

## An Outing to Port Orchard by Linda Schroeder and George Holm

On August 1<sup>st</sup> several club members visited the beach of one of our newest members, Karin Fletcher. We'd learned that she had beach front property and went diving right off her beach. Karin studies nudibranchs in particular and had photographed many right near her house. Karin enthusiastically agreed to allow a few of us to come visit her and see what else her beach had to offer.



Karin Fletcher, George Holm with Zoe, Bert Bartleson, and Stephanie Clark.

Bert Bartleson, George Holm and Linda Schroeder made plans to visit Karin. We were also joined by Stephanie Clark, a scientist from Australia who presently lives in Chicago. She is the vice-president of the Chicago Shell Club. Stephanie is in Seattle collaborating with Ed Johannes on a field guide to the freshwater gastropods of the Sacramento River Basin in northern California. She had been in contact with Bert and was interested in visiting a local beach while she was in town.

Karin's property is near Port Orchard and sits on a bluff overlooking Rich Passage. The property isn't very wide, but we'd been granted permission to also access the beachfront in front of a couple of her neighbor's houses. We weren't sure how much we'd see on such a limited tract of beach but it turned out there was a LOT to see! The beach was reached from a set of stairs at the back of the property. Because of the bluff, the high tide line is partway up the bluff and once you drop down to the beach, you're already at a mid to low intertidal level. The beach has some loose rock and gravel, but is mainly sitting on a shelf of hard clay and mudstone. The algae and seaweed population wasn't extremely diverse but provided enough habitat for some additional species.

We easily found enough to explore just on Karin's property but we did venture to the neighbor's property as well. We located 42 mollusk species in only a couple of hours. The primary bivalves were boring types. *Zirfaea pilsbryi* Lowe, 1931 was very common. George also located *Penitella penita* (Conrad, 1837), *Penitella richardsoni* Kennedy, 1989, and *Penitella sagitta* (Tyron, 1863). *P. sagitta* is a species currently listed as a synonym of *P. penita* but may prove to be a unique species. It is under study. George had just learned to differentiate these species two days earlier, on a field outing with Rick Harbo to search for these bivalves in the southern Gulf Islands in BC.

It was quite an interesting beach and is certainly an ideal location for someone who is a diver studying the marine environment. Karin has made it her goal to find and record the nudibranchs that occur along Rich Passage. She documents the time of year and the conditions under which she observes them. It was also just off shore from her property that Karin had observed and photographed the three-siphoned *Zirfaea* which George wrote about in *The Dredgings*, Vol. 52, No. 3, 2012, page 3. The cover photo of that issue was a *Cryptonatica aleutica* (Dall, 1919) which Karin had also photographed nearby.

After the beach outing, we enjoyed a lunch Karin had prepared for us and had the opportunity to meet her husband, Doug. It was wonderful to meet them both and hopefully we'll get a chance to revisit her beach in the future. We will also certainly maintain contact with our new friend, Stephanie, who is a very knowledgeable malacologist of both marine and freshwater mollusks. It was a very productive outing.



*Penitella richardsoni*, Kennedy, 1989 can be distinguished by bumps on the siphon, as compared to *Penitella penita* (Conrad, 1837), where the siphon is smooth.