



March 2003

Volume 1, Number 1

Englewood Shell Club Newsletter

by Debbie Freeman

At last we have the beginning of the Englewood Shell Club Newsletter. Now that you have an idea of what we had in mind, we would like to ask for your help to keep it going.

In order to keep our newsletter interesting we need articles to print. The articles can be about anything related to shelling. Have you had a shelling adventure that you would like to share with the club? Do you have a favorite shell to talk about? Perhaps you have attended an event that you feel your fellow shellers would enjoy reading about. If so, please let us know!

The next step will be choosing a name from the many good ones you suggested. We have it narrowed down to five of them. It's going to be a tough decision!

If you would like to take a part in the creation of our newsletter on any level, contact Linda Powers or Debbie Freeman. Your help is very much needed, and will be most appreciated.

The Lightning Whelk

by Edie Laurence, and Ethel Safigan

Whelks (family Busycon) have been around the Southwestern U.S. for about sixty million years and were a main source of food for the Indians in Florida. The shells were used for everything from ladles to weapons.

Our club emblem, the Lightning Whelk, gets its scientific name "Busycon contrarium" (Conrad, 1840) from the fact that it coils counter clockwise as it grows. The shell is called sinistral, or left handed, contrary to most other whelks which coil clockwise and are called dextral or right-handed. Its common name comes from the streaks on the shell which look like flashes of lightning.

The Lightning Whelk grows from 2" to 14". Under 7" it has rather dark axial brown streaks, but as it grows larger the streaks lighten, and the larger shells are almost pure white. Females are generally larger than males and lay long strips of egg capsules containing from 20 to 100 minute eggs.

Whelks feed almost exclusively on hard shelled clams, covering the clam with their massive muscular foot and applying steady pressure to force the clam valves ajar. The whelk then uses the edge of its shell to wedge the clam open and plunges its long proboscis deep into the soft parts of the clam, feeding on about 1 large clam per month.

Welcome New Members!

Amie Barnicle, Pat Brady, Jim & Becky Cannon, Lou & Jim Gathercole, Ellie & Devon Hobby, Mary & Jim Keefer, Ron Kohler, Edith Laurence, Kathy Massulli, Dennis McCormick, Carolyn McMallum, Sally Moinette, Gay Nucholls, Kathy Scheley, Jim & Nancy Smith, Pete & Sandy Solanics, Veronica Stier, Joyce & Barry Sullivan Betty Turner, Anna Witte.

We have a total of 90 club members as of March 17, 2003! Please let Marilyn Price know if we have missed anyone, or misspelled your name. Great job Marilyn!

Shell-A-Thon Update

Many of you have asked about what has happened to the idea of having a shell show of some kind. Based on the results of our survey, a committee was established, and met to discuss the matter. The committee felt that at this time our club is not ready to take on such a huge task. If the club vote agrees, then it will be tabled.

About Our Dues

The Board has decided that with the growing needs of our club, it is time to increase our annual dues. Beginning January 2004, membership fees will be \$20 for the first year, and \$15 there after. The fee for a family membership will increase to \$30 the first year, and \$25 the following years. We ask that you give, or mail your checks to Marilyn Price (2031 Forked Creek Dr., Englewood, FL. 34223), at or before the meeting on January 27, 2004.

Make checks out to our treasurer, Joe Bao.

BEACH REPORT

by Linda Powers

Shelling on Manasota Key has been sporadic. During the middle of the month, there seemed to be more scallops than usual: bay scallops, sentis, and zigzags. The best days occurred two days after a northern cold front came through. Up before the break of dawn, I found a perfect 8" dead lightning whelk. Later that same day as the tides were changing, the tulips, nutmegs, Florida cones started rolling in. It was short lived though, and has not been as good since.

Study your tide tables and look for negative low tides around sunrise. Don't have a tide table? Watch the moon and anticipate lower than usual tides during both the full and new moons. Watch the weather. If strong north winds are predicted, consider a beach excursion two

days after the storm. There are no guarantees of good shelling during these conditions, but I can guarantee that a walk on the beach will start your day out right!

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**Reading Tide Charts**

By Linda Powers and Debbie

Freeman

Are you intimidated by all those numbers on a tide table? So was I. Then I was taught how to read one properly. Let's simplify it for you.

For shelling purposes, we are most interested in the negative, or minus low tides. When first looking at the month's tide tables, skim the height (ht) column for the tides marked with a minus sign, indicting a negative tide. The days where the negative tides are around sunrise are the best.

Englewood Tide Chart

2 April 2003 - 6 April 2003

|            |           |            |           |
|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| 2003-04-02 | 01:13 EST | 1.19 feet  | High Tide |
| 2003-04-02 | 06:19 EST | Sunrise    |           |
| 2003-04-02 | 07:29 EST | 0.30 feet  | Low Tide  |
| 2003-04-02 | 13:08 EST | 1.30 feet  | High Tide |
| 2003-04-02 | 18:47 EST | Sunset     |           |
| 2003-04-02 | 20:02 EST | 0.05 feet  | Low Tide  |
| 2003-04-03 | 01:54 EST | 1.11 feet  | High Tide |
| 2003-04-03 | 06:18 EST | Sunrise    |           |
| 2003-04-03 | 07:47 EST | 0.42 feet  | Low Tide  |
| 2003-04-03 | 13:22 EST | 1.39 feet  | High Tide |
| 2003-04-03 | 18:47 EST | Sunset     |           |
| 2003-04-03 | 20:40 EST | -0.04 feet | Low Tide  |
| 2003-04-04 | 02:40 EST | 1.04 feet  | High Tide |
| 2003-04-04 | 06:17 EST | Sunrise    |           |
| 2003-04-04 | 08:04 EST | 0.52 feet  | Low Tide  |
| 2003-04-04 | 13:41 EST | 1.47 feet  | High Tide |
| 2003-04-04 | 18:48 EST | Sunset     |           |
| 2003-04-04 | 21:21 EST | -0.10 feet | Low Tide  |
| 2003-04-05 | 03:31 EST | 0.96 feet  | High Tide |
| 2003-04-05 | 06:16 EST | Sunrise    |           |
| 2003-04-05 | 08:20 EST | 0.62 feet  | Low Tide  |
| 2003-04-05 | 14:05 EST | 1.52 feet  | High Tide |
| 2003-04-05 | 18:48 EST | Sunset     |           |
| 2003-04-05 | 22:05 EST | -0.12 feet | Low Tide  |
| 2003-04-06 | 05:31 EDT | 0.88 feet  | High Tide |
| 2003-04-06 | 07:15 EDT | Sunrise    |           |
| 2003-04-06 | 09:35 EDT | 0.70 feet  | Low Tide  |
| 2003-04-06 | 15:33 EDT | 1.55 feet  | High Tide |
| 2003-04-06 | 19:49 EDT | Sunset     |           |
| 2003-04-06 | 23:57 EDT | -0.11 feet | Low Tide  |

The time indicates when the tide is at its highest or lowest. So, it would be best to be at

the beach prior to the time of the lowest tide, as the tide will start coming in at the time given on the chart. It can also be advantageous to be on the beach just as the tides are changing. Some shells, such as fighting conchs, will pop out of the sand at that time. Also look for the time when a high tide occurs. If the shells have piled up on the beach, as the tide changes, it can reveal some shells that were hidden. Be aware of the rhythm of the gulf waters and you're sure to find shells!

This tide chart is from the following web site.  
<http://tbone.biol.sc.edu/tide/tideshow.cgi>

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Shell Club Meetings In 2003 and 2004

- October 28
- November 25
- December Christmas party to be announced
- January 27, 2005
- February 24
- March 23
- April 27

The study group will continue to meet on the second Monday of the month, at 1 p. m.

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**Board Members**

We will be changing a few faces on our Board today. This past year ( 2002-2003) has been a great one, and we need to thank those who made it possible. **Thank You!**

- President: Judy Curtin
- Vice President: Marilyn Price
- Secretary: Audrey Grant
- Treasurer: Joe Bao
- Barb Myers
- Etta Crosby
- Marilyn Boyd

**Slate of Officers for 2003-2004**

- President: Debbie Freeman
- Vice President: Marilyn Price
- Secretary: Helen Gardner
- Treasurer: Joe Bao
- Judy Curtin
- Barb Myers
- Marilyn Boyd
- Ethel Safigan

**Happy Shelling!**