



The Epitonium

HCS Banquet

Approximately 21 members, family and friends enjoyed the annual banquet held at the Monument Inn. As usual, the food was yummy and the socializing was fun.

President Leslie Crnkovic thanked the outgoing officers. Officers for the 2022-23 year are: President – Leslie Crnkovic, Vice President – Angela Doucette, Treasurer – Angie Haneiko, Recording Secretary – Rusti Stover, and Corresponding Secretary – Jerry Clampit.



President's Message

By Leslie Crnkovic

For those of you who could make it, thank you for coming to the banquet. It was a great event.

Also, thank you for allowing me to serve again for another year as president.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the COA Convention in Galveston.

The COA 50th Anniversary Pin

Pins will be on sale at the COA Convention for \$7.00 at the registration area club tables, and also at the bourse. Get yours while they are available!



2022-2023 Dues

Yes, it's that time of the year again. A big thanks to everyone who has already paid their dues. If you have not paid, and you read the newsletter on the website, you will receive an email with a membership form attached. If you receive a paper copy, a form is included in this newsletter. Please send a check to the address on the form as soon as you can. It would be helpful if the Treasurer could make all of the deposits at once.



President:
Leslie Crnkovic

Vice President:
Angela Doucette

Treasurer:
Angie Haneiko

Recording Secretary:
Rusti Stover

Corresponding Secretary:
Lucy Clampit

Visit HCS online at
www.houstonshellclub.com

CALENDAR

5/31-6/4	2022 COA in Galveston
8/6/22	San Antonio Auction
10/14 - 10/16	2022 Texas Jamboree & Shell Show

The Purple Sea Snail – Upside Down Wanderer

By Tina Petway (Originally published as an HMNS blog)

If you have ever been to a beach where a Portuguese Man-Of-War jellyfish has washed up onto the beach, you might also have seen the glorious Purple Sea Snail too. These light-as-air snails live their entire life upside down and attached to a living Portuguese-Man-Of-War. The Purple and blue color of the air sack of these jellyfish have made them a pretty addition to the high tide line of the beach. But do not touch them! They are true members of the Jellyfish family and the stinging cells (called Nematocysts) are able to release their poisonous barbs even after they are dead. But the Purple Sea Snail is able to consume these stinging cells and store and reuse the stings themselves. They also acquire their beautiful purple coloration as they feed on the body of the Man-Of-War.



These are not your ordinary, everyday snails for many reasons. They spend their whole lives floating at the top of the ocean in an upside-down position. They are able to maintain their buoyance due to the “Bubble Float” that each snail constructs by trapping tiny bubbles of air in thin membranes which sticks to all the other bubbles and forms a life raft attached to the snail’s body and shell.

They even lay their eggs in bubble rafts that also float near the parent. The reason for this life style is based on the feeding habits of all the species of Purple Sea Snails. The Man-Of-War jellyfish is their home and dinner as well. They will remain attached to a jellyfish for life or until some accident causes the bubble float to be separated from the snail. If that event occurs, the snail will sink to the bottom and die.

Janthina janthina is the scientific name for the Purple Sea Snail and they can be found in every warm- water Sea or Ocean around the world. But the most special adaptation that *Janthina* illustrate is the ability to be almost invisible to any predator, either from below or from above. By evolving a color appropriate to living at the top of the ocean where a very pale color of purple on the underwater side, it is difficult to see from below as a fish looking up sees the light of the sky. While the upper side is a deep purple which blends more into the darker water as seen by a bird from above.

In years past, these beautiful and unusual mollusks were plentiful and were easily found in great numbers on Texas’ beaches along with their jellyfish host as they were washed ashore at certain times of the year. As the number of the Man-Of-War jellyfish has declined in numbers, so also has the number of *Janthina janthina*. Though both can still be found on local beaches, their reduced numbers make it a rare find now and a special one as well. Just remember that the Man-Of-War is a jellyfish and even though it may be dead on the beach those stinging cells can still be active and deliver a painful sting. So always treat sea life with caution and respect for the almost limitless ability to protect themselves in ways that are not always evident. If you should happen to find one of these fragile and beautiful mollusks on the seashore, remember all the special adaptations that one small family of Mollusks has found to survive.

COA Convention

It's almost time! We will be celebrating COA's Golden Anniversary, so we hope you are planning to attend the Convention, May 31-June 4, at Moody Gardens in Galveston. **All events will be in the Moody Ballrooms.**

You do not have to be a COA member to attend, but you do have to register if you want to participate in any events other than the Oral Auction and/or the Bourse. Those are both open to the public.

The fun begins with the Opening Ceremonies at 1:00 on Tuesday, May 31. It will be followed by a couple of programs about the history of COA. Our own Tina Petway will be presenting a program about the Strake Hall of Malacology at the HMNS. That evening the Welcome Party will have Texas theme, so wear your Go Texan clothes.

The following days will be filled with interesting programs by a variety of speakers, silent auctions, door prizes, book sales, raffles, the Texas Parade of Snails, and a Mini-Shell show. The Oral Auction will be on

Wednesday evening starting with the previewing of Auction items at 6:00 p.m. Thursday will be filled with more interesting presentations, including a preview of the 2023 Convention in North Carolina. That evening will find attendees enjoying delicious food at the Banquet and celebrating COA's 50th, so let's dress up like we are going to an Anniversary Party.

Friday morning would be a good time to use the Moody Gardens Attraction Passes while the shell dealers, from around the US and the world, set up their goods for the Bourse (AKA Candy Store for Shellers). The Bourse will open at 1:00 p.m. and close at 6:00 p.m. It will be open again from 8:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. on Saturday.



Parking in the garage is free if you are staying at the hotel. Parking in the outside lots is free for everyone. Reminder: **The hotel does not accept cash for any purchases** – just credit cards. Some Bourse dealers will accept cash. Many will accept credit cards.

Bourse Tips

Several of you have never been to COA, or it has been a few years since you attended. You will probably visit each dealer multiple times. When you go back to a dealer's tables, you will find something that you didn't see before, so they will hold your selections and let you pay for everything at the end of the day. Since

crowds build up near the entrances at the beginning of the Bourse, it might be better to start at the back of the room where there is no crowd.

Shell dealer Rich Goldberg recently posted this on Facebook. He gave permission for me to share it with you: "For those planning to attend the Texas COA Convention and the Dealers Bourse scheduled on the last two days of the convention, here's a tip that can help dealers immensely during the bourse event.

During sales hours, and especially during the first couple of hours of the bourse, it gets pretty hectic for dealers. The crowds pack in all at once and sales are brisk. We typically put your shell selections behind our tables to invoice when things slow down.



Having pre-written cards with your name and email address or cell phone number to place in your "holds basket" avoids confusion and speeds up the process when multiple baskets are being handed over for invoicing in a short period of time. Dealers can also contact you when your invoice is ready, or if you forget to return to pick up and pay for your shells. This occasionally happens in the fog of bourse . . .

Those who have been to previous bourses know the routine, but if this is your first convention, or just as a reminder, having those cards, or even business cards, makes life so much easier for everyone.

Thanks, and looking forward to seeing you at the convention and bourse."

HOW MANY MOLLUSKS HAVE YOU EATEN?

By Tina Petway (Originally published as an HMNS blog)

Did you know that much of the seafood we eat is part of the family called MOLLUSKS. If you have eaten Oysters, Mussels, Clams, Scallops and even Calamari you have eaten mollusks. The mollusk family is one of the most varied groups of animals on earth. So you are probably familiar with the ones already listed, but did you know that Escargot are mollusks that live on land? Yep, land snails are also mollusks. Even those plant eating slugs in your garden are family members.

Squids, Octopus and Cuttlefish are also mollusks and they are some of the most plentiful and popular around the world. But what about others you may or may not be familiar with; such as Abalone and Conch. If we could count all the different kinds or species of mollusks that are consumed around the world, it would be in the tens of thousands. Because the truth is that most mollusks are edible and are part of the regular diet of most of the rest of the world. In Mexico they have appreciated many species of the Murex family as popular seafood for centuries and is available fresh as well as canned and known as Conch meat. Squid species are also very popular there as in most of the world. One of the largest and most popular is a squid known as the Humbolt Squid and they are also one of the most dangerous. Fishermen in small boats fish at night for these strong, fast and very aggressive squids. Humbolt squid usually

hunt in packs and have been known to pull a fishermen into the water and drown them. These edible but dangerous animals make up only a small amount of the mollusks consumed by humans.

In much of the south Pacific, mollusks comprise the greatest percentage of the protein makeup of the average family's diets. And as wild communities of mollusks have become overfished we have found ways to grow many species in Aquaculture farms all over the world. In Florida the popular "Queen Conch" is being raised in order to repopulate areas where they were once abundant and now almost eradicated by over harvesting for their meat for Conch Fritters as well as their shells for the tourist trade. They are also being raised in other Caribbean countries with less success. Oysters and Mussels are some of the most successfully raised mollusks in many countries around the world.



Other types of mollusks are being successfully raised in Aquaculture "farms" such as Abalone. Several different species of Abalone have been raised with progressively better and better success in several countries around the world in order to save wild populations from being over harvested. From California to Australia to Korea, South Africa, Mexico, New Zealand, Chile and Hawaii these mollusks are a success story for saving species in the wild. Another reason for raising most of these mollusks in "farms" is the price for their meat is very high and a superior product can be obtained in controlled and healthy conditions. The next time you are in your supermarket, take a stroll past the Sea Food area and read how many items are farm raised. As we continue to learn more about these species, we can better provide more plentiful, safe supplies of some of the most popular foods around the world.

Now let's talk about Escargot! Yes, those delicious, exotic little mouthfuls are being raised in controlled "farms" in several countries around the world also, including the U.S. Large quantities are provided to Cruise Ship companies who deliver many diners with their first opportunity to savor these epicurean delights! If you have never tried them, don't be afraid to give them a try. After all, most of Europe and much of the U.S. consider them a treat not to be refused.

Have you tried Calamari? Fried to a golden perfection, these crispy little bites have been on American restaurant menus for many years. There are many other mollusks happily consumed all over the world and by providing quality conditions for their growth in special "Farms", we help save wild populations from extinction and still have our favorites to enjoy. Bon Appetite!!!!

Many of these edible mollusks can be seen in the new Strake Hall of Malacology at The Houston Museum of Natural Science.

