

The Drifting Seed

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THE DRIFTING SEED

A triannual newsletter covering seeds and fruits dispersed by tropical currents and the people who collect and study them.

Distributed to more than 20 countries.

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The 9th Annual International Sea Bean Symposium will be held at the Cocoa Beach Public Library, October 15th-16th, 2004
Contact the Sea Aire for Motel Reservations, mention the Symposium for a \$10 discount, 1-800-319-9637, <http://www.i-n.com/seaaire/>

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When It All Comes Together by Ed Perry

It was Monday after the Sea-Bean Symposium and I was due back to work, on *this* day at the tackle shop, but only after I took our Japanese guests— Izumi and Teru—back to the airport.

Their early flight out of Melbourne, (Florida), left me with a couple of hours still before I needed to be at work. I got a biscuit and coffee at McDonald's, read the newspaper, and waited for the sun to come up on the horizon.

I decided that a walk on the beach at the end of the causeway near where I would be working would be a great way to reflect on the past weekend's events, and to thank God for a wonderful Symposium. The area is a well-combed spot, and several "beaners" that I alone, know of, look for driftseeds here each day when conditions are prime. I really didn't expect to find anything, but wanted to spend some time on the beach none-the-less.

I was pleasantly surprised to see some fairly new wrack forming at the water's edge when I hit the beach, and within minutes I picked up two seahearts; one was nicely shaped, the other waterlogged.

Within minutes a loud sound from the west surprised me, and I looked up to see a large jet— Izumi and Teru's—rapidly ascending. It steadily curved over the Atlantic Ocean and headed due west. I could feel our Japanese beachcombers making one last longing-look at the bountiful Atlantic beaches as they started their long journey home. I felt their stare on me and I waved; they were certainly close enough to make out human figures on the light colored beach sands. "Bye, my friends, bye for now," I said aloud to myself.

As I watched the plane bank, a familiar presence blew in with the ocean wind; I thought of Cathie. How pleased she must be that this group still convenes in her absence, and that it continues to draw new and interested persons from all parts of the globe. *All of this* from a single person's dedicated passion. Cathie's passion. Not only had it changed my life, but the lives of many others.

As the goose bumps disappeared from my arms, I silently wished my new Japanese friends "good luck" and watched their plane disappear from sight. I refocused my attention to the glistening fresh wrack strewn water's edge along my path. Within two steps the incoming salty foam deposited a familiar, yet rare sight at my feet. It was a Mary's-bean, cross side up! I reached down to grab it before the next incoming wave carried it away. It was a beautiful specimen, with a "perfect" cross, still glossy with seawater.

To my amazement, another few minutes of walking produced a sea purse, a nicely shaped fossil ghost crab, and a first-ever in my lifetime of sea-bean collecting. It was a nypa palm seed, *Nypa fruticans*, and a perfect specimen at that! Nypas are not even supposed to be in Atlantic currents. I was excited to a level I hadn't experienced in years of beachcombing, and wondered if I was somehow being "paid" for a job well-done.

The weekend event had come together almost perfectly. Everyone seemed to be having a great time. A record number of participants in the Saturday morning Bean-A-Thon brought in scads of rare seeds and filled the library with excitement. Our international flair was highlighted with displays on Japanese driftseeds and glass fishing floats, as well as driftseeds from Midway Atoll and Australia!

Like the weekend that had just passed, my morning walk was a reflection of life in general. We walk the wrack of life with mostly dull moments, but sometimes things just really connect and come together. My walk had just connected, and the Symposium had too.

The following forty-five minutes on the beach produced nothing more. But that was OK. The short-lived bonanza was a coming together of energy, spirit, and friendship. I knew I had been blessed, never expecting to really find anything anyway. I had gone to the beach mainly to give something back, and to reflect.

My beachwalk was over, and the reality of 14 days in a row of working was setting in. There would be much more life-wrack to walk, and more memories to be made along the way.

But for that morning, everything was just fine.

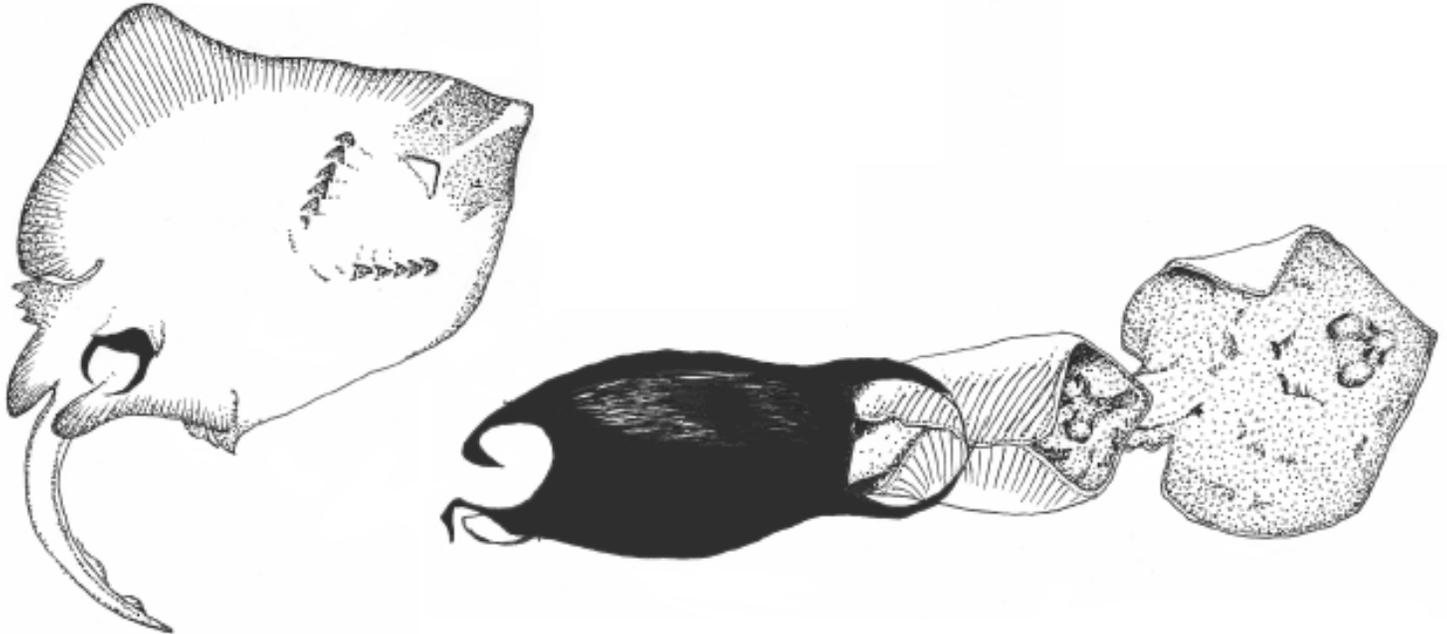
Skate Egg Connections
by Izumi Hanno
izumin@h.email.ne.jp

I found about eighty skate egg capsules which were all the same kind last winter and spring on Kujukuri Beach in Japan. I didn't know their scientific name so I wrote an e-mail to the Japanese Drift Logical Society's mailing list and asked if there was anybody who knew of these egg capsules? One lady, Mitsuko Nakatsuka, who lives in Hokkaido answered to me. Though she didn't know the scientific name, she gave me much interesting information on the capsules I had found. She had even found a large skate egg capsule and also wanted to know the name.

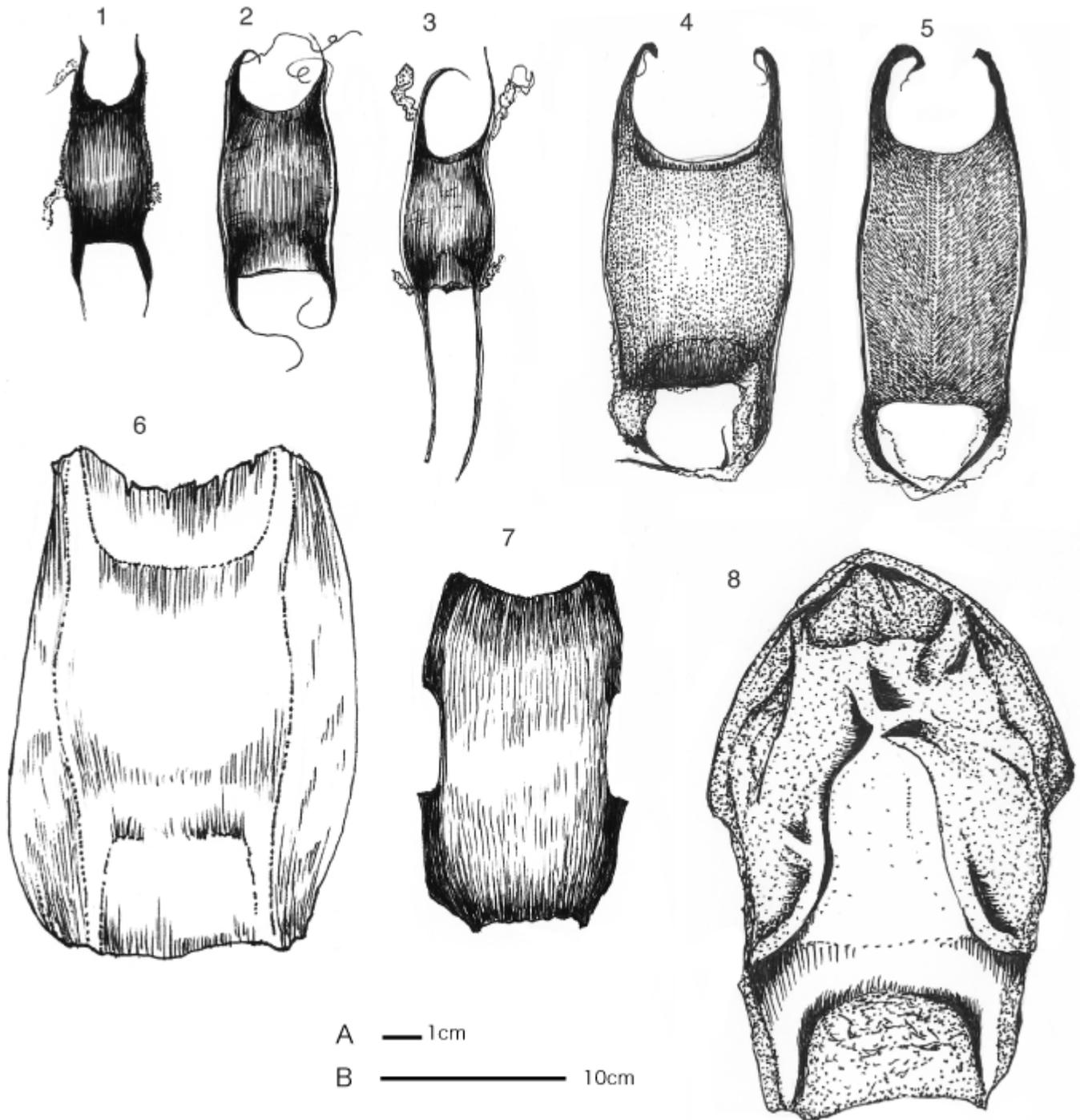
I sent my finds to Peter Bor who lives in Holland. He is a skate expert and has collected many kinds of skate egg capsules from all over the world. He told me the scientific name of my finds, as well as the name of a Japanese skate expert, Dr. Hajime Ishihara. At once I e-mailed Hajime and I went to his laboratory with some large specimens from Hokkaido. I also took pictures in his lab of almost all the different kinds of skate egg capsules distributed around Japan.

Afterwards, I let Mitsuko know we had gained the knowledge we wished on our ID's. Mitsuko was very impressed and we decided to make a presentation of our finds at this year's Japanese Drift Logical Society's meeting. Before the meet, I attended the 8th Annual Sea-Bean Symposium in Florida. This year's keynote speaker was Dr. David Cox who is an expert on skates in the USA. What a coincidence for me! His presentation was very interesting and I talked more with him at the Symposium.

The presentation that Mitsuko and I gave was a great success. Though we were only amateur beachcombers, the three experts, all from different countries, greatly helped us. It was amazing for me and I think the whole connection is very special. I knew well of the magic and legend of sea-beans, but this time I had experienced the magic of mermaids' purses!



To be looking elsewhere for miracles is to me a sure sign of ignorance that everything is miraculous.
Abraham Maslow



1. *Raja okamejei kenojei*, a comon specimen on the coast of Japan. 2. *Raja eglanteria*, seems common on the Florida coast. 3. cf. *Raja senta*, this skate is from the northern coast of the Eastern US. (Figs. 1.2.3: scale A) 4. *Bathyaraja aleutica* 5. *Rinoraja kujjensis* 6. *Dipturus gigas* 7. *Dipturus pulchra* 8. *Raja binoculata*, this skate which is distributed in the deep sea lays larger eggs that take about 2-to 3-years to develop and hatch. The large egg capsules found stranded on Hokkaido can be pitted by acorn barnacles due to their long immersion in the sea. The size of the egg capsule is in proportion to the mother skate's size. The top and bottom accord its mother's head and tail. The baby skate always emerges from the bottom of the egg capsule.

Legend of St. Augustine by Jerry Sullivan

Whether you agree or not, you are a part of a fledgling, emerging and novel society. Ultimately all groups, whether rigidly structured or loosely knit, having a common interest, begin to search for their historic roots. How did we evolve? Who were our pacesetters? Are there legends?

One immediately recognizes the contributions of Darwin and Guppy with their early theories concerning plant distribution by drifting seeds and the role of ocean currents. Early on Gunn and Dennis (1) realized the need for a comprehensive means to identify sea-beans, so they devised one. Katz's (2) personal touch romanticized the drifting seed, which gave it an esthetic quality previously lacking. Katz and others not only founded the much appreciated and valued newsletter, *The Drifting Seed*, but also laid the foundation for an international sea-bean society. At the present time it is no more than a worldwide, heterogeneous mix of individuals sharing experiences and information as it pertains to sea-beans. More recently, Perry and Dennis (3) successfully blended a more modernistic approach, aiding in the identification with a more complete understanding of the drifting seed.

Has anyone ever heard of Pratt? More precisely, Richard Henry Pratt. Of course, he was the American army officer and Indian educator who organized the first non-reservation Indian school at Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, Pennsylvania in 1879. What has all this to do with sea-beans?

Please read Adams' (4) account of Pratt's activities in 1875 in America's oldest city, St. Augustine, Florida.

"Along with recreation, Pratt made an effort to integrate his prisoners into the social and economic life of St. Augustine. The Indians, although initially feared by some, were an object of great curiosity. Pratt made the most of this fact by inviting citizens to visit the prison, and soon he was issuing passes to selected prisoners to leave the prison. In time, the prisoners, usually in pairs, could be seen walking from shop to shop on the streets of St. Augustine. Blurring the demarcation between the prisoners and the wider community was a conscious reflection of Pratt's belief that in order for his prison-school to be successful, the Indians must understand firsthand the white man's way of living. Also fundamental was a need to instill in the Indians the work ethic—but where to begin? The solution came in the unlikely form of sea beans or seeds, which covered the shores around St. Augustine. Once polished and strung on necklaces, these beans were a major sale item for local curio dealers. Upon learning that dealers were willing to pay ten cents for the polishing of a single bean, Pratt secured a contract for his Indians. Within a few months they had polished 16,000 beans, for an income of \$1600. Soon the Indians were making canes and bows and arrows, painting scenes of traditional Indian life, and receiving the full sales amount when the items were sold." Sixteen thousand sea-beans! Unbelievable! Absolutely fascinating!

According to Pratt (5), *"Sea Beans found along the ocean shore were sold by the curio dealers. The shells were so hard and of such fiber as to be susceptible to a high polish. The principal dealer in St. Augustine was a Mr. Ballard, who had accumulated 10,000 in preparation for sale to northern visitors the next winter. The dealers, when ordered, ornamented them with gold insignia or the initials of the wearer. Another curio dealer, from Jacksonville, brought 6,000 more, which the Indians polished.*

The curio dealer taught them the art of polishing and a system was established of giving them out unpolished, taking them back polished and paying the money to the Indians each time for their work."

Pratt did not give a clue as to how the polishing was accomplished, but one might speculate that each individual sea-bean was hand sanded with fine-grade sandpaper, then buffed to a high polish.

He wrote, *"During an encampment on Anastasia Island, the Indians discovered where sea beans could be found. A general search rewarded them with considerable numbers, which they polished and sold to visitors on their own account, receiving from twenty-five cents to a dollar each according to size and quality. This resource continued throughout their imprisonment."*

According to a footnote, these sea beans found on the Florida shores were usually the chocolate-colored mackay bean. The second edition of Webster's International Dictionary specifies that the mackay bean is the snuff box bean (*Entada scandens*). Today we recognize it as the sea heart (*Entada gigas*), as well as the snuff box bean.

Perhaps two curio dealers, 72 American Indians (■) and Lt. Pratt (□) should be recognized as America's first, documented, authentic sea beaners in 1875, and as the "Legend of St. Augustine."

■ This group was composed of 33 Cheyenne, 27 Kiowa, 9 Comanche, 2 Arapaho and 1 Caddo.

□ Richard Henry Pratt, Brigadier General, U.S. Army Retired, 1840-1924

To my friend and scholar, Ms. JoLayne Sunday, a citizen of the Cherokee Nation, THANKS for directing my attention to this historic happening.

References

1. Gunn, C.R. and J.V. Dennis. 1999. *World Guide to Tropical Drift Seeds and Fruits*. Quadrangle/New York Times Book Company. New York, 1976. Reprint, Krieger Publishing Company. Malabar, Florida.

3. Perry, E.L. and J.V. Dennis. 2003. *Sea-Beans from the Tropics*. Krieger Publishing Company. Malabar, Florida.

4. Adams, D.W. 1995. *Education for Extinction*. University Press of Kansas, pg. 41.

5. Pratt. R.H. 1964. *Battlefield and Classroom*. New Haven & London, Yale University Press. Hartford, Connecticut. Chapters 11 & 12.



Every conceivable kind of drift was carried far inland and deposited in beds, often acres in extent. This consisted of trees, broken limbs, bark and leaves, much of it carried in from the tropics, and it contained millions of seeds. In places these were coming up by the thousands, the forerunners of colonies of imported plants.

No finer lesson could be given of the manner in which our tropical flora has been planted and established, and it is in just this way the work has been done in the past ages.

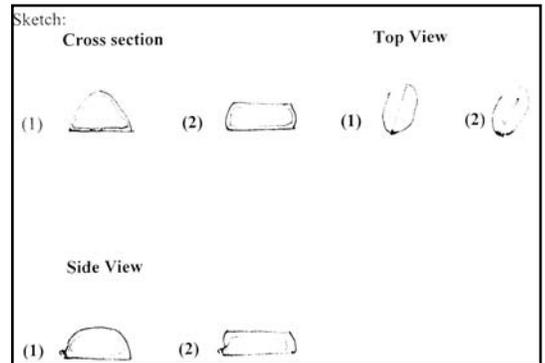
Charles Torrey Simpson in Out of Doors in Florida, 1924

A New Sea-Bean: Texas Ebony by Jerry Sullivan

Pithecellobium flexicaule, synonym *P. ebano*

Common names: Texas ebony, ebano, ebany, Blackbeard, ape's-earring.

Description: *P. flexicaule* seeds are 1.2 to 1.7 cm long, .6 to 1.1 cm wide, two predominant shapes in cross section: 1) triangular and 2) trapezoid. In side view 1) half circle, or 2) trapezoid. From top view seed is ovoid, somewhat lustrous monochromatic reddish brown with a conspicuous middle crease on flat side(s), surface smooth but very slightly wrinkled, hilum 1-to 2-mm conspicuous on pointed end of seed, also on the curved sides an oval lighter color imprint originating and terminating at the hilum.



A single reddish-brown colored seed was collected from the wrack in Port Aransas in close proximity to the Horace Caldwell Pier. For identification, Edward L. Perry IV was consulted, but he was unfamiliar with this seed.

Recently a twelve-foot shrub bearing brown, leathery, sturdy, durable pods was found in the Port Aransas area. Dr. John E. Fucik, biologist/botanist, identified the plant pods as that of Texas ebony. The seeds from these pods were identical to the new sea-bean found at the beach.

Texas ebony is generally found growing in the southern portion of the state and into Mexico, but seldom found in the coastal region. It may exist as a shrub or medium sized semi-evergreen tree, which might reach a height of fifty-feet and a width of forty. Both produce abundant numbers of curved 4-6 inch pods containing 8-13 mature seeds.

The seeds serve as food for wild animals, are incorporated into jewelry, and have been used as an alternative for coffee.

Although seeds do not float, the intact pod is wonderfully buoyant and could serve as an instrument of distribution and is probably capable of weathering a great number of storms. Both seeds and pods have been sent to Ed Perry.

This may well be the first collection and report of the Texas ebony seed as a sea-bean.

buoyancy: seed is non-buoyant, pod is buoyant

viability: not tested

editor's note: Please report to this newsletter if you ever find a Texas ebony seed on the beach!



In the parable of the sower some seeds fell by the wayside and the fowls devoured them; some were cast on stony places to wither and die. Other seeds were sown among thorns and were choked, but still others fell in good ground and brought forth thirty, sixty, even a hundred fold. So it is with nature's planting.

Charles Torrey Simpson in *In Lower Florida Wilds*, 1920

8th Annual International Symposium Highlights by Margie Mitchell

A full moon over Cocoa Beach welcomed sea-bean enthusiasts to the Eighth Annual International Sea-Bean Symposium, once again hosted by the Cocoa Beach Public Library, on Friday and Saturday October 10th and 11th, 2003. Strong high tides earlier in the week, reports of good finds on Brevard County beaches, and a terrific feature story about the Symposium in Friday's *Florida Today*, the local newspaper, brought out record crowds of beachcombers with high hopes for good beaning throughout the weekend and good competition in the Bean-a-thon.

The highlight of this year's Symposium was the long-awaited introduction of *Sea-Beans from the Tropics*, the new authoritative reference guide by Ed Perry and the late John Dennis. Sea-beaners anxious to get their hands on its beautiful color photographs and fascinating fast facts, snapped up copies at the Krieger Publishing table as fast as they could be pulled out of the cartons. Ed was kept very busy all weekend signing copies for his many fans.

The Symposium took on a more international flavor than ever this year as we were joined by three first-time exhibitors with a Pacific perspective on all that drifts in the ocean.

Izumi Hanno and Teruo Kawasaki, visiting from Japan, displayed Pacific drift seeds, fishing floats, and a collection of unusual and beautiful mermaids' purses from various Pacific skate species.

Chuck Nolan, who recently moved to Florida from Japan, brought along some beautiful samples from his collection of over 1,300 glass fishing floats.

Billi Wagner displayed her collection of Australian drift seeds, amassed during her travels to Australia and while in the Pacific working for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on Midway Atoll.

Other exhibits included Cathie's famous sand box; Jim Angy's nature photography, including samples of the new *Still Nature* CD series; Mark Bartlett's plants, jewelry, and his amazing coco-de-mer specimen; Paul Mikkelsen and Mary Canada's display of plants, sea-beans, jewelry, and sculpture; Deborah Trachtman's beautiful sea-bean jewelry; Mary Bowman's red mangrove propagule re-planting project; and the aging, but still much sought-after Bean-O-Matic.

The keynote speaker this year was Dr. David Cox of Vero Beach, Florida, whose topic was "The Magic of Mermaids' Purses." With photographs, actual specimens, and insights gleaned from years of studying skate reproduction, he presented a fascinating look at this unique natural phenomenon. We learned all about the process of formation and development of the embryonic skate in its amazing egg case. Did you know that the skate embryo pushes its disproportionately long tail down one of the egg case's prongs and rotates it at high speed to create water circulation into the interior? We even learned something about the historical origin of the term "mermaid's purse."

Other presenters this year were Ed Perry with his ever-popular talk on basic beach walking; Billi Wagner, who talked about her experiences on Midway, and Paul Mikkelsen, who put together a wonderful multi-media show to accompany a BBC radio interview featuring Cathie Katz talking about the magic of ocean currents in her imitable style.

Most Variety of Beans in the Bean-a-thon went to Christopher Scott Boykin of Crystal River, with 34 species. Hot on his heels were Izumi Hanno, Teruo Kawasaki, Alice Surrency, Ben Sunter, and Judith Nettles. The **Young Beaner** award was a split between repeat winner Torrey Cranston and Ben Sunter for finding many different species each. The **Cool Bean** award went to Teruo Kawaski for not just one, but three rare seeds: a boxfruit, an *Ochrosia elliptica*, and a thick-banded mucuna. The **Non Bean** award winner, a poison dart frog (no, not a live one!) was found by Ellen Holbert.

In the **Odd Bean Contest**, prizes went to Michele Kelley for the **stripiest nickar**, Teruo Kawasaki for the **biggest hamburger** (a giant hamburger found during the **Bean-a-thon**), and yours truly for the **largest heart** (seaheart).

A **Special Bean Award** went to Izumi Hanno for her delightfully creative contributions to the Drifters during the past year, and especially for designing this year's Symposium t-shirt.

The Drifters fund-raising raffle boasted the best prizes ever, including one of Alice Lowe's

famous bean boxes (complete with a smiling fossilized crab), an equally-famous Alice Surrency sea-bean wreath, a *Sea Drift Collection* necklace donated by Deborah Trachtman, a shell-bedecked flower pot made by Linda Nichols, and a coveted Mary's-bean donated by Ed Perry. Several great prizes were donated by local merchants, including gift certificates and t-shirts from Dixie Crossroads, a sonic toothbrush from beachcombing dentist, Dr. Zakhari, Indian River Lagoon boat tour packages from Island Boat Lines, books from Krieger Publishing Company, beach-themed curios from Ann Lia Gift Shop and Nautical Collections, nature cd books from StillNature.com, a canvas tote from the Environmental Learning Center, plastic bean storage boxes from D & R Tackle, and subscriptions and hats and tees from *Coastal Angler Magazine*. Jeff Berger Photography graciously produced this year's wonderful Symposium Poster ad, and our Symposium baseball caps were made and donated by Embroidme.com.

For those of you who weren't able to join us in Cocoa Beach this year, Paul Mikkelsen has posted dozens of photos on the seabean.com web site. Take a look at what you missed!

Thanks to all who helped out at the hospitality table and otherwise helped make things run smoothly. To all of the "regulars" who were unable to make it this year, we look forward to seeing you next year. Mark your calendars for **Oct 15-16, 2004!**



Coming Clean! by Curtis C. Ebbesmeyer

"To market, to market, to buy a fat pig,

Home again, home again, jiggety-jig." — Anonymous

No soap! Cornish combers were pumped! On February 28, 2002, **Nick Darke** reported thousands of soap dispensers washing up. Plungers, he called them, to dispense hand soap. Just the pumps, no bottles of soap. They'd been at sea for a long time, Nick observed. Beaching in large numbers suggested they'd fallen from a distant containership.

To the north, a handful showed up in Shetland. *"Just finished my September beached-bird survey and found two soap dispensers of the type in your photos (29th, Sandwick beach, Eshaness; 30th, Shetland and Culswick, West Mainland),"* wrote **Martin Heubeck**. *"There were certainly no more soap dispensers on the beaches in Shetland at the end of October. I kept an eye out for them!"*



To the south, five months later, hundreds harried Holland. *"The invasion of the soap dispensers,"* wrote **Wim Kruiswijk**. *"The fourth week of July 2002, we had our yearly 'seaweeds from the English Channel' washing ashore. In it are the regular drift articles such as 150 light sticks — they are a plague. But the funniest items were soap dispensers! They were dirty with tar and fungus and one- or two-year-old goose barnacles living on them. Because of the pump part, they are good floaters. Due to the sun, they fall apart easily. Just the 'bottle ring and mouth' together with the piston survived the long ordeal."*

They kept invading! A total of 203 pumps beached in eleven months (July 22, 2002 through May 2003): 84 in 2002 (July-December; 39, 21, 2, 14, 7, 1, respectively); and 119 in 2003 (57 during February-March; 60 in April; 2 in May). Wim sent me five, the complete ones each weighing an ounce.

To finger the culprit containers, Wim first found out who produced the pumps. There wasn't much to go on. The plungers carried no ID with the exception of "open" and a semi-circular arrow. A Dutch firm in Tiel provided Wim with the manufacturer's address: *Airspray International BV* in Alkmaar just twenty miles south of where their pumps beached! *Airspray* informed Wim that 262,500 Type T1 dispensers destined for *Dial U.S.* fell overboard. In 525 cardboard boxes each holding 500 dispensers, *Airspray* had packed eight tons of pumps into a 40-foot container. In the United States, *Dial* was to couple the pumps with bottles of soap. Remarkably, while on holiday at Texel, two *Airspray* employees found dispensers!

In transit to New York City from LaHavre, France, a winter storm packing 50-knot winds driving 30-foot seas, pounded the 787-foot-long *Containership Choyang Park*. Halfway across, on March 1, 2001, the storm took its toll, seizing 81 containers, a few of the estimated ten thousand which annually fall overboard worldwide.

As the 14-ton container of dispensers and cohort steel boxes boomed overboard, they punctured and flattened fifty others. Fortunately, no personnel were injured and the ship sustained no serious damage. Despite the havoc, the *Choyang* steamed on to the U.S., littering a herd of steel icebergs in Atlantic shipping lanes 1,400 miles west of Cornwall (47.1°N; 38.4°W). Each Dutch dispenser

boomeranged 3,600 miles: 1,800 miles west in the container; and 1,800 miles adrift back to Holland.

On March 12th, on the *Choyang's* deck, U.S. Coast Guard inspectors discovered relic flotsam — blue jeans, light bulbs, car tires. Debris afloat on the Gulf Stream, based on many previous drifters, generally heads east to Europe. None, however, from the *Choyang* was heard of 'til 14 months later at Cornwall and 17 months later in Holland.

The dates are equivalent to a drift rate of 3.8 miles per day (mpd) which is slow for the Gulf Stream compared with its usual transatlantic drift speed (5 mpd). Furthermore, the pumps should have exceeded the typical drift speed because they're good floaters with a half-inch of freeboard to catch the wind. Perhaps, I thought, the pumps circled 'round a Gulf Stream ring before coming ashore in Cornwall.

From the spill site, some pumps could loop around the North Atlantic's Subtropical Gyre before landing in the Americas — Antilles, Texas, Alabama, Louisiana, Florida, Georgia and the Carolinas. The spill date on March 1, 2001, plus approximately 30 months of estimated gyrating, suggested an October 2003 arrival date, in time for the 8th *Annual Sea Bean Symposium* held in Florida. Beaners, however, reported none. Where are they?

My rule-of-thumb — I learn the fate of 1% of a container spill — meant that I'd eventually hear of some 2,600 pumps. Since Nick reported thousands, and relatively few washed ashore to the north (Shetland) and south (Holland), I probably would not hear of many more. Given the weathering they experienced before hitting Europe, the pumps probably disintegrated before beaching in the Americas. Perhaps American beaners will find pump parts.

Soap! For months, only dispensers washed up. That is, till later in 2002. En route from Santander, Spain, to Avonmouth, Bristol, off Land's End, England, big waves rocked two containers overboard from the *Merchant Vessel Heereweg*. The containers apparently sank. Days later the doors opened releasing plastic packets of a pink colored liquid soap. For days, beach cleanup crews removed the pink packets.

Things, they say, often arrive in threes. First, the soap dispensers washed up, then the soap. That's two — where's the third? Maybe the sea is saying that it's time for us to come clean.

(Information about the *Choyang Park* courtesy of **Captain David Bill**, *Tabor Academy*; **Keith Dominic**, *National Imagery & Mapping Agency*, *Maritime Safety Information Center*; **Michael S. McDaniel**, *The Cargo Letter*; *Professional Mariner Magazine*. Information about the soap from an article by **Robert Jobson** in *Westcountry Morning News*, November 4, 2002, courtesy **Stella Turk**; **Carl Wilson** made helpful suggestions)

The Missing by Curt Ebbesmeyer

Messages In Bottles (MIBs) found on the seashore often signal lost loved ones. As you concentrate on sea beans — footwear along eastern Florida often flags their arrival — never fail to inspect bottles for MIBs. The first story tells why I could not attend the *Eighth Sea Bean Symposium* so I could let beachcombers know the rest of the story for flotsam besides the seeds in the strand. Another account tells of a bottle seemingly guided by the breath of God to its final resting place with a message from an unknown sender by the name of Tanja. I also need to find young Jessica and let her know that her message floated across the Atlantic.

I hope the Small World Network will connect us to Jessica and Tanja.

Mom, MIBs & MOBs. In the wee hours of October 8, 2003, Genevieve Marie Ebbesmeyer, 88, succumbed to a massive stroke followed by a heart attack. For six years (1996-2001) my mother hand-folded, -stamped, -labeled and -mailed 25 issues totaling 20,000 copies of the *Beachcombers' Alert* newsletter, all without the aid of a computer!

On her last day alive, as I trudged heavy-hearted in darkness back to *Yellow Bird* — the canary '79 Chevy Mom had given me when she could no longer drive — I fished parking money from my wallet. There I discovered a marked \$1 bill.

Who has not received in change a doctored dollar? The website www.uglymoney.com illustrates 200-plus messages on money. There's fiscal graffiti for oceanographers — *Water* scrawled on a dollar — and comfort on a ten-spot for Mom's passing: "*Jesus died & came back to show us the way — Pray that we follow. Nothing ever dies. Forever in Him 6/98 Pray for All Fathers' souls — Pray for the living and deceased.*"

Mom knew my curiosity concerning the connection between currents and currency.

Water is like people. Drifters travel the sea, just like cash circulates hand to hand. Both pass along graffiti: currents transport messages in bottles (MIBs), and a sea of humanity transfers messages on bills (MOBs). The difference? The ocean diffuses on a global conveyor belt of interlinked currents, whereas humanity exhibits little global drift, principally random dispersion.

My speed/spend fascination began with an Australian film crew on a TV shoot of *Flotsam Follies in Beyond 2000* for the *Discovery Channel*. One evening over wine at Grayland's Walsh Motel in Washington, as we played *Jenga*, **Lisa Whitby** asked for change. Australia's plastic money caught my attention. I exchanged a fiver, immediately ran some water, and dunked the fin. The pecuniary plastic lay flat on the water, giving new meaning to 'float a loan.' From then on, I wondered about messages on money handed through a sea of currency — walked from cash register to wallet, tip jar to bank teller, coffee kiosk to parking garage . . .

Mom planted that lucky lucre in my wallet to show that currency has lots to teach about the sea! In red ink, someone had rubber-stamped my dollar with www.wheresgeorge.com, *track this bill, please enter series and serial numbers, thanks*. So, I logged on, recorded my dollar (series 2001; serial #L14970870J) and discovered that this money trail to my wallet began in Pasco, Washington, on September 8, 2003, a month to the day before Mom passed away.

Who does not wonder where their money goes? For me, it's literal. We cannot know the location of a MIB at sea, but we may for a MOB via *The Great American Dollar Bill Locator*. To practice website design, **Hank Eskin**, 38, an electronic commerce consultant from Brookline, Massachusetts, launched *Where's George* in 1998. Five years later — as of October 13, 2003 — two million users had entered 37 million bills! Of an estimated 20 billion bills circulating within the United States, *Where's George* is tracking one in 500!

Similar sites have popped up internationally: Canadians play *Where's Willy*; Germans *Wo Ist Mein Geld* (Where's My Money); the Dutch *Where's The Money*; and the Japanese *Osatsu* (Bill). These sites make it possible to compare cash flow with ocean flow. In 30 days, folks had exchanged my dollar over a distance of 179 miles as the crow flies, for a speed of 6.0 miles per day, equal to that of the typical MIB drifting on the Pacific from Japan to Washington.

Registering a bill is like casting a MIB. You enter your bill and wait till somebody reports it. Turns out, 3.5 percent of those entered will be logged at least once, about the reporting rate for MIBs pitched overboard in the middle of an ocean. One energetic stamper launched 65,051 bills and heard of 4,955 for a hit rate of 7.6%, a high percentage for mid-sea MIBs.

Like MIBs, MOBs may travel overseas. Eskin does not track of far-ranging pathways, but anecdotes tell of one from New Jersey to Ireland and back, and another from California to Sweden. Glass MIBs, however, last longer than paper MOBs. The *Federal Reserve* estimates that on average a \$1 bill wears out in 18 months and a C-note in nine years. Glass MIBs, on the other hand, may persist a

century or longer. To find fiscal graffiti matching aged MIBs, we turn to metal money.

The life span of a U.S. coin is roughly 30 years, comparable to a long-lived MIB. The most interesting graffiti is a fingerprint permanently etched on a nickel. Theoretically, *AFIS* — *Automated Fingerprint Identification System* — could trace the originator. In eight months (January - August 2003), the *U.S. Mint* turned out 8.3 billion coins: 4.7 billion pennies, 484 million nickels, 1.3 billion dimes, 1.8 billion quarters, 5 million 50-cent pieces, and 6.2 million Sacajawea dollars.

For added dispersion, some "Georgers" use natural assists, such as taping a bill to balloon and letting it fly, and putting a bill in a bottle and throwing it into a lake. Where will L14970870J go next? Many a MIB dispatcher adds a few dollars to inspire finders to report. Marked money provides an added dimension. Soon, I'll throw into the sea, along with a prayer, some of Mom's ashes — in a MIB— along with her MOB.

(Unlike city graffiti, defacing money is not a crime, so long as the message does not alter the bill so much that it's unusable. Source for coin information: *USA Today*, 18 September 2003 found at the Walsh Motel, Grayland, WA, while on a TV shoot for German TV — *Prosieben Televison gmbh*)

October Foot Fest. Hats, er, shoes off to **Margie Mitchell** and **Bill Blazek**. During 1999-2003, they industriously beachcombed 1,104 footwear items — soles, sandals, sneakers, flats, loafers, platforms, shoes. Margie's count along Cocoa Beach (572) netted 53% lefts and 47% rights, whereas Bill's score (532) to the south at Jupiter showed just the opposite, or 47% lefts and 53% rights. The two tallies taken together indicate that the winds and currents move equal numbers of lefts and rights ashore along eastern Florida.

Averages are deceptive! On any given day, the left/right aggregate equality usually does not hold. On October 9, 2001, for example, under 25-knot East-North-East winds, Margie collected 32, the lefts outnumbering the rights 20 to 12.

How did they do it? During daily exercise, Bill counted shoes from October 24, 1999 through December 31, 2000. Nearly every day, he tabulated footwear along 1.5 miles between Mercury Road and the Jupiter Beach Pier. Margie, on the other hand, counted as she cleaned Cocoa Beach shores aboard her All-Terrain-Vehicle. Monday through Friday, during October 2001 through September 2003, she tidied the beach.

The best time to comb? The monthly totals reveal October as the clear favorite — no news to beaners. That's why the annual Sea Bean Symposium is held in October — accounting for 40% of the two-year total. The October sums are remarkably consistent, Margie finding 44% and Bill 36%. The three fall months — September, October, November — accounted two-thirds (67%) of the annual reckoning, varying from 57% (Bill) to 76% (Margie).

Why Fall? Why October? To find out, with data from the *National Center for Atmospheric Research* Jim Ingraham constructed a map of the 30-year average sea level atmospheric pressure over the North Atlantic Ocean. Winds tend to follow lines of equal pressure. Turns out, in fall there's two high pressure centers: the primary, very extensive high centered over the Azores, and a secondary high centered over Kentucky and North Carolina. In October, the pressure contours are perpendicular to eastern Florida indicating easterly winds driving flotsam onshore from the Gulf Stream. October's when the easterlies are strongest and most prevalent along eastern Florida.

Year to year, beachcombing varies dramatically! Margie counted for two shoe-years (like water years, October through September). During the 2001-2002 shoe year, she found 484, whereas during 2002-2003 just 88, an astounding 82% drop. In 2001-2002, footwear washed ashore on 63 days but only 30 days in 2002-2003.

Finding Jessica. "*Hi Curtis,*" writes **Heather Maconald** from Ireland. "*I got your name from Nick*

Darke. *A few days ago, I heard him on the BBC. As I'm fascinated by things on the beach, I wrote to him. He said to contact you about my find in a tiny little cove just near where I live on the Waterford coast near a place called Tramore."*

"Last September we found a little pink box lying on the high tide mark. On the lid was written 'OPEN ME.' Who could resist? So we did just that. Inside was a piece of paper with this message: 'Hello. I'm Jessica. I'm five. I live in Florida with my Mummy and Daddy. Please write back at 32 Beech Wood Lane P.O. Box 889213, Windsor Hill, Florida U.S.A.' "

"I took a photo of the little cove where we found the box plus photos of us all plus information about the interesting stretch of coast we live on and maps plus a photo of our thatched cottage we live in, and, last but not least, a letter to Jessica explaining how her little box caught the Gulf Stream and finally bumped into the Waterford coast in Ireland. I then waited and waited."

"Much to my dismay, the whole package came back last week, saying 'Return to Sender.' I cannot understand it at all. Perhaps, she threw the message in the sea so long ago that the whole family moved away. I would dearly love to track the little girl down. Perhaps she is a teenager now. Do you have any ideas what I could do to find her?"

My internet searches proved fruitless. Beaners?

Six Degrees To Tanja. Just a bottle the Gulf Stream jettisoned onto Ireland's southeast coast. Strolling along Ballyteigue Beach near their rural fishing village of Kilmore Quay, through the bottle's clear glass the Maddock family glimpsed paper.

Luckily, Therese Maddock spoke fluent German. Quickly, she read the poignant missive from Tanja grieving for her dead friend Urs. The letter's lack of surnames prevented Therese from letting Tanja know her bottle beached near the *Vigil Sculpture* of a couple staring out to sea grieving for lost loved ones.

Tanja needs to know her letter's fate. I therefore invoked the Small World Network in which a short chain (usually six) of friends connects any two people chosen at random from 'round the world. By launching a MIB, Tanja initiated six degrees of separation:

Degree 1: She arrived for work aboard the *Queen Elizabeth 2* docked in New York City to prepare for a 5-day voyage on the Stream to Southampton, Great Britain. The first day out to sea, Tanja discovered Boris' email conveying Urs' death. During the crossing, Tanja typed the letter to Urs dated May 19, 2001, and threw it onto the Stream.

Later that year, the Maddocks discovered Tanja's bottle near Forlorn Point at Memorial Garden dedicated to those lost at sea. Tanja writes as if she sat with the sea as the medium, as if on a *Ouija Board* the breath of God guided her bottle to the Vigil Couple. The letter's so personal that I can bring myself to include only excerpts:

"I sit and stare at the computer screen. I read the mail over and over, it takes a while for me to understand — you are no longer there — you are dead — just gone — I still don't understand. My eyes fill with tears — the computer screen swims before my eyes — just like now . . .

I don't understand it, I don't want it to be true.

Boris's news is short — he says that you lost your life in a parachute jump — that your chute didn't open. I struggle with the thoughts of what your last moments were like, what were you thinking — if you were thinking, if you were afraid — in pain. I still don't understand.

You will always have a place in my heart, and when I look for you I know I will find you – in a flower, a tree, a waterfall, a rainbow, a cloud, a raindrop, a ray of sunshine — I know you will be there.

Wherever you may be — I would like to share this saying with you:

DANCE — AS THOUGH NO ONE IS WATCHING

LOVE — LIKE IT WILL NEVER HURT

SING — AS THOUGH NO ONE IS LISTENING

LIVE — LIKE THERE IS ONLY TODAY.

"My thoughts are with youTanja."

Degrees 2-4: Therese disclosed Tanja's epistle to her village newspaper (2). Several years later, to attend the *International Lobster Congress*, members of the Maddock family visited Maine where Therese's friend **Nancy Griffin** wrote of Tanja's letter in *The Working Waterfront News* (3; *Message in a bottle*; October 2003). *Beachcombers' Alert* subscriber **Kay Gibson** mailed me a copy of Nancy's account (4).

Degrees 5-6: Therese, Nancy, Kay and I forged the first four degrees of separation. You, the readers of *The Drifting Seed*, form the 5th. It is my hope that you tell Tanja that Urs heard her heart break and waits to console her beside the Vigil Couple.

(See the *Vigil Couple* at <http://www.irishships.com>; click on *Kilmore Quay Memorial Garden in Honor of Those Lost At Sea* by **Tony Brennan**. Beaners may participate in testing the Small World Network via the internet at Columbia University's website <http://smallworld.columbia.edu>.)

**Sea-Beans on a Silver Platter
(Beaning Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula)
by Chris S. Boykin**

Several weeks ago my husband began speaking with me about the possibility of taking a cruise before Christmas. Though a cruise was something we had never considered before I reluctantly reviewed some of the itineraries. I quickly decided upon two options that would work—Lima to Buenos Aires or Puerto Rico to the Lesser Antilles. You can imagine my despair when he told me we're doing the western Caribbean: Jamaica, Grand Cayman, Costa Maya and Cozumel. My perceptions of the western Caribbean were that the afore mentioned locales were visited by drunken spring breakers and the least adventurous of the adventure traveler. My hopes were further darkened when he told me we would be joined by nine of his family members. I soon began referring to this venture as "The Cruise from Hell: A drunken food orgy through the armpit of the Caribbean with nine of my in-laws."

Well, before I knew it I was waking up in the Caribbean with a hazy Cuba reaching up to the sky from a flat calm sea off the starboard side of the ship. In what was to be one of many reflective moments alone aboard the *Norwegian Sun*, I found myself gazing down into the bluest of blues as a dozen flying fish scattered across the blue liquid canvas of Cuba's Windward Passage.

The next morning I awoke to find Jamaica framed by the glass doors of our balcony. Ashore, we meandered up over the mountains behind Montego Bay to the south side of the island. As the bus rose and swerved, I swore my eyes caught glimpse of my first wild *Mucuna*, as its pods dripped from vines at the tops of the tallest tree in the canyon. Southward and west my eyes once more fell upon the pods of the elusive seeds I sought.

Upon reaching our destination, the Black River, I was thrilled to see the unexpected, Jamaica's endemic swallow-tailed hummingbird, drunk on nectar and affording me spectacularly close views from every angle. On board our riverboat we moved up the Black River where giant 300-year-old

mangroves were interspersed with bulrushes and backed by rolling mountains. A crocodile, and then another and another and finally two more appeared. The last two crocs were seven and ten feet respectively and neither even flinched when the boat inched in within several feet of them. They were big and powerful and beautiful and foreign. On the ride down river, I asked the guide about sea-beans and he confirmed that they grew in the mountains. Back by the ship, I scoured the local shops and came upon bracelets made of nickerbeans and a seaheart key chain, but no *Dioclea* or *Mucuna* jewelry.

The next day's activities in the Caymans were of course filled with giant southern stingrays and green turtles at the Cayman Turtle Farm. While I was kissing them at the farm and visiting the town of Hell, my husband was eating a turtle burger and participating in his favorite pastime of marinating his liver—the divorce papers are almost complete. My sea-bean scouts and I checked the local stores but found no sea-bean crafts. Upon returning to the ship and reviewing the currents it became clear that the tiny 76 square mile island of Grand Cayman had no mountains or rivers and lay over two hundred miles east of the Yucatan Current. However, Costa Maya and Cozumel, Mexico both were only twenty miles or so west of the Yucatan Current. My heart swelled as I thought of scouring wrack-covered foreign beaches for those beautiful seeds we all love.

The calm seas of Cuba's Windward Passage were gone now—the seas were 12-18 feet. The captain came over the speakers and announced that we may not be able to dock in Costa Maya due to the rough conditions. Luck was with us as we approached the pier in Costa Maya, built exclusively for Cozumel's overflowing cruise ships. I looked down at a cobalt blue sea and a palm dotted coastline that stretched for days. We were in the Mexican state of Quintana Roo and only about two hours north of Belize. My heart bled as I walked down the long pier and stood in line with the others to begin my tour of the Kahunlich Mayan Ruins. I wanted to scour those beaches, but I also longed to see rainforest and had hopes of finding pods in the jungles surrounding the ruins. Years earlier, while living in the Keys, a friend returned from Guatemala's Tikal with a seaheart that she had found on a path leading up to the ruins. I dreamed of such and more. We were greeted at the entrance to the Kahunlich ruins by a group of five howler monkeys. They were high up and somewhat difficult to see—but they were howler monkeys and it was my first primate sighting in Central America. Moments later they burst into what can only be described as the opposite of a symphony—it was a loud, dark, scary, ungodly noise that is still difficult to fathom. When I first heard it I thought it to be one of the buses grinding between gears and then I thought it must be a jaguar (our guide had seen five in his lifetime). But when I rushed from my group to the origin of the noise I found three large black monkeys with their mouths agape and that horrible noise flowing into my ears. The ruins were beautiful, giant palms and jungle all around but I found no lianas growing at the jungle edge and no sea-beans lying on the ruin stairs. On the ride back to the ship, I spoke with our young guide Juan Carlos about sea-beans and he confirmed that one could find all they wanted on the beaches of Costa Maya. He offered to mail me some, so I emphatically sketched out drawings of *Merremia*, *Oxyrhynchus*, *Mucuna* and *Dioclea* with hopes of dozens of them arriving in a box each month for the rest of my life. I handed him \$20 for postage and couldn't wait to check my mail the next week.

My first actual encounter with a sea-bean was on a sidewalk in Cozumel—the sea had literally cast it over the wall and into my path. My anxieties waned as I knew this would be a good beaning day. I walked a short stretch of beach while my family was at lunch. There, floating in limestone tide pools was a *Mucuna urens* and there an *Entada gigas* and then finally a *Mucuna sloanei*. It was proving to be a great day with two new beaning experiences—sea-beans on the sidewalk and searching tide pools for sea-beans. What did the remote beaches on Cozumel's eastern shore have in store for me?

After driving about 20 miles down a narrowly paved road with no signs, or lights or development of any sort, we came upon a quaint little seaside bar situated right on the edge of the Caribbean. While the group had cervezas, I scoured the tiny little 300-yard beach that culminated in a rocky outcropping of limestone that shot streams of sea spray high into the air with each lapping wave—my first blowhole since Hawaii. On that tiny stretch of paradise I found a half-dozen seahearts

and four or five *Mucuna sloanei*. After a group photo and a brief moment of smiles and gratitude for the beauty that engulfed us I peered down and noticed something black and half-buried in the sand only inches from my feet. A Mary's bean!—and found with such little effort. I screamed (in a manly way of course) with excitement and my husband yelled out, “a Mary's bean, he found a Mary's bean, one of the rarest and most sought after of all sea beans.” He's been paying attention after all.

Back at the jeep we began to drive northward along the eastern shore of the island. Past the palm trees, cactus and sea grapes we jovially sped along...well, for about a quarter of a mile and I was looking down at a beach covered in a blanket of desiccated sargassum (or wrack). I pulled off the road as best I could and exclaimed, “I'm sorry, but I have to go down there, just for a minute.” I ran down the thirty-foot slope past dozens of green sea turtle body-pits (nesting sites) to the place where sea-beans completed their sometimes decades-long journey—atop the wrack on some foreign shore. There amidst the dried sea grasses and buoyant driftwood I found seahearts and red hamburgers and true sea-beans and more blister pods than I've ever seen in my life. I was excited because I knew I'd found the place, but anxious because I also knew I was with a group of people who were eager to get to their next margarita and find deals on hammocks. How much time would I have? How many beautiful and magical seeds could I find?

Two dozen seahearts later and I was looking down at *Oxyrhynchus*. Oh, *Oxyrhynchus*—I've grown to desire these special treasures even more than the coveted Mary's bean. Did I mention the *Diocleas*? At that point I was up to five, which had already surpassed my 2003 numbers for Florida (only four). On, on, on I marched—pockets filling—front left was for seahearts (no more room for blister pods), front right for *Mucunas* and back right was for sea purses, Mary's beans and *Oxyrhynchus*. My heart stopped when I heard voices calling “Chris... Chris.” I looked back and saw a Mexican police car with his lights on. My party was over—I had to leave. No, it was too good here. I couldn't stop. After a few steps back in the WRONG direction, the police car left and upon reaching my family I learned that we could stay. My sweet sister in law Kim looked at me with a smile and extended a downward facing closed fist and exclaimed “This is for you.” Plop, a Mary's bean fell into my hand. Kim had never collected a drift seed in her life and of the three that she had found on this beach, one was a Mary's bean. A kiss, a hug, a quick sprint and I was back down the beach where I had left off. Seaheart. . .sea purse. . .hamburger, I was picking up seeds at a rate of one or two per minute. It was amazing. Not unlike several dreams I had of being in sea-bean heaven. One stoop and I picked up three *Mucuna sloanei*, and they were all within four inches of each other. At the end of the wrack at the end of this dreamy beach I did a 180-degree turn and began my march back to the



family. Two more steps and what brilliant orange—right before me was the most beautiful of the *Diocleas*, a brilliant orange/butternut squash-colored seed and a meter beyond it was a speckled *Dioclea*. I was back to the family, and it was time to go. I was contented, how could I have not been? I trailed behind as we walked up the thirty-foot slope at a 45-degree angle. Half way up I noticed something maroon colored in the sand—a seaheart. All in all, I collected just over a hundred sea-beans in less than ninety-minutes of beaning. About 45 were comprised of blister pods and seahearts. Nine were *Dioclea*, two Mary's beans, one *Oxyrhynchus* and the rest

were *Mucuna*. It was a magical and beautiful day.

Back in our room aboard the ship, I quickly took the two silver platters from beneath the coffee service and the cocktail bar. One was reserved for *Entada gigas* and *Sacoglottis amazonica*. The other was for the true beauties of the sea-bean world. I gazed down at all these oranges, reds, browns, creams and blacks as their beauty was magnified in their reflections. I was truly satiated. I had to share this beauty, so I carried my silver platter full of sea-beans all over the ship that evening and to dinner, where it served as the centerpiece of our table for eleven. Everyone marveled at their beauty, but no one was as inspired and amazed by them as I. I love this—my healthiest addiction, and I can't wait to be back on those lonely beaches of Cozumel's windward shore.

News and Notes

First, a big **THANKS** to all of you who attended and lent a helping hand at this last year's Symposium. It was a huge success due to each and every person's individual input. It would take nearly this whole page to thank each of you individually, but rest assured your contributions are heartfelt and appreciated. Our sincerest sympathy goes out to both Curt and Cathy who both suffered losses and were unable to attend this year.

A call for beach scavenged rope. (attention Florida members) Jerry Nordling, a fellow seabeaner, beachcomber, and member of Friends of the Scrub, and Forever Florida is looking for rope of any description (beachcombed!) for use at the non-profit Allen Broussard Conservancy area of Forever Florida. It would be used to delineate paths and walkways. Jerry will serve as a collection point in the Canova Beach area, and will travel further for a good supply. Better yet, we can visit Forever Florida and bring the rope with us. It is located 7.6 miles south of Holopay on US Highway #441. Contact Jerry Nordling at 160 Atlantic Avenue, Indialantic, FL 32903, phone 321-777-3460.

Beachcomber Fair Dates for 2004:

- 1) February 28-29 (Saturday-Sunday). *Beachcombers' Fun Fair*, Ocean Shores, Washington, Convention Center (consult oceanshores.com).
- 2) March 13-14 (Saturday-Sunday). *41st Annual Driftwood Show*, Grayland, Washington, Grayland Community Hall (consult cranberrycoastcoc.com).
- 3) July. *Paths Across the Pacific III and Beachcombers' Fair*, Sitka, Alaska, Centennial Hall.
- 4) October 15-16 (Friday-Saturday). *9th Annual Sea-Bean Symposium and Beachcombers' Fair*, Cocoa Beach Public Library, Cocoa Beach, Florida.

NOTE FROM LANZAROTE, CANARY ISLANDS: II

E. Charles Nelson

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& Esquina Soleada, Arenas 8 Unico, 35558 Soó, Lanzarote, España
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In *The Drifting Seed* volume 8 (no. 3), p. 10, I summarized records of tropical drift-seeds from Lanzarote, the eastern- and northern-most of the Canary Islands. In September 2003, I found a solitary sea-bean (*Entada gigas*) in a small, rocky cove to the east of El Caballo (for details see the previous note). This confirms the 1985 report of this species by Kraus which was published in my book *Sea beans and Nickar Nuts. A handbook of exotic seeds and fruits stranded on beaches in north-western Europe* (2000: 89). The seed was lying on a raised beach composed of large stones of black lava, among the usual, now-universal selection of plastic, tar and fishery "light sticks."

A reprint of John Muir's *The Seed-Drift of South Africa* is being planned by Still Bay Conservation Trust. This classic work, published in 1937 is being reprinted in a limited edition. It will be a facsimile of the original, with a short biography and an index of plant names with current equivalents. There will be a soft-cover as well as a hard-cover edition. The names of all subscribers whose names and checks are received before February 20th, 2004 will appear in the special hard cover edition. (Please supply initials, surname, and state or province clearly.)

South Africa:

Soft cover: R110 including postage

Hard cover: R180 including postage

Overseas:

Soft cover: \$31 or £18 including surface posting

Hard cover: \$41 or £25 including surface posting

Still Bay Conservation Trust

PO Box 3030

Stellenbosch 7599

South Africa

The World's Largest Seaheart by Jerry Sullivan

The UTMSI sea-bean collection at Port Aransas, Texas, continues to expand. The newest arrival is the "World's Largest Seaheart." This unbelievable seed was discovered stranded on the Port Aransas beach one-tenth mile northeast of Horace Caldwell Pier on 11-08-03. Its size was calculated as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Height} \times \text{Width} \times \text{Weight} &= \text{Size} \\ 52\text{mm} \times 60\text{mm} \times 1.4 \text{ oz} &= 4,368 \end{aligned}$$

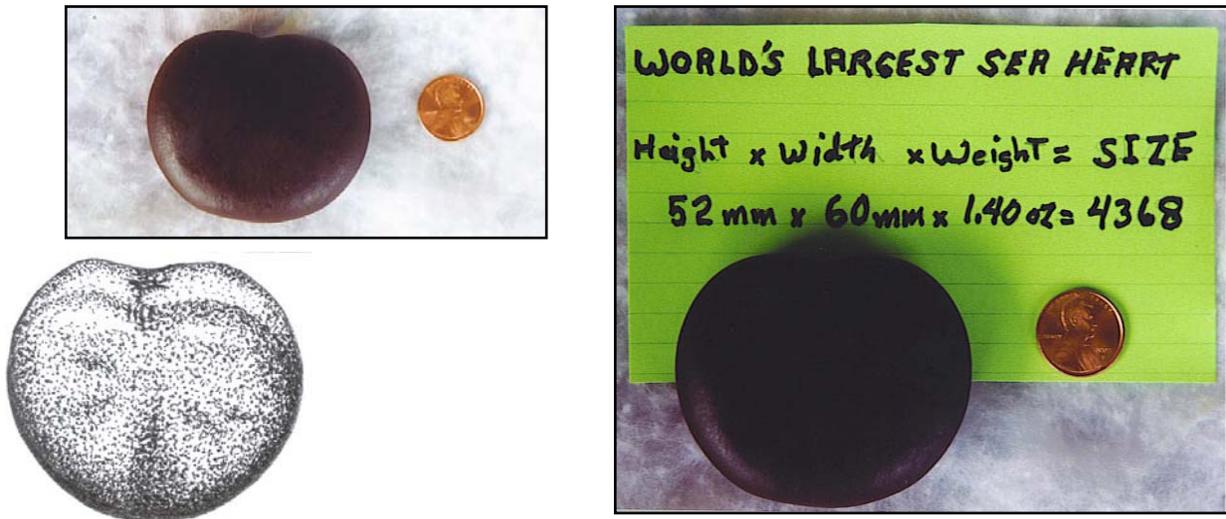
The seed was weighed on a super digital US Postal Service scale. The odds that this seaheart is really the largest in the world are "slim-to-none and slim is out of town." Regardless of the fact, it will remain King until its size is successfully challenged by a larger *Entada gigas*.

Therefore, if you think you have a challenger seaheart which you have found washed up on a beach anywhere in the world, send it to Jerry "Seabeader" Sullivan at PO Box 2888, Port Aransas, Texas, 78373, USA.

Reward! Prize! No one said anything about a reward or prize, just professional self-satisfaction. Your champion seed will be displayed in the UTMSI showcase along with your name and where the new King was found. If, at a later date, a larger seaheart is submitted, yours would be returned to you.

In order for your seaheart to be considered, it must be officially qualified. If you would prefer to retain your champion seed rather than display it in a foreign country (The Sovereign State of Texas), your seaheart would be returned and the sign on the existing seaheart at UTMSI would simply be altered to read "World's Second Largest Seaheart." Happy hunting!

editor's note: UTMSI, The University of Texas at Austin Marine Science Institute, is located on the northeast tip of Mustang Island, a barrier island between the coastal bays and the Gulf of Mexico.



"The secret of life is enjoying the passing of time."
James Thurber