

# The Beauii



A newsletter published by the  
Sarasota Shell Club

[www.Sarasotashellclub.com](http://www.Sarasotashellclub.com)

We meet on the 2nd Thursday, 7:00 pm  
(September to April)

**Room 206, Albritton Center  
Bee Ridge Presbyterian Church  
4826 McIntosh Rd  
Sarasota, FL**

March, 2024 Edition

## CONGRATULATIONS SSC

Once again the Sarasota Shell Club showed how a community of diverse folks can come together to put on an outstanding Shell Show. Although hectic as always, the set-up was accomplished despite the usual minor snafus. The artistic and scientific exhibits were as we have come to expect, outstanding, giving the judges their usual plaque and ribbon challenges. The vendors filled the available space and seemed pleased with their sales. Show income was better than anticipated and SSC will have funds to support our activities and donate to our charities. And while successful, we continue to learn, and thus we can anticipate another splendid show in 2025.



As you read this, the calendar will have turned to March, and it will not be long before the migratory snowbirds will begin to believe they can fly north without much fear of getting their feathers frozen. And thus it is that another "school year" of Sarasota Shell Club begins to wind down. The Board will have their final meeting of the year March 14 (send agenda items to [duanerk@goshen.edu](mailto:duanerk@goshen.edu)). And at the March regular meeting a slate of officers will be voted in to assume their duties for the coming year. In that vein, ongoing pleas for persons to step forward seems to have worked, and it appears we will have a slate of nominees to present.

Be sure to check the Club calendar for coming events and hope to see many of you at the March 14 meeting.

Duane K

## Nominations of Officers

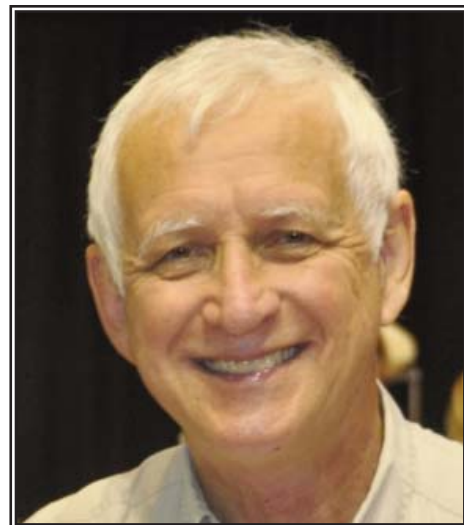
The Nominating Committee met on February 15, 2024 and the following Officers and Board Members were recommended:

**President:** Sally Peppitoni  
**Vice-President:** Karen Huether  
**Treasurer:** Allan Banko  
**Secretary:** Debbie McDermott  
**Board Members:**

Debbie Alexander (3); Donna Krusenoski (3); Nancy Cadieux (2); Amy Bentley (2); Donna Cassin (1); and Gwelda Wooldridge (1)

## March's Featured Speaker

Past SSC President, Dennis Sargent, will give a presentation "My Life with Seashells."



**The SSC's Annual Picnic . . . see page 3 for more information . . .and . . .  
The Clubs new website . . . see page 4!**

## Officers & Board Members

President	Duane Kauffmann
Vice-President	Ron Bopp
Treasurer	Alan Banko
Recording Secretary	Debbie McDermott

Board Members: Nancy Cadieux (3); Amy Bentley (2); Sally Peppitoni (2); Karen Huether (2); Donna Krusenoski (1); Debbie Alexander (1);

## Committee Chairmen

Artisans	tba
<i>The Beauii</i>	Ron Bopp
Historian	Duane Kauffmann
Field Trips	Gary Martinez
Librarian	Debbie McDermott
Membership	Lisa Kinney
Shell Show	Ron Bopp
Sunshine	Debbie McDermott
Webmaster	Bruce Paulsen

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- \* **Meetings** are held on the second Thursday of September through April at 7:00 pm.
  - \* **Dues** are \$30.00 for new single members and \$40.00 for family members (at the same address).
  - \* **Renewals** are \$25.00 for single and \$30.00 for family.
- \* If you want *The Beauii* printed and mailed it is an extra \$15.00 to your dues.
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**Contact the Editor** - email Ron Bopp at [rbopp1@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:rbopp1@tampabay.rr.com) or call at 918-527-0589 if you have something to include in *The Beauii*.

### Important . . . Same Location New Building

Yes, we are still meeting at Bee Ridge Church at 4826 McIntosh Road, Sarasota.

However, our meetings will be in the Albritton Center, Room 206. This is the administration building for the church, and there is ample parking.

**A 2023—2024**

**Membership application is  
attached to this Newsletter**

### Library Notes

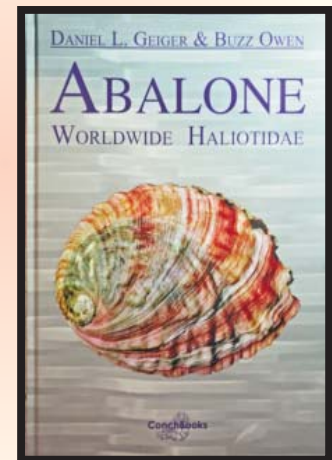
Our Sarasota Shell Club library is located at the Bee Ridge Presbyterian Church in Sarasota. A list of our books is on our website [www.sarasotashellclub.com](http://www.sarasotashellclub.com). For more info on some of our books, go to [www.mdmshellbooks.com](http://www.mdmshellbooks.com)

Books in the Sarasota Shell Club Library can be accessed by contacting Debbie McDermott at [washashore76@yahoo.com](mailto:washashore76@yahoo.com).

In addition persons needing information about shells and shelling can be assisted in contacting club members with relevant expertise.

There is a whole world of seashells and marine life out there!

Debbie



### Positions Needed

**Our Shell Club needs members to fill the following important position. Please consider volunteering for **HISTORIAN!****

**Contact President Duane Kauffmann at [duanerk@goshen.edu](mailto:duanerk@goshen.edu) for more information.**

## Historian's Report to March, 2024 SSC meeting

### 50 Years Ago

Thirty-six persons attended the March 14, 1974 meeting of the Sarasota Shell Club held in the Community Room of the Sarasota Bank and Trust Building. The minutes report that “we are in better financial shape than we have ever been since we have been organized, having a bank balance of \$2238.40.” The Shell Show had a profit of \$204.20.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Lipe gave a “very fine program” focused on shelling on Bimini, in the Bahamas. Photographs, many of live snails, accompanied the program.

### 25 Years Ago

No attendance numbers are given for the March 11, 1999 meeting of the Sarasota Shell Club. Much routine business was transacted. Included are

- (A) “Peggy Williams was cheered for her many years devoted to chairing the Shell Festival and she, in turn, thanked Lynn Gaulin for her work on the club table and for agreeing to chair the festival next year.”
- (B) A donated copy of Abbott's American Seashells book was auctioned off. Lynn Gaulin won the book with a bid of \$125.00.
- (C) The shell of the month, a Cockscomb Oyster, was discussed by Pat Amsel.
- (D) Rich and Lou Cirrantino are in charge of South Lido Beach clean-up day.

Also in the archives are two pages concerning shell show finances. The 1999 Shell Show had a profit of \$2310.77 and an attendance of 1823.

## April 13, 2024 End-of-the-year Picnic

Yes, on April 13th, 2024 (that is a Saturday) the Sarasota Shell Club will have it's annual picnic. It will be at the same pavilion that we have used in the past at Coquina Beach Park. The picnic will be catered as before with members providing their favorite deserts. More details are forthcoming . . .**here they are:**

On April 13, 2024 the Sarasota Shell Club will hold it's **Annual Picnic at Coquina Beach** ( next to the playground) from 10 AM to 4PM. It will be catered by Mission BBQ at 12 Noon. We will have BBQ brisket and smoked turkey, BBQ beans and coleslaw as well as cornbread/slider rolls. The cost per person is \$15.00 because the club will be subsidizing the rest of the cost. Please feel free to bring some dessert. We will have some lemonade, sweet tea and unsweetened ice tea to drink.

**Checks should be made out to the Sarasota Shell Club and mailed to Margo Heck, 406 Bolivia Blvd. Bradenton, FL 34207. Please send your check as soon as possible because I have to give them a final head count at least three days in advance. Thank you.**

## Mark Your Calendars — — — Save The Dates

We look forward to seeing you at all our events. “Eyeball” this space in each issue for additions, more information or changes.

- March 9      Shelling Trip: Missouri Key  
Low Tide (-0.73) at 6:47 am  
Time to be announced
- March 14      Membership Meeting (Bee Ridge Church, Room 206)  
Speaker: **Dennis Sargent**: “My Life with Seashells”  
Time: 7:00 pm
- April 11      Membership Meeting (Bee Ridge Church, Room 206)  
Speaker: **Ron Bopp**: “A Tale of Two Trips”  
Time: 7:00 pm
- April 13      Annual Sarasota Shell Club **Picnic** (Coquina Gulfside North Pavilion)  
Details to follow in future newsletters; **Chair: Margo Heck**  
Time: 10:00 am to 4:00 pm
- June 11-16    **Conchologist of America Convention**  
Melbourne, Florida  
Convention Chair: **TBA**

To attend the convention and participate in the presentations and silent auctions, you must be registered. Registration forms will be available soon on the COA web site **conchologistsofamerica.org**.

The Convention consists of a Welcome Party, Presentations, Silent Auctions, the Banquet, an oral Auction, and the Dealers Bourse. No registration is required to attend the oral auction and the bourse. The bourse can consist of up to 10,000 square feet of space for dealers from around the world displaying a huge variety of shells and shell-related items.

### Visit the Sarasota Shell Club's **New Website**

The Sarasota Shell Club now has a new website! It's still on the Internet at the same address as the previous website: <http://www.sarasotashellclub.com>.

Visitors will be able to learn about the club, see photos of our events, see photos from shell shows and of our activities, read old newsletters, learn about our charitable giving, and join the club if they wish. Club member Amy Bentley worked for several months with web designers Cindy Daly and Kyle Knapp of WhizCom Marketing (Amy's company based in California), to create a full new website at a cut rate.

It takes a LOT to build a new website from the ground up. Within a few weeks or months, Google will recognize the site and it will pop up when folks Google "Sarasota Shell Club." And, as time goes on, more photos and updated forms will be added to the website.

Take a look on your computer or mobile phone and happy browsing. And please let all your shelling friends know so they can take a look too. We would like to encourage the community to visit the website and will be promoting it on our Facebook pages.

### A Note from the Membership Chair

We have received 11 new memberships so far since the Sarasota Shell Show. Several people took our brochure during the show and I hope to receive more memberships in the mail in the coming weeks. Thanks to everyone for their efforts in spreading the word about our club. It is so fun to be a part of this club!

Lisa Kinney  
Membership Chair

### Frogs & Snails . . . #7



### A Snail and a Frog at a Picnic

Picture this: a serene meadow hosting a vibrant picnic. In the midst of it all, a snail and a frog make an unlikely duo. The snail, with its slow and deliberate pace, inches its way through the grass, while the frog leaps with boundless energy, hopping from one spot to another.

The picnic buzzes with laughter and chatter. The snail, taking its time, explores the nuances of each leaf it encounters, while the frog eagerly scans the area for any tasty bugs that might cross its path.

Despite their differing speeds and methods of movement, the snail and the frog find common ground in their enjoyment of the sunny day and the company of friends. As the afternoon unfolds, they share stories, nibble on snacks, and bask in the warmth of friendship, proving that even the most unlikely companions can find joy in each other's company.

C.G.

*My favorite machine at the gym is the vending machine!*

### Sarasota Shell Club Past Presidents

Jack Oberle: 1963-1965,  
1968-1968, 1972-1974  
Louise Danforth: 1965-1967  
Franck Rinck: 1967-1968  
Thomas Robertson: 1969-1970  
Evelyn Bradley: 1970-1972  
Charles Hertweck: 1974-1979  
Peggy Williams: 1980-1982,  
1988-1989, 1992-1994,  
2001-2002, 2005-2007

Vi Hertweck: 1982-1984  
Richard Forbush: 1984-1985  
June Bailey: 1985-1987,  
1995-1997, 2002-2003  
Bob Hansen: 1987-1988  
Beverly Chouinard: 1989-1991  
Bonnie Christophel: 1990-1992  
Pat Amsel: 1994-1995  
Debra Ingrao: 1997-1998  
Cathy Aschliman: 1998-1999

Cathy Hollar: 1999-2001  
2003-2004  
Bob Horton 2004-2005  
Joanne Chmielewski: 2007-2010  
Ron Bopp: 2010-2012  
Dennis Sargent: 2012-2014  
Sally Peppitoni: 2014-2022  
Duane Kauffmann: 2022-2024



☀️ Debby & Guelda appearing on the Suncoast View Show on February 5, 2024. Good coverage and publicity for the 2024 Sarasota Shell Show. ☀️



### Sarasota Shell Club Members at the 2016 Annual Shell Show



## SSC members at the 2024 Shell Show





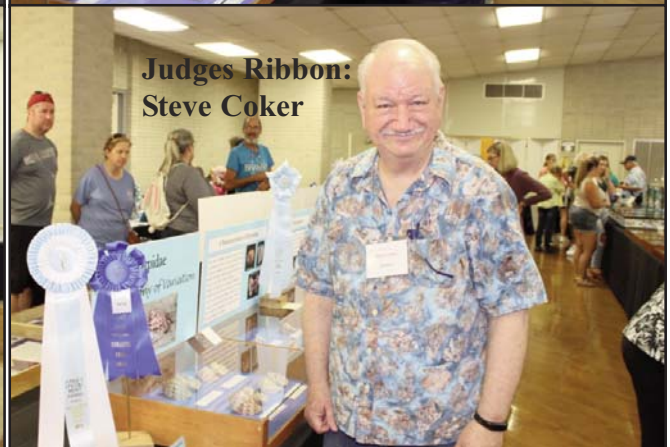
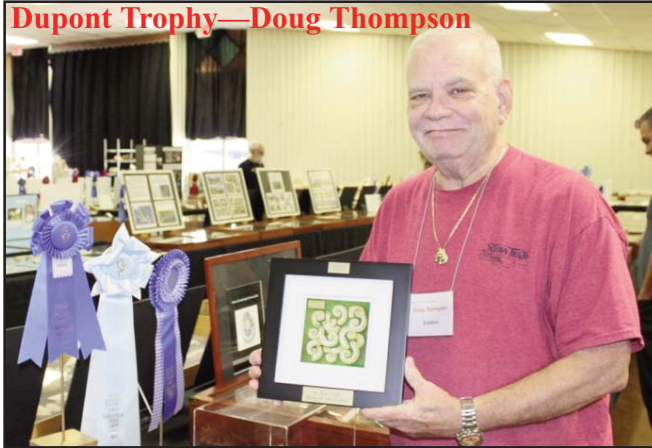
## SSC members at the 2024 Shell Show



## SSC members at the 2024 Shell Show



## Some Award Winners at the 2024 Shell Show



## The immense journey: The life of Harry Lee In the words of those who knew him

Jerald Pinson

(Science writer at the Florida Museum of Natural History)

*Jerald Pinson has given me permission to reprint this interesting article. I feel that it is important for members of the Sarasota Shell Club to know more about Harry Lee. As talented and as smart as he was he would carry on a conversation with the most uneducated person with respect. Harry was to have been our judge for the recent shell show and importantly for me, he had agreed to say with me during the show, allowing for me to interact with him and pick his brain. It was not to be—RIP—ED*

“The journey is difficult, immense. We will travel as far as we can, but we cannot in one lifetime see all that we would like to see or to learn all that we hunger to know.”  
– Loren Eiseley

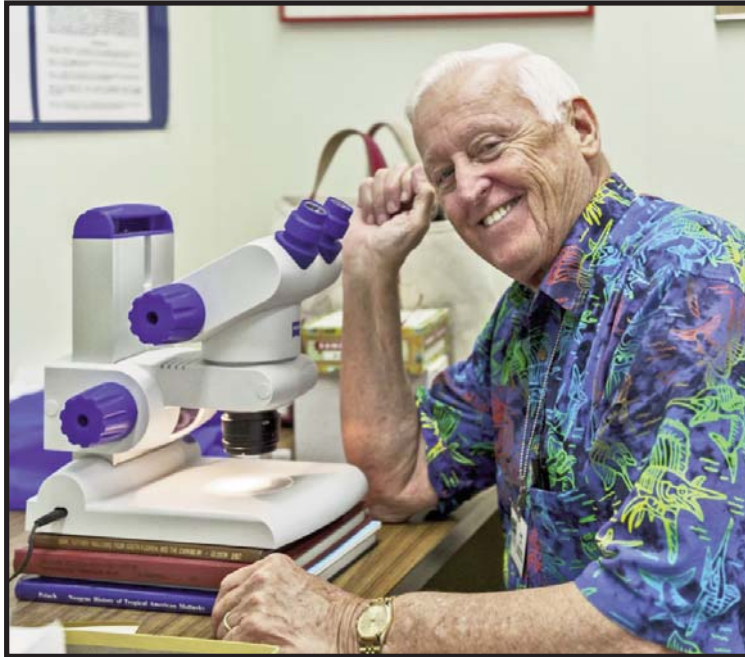
In his book, “The Immense Journey,” anthropologist Loren Eiseley wrote, “If there is magic in this world, it is contained in water.” There are few people who seemed to have grasped this truth as completely as Harry George Lee of Jacksonville, Florida, a physician, globe-trotter, researcher and an avid enthusiast of mollusks.

“He lived for mollusks,” said Roger Portell, director of the invertebrate paleontology collection at the Florida Museum of Natural History. “He started collecting when he was six years old, and his passion seldom waned.”

Lee passed away this year due to complications from a stroke, leaving behind a storied legacy and nearly a million shells, which he bequeathed to the Florida Museum in 2010.

During his life, his passion for shells grew, took on new dimensions and opened avenues down which he tirelessly traveled. He maintained international correspondence with scientists, amateur shell collectors and novices, through which he shared his expertise, exchanged specimens and contributed extensively to the scientific study of mollusks, called malacology. He pub-

lished dozens of peer-reviewed publications, named and described 36 new species, and had 18 species named for him, with more still to be named.



Perhaps the most remarkable thing about his career is that he wasn't a scientist by trade. Lee was a physician and ran an internal medicine practice for three decades. He rose to prominence in the malacology ranks by dedicating much of his evenings and weekends to the study of shells, learning and contributing more to the field during his free time than some professional biologists accomplish throughout their entire careers.

“There are a few people who are passionate about science who do not follow it as a vocation but instead are forced or choose to do something else,” said Kurt Auffenberg, a former collection manager at the Florida Museum who worked closely with Lee periodically beginning in the early 1980s. “Instead, they come to science as an avocation, and they're in all biological disciplines: shells, reptiles, birds, etc. They might be female or male, a doctor, dentist, engineer; it doesn't matter.”

These individuals, Auffenberg attests, the ones who linger on the margins of scientific practice and who have only their spare time and energy to devote, have pushed knowledge beyond measure since the days of Carl Linnaeus.

“Physicians, because of their training in biology and

interest in the curiosities of life, have had a great influence on the science of conchology.” – R. Tucker Abbott, “Shells”

The comparison is apt. Linnaeus was also a physician by training but is most famous for establishing the modern system of binomial nomenclature, whereby every species is classified and referred to by its genus and specific epithet. Linnaeus named more species than any other biologist before or since. In the 10th edition of his *Systema Naturae*, published in 1758, he gave names to roughly 700 mollusks, including many of the species with which Lee would later become fascinated. The shell that started Lee’s collection — a smooth, rounded tiger cowrie — was given the Latin name *Cypraea tigris* by Linnaeus. Lee was given the specimen by a retired scissors-maker who kept his own sprawling collection distributed throughout a two-story house across from the home of Lee’s grandmother’s, which left a lasting impression.

Lee wasn’t content with studying species that had already been given the binomial rubber-stamp by those who came before him. He seemed to have an unquenchable thirst for the unknown, which drove him along neglected paths that even professional malacologists consider to be on the hazy periphery of their profession.

After retiring as a physician, he began volunteering at the Florida Museum, where he sifted through fossils so small they had to be scanned with an electron microscope to be adequately visualized. He picked the specimens, mounted a portion on button-sized titanium stubs, and learned to operate the electron microscope himself.

“It is perhaps a more fortunate destiny to have a taste for collecting shells than to be born a millionaire. Although neither is to be despised, it is always better policy to learn an interest than to make a thousand pounds; for the money will soon be spent, or perhaps you may feel no joy in spending it; but the interest remains imperish-

able and ever new.” – Robert Louis Stevenson, *Lay Morals*.

When author and journalist Cynthia Barnett was conducting research for a book on shells, she naturally reached out to Lee and thought they’d meet at his home, where he kept his colossal collection. Instead, she wrote, they spent most of their time together at the museum, where he busily sorted specimens. “The tiny white conchs, horns, and tulips, many extinct, are delicate miniatures of the shells he has collected since boyhood. They came from a 3-million-year-old layer of the Pliocene, the era named by Charles Lyell to describe when modern marine mollusks in the fossil record—the shell shapes we recognize—begin to outnumber those that are extinct.”



Lee became more deeply interested in tiny fossil shells after reading a study co-authored by Roger Portell, in which an historical estimate is provided of marine micromollusk diversity along the Atlantic Coastal Plain. He asked Portell if he’d ever tested to see how accurate his estimation was.

“I said ‘no, it would be too time-consuming,’ and that started the quest.”

Lee made the drive from Jacksonville, Florida, to the museum in Gainesville once a week, most often accompanied by his friend Rick Edwards, a retired teacher and

fellow shell aficionado. Edwards sifted through buckets of shell and sediment scarcely larger than sand grains, separating the shells from the limestone matrix they’d nestled in for millennia.

“I call these my treasure hunts, because I find things only I have ever seen before,” Edwards said. “Harry could tell just by looking at a shell whether it was a new species or not.”

Lee had a similar collection of modern micromollusks at home, which he assiduously collected, sorted and identified.

“He had a lot of small things that most people ignore,” said John Slapcinsky, collection manager of invertebrate zoology at the Florida Museum. Friends sent him bags of sand they’d collected while diving in various locations, and he’d focus his attention on picking out the cones, turrets and helices hidden inside.

“Most museums don’t have a lot of that material, because they don’t have the resources to put into it,” Slapcinsky said. “He was willing to spend thousands of hours sorting.”

“... I caught a glimpse of a beautiful shell, imprinted with what appeared to be strange writing, rolling in the breakers. Golden characters like Chinese hieroglyphs ran in symmetrical lines around the cone...I lifted it up with utmost excitement, as though a message had come to me from the green depths of the sea. Each man deciphers from the ancient alphabets of nature only those secrets that his own deeps possess the power to endow with meaning. It had been so with Darwin and Thoreau. The golden alphabet, in whatever shape it chooses to reveal itself, is never spurious. From its inscrutable lettering is created man and all the streaming cloudland of his dreams.” – Loren Eiseley, *The Unexpected Universe*.

Eventually, even the innumerable tiny shells couldn’t contain Lee’s hunger for ever-more expansive and esoteric horizons. If there were few people who study micro-mollusks, there are even fewer who focus on diminutive bivalves, referred to by malacologists as LWCFs — little

white clam fossils. These are so small and non-descript that only those with a unique mix of discernment and dogged commitment have the patience to work on them.

“At least with gastropods, you have enough sculpture that you can do something with it,” Portell said. “With the little white clams, it’s really tough. It requires a lot of focus, energy and effort.” All qualities that Lee had in abundance.

The shells he catalogued and those he left to the Florida Museum are an invaluable portal to the natural world, one that will help future researchers track our planet’s shifting diversity and perhaps stave off the worst of its declines. But they’ll do so at a disadvantage, without the benefit of having the talented physician and naturalist who accrued the specimens and helped make sense of them.

“He was the most intelligent person I’ve ever met, without a doubt,” Auffenberg said. He was an amazing human. There’s a void in the cosmos and scientific world that was filled by Harry Lee, and I feel it. I’m sure many other people do, too.”

## **This Space Left Empty**

**Missing: the following seashells from the  
Peggy Williams display.**

Please contact the President or Editor if you have  
knowledge of the where-a-bouts of these shells!



On Saturday, March 9, nine members of the Sarasota Shell Club defied conventional wisdom and ventured into the Florida Keys during Spring Break. Many arrived at Horseshoe Beach before the suggested gathering time of 12:00 pm; no one was late.

Early in the day, the wind had the Iron Shore stirred up so there was little point in exploring there. Early arrivers waded and snorkeled around the quarry. It was nice to see healthy seagrass beds being groomed by American Star shells. All went well, except for the loss of a dive float and one of our vehicles being involved in a collision in the parking lot. Law enforcement became involved.

Around noon we headed over to Missouri Key, and lugged ourselves down to the channel, aching joints and all. We were rewarded with the find of tons of Queen Conchs, Hawk Wings, and Atlantic Vase Shells. Soon the air rang with cries of, "Dammit, they're all alive!"

Yes, indeed, they were very healthy populations, but there were a few lucky winners in the shell game. As the tide began to rise, we went our separate ways, ready to shell another day.



Milk Conch

Hawkwing



Deer Cowrie



Lobster Mexicali at Lazy Days, Marathon



## Sarasota Shell Club 2023/2024 Membership Application

**New Member: Individual \$30 - Family \$40**  
(Includes a membership name tag)

**Renewal Member: Individual \$25 - Family \$30**

*(Add \$15 to receive newsletter by mail instead of email)*

Join the Sarasota Shell Club by mailing a  
check, made out to SSC to:

**Lisa Kinney  
17052 Coral Key Dr  
Nokomis, FL 34275**

All new and renewed memberships will receive their  
memberships/cards/badges at the monthly meetings.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Local Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address(es): \_\_\_\_\_

(Optional) Other address & phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contact & phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Month & Day of your Birthday: \_\_\_\_\_

**Our Insurance Requires a Liability Release**  
*I agree that I am individually responsible for my safety and my personal property. I will not hold the Sarasota Shell Club, its officers, field trip leader(s), or property owner liable for any damage or in-jury to me or my property that should occur.*

Signature required for each member joining:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

The SSC publishes a roster with names, address and emails for our member use only. Please check one:

\_\_\_\_\_ it is **OK** to publish my information in the roster.  
\_\_\_\_\_ it is **Not OK** to publish my information in the roster.

Meeting Location: **Bee Ridge Church Community Room 206  
4826 McIntosh Rd, Sarasota, FL 34233**  
(On the corner of Proctor Road and McIntosh Road)

Club Meetings are held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month, from September through April. Newsletters are sent out monthly.

The Artisan group meets year-round on Thursdays, 10am to 1pm - Feel free to join us to make shell art that benefits the club.

Look for us at: [www.Sarasotashellclub.com](http://www.Sarasotashellclub.com)  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/sarasotafordshellclub>  
Contact us: [sarasotashellclub@gmail.com](mailto:sarasotashellclub@gmail.com)

(To be filled in by the Membership Committee)

Renewal  New Member

Amount paid \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Checklist \_\_\_\_\_ Cash \_\_\_\_\_

Card  Badge ordered