

**SWMEA
OFFICERS**

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Joey Scott
Monterey Bay Aquarium

Chapter Rep

Alie LeBeau
Education Programs Manager,
Aquarium of the Pacific

Treasurer/Membership

Colleen Shipley
Education Manager,
Downtown Aquarium

Newsletter Editor

Steven Schenk
Shark Reef Aquarium

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Letter from the President

Dear SWMEA members,

It has been a pleasure being SWMEA President for the past two years. As a group, we have provided support for formal and informal science educators to integrate NGSS into the marine science curriculum. We had productive meetings at NMEA to determine future directions for our group, and I am going to help Joey as she starts the next year as president. We have a massive topic ahead of us - hosting the 2018 conference in Long Beach! I can't wait to show NMEA members what an awesome chapter we have. The new board is excited to take over, and they are more than qualified for the tasks ahead!

Cheers,
Lori

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Keep reading to meet our new
SWMEA Board Members!

MEET YOUR NEW SWMEA BOARD MEMBERS!

President: Joey Scott

Joey Scott has been working in teacher professional development and curriculum design since 2009, currently for the Monterey Bay Aquarium and previously with the United States Peace Corps. Before that, she taught at elementary and middle schools in East Palo Alto, Santa Cruz, and Sacramento, California. Joey currently holds a clear California teaching credential and has degrees in molecular genetics, education, and a certification in project management. She serves as a reviewer for the National Science Teachers Association's elementary journal, *Science and Children*, as an item reviewer for the NGSS-aligned 5th grade California state science test, and has presented at numerous regional, state, national, and international science education and literacy conferences. For the past two years, Joey has organized the SWMEA webinar series, bringing scientists, researchers, and educators together.



As SWMEA president, Joey will help build and support our community of marine educators through membership drives, social and professional events, and stronger communication platforms. Her education project management background will help her manage and execute projects that will allow SWMEA to grow in both size and in community connection.

Chapter Rep: Alie LeBeau

Alie LeBeau is the Education Programs Manager at the Aquarium of the Pacific and serves as a primary Project Manager for many grant-funded projects within the Education Department, including projects related to educator professional development, implementation strategies using technology, and teacher resources and workshops. She has a background in elementary education, outdoor education and community partnerships. Within the department, she facilitates teacher professional development offerings, manages program staff, develops strategic partnerships, and manages program budgets. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Biology and Education from Earlham College in Richmond, IN.



Alie intends to connect local marine educators with a larger network of resources and conversations. There are many of us in the area, and Alie looks forward to making our voice heard on the national level. Alie hopes to find more opportunities for marine educators in Southern California to advance our field and connect science happening locally to the public.

Treasurer/Membership Secretary: Colleen Shipley

Colleen Shipley grew up in landlocked Colorado, but from her first visit to SeaWorld when she was 5, she knew she wanted to study and work with marine life. For college, she decided to attend the University of Puget Sound and graduated with a Bachelor's of Science in Biology, with a minor in Theater Arts in 1997. She has been working in the zoo and aquarium education field for 20 years. Soon after graduation Colleen also worked at Northwest Trek Wildlife Park as a Tram Naturalist, driving tours through the 435 acre free-roaming exhibit. It was there that she found her love for wildlife education, as she loved seeing the "ah-ha" moment that the guests would have during the animal tours. In 2001 Colleen got a big break as an Educator at the new aquarium in Denver, called Ocean Journey (now called Downtown Aquarium). She finally found her place! She has continued to bring marine science education to Denver over the last 17 years. Colleen is now the Education Manager, overseeing all school and family programs. She will serve on the SWMEA board as the Treasurer/ Membership Secretary, and will help bring new ideas for increasing membership to the organization.



Animal Connections at Lehigh Valley Zoo

Whenever I travel around the country I always try to visit any zoo or aquarium in the area. This year while visiting Pennsylvania with family I came across the Lehigh Valley Zoo, a small zoo nestled in the Trexler Game Preserve a few hours drive from Philadelphia. The AZA accredited zoo is a participant in the scimitar horned oryx SSP and is also known for its work with African Penguins and Mexican Gray Wolves.

As an educator, when I visit any zoo or aquarium, I try to look at everything with a focus not only on the animals, but also things like signage, conservation messaging, and staff presentations. As a treat for my kids (and myself), I signed my family up to participate in the Fennec Fox Animal Connection. We were greeted with a friendly smile at 1pm by Hannah, a member of the zoo's Conservation Education team, who took us into a room with a collection of education animals.

She went over the rules for interacting with Audi, the zoo's fennec fox before introducing us to him. Audi is a skittish little fellow, who made a "wheee" sound as he exited his carrier and scrambled across the floor. Once he got some of his energy out, Hannah picked him up and allowed us to gently pet him down his back. We then picked up some enrichment items to play with Audi, and concluded the program with everyone getting a chance to hand-feed him a few crickets.



The presentation was informative and touched on important conservation messages, AZA accreditation, SSP programs, as well as general information about fennec foxes. Most importantly, Hannah was friendly and interesting, and kept everyone's attention, which is not always easy to do when speaking to a 7 and 9 year old. My children, generally shy, readily opened up and not only answered many of her questions, but asked her many of their own as well. She patiently answered them all. Overall, the experience was a lot of fun for everyone.

If you're ever in the small town of Schnecksville, Pennsylvania, I recommend checking out this zoo. I think you'll definitely enjoy the visit!

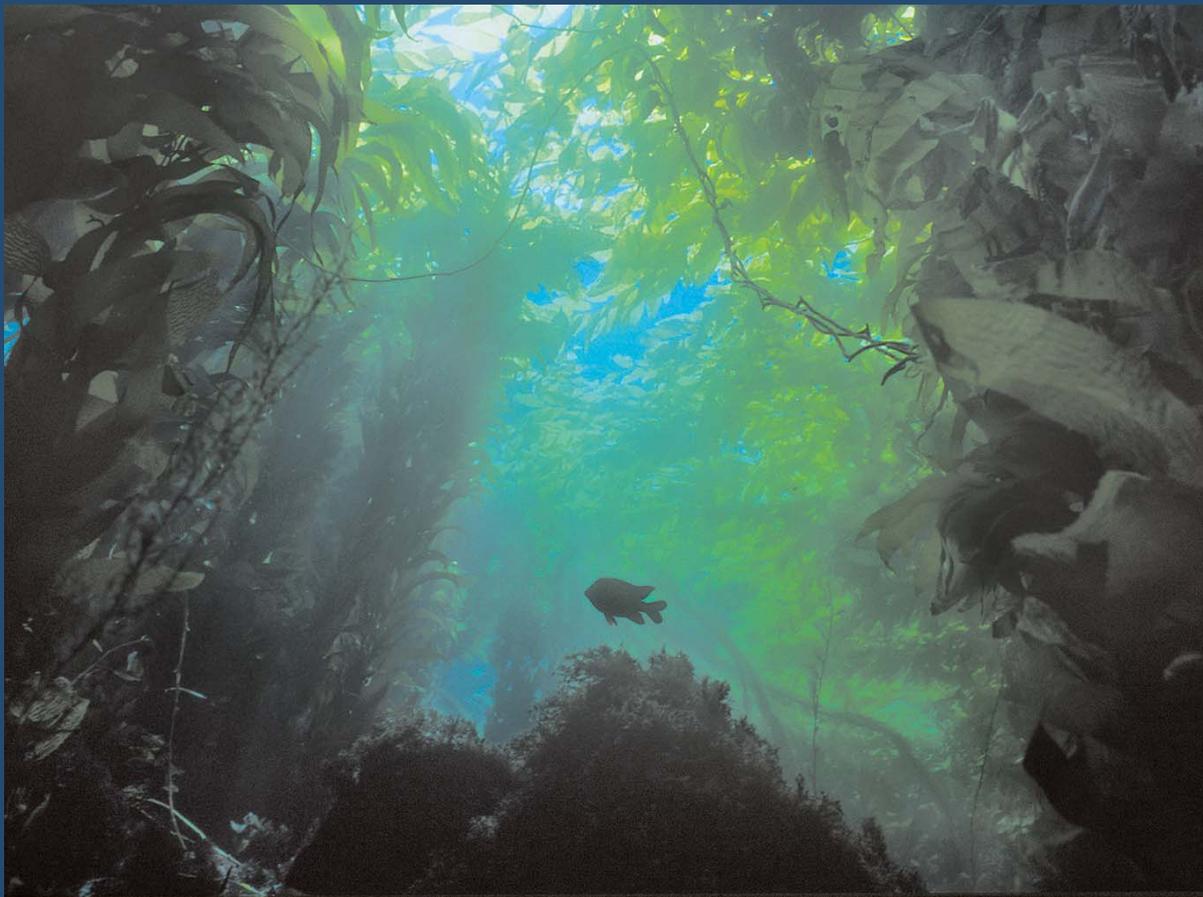
by Steven Schenk



Underwater Parks Day

January 20, 2018 at the Santa Monica Pier Aquarium

Dive into Southern California's underwater marine parks without getting wet! Heal the Bay's Santa Monica Pier Aquarium will celebrate the establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), or underwater parks, on January 20th. The marine education center will unveil its new virtual reality exhibit, allowing visitors of all ages to experience the beauty of an underwater park. Keeping Santa Monica Bay healthy for marine life - and for all who enjoy the coastal waters - has been the primary concern of Heal the Bay for more than 30 years. The environmental non-profit was a key player in the establishment of the Southern California MPAs, which were officially designated in January 2013. Special craft projects, face painting, and a lively puppet show telling the story of Marine Protected Areas will be featured and included with admission to the Aquarium. The Aquarium is located at 1600 Ocean Front Walk, beach level beneath the Pier's Carousel Building. During the winter, open Fridays from 2 - 5 pm and weekends from 12:30 - 5:00 pm, admission is free for children 12 and under; all others: \$5 admission; groups of 10 or more: \$3 per person, regardless of age. More information at <https://healthebay.org/aquarium/>



Happy Birthday, GSB!

Visit Heal the Bay's Santa Monica Pier Aquarium to wish our juvenile giant sea bass (GSB) a happy second birthday. The giant black sea bass, *Stereolepis gigas*, was a mere inch-and-a-half in length when introduced at the Aquarium. This fish has a long way to go to fit the description as a "giant," but at age two, the GSB is more than a foot long and thriving. When full grown, this critically endangered species can reach seven feet in length, weighing upward of 500 pounds. Our giant black sea bass is playing a big part in conservation of the species. For the past two years, researchers have been chronicling its growth, recording the statistics of the fish's growth and color scheme - paying particular attention to its dark spots. The theory is that unlike many species of fish that have different characterizing color schemes as they mature, the giant sea bass' spots remain the same. If they are unique markers, researchers can identify individuals in the wild, learning more about their habits and tracking their growth. Come count the spots on the GSB, and check out the other 100 plus species of marine life on exhibit. The Aquarium - located at 1600 Ocean Front Walk, beach level beneath the Pier's Carousel Building - is open Fridays from 2 - 5 pm and weekends from 12:30 - 5:00 pm, admission is free for children 12 and under; all others: \$5 admission; groups of 10 or more: \$3 per person, regardless of age. More information at <https://healthebay.org/aquarium/>



Upcoming Events

January 20, 2018

Underwater Parks Day

March 24 - 29, 2018

AZA Mid-Year Conference hosted by the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens in Jacksonville, Florida

July 13 - 20, 2018

NMEA Annual Conference in Long Beach, California

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 Julien Jordan at

jchristopher@lbaop.org

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 kjkorhonen@live.com or to me at 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 2018

Deadline - February 15th
Publication - March 1st

Summer 2018

Deadline - May 15th
Publication - June 1st

Fall 2018

Deadline - August 15th
Publication - September 1st

Winter 2018

Deadline - November 15th
Publication - December 1st

The SWMEA Connection

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