



The Epitonium

OCTOBER PROGRAM

"WHAT IS A RARE SHELL?"

By Rusti Stover

Russell Renka, a member of the San Antonio Shell Club, shell dealer and entertaining speaker, will be giving the October program on **Tuesday, October 18th**, at the Houston Museum of Natural Science. Russell entertained us with a great program on "Seashells of the Yellow Sea" in February of 2015, and is coming back to give us insight on rare shells. He will be bringing a few specimens along to show, as well as a PowerPoint slide show about the things that make a shell a rarity, and how that changes over time.

A little background information about Russell: A Native of Austin, Texas, Russell is a graduate of the University of Texas. He retired in July of 2010 as Emeritus Professor of Political Science from Southeast Missouri State University in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, and has resided in Round Rock, Texas since that time. He considers himself a beachcomber, and "buyer, seller, and swapper" of seashells.

Please join us for this entertaining program.

Refreshments and social time will begin at 7:00 p.m., and the meeting will begin at 7:30.

President's Message

By Leslie Crnkovic

We were really treated to a great program from NOAA on the state of the Flower Garden Banks at the September meeting! October should prove to be just as interesting. We look forward to seeing you there.

'Beni-Okina-Ebisu' *Mikadotrochus hirasei* (Pilsbry, 1903), A Long and Wonderful History — A Melding of Collecting Passions — Sea Shells and Shells-on-Stamps. At an upcoming HCS meeting, perhaps February 2017, he hopes to present this exhibit as the program. (See exhibit on page 3)

San Diego Shell Show

May 21st, 2016, while the Houston shell club celebrated at Brady's Landing, the club President, Leslie Crnkovic was competing in the "West Coast Shell Show," in Casa del Prado, Balboa Park, San Diego, CA. Entering a total of 5 exhibits, he earned the top award "The Festivus" for his 16 foot exhibit: A Celebration of the Emperor's Slit-Shell



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Visit HCS online at
www.houstonshellclub.com

CALENDAR

10-18	HCS meeting
11-13	Gem & Mineral Show
11-15	HCS meeting
12-11	HCS Christmas Party

Upcoming Events

HGMS Gem, Jewelry,
Mineral, and Fossil Show
Nov. 11–13 | Humble
Civic Center - \$8
www.hgms.org/Show.html



September Minutes

Submitted by Tina Petway – Recording Secretary

The meeting was called to order (after the program) at 8:48 p.m. by President Leslie Crnkovic. New members John and Angela Ha-neiko were introduced and welcomed. The treasurer's report was given by Sandy Clark and approved. There were no minutes from May as we did not meet but enjoyed our end-of-year banquet. Leslie and Sandy reported that the process of our return to non-profit status is nearing completion.

Rusti Stover reported on upcoming programs: Russell Renka will present a program on "What is a Rare Shell" in October. In November our program will be presented by Alex Chapman and David Diehl about their recent shelling trip to the Philip-pines. Our December Christmas Party will be held at the home of Nancy and Johnny Mustachio with Sandy Clark hosting along with Nancy. The date for the party is Dec. 11.

Field Trips: We would like to hold a fossil collecting trip to the site near Bryan, Texas, that we have visited in years past. Information concerning this trip will be up-coming. Frank Petway reported that the Sea Shell Searchers of Brazoria County will have a field trip to Sargent Beach in October. The date will be given in an email to all members when a date has been chosen.

Tina Petway reported that the annual Christmas tree decorating will again take place at the Houston Museum of Natural Sci-ence. This year's theme is "Saving the Sea Turtles". Lucy Clampit moved to give Tina and her crew \$500.00 for purchase of materials to decorate the tree. The motion was seconded by Rusti Stover and carried. Any money not used will be put back in the club's account.

Tina reported that the Constance Boone Grant was awarded to a student attending Texas A&M at Corpus Christi. The Houston Conchology Society Grant was also awarded to a student attend-ing Texas A&M at Corpus Christi. Information about the recipi-ents will be in the October newsletter.

Wayne Humbird announced that there was still time and space available to enter the Brazoria County Fair's Of Sea and Shore Exhibits. Set up date for this is Oct. 8. Anyone interested in in-formation concerning the entry into the Fair may contact Wayne Humbird.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

Christmas Tree

By Tina Petway

This year's tree design will encompass the ocean world of turtles. Our theme is "Saving the Sea Turtles of the World." We will use several different kinds of materials to create the turtles and add ocean like backgrounds for them. There will be work days at my house, and I will email the dates for them. Anyone interested in helping make these decorations or in helping to assemble the tree is encouraged to **call me at home: 713-436-4052**. We recently stopped using our old phone number (713-864-6683) and now only use the new number. Dates for work days and the tree assemblage day will be sent by email or phone calls. We always have the most beautiful tree in the Great Hall at the Museum and our message is always one of the most appreciated. Help us use this year to make an impact on the minds of the Museum visitors.

Christmas Party

The annual Christmas party will be **Sunday, December 11**. It will be hosted by Sandy Clark and Nancy Mustachio at Nancy's home. More details will be coming.



Leslie Crnkovic's Prize-winning Exhibit



Update On Flower Garden Banks Mortality

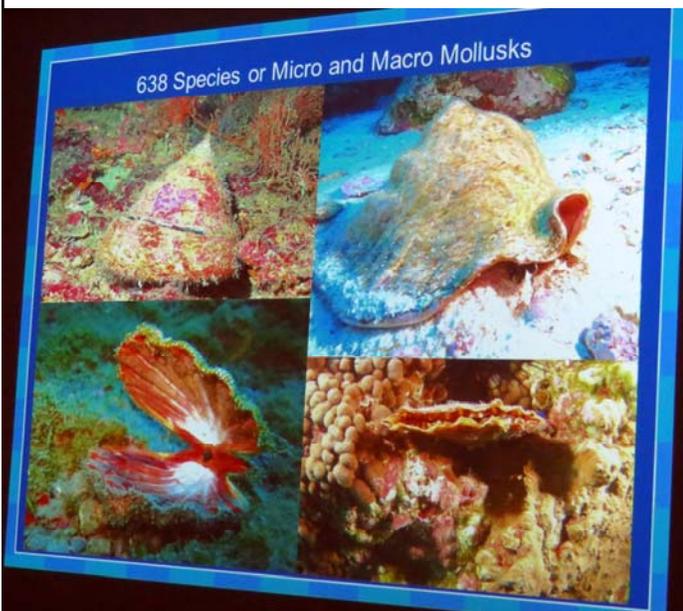
By Rusti Stover

Emma Hickerson, main research coordinator with the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary (FGBNMS), gave a wonderful program to our assembled club members on Tuesday night, September 21, at the Houston Museum of Natural Science. She also brought along a few DVDs about the "Coral Reef Cap Highlights." They were put into our door prizes for lucky members to take home and peruse.

Since the mortality at the East Flower Garden Banks reef was just discovered by divers in late July, Emma noted, they are still researching cause and effect after sending dive teams down and taking numerous samples. So far, nothing has spread to the West Flower Garden Banks, twelve miles away from the east reef. What the researchers *think* may be part of the die-off problem is a combination of natural events: hotter water in the Gulf, a heavy saline 'lake' and 'river' running through the bottom of the reef, too much freshwater inflow further up the reef from our very wet spring and summer and all that fresh water combining in the shallow water above the reef. It all came together to cause a "cyanobacterial" (the slimy stuff that smothered reef life) event. However, until their research is complete, this is all speculation about the causes of this scary mortality event in one of our most important underwater sites.



Emma wanted us to know that, in comparison to other reefs worldwide, the Flower Garden Banks is still a very healthy reef in the Caribbean system of reefs – more healthy, in fact, than the famous Great Barrier Reef off Australia, which has recently suffered a calamitous die-off of much greater proportion. In June of this year, this report went out that fully a quarter of that expansive reef system has been killed by climate change "bleaching". <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/jun/07/the-great-barrier-reef-a-catastrophe-laid-bare>



For any Internet updates on the health of our Flower Garden Banks reef system, here is a link to their main page: <http://flowergarden.noaa.gov/>.

Look for future articles about the reef health in upcoming newsletters.

2016 HCS Grants

By Tina Petway

This year's two grant recipients are both full time students at Texas A&M University at Corpus Christi. The Constance Boone Grant was awarded to Danielle Aguilar, a graduate research assistant in Marine Biology. Her thesis project is focused on the faunal development of a 57 acre oyster reef restoration project in Matagorda Bay. This project was completed in 2014. The continued observation of the recovery of the oysters, crustaceans, mollusks, and other associated fauna will be monitored in the long term by Daniell and others doing this invaluable research into restoring some of the many lost oyster reef systems in the Gulf.

The recipient of the Houston Conchology Society Grant was Meredith Diskin who is studying the effects of temperature changes which affect species growth into habitats along the Texas coast, such as the invasive black mangrove. With these habitat changes from salt marsh to mangroves, some impacts on the local mollusks and other types of fauna are inevitable. By monitoring the Common Marsh Periwinkle, *Littorina irrorata*, it is hoped that the health of these changed ecosystems will continue to provide good environments for the associated species of the salt marshes.



Sea Rim State Park

Since the park is located on the Sabine River delta, in 2005 the park's facilities were destroyed by Hurricane Rita. They have been rebuilt and have been open for a couple of years. HCS members Cathy Betley and Victoria Craig visited it recently.

Cathy reports that "It was a beautiful day and there was a light wind at the beach but still plenty of mosquitoes – not too many shells but Victoria picked up quite a few beached Texas Moon Snails."



"The park has chemical toilets that are housed in hurricane resistant, small buildings. The beach area, within the park property, is quite tidy, and you can also drive past the park to the east and west and then onto the open beach that is not supervised by the State of Texas Park System. With all the rain we've had in the past few months, the marsh grass and other grasses are thriving and are various, beautiful shades of green. There are lots of salt marsh water areas for ocean kayaking and also apparently lots of alligators."

If you are interested in more information about the park, this is the website: <http://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/sea-rim>.