

## SWMEA OFFICERS

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**Steven Schenk, Shark Reef  
Kellie Korhonen, Dolphin Quest**

## New Friends at the Downtown Aquarium

We have welcomed some new friends to the Downtown Aquarium in Denver over the summer. The first one is small, brown, furry and upside-down. She is a 1 year old 2-toed tree sloth named Aspen. She comes out for public visits a couple times a day and will be used in Education programs once she has become accustomed to people. Aspen enjoys hanging out with her trainers while munching on veggies and sleeping.



Another new friend that joined us this summer is Emmet the River Otter. Emmet is a 1 year old male North American River Otter, who moved to Colorado from Binghamton Zoo in New York. He has been introduced to Slater and Blue, the other two river otters here at the aquarium and he really enjoys exploring the exhibit and playing with the other two otters.



The most recent addition is our young Shovelnose Guitarfish. Guitarfish are cartilaginous fish in the ray family. They are named for their unique shape, which resembles a guitar. Our young guitarfish came to us from Birch Aquarium.



by Colleen Shipley  
Education Co-Manager  
Downtown Aquarium Denver

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\_\_\_\_\_ **from the President** \_\_\_\_\_

Dear SWMEA,

It is hard to believe that another year has gone by. While each year brings so many changes it seems that this one has been particularly full of challenges and (**insert noun**). It is my belief that science education at science centers, (**insert place of teaching science**), zoos, aquariums as well as the formal schooling system is now more important than ever. Education budgets are (**insert verb ending in -ing**) as the economy struggles to recover, all the while the demand on educators to produce a science literate and (**insert adjective**) population has increased. While global climate change, ocean acidification, overfishing, (**insert terrible thing affecting humanity**) and (**insert something even worse affecting humanity**) are all progressing seemingly unabated, one might have feelings of helplessness. But look around you. I bet that you see smiles, hear laughter and feel comforted by the community of friends and colleagues around you. It is this community that is our (**insert noun representing hope**) and it is this community that will give us the strength to overcome the tremendous hurdles that are in front of us.

This year I am (**insert adjective**) for having the opportunity to be part of such a diverse and committed community of educators. I hope that you have enjoyed this "mad lib" letter. Fun is part of what we do and allows us to take the seriousness of our challenges and see it from a new light. Tackling what we are sure to face in 2012 will be made all the easier by knowing that we, SWMEA, are committed to supporting one another with fun, hopefulness, and community.

I wish everybody a Happy Holiday season and look forward to a wonderful New Year.

Sincerely,  
Dave

## SWMEA Connection Call for Articles

We hope you enjoy this edition of your SWMEA Connection newsletter. We encourage all members to contribute articles and other news regarding your facilities and what's happening in your neck of the woods (or desert or ocean, wherever you may be)!

Check out the schedule below to see the deadlines and publication dates of upcoming SWMEA Connection editions. It's never too soon to start thinking about items you would like to submit for inclusion. Please send any articles to Kellie at [kkorhonen@dolphinquest.com](mailto:kkorhonen@dolphinquest.com) or to me at [sschenk@mandalaybay.com](mailto:sschenk@mandalaybay.com). Kellie and I both look forward to receiving your contributions, and to making the SWMEA Connection the most informative, interesting, and best looking newsletter out there!

Sincerely,

Steven and Kellie

### Upcoming Newsletters

**Spring 2012**

**Deadline - February 15th**

**Publication - March 1st**

**Summer 2012**

**Deadline - May 15th**

**Publication - June 1st**

**Fall 2012**

**Deadline - August 15th**

**Publication - September 1st**

**Winter 2012**

**Deadline - November 15th**

**Publication - December 1st**

# Fishy Fest Celebrating Halloween and Dia de los Muertos at the Santa Monica Pier Aquarium

**OCT. 22<sup>ND</sup> & OCT. 23<sup>RD</sup>  
12:30PM - 5:00PM**

## A FISHY FEST CELEBRATING HALLOWEEN AND DIA DE LOS MUERTOS

**ACTIVITIES  
INCLUDE:**

- "BIOLUMINESCENT" DEEP SEA EXPERIENCE
- FAMILY FRIENDLY PRESENTATIONS
- DIA DE LOS MUERTOS CRAFTS
- MARINE ANIMAL GRAVEYARD

**SANTA MONICA PIER AQUARIUM**  
1600 OCEAN FRONT WALK  
SANTA MONICA, CA 90401  
310-393-6149  
WWW.HEALTHEBAY.ORG/SMPA



Guests were invited to make tissue paper flowers for an alter honoring creatures that have succumbed to human impacts like marine debris entanglement and ingestion. We debuted our new Bioluminescent Laboratory Experience, where visitors were able to take a flashlight tour of the dark ocean depths where they encountered a black smoker, many bioluminescent creatures and even a giant squid!



In our Artifact Graveyard, we used bones and bone models to talk about animals, their natural history and possible human impacts on those animals that can affect their survival.

Tara Treiber  
Education  
Director  
Heal the Bay

# SeaWorld's School

## Assemblies for Conservation

This fall, SeaWorld San Diego's Education & Conservation Department, Bird Department, and Animal Ambassador team visited four different Southern California elementary schools to present SeaWorld Cares assemblies to the runner-up classes in last spring's Sea Turtle Essay Contest. At each school, the third and fourth grade students that participated in the essay contest enjoyed a half-hour program on SeaWorld's efforts to save wildlife around the world.

During the assembly, the students wondered at a 30 foot long, inflatable gray whale calf

while learning the story of J.J., the gray whale calf that was rescued and cared for in 1997. They also participated in a simulated sea turtle rescue using an extremely large, plush sea turtle and a sea turtle stretcher to move the turtle. The highlights of the assemblies were SeaWorld's ambassador animals, which usually included an American alligator, scarlet ibis or macaw, and Magellanic penguin. While the students watched the animals, they were given natural history facts about the animals and also information on how SeaWorld has helped rescue or preserve habitats for similar species of

animals. The goal of each assembly was not only to reward the students for their thoughtful and well-written essays on sea turtle conservation, but also inspire the students to care for all types of wildlife close to home and around-the-world.

Be sure to watch for the details of SeaWorld's 2012 essay contest for Southern California students early next year.

by Patricia Nisbet  
Science Writer  
SeaWorld San Diego  
Education & Conservation



# Restaurant Housewarming Benefits the Roundhouse Aquarium

The Roundhouse Aquarium in Manhattan Beach had the good fortune of having a local businessman hold a benefit for the aquarium. Mike Zislis, who owns local hotels and restaurants, opened a new restaurant called The Strand House. He threw a housewarming party on August 9 with the all the money going to the aquarium. Tickets to the event were \$100 a piece and all 200 of them sold out quickly. The aquarium also conducted a silent auction at the housewarming that raised about \$10,000.



Aquarium Board members and staff at The Strand House housewarming. The restaurant looks out onto the Manhattan Beach pier and at the end of the pier is the round building that houses the aquarium.

Some of the money has already been used for new energy-efficient lights that give the aquarium tanks a more realistic look. The rest of the money will be used to support the aquarium's various activities that include classes for school children that emphasize the ocean and the environment, a robust volunteer program for high school students and adults, and general education during the afternoon and weekend hours when it is open to the public free of charge.

Oceanographic Teaching Stations is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that operates the Roundhouse Marine Studies Lab and Aquarium located at the end of the Manhattan Beach, CA pier. Its mission is to educate members of the public about the ocean environment.



An overview of guests mingling in the main dining room of The Strand House restaurant.

Strand House owner, Mike Zislis (in blue shirt), chatting with guests.



by Lynne S. Gross

# USC QuikScience Challenge hosts SOS Rally and announces Ocean Leadership Awards

The 2012 edition of the QuikScience Challenge is underway and just completed a successful rally on the campus of the University of Southern California called "Surfing Onto Solutions for our Ocean Planet." We expected about 100 student participants in this year's Challenge to come to the rally on the USC campus but almost 150 showed up!

The QuikScience Challenge is a competition for teams of middle school and high school students that create projects and portfolios on a science subject related to marine or freshwater environments. Every year, the interest and excitement in the QuikScience Challenge builds, and this year we have almost 120 teams registered for the Challenge, about 20% more than last year! The focus of the Surfing Onto Solutions (SOS) rally is to bring students together to learn about ocean and aquatic science, to explore ideas for project topics, and to give the students an opportunity to be on a university campus.

Rally participants toured science labs at USC; viewed exhibits on ocean and aquatic science; heard talks from Quiksilver sponsors and former QuikScience Challenge participants, and attended a presentation by Algalita on the problems of plastic in the ocean and the environment. Graduate and undergraduate student mentors from USC worked with their QuikScience Challenge teams on project topic ideas, and after the rally concluded, the student teams had an opportunity to tour the USC campus.

The Challenge also recognizes educators who make outstanding contributions to ocean science education through the QuikScience Ocean Leadership Awards. These awards are supported by the QuikScience Challenge and COSEE-West, the Los Angeles hub of the NSF-supported Centers for Ocean Sciences Education Excellence. The categories are Formal Teaching Excellence Award, Informal Teaching Excellence Award, Early Career Award (for teachers with less than two years experience) and the Commitment to Education Award.

**Nominations** for the Ocean Leadership Awards are open until **February 3, 2012**. Winners will receive a \$500 stipend/award for classroom enhancement and a lovely plaque, and they will be honored in April at the Awards Night Open House at Quiksilver headquarters in Huntington Beach, California. To nominate an educator (even yourself) for an award, check the following URL: <http://www.usc.edu/org/quikscience/oceanleadership.html>



QuikScience Students  
Touring USC Lab

The QuikScience Challenge is sponsored by the University of Southern California Dornsife College Wrigley Institute for Environmental Studies in partnership with Quiksilver Inc., an international producer and distributor of surfing apparel, and the Quiksilver Foundation. The challenge uses a team competition to encourage students to learn more about scientific research and to enhance the students' capacity for leadership.

by Lynn Whitley  
Director of Pre-College Education  
Wrigley Institute for  
Environmental Studies



QuikScience Ocean Leadership Award Winners

## Upcoming Events

February 6 - 11, 2012

Conservation education: Effective Program Design at Ogelbay Resort in Wheeling, West Virginia

March 24 - 31, 2012

AZA Mid-Year Meeting at The Living Desert, Palm Springs, California

June 24 - 28, 2012

NMEA Conference in Anchorage, Alaska

September 8 - 13, 2012

AZA Annual Conference at the Phoenix Zoo, Phoenix, Arizona

## Become a SWMEA member today!

The Southwest Marine/Aquatic Educators' Association (SWMEA) is a marine educators network throughout Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah. Members receive four on-line newsletters each year, and a subscription to our listserve. Receive discounts on our semi-annual professional development seminars as well as discounts in several SWMEA facilities.

For more information contact Sarah Swain at [SSwain@LBAOP.ORG](mailto:SSwain@LBAOP.ORG)

## The SWMEA Connection

Steven Schenk  
Shark Reef Aquarium  
(702) 632-4566  
[sschenk@mandalaybay.com](mailto:sschenk@mandalaybay.com)



*Wishing Everyone  
Happy Holidays and  
a Great New Year*