

FROM *THE* COMMUNITY

ONE SHELL OF A GOOD TIME

WRITTEN BY: CRAVEN INIONS



Interspersed amid glittering shoreline profusions are remnants of life on a much smaller scale. Beneath the sands lie shells that once housed organisms ranging the spectrum's expanse. From sea snails to conchs, shells come in as many shapes, sizes and colors as their former inhabitants.



Graced with a general ocean shoreline exceeding 300 miles, accompanied by an estimated estuarine shoreline totaling over 12,000 miles, North Carolina shell enthusiasts have tremendous ground to explore and discover. Fortunately for them, there's a group that promotes shell acquisition and makes it more than just a hobby.

The North Carolina Shell Club gives members and visitors the resources required to stock every collection from humble beginnings to borderline hoarder disorders. In addition to their website, ncshellclub.com, which is loaded with helpful tips and guidance, the NCSC presents an annual Shell Show here in the Port City.

The Shell Show boasts a broad swath of competitive categories including handmade shell crafts, photography and shell displays. Competition groups are divided based on age and experience with special groups for novices and juniors. Exhibits are examined by judges, and winners are selected.

While Wilmington may be home to the event each year, specimens are hardly limited to local waters. Shell Show chair John Timmerman explains how shells from all over the world are welcomed as displays and spur the shell-lover's zeal.



The show, held from August 22nd - 25th at the Coastline Conference and Event Center, is open to the public and costs \$4 for adults and \$3 for seniors and children under the age of 18. This year's show will be the 47th installment of the annual Shell Show. Last year, Hurricane Florence's landfall precipitated the event's cancellation.

Mr. Timmerman says the show has a way of converting bystanders into full-fledged shell junkies. Even seemingly pedestrian interests can be let loose.

Shell Club President Dora Zimmerman shared an anecdote from the 2017 event about just such a baptism. While stationed at the giveaway bins, Mrs. Zimmerman was approached by a young group of girls aged 8 to 10 who were there for a birthday party.

"Like a swoop of birds on prey," the girls converged on the bin, says Mrs. Zimmerman. One chaperone in attendance remarked what a refreshing change of pace this gathering had been for the girls, who had tired from the routine laser tag parties and fast food rendezvous. The scavenger hunt was the biggest hit with the crowd, who came away having learned a few new things.

"When I was that age, having a chance to attend a shell show like this one would have made my head explode," says Mr. Timmerman of the displays at the annual event.

Mr. Timmerman grew up in West Virginia, hundreds of miles from the nearest beach but hardly too far to kick start a passion that would last a lifetime.

Reminiscing about his youth, Timmerman explains the origin story for his shell obsession; he discovered his first treasure trove at Myrtle Beach. Mr. Timmerman admitted the prize was actually just a rag-tag collection of fractured cockle shells. All the same, it ignited his fire—a flame yet to be extinguished.

As time passed family moves ensued, compelling Timmerman to consolidate his relics; in the case of the cockles, discarding them completely. Acknowledging their latent sentimental value, Timmerman wishes he could have those shattered shells back, if for no other reason than nostalgia.

Mr. Timmerman encourages those who do catch the fever to be mindful of their contribution to science, reminding them to always document the locations where shells or other specimens are recovered. Without this detail, any newly



gleaned information will be all but nullified, and the shell demoted to prospective art piece at best. Much like real estate, he stresses, "Location, location, location!"

The NCSC welcomes any and all who are interested to participate in the Shell Show this year. The public is invited to attend and vote for their favorite display; just one more interactive guest-friendly feature the show offers.

For more information on the show, contact Shell Show Chairman Karynn Morgan by email at karynnmorgan@earthlink.net.

The Club also publishes a newsletter four times yearly which provides articles on shells, descriptions of field trips and information on upcoming meetings. The newsletter is mailed electronically. Sign up at ncshellclub.com to start receiving yours. ☺

North Carolina Shell Show

August 23 - 25, 2019

"It's part of the family fun"

Coastline Conference & Event Center
501 Nutt Street, Wilmington NC 28401



Information

Karynn Morgan
3088 Shannon Dr
Winston-Salem NC 27106
karynnmorgan@earthlink.net

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Show Hours:

Friday August 23, 9 AM - 5 PM
Saturday August 24, 9 AM - 5 PM
Sunday August 25, 9 AM - 3 PM