

Tidelines

May 2024

Celebrating
our
88th year!

St. Petersburg Shell Club, Inc.

Founded 1936

Web site: stpeteshellclub.org

Shell Club meetings are held on the first Friday of the month, except June, July, August, & December at the **Seminole Recreation Center, 9100 113th Street North, Seminole**. The doors open at 6:30p.m. and the meetings start at 7:00p.m. The public is always invited.



The Souverbie Lobiger (*Lobiger souverbii*) is a sea slug that reaches about 20 mm (0.78 inch). Its cap-like, translucent shell is very thin, and covers only the central part of the slug's back. The thin shell is flanked by the four parapodial lobes, body projections that are typical of *Lobiger* sea slugs. Most likely, the lobes act to increase the apparent size of the animal to intimidate predators. The photo of the live sea slug was taken by Anne DuPont at Lake Worth Lagoon, Palm Beach County, Florida. Shell photos by José H. Leal.

More? ShellMuseum.org/blog



BMSM 128508
Lobiger souverbii
Cayo Costa, Florida, USA

THE SHELL COLLECTOR'S CODE OF ETHICS

I realize that molluscs are part of our precious national wildlife resources, therefore:

I WILL make every effort to protect and preserve them not only for my own future enjoyment, but for the benefit of generations to come.

I WILL always leave every shelling spot as undisturbed as possible.

I WILL take only those specimens needed for my collection and for exchange at the time... Shells in a box cannot reproduce while I am waiting for a place to send them.

I WILL leave behind the damaged and the young specimens so that they may live and multiply.

I WILL **NOT** collect live egg cases unless they are to be used for study, and then, only in small quantities.

I WILL **NEVER** "clean out a colony" of shells.

I WILL practice and promote these conservation rules in every way possible.



A MESSAGE FROM THE DESK OF YOUR PRESIDENT

As we approach our summer hiatus from club meetings, I can't help but reflect on the past year. Starting this past summer we had another wonderful COA convention held in Wilmington, NC filled with great presentations, a fun Welcome Party, Banquet, Oral Auction, Silent Auctions, and, of course, the Dealers' Bourse. The 2024 convention to be held in Melbourne, FL is shaping up nicely.

Club meetings have continued, and, thankfully, we are back to our 7PM start time. We hope to line up some great programs for the 2024-25 season.

Five shell shows occurred during the first three months this year. While our own show was not well attended, we hope to change that for 2025. Jerry Puigdomenech has volunteered to be Shell Show chair which takes some of the club business off our minds. Thank you, Jerry.

Our shell community has suffered several losses this past year, all of whom will be greatly missed. Alan Gettleman and Harry Lee were the most well known. Their many decades of knowledge and their willingness to help anyone with shell questions is what made them so appreciated, and I, for one, will miss them both.

I thank Kathy Hofstad for assuming the role of treasurer. You've done a great job. She also sends out cards both digital and hardcopy to our members. Kathy helps with several of the Florida shell clubs as well.

Otis & Linda Taylor are always willing to help the club. It is thanks to them that we are back to our 7PM time slot.

I wish all of you a safe and happy summer filled with beautiful shells.

John

Club Officers and Committees

President John Jacobs; Vice President Robert Gould; Recording Secretary open; Treasurer Kathy Hofstad; Newsletter Editor Cheryl Jacobs; Directors at Large: Carolyn Petrikin, Jane McKinney, Otis Taylor; COA Representative John Jacobs; Refreshments open; Photographer John Jacobs; Field Trips Entire Board; Corresponding Secretary open, Shell Show Chair Jerry Puigdomenech; Annual Picnic the Board; Raffle/Door Prizes Cheryl Jacobs; Facebook Cheryl Jacobs; Webmaster Cheryl Jacobs.

Forecast Minus Tides

May

1 Wed 1:58AM -0.3
2 Thu 2:58AM -0.2
6 Mon 6:43PM -0.2
7 Tue 7:31PM -0.4
8 Wed 8:18PM -0.5
9 Thu 9:07PM -0.5
10 Fri 9:57PM -0.4
11 Sat 10:51PM -0.3
12 Sun 11:48PM -0.2
21 Tue 6:54PM -0.2
22 Wed 7:31PM -0.3
23 Thu 8:10PM -0.3
24 Fri 8:54PM -0.4
25 Sat 9:42PM -0.4
26 Sun 10:34PM -0.4
27 Mon 11:30PM -0.3
29 Wed 12:25AM -0.3

June

3 Mon 5:51PM -0.2
4 Tue 6:42PM -0.3
5 Wed 7:31PM -0.4
6 Thu 8:18PM -0.5
7 Fri 9:03PM -0.4
8 Sat 9:48PM -0.3
9 Sun 10:31PM -0.3
10 Mon 11:14PM -0.2
19 Wed 6:41PM -0.2
20 Thu 7:24PM -0.3
21 Fri 8:08PM -0.4
22 Sat 8:53PM -0.4
23 Sun 9:38PM -0.4
24 Mon 10:23PM -0.3
25 Tue 11:06PM -0.3

July

2 Tue 5:51PM -0.3
3 Wed 6:44PM -0.3
4 Thu 7:32PM -0.3
5 Fri 8:15PM -0.3
6 Sat 8:53PM -0.3
7 Sun 9:27PM -0.2
18 Thu 6:28PM -0.2
19 Fri 7:15PM -0.3
20 Sat 7:59PM -0.3
21 Sun 8:39PM -0.3
22 Mon 9:18PM -0.3
23 Tue 9:54PM -0.2

August

1 Thu 6:41PM -0.2
2 Fri 7:23PM -0.2
17 Sat 6:54PM -0.2
18 Sun 7:33PM -0.2

Tides are for Pass-a-Grille. Other specific locations may be up to 2 hours later or earlier. Listings from saltwatertides.com.

Upcoming Club Meetings
6:30pm Meet and Greet, 7pm Meeting

May 3 SPSC: member Jerry Puigdomenech
 “*Carinaria cristata*”

May 7 Suncoast Conchologists meeting 7pm

These are the last meetings of the season. See you in September.

UPCOMING SHELL SHOWS & RELATED EVENTS

May 3-5: North Carolina Shell Show, Crystal Coast Civic Center, 3505 Arendell St., Morehead City, NC

Jun 12-16: Conchologists of America Convention Hilton Hotel, Melbourne, Florida

Aug 24-25: West Coast Shell Show

Oct 18-19: Texas Shell Show/Jamboree

Nov 8-10: Gulf Coast Shell Show

July—Strawberry top
 (*Clanculus pharaonius*)



July

7-Debi McCreary
 22-Matthew Newcomb
 24-Cynthia Beck
 26-David Ward
 28-Peggyann Ankrom

Happy Birthdays

Birthday Shells per R. Tucker Abbott

May—Emerald nerite
 (*Smaragdia viridis*)



May

1-Jerry Puigdomenech
 16-Tina Baldwin
 23-Mary Ellen Akers
 31-Deb Williams

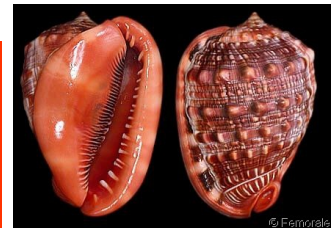
June—Pearl oyster
 (*Pinctada margaritifera*)



June

1-Jennifer Kotimaki
 7-Maureen Keefe
 12-Julianne Benedict-Dolney
 13-Karla Mason

August—Cameo helmut
 (*Cypraea cassis rufa*)



August

11-Gloria Gould
 21-Crystal Dean
 24-Save Geiger
 29-Cheryl Jacobs



Conchologists of America, inc.

2024 Convention

When: June 12-16, 2024

Where: Hilton Hotel, Melbourne, Florida

To attend the convention and participate in the presentations and silent auctions, **you must be registered**. Registration forms are available on the COA web site conchologistsofamerica.org.

**COA 2024
 SHELL-OLYMPICS**



The convention consists of the Welcome Party, Presentations/Talks, Silent Auctions, the Banquet, an Oral Auction, and the Dealers Bourse. No registration is required to attend the Oral Auction and the Bourse. The Bourse can consist of up to 10,000 square feet of space with dealers from around the world displaying a huge variety of shells and shell-related items.

The Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum & Aquarium: the Live Tanks

story & pics by John Jacobs

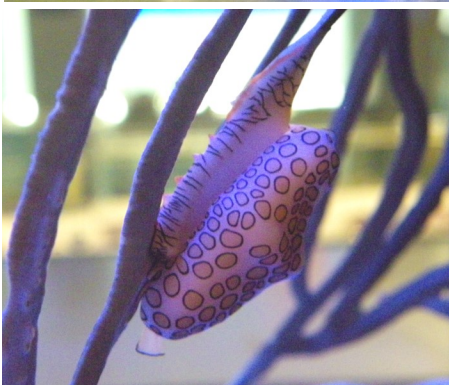
Now that the Living Gallery area at the museum is open to the public, here is a quick look from a visit I made in March. The estimated opening of the rest of the facility is late summer. Admission is at a reduced rate for now. I encourage you all to visit.



Entrance to the Living Gallery



Ctenoides ales (Electric flame scallop)



Cyphoma gibbosum



Summertime Reads by Jerry Puigdomenech

As we approach the Eve of summer break the memories of childhood with long summer days & the footloose and fancy free plans of youth come flooding back. Of course, those cherished far away days were overshadowed by the dreaded mandatory scholastic reading assignments of dry often boring literary works and their associated book reports.

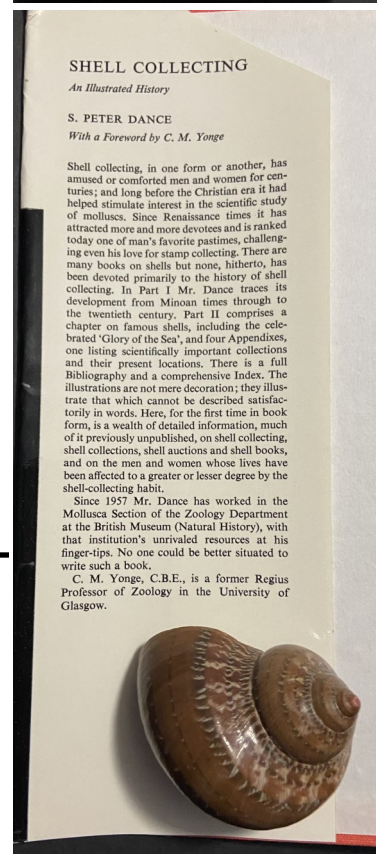
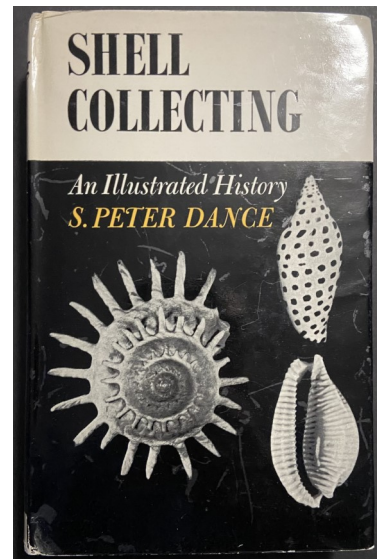
While we are far removed from those compulsory readings, I encourage all of you to perhaps carve out some time and explore the vast offerings of the many long ago Sea Shell authors locked away in the yellowing pages of slowly vanishing out of print books.

These antique manuscripts may not contain the most up to date information as our 21st century digital resources but they can act as a sort of “time machine” providing a crucial glimpse into the “infancy of thought” surrounding our molluscan hobby.

It's fascinating to note that some of the concepts of these primitive writings remain tried and true centuries after they were penned while others have evolved through time. Some ideas although rudimentary compared with today's thinkers can still act as a valuable road map for our own individual treks into and across the vast conchological landscape.

We can fairly easily track down any number of these historical writings via internet sources such as Abe Books.com, Amazon, eBay, and perhaps my favorite MDM Shell books.com (Owned and operated by one of the major forces in our hobby Mr. Bob Janowsky & his wife). As an example, one of the treasured works that I acquired is titled *Shell Collecting: An illustrated History* written by the charismatic British author S. Peter Dance. This text highlights an extensive roster of great antiquarian conchological thinkers from the Renaissance to the 20th Century and showcases a handful of classic important and rare sea shells. I'll be discussing one of the rare shells at the St. Petersburg Shell Club meeting in May.

I wish everyone a safe, fantastic and enlightening summer break.



Shell of the Day

In my email nearly every day is a new shell of the day from the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum & Aquarium sent out by Dr. José Leal. The newest one today, April 30, is a chiton. Dr. Leal writes:

“Chitons belong to a class of mollusks called the Polyplacophora (Greek for “bearers of many plates”). Their bodies are covered by eight shelly plates, also known as valves. The valves are interlocked and surrounded by a leathery girdle. The Eastern Beaded Chiton (*Chaetopleura apiculata*) may reach 38 mm (about 1.5 inches), but locally (SW Florida) rarely gets to 25 mm (one inch).

There are eight plates (valves), the central area of the valves has longitudinal lines, and the lateral areas show minute beads. The girdle is festooned with microscopic scales. The color of the valves is very variable, ranging from light gray to greenish, shades of brown, and orange. They are usually found washed ashore inside empty shells, often in pen shells, but also living atop the shells of other living mollusks.”



Something Different

by John Jacobs

In many molluscan families there are species that just don't fit the norm. Within the Muricidae there is a small species found throughout the Indo-Pacific region, including Hawai'i, called *Vexilla vexillum* (Gmelin, 1791). It is a unique species that can't be mistaken for anything else. If you didn't know better, you might think it belonged to some other family. Its shell is smooth with no frills whatsoever. The pattern consists of horizontal brownish bands with a pinkish background coloration. It can grow to about 21mm in length and is generally found in shallow water or sometimes in areas exposed by low tides.



2 specimens with operculum from the Philippines in the author's collection

Molluscs on Currency by John Jacobs

Today, I created a new facebook page called "Molluscs on Currency". Thematic collecting in the world of numismatics is a growing area so I thought I would start this for us coin and banknote collectors who have a bent towards molluscs. Coins, tokens, medals and banknotes from ancient times and continuing have depicted molluscs in various forms. If you are interested, please check out this new page.

A new collector coin from Austria was issued Apr 17, 2024. The obverse depicts an ammonite, while the reverse shows a land snail. The 25 euro coin is made of .900 silver and niobium. It is 34mm in diameter and weighs 16.5 grams. The mintage is 65,000.

From the Austrian Mint website:

The latest silver-niobium coin turns the bottom upside down: it shows us what we otherwise hardly notice. It shows all the life that makes our life possible in the first place: the Edaphon, which refers to the totality of living beings in the soil. All of them together create a meaningful chaos that ensures growth and always gives rise to new life.

Diverse life in the soil

Without them, nothing works, without all the small and large creatures, without the microorganisms, bacteria, worms, fungi, insect larvae, springtails, without earthworms and moles. They make things thrive, they help farmers to produce successfully.

The edaphon breaks down organic matter, i.e. what falls from the trees as waste or remains from the harvest. It ensures that the cycle of life keeps going. It produces humus, which has very important properties: humus provides nutrients to the plants, protects the soil from erosion, ensures a granular soil structure, stores water and compensates for temperature fluctuations.

The Edaphon is exposed to various threats. One of them reduces the quality of the soil and is related to climate change. When it gets warmer, there is a risk that the humus levels will decrease and the soil will dry out. If a heavy rain event occurs, the soil is no longer able to absorb these large amounts of water. This increases the tendency to erode, for example.

A second threat is more than that: it means the complete destruction of the Edaphon. With the sealing of natural soil, its useful functions are also lost: water storage, filtering of pollutants, sequestration of carbon. At present, about 11.5 hectares of natural soil are used per day in Austria, about 50% of which is built upon.

More and more human actors are becoming aware of the fact that we need the actors working in the ground to survive. It is important to prevent our land, this precious and indispensable resource, from becoming a scarce commodity. – Let's not trample on the foundations of our lives. If the ground is doing well, we are all doing well.



A Truly Rare Shell

We all have some special finds in our beachcombing collections, and conchologists are especially proud when they are able to add rare specimens to their seashell collections. Imagine having a shell in your collection of which there are only a few known specimens in the world. Find a *Sphaerocypraea incomparabilis* shell and you can retire from shelling!

The *Sphaerocypraea incomparabilis* is considered the rarest seashell today. This snail shell is dark, golden brown with a row of zipper-like white teeth along the shell opening. It is part of the Eocypraeidae family of large sea snails, in the superfamily Cypraeoidea, which includes cowries. Until these shells were announced as a new species in the 1990s, the Eocypraeidae family was thought to have been extinct for 20 million years. Not only was this shell rare, discovering it was like finding a living fossil.

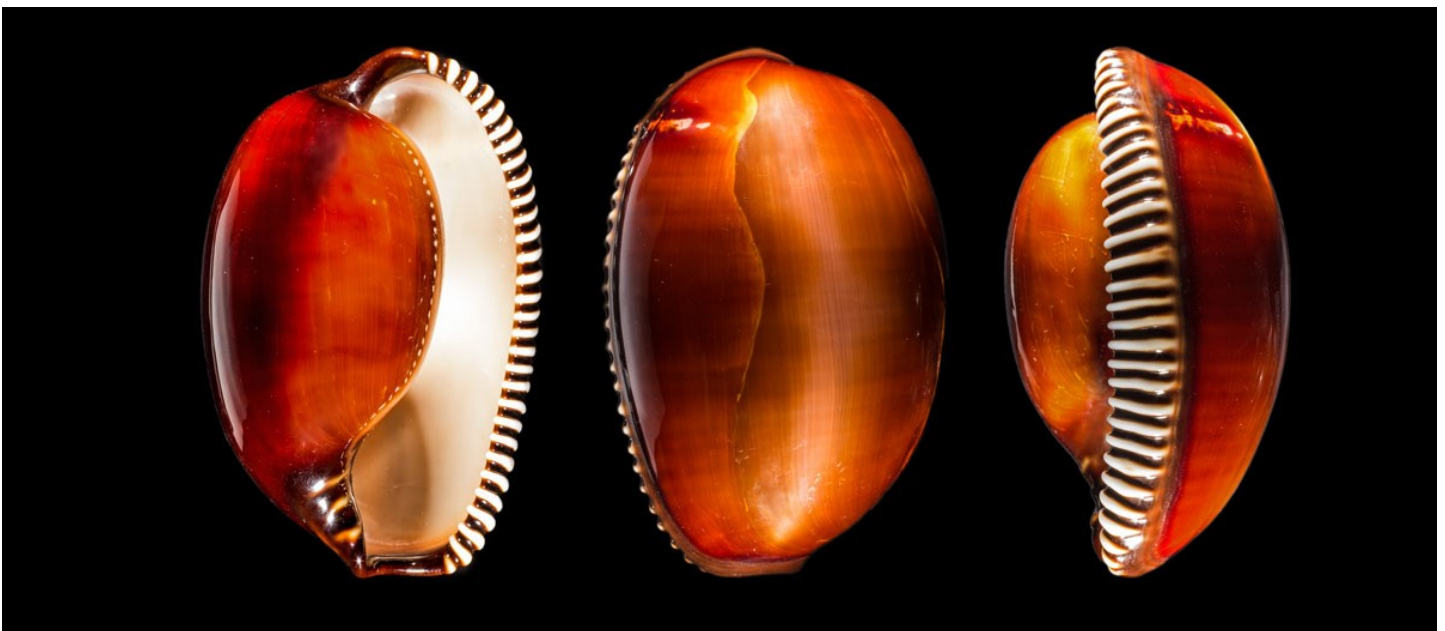
In the 1960s, there was a significant Soviet naval presence in the Gulf of Aden (located between the Arabian Peninsula and Africa, with Yemen to the north and the Arabian Sea to the east). In 1963, the first known shell of what is now known as *Sphaerocypraea incomparabilis* was dredged up by a Soviet trawler there. A few more specimens were found over the following decades, but they remained hidden in private shell collections in the Soviet Union for years.

In 1990, a shell dealer from Florida named Donald Dan heard rumors of a previously unknown shell now in several Russian collections. He eventually tracked down one owner and managed to purchase a *Sphaerocypraea incomparabilis* shell. He then purchased the shell found in 1963 by the Soviet trawler, and was able to see another belonging to a Soviet oceanographer who eventually sold Dan his specimen. Dan sold two of his shells to a private collector who eventually donated the shells to the American Museum of Natural History. Most of the known specimens are now in museums.

The American Museum of Natural History hired Martin Gill to appraise their collection in the early 1990s, and in 1997 a curator found that one of the shells was missing. It was eventually found and the theft was traced back to Gill, who had sold it to a Belgian collector for \$12,000, who subsequently sold it to a collector in Indonesia for \$20,000.

The snails that create these shells are thought to dwell deep in the waters of the northwestern Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden off Somalia. The depth of their habitat—and the dangers modern-day pirates in that region pose to those who would seek to collect them—have kept the known number of these shells to under a dozen. The exact location of the habitat is not yet known. Once it is found, you can expect *Sphaerocypraea incomparabilis* shells to drop in value like *Conus gloriamaris* shells, which were once the most rare and expensive shells in the world until the discovery of their habitat in 1969.

This article appeared in the [Beachcombing Magazine November/December 2021 issue](#).



The Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum & Aquarium

The Living Gallery of Aquariums is now open at a reduced admission as of March 1st. This is great news! There is still a lot of work to be done before opening completely, but progress is being made.

As of May 1, 2023, the museum was closed (after being open in a limited mode) to renovate the damage caused by Hurricane Ian which is now complete. Museum staff will also incorporate a number of upgrades to existing exhibits. So when the Museum reopens completely, in the late summer, things will be different from pre-hurricane status. I encourage you all to visit the Museum then. Also, by becoming a member, you will be supporting this wonderful institution. Additionally, donations can be made via the Museum's website at shellmuseum.org. At the top of the home page is a **Donate** button.

This isn't just a museum. Researchers here conduct vital research expanding our knowledge of molluscs, especially in the Florida, Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean areas. If you have a specific interest and wish to examine the Museum's specimens, you only have to ask.

To me, the Bailey-Matthews is a national treasure which deserves to continue its goal of educating and bringing awareness of these fascinating animals which have a lineage going back more than 500 million years. Let's keep the Museum going for generations to come.



Molluscs on Stamps

by John Jacobs

Great Britain released this tribute to Paleontologist Mary Anning March 12, 2024. In the lower right of this miniature sheet is an ammonite. A set of 8 dinosaur stamps was issued in conjunction with this.



Vintage picture postcards



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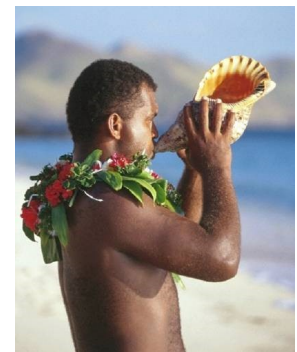
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Show 'n Tell

Bring that special shell to the meeting and talk for a few minutes about it.

What was it that appealed to you about that shell?

Was it the color, the family, the location it came from?

Do you have a question on the identification of a shell?

Whatever the reason, blow your horn, show it off.

HAVE I RENEWED ?

Our club membership runs from January to December. If you are not sure if you have renewed, please call or email us.



Contact Cheryl & John Jacobs
stpeteshellclub@gmail.com
or 813-309-2608



“It’s never too early to renew.”

St. Petersburg Shell Club, Inc.
Founded 1936

Annual Dues: Individual \$15.00
Family \$20 (1 copy of TIDELINES per household)

Meetings are held on the 1st Friday of the month, except June, July and August, at the **Seminole Recreation Center, 9100 113th Street North, Seminole**. Meetings start at 6:00p.m. and include educational short programs, social times, opportunities to identify shells, and a main program on some aspect of the shell collecting hobby. The club publishes “**TIDELINES**” 5-6 times a year with a special edition at Shell Show time. The membership year begins Jan 1st and dues are delinquent after Apr 1st. Please make your check payable to the St. Petersburg Shell Club.

Return the application to the membership chairperson at the address below.

Please complete—Detach and Return

New Member: Individual _____ Family _____
Renewal: Individual _____ Family _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Apt# _____

City, State, Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

Birthday: _____ Shell Interests: _____

If you use another address part of the year, please list where & when here:

Return to: Membership Chairperson
P. O. Box 3472
Seminole, FL 33775-3472

Membership \$ _____

Shell Show Awards and Ribbons Fund \$ _____

Total \$ _____

E-mail: stpeteshellclub@gmail.com
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