SAVING THE STURGEON
10 year anniversary

PLUS: Wild About Otters, RiverRocks and Conservation News
Restoring a River Giant

In April, we celebrated a conservation milestone in downtown Chattanooga. With help from 5th grade students from Calvin Donaldson Environmental Science Academy, we released 25 lake sturgeon into the Tennessee River.

Not only was this our first release within eyesight of the Aquarium, it also marked our 10th anniversary of lake sturgeon releases in Tennessee. We are one step closer to returning this important fish to its historic home permanently.

The lake sturgeon is a vital part of our healthy aquatic environment. These river giants have been known to live more than a century, grow to eight feet in length and weigh up to 300 pounds, making the species one of the largest to live in the Tennessee River. For food, they vacuum up snails, insects and even fish with their protrusible mouths. Unfortunately, large fish such as lake sturgeon grow slowly and take years to reproduce, making them vulnerable to overfishing and habitat changes. “Lake sturgeon were extirpated, or made extinct, in the Tennessee portion of their historic range,” said Jason Henegar, River and Streams Program Coordinator for the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, TWRA. “Because of the sturgeon’s long life span, they are very vulnerable to over harvest, habitat changes and decreases in water quality. As a result, these animals disappeared from Tennessee waters during the 1960s.”

Fortunately, things began to change for the lake sturgeon at the end of the century. TVA modified the operations of some of their dams, which boosted water and oxygen levels in the river. At the end of the 1990s, we joined forces with TWRA, TVA, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, World Wildlife Fund and others to reintroduce these dinosaur-looking fish. The first release happened in 2000. Over the last 10 years, more than 90,000 lake sturgeon have been reintroduced in the French Broad River near the headwaters of the Tennessee River. The program was deemed so successful that we have started another program with TWRA to reintroduce lake sturgeon to the Cumberland River near Nashville. With another decade of hard work, we could see a strong sturgeon population back in Tennessee’s two main rivers.

Lake sturgeon are still an endangered species in Tennessee and must be immediately released if caught. But TWRA seeks out, and has received, valuable lake sturgeon...
reports from fisherman who accidentally hook the fish. Recently, these reports have come from close to home, with many sightings just downstream of Chickamauga Dam. Even though we don’t get to see them every day anymore, it’s nice to know that our sturgeon still make an occasional appearance!

You can get your own chance to touch a lake sturgeon and learn more about our reintroduction program at the Aquarium. It’s always a pleasure seeing people inside the Aquarium connecting with the animals we’re working so hard to protect. But it’s even more gratifying when a school group such as Calvin Donaldson gets to join us in the field and learn about conservation first-hand.

About the Author: Anna George, Ph.D., is the director of the Tennessee Aquarium Conservation Institute. Anna keeps busy with numerous field studies and restoration projects including work with Barrens topminnows and hellbender salamanders.
Jack Lupton knew a good idea when he saw one, so it came as no surprise to anyone associated with him that when the concept of building an aquarium in Chattanooga was first presented to him, he would embrace it with all his might.

The “magic moment,” as Lupton, the businessman-turned-philanthropist later called it, came in 1984 during a conversation with then-Tennessee governor Lamar Alexander, who, aware of the efforts of Chattanooga civic leaders to transform their city via one of its greatest resources, the Tennessee River, suggested building an aquarium. The plan had originally been presented by a group of architectural students at the University of Tennessee.

“I looked at him and said, ‘What are you talking about?’ ” Lupton recalled in a 2004 interview he gave Business Tennessee magazine. “He said, ‘Give it some thought.’ That’s where it came from. We took the idea from there and made it happen.”

Lupton was gracious enough to say “we took the idea,” and without question it took the concerted effort of a small army of people to transform what would become the Tennessee Aquarium from idea to reality. But Lupton was the driving force behind the project.

On the occasion of Lupton’s death at age 83 in May, several people involved in the Aquarium from the beginning paid tribute to his vision and his steadfast insistence—even in the face of critics who derisively called it “Jack’s Fish Tank”—that it was important for the city’s future.

“Once he became convinced the Aquarium really was a good idea, that it made sense to build something like that on the river, he had the vision to see the benefits to the city,” said John Phillips, the first legal counsel to the Aquarium and later the chairman of its board of directors.

“He was clearly the driving force,” said Bill Sudderth, former president of RiverCity Company, the organization that laid the groundwork for the Aquarium. “He wanted to see it happen, and he wanted to see it done the best that anybody had ever done.”

Lupton talked about his vision for the Aquarium in a rare interview with the Chattanooga Times in 1986.

“The Aquarium is going to fool the critics,” Lupton said. “They’re having a good time sticking their tongue in their cheek right now, but I think it’s going to be a meaningful thing, an exciting thing. I really do. Everybody’s saying, ‘Who wants to go down there and look at the bream and catfish?’ Well, if that’s where they’re coming from, they are going to be truly shocked.”

Lupton loved a challenge, and when he realized tax dollars wouldn’t be a component of the project’s funding, it only strengthened his resolve. He pledged $20 million from his family’s charitable organization, the Lyndhurst Foundation, and then vowed to raise the rest of the project’s cost, estimated at $45 million.
“Some fairly vocal voices were against [using tax dollars],” Sudderth said. “So we determined that we could raise enough money to fund the project privately. And that was not just Jack’s money, but also his willingness to go ask a lot of different people and companies, to raise money for something he thought would be good for the community.”

Once the money was raised to build the facility, Lupton could have stepped away from the project, secure in the knowledge he had provided the most critical piece. But raising money was only the beginning of his involvement.

“[The Aquarium] never was something somebody thought up and talked him into throwing money at,” Phillips said. “He did a lot of the background work. He had visited the National Aquarium in Baltimore and the Monterey Bay Aquarium in California before any decisions would be made. He had it in his head what a good aquarium looked like and how it should be run.”

Despite his heavy involvement in the Aquarium, Lupton would never agree to be chairman of the board.

“I was always impressed with that,” Phillips said. “Just because of who he was and how much money he’d given, he could have run the whole show. As long as there were good people on the board, he was fine with that. But he set a very high standard for people to serve on the board. He wanted them to be active and contribute, not just financially, but in other ways as well.”

Just as Lupton imagined, the Aquarium’s opening in 1992 sparked a downtown Chattanooga revitalization that continues to this day. The Aquarium begat the Chattanooga Visitor’s Center in 1993, the Creative Discovery Museum in 1995 and the IMAX Theater in 1996. The Walnut Street Bridge was renovated and opened for pedestrians in 1993. Coolidge Park and a rebirth of Chattanooga’s north shore followed. And all over downtown, restaurants, shops, even a new theater, opened as millions of tourists spending many more millions of dollars flocked to the city.

Chattanooga, known as the “Dirtiest City in America” in 1969, has been transformed into a shining example of a green community and a media darling, featured on the covers of national magazines and heralded by NPR’s Morning Edition as one of the world’s great cities.

The dramatic changes eventually caught the attention of industry and paved the way, in 2008, for Volkswagen to decide to build its North American manufacturing plant in Chattanooga. Volkswagen’s potential economic impact was evaluated by the University of Tennessee’s Center for Business and Economic Research.

“Total economic benefits of Volkswagen’s location include a $511.1 million annual increase in personal income, $55.7 million yearly in state and local tax revenue, and the support of 11,477 full-time equivalent jobs,” the UT report said.

“I have a hard time believing that Volkswagen would have ever come here had the foundations not been laid, dating back to the Aquarium being built,” Sudderth said. “And I don’t think we could have ever gotten there without the vision Jack Lupton had along with his determination to make it successful.”

Lupton talked about that vision in the 1986 interview he gave the Chattanooga Times.

“Believe me, interested outside investors are already beginning to look at this city right now and they’re saying, ‘What’s going on? What is going on in Chattanooga?’” Lupton said. “I haven’t even heard of Chattanooga.” They’re coming in here. They’re going to bring their companies in here.”

Jack’s Fish Tank indeed.

Many generous contributions have been made in memory of Jack Lupton. The Aquarium wishes to thank those who have made contributions for their thoughtfulness.

About the Author: Chris Dortch publishes the Blue Ribbon College Basketball and Football Yearbooks and also appears on television and radio to talk about sports. He volunteers as a Riverwatch contributor because he believes in the Aquarium’s mission.
Wild About Otters

Many visitors are amazed at the fluid swimming abilities of the Aquarium’s North American river otters. They can swim like fish and are amazingly agile in and out of the water. “People might be surprised at the otter’s jumping and climbing abilities,” said Courtney Lewis, one of the Aquarium’s otter keepers. They might also be surprised to learn that even though they look cute, cuddly and fuzzy, Lewis would rather go diving with the big, toothy sharks in the Secret Reef than actually go inside the otter exhibit. “At least the sharks are used to divers. People entering the exhibit would be a totally new experience for the otters. Since they tend to explore new things with their teeth, it would not be good for the keeper,” Lewis said with a chuckle.

Lewis absolutely loves working with these feisty critters even though they remain untamed in many respects. “Pete” and “Delmar,” the Aquarium’s two male otters, have been trained to perform several behaviors: keepers are able to check the otters’ feet, teeth and even their weight without having to actually handle them. “The training is all done in the backup area and there’s always a fence between me and the otters,” notes Lewis.

The boys, as Lewis calls them, have two traits that help with training: they’re always receptive to food, and they’re really smart. “What’s fun about them is discovering how intelligent they are,” Lewis said. “When we are training them, we have to constantly stay one step ahead of them and plan way, way in advance.” For example, getting them to stand on a scale took a lot of advance planning and building a special scale. The otters have been trained to touch their noses on a target stick. When they do, they are rewarded with a smelt or other treat. By getting the otters to sit still for a few moments, keepers are able to examine their bodies up close. Lewis says the keepers were able to take baby steps to build upon this initial behavior to get the animals on a scale.
“Our maintenance department built a special scale with a ramp leading up to it,” Lewis said. “We hold up the stick in front of the scale and say, ‘target scale.’ Then they will run up the ramp and hold their little noses to the target stick while standing on the scale.” However, the clever otters had to learn to use the ramps. At first they wanted to climb the fence. That was the fastest, most direct route to touch the stick for a treat. It didn’t take them long to learn that there was no payoff for climbing, but there was a reward for using the ramp and therefore the scale. “That’s the fun thing about training otters,” Lewis said. “They will come up with solutions to problems that you’re not thinking of. That’s when you have to get them to think otherwise.”

Occasionally, training has a lot to do with good timing. Delmar will show keepers his teeth on cue, which Lewis says is a great behavior for Aquarium veterinarian Dr. Chris Keller. “Another keeper happened to catch Delmar opening his mouth one day and was able to reinforce that behavior with a smelt right then,” said Lewis.

While maintaining the behaviors used for healthcare, Lewis is also working on bringing out, or shaping, additional natural behaviors for keeper talks with guests. Right now visitors may see the otters telescoping, or standing on their hind legs to look around. Lewis would like them to perform this behavior on cue. “So I’ve started baby steps by raising my hand in front of them,” Lewis said. “And when they follow my hand, I’ll reinforce them at the top of the motion.

The Cove Forest inside River Journey isn’t the only place to see North American river otters. Those with a sharp eye can sometimes spot them in the Tennessee River Gorge while aboard the Explorer. Otters tend to be most active in the early morning and evening hours, so sightings in the middle of the day are rare. However, the fact that any otters are seen around East Tennessee is a remarkable conservation success story, given the difficult conditions they have faced over the years.

According to the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, TWRA, the last native river otter in middle or east Tennessee was recorded in 1958. Over-trapping led to the demise of these charismatic mammals. For nearly 30 years, only a few sightings were reported in west Tennessee, and otters were listed as an endangered species in the state.

When Bruce Anderson was hired by TWRA as an endangered species biologist in 1982, he had no idea how much restoration work lay ahead of him. Anderson was involved in reintroducing bald eagles, golden eagles, osprey, fishers and otters to Tennessee. His first project in 1984, otter restoration, has a special place in his heart. “We got the first six otters from the Bayou Otter Farm in Louisiana, the same place the Aquarium originally got their otters,” Anderson said. “They had radio telemetry devices embedded under their skin so we could track their movements and learn from them.”

The first otters were released in the Obed River, a designated Wild and Scenic River, which runs from Cumberland County to Morgan County and is a tributary of the Tennessee. During the first year of data collection, Anderson made...
discoveries that helped to “rewrite the book” on otters. “We learned that they covered 40 river miles, sometimes moving 15 to 16 miles in a couple of days,” said Anderson. “Unless they had young, they liked each other’s company and tended to move around together. That was new knowledge. All of the literature previously said that otters were solitary creatures, but we found out they are pretty social.”

Anderson worked to reintroduce otters within the state’s medium-sized rivers from 1984 to 1993. Since then, otters have taken up residence in reservoirs and large rivers like the Tennessee. Seeing them out and about today brings back fond memories for Anderson, who says each release was special. “Every time you opened the door and let them out, it was a never-ending source of joy and fascination. But the best day was the day we were able to de-list them in 1999.”

Unlike Pete and Delmar, who prefer smelt and clam strips at the Aquarium, Anderson says otters in the wild have a more seasonal diet. “In the summer, otters prefer crayfish and snakes. But in the winter, their primary food is fish. So beaver ponds become attractive to otters in the winter where a fishbowl effect is created. That makes catching fish easier.”

Ironically, Anderson occasionally fields calls from landowners who have a bit of an otter problem. “They sometimes get into a stocked pond and eat their fish. It’s not widespread, but it does happen.”

Anderson was one of the Aquarium’s charter members, bringing his children to Chattanooga two or three times a year. “I liked it all, but I really enjoyed the otters,” he said.

Meanwhile, Lewis informs Aquarium visitors about the comeback of North American river otters in Tennessee every day. “They are one of the great conservation success stories because it shows that people can connect with nature and can work to change things for the better. All we have to do is help take care of our rivers and the natural areas around them.”

About the Author: Thom Benson is the Tennessee Aquarium’s communications manager. He is also the editor of Riverwatch.

Donor Spotlight

Donor Names: Kathy and Chris Canoles from Atlanta, Georgia
Gift: Founder Level Conservation Society members with a matching gift from Home Depot

For years, Kathy and Chris Canoles have been making the short trip from Atlanta to Chattanooga to relax and take in the Tennessee Aquarium’s exhibits. “We really enjoy the experience the Tennessee Aquarium offers and we always have a great time,” said Mr. Canoles. “We decided that making a gift to support this amazing place was the right thing to do and our annual membership was included in the gift. I was happy to know that my employer, Home Depot, would match the gift to provide even more support for the Aquarium.” Recently, Mr. Canoles’ wife, Kathy, and her sister enjoyed a full day at the Aquarium, even getting to meet the otters during a special behind the scenes experience for donors.

One of the Aquarium’s otters is seen “telescoping” as Kathy Canoles prepares to toss a fish his way. If you have had incredible Aquarium experiences of your own, consider making a tax-deductible gift to support the Aquarium today at: http://www.tnaqua.org/donate.aspx.
Backstage Passes

DAILY: 11 a.m. Ocean Journey & 1:30 p.m. River Journey

Enhance your Aquarium visit by choosing one of these highly interactive and engaging tours. You’ll get a chance to feed, and in some cases, actually touch Aquarium animals. Each 45-minute VIP tour will take you to areas only accessed by our animal keepers and will get you up-close and personal with the Aquarium’s most amazing animals. Advanced reservations recommended; call (423) 265-0698 to book your VIP experience today.

$12/Member; $15/Non-Member (plus Aquarium admission), Children must be at least 6 years old and accompanied by an adult

MEMBER NIGHT

Caroling with the Fishes

Sunday, Dec. 5 • 6:30 - 9:00 p.m.

Join us for traditional seasonal caroling throughout River Journey, photos with Santa, holiday treats and more including Dan Landrum on hammered dulcimer. More details in the winter issue.

All Ages • Free/Members and Non-Member guests using Member Night Guest Passes (one person per pass) • Additional Non-Member guests: Half-price admission: $7.50/Child; $12.50/Adult

REGISTER NOW online at www.tnaqua.org/Events.aspx or mail form on page 16 or call 423-267-FISH (3474).

Renew your Membership — anytime! Visit www.tnaqua.org/Membership/Membership.aspx

RIVERWATCH
**FAMILY FUN**

**Rendezvous with a Comet™**

*A Space Mission at the Challenger Center*

**Saturday, Sept. 25 • 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**

During Hubble 3D at the IMAX Theater, spacewalking astronauts repair the Hubble Space Telescope. Undertake your own simulated space mission at UTC’s Challenger Center as scientists and engineers who take an up-close look at a comet as it streaks across the galaxy. Plot a course to rendezvous with the comet, then construct and launch a space probe to collect scientific data. What seems at first to be a routine exploration is filled with challenges and emergencies successfully solved only by teams working together in mission control and the space simulator. Before your mission, tour fascinating space artifacts including a Hubble model. IMAX movie is not included. *Fee includes admission, space mission and t-shirt!*

**Adults & Ages 10 and older accompanied by an adult**
Limited to 34, minimum of 20
$16/Member; $26/Non-Member

**Aqua-Scarium Halloween Party**

*Friday, Oct. 29 • 6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.*

Come in costume and celebrate Halloween with the wild ones at the Aquarium, like stinging jellies, squirming octopi and toothy sharks. Trick or treat for lots of goodies and interact with our loveable mascots in Halloween costumes! Do the Monster Mash on the dance floor, watch our popular costumed divers and win treasures as you play games. Encounter scales and tails at the animal encounters and dare to touch the unknown. *Pre-register by Oct. 26.*

**Families with young children (Children must be accompanied by an adult)**
Member: $5 per person, Adult or Child (3-12)
Non-Member: $30/Adult; $20/Child (3-12)
Non-member price includes Aquarium admission
After Oct. 26, tickets available on Oct. 29 at the door.

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**Walk the Talk for the River 2010**

**Conservation in Action!**

**Saturday, Oct. 2 • 10 a.m. - Noon**

“Walk the Talk” during the annual Tennessee River Rescue and help clean up the habitats of local wildlife. Learn why animals in the Tennessee River and all the way to the Gulf of Mexico will thank you! This clean up is safe for young children and a great way to teach them how to be environmental stewards. Wear old clothes and shoes and bring gloves and a drink. *Meet under the white tent outside the Members Entrance.*

**Families with elementary age children (children must be accompanied by an adult) • Free to Members and Non-Members**

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**Back To School Sleep in the Deep**

**Sept. 11-12 • 6 p.m. Saturday - 8:30 a.m. Sunday**

Sleep in the Deep with your family and learn fascinating facts about Aquarium animals as you explore behind the scenes. Get up-close with our critters and encounter otherwise shy animals that come out with the dark. At lights out, bed down in the Undersea Cavern in Ocean Journey surrounded by schools of tropical fish and toothy sharks. *Includes overnight, IMAX movie, guided tours, special activities, pizza and continental breakfast. Registration closes September 9.*

**Families with Children ages 6 and older accompanied by an adult**
$50/Member; $60/Non-Member per person
Minimum of 30; maximum of 40

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**Family Day at Tennessee River Gardens**

**Sunday, Sept. 19 • 1:30 - 4 p.m.**

Tennessee River Gardens is a beautiful private nature preserve and botanical wonderland located on the Tennessee River deep inside the gorge. Join Aquarium lead horticulturist Christine Bock on a fun family scavenger hunt that will help you discover cool facts about nature.

**Families with ages 6 and older**
Limited to 25
$6/Member; $12/Non-Member

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REGISTER NOW online at www.tnaqua.org/Events.aspx or mail form on page 16 or call 423-267-FISH (3474).
DISCOVER & LEARN

Stephen Rolfe Powell — LIVE!
At the Hunter Museum of American Art
Thursday, Sept. 30 • 6 - 8 p.m.

As part of our continuing Jellies: Living Art partnership, Aquarium members are invited to join glass artist Stephen Rolfe Powell for an exploration of his work as seen in the retrospective currently on view at the Hunter Museum. Enjoy a cash bar at 6 p.m. followed by Powell’s program at 6:30. No need to register!

Adults
$7.95/Aquarium Member (Show your membership card at the Hunter for this 20% discount), $9.95/Non-Member

Wildlife Predicaments!
Saturday, Nov. 13 • 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.

So there’s a raccoon in the garbage can and an opossum under the house. There’s an orphaned bird in the front yard and a box turtle in traffic. What do you do? Meet the animals up-close and personal with an Aquarium educator and find out how to respond to wildlife predicaments like these. Bring your questions and personal stories!

Families
Limited to 40, minimum 10
$3/Member; $6/Non-Member per person
River Journey Auditorium
Non-Member Price does not include optional admission if touring the Aquarium

Birding at the Brainerd Levee
Saturday, Oct. 2 • 8:30 a.m. - Noon

Autumn is a great time to watch birds. Join Kevin Calhoun, Assistant Curator of Forests at the Aquarium, for a birding walk at the Brainerd Levee, an important marsh habitat and migration area. Kevin will share information about identification, behavior and habitat. Please bring binoculars if possible.

Adults and ages 14 and older • Limited to 20
$8/Member; $13/Non-Member

Nature Walk
At Reflection Riding
Wednesday, Oct. 6 • 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Join Bill Haley, Aquarium educator and Reflection Riding board member, for a naturalist’s walk to explore the beautiful grounds of this arboretum and botanical garden. Trees will be starting to change color and late summer asters may still be visible. Search for signs of animals as they prepare for the coming winter months. Wear comfortable walking shoes, dress for the weather and bring binoculars if possible.

All Ages • Limited to 20
$8/Member; $13/Non-Member

Civil War Cruise Upriver
With Historian Jim Ogden
Saturday, Oct. 9 • 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.

As we near the Civil War Sesquicentennial, join noted historian Jim Ogden for a cruise aboard the River Gorge Explorer upriver. Jim will relate the actions that occurred along the river in 1863 that brought about the bloody fighting at the north end of Missionary Ridge. Learn how General William T. Sherman and his Union army took advantage of the mighty Tennessee during the battle to overcome Confederates poised along the river in the shadow of Missionary Ridge. It all happened right here on the banks of the Tennessee River!

All Ages • Limited to 68 • $24/Member Adult; $18/Member Child (0-12)
$29/Non-Member Adult; $21.50/Non-Member Child (3-12); $18/Child under 3

REGISTER NOW online at www.tnaqua.org/Events.aspx or mail form on page 16 or call 423-267-FISH (3474).
Family Canoe Trip  
**Sunday, Sept. 12 • 1 - 3 p.m.**

Get up close and personal with creek critters as you float the pastoral waters of the North Chickamauga Creek in single canoes with guides from Outdoor Chattanooga. All equipment and transport are provided. Bring your own snack and drink. Meet at Greenway Farm.

Adults and ages 5 and older accompanied by an adult  
Limited to 16 per session, minimum 6  
$17/Non-Member • Adult: $16/Member; $21/Non-Member

**WOW — Women on the Water**  
**Thursday, Sept. 9 • 7 - 9 p.m.**

Ladies! Strap on a pair of water sandals and paddle with us on a laid-back adventure as we explore local rivers and lakes with other women. All equipment is provided, including single touring kayaks and a female guide. Meet at Greenway Farm. Bring your own snack and drink.

Adults (women only) • Limited to 12, minimum 8  
$20/Member; $25/Non-Member

**On the Edge - Spelunking Expedition**  
**A 4-hour Wild Cave Adventure**  
**Saturday, Oct. 9 • 9:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.**

Suit up in full spelunking gear—helmet with headlamp, kneepads and gloves for an extreme adventure on the wild side. Explore the world inside Raccoon Mountain with an Aquarium educator and experienced caving guides on a four-hour adventure through the depths of Raccoon Caverns. Experience whole-body learning as you crawl through the 49-Cent Squeeze and the Birth Canal. Slither, scramble and slide your way through passageways and underground chambers, marveling at how the power of water has created this unique environment. You must be in good physical condition with previous caving experience. Includes caving equipment and guides.

Adults and Ages 12 and older accompanied by an adult • Limited to 24  
$31/Member; $36/Non-Member

**Touring Kayak Clinics**  
**Sat., Sept. 18 • 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. & Sun., Oct. 3 • 1 - 3 p.m.**

Learn kayaking basics from the experienced guides of Outdoor Chattanooga. You’ll practice proper paddling techniques, how to adjust, enter and exit a boat, safety guidelines and what to do if you turn over. Dress in clothing that may get wet and bring dry ones in case you want to experience a wet exit first-hand.

Adults and ages 14 and older accompanied by an adult  
Limited to 12, minimum 8  
$20/Member; $30/Non-Member

**Downtown Sunset Paddle by Kayak**  
**Thursday, Sept. 23 • 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.**

Launching single touring kayaks, we will paddle around the Maclellan Island bird sanctuary and past Chattanooga’s beautiful riverfront. Includes all equipment and guides. Meet at Coolidge Park.

Adults and ages 14 and older accompanied by an adult  
Limited to 12, minimum 6  
$20/Member; $25/Non-Member

REGISTER NOW online at www.tnaqua.org/Events.aspx or mail form on page 16 or call 423-267-FISH (3474).
Nickajack Lock Paddle

**Saturday, Oct. 23 • 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.**

Kayakers—paddle en masse through the lock system of the Nickajack Dam between Nickajack and Guntersville lakes. The adrenaline builds as the huge doors of the lock close and the waters lift kayakers 41 feet to the adjoining reservoir to explore wildlife! BYO lunch and water. Previous kayaking experience is highly recommended.

Adults and ages 14 and older accompanied by an adult • Limited to 12, minimum 6 • $35/Member; $40/Non-Member • Meet at Greenway Farm

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Orienteering with Map & Compass

**Sat., Nov. 13 • 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**

Rain Date: Saturday, Nov. 20

Are you ready to venture into the wild with only a map, compass and “directions”? Then join us for an orienteering adventure on the slopes of Lookout Mountain. After getting acquainted with compass and map techniques, search for six hidden stations, some of them in spots a mountain goat could call home. Expect “ups and downs,” so wear shoes suitable for off-trail hiking. Getting lost is not allowed; however, feel free to be disoriented!

All Ages (children must be old enough to traverse STEEP terrain) • Limited to 25, minimum 10 • $8/Member; $13/Non-Member

Registration: Meet at Chattanooga Nature Center

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**WORKSHOPS**

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**A Living Glass Art Experience**

**Saturday, Sept. 18 • 1 - 4 p.m.**

Inspired by the stunning glass art in *Jellies: Living Art* and at the Hunter Museum, learn to create a glass orb for an unforgettable experience at Ignis Glass studio on the Southside. After observing the glass blowing process by artist Christopher Mosey, you will blow your own piece. Pick up at the Hunter after cooling on September 21.

Adults and children 12 and older accompanied by an adult • Limited to 25 • $40/Member of the Aquarium or Hunter; $45/Non-Member

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**Nature Photography Workshop in the Tennessee River Gorge with Tom & Pat Cory**

**Saturday, Oct. 2 • 1 - 4 p.m.**

Photograph subjects in nature including fall wildflowers, landscapes, an historic log cabin inside the beautiful Tennessee River Gorge and lush forest surrounding the Pot House owned by the Tennessee River Gorge Trust. The Cory’s will include traditional instruction with hands-on help in the field, emphasizing the art and technique essential for creating compelling images. Includes photography instruction, lecture and light refreshments.

Adults • Limited to 20, minimum of 10 • $30/Member; $45/Non-Member

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**Picture the Aquarium with Tom and Pat Cory**

**Tuesday, Oct. 5 • 6 - 9 p.m.**

Capture stunning images of marine life, fabulous penguins, jellyfish and tropical butterflies. Begin with a short clinic before photographing in both Aquarium buildings with hands-on advice by professional nature photographers Tom and Pat Cory. Digital or traditional cameras or camcorders are welcome.

Adults • Limited to 20 • $30/Member; $45/Non-Member

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**Create a Festive Yule Log**

**Saturday, Nov. 20 • 10 a.m. - Noon**

Centuries ago on Christmas Eve, Europeans ceremoniously dragged a huge log into the house to put on the hearth, accompanied by dancing and feasting. This holiday tradition lives on, although Yule logs are smaller and can be used as table decor as well as in the fireplace. Make this festive tradition your own by decorating a log with boughs, berries and candles and take home other natural holiday ideas. Includes a log, candle and greenery. Bring garden clippers and a glue gun if possible.

Adults • Limited to 15 • $15/Member; $25/Non-Member

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REGISTER NOW online at www.tnaqua.org/Events.aspx or mail form on page 16 or call 423-267-FISH (3474).
SPECIAL EVENTS

Brewer’s Dinner at Big River

Tuesday, Sept. 14 • 6 - 8:30 p.m.

Big River Grille and Brewing Works features made from scratch regional cuisine and award winning hand-crafted beer. Begin with a guided tour of the brewing process, followed by four courses prepared by Executive Chef Mike Deaver, paired with beers selected by Brew-master David Sharpe. Start with apple-smoked Alaskan salmon cakes with a roasted red pepper cream sauce and a salad of mixed greens, followed by your choice of goat cheese ravioli served with smoked salsa, sautéed spinach and rice pilaf or baked North Carolina trout in lemon butter and sundried tomato sauce with gorgonzola sauce. Dessert is peach cobbler a’la mode or chocolate peanut butter pie.

Adults Only • Limited to 40 • $35/Member (Aquarium or Big River Passport Members); $45/Non-Member • Please add your own tip

Wild & Scenic Environmental Film Festival

Friday, Oct. 8 • 7 - 10 p.m.

The Tennessee River Gorge Trust hosts the third Wild and Scenic Film Festival with environmental movies that expose viewers to forward-thinking ideas and global awareness with topics ranging from community activism, conservation and wildlife, to some that are just plain fun! Enjoy complimentary soft drinks and popcorn. Proceeds support the mission of the Tennessee River Gorge Trust. Winners of the Gear up for the Gorge raffle will be announced. For more details visit www.trgt.org.

Adults • Limited to 200 • $15 Per person
Optional Aquarium admission is not included; if touring, last ticket is sold at 6 p.m.

Civil War Dinner with Historian Jim Ogden

At 212 Market Restaurant
Thursday, Oct. 21 • 6:30 - 8 p.m.

As we approach the Sesquicentennial of the Civil War, join historian Jim Ogden for a “Civil War Dinner” that includes delicious updated versions of what a typical soldier’s ration might have been. Begin with bacon-wrapped quail salad with mixed greens, cornbread and a taste of authentic hardtack as Jim makes connections to the events that unfolded here in 1860. Continue with Dutch-oven pork, applesauce and potatoes, accompanied by green beans from the field. Finish with a sweet Southern cobbler a’la mode and coffee with a hint of chicory.

Adults • Limited to 35 • $35/Member; $45/Non-Member

Laurelwood Garden Tour

On Signal Mountain
Sunday, Oct. 3 • 1:30 - 4 p.m.

Visit Laurelwood, Larry Bannier’s stunning garden planted amid sandstone boulders and stacked stone walls. Featured in “Southern Living,” the fall landscape includes ornamental grasses in full plume, blooming sedum and salvia with lots of foliage and texture. The former owner of North River Nursery will share landscaping tips for seasons of color. Stroll through the breathtaking grounds used for events and weddings held in an elegantly appointed barn. Enjoy a warm drink as you meet Larry’s small herd of llamas.

Adults • Limited to 20 • $18/Member; $23/Non-Member

Tropical Holiday Orchid Preview and Sale

Thursday, Nov. 19 • 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Be the first to get an exclusive preview of the Aquarium’s Tropical Holiday Adventure with fellow orchid lovers. This special evening includes admission to Ocean Journey with an opportunity to view our new display of exotic and rare orchids in the Tropical Cove. Aquarium horticulturist Charlene Nash will provide information about these colorful blooms. Purchase one for yourself or as a unique holiday gift before they are available to the general public on November 19. Enjoy complimentary light appetizers, tea, coffee and a cash bar.

Adults • $5/Member; $18/Non-Member

REGISTER NOW online at www.tnaqua.org/Events.aspx or mail form on page 16 or call 423-267-FISH (3474).
**FUN FOR KIDS**

**Friend or Foe**

*Saturday, Sept. 25 • 9 - 10:30 a.m.*

Most of the time we think about animals in terms of the struggle between predators and prey. But we should also highlight symbiotic relationships where animals and even plants find “friends” in another species. This event includes time in Aquarium galleries, a game and snack. *Please alert us about any food allergies.*

*Ages 8-12 • Limited to 15, minimum of 5 • $8/Member; $13/Non-Member*

**River Journey: Discovery Classroom**

**The Hedgehog Knows**

*Saturday, Oct. 9 • 9:30 - 11 a.m.*

What is cute, round and covered with prickles? Discover the answer as we read a story. Then visit with this fun little critter and create a neat craft to take home. *Please alert us to any food allergies.*

*Registration closes Oct. 6.*

*Ages 3-4 accompanied by an adult (register child only) • Limited to 12, minimum of 5 • $8/Member; $13/Non-Member*

**River Journey: Seahorse Classroom**

**Life in a Shell**

*Tuesday, Oct. 12 • 9 - 10 a.m.*

Discover what life is like in a shell as we meet some of our turtle friends at the Aquarium. Learn why their shells are different shapes and discover some of the things turtles like to eat. A story, craft, games and live animals will round out this hour of fun. *Please alert us to any food allergies.*

*Ages 2-3 accompanied by an adult (register child only) • Limited to 15, minimum of 5 • $8/Member; $13/Non-Member*

**River Journey: Discovery Classroom**

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**REGISTER NOW online at www.tnaqua.org/Events.aspx or mail form on page 16 or call 423-267-FISH (3474).**

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**TRAVEL ADVENTURES**

**Snorkel with the Manatees Weekend**

*Friday, Jan. 28, 10 p.m. departure - Sunday, Jan. 30, 2011*

Discover why the West Indian manatee has become endangered and what is being done to save this “vanishing mermaid” on our family snorkeling trip to Florida led by Aquarium Aquarist Rob Mottice. We’ll drift-snorkel down the slow-moving Rainbow River and swim with manatees in the Crystal River National Wildlife Refuge. We will also visit the Homosassa Springs State Wildlife Park. Includes trip orientation, transportation by motor coach, one night hotel lodging, buffet breakfast and snorkeling excursions. Other meals are on your own. Snorkeling equipment may be rented or purchased with a special discount at Choo-Choo Dive Center (423-899-1008).

*Members: $395/Adult per person, double occupancy; $380/Child (8-12) $330/Child (8-12) sharing room with 2 others*

*Non-Members: add $25 per person or join as a member. Single Occupancy: Add $50*

**Bug Club**

Bug Club is for kids who love learning about fascinating multi-legged creatures. Bug Club meets from 4 to 6 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month and membership includes a monthly newsletter and T-shirt. Games, snacks and experiments round out the fun.

*Ages 5-11 • $20/Member; $30/Non-Member per quarter (every 3 months) plus a one-time $15 initiation fee—call Aquarium Educator Julia Gregory at (423) 785-4054 to register and pay. (The membership department does not take registrations for Bug Club!)* Please alert us about any food allergies.

**September: Wasps; October: Arthropod Movie Stars; November: Insects Did It First IV**

**A Day in the Life of a Herpetologist**

*Saturday, Oct. 2 • 9 a.m. - Noon*

Ever wonder how to feed an alligator? How do you safely move a venomous snake or give it a shot when it’s not feeling well? Discover the answers and learn many other things needed to maintain a healthy collection of reptiles and amphibians. You’ll help prepare fresh diets, visit back-up areas and learn the proper way to handle some of the animals. Tennessee Aquarium herpetologists also care for the river otters, so we’ll take a look into their care and throw them a tasty snack. *Please alert us about any food allergies including seafood, mealworms, etc.*

*Ages 8-12 • Limit to 12, minimum of 5 • $10/Member; $15/Non-Member*

**River Journey: Auditorium**

**Reptile or Amphibian—What’s the Difference?**

*Saturday, Oct. 23 • 10 - 11:30 a.m.*

Reptiles and amphibians have similar characteristics and sometimes they are hard to tell apart. Meet a few of the Aquarium’s cool “herps” and learn some of the subtle differences between these two often misunderstood families of animals. *Please alert us about any food allergies.*

*Ages 5-7 • Limited to 20, minimum of 5 • $8/Member; $13/Non-Member*

**River Journey: Discovery Classroom**
Registration is required for all programs with payment in full.

ONLINE:
www.tnaqua.org/Events.aspx

PHONE: 423-267-FISH (3474) or 800-262-0695, ext. 3400, 8:30 a.m. - 4:45 p.m. weekdays. Please have event and credit card information ready.

PAYMENT is required by credit card, cash or check when registering.

CONFIRMATION with event details will be mailed upon receipt of event fees.

CANCELLATIONS/REFUND: We cannot provide refunds for no-shows. Unless noted differently, cancellations must be received no less than two weeks prior to event date for a refund. A full refund is made if the Aquarium cancels an event or if an event is full.

**PROGRAM REGISTRATION FORM**

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*Indicates second choice of date/time if program is offered more than once.

**Guests who are not members must pay non-member fees.

MAIL TO:
Member Programs
Tennessee Aquarium
P.O. Box 11048
Chattanooga, TN 37401-2048

READ ABOUT MEMBER PROGRAMS ONLINE AT: www.tnaqua.org/events.aspx

**RENEW ONLINE — ANYTIME! Visit www.tnaqua.org

Think Green, Go Paperless

Your Riverwatch magazine is now offered in a dynamic, new electronic version and delivered right to your inbox. The new digital Riverwatch contains the same great articles, vivid photos, and listings of fun-filled events as the print version; and now is enhanced with additional features like video and interactive links. Visit www.tnaqua.org/membership_riverwatch.aspx today and sign up to receive your Riverwatch magazine in the new digital format. It's a great way to conserve paper and promote "green" practices at home.

Become an Aquarium Insider

Sign up to receive the Aquarium Insider e-newsletter and be among the first to learn about new animals and exhibits, conservation programs, special events at the Aquarium and new films coming to the IMAX 3D Theater. Visit www.tnaqua.org/membership/membership.aspx to subscribe today.

Renew Your Membership and Reward Yourself

Enjoy another year of entertainment, fun-filled family activities and the simple serenity and opportunities for reflection that each gallery has to offer. Visit www.tnaqua.org/membership/membership.aspx to renew your membership anytime - it’s fast and convenient. You’ll also help save the cost of future mailings and conserve natural resources.

Official sponsor of the Tennessee Aquarium Membership Program.
Hey Kids! In each Riverwatch issue, look for fun activities in this section. Collect the Tennessee Aquarium's Animal Trading Cards, send us your own Animal Art or Silly Animal Jokes and Riddles and ask us your “How Do They Do That” questions. Send all submissions (along with your name & age) to jal@tnaqua.org.

OIL AND WATER DON’T MIX

This fun experiment will show you why oil and water do not go together.

What you need:
- White construction paper
- Shallow pan (casserole type)
- Fork
- Three small mixing containers
- Cooking oil & water
- Food coloring
- Newspaper

What to do:
1. Put newspaper under the pan filled with a layer of water.
2. To make the different colored oil mixtures, measure one tablespoon of oil and one teaspoon of color into each mixing container.
3. Stir the mixture in each cup with the fork until the food coloring is well mixed.
4. Pour a little of the colored oil mixtures into different areas of the pan.
5. Lay a piece of the construction paper on top of the water for 30 seconds.
6. Carefully lift it off the water and lay the wet paper flat on the newspaper to dry overnight.
7. Use your artwork to frame a picture, make a greeting card, wrap a present, etc...

In an oil spill or leak, the same effect takes place. The oil spreads quickly across the surface of bodies of water. Oil may also enter waterways through run-off from streets, parking lots, driveways or by improper disposal. The pollution has many negative effects on the plants and animals that call the water home, drink and eat from it or travel through it.

How did you get the large sharks in the Secret Reef?

The large brown colored sharks (sand tigers) in the Secret Reef exhibit were caught by a professional fish collector off the coast of New Jersey. The collector checked the line every hour and when he found the kind of sharks we wanted, he pulled them into his boat and used a large stretcher to place them into tanks on the boat. From the boat, the sharks were then moved to tanks at a holding complex. Then Rob Mottice, the Tennessee Aquarium’s manager of fish acquisition, used large stretchers to load them into rectangular tanks in the back of a tractor trailer for the 22-hour drive to Tennessee. Rob and two other aquarists took turns checking the water for oxygen, temperature and ammonia (produced by the sharks). After eight weeks in quarantine in our Animal Care Facility, the sharks were moved to their permanent home in the Secret Reef.

WHAT IS IT?

Barrens Topminnow
Fundulus julisia

Palawan Peacock Pheasant
Polyplectron napoleonis

CONTENT FOR “GETTING OUR FEET WET” PROVIDED BY THE TENNESSEE AQUARIUM EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
A kind of algae, this diatom is a form of plankton. Plankton is found in freshwater as well as in the ocean. This diatom was living in the moss growing in the Cove Forest exhibit.

### Palawan Peacock Pheasant
*Polyplectron napoleonis*

- **Habitat** — Found in humid central lowland and deep forests of Palawan Island in the Philippines.
- **Diet** — Omnivorous-eating seeds, fruit, leaves and roots as well as invertebrates like insects, slugs and worms.
- **Size** — Females around 16 in, males around 20 in. (40 and 50 cm.).

**WOW!** The Palawan peacock pheasant is one of six peacock pheasant species. Like the crested wood partridge, one can easily distinguish the male from female by his brightly colored plumage. (Do not try to find the female on exhibit; there isn’t one!)

A Palawan peacock pheasant can be found in the Butterfly Garden in Ocean Journey.

### Barrens Topminnow
*Fundulus julisia*

- **Habitat** — Found only in springs, pools and slow current areas of spring-fed streams on the Barrens Plateau of Middle Tennessee.
- **Diet** — Aquatic insects and freshwater plankton.
- **Size** — 4 in (10.2 cm) length.

**WOW!** The Barrens topminnow teeters on the brink of extinction. It is found in 14 locations in Middle Tennessee. The Tennessee Aquarium is involved in a captive breeding and reintroduction project to help save this species.

Barrens topminnows can be seen in the new Topminnow Lab Exhibit in the Tennessee River Gallery in River Journey.

### Tennessee Aquarium ANIMAL TRADING CARDS

Cut along dotted lines and start your own collection.

**WHAT IS IT?**

A kind of algae, this diatom is a form of plankton. Plankton is found in freshwater as well as in the ocean. This diatom was living in the moss growing in the Cove Forest exhibit.

**SILLY ANIMAL JOKES & RIDDLES**

What has no beginning, end or middle and touches every continent?

*The Ocean.*

### A WORKING SEAHORSE

This seahorse craft has body parts that work a lot like the parts on a real seahorse!

**MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED:**
- Toilet paper tube
- Bendy straw
- Pipe cleaner
- Two wiggly eyes
- Paper
- Translucent material (windows from envelopes work well)

**TOOLS YOU WILL NEED:**
- Hole punch
- Scissors
- Glue
- Markers

**DIRECTIONS:**

1. Use markers to “camouflage” the tube.
2. Punch a hole about half an inch from each end of the tube on opposite sides. (These holes will be where you attach the mouth and tale.)
3. Push the short end of the bent straw through one hole to make the mouth.
4. Cut off the extra straw that hangs out the other end of the tube.
5. Loop the pipe cleaner through the other hole and twist ends together to make the tail.
6. Using a marker, make a thumb print on paper and cut it out to make the coronet.
7. Glue the coronet above the straw.
8. Glue the wiggly eyes on opposite sides of the tube in line with the straw.
9. Cut three nickel-sized circles from the translucent material to make fins.
10. Glue one fin behind each eye and another two inches above the tale.
When you think of a life support facility, you generally think of hospitals, respirators and cardiac monitors. In the aquarium world, it’s not a lot different, but the equipment is hooked to the systems, not the animals themselves. Pumps, filters, air lines, sensors and multitudes of other specialized equipment keep our animals thriving and our exhibits disease free and crystal clear.

Anyone who has cared for a home aquarium quickly realizes that caring for fish takes a little more than just adding water. Cloudy water, algae and sick fish are just some of the things that can turn a fun hobby into frustration. We are fortunate at the Tennessee Aquarium to have a life support systems (LSS) staff that consists of highly trained individuals working around the clock to make sure that nothing fails, but if it does, they can fix it before something catastrophic happens. We currently have five full-time life support system operators who come from very diverse backgrounds of nuclear power, waste water treatment, aquaculture, aquarium maintenance and facilities management. This diversity of experience is key to diagnosing every imaginable issue that could arise.

Our operators work eight-, 10- and 12- hour shifts and rotate between night and day to make sure there is always someone around to monitor the lifeblood of our Aquarium. Rounds consist of checking temperatures, flow rates, lights and a multitude of other parameters that are not part of our automated systems. From the control room on the mezzanine level of River Journey, computers relay images of tanks, filters and piping. Sensors constantly give feedback when levels are out of balance, filters are clogged and valves open and close. Operators also monitor the Aquarium’s Animal Care Facility, the public and working spaces of the Aquarium, IMAX, Riverplace Ticketing Center and the Aquarium offices located in the old Coca-Cola bottling plant across from the Aquarium.

Currently, we have more than 150 aquatic systems for our animal husbandry and life support staff to care for. Only about half of these are in public view; the rest are quarantine, research and backup tanks. While many systems are similar, they all have individual needs due to the nature of the equipment or animals. Filtration systems also have become quite sophisticated in the last several decades. Automated systems now operate to open and close the valves that heat and cool our water, backwash our large sand filters and feed ozone to contact chambers that cleanse our water. A multitude of probes provide feedback to LSS staff and can alert them when something is out of balance as well as provide a history of activity to that particular system.

The Aquarium recently has been awarded a $75,000 grant by the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences for LSS upgrades in River Journey—and not a moment too soon. Much of the equipment in River Journey is approaching the 20-year mark. While some of it has been replaced as needed over the years, the majority is now in need of preventative maintenance or replacement before we experience failure with the equipment. Matching funds will be used to replace valves and pump seals, but the majority of the grant funding will be used to upgrade the software and components necessary to monitor and increase the efficiency of our life support system. More efficient LSS upgrades can actually pay for themselves within a few years with the energy savings achieved.

About the Author: Carol Haley is the Aquarium’s assistant curator of fishes. Carol coordinates the aquarist staff and works closely with the education staff and volunteers.
New and Improved ELL

Thanks to funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NOAA, the Environmental Learning Laboratory has been remodeled and re-equipped. And the Aquarium’s education department wasted no time putting the new learning space to work. “Educator Thaddeus Taylor started using the new smart board technology to provide ocean literacy programs to summer campers almost the day after the ELL was re-opened,” said Tim Baker, the Aquarium’s director of education.

The revamped classrooms give educators more flexibility and capacity for students for the upcoming 2010-2011 school year. Baker said several new tools will also help enhance the hands-on learning activities. “We have new document cameras, DVD players, projectors and screens. When combined with animal encounters, smart boards and physical experiments, our ability to make freshwater and marine lessons exciting and engaging will be second to none.”

Plush Animals Offered to Aid Gulf Efforts

One way to help save sea turtles.

“Stewie” and “Oscar,” both rescued sea turtles, are among two of the most inspiring animals on exhibit at the Tennessee Aquarium. Both green sea turtles are great ambassadors for their species and other sea turtle species that navigate the warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico and beyond.

Aquarium members have expressed an interest in helping with the Gulf oil spill clean-up efforts and saving marine creatures like sea turtles. We wanted to focus support, so staff members have carefully researched a number of non-profit organizations to find a group that helps sea turtles like Stewie and Oscar. We learned that the Louisiana Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Stranding Network, LMMSTSN, is the primary responder for the rescue, rehabilitation and release of all marine mammals and sea turtles along the Louisiana coast.

Rescued animals must be housed until the Gulf is safe for their release. For each sea turtle, this is estimated to cost $5,000 for equipment, supplies, medication and veterinary staff time—and LMMSTSN does not know how long they will need to be cared for before these animals can return to the wild.

Purchase one of these plush sea turtles at any Tennessee Aquarium gift shop location and $2.00 for each turtle purchased will be donated to LMMSTSN.

2010 Tennessee Aquarium Business Partners

We gratefully acknowledge the following Business Partners of the Tennessee Aquarium, IMAX 3D Theater and River Gorge Explorer. These partners help support the Aquarium’s many conservation, education and research programs.

To learn how you can become an Aquarium Business Partner, please contact Meredith Lewallen at (423) 785-3019 or email mml@tnaqua.org.

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Aqua Kids at the Aquarium

We were honored to have the Aqua Kids cast and crew at the Tennessee Aquarium recently. The Emmy-Award winning television program showcases organizations that are inspiring tomorrow’s environmental stewards. The fun, fact-filled shows encourage young people to take an active role protecting and preserving aquatic environments and animals.

While in Chattanooga, the Aqua Kids explored both Aquarium buildings, visited the Animal Care Facility, learned about TNACI’s conservation efforts and cruised the Tennessee River aboard the River Gorge Explorer.

Episodes from the new season, which will include the Tennessee Aquarium, begin airing nationwide in September. Aqua Kids can be seen in Chattanooga on NewsChannel 9 Saturday mornings at 7:30 am eastern. Check your local television listings for the times and stations that Aqua Kids airs in your city at: http://www.aquakids.tv/showtimes.htm

Gibson Visits Chattanooga after Nashville Flooding

We were all heartbroken by the devastating floods that struck Nashville in May. For two days, while we sat high and dry in Chattanooga, torrents of rainfall seemed to be stuck in place over western and middle Tennessee. So when the call for assistance came in from the Nashville Aquarium Restaurant at the Opry Mills Mall, the Tennessee Aquarium husbandry department and curators from the Nashville Zoo were more than willing to lend a helping hand.

One of the most beloved animals of the Nashville Aquarium Restaurant is “Gibson,” the giant guitarfish. (That’s actually the common name for the species, but it’s also fitting for this HUGE animal.) A team of divers were able to rescue “Gibson” and transport him safely to the Tennessee Aquarium’s Animal Care Facility in Chattanooga. All other fish and reptiles that survived the flood were relocated to the Nashville Zoo.

“We appreciate the tremendous support from the community during this unfortunate time,” said James Prappas, Director of Biology at the Nashville Aquarium Restaurant. “We know Gibson and the other fish and reptiles are in good care and we look forward to their return home at the Nashville Aquarium Restaurant.” Tennessee Aquarium senior aquarist Rob Mottice was part of the team that rescued Gibson. He reports a happy and healthy guitarfish today. “We’re glad we could help out and we’re hopeful that Gibson’s stay with us is a relatively short one,” said Mottice. “I’m sure all of his fans in Nashville are ready to see him back home.”
The SUV in the Aquarium parking lot caught Joe Jacobi’s eye. The Olympic gold medalist pointed out the vehicle, smiled and said, “That’s why I love Chattanooga.” The roof was adorned with two brightly-colored kayaks, and a pair of mountain bikes was firmly attached to the rear. Inside was a week’s worth of luggage indicating an action-packed vacation was underway. “People come from all over to visit the Aquarium and enjoy the wide array of outdoor activities.”

Thousands of additional outdoor enthusiasts will descend upon Chattanooga October 1st through 10th for RiverRocks, a new festival celebrating and supporting the area’s natural assets. More than 40 events are planned during RiverRocks ranging from gentle thrills aboard hot air balloons in Coolidge Park to kayak races and peak performance events such as rock climbing. The menu of activities should be appealing to a broad range of visitors with various skill levels. “If you’re a top athlete, there’s ample opportunity to compete against others from around the region,” said Stormy McGauley, RiverRocks co-founder. “But if you enjoy a more leisurely pace, the RiverRocks schedule includes laid-back activities such as geo-caching, casual bike rides or a sunset paddle on the Tennessee River. The point is getting out and getting active.”

The Tennessee Aquarium, IMAX 3D Theater and River Gorge Explorer will be among the featured RiverRocks venues with special programs added to the visitor experience both within our venues and out in nature.

At the Aquarium, a slate of exciting experts will host RiverRocks presentations in the River Journey Auditorium. These added experiences will give visitors an introduction to rock climbing, trail running, bouldering, outdoor photography, canoeing and kayaking. Joe Jacobi is one of the featured presenters. His new role as CEO of USA Canoe / Kayak is to help Olympians win gold and also invite others to a sport that can be enjoyed by anyone. “You don’t have to be an expert kayaker,” said Jacobi. “The attributes of being in a kayak, or other type of human powered boat, are terrific.”

The Aquarium has prepared special RiverRocks adventures to get people out in the natural world with expert guides. Learn fascinating facts while birding, nature hiking or even spelunking deep below a local mountain. Help clean the banks of the river, discover entertaining stories of Civil War lore or immerse yourself in the world of nature photography. Look for the RiverRocks logo next to the Aquarium adventures in the Events section.

Thrill seekers will also enjoy Great Adventure Films at IMAX. Guests will be treated to virtual trips to the top of the world and into the deepest and most amazing caves on the giant IMAX screen. Your heart rate will race as you cross a crevasse-filled ice field on the way to summit Mount Everest or repel from the lip of a gaping cavern.

Soft adventure is another aspect of RiverRocks. Proceeds from the festival will help support a number of organizations, such as the Tennessee River Gorge Trust, that work to protect the region’s natural areas. Cruising aboard the River Gorge Explorer is one way to introduce people to these rugged places, which are important playgrounds and vital habitat. “Whatever it takes to get people out on the water, you put people in a position that widens their perspective of what water means to us, what it means to our community,” said Jacobi. “The whole family can have fun not only on the water, but off the water as well.”

RIVERROCKS at the AQUARIUM

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Imagine an eight-eyed creature possessing an exoskeleton and covered in something called urticating hair. Does that sound beastly or hauntingly cool? If you answered both, then maybe you’re brave enough to meet one of three species of tarantulas during an Animal Encounter program at the Aquarium this October.

Senior educator Susie Grant says the Mexican red-knee, Chilean common and curly hair tarantulas are actually mild mannered species, not fear-inspiring beasties. “Even though they have eight eyes, tarantulas can’t see very well,” said Grant. “They use the hairs to detect prey and perceive tiny movements in the air surrounding their bodies. In fact, the curly hair is sometimes called the teddy bear tarantula because of the way it looks.”

While Aquarium guests might not want to cuddle next to a hairy tarantula, they will enjoy the added programs, special dive shows and keeper talks throughout October during “Thrills, Gills and Chills.” Animal Encounter Specialists will be busy introducing visitors to fascinating creatures that have been misunderstood or may only come out at night, adding to their spooky reputations.

Owls appear to float through the night sky without making a sound, have big eyes and can make some rather chilling sounds. “Our screech owl makes kind of a high-pitched trill,” said Grant. “In some ways, it almost sounds like a horse whinny.” Other owl characteristics helped get them on the “ghost-list” of the seasonally scary. Visitors will learn how they are able to rotate their heads nearly all the way around, how they achieve silent flight and whooooo’s on their menu.

Guests may also choose to take a thrilling trip behind the scenes with the new Backstage Pass to get even closer to toothy sharks or fierce barracudas and talk to divers about feeding the Aquarium’s green moray eels.

Make plans to attend the Aqua-Scarium Halloween Party on Friday, October 29th from 6:30 to 9:30 pm. Details on page 10.

If you like interacting with people and learning cool facts about animals and plants, this is a perfect volunteer opportunity. As a private non-profit, we depend on volunteers to help us make a great first impression. Our volunteers enhance our guest experience by providing fascinating facts about creatures that live here.

We teach you everything you need to know about our exhibits and how we care for the animals. You’ll have a chance to meet visitors from around the world and help welcome them to Chattanooga and the Tennessee Aquarium.

Get started on an adventure of a lifetime today.

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For Complete Schedule Details go to:
www.tnaqua.org/IMAX/IMAX.aspx