



The Epitonium

April Meeting and Program

The next HCS meeting will be **Sunday, April 16, 2:00** at Immanuel Lutheran Church. Tina Petway will be presenting a program about new HMNS acquisitions and future plans for the Malacology Department.

This is a rare, red *Harpa cabriti* that the HMNS recently acquired.

Like the March meeting there will be more free shells.

Bring a shopping bag, and come join the fun!



In Memoriam

On March 12, 2023 former HCS member Joaquin "Joe" Incháustegui passed away at the UTMB Hospital in Galveston. He was 91. His health had been failing in the past few years, especially since his beloved wife Rose passed away in April of 2021. Unfortunately, health issues prevented him from attending the COA convention in Galveston.

Joaquin was born on February 2, 1932 in the Dominican Republic. After coming to the US, he worked for the DuPont Company in Delaware. Eventually, he moved to the New Orleans area. He joined and became active in the Louisiana Shell Club.

Hurricane Katrina destroyed his and Rose's home and his shell collection. They then moved to the Houston area to be near children and grandchildren, and he started another shell collection.

The editor first met Joaquin at the 2008 COA convention in San Antonio.

President's Message

Dear HCS Friends and Members,

This is our last meeting of the fiscal year and my last as the HCS pres. Thank you for letting me serve you again these two years.

Thanks to all of you who have helped me and continue to serve the club. Special thanks again to those who helped with the By-Laws. You all make this club possible.

I look forward to seeing you all on **April 16th** at the meeting and **May 20th** at the Banquet.

Leslie

REMINDER - Bring your Check Book!

☼ **Buy your Banquet Ticket \$25.**

☼ **Pay your HCS Dues.**

☼ **Get more Shell Table items.**

He joined HCS and became an active member. He would bring children and grandchildren to club events. One year, he and Rose hosted a field trip for HCS members to collect apple snails in their neighborhood, and he wrote several articles for the newsletter.

HCS members extend their condolences to his family. A special thanks to his daughter Sandra Poole for keeping the editor informed and sending his picture.



President:
Leslie Crnkovic

Vice President:
Angela Doucette

Treasurer:
Angie Haneiko

Recording Secretary:
Rusti Stover

Corresponding Secretary:
Jerry Clampit

Visit HCS online at
www.houstonshellclub.com

CALENDAR

4/16/23	HCS Meeting
5/20/23	HCS Banquet
5/31/23	COA Convention
10/12-14	SSS Shell Show

2023-2024 Dues

It's time to think about renewing your membership. If you read the newsletter on the website, you will receive an email with the form for 2023-2024 attached. If you receive a paper copy, a form will be enclosed. It can also be accessed on the HCS website:

www.houstonshellclub.com

. **Please fill out the form completely.** You may pay at the April meeting or May banquet, or you can mail your check to the treasurer whose address is on the form.

Please pay as soon as you can, so she can deposit most of the checks at the same time. Thank you.

Minutes March 19, 2023

Submitted by Rusti Stover

President Leslie Crnkovic called the meeting to order at 1:55 pm at the Immanuel Lutheran Church meeting room location. Tina Petway made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 19, 2023 meeting as published in the March newsletter. Mary Harris seconded, all approved, motion passed.

Under Officer Reports, Treasurer Angie Haneiko read a letter from the Executive Director of the Bailey-Matthews Shell Museum in Sanibel, Florida, acknowledging and thanking our club for the generous donation for the rebuild after Hurricane Ian. Lucy Clampit reminded everyone that dues are due and the form to renew is on our club website. Dues can be paid at the April meeting.

Under New Business, Tina spoke on the Boone/McHenry Grant and asked if we could do a one-time addition of 500 dollars to the grant, upping it to \$1500. The Grant is open to US students studying recent marine mollusks. Tina moved, Mary seconded, all approved, motion passed.

The question of HCS sponsoring the Thomas Pulley Award for the October Sea Shell Searchers Shell Show was asked, and who it would honor. Dave Green motioned the club sponsor the award and cost to purchase, up to 100 dollars. Sandy Clark seconded, all approved, motion passed. Lucy made a motion that the Pulley Award should honor Tina Petway, for all her work for the club. Mary seconded, all approved, motion passed.

Les mentioned the end of season banquet is Saturday May 20th at the Monument Inn. The cost this year is 35 dollars per person. Les asked if the club wanted to fund 10 dollars per person, bringing the cost down to 25 dollars per club member; Tina made a motion to do so, Dave seconded, all approved, motion passed.

Angie made a motion to approve the published changes to the by-laws, Paula Rutledge seconded, all approved, motion passed.

The slate of officers that was accepted and moved on at the February meeting was approved. The officers for the 2023-2024 meetings season are: President, Dave Green; VP/Program Director, Tina Petway; Treasurer, Angie Haneiko; Recording Secretary, Rusti Stover, and Corresponding Secretary, Jerry Clampit.

Under Announcements, Lucy mentioned there will be more free shells and shell related items at the April meeting, and possibly others later. A retirement party for Janey Cormier, Malacologist for the Brazosport Museum of Natural Science, will be held at the Lake Jackson Civic Center on Sunday, April 2nd, from 2 to 4 pm. The Sea Shell Searchers Shell Show is slated for October 13 and 14th, 2023.

There being no further business before the board, Mary made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:15 pm, Sandy Clark seconded, all approved.

Houston Conchology Society

Annual Banquet

MAY 20TH 2023 – NOON

Tickets \$25 per-person

Purchase at the April meeting
or call-text 713.784.7084



**MONUMENT INN
RESTAURANT**

4406 Independence Pkwy. La Porte, TX 77571

Earth Day

Both the Houston Museum of Natural Science and the Brazosport Museum of Natural Science are celebrating Earth Day. The HMNS is celebrating the entire month of April. Here is a link to their activities: [Celebrate Earth Times, Come On! \(mailchi.mp\)](https://www.mailchi.com/celebrate-earth-times-come-on). From the BMNS Facebook page: “Join us for a FREE Earth Day Celebration on **Saturday, April 22 from 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM** featuring community partners, experiments and Earth-themed projects!”



Eye Music

(Richard Goldberg posted this on the Beautiful Marine Molluscs Facebook page in March. Used with his permission.)

“Incremental Expansion :::: The distance between the strong axial ribs of *Harpa costata* widens incrementally as the mollusk expands its shell. Like a circular accordion stretching as it grows, the influence on rib spacing is both a genetic occurrence as well as being environmentally influenced.

This top down view of a 75+mm Mauritius *Harpa costata* illustrates the ever widening increments between each rib. *Harpa costata* is the only species of Harp that has such a short distance between each rib. Much like the sound of a musical Harpa where no two instruments have the same exact tone, the same can be said for the rib spacing of the molluscan *Harpa costata*. . . the spacing is never identical . . . but it is music to the eyes!

Photo and text: © Richard L. Goldberg.



© Richard L. Goldberg

Mollusk of the Year

Did you know that there is a “Mollusk of the Year”? The editor didn’t until seeing this in the National Shell Museum Newsletter. This is the blog link where it was first posted by curator Jose Leal: <https://www.shellmuseum.org/post/loco-is-the-mollusk-of-the-year-for-2023>. If you click on the red word “here”, you can see the other nominees. The chosen species gets its entire genome (all DNA) mapped by the Senckenberg in Germany! (Used with Jose’s permission)

"Loco" is the "Mollusk of the Year" for 2023!

For a few years now, the Senckenberg Museum Frankfurt, the LOEWE Center for Translational Biodiversity Genomics (TBG), and Unitas Malacologica have been promoting the election of “Mollusks of the Year.” The endeavor is non-discriminatory: Anyone can nominate their favorite species, from any geographic area. Species from marine, land, and freshwater environments are eligible. The selection takes place in March every year, and TBG will sequence the complete genome (the entire DNA, comprising all genetic information) of the selected species.



Concholepas concholepas. Photo by Cristian Sepulveda, /Senckenberg.

This year’s selection is the “Loco”, *Concholepas concholepas*, a very unconventional species of gastropod from Chile and Peru, where it is a traditional seafood staple (I tried it a few years ago during a visit to the coastal town of Coquimbo, in Chile). *Concholepas concholepas* belongs in the murex family (the Muricidae), but has an unusual, “open” shell that basically lacks a well-defined spire, resembling the abalones (The “English name” Chilean Abalone is in my opinion inappropriate, because “Locos” are not abalones, being only very remotely related to them.) For more on this year’s selection and the other four nominees check here:

[#concholepasconcholepas](#) [#loco](#) [#molluskoftheyear](#) [#molluscofhteyear](#)

A *Wilkingia* sp. From Utah

By Colleen Costelloe

Utah is renowned for its arid landscape and magnificent, towering rock formations with layered -cake strata spanning the entire fossil record. The red rock terrain is not conducive to the lifecycle of molluscs and they are absent even from the majority of the rivers that wind through this parched land. Moab is a small town in southeastern Utah that is an excellent base for visiting famous sites such as the Arches and Canyonlands national parks. On a trip in March, complete with persistent freezing temperatures, the best way to find molluscs is as fossils.

This bivalve specimen, measuring approximately 116 mm x 51 mm x 38 mm (Figure 1), was reportedly found in the vicinity of Dead Horse Point State Park which is located near the portion of Canyonlands National Park called "Island in the Sky" because it is perched on the top of a tall mesa overlooking the Colorado and Green rivers. The origin of the peculiar name of the state park is partly lost to history. Dead Horse Point is a small, high mesa that is located 2000 feet above the Colorado River and is surrounded on all sides by sheer sandstone cliffs. The cowboys of yesteryear, needing horses, would ingeniously herd wild mustangs across the thin peninsula of



land that connects the point to the surrounding high terrain (Figure 2 is of the Colorado River from an observation point on top of this mesa). The cowboys would then corral the horses on the point by simply erecting a barricade across the narrow neck of the peninsula (currently only 30 yards wide), so that they could easily choose the animals they wanted to keep and free the rest. Evidently, there was the occasional accident. Upon speaking with the park manager, it is unlikely that the fossil could have been found in the park. Also, no collection is allowed in the parks [1].

The Paleontology Department of the Natural History Museum of Utah was very helpful in identifying the specimen as an extinct marine clam of the genus *Wilkingia* (Wilson, 1959) from the Cutler Group layer of sedimentary rock that dates from the latest Carboniferous – early Permian periods. The fossil may be 295-300 million years old [2]. Trace fossils from the late Paleozoic tidal flats of Kansas have preserved the movements of these animals as they burrowed in the moderately deep sediment, showing the vertical mobility that is typical of suspension feeders [3]. They can be found in North



America, South America, Europe and Asia [4]. This specimen was likely collected from an area administered by of the Bureau of Land Management near but not within any of the parks [2]. In such areas the limited collection of plant and invertebrate fossils is allowed for noncommercial use, adding to the charm and fascination of this part of the country.

References:

1. Personal communication with Aaron Farmer, Park Manager, Dead Horse Point State Park, Utah; March-April, 2023.
2. Personal communication with Randall Irmis, Ph.D., Chief Curator and Curator of Paleontology of the Natural History Museum of Utah, Associate Professor of Geology and Geophysics, University of Utah; March-April, 2023.
3. Mangano MG, Buatois LA, West RR, Maples CG. Contrasting behavioral and feeding strategies recorded by tidal-flat bivalve trace fossils from the Upper Carboniferous of eastern Kansas. *PALAIOS*, 13 (4);335-351: 1998.
4. Mindat.org. *Wilkingia*. Accessed April 2023.

Adventures at the HCS Store Room

Shell donations are first filtered through the Houston Museum of Natural Science and are then sorted by the Houston Conchology Society for club events. During one sorting session at the store room, olive shells from the Arkansas Collection were processed and packaged along with an interesting large olive shell with an anomaly. The lower photos show not a growth series but seven of the donated shells. Happy Hunting at future club activities. Storage room sorting includes items for Free, Sale Table, Silent and Oral Auctions, etc.

The club stored eleven heavy duty museum quality wood stands for years and recently offered them to members at the March meeting's free table. Five were left over and were donated to the Goodwill store on Jones Road close to 1960. A retrieval effort was attempted but that Goodwill store has a 24-hour turn-around for donated materials to get to the sorting warehouse on 529 near Fry Road. Goodwill has many donation locations and sales stores from "Select" to "Outlet". The upper photo shows the Outlet store sales floor where the remaining display stands might be located. All sorts of material is laid out on large, elevated trays that include everything from bedding to books to clothing, etc.



From Houston Chronicle, March 23, 2023.

Ghost crabs now are starting to appear on Galveston Island

By Erica Grieder *STAFF WRITER*

Ghost crabs are marching to battle on Galveston Island, helping protect Texas beachgoers from stinging pests.

Galveston Island State Park on Thursday posted a video, taken at night, showing a ghost crab munching on a Portuguese man o' war, a jellyfish-like animal that many Texans have encountered over the years, to their distress.

"Ghost crabs are opportunistic eaters and will devour just about anything they can get their claws on, including jellyfish and man o' wars," park officials said.

Here are a few things to know about ghost crabs:

Diet, night life and more

They got their name because they're most active at night, and are generally pale, like ghosts.

Ghost crabs are considered harmless to humans.

Some experts contend their claws can deliver a sharp pinch.

But because ghost crabs are mostly nocturnal and tend to shy away from humans, odds are a beachgoer won't be able to confirm that from personal experience.



Jon Shapley/Staff file photo

A ghost crab walks across mud flats in June 2021 at Boca Chica State Park near Brownsville.

Can you eat ghost crabs?

In theory, you can eat ghost crabs. But you probably shouldn't.

Their bodies are small, maxing out at perhaps three inches, containing barely a mouthful of meat. And, as noted, a ghost crab's diet includes Portuguese man o' wars, which are known to be a beach hazard.

"While they look beautiful sparkling in the sun, they pack a horribly painful sting," the Houston Chronicle reported in 2021.

But while ghost crabs are not the most delectable choice for people, that doesn't mean no one eats ghost crabs.

Sheepshead love them and those looking to catch the fish sometimes use ghost crabs as bait.

The Eptonium is published monthly August through May and is an official publication of the Houston Conchology Society. Items of interest concerning shells and shelling are welcome for publication. Credit will be given to contributors when known unless anonymity is requested.

Permission is granted for reprinting articles, provided credit is given to *The Eptonium*, the writer, and the Houston Conchology Society and a copy of the reprint is sent to the editor of the newsletter.

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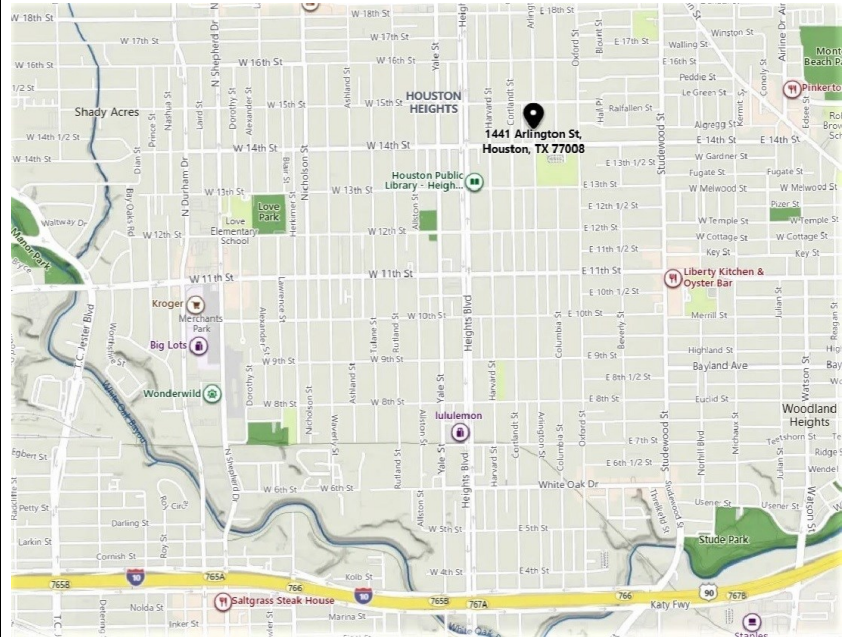
The Society holds regular meetings on the third Sunday of September, October, November, January, February and April. There are seasonal events and a yearly shell auction scheduled in the other months.

VISITORS WELCOME!!!

Membership year extends from June 1 through May 31.

Annual membership dues: Family \$20; Single \$15; Junior (under 18) \$6.

Make checks payable to Houston Conchology Society and send to the treasurer whose address is listed on the form.



Immanuel Lutheran Church

306 E. 15th Street

HOUSTON CONCHOLOGY SOCIETY

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