



# The Epitonium

## October Meeting and Program

Finally, we are going to have a meeting! Come and join us **Sunday, October 17 at 2:00 p.m.** at Immanuel Lutheran Church, 1441 Arlington St, Houston, TX 77008. This is the venue where we have our annual auction. There is plenty of room to social distance. We will not have any refreshments, so if you want something to drink, you will need to bring it.

John Haneiko will be sharing his favorite shells with us. This is what John says about his program: "Everyone who sees my collection of seashells asks the same question: 'Which one (or ones) are your favorite?' It doesn't matter whether it is a neighbor, a friend, family member, or fellow shell enthusiast. So, it occurred to me that I should do a presentation answering that question. And that is what I will do at the October meeting." Here is a picture of one of his favorite shells.



Come and join us for socializing and beautiful shells!

## President's Message

Hello HCS Shellers,  
Fall is upon us as we **finally** will return to having meetings and a Christmas party. I look forward to seeing you all. However, I will be out-of-town for the October meeting.  
Stay safe,



## Conchology Website

Many of you have probably accessed the Conchology, Inc. website maintained by Guido and Philippe Poppe to buy shells or for identification help. If you haven't checked it lately, they have made some interesting additions. The most recent addition is "Hardy's Internet Guide to Marine Gastropods", another help for shell ID. They also host Tom Rice's informative "Shellers From the Past and the Present", and there are interesting sections about "Fake Shells" and "Shells on Stamps". Check it out at: <https://www.conchology.be/>.

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Rusti Stover

**Corresponding Secretary:**  
Lucy Clampit

Visit HCS online at  
[www.houstonshellclub.com](http://www.houstonshellclub.com)

### CALENDAR

10/17/21	HCS Meeting
11/21/21	HCS Meeting
3/19/22	HCS Auction
5/31-6/4	2022 COA in Galveston
10/14-10/16	2022 Texas Jamboree & Shell Show

### 2022 HCS Auction

Mark your calendars and start saving your money for the auction on Saturday, **March 19, 2022**. It will be at our usual site – the Immanuel Lutheran Church in The Heights. The auction committee is sorting through boxes of material from the storage room and is finding some interesting shells. Among other things, there will be some nice cones and cowries. More details and pictures will be in future newsletters.

**WORLD OCTOPUS DAY 8th OCTOBER**

Octopuses are among the *most intelligent species* in the animal kingdom

The Gaint pacific octopus can weigh more than **600 pounds**

All Species are venomous, but the **Blue-Ringed Octopus** is the only one dangerous to humans.

**One Hundred Thousand** is the maximum number of eggs that a female octopus can lay, but the average litter size is only 80.

**Octopuses vs. Octopi**  
The plural in English is "octopuses," But the greek plural form-"octopodes" is sometimes used. "Octopi," while commonly used, is considered incorrect.

**An Ocopus has 3 hearts**   
An octopus has **500 million neurons**, located in both its brain and throughout its arms

**Octopuses are about 90% Muscle**

The giant pacific octopus can inhabit depths of up to **5,000 feet**

A female octopus can have up to **280 suckers on each arm!** Each sucker contains thousands of chemical receptors, with sensitivities to both touch and taste.

Octopuses can quickly change **color and texture**

Octopuses inject their prey with venom using a beak, similar to a bird's, it's also made from the same material as a lobster shell.

Because octopuses **do not have bones**, even large octopuses can fit through small openings the size of a coin!

**300** Recognized Species of Octopus

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

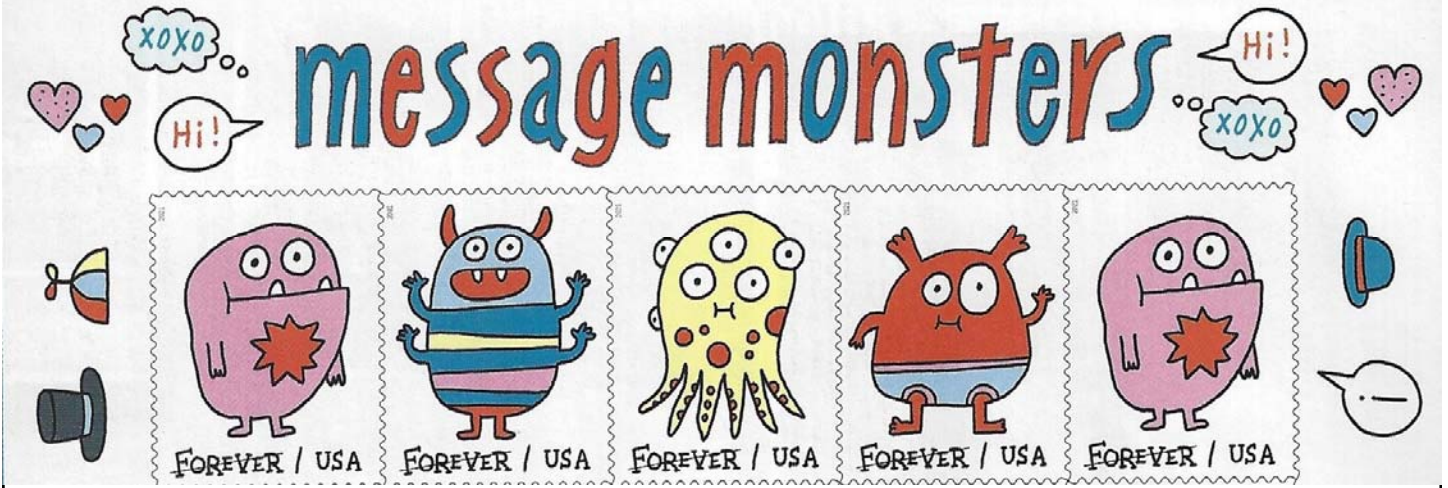
### San Antonio Shell Club Auction

FYI: The San Antonio auction scheduled for November 6 has been canceled.

# Molluscs on Stamps

by John Jacobs

On September 24th the US Postal Service issued a new set of stamps called “Message Monsters”. There are four monster-like characters depicted including one octopus-like monster. This is a fun issue which children (of all ages) can have fun with. The border of the stamp pane has little stickers which can be applied to the particular monster stamp being used. The stamps are all self-adhesive (the norm for US stamps), and are one ounce first-class rate stamps. So, have some scary good fun this Halloween by sending some monster letters. Boo!



# More Adventures

By Darwin Alder

I was transported, almost by magic, to two of my favorite places. On two separate weekends, I was treated to scenes of great beauty on the Texas and Louisiana Coasts. There were billowing clouds of smoke from grass fires. There were fluffy cushions of clouds overlooking a sea of almost no waves. Turkey vultures, hawks, herons, and egrets graced the blue skies. Roseate Spoonbills added a flash of brilliant pink to ponds and waterways. Winnie, Crystal Beach, preceded Galveston. The Bolivar Ferry passed by sleek porpoises swimming and playing in the waves. The Gulf shores provided a few *Polinices*, *Thais*, and a single *Epitonium*. The magic carpets of the Blue Water Highway and I-H 45, brought me safely back to Houston.



The adventure continues!



**68th Annual Gem, Mineral, Jewelry & Fossil Show**

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**November 12-14, 2021**

**In-person at the Humble Civic Center!**



## Pourtales' Abalone

By Tina Petway

The photographs are of a rare, live-collected specimen of Pourtales' Abalone; known scientifically by the Latin name *Haliotis pourtalesii*. This specimen is part of the Malacology collection here at the Houston Museum of Natural Science. It was collected by dredge off the south west Florida shelf in very deep water by L. R. Martin in December of 1983. *Haliotis pourtalesii* only reaches a little over one inch or up to 30 millimeters in length. Photographs of the animal within its shell were taken just after our specimen was brought on board and represent some of the best of the very few ever taken of this elusive species. At that time 22 slide pictures were taken of the live animal and also of the soft parts after removal from the shell. These pictures show some very important anatomical features that had not previously been recorded.



It is the only abalone indigenous to the Atlantic coast area of the United States in the Gulf of Mexico and is found along a deep, offshore coastal range that extends from the Florida Keys and northern Cuba, throughout the Gulf Coast of the United States to the Yucatan Peninsula, and further southward to Brazil. This species was named in 1881 by the Smithsonian Institution Curator of Molluscs, William Healy Dall, in honor of its discoverer, Count Louis Ferdinand de Pourtales. Count Pourtales directed the dredging operations of the U.S. Fish Commission steamer, *Bibb*, on the plateau off of the Florida Keys where it was discovered. This undersea formation is now known as the Pourtales Plateau. The specimen was then sent by Dr. Dall to Dr. William Stimpson, of the Field Museum of Chicago, for inclusion within a comprehensive study of worldwide, marine molluscs that Stimpson was preparing for future publication. It was stored in what was supposed to be a fireproof warehouse along with thousands of other specimens accumulated by Stimpson, which were on loan from the collections of the leading museums of the world at that time. Unfortunately, the warehouse and its contents were completely destroyed in the Chicago Fire of 1871. A second specimen was not found until 1913 by the Smithsonian's John B. Henderson, while dredging from his private motor yacht, *Eolis*, along the inner edge of the Pourtales Plateau off Key West. *Haliotis pourtalesii* has been found living among the American Thorny Oyster, *Spondylus americanus*, feeding on the algae that often covers the outer surface of that species. Pourtales' Abalone is one of the rarest of all *Haliotis* species, and is perhaps the most difficult of all to obtain. Live-collected specimens, such as this one, are extremely rare and are of the highest scientific importance. And though it is very small indeed it is also one of the most beautiful of the family of Abalones.

# THE WORLD OF LATIAXIS

By John Haneiko

Some collectors focus on a single type or family of seashells while others like to collect them all. I fall in the second category, but it took me many years before I focused on certain shell families. The last family to catch my attention was the *Latiaxis*. In most seashell identification books, they are filed right after the Murex which makes sense because they form the two families with more “frills” than any other shell grouping. In fact, I would say the *Latiaxis* have the most “frills” of any seashell family. They have certain things in common: virtually all are deep water inhabitants, physically small, many are restricted to specific geographic locations, and a good number of them are surprisingly expensive. There were very few of them in my collection until this year, when I added 47 of the 53 that I now own.

Among many beautiful species lurks one of the oddest shells in the world in my opinion. That would be the *Latiaxis mawae*. It is one of the largest, possibly the largest, member of the family. The great majority of specimens for sale are 40-45 mm in length. A large one is a treasure, like the 62.3 mm specimen I acquired recently. It is the white one in the picture. This is a shell that looks like it was in a hurry since it appears to be uncoiling as it grows. Like so many shells, I did not realize the variety of appearances this strange species can take. I have attached two additional pictures with quite unusual color/markings that I recently found from Singapore. Actually, the shells were from the Philippines, since most attractive species are from Japanese waters or the Philippines. Nearly all specimens appear to be beige or off-white. Even the bright white shell pictured is unusual.



This species is a prime example of the amazing diversity that exists in nature, since it does not even resemble any other seashell. It is also an example of why I have never tired of looking at seashells and pictures of them.

I included two other pictures to show the beauty of some of the shells in this family. If you have never investigated the *Latiaxis* shells, you may be surprised at what you find.



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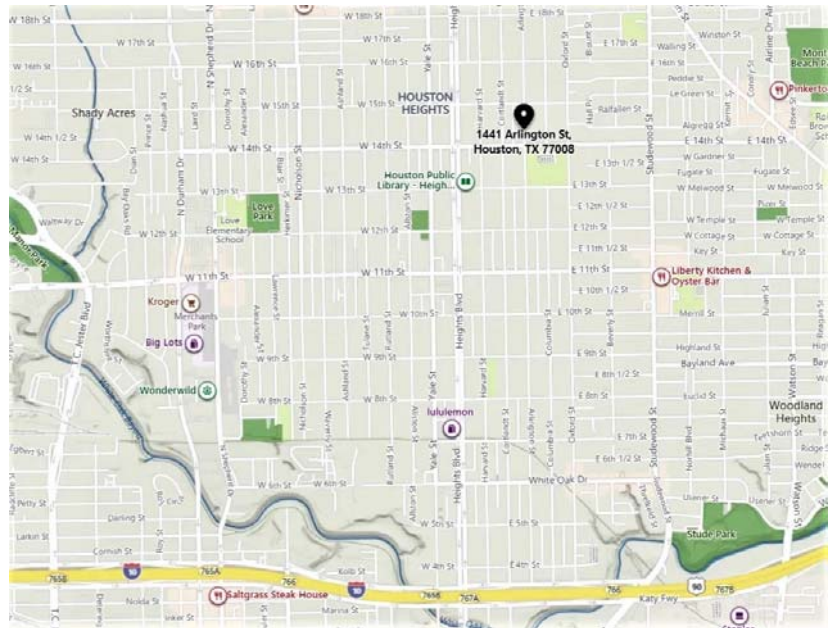
The Society holds regular meetings on the third Sunday of September, October, November, January, February and April. There are seasonal events and a yearly shell auction scheduled in the other months.

**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 Angie Haneiko, 11407 Blackhawk Blvd., Houston, TX 77089.

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## **HOUSTON CONCHOLOGY SOCIETY**

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