Clampit, who presented thoughts and considerations about possible club mergers and ways to preserve Texas shell clubs. Jerry urged members to think about these ideas and report back at the September meeting.

Lucy Clampit mentioned the possibility of a club shell auction at the October Shell Show in Lake Jackson. Wanda Coker spoke more on this subject, also mentioning the fee for rental of the area at the Lake Jackson Civic Center for the shell show had been waived, but there are additional expenses for the Sea Shell Searchers to put on the shell show, and asked the Houston club to consider having the Sea Shell Searchers also be a part of the auction, with oral auction items from that club being marked as monies that would go to them to help offset the cost of the shell show. This topic will be discussed by the officers and worked out before the October shell show.

Dave Green then talked more about the Texas clubs possibly merging in the future, maybe in the way the North Carolina Shell Club has done, with meetings in different cities. He mentioned this is up to the members to decide.

Speaker Tina Petway introduced HMNS employee Anne Avara and noted that Anne did the work behind Tina's programs to make them very professional.

With no further business to discuss, Frank Petway made a motion to adjourn, Linda Green seconded, and Leslie adjourned the meeting at 2:35 pm.

## Sea Rim Beachcombing Report

By Lisa Alderman

The East Beach at Sea Rim State Park has provided some amazing beachcombing finds lately. Over the last few months, I found some very large Shark Eye and Angel Wings, a nice Lightning Whelk or two and some cool barnacles and sea beans. But the most incredible and truly surprising find was the little amethyst tinted sea glass stopper.

I had been out on the beach for about 5 hours (walked 8.4 miles that day) and was nearing the beach access road when a shell caught my eye. I usually don't spend much time shelling in this area thinking it gets the most traffic, human and cars. When I reached down for it, I saw "something purple" nearby. My first thought was that it was probably plastic. There's not a lot of sea glass on this beach and I typically only see it much farther down the beach. I couldn't believe it was sea glass!

I wanted to know all about this little piece of glass, so I hit the internet! The size and shape of the glass piece indicates that it was once part of a "shell cork and stopper" style of bottle stopper. Originally a cork sheath would have been installed around the glass stopper shank to create a tight seal in the bottle. This type of stopper was used from the mid 19<sup>th</sup>-century to the mid 20<sup>th</sup>-century on bottles containing non-carbonated substances only.

The amethyst color of this stopper indicates that it was originally colorless glass. Between 1880 and 1915 manganese was used by glass manufacturers in the United States as a decolorizing agent to offset the impurities in the sand to create colorless glass. Extended exposure to UV light causes manganese to oxidize creating the amethyst color. Germany was the main supplier of manganese and with the outbreak of World War I, US supplies of manganese were depleted. By 1920 glass manufacturers were using selenium instead. This stopper may be over 100 years old!



I had a casual curiosity about sea glass before, but now I'm very interested. If you have not visited [www.beachcombingmagazine.com](http://www.beachcombingmagazine.com), give it a try. The articles on sea glass and other beachcombing finds are very interesting and the videos are well made. Articles on that site lead me to the book *Pure Sea Glass* by Richard LaMotte which explores sea glass colors and origins. Another interesting site is the *Historic Glass Bottle Identification & Information Website*, <https://sha.org/bottle/>. The more I read, the more anxious I am to return to Sea Rim to hunt for sea glass!



## ST. CROIX SEASHELL SOCIETY

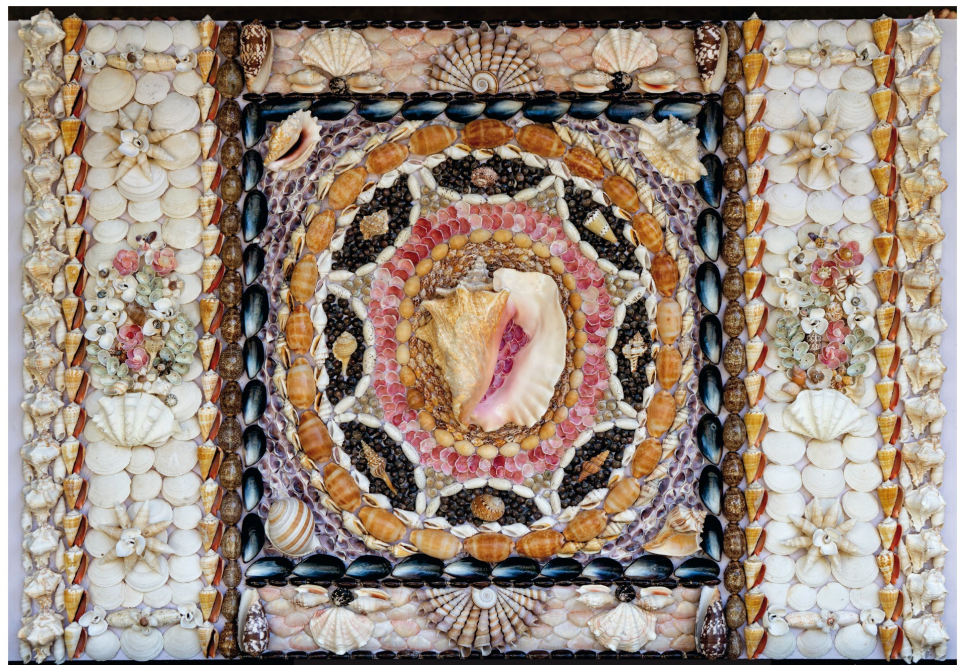
By Sharon Grimes

Formed in May 2014, the mission of the St. Croix Seashell Society is to inspire, educate and increase awareness and appreciation of seashells through exhibits and other monthly educational programs.

Our purpose is to:

- Highlight the beauty of the marine ecology of our island
- Encourage a community sharing of our resources
- Foster a growing community stewardship for the ecology of our island.

St. Croix is an island in the Caribbean Sea surrounded by the beautiful azure sea, sand and beaches. Many of our shores have different types of sand dollars and seashells, such as the nerite, conch and cowrie. Over the years these shells have been collected, used for building, used for decoration, and taken off the island. Dredging, over-fishing, and pollution have caused a decline in our shell populations. Local laws now prohibit any form of sea life from being taken from the beach. As founders of the Seashell Society, Marcia Taylor and I were able to obtain permits to take dead shells and echinoderms from the beaches to use for educational purposes. We were allowed to collect 100 species, only 3 specimens each. We have established a seashell museum to highlight and pre-





serve these treasures.

By January 2015 we had our first exhibit at Fort Frederik, near where the cruise ships dock. We had plenty of visitors, and also held monthly education programs for both adults and school children. In August 2016 we moved to our current home at the St. George Village Botanical Gardens. Not only a botanical garden, it is the site of a Danish Sugar Cane plantation from the late 1700s. Our exhibit is located in one of the rooms

formerly occupied by enslaved workers on the plantation. It is small, but we think wonderful. We have a case of gastropods, a case of bivalves, and a case of echinoderms that are strictly St. Croix shells and urchins. We have a case of African seashells to honor the island's African heritage and a case of worldwide shells to show off many more spectacular shells. We continue to hold education programs for pre-K through high school students, summer camps, and adult programs. On our Facebook page, St. Croix Seashell Society, we have several YouTube videos of different education topics.

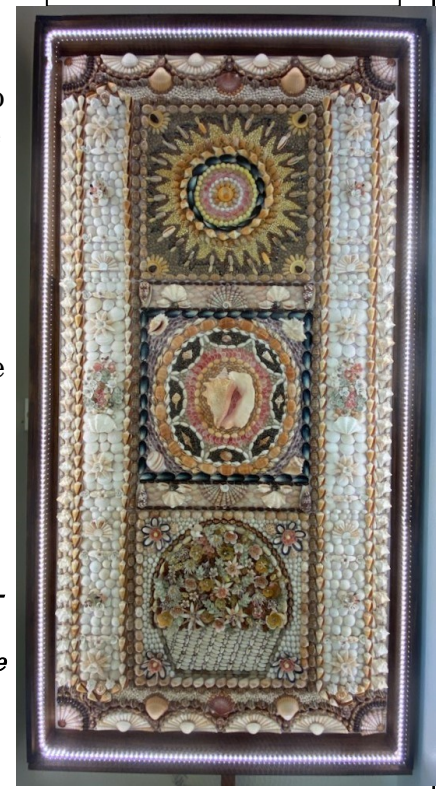
In January 2020, we began a seashell mosaic project to be installed at the Botanical Garden. After the pandemic, and many iterations of where to install and what it would look like, we are very proud to install our 4' x 8' mosaic at the entrance to the Visitor Center at the St. George Village Botanical Gardens on St. Croix, USVI. Created by volunteers for the St. Croix Seashell Society, Inc., the photo by Dan Boyarski is attached. Together they spent over 500 hours during an 80-day period. The mosaic contains over 7000 seashells from 56 different families. We also used sea urchin spines in some of the flowers. Some of the shells were purchased craft shells, some were donated from old family collections, and some are findings from the dredging of the Christiansted Harbor in the late 1980s.

We invite everyone to St. Croix, and specifically to St. George Village Botanical Gardens and the Seashell Museum.

*(Editor's Note: A special thanks to Sharon Grimes for sharing this with us. Sharon was a member of the North Texas Shell Club for many years before she moved to St Croix in the US Virgin Islands. She has remained friends with Dave Green and attended COA last year in Galveston, the first convention that she has attended in several years. She has also attended several Texas Jamborees including the one in Houston in 2012.)*



Photo of entire mosaic is by Patti Tullis.



## A Very Special Addition

Written By Tina Petway – Associate Curator of Malacology and Marine Invertebrates – Houston Museum of Natural Science

If you have ever purchased anything from an Auction, you know how fun that can be. But it can also be very stressful if there is something really special that you feel you must have. For me, that recently was the case as I viewed a site that has weekly auctions of nice quality Marine and Land shells. While I seldom purchase anything from any of the excellent Sea Shell Auctions currently available on line, I made an exception to my general rule.

The Museum's huge, extensive Malacological collection contains the finest and most complete collection of Philippine Island and general central Pacific marine mollusk species, but we continue to add an occasional special single or group of shells from this area. We also have begun a specialized collection of Marine and Land species from such places as Madagascar and Mauritius. While collecting from Mauritius has been banned, some species from older collections have been offered to us in the last few years.

Madagascar is an amazingly extravagant area for some very special shelled mollusks exhibiting wonderful forms and colors. And one such very Special shell was recently offered on one of the Sea Shell Auction sites. I couldn't truly believe the color I was seeing was an accurate representation of the specimen in question. My inquiry into the accuracy of the color was quickly answered and was proven to be accurate. Then my next thought was that this shell should be in a museum to be shared and appreciated by thousands of visitors. I therefore went in search of funding for the possible purchase of this specimen. I was quickly assured that funds would be available to acquire it if we were successful in our bidding for this shell. I went to my newly appointed Collections Manager for Malacology, Gary Kidder. His reaction was the same as mine to this specimen and we devised a plan to acquire it from the Auction.

As you know in bidding on an auction item, it is the usual practice to wait till near the ending time for the auction and then place a bid. Since the ending time for this particular auction was 7:00 AM on a Monday morning, both Gary and I stayed up all night before the deadline to watch the bidding go up and up and up. When the price reached the higher level of value that I anticipated for this amazing shell, we began to place a bid occasionally. In the remaining few minutes of the auction my blood pressure elevated greatly and excitement overtook both Gary and me as we were able to anticipate the next counter bid which we contended with successfully. In the last seconds there were no higher offers for the specimen and we both texted our Director of Collections our success. Then came the emails to everyone we knew were watching and hoping for our successful outcome. As we both, along with our Director of Collections Gabby Truly, collapsed with exhaustion, I thought I heard bells ringing and joyful music playing. If you have ever enjoyed being able to add such an item to something you are fond of, you will be able to understand our elation that this specimen will be seen and appreciated by many and not just hidden in a personal collection somewhere and seldom if ever seen again.



Here is a photo of the specimen of *Harpa cabritti* from Madagascar. We hope to be able to exhibit this specimen in the coming months, and I will keep you all informed when it is finally given the place it deserves.

Always remember to care for your shells and keep any and all information with your specimens.



## Birds and Snails

By Rusti Stover

I went birding up at Lakeside Park in the Woodlands a week ago, with very specific directions from a birding friend, of where a Limpkin in that area has been hanging out. Limpkins are a far-south species of a large swamp and coastal bird that, until just recently, had not been seen any further north than South Florida. It seems that with the northern advance of the huge, Channeled Apple Snails in recent years, which are the Limpkin's main diet staple, the birds have followed, and are now found in Georgia and Louisiana and most likely also all coastal Gulf states. In Texas, there have been sightings in the Brazos Bend State Park area of a breeding pair just last year in May, and now this one in the Woodlands. Photo is of one in a Louisiana swamp that I found online.



Well, I did not find the bird, but did find exactly where he was eating the snails at the water's edge. Hopefully I will someday find the bird itself for my birding life list. The birds are not displacing any other species, and are marginally helping to control the giant invasive swamp snails.



## The Sea Shell Searchers Shell Show

is scheduled for **October 12-14**, at the Lake Jackson Civic Center, so you have approximately 5 months to get your exhibits ready. Entry forms are on the HCS website: [www.houstonshellclub.com](http://www.houstonshellclub.com).

Applications are now being accepted!

New Category: Sunny Sea Snail

Plans are being made to have the **HCS Auction** in conjunction with the Shell Show – similar to what we did last year at the Jamboree. Stay tuned for more details.



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Permission is granted for reprinting articles, provided credit is given to *The Eptonium*, the writer, and the Houston Conchology Society and a copy of the reprint is sent to the editor of the newsletter.

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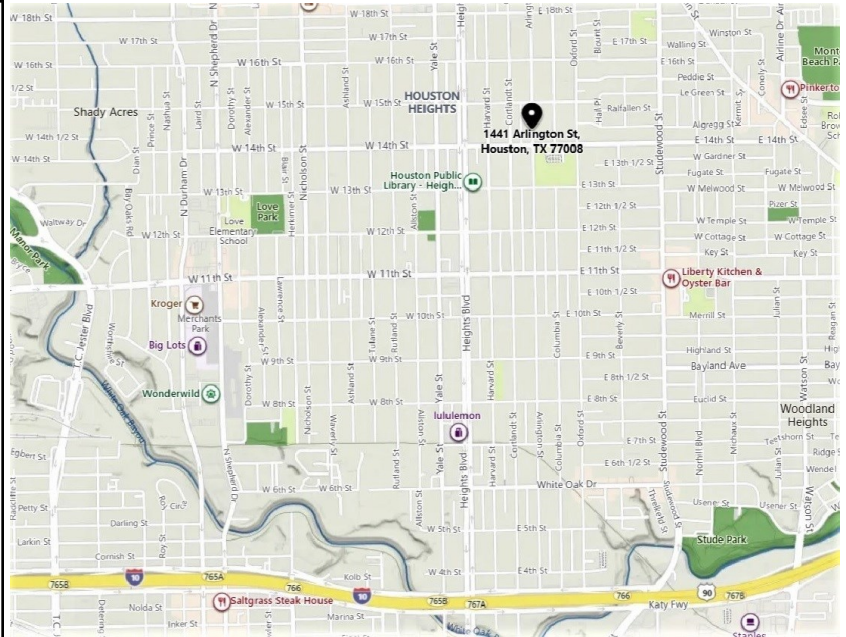
The Society holds regular meetings on the third Sunday of September, October, November, January, February and April. There are seasonal events and a yearly shell auction scheduled in the other months.

VISITORS WELCOME!!!

Membership year extends from June 1 through May 31.

Annual membership dues: Family \$20; Single \$15; Junior (under 18) \$6.

Make checks payable to Houston Conchology Society and send to the treasurer whose address is listed on the form.



## Immanuel Lutheran Church

306 E. 15<sup>th</sup> Street

### HOUSTON CONCHOLOGY SOCIETY

**Lucy Clampit**, Corresponding Secretary

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