

SeaScripts



The Newsletter of the South Carolina Marine Educators Association



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SCMEA Calendar

**Spring SeaScripts
Deadline:**
January 29, 2011

Spring Board Meeting:
Waddell
February 26, 2011
10:00am



SCMEA

The South Carolina Marine Educators Association

Letter From the President – Beth Burkett – SCMEA President

Hello SCMEA,

I hope this letter finds you all well, happy, and healthy. During the holidays, I find myself thinking about all that I have to be thankful for. I include SCMEA in the list because this group is made up of the most dedicated educators, innovative thinkers, and amazing friends that I know. I'm thankful for all of the good times that we experienced in 2010 and I am excited about everything that we are working on for 2011.

One of SCMEA's big events in 2010 was the annual conference and this year continued the trend of fun field trips, informative sessions, good food and increased attendance. We received support from many agencies, including SCDNR, the South Carolina Aquarium, SC Sea Grant, the *Spirit of SC* and the Charleston County Parks. The hard work of the Board of Directors, President Scott Meister and Past President Elizabeth Joyner made everything come together smoothly and I am grateful to all who helped make it a success.

One of the big decisions to come out of the 2010 conference was the adoption of an updated logo. For the past two years, we have been working on the electronic face of SCMEA through a redesign of our website. During this process, it was recommended by our team that we find a logo that fits the new digital format. Logo redesigns are often sensitive issues because the challenge is to remember the past while maintaining a present, polished image. I believe that Paul Caputo sums this up well in his interpretive design blog:

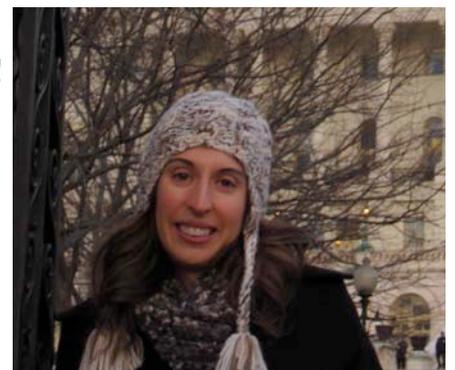
<http://www.interpretationbydesign.com/>.

There, he describes changes made by Planters to keep their famed mascot, Mr. Peanut, fresh and interesting. They paid tribute to the past by including classical elements that date back to the 1950's but added a celebrity voice (Robert Downey Jr.) and humor (a giant nut cracker with a hankering for peanuts) in the hopes of attracting a new audience to their product. I'm not necessarily advocating that we go after celebrity endorsement (unless the Cousteau family is interested), but I do believe our new logo design smoothly repackages the fish and waves found in the SCMEA "S" into a modern and sleek representation of the organization. My hope is that we continue to honor our history as we progress forward.

So, I would like to offer my last thank-you to the SCMEA membership for thoughtfully considering the logo designs presented at the conference and deciding on one that will be placed on the new website. I look forward to working with you all in 2011 and I encourage you to come to a meeting, present a workshop or contribute to *SeaScripts*. The members are what make SCMEA great!

Clear Sailing!

Beth





It is about 7:15pm on a Thursday evening in October and I am sitting in a boat with a crew of six other rowers coming into the docks at the Charleston Marina. I'm helping to keep the boat set while our stern pair is bringing us in after a short but intense sunset workout. I can hear the water as it runs by our boat, but the evening is otherwise almost silent. I hear a distinct blow coming from my left side; a bottlenose dolphin surfaces for a breath of air and then dives back down again. I could only see the silhouette briefly but it was a remarkable moment nonetheless.

One of the most amazing parts about living along coastal South Carolina is being able to enjoy these charismatic species in their natural environment. Bottlenose dolphins are the most commonly observed marine mammal in the Charleston area, frequenting the coastline, estuaries and tidal marshes. They can be seen socializing with one another, feeding or just traveling through the local waters. This natural habitat is however the only way that locals and visitors are able to view dolphins or any marine mammal in South Carolina. South Carolina is the only state to make it illegal to exhibit marine mammals in captive environments. Initially, one might think, "What a missed opportunity to share these amazing animals with the public and educate them on why we should protect dolphins." That sentiment is appreciated, but it may also be argued that having the opportunity to responsibly observe these animals in our own backyard may offer an even stronger connection to how important dolphins are to our ecosystems and why it is important for us to protect them. The South Carolina Aquarium will soon be launching a program to do just that.

Adopt a Wild Dolphin is the Aquarium's newest adoption program partnering with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS). It will offer an opportunity for local communities, visitors and classrooms to connect with South Carolina's state marine mammal, the bottlenose dolphin. Local researchers have been studying dolphins in the Charleston area for years and have chosen known resident dolphins from their catalogue to be adopted. Two series of adoptions will be available, one for the public and one for classrooms. Adoption packages will vary depending on the level of adoption, including personalized certificates, special tours and exposure to local research efforts.

Keep an eye out for this exciting new program at the South Carolina Aquarium. For any questions, please contact:

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Lessons Learned:

Gardening for Wildlife

By Kim Counts: SCDNR/ACE Basin NERR

As our landscape becomes increasingly urbanized, the question is often asked “how can we better coexist with our natural surroundings?” I had the opportunity to hear Dr. Douglas Tallamy (author of *Bringing Nature Home*) speak at the SC Native Plants Society Symposium in May. His words were not only inspiring and motivational but also scientifically based. As we continue to landscape with foreign species, largely European and Asian, we are creating sterile environs. Our native plant and insect species have coevolved, thus are complexly intertwined. In removing our native plants we often remove our native insects and the base of the food chain as we know it. We are witnesses to unfathomable local extinctions right in front of our very eyes.

The good news is, we can all make a difference. We can strategically utilize *native* plants and create viable wildlife habitat right in our own backyard and schoolyard. No matter how small the space, even if your space only consists of a back patio, you too can support wildlife. The old saying rings true, if you build it they will come. For example, in creating a butterfly garden, ideally you will create an area that includes both nectar and larval host plants for butterflies. In doing this, you have also created an area that supports numerous other forms of wildlife as butterfly caterpillars are important food sources for many of our bird species, particularly the baby birds. Gardening for wildlife allows access to a whole new world, often overlooked. What better opportunity to teach our children about local ecology while also making a positive impact at the same time? The best way to learn about gardening for wildlife is to consult others and the literature, but above all, get out and do!

Meet the 2010 SCMEA Award Winners

2010 MARINE EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR: BETH THOMAS

Beth Thomas is the Education Coordinator for the North Inlet-Winyah Bay NERR headquartered at the Baruch Marine Field Laboratory. She received her BS in Marine Science from USC-Coastal. Her primary interest is ichthyology, but her career at Baruch led her into marine and environmental education. As Education Coordinator, Beth provides outreach programming to K-12 students as well as general public audiences of all ages.



2010 COUSTEAU NMEA TRAVEL AWARD WINNER: DONALD SWEEPER



Gullah historian and retired sixth grade teacher Donald Sweeper was the winner of this year's Cousteau NMEA Travel Award, which he used to attend the 2010 National Marine Educators Conference in Gatlinburg, Tennessee this past summer. During the conference, Donald portrayed Dr. Ernest E. Just as part of an educational skit titled "A Visit from Ernest Everett Just." In the skit, a local newscaster, portrayed by SCMEA member Lundie Spence, was surprised to have a Dr. Just come back to life for a brief interview. Dr. Just asked Lundie several questions about the changes in the Charleston area since his death in 1941. Then Lundie asked a series of questions relating to the research Dr. Just conducted at the Woods Hole Marine Biology Lab involving the fertilization and embryo development of marine invertebrates.

Dr. Just was born in Charleston, South Carolina in 1883, and died in Washington D.C. in 1941. He was chairman of the Zoology Department at Howard University in Washington D.C. from 1909 to 1939. He published a book in 1939 entitled *The Biology of the Cell Surface*. During the last 10 years of his life, he did research at some of the world's renowned biology labs in Germany, France and Italy. Donald will perform a more in-depth portrayal of Dr. Just at the 2011 NMEA conference at Boston

2010 PRESIDENT'S CHOICE AWARD: NELLE STEPHENSON



This past October, after a long tenure as our SCMEA treasurer, Nelle Stephenson officially retired from office. After serving at least 7 terms (she wouldn't disclose the real number), and just as many presidents, Nelle decided it was time for new blood and she passed the reins on to Kattie McMillan, a relative youngster. As Nelle made clear at the annual meeting, she still plans to be involved, just not at the level she has committed to in the past. After seven years of keeping us straight, who can blame her?

Nelle's unwavering dedication to SCMEA, her cheerful attitude, attention to detail and unbelievable patience are just a few of the reasons she's so deserving of the 2010 President's Award. Time and time again, Nelle always had the answer, always putting SCMEA before herself and has always been there in a clutch. She has been an integral part of the SCMEA team for as long as I can remember, and has literally been the glue that has bound many of us together. It has been a pleasure and honor to work closely with her these past few years, and I look forward to the future when we can both kick back in the "peanut gallery". Three cheers for Nelle!

Scott Meister
2009-2010 SCMEA President

2010 RENKAS CLASSROOM GRANT WINNER: KAREN FUSS

Karen Fuss works as an Environmental Educator for the Center for Marine and Wetland Studies at Coastal Carolina University in Conway, SC. In March 2010, an undergraduate intern, Lisa Scarano, and Karen developed a loggerhead sea turtle outreach program for pre-schoolers through adults. Trained volunteers give age-specific presentations at schools and community organizations and also participate in local sea turtle nest monitoring. The funding from the SCMEA Renkas Classroom Grant is being used for printing and binding of activity packets that Lisa created to be distributed to pre-K through 2nd grade students.

Meet the New SCMEA Board Members



President Elect: Elizabeth (EV) Bell

EV currently serves as marine science specialist for the SC Sea Grant Consortium and COSEE SE where she conducts programs that bring educators and scientists together. She was formerly the marine education coordinator at the SC Department of Natural Resources where she led vessel and land-based programs for K-12 students. She holds a BS in Biological Sciences from Clemson University and an MS in Environmental Studies from the College of Charleston.



Treasurer: Kattie McMillan

Kattie McMillan works in the office of Coastal Reserves and Outreach for the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources and is the education specialist aboard the Education Vessel *Discovery*. Most of her time is spent coordinating and conducting marine education programs aboard the *E/V Discovery* for 5th-12th grade students in Charleston and the ACE Basin. She received her BS in Marine Biology from the College of Charleston.

Board of Directors:



Julie Binz

Julie Binz has a Bachelor's in Marine Biology from the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey and a Master of Environmental Science from the College of Charleston. Since 2005, Julie has been the Environmental Educator for the SEWEE Association (www.seweeassociation.org).



Edna Mills

Edna Mills is the Science Department Head at Aiken High School in Aiken, South Carolina where she also teaches Biology Honors and Marine Science. She grew up in Connecticut and has lived the last 27 years in South Carolina. She loves being part of SCMEA!



Beth Thomas

Beth Thomas is the Education Coordinator for the North Inlet-Winyah Bay NERR headquartered at the Baruch Marine Field Laboratory. As Education Coordinator, Beth provides outreach programming to K-12 students as well as general public audiences of all ages.

News and Events

Students and Educators can follow ongoing Marine Geology Research this Winter with SCMEA Member Kevin Kurtz



From December 13, 2010 to February 15, 2011, SCMEA member and *A Day in the Salt Marsh* author Kevin Kurtz will be the Education Officer on the scientific research vessel the **JOIDES Resolution** during an expedition to study a chain of underwater volcanoes off the coast of New Zealand. To follow **Kevin's blogs**, videos and other educational activities about the science of this expedition, visit the *JOIDES Resolution* website <http://joidesresolution.org/> or become a fan of the *JOIDES Resolution* on facebook <http://www.facebook.com/joidesresolution>.

Apply for \$10,000 Science Teacher Grants

Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc. and the National Science Teachers Association are pleased to announce the 21st Toyota TAPESTRY Grants for Science Teachers program. This year, 50 large grants of \$10,000 each will be awarded to K-12 teachers of science in the United States. Grants will be awarded in Environmental Science.

A partnership between Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc. and the National Science Teachers Association, the Toyota TAPESTRY Grants for Science Teachers program offers grants to K–12 science teachers for innovative projects that enhance science education in the school and/or school district. 50 large grants totaling \$500,000 in all, will be awarded this year. To apply for funding, qualified teachers must write a Toyota TAPESTRY proposal according to the proposal requirements. The deadline for the completion of the online application is 11:59 P.M. EST Tuesday, February 23, 2011. Recipients of Toyota TAPESTRY grants will be notified in April 2011. Non-recipients will be notified in June 2010. For application materials, visit:

<http://tapestry.nsta.org/>

NOAA and Partners Protect Sea Turtles in Face of Oil Spill

Visit http://www.noaa.gov/features/04_resources/seaturtles2.html for a story on NOAA and their partners' efforts to protect sea turtles during the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and its aftermath. For more information on NOAA's efforts to protect endangered or threatened marine species and marine mammals, visit <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/>, the home page of the Office of Protected Resources.



Conservation Education Grants Available

The **SeaWorld & Busch Gardens Conservation Fund**, a nonprofit private charitable foundation created by Anheuser-Busch Adventure Parks, supports wildlife research, habitat protection, animal rescue and conservation education in the United States and more than sixty countries around the world. The fund has no set minimum or maximum grant amount. In the past, the fund has awarded grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$25,000 each for a one-year term. The fund will consider multi-year proposals.

All grant applications for each year's granting session are due by December 1 of the prior year. Only applications submitted via the fund's online application system will be accepted. Visit the Conservation Fund's Web site for complete grant policies, information on previously funded projects, and the complete application.

<http://www.swbg-conservationfund.org/>

NOAA's Office of Ocean Exploration and Research announces Lessons from the Deep: Exploring the Gulf of Mexico's Deep-Sea Ecosystems Education Materials Collection

OER's Gulf of Mexico Deep-Sea Ecosystem Education Materials Collection includes a selection of these lesson plans together with new lessons and additional background information about the Deepwater Horizon blowout event. The purpose of this collection is to provide a foundation for student inquiries into deep-sea ecosystems, and to build capabilities for comparing data from OER expeditions with post-event information as the latter information becomes available. The Gulf of Mexico Deep-Sea Ecosystem Education Materials Collection is comprised of an Educators' Guide, http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/edu/guide/gomdse_edguide.pdf, providing background information, as well as 16 associated lesson plans.

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www.etsy.com/shop/allisonsepmn



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Joining SCMEA is easy!

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and fill out the registration form.



Joining NMEA is also easy!

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<http://nmeaweb.org/membership.html>

and fill out the registration form.