

Update on COA 20/20

The Sheller's Family Reunion

Alan Gettleman

Registrations for the COA 20/20 Return of Human Space Flight and the COA to the Florida Space Coast show a good initial response as well as reservations for the Hilton Rialto in Melbourne, Florida. We are optimistic that we will be able to have a convention in June. Florida has already reopened major attractions such as Walt Disney World, Sea World, and Universal Orlando, with social distancing and other health precautions. The space program continues in full launch mode with manned and other launches, and we hope for a space launch around convention time. Unfortunately, it appears the cruise industry may not get approval to resume cruises from the Cape Canaveral port before our convention.

Registrations and latest information can be found on the COA website at <https://conchologistsofamerica.org/> We can answer specific questions by contacting lychee@cfl.rr.com.

The convention begins with a tour of the Kennedy Space Center on Monday, June 14. Your local club guide will be a NASA retiree who worked on several Space Shuttle missions, including the two flights that included mollusks, and the Mars Pathfinder mission with the series of landers that culminated with Perseverance in February. We have a Harbor Branch Oceanographic and McLarty Treasure Museum tour on Tuesday, June 15. Both are full day tours. We hope to have evening turtle hatching tours on those evenings, but we will not find out until later if we can receive reservations for those spectacular oceanside events.

The convention begins at 1 pm on Wednesday, June 16th with programs and silent auctions. There will be special shells as door prizes for each program. Wednesday evening is our Welcome Party. Since we are on the Space Coast, we ask attendees to dress as their favorite astronaut, favorite space character, or favorite space creature. The best in each category will get a space related prize. The sky is not even the limit for your imagination of costumes.

Thursday continues with silent auctions, programs, and door prizes. Thursday night is the premier COA oral auction of spectacular and rare shell items. We are still looking for donations of premium items for the auction, which is one of the primary funding sources for COA. Contact Dave Green, Oral Auction Chair at dgreen2@entouch.net Friday continues with programs and meetings, including the COA business meeting. That evening is the COA banquet with a guest speaker from the space program.



The world famous COA Bourse with premier shell dealers is on Saturday (1pm-8pm) and Sunday (9am-2pm). We also have the COA raffles that include a spectacular 18 inch diameter Sailor's Valentine made by a COA member. It comes with a detachable 26 inch stand.

Our hotel is the Hilton Rialto in Melbourne, with a rooms rate of \$125 per night. Junior suites are available for \$145. All rooms have refrigerators, in room safe, and free wi-fi. The hotel offers a pool, hot tub, tennis courts, and an indoor exercise gym. ALL events (except of course for field trips) are located on the first floor of the hotel with easy access to all of the meeting events.

COA has weathered interesting challenges with conventions. Our second convention was scheduled on a cruise ship that blew up before the convention. The first convention planned for Key West was interrupted by a hurricane. These conventions did go on and the attendees had a great time. We know you will have a great time at the Sheller's Family Reunion to meet and celebrate at the only national shell convention which will be held in the U.S. this year.

This convention is a go! Masks and sanitizer will be provided and the convention will be conducted under the most current CDC guidelines. Check the COA website for updated information (conchologistsofamerica.org)

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Left column and above: the Hilton Rialto experience with nearby beaches and spacious hotel accommodations both inside and outside.



Located on the top two floors of the Dinosaur Store, in Cocoa Beach, the 20,000 sq ft Museum of Dinosaurs and Ancient Cultures showcases hundreds of authentic artifacts and fossils from around the world. Museum pricing: Adult - \$14, Senior - \$12, Child - \$10.