President’s Message
By Dave Green

It appears the vaccines are close at hand, finally. Let’s hope so. I still anticipate that 2021 will be a better year for HCS. Just don’t let down your guard at this point.

I really don’t have a message this month except Linda and I wish everyone in HCS a VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS and a MUCH BRIGHTER NEW YEAR. Let us give thanks for what we have and what we shall receive, and remember there are people in Houston, and around the world that will have so much less and many nothing at all. Give thanks for your blessings and stay healthy. Let us pray that 2021 will finally see us attending club meetings and special functions once again. Stay safe. Best wishes and joy to all.

Dave and Linda Green by their unique Christmas tree.
Molluscs on Stamps
by John Jacobs

There are only a few stamp issues for Christmas that incorporate shells in the designs. The earliest of these that I know of is the 1972 Gilbert & Ellice Islands issue where shells were used to illustrate the nativity. The shells are realistic representations that make these two stamps a very colorful addition to one’s collection.

In 2007 the Bahamas issued a set of six stamps showing ornaments. Five of these are ornaments made from shells. These lovely designs will make you wish you had these ornaments on your tree.

Fiji is a little slice of paradise in the south Pacific which has produced several shell-related stamp issues. The stamp shown here was issued in 1996 as part of a set of four. This high value stamp from the set has a nativity scene on the left and a native on the right blowing a Triton’s trumpet (Charonia tritonis).

The last stamp here is a Palau issue from 1996 that was part of a strip of five stamps depicting different types of trees decorated for Christmas. This stamp shows pandanus trees, and if you look closely, there are some shell ornaments hanging down.

From Florida, I wish all my Texas friends the safest of holidays and a great New Year
HMNS Christmas Tree

For decades the Houston Museum of Natural Science has invited outside organizations to decorate Christmas Trees in the Great Hall. Traditionally, the HCS has been one of those organizations. This year, in the interest of safety, the museum decided to ask each museum department to decorate a tree, so there are only eight trees, but they are beautiful as always. Here are a few pictures of the Malacology Department tree. HCS was not totally left out, because our storage room supplied the decorations!
Thank You!

The editor thanks everyone who contributed pictures. Since the club could not have a Christmas party this year, her goal was for members to feel a little closer together and to perhaps bring a smile to a face. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Here are a few pictures that were shared:

This is Rusti Stover’s 2019 tree with a sandy beach full of shells and vintage glass floats.

From Angela Doucette: Like most people/kids, I love Christmas time – celebrating the birth of Christ, shopping, being with friends and family, and best of all, enjoying our favorite foods. One of my favorites is a delicious, nutty fruitcake soaked in bourbon. I’ve not completed my holiday decorations, but I find that the dining room table is the easiest to decorate whether Thanksgiving, Easter, birthday, etc. Here’s to all you shellers – Happy Feasting, Happy Holidays, and Happy shelling!
Mary Harris’ tree crafted by Darwin Alder.

Darwin Alder shared his tree and ornaments that he has made.
Nancy and John Mustachio’s beautiful tree and ornaments
These are Lucy and Jerry Clampit’s unusual Christmas trees. Most of the year the trees live in the shell room, but at Christmas they come downstairs, so the Clampits can enjoy the memories that the ornaments represent: trips, friends, co-workers, and even students.

Early Christmas Present
On November 30 Darwin Alder took a trip to the beaches of Louisiana. He was rewarded with a great find – several fairly fresh *Strombus alatus*! He found them near Cameron Parish road 305. Emilio Garcia from Lafayette, La confirmed that the species is alive and well, off LA and TX in 10-15 meters of water. Congratulations, Darwin!

Christmas Shopping for Shells
Many of you know Jose and Marcus Coltro who own Femorle. Marcus designs humorous pictures for their shell lists. The editor enjoyed this one from the December 7 list. Visions of Ancient Egyptians buying a few shells for Christmas.

From Marcus, “People have been collecting shells since early times, even more than 3,000 years B.C. (Before Coltro). On the walls of the pyramid of Pharaoh Fehmo’Ra-Leh, a painting shows the dealer Khol’trotep selling shells with 35% discount, the same discount applied here!