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breakers

She Sells Shell Totes by the Mesh

Handy Sacks a Hit With Clammers, Collectors

You're walking on the beach, your eyes swinging like a railroad lantern back and forth, sweeping the sands for ... shells, and ... seaglass, and ... treasures. Look — there's a moon snail, there's a piece of old blue bottle glass, there's a wooden soldier. Uh-oh, your hands are full, your pockets are bulging, and there's a whelk. Whatcha gonna do?

George Carlin had a routine about *stuff*, how we had so much stuff we didn't know where to put it all. Any beach walker knows the feeling: so you stuff a plastic bag in your pants and when you go to put something in it, you find out it's got a hole in it and whatcha gonna do?

Carol Boll to the rescue, with a pair of matched mesh bags you wear on your hips attached to a web belt.

"It started as a clam tote," she said, demonstrating. A practiced and still-practicing clam digger, Boll wasn't satisfied with the basket-in-an-inertube arrangement a lot of diggers use, or the canvas bag around the waist that knuckles against your knees, so she figured out a better way.



Ayan Merrill

IT'S IN THE BAG: Jillian Carter searches the swash on a Holgate beach for something to put in her new belted shell totes.

"My husband and I like clams," she said. "We rake them ourselves, but we couldn't figure out where to put them." They work in shallow water, about a foot deep, so the floating buckets and such weren't satisfactory. She came up with a bag made of tough netting that hung on a belt, went wherever they did, and kept the

clams in water until the day was over.

It was only a step from there to her shell tote. There are two versions, one for kids and one for grown-ups, basically the same except for size. Each consists of two bags hung from a belt. The other difference is in color — yellow for kids, black for adults. The belt itself is red.

Boll fashioned one for her son Ryan, and soon other kids wanted one. So she went into business.

"I've never done anything like this before," she said, "but I've wanted to do something for a long time and my friends urged me to go

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Totes

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ahead with it."

The clam totes are available at bait and tackle shops on the Island, and the shell totes — now named Treasure Totes — at gift and *recreate* shops.

The so-far-success of the totes has Boll looking farther afield, so to speak: "I'm going to try tapping into other markets," she said, "such as carry ducks, and I'm exploring to carry the totes and the shells."

In fact, anything that you need bags or pockets for — "I have a distributor who broke his leg and found it handy to hang one on his crutch. Older people can put them on walkers," said the increasingly marketing-savvy Boll, who calls that model a Handy Tote. It will soon appear in some home health product catalogs, she said.

When I started, it was just Long Beach Island. I made the calls myself. Now it's all over the county," she said, making no effort to hide her pleased surprise. "People are calling me," she beamed.

—Larry Savadone