



The Epitonium

February Program

By Rusti Stover

"Seashells of the Yellow Sea", our February program by Russell Renka, addresses distinctive species, including Buccinidae, Muricidae, and Pectinidae from this cool water Asian continental shelf sea. It is also a growing region for intensive aquaculture of Bivalvia. Chinese and Korean fishermen and shellers have rapidly expanded our knowledge of this region and the adjacent East China Sea and Taiwan Straits. Russell will illustrate this with a

globe, some maritime maps, and a host of specimens.

Russell Renka has been an armchair collector for years, while holding a professor's job in the inland State of Missouri. Since retirement and return to Texas, he calls himself a beachcomber; he is a member of the San Antonio Shell Club, and buyer and seller and swapper of marine shells.

President's Message

By Leslie Crnkovic

Greetings,
We have a full night planned for the February meeting. Tickets will be on sale for the **May 2nd** Banquet at Brady's Landing. We will be presenting the revised HCS By-Laws and the 2015-2016 Slate of Officers, which are to be voted on at the March meeting which is also the auction. Come enjoy the program. Look forward to seeing you all there!

HCS Website

There have been some issues with the club's website for the past month. We are pleased to announce that those issues have been resolved and everyone can again access the site through:

www.houstonshellclub.com .

February 17th Meeting

By Rusti Stover

Fellow Shellers: Our February meeting night this year is Fat Tuesday, or Mardi Gras! The actual day! If you happen to have seashell-or-sea-related Mardi Gras beads, why not wear them to the meeting...or the Mardi Gras colors, purple, green and gold! We will have some beads to help celebrate, and a King Cake! Whoever finds the baby in the cake will get a special little gift! So come join us for the meeting, (maybe bring a Cajun-themed treat to add to our munchies?) enjoy a great program by one of the San Antonio club members, and just plain fun at our monthly gathering! Hope to see you there on **Tuesday February 17, 2015!** Aiiiee...laissez le bon temps rouler! (Let the good times roll!) Come early to shop at the sale table.

President:

Leslie Crnkovic
713-784-7084 / 713-598-7084
(cell)

Vice President:

Angela Doucette
(713) 523-0169

Treasurer:

Nancy Mustachio
713-526-7733

Recording Secretary:

Tina Petway
(713) 864-6683

Corresponding Secretary:

Lucy Clampit
(713) 468-0610

Program Chairman

Rusti Stover
(713) 660-6446

January Minutes

Submitted by Tina Petway

The meeting was called to order by Leslie Crnkovic at 7:33 pm on January 20, 2015. The minutes and treasurer's report were approved.

Rusti Stover reported that the February program will be on shells of the Yellow Sea by Russell Renka from the San Antonio Shell Club. The March program will be the annual auction. The April program will be presented by Dr. Fabio Moretzsohn. In May, we will have our end of the year banquet.

Lucy Clampit announced that Tuawanda Bermudez, wife of former member Alex Bermudez, has donated his shell collection to the Houston Museum of Natural Science and the HCS.

Leslie asked for volunteers for the nominating committee, but it was tabled for now as the changes to the By-Laws might make changes to this year's nominations. There will be upcoming work on the wording of the By-Laws which will be presented to the membership for approval. Copies of the current By-Laws are available on the Web site.

Requests to have the May banquet at a different venue were discussed and Leslie will look into all sites. There being no other old business or new business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:57 pm.

Rusti introduced Lucy Clampit whose shelling adventures around the interior of the continental U. S. entertained us all. Darwin Alder announced the door prize winners, and silent auction treasures were picked up by lucky winners.

Visit HCS online at
www.houstonshellclub.com

CALENDAR

2-17	HCS meeting
3-7	HCS Auction
4-21	HCS meeting
5-2	HCS Banquet
7-14	COA Convention

Nominating Committee

Although a nominating committee was not formed at the January 20th meeting. A committee has since been formed, comprising:

John Zelko, Chair
Tina Petway
Dave Barziza

Slate of Officers for 2015-2016

President: Leslie Crnkovic
Vice-President: Rusti Stover
Treasurer: Nancy Mustachio

Recording Secretary: Rachel Zelko
Corresponding Secretary: Lucy Clampit

Notice Of Revision Of The HCS By-Laws

A new revision of the HCS By-Laws is being provided as a supplement to this newsletter for review and commentary by the general membership at the **February 17th** HCS Meeting, and subsequent approval at the **March 7th HCS Meeting/Auction**.

Beach Report

by John Zelko

It was dark outside and a chilly 38 degrees in the early morning on January 18, but the promise of getting to enjoy one of the first sunny days in weeks had us in the truck and driving toward the coast before 6:00 am. Rachel and I parked the truck on the levee road in Surfside to witness a glorious sunrise around 7:00 am, and then proceeded over the bridge and straight through the light to the beach. The sand was piled high and soft. There was an abandoned car stuck in the sand from the previous night that blocked access for my vehicle so we turned around and stopped at the corner store for a large cup of hot coffee and continued down Follett's Island toward the San Luis pass.



At about the halfway point, we turned off the highway and drove down the beach which was flat and smooth and clean from the previous high tide. The expanse of sand was also quite a bit wider than normal since the present tide was approaching a predicted low of -0.8ft. There were two lightly sprinkled drift lines here, one high on the beach and one closer to the water's edge, and the first sand bars were exposed. We didn't find much of significance on this stretch other than a live, silver dollar sized *Polinices duplicata* and its egg mass half buried in the sand. We snapped a photo of it, left it to its affairs and moved on.



Down at the pass we had a nice long two to three hours of low tide conditions. There were numerous drift lines here and a lot to look at, just not a lot of it fresh. We saw quite a few large and brightly colored Giant Atlantic Cockle halves on the Treasure Island side of the bridge. In the past, this has been a good spot to occasionally find a large, live specimen. Here we also picked up several fresh and nicely sized *Oliva sayana*. In the pile of granite and concrete boulders that used to be the fishing pier, I found a surprisingly large and mature *Strombus alatus*, not fresh but recent enough to still have its color and some gloss. The prize find of the morning came after that. Here on the shady side of an exposed, barnacle encrusted con-

crete slab was a group of live *Thais haemastoma*, and a gorgeous live *Murex fulvescens*. I was quite excited as it is the first one I have found live here, and the first live one I have heard found here in the last ten years.



We walked back the other direction toward the county park. The sand here, near the waterline, was black with the last remnants of the sargassum seaweed that had buried area beaches last year. It had the consistency of wet tea leaves and was accumulating heavily on our shoes. Not much to find here, but two empty wentletraps. Rachel “rescued” a large stone crab which was half frozen in the drift line and returned it to the water.

We left San Luis pass and headed to Quintana Beach next. At this location the only live mollusks washing in were some ark shells. The beach here also had two drift lines, one high and one low, and the sand in between was littered with more sargassum remnants. Here the dried seaweed was compressed into small spongy bricks that would break apart when kicked. As we were walking we were passed by a van hauling a trailer full of Home Depot boxes, followed by another vehicle. They entered the beach at the pier and stopped about two thirds of the distance to the jetty. Rachel and I were speculating as to what they were doing on the beach since they were not official looking vehicles, and the park has restricted access only. Per-

haps they were beach cleanup volunteers or going to work on the park's beach access boardwalks? As we neared, a group of people exited the vehicles and started to carry the two dozen thirty inch boxes toward the water and gently place them on the sand. By now we were getting really curious as to what we were witnessing. We approached the group which by now had grown with informed bystanders from the park campground. As it turns out, we had the serendipitous occasion to watch 23 rescued and rehabilitated brown pelicans be released back into the wild by Texas Parks and Wildlife volunteers. All of the boxes were opened at once and the comedy ensued. Some of the birds got up immediately and flew out to the water. Others waddled their way to the water's edge, dipped a foot in the water as if to check the temperature before swimming out to the join the others. Before long all twenty three pelicans were rafted together about a hundred yards out, bathing, preening, and running through their pre-flight checklists. As we were leaving we saw them joined by a couple of new pelicans that were flying by, all bobbing in the gently rolling waves. It was an exciting finale to a beautiful sunny day by the sea.



Note: the pelican photo was borrowed from Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept. Facebook post. If you look closely at the image you will find Rachel and me at the far left!