

American Malacological Society Newsletter

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Spring 2002



DO THE CHARLESTON!

The 68th annual meeting of the American Malacological Society will be held at the College of Charleston's Lightsey Conference Center in historic Charleston, South Carolina August 3–7, 2002. The city is America's most beautifully preserved architectural treasure, featuring historic homes, restaurants, shops, museums, and tours. The Lightsey Center is a modern facility with a complete range of conference services.

The featured symposium will be "The Biology and Conservation of Freshwater Gastropods," organized by Rob Dillon. Amy Wethington is organizing a satellite session entitled "Pulmonate Gastropods in the Laboratory." John Wise and Ellen Strong are also organizing a special session: "Multidisciplinary Approaches to Molluscan Phylogeny." In addition, there will be general sessions for contributed papers on a wide variety of topics, in both oral and poster format. Connie Boone awards will once again be offered for the best student presentations.

Monday evening features an expanded endowment auction and Tuesday concludes with a dinner cruise on Charleston Harbor. Four field trips will be offered on the final day of the meeting: a boat trip to pristine Bull Island, inshore trawling on a SCDNR research vessel, a freshwater trip to the site of Charleston's first settlement in 1670, and a tour of the historic Ashley River plantation district.

Housing is available at a very modest rate in the College of Charleston dormitories. A block of rooms has also been

reserved at the Westin Francis Marion Hotel, located adjacent to the Lightsey Center.

Registration materials have been mailed separately to all AMS members along with annual dues notices. A complete set of registration forms directly follows this newsletter, or may be obtained through the mail by contacting President Rob Dillon directly. On-line registration will also be available by following the link from the conference web site: <http://www.cofc.edu/~dillonr/AMS2002.htm>

VIENNA WRAP-UP

Unitas Malacologica hosted the AMS in old world splendor at the second World Congress of Malacology August 19 – 25, 2001. Approximately 90 members of our society joined the throng of 400 malacologists from around the globe converging on the University of Vienna for a week of science and fellowship with echos of the guilded age.

The scientific program featured 406 oral presentations and posters, organized in one plenary and 28 concurrent sessions. The AMS sponsored two symposia: "Evo-Devo in Mollusca," organized by Gerhard Haszprunar and Wim Dictus, and (also with NSF support) "New Frontiers in Functional Morphology of Molluscs: A Tribute to Vera Fretter and Ruth Turner," organized by Shirley Baker and Dianna Padilla. Additional symposia included "Molluscan Chemosymbiosis,"

"Molluscan Conservation and Biodiversity," and "Ancient Lakes: Laboratories and Archives of Molluscan Evolution." Abstracts may be viewed at: <http://www.univie.ac.at/WCM2001/>

The AMS awarded six travel grants to students, and the travel of at least one additional student was supported by the NSF. A total of 23 talks and 31 posters competed for Connie Boone Awards for the best student presentation.

The field trips on Thursday afforded a marvelous opportunity to experience the Austrian countryside as well as its malacological fauna. One group went up to Schneeberg for alpine gastropods, a second went down to the Danube alluvial forest for land and freshwater mollusks, and a third went out to Burgenland for Paratethys fossils. This reporter opted for the cultural program — tours of the Abbey at Melk and the medieval towns of the Wachau Valley, highlighted by a cruise down the beautiful green Danube. I felt as though I had spent the day in a fairy tale.



NOTICE

With this issue of our newsletter, the American Malacological Society enters the electronic age. Volume 32(1) is primarily intended for distribution through our web site as a PDF download:

<http://erato.acnatsci.org/ams/>

Members requiring a paper copy may contact our Secretary, Dr. Roland Anderson.

The social program was spectacular. Monday evening we were warmly received at the fine old Natural History Museum of Vienna, where greetings were offered by the museum directorship, and by the Austrian Ministry of Education, Science & Culture, and where we strolled among the exhibits, sampling wines from Austrian vineyards. The "Heurigen dinner" at the Viennese wine tavern Wednesday was a blast — filled with music and song. And the Congress Dinner in the great room at the Rathaus (City Hall) was a glorious finale, statuary glistening by the light of the chandeliers.

The AMS wishes to express our gratitude to *Unitas Malacologia*, to the Institutes of Zoology and Paleontology at the University of Vienna, to the Naturhistorisches Museum Wien, and to the Zoologisch-Botanische Gesellschaft. A special note of appreciation is due to our hosts, Dr. Luitfried Salvini-Plawen, Dr. Gerhard Steiner, and the other members of the organizing committee. The week will long be remembered for its success at every level, for the quality of its science and the warmth of its welcome. See you all in Charleston?

2001 GENERAL MEETING

The meeting was called to order August 25 at 1435 by President Janice Voltzow. She offered a general overview of the World Congress as it had unfolded thus far, and expressed the deep appreciation of the AMS to the local organizing committee.

President Voltzow highlighted the actions of the AMS Council in its meeting of August 19, as detailed in the minutes directly following.

Alan Kohn, the chair of the nominating committee, reported the slate of officers for the coming year: President - Rob Dillon, President Elect - Diarmaid O'Foighil, Vice president - José Leal, Treasurer - Susan Cook, AMB Editor in Chief - Janice Voltzow, Past presidents - Janice Voltzow, Eugene Coan, Richard Petit, At large Council Members - Gustav Pauli, Rebecca Price. The slate was elected as offered.

Fred Wells, the next president of the *Unitas*, reported that the next meeting billed as the World Congress of Malacology will be held in Perth, Australia in 2004. Wells spoke of the AMS's tradition of working with the *Unitas* and would like to see that tradition continue.

Roberto Cipriani announced the 5th Latin American Malacological Meeting in Sao Paulo, Brazil, July 1-4, 2002.

The meeting was adjourned at 1510.

2001 COUNCIL MEETING

IN ATTENDANCE: Laura Adamkewicz, Roland Anderson, Heather Bennett, Rudiger Bieler, Rob Dillon, Terrence Gosliner, Alison Kay, Alan Kohn, José Leal, Jim McLean, Diarmaid O'Foighil, Tim Pearce, Gary Rosenberg, Ron Toll, and Janice Voltzow.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT (VOLTZOW):

Through an agreement approved by Council with *Unitas Malacologica*, AMS invested no funds for deposits or other expenses for the Vienna meeting and does not anticipate sharing in any profits or losses that may be incurred by WCM. AMS contributed its customary \$1500 for student awards and an additional \$3000 for six graduate students to attend the meeting. Both of these expenditures are items from the AMS budget, not the meeting budget. We contributed \$4300 from our endowment funds for each of two symposia.

TREASURER'S REPORT (DILLON FOR KEFERL, IN ABSENTIA): Our operating funds include \$28,920 currently held in a commercial checking account and \$43,013 in a money market account (yielding 2.35% interest). These are tracked in three cost centers: Bulletin 60%, Newsletter 12% and General Operations 28%. Together, our operating funds grew \$3,441 in the year 2000. But publication of the AMB is currently behind schedule. The costs of printing and mailing issues of AMB presently in arrears will strain the operating budget significantly.

The treasurer suggested that we might reduce costs by putting the Newsletter and the Membership Directory on our web page, mailing hard copies only to those members who request them. We might also cap individual travel allowances for the Treasurer, Secretary, Bulletin Editor and Managing Editor to attend annual meetings. Student dues seem much too low, insufficient to cover the costs of printing and mailing publications.

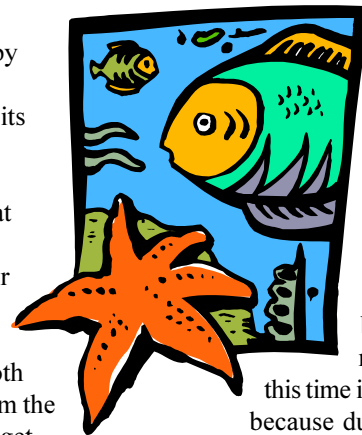
Our endowment (in several portfolios), currently totaling \$107,776, increased in value just 0.5% during the year 2000. Strictly interpreting the 1996 motion of Council regarding the disbursement of endowment funds, there would be no money to support a symposium in Charleston. The treasurer nevertheless suggested that the earned income of

\$3,445 be allocated for a symposium in 2002.

We have 264 members who have paid their dues through 2001. This is substantially below our membership at

this time in 2000, primarily because dues notices were delayed until May. Our database of individuals who have been members since 1997 contains 662 names, including 191 paid through 2000 who have not as yet paid for 2001. There are 567 members scheduled to receive volume 16 of the AMB, and 455 members who will receive volume 17 when printed. We need to plan for this expense.

The present treasurer's term of office is constitutionally concluded in September, although he has agreed to remain through December, to close the 2002 books, file the non-profit organization reports, and affect a smooth transition to the new treasurer.



PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE (TOLL): We can expect the *American Malacological Bulletin* Volume 16(1&2), with 18 contributed papers and the 1999 special session on mineralization, to arrive in our mailboxes in August or September. The year 2002 should see publication of Volume 17 in two issues, 9 contributed papers in May/June and the symposium on new frontiers in functional morphology in November/December. Our much-anticipated special publication, "The Mollusks: A Guide to Their Study, Collection and Preservation," (edited by Charles Sturm) is still in preparation.

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT (O'FOIGHIL): The 2003 meeting is tentatively scheduled for the last week in June at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. The Chemistry Building has numerous lecture halls of various sizes. A variety of housing is available within walking distance of central campus, including University residences (\$35 – \$65) with continental breakfast and hotels in the \$150/night range.

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE (COWIE): The AMS continues as a member of the Endangered Species Coalition, supporting the strengthening of the Endangered Species Act. In his capacity as chairman, Robert Cowie signed a "scientists' letter" urging Congress "to quickly address our biodiversity conservation spending deficit by substantially increasing the appropriation for the ESA's listing and critical habitat programs, and to begin a longer-range effort to raise spending for the entire program to a level that will enable us to adequately conserve our nation's plants, animals, and ecosystems." The Committee also endorsed a letter urging the US Fish and Wildlife Service "to immediately list the exotic black carp species as an injurious species under the Lacey Act, thereby banning their use in interstate commerce and helping to prevent the devastating



consequences" that this large predatory fish will have on already threatened and endangered freshwater snails and mussels. Committee member Kevin Cummings was quoted in *Science* (292:203) on the black carp issue.

Acting on behalf of the Society, the committee chair has authored a proposal to the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to create criteria leading to a ranking model which would identify potential mollusk pests. The anticipated \$10,000 grant will be used to develop a list of (perhaps ten) "Least-wanted Mollusks."

NEW BUSINESS: The Council voted to present plaques to Eugene Keferl and Ron Toll recognizing their extended years of service to American malacology. The Council approved the allocation of \$3,445 from the symposium endowment to support the 2002 symposium in Charleston. There was discussion on whether to cap officers' expenses in attending meetings, but no motion was passed. A motion to raise student dues was defeated.

A motion was approved that the AMS will no longer publish and distribute a hard copy of the Newsletter to members. The Newsletter will be distributed electronically to the membership with an email address and placed on the AMS website. Hard copies will be available upon request from the AMS secretary and hard copies will be kept by the secretary.

STUDENT AWARDS 2000

Connie Boone awards went to three students for presentations at the San Francisco meeting: Audry Aronsowsky, "Phylogenetic relationships of moon snails (Gastropoda: Naticidae)" (paper). Erika Iyengar, "Kleptoparasitism by the marine snail *Trichotropis cancellata* on tubiferous marine polychaetes worms" (paper). Sarah

Gilman, "Life at the edge: an examination of the northern range limit of the limpet *Collisella scabra*" (poster).

STUDENT AWARDS 2001

Research Grants: Matthew Campbell - "Phylogenetic and evolutionary implications of Pennsylvanian silicified marine gastropoda from Indiana" (\$600). Suzanne Dufour - "Determination of chemosymbiont presence in thyasirid bivalves" (\$600). John C. Malone - "Consumer-resource interactions of two marine gastropod grazers" (\$800).

Travel Grants to Vienna: Carin Bondar, Suzanne Dufour, Yolando Comacho, Steve Lonhart, Katheryn Perez, David Rogers (\$500 each).

Oral Papers at WCM: First prize - Peter B. McIntyre, "Differences among Tanganyikan gastropods as algal consumers and prey for crabs" (\$500, a copy of Rob Dillon's *Ecology of Freshwater Molluscs*, and a two-year membership to the Malacological Society of London). Second prize - Jennifer L. Gow, "The genetic structure of subdivided populations: A case study using microsatellites in the highly-selfing freshwater snail *Bulinus forskalii*" (\$400). Third prize - Carin Bondar, "Development of asymmetry in two caenogastropods" (\$300). Fourth prize - Anthony B. Wilson, "Reconstructing an invasion: Colonization and spread of invasive zebra and quagga mussels in the Laurentian Great Lakes as revealed by microsatellite markers" (\$150 and a six-year membership to Unitas Malacologica).

Posters at WCM: First prize - Alexander Fahrner, "Review of the Red Sea Phyllidiidae (Gastropoda: Nudibranchia)" (500 Euros). Second prize - Henning Scholz, "Locomotion behaviour of unionid mussels from Lake Malawi (East Africa)" (300 Euros). Third prize - Christiane Todt, "Histochemistry and ultrastructure of salivary, pedal and sole glands in *Wirenia argentea* (Solenogastres, Wireniidae)" (\$150 and a six-year membership to Unitas Malacologica).

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I attended my first AMU meeting in the summer after my junior year at Virginia Tech. It was 1976. I had known for many years that I would be a malacologist, and that I would need a Ph.D. The next step was to shop for the right combination of major advisor and graduate program. So I packed a week's worth of clothing into my sky-blue Pinto and drove out to Columbus, where Dave Stansbery was hosting the 42nd meeting of the AMU at Ohio State.

I have a lot of great memories from that meeting, and from the 14 other annual meetings I've attended in last 25 years. I've enjoyed the acquaintance of all 25 of the AMU Presidents since Dorothea Franzen in 1976. They were (and are) remarkable men and women, and it is humbling to be counted among them.

What I did not realize in 1976, nor in fact honestly begin to appreciate until about two years ago, was the tremendously important role played by a small number of other officers in the life of the Society. Everybody knows the President. But who have been the Secretaries, the Treasurers, and the Newsletter Editors? How many of us remember Paul Jennewein, Myra Taylor, and Dee Dundee?

So this is for the record. From 1995–2001 our treasury and membership database has been kept by Gene Keferl. He is not a professional money manager, nor a clerk, nor a bookkeeper. He is a scientist and an academic department chair who has volunteered to perform a vital function in the service of American malacology. When the time has come to mail dues notices, he has printed the forms, run off the mailing labels, and stuffed, stamped, and licked over 500 envelopes, sitting at home in front of his TV. No, we do not have a professional mailing service or a bulk permit. We have had Gene.

From 1999–2001 the Managing Editor of the American Malacological Bulletin was Tim Pearce. Tim's responsibilities included such routine and thankless chores as copy-editing, dealing with the publisher, billing, subscriptions and mailing. If journals haven't arrived on library shelves, Tim has heard com-

plaints. Otherwise, he has heard nothing.

From 1996–2000 our Newsletter was edited by Donna Turgeon. I have only very recently come to appreciate the skill necessary to turn stacks of odd notes and committee reports into newsletter copy. Donna produced a polished publication that kept us entertained and informed, on time and on budget, for five years.

Gene, Donna, and Tim, on behalf of the American Malacological Society, I would like to thank you for your service and dedication.

This year the AMS Treasury has passed to the capable hands of Sue Cook. Angel Valdes has graciously agreed to serve as Managing Editor of the AMB, and Dawne Hard has stepped up to edit this Newsletter. Bless your hearts, all of you.

Looking into the future, I'm not sure whether absolute dependence on the kindness of volunteers will continue to be our best policy. Here's a blinding flash of the obvious — the economy has changed since 1976. One of the biggest recent shifts has been the "growth of the service sector." Such routine chores as maintenance of membership databases, billing, and mailing can be done much more efficiently by professionals. Let's face it — we're scientists, curators and college professors. The time to investigate professional management services may be at hand.

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IN MEMORIUM

DONALD R. SHASKY (1925-2002)

It is with great regret that I report the passing of Dr. Donald R. Shasky, M.D., at age 76. Don died this morning, 25 February 2002, in Oceanside, California from the complications of Alzheimer's disease, after a relatively short period of failing health. He his survived by his wife, Ursula, three sons and their families.

Although his professional training and career was as a dermatologist, Don was also a highly knowledgeable and dedicated malacologist, who during a 40 year period amassed a comprehensive collection of Panamic mollusks as well as a formidable number of species from the tropical Pacific. He had a particular interest in the collection of micro shells and other cryptic species, which he would gather either from grunge or by shaking loose substrates into a large bag for later sorting. The success of this method influenced all who traveled with Don over the years. Perhaps his greatest contribution to the study of eastern Pacific mollusks was through a series of ten expeditions he led to Cocos Island, Costa Rica from 1983 to 1997 (his last collecting trip). The result of this work is still to be fully appreciated.

Don published extensively on his discoveries, described new species and had several described in his honor. He was a great contributor to the works of many professional malacologists throughout the world and materials from his collection have been repeatedly cited in numerous monographs, published over the last quarter century. Readers of *American Conchologist* will recall Don's serialized reports of his extensive travels as "Wanderings of an Itinerant Malacologist."

Don's collections, including his extensive library-archive of publications, letters, historical photographs and journals are housed at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History.

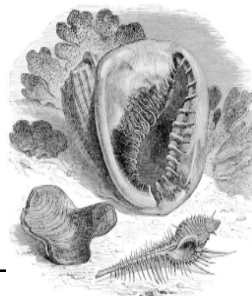
*Henry Chaney
Director of Collections and Research
Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History*

PROFESSOR FRITZ SEIDL

Only now I received a notice that Prof. Fritz Seidl, the well known land- and freshwater mollusc specialist from Braunau am Inn, Austria, passed away on 8 July, 2001, after a long struggle with an incurable illness.

I will remember Fritz as a zealous collector of snails wherever he happened to be, registering in details any information concerning the visited localities. He was always willing to share his knowledge and material with other collectors and institutes. He was also one of the leading spirits in the Zoological Society of Braunau and published numerous articles dealing with inland molluscs in their journal: the "Mitteilungen". Because of all his activities in the field of malacology, he received the honorary title of Professor. Fritz, I will miss you!

Henk K. Mienis



LA CARACOLA

FEDERICO GARCIA LORCA

Me han traído una caracola.

Dentro le canta
un mar de mapa.

Mi corazón
se llena de agua
con pececillos
de sombra y plata.

Me han traído una caracola.



THE SHELL

FEDERICO GARCIA LORCA

They brought me a shell.

A sea of map
is singing it inside.

My heart
is being filled with water
with little fishes
of shadow and silver.

They brought me a shell.

*Dedicated to all my conchological
friends. Translation (by myself, so no
perfect).*

ON THE MOVE . . .

Tim Pearce became the Curator of Mollusks at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History (CMNH) 1 January 2002. Tim left his position as Curator of Mollusks at the Delaware Museum of Natural History to fill the position at CMNH that has been vacant for 20 years since Juan Jose Parodiz (now curator emeritus) retired in 1981.

Tim, a specialist in terrestrial gastropods, will build upon the earlier labors of Stanley Brooks, Gordon Kutchka McMillan and George Clapp, terrestrial specialists who were at CMNH during the time period of 1895 – 1951.

Timothy A. Pearce, Ph.D., Curator of Mollusks, Delaware Museum of Natural History, Box 3937, 4840 Kennett Pike 302-658-9111 x319, Wilmington, DE 19807-0937, USA tpearce@delmnh.org



Stanford Report,
October 24, 2001

[Anthropological
scientist, John Rick,
awarded Cox Medal](#)

(6/20/01)

Professor John Rick
blows on a shell
horn. Photo: L.A.
Cicero

Discovery of shell stash sheds light on ancient society

BY MEREDITH ALEXANDER

John Rick arrived in Lima, Peru, this summer with quite a fanfare. Literally.

After a talk at the National Museum in Lima, Rick and a large audience were serenaded with the sounds of 12 Strombus trumpets — instruments made from large sea-snail shells. But these weren't just any shells. They were nearly 3,000-year-old artifacts that archaeologist Rick and his team had unearthed this summer at the ancient Peruvian center Chavin de Huantar. He describes the sound of people playing the shells as "a quite substantial throaty roar."

"This was not a quiet concert," Rick recalls. "It was a din. It was literally wall-shaking. The large audience was stunned," he says.

But surely not as stunned as Rick and his colleagues were when they came across the stash of shells in an underground gallery at Chavin, the seat of a culture that began to gain prominence around 1200 to 1400 B.C. and faded around 400 B.C. This early pre-Columbian site — whose underground gallery features a huge stone sculpture called the Lanzón — always has been known to Peruvians, and archaeologists have worked there for decades. But only this July did Rick excavate a room that may have been used for storage of ritual paraphernalia. Rick, associate professor of anthropological sciences who

also chairs the department, says he believes the 20 newly discovered shells, which date back to 600 to 1000 B.C, were deposited there deliberately, perhaps as an offering.

Before Rick's discovery, only one other decorated Strombus shell had been unearthed in all of Peru — from an irrigation ditch. In contrast, many of the shells Rick found have intricate patterns incised onto them. This mother lode of 20 shells, each weighing 3 to 5 pounds and measuring some 10 inches, already has elicited significant interest from the Peruvian press. It was the subject of an article in the Peruvian newspaper *Liberación* in August.

Other archaeologists also are responding with enthusiasm to Rick's discoveries. "John's work at Chavin has really opened our eyes to a lot of things we never saw before," says Katharina Schreiber, professor of anthropology at the University of California-Santa Barbara and editor of *Latin American Antiquities*, a leading journal. "The things he's learning about the site are astonishing."

It's obvious the shells were used as musical instruments, Rick says, because they'd had their spires carefully cut off and shaped into mouthpieces. "It's a clear cultural modification with only one reasonable reason," he says. There have been numerous artistic representations found at Chavin of shells being carried and played.

There is also a long cultural tradition in Peru of playing shell trumpets that continues to this day.

At the very same time that Rick and his team were pulling the shells out of the dirt, the new



Alumnus John Kiewall, undergraduate Parker VanValkenburgh, alumnus Richard Parker and undergraduate Kim Cahill help excavate the circular plaza. Photo courtesy of: John Rick



A deeply engraved *Strombus* shell, discovered by John Rick at Chavin, appears to show trophy heads of sacrifice victims and spear-like weapons. Photo courtesy of: John Rick

president of Peru, Alejandro Toledo — who holds graduate degrees in education and economics from Stanford — was traveling to the historic site Machu Picchu for his “cultural investiture.” During the ceremony, 20 people played shell trumpets.

“The president used it as a symbol of his ascendancy to power,” Rick says. “Its association of authority was being acted out at precisely the time we were finding them.”

Rick is floored by this coincidence, because what he finds particularly fascinating about the Chavin site is the way its rituals served to support new forms of religious and political leadership. Archaeologists believe that Chavin inaugurated the image of the authoritative ruler, a priest who was granted powers by nature to govern others. Chavin legitimated the leader’s political and spiritual power, in part through fancy use of light and sound — as evidenced by the trumpets — as well as image.

“The manipulation of the mind with light, sound and architectural context build this relatively complete picture of what Chavin ritual was like,” Rick says. “This was an early use of multimedia.”

Another set of discoveries Rick made underscored the visual drama ancient visitors would have experienced. He found several stone reliefs depicting fierce-looking jaguars, probably carved around 800 B.C., Rick says.

“Felines are extremely important to them,” he explains. “The Chavin priesthood seems to be drawing on powerful elements of nature, arguing that some people have come into the powers of the natural world.”

The animals were found on the south side of a circular plaza that leads to the gallery of the

Lanzón. It makes sense, because this probably was the path of the religious procession toward the interior of an ancient temple.

Rick and his group of excavators also solved a mystery. (The group at one point included 52 people — Peruvian colleagues and workers plus Rick’s wife, Rosa, an archaeologist who is curator of anthropological collections at the Cantor Arts Center, 15 Stanford alumni and 15 Stanford undergraduates.)

For years, people had puzzled over whether a human figure in a partially destroyed carving was holding a San Pedro cactus or not. It’s significant because that type of cactus contains a psychoactive drug that may have been part of the Chavin ritual. Rick’s team found a fragment of a matching carving with its base, where the cactus roots were obvious. The more complete plaque seems to prove it: Members of the exclusive Chavin cult could, indeed, get high.

Do these discoveries change the way archeologists and historians view this ancient culture? Rick says that after dating some materials he excavated, he has revised the timeframe of structures on the site. “We’ve pushed Chavin back in time,” he says, making the argument that the culture was 500 to 800 years older than some believed.

But Rick says that instead of fundamentally altering archaeologists’ vision of Chavin, the artifacts he found reinforce what experts already thought they knew. Chavin specialized in convincing people of the power of authority and ritual, he believes. The added sights, sounds and drug experience would have made that “convincing system” all the stronger.

“We get a sense of the mind-shaping importance of these rituals in supporting authority,” Rick contends. He adds that new research shows that certain types of sounds — perhaps including the shell trumpet’s roar — can change brain waves in ways similar to hallucinogens.

How were those ancient shells able to last so long, some may wonder? By lucky coincidence, Rick explains, the soil at Chavin is permeated by calcium carbonate. That is exactly the same material found in the shells, which were preserved almost perfectly — so much so that these sturdy artifacts could bear a few encore performances.

From: Stanford Reports, news.stanford.edu

<http://www.stanford.edu/dept/news/report/news/october24/chavin-a.html>

Snails Blaze Space Trail for 1st China Astronaut

January 19, 2001

By REUTERS

BEIJING - China's "Shenzhou II" spacecraft carried a monkey, a dog, a rabbit and snails into space earlier this month as Beijing prepared for a manned flight in the next five years, an industry source said on Thursday.

The flying menagerie returned to earth alive Tuesday from the seven-day mission after making 108 orbits as the unsung heroes of China's space program, the source said.

State media have said only that "various life forms" including animals, plants, aquatic creatures, microbes and cells made the journey, but gave no details.

An official from the Jiuquan launch center in northwest China laughed when asked to confirm the news, saying it was a state secret. Officials from the Beijing Space Control Center, which operates under the military, could not be reached for comment.

Chinese leaders are eager for the pride and prestige that would come if China joined the United States and former Soviet Union as the only countries to put a person into space.

An official at the China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology has said China would follow the experience of other space powers with regard to sending animals into orbit.

The United States sent a chimpanzee into space and the Soviet Union put a dog into orbit before men.

The People's Daily said Thursday that part of the "Shenzhou II" remained aloft conducting scientific experiments after the successful return to earth of the descent vehicle,

Following separation, the systems of the "orbital cabin" were functioning normally and it would stay aloft for several months, the newspaper said.

The orbital portion would monitor conditions and the environment in space, it said.

Last month, state media said China aimed to put an astronaut into space within five years, setting an official timetable for the first time.

In 1999, China announced a four-step manned spaceflight plan, with the aim of establishing a space station served by shuttle-style vehicles.

"The successful launching and recovery of Shenzhou II indicates China's manned spaceflight technology is advancing and has laid a solid foundation for the country to eventually conduct manned space flights," state media said this week.

The New York Times on the Web: <http://www.nytimes.com>; <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/01/19/science/reuters-china.html>



Rusty B. Supersnail drawing
Image © Rusty B. 1999

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