Renovation of the Discovery Room

By Sherrod Sturrock, Deputy Director for Education & Special Programs

The Discovery Room is near and dear to the hearts of Calvert Marine Museum visitors. Ever since it opened in 1989, children have kneeled in studied concentration over the “sand box” searching for the elusive shark’s tooth or fossil. They have donned costumes that magically transform them into pirates and sea captains. And they have fished the carpeted sea from their rowboat. But the Discovery Room, like all things, has a shelf life, and after being enjoyed by literally thousands of children over the years, it is in danger of being loved to death. It’s time for rejuvenation.

The “new” Discovery Room, reflecting the three major themes of the museum, is designed to be a place where learning is experiential and fun. The ideas emerged after many conversations with interpreters, volunteers, other staff members, visitors, and the children themselves. Our core team includes Jim Langley, curator of exhibits, Lori Cole for the education department, and myself. Ken Kaumeyer, curator for estuarine biology, designed the touchtank. The space will be divided into three zones: (1) Fossil Fun, (2) Working on the Water, and (3) Creatures from the Sea. The exhibit department’s talented muralist, Tim Scheirer, will illustrate each zone with a progressive wall mural.

As you enter the Discovery Room, you will find yourself at the foot of Calvert Cliffs. A section of the cliff fabricated by the National Aquarium in Baltimore will be extended by Tim’s mural. At the base will be an elevated “sand box” seeded with fossils. (This is one aspect of our current Discovery Room that everyone agrees should remain.) We want children to move beyond the treasure hunt aspect of finding a fossil to wanting more information.

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**MUSEUM BOARD FOR 2006**

There will be four new members of the museum’s Board of Governors in 2006. **Robert S. Currie** is retired from the Environmental Protection Agency and is active in community affairs; **Karen Everett** is employed with BAE Systems, Integrated Electronic Solutions, in California, Maryland, and previously served as manager of economic development for St. Mary’s County government; **Dennis M. King** is currently director of King and Associates, Inc., and is a research professor with the University of Maryland; **Robert S. Crum** is a local attorney with a strong interest in environmental and conservation issues. Mr. Crum will complete the term left vacant by the resignation of Dr. James R. Hook The new members were welcomed at the board dinner on December 7, and three retiring board members were recognized for their service over several years: Ralph T. Eppard Jr., Michael S. King, and Marianne Harms.


Members of the museum’s Board of Governors also serve as directors of the Calvert Marine Museum Society, Inc., responsible for fundraising.

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**“Good Things Come To Those Who Wait”**

CMM’s new volunteer coordinator, Sherry Reid, is no stranger to the Calvert Marine Museum or Southern Maryland. She was born and reared in Calvert County and has spent her past twenty-four years in Lusby. A graduate of Calvert High School, Sherry has taken classes at the University of Maryland and the community college. She is happily married with two children who keep her on the go.

Sherry has years of experience, both as a volunteer and in working with volunteers. She has volunteered for concerts at the museum ever since “the three boys” sang on the boat basin some seventeen years ago. She invested six years as a member of the CMM Board of Governors and chaired the Budget and Finance Committee. She volunteered at the Waterside concerts, managing the wine and beer concession at concerts, and she has proved very adept at recruiting, training, and organizing new volunteers. Sherry was brought up to believe that it is “very important to give back to the community,” and she practices that belief daily.

In addition to her work with the museum, Sherry spent seven years with the Solomons Boys and Girls Club/Solomons Steelers Athletic Club. She served as a team mom, cheerleading coordinator, and cheerleading coach, and on the Board of Directors. Her professional life has trended toward the finance. She spent twenty-two years with Calvert Bank, managing the Solomons office for eighteen years. She is well known for the outstanding customer service she gave there. During her tenure, she served on the board for the Academy of Finance for Calvert County, working with young adults.

Prior to accepting the position with the museum, Sherry worked part-time with the Small Business Development Center program run jointly by the county’s Economic Development department and the College of Southern Maryland, assisting new businesses in the county. In her “spare” time she is a sports FANATIC! Football (Cowboys), baseball (Orioles), hockey (CAPS), NASCAR (Junior is her driver of choice) all vie for her attention.
A Significant Retirement

In early December, George “Nicky” Nichols, who has overseen the museum’s physical plant and grounds since October 1988, retired. Staff and many county friends joined together on December 2 to “roast” Nicky and see him off. His tenure has encompassed the opening of the new exhibition building, the temporary offices in the “east annex” (now demolished), the renovated administration building, the opening of the Washington Gas Pavilion with attendant changes in the museum’s parking lot, and several expansions of existing buildings. His position is now filled by Kenneth Heard who transferred from a similar position elsewhere in the county government.

2006 MEMBERS TRIP
OUTLET SHOPPING & MEDIVAL TIMES DINNER THEATRE

Members – On Sunday, April 30, join us for a group trip to Arundel Mills Mall for a day of outlet shopping and a dinner performance at Medieval Times Dinner and Tournament.

Our day starts with three hours of bargain hunting at the outlets of Arundel Mills. Afterwards, we will all enjoy a trip to the Middle Ages as you dine with a four-course feast and cheer on Knights and their Andalusian stallions as they compete in a thrilling contest of sport. Shopping will be from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Dinner and show begin at 5:00 p.m.

Tickets for this fun-filled day are $46 for adults and $39 for children under 12. Your ticket fee includes bus service to and from Arundel Mills, three hours of shopping, dinner and performance, tax and tips. Please see the flyer in this Bugeye Times to reserve space. For more information, please call Debbie at 410-326-2042, ext. 16.

2005/2006 YEAR-END APPEAL IS UNDER WAY

Members – Watch your mail for this year’s Year-End Appeal brochure, Paleontology – Preserving Our Past – Expanding Our Future. Your generous donation will help fund the expansion and renovation of the Paleontology Hall. Plans include the construction of a new fossil preparation and storage laboratory; a new geologic time-line mural and new fossil displays; and the addition of multi-media presentations and computer terminals linked to the new exhibit. Gifts can be made in the form of cash, check, or credit card (M/C or Visa). Donations of stocks or bonds are equally welcome. We also welcome Corporate Matching Gifts. If your employer has a matching gift program, please enclose a matching gift form with your donation. Your gift is also tax deductible! Gifts may be made online at www.calvertmarinemuseum.com. For more information, please contact Debbie Strozier at 410-326-2042, ext. 16.

WATERSIDE 2006 CONCERTS

March 4 – Edwin McCain

The popular pop musician Edwin McCain returns to Solomons for two performances on March 4. Popular hits include “Could Not Ask For More” and “I’ll Be.” Showtimes are 6:00 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.

March 24 – Average White Band

Average White Band heads to the CMM auditorium for two shows on Friday, March 24. For the better part of the past thirty years, the Average White Band has performed sold-out shows around the world, confirming the timeless appeal of their infectiously danceable funky soul. Showtimes are 6:00 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.

For more information, including ticket prices and ordering, please call 410-326-2042, ext. 16,17 or 18.
The annual celebration of the Patuxent River – PRAD – was held on October 8 and 9 with many events, boat rides, exhibits, and a parade. John Johnson demonstrated knots and other ropework to interested attendees.

CMM photo by Bob Hall

At the annual meeting of CMM Volunteer Council on September 13, new officers for the coming year were elected and installed. These officers are (left to right): Barbara Roberts, treasurer; Debra Carlson, recording secretary; Nan Suydam, corresponding secretary; Peggy Hovermale, vice president; and Shirley Mihursky, president. CMM photo by Bob Hall

Members of the Chesapeake Chapter of the U. S. Lighthouse Society were available at CMM on September 17 and 18 to help with the Chesapeake Lighthouse Challenge and to support the chapter’s activities. CMM photo by Bob Hall

During PRAD, the skipjack Nathan of Dorchester visited the boat basin and offered rides, along with CMM’s Wm. B. Tennison.

CMM photo by Bob Hall

Among the many PRAD exhibits was that of the Patuxent River Sail and Power Squadron.

CMM photo by Bob Hall

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**Fall Activities**

**SEPTEMBER**

**OCTOBER**
**NOVEMBER**

The very successful **Bugeye Ball** on October 15 included a talk and demonstration by chef Roland Mesnier, the pastry chef at the White House for twenty-five years, serving under five presidents.

CMM photo by Bob Hall

As described in the Discovery Room article in this issue, funds raised at the Bugeye Ball helped match a **$9,500 grant** in October from the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network program. Present at the check presentation were (left to right) Jonathan Dogherty, director of the Chesapeake Bay Program Office; The Honorable Steny Hoyer, U. S. Congressman; CMM director C. Douglass Alves Jr.; and Melissa Carnes, of CMM’s development office.

CMM photo by Bob Hall

CMM’s **Wm. B. Tennison** was hauled during November for annual inspection and any necessary repairs.

CMM photo by Richard Dodds

Six canoes were built during the weekend. Another weekend of boatbuilding is scheduled for March 25 and 26 (see calendar).

CMM photo by Richard Dodds

CMM’s boatwright **George Surgent** assists boatbuilders during the **canoe boatbuilding weekend** on November 12 and 13.

CMM photo by Paul Berry

A young member talked to Santa and CMM’s otter mascot during the annual **Members’ Yule Party** on December 11.

CMM photo by Bob Hall

An ample snacks table attracted members during the **Yule Party**.

CMM photo by Bob Hall

**DECEMBER**

Drawings of **A Solomons Christmas** by students at the Southern Middle School added seasonal cheer to the museum’s lobby.

CMM photo by Paul Berry
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about what they have found. To that end, a Fossil Identification Station will offer children the opportunity to identify the fossil themselves by matching what they have found with mounted examples. They can then go to a touch screen on the other side of the station that will lead them to information about the creature the fossil came from – with heavy reliance on graphics rather than words. And yes, they will get to keep their fossils.

The next zone is Working on the Water located in the center of the room. The mural will transition to a water scene with various types of workboats in action. Overhead a water bird will hang forever suspended in a blue sky. Emerging out of this seascape will be a twelve-foot sailing skiff constructed by the Patuxent Small Craft Guild. It will have a working tiller attached to the rudder, centerboard, sail, oarlocks and oars, bailer, life jackets – everything children need to simulate a brisk sail around the bay. The boat will be constructed in such a way that it can be stripped down to the mast, thus allowing education staff to use the reassembly as a teaching tool with school groups. A pier will provide access to the boat. We are still seeking a sponsor for our boat, which is estimated to cost $3,500 – and that comes with naming rights.

Across the room next to the stairs will be a Lighthouse modeled on the Cove Point Lighthouse. The lighthouse will have a door, and inside there will be a short spiral stair case up to a small window where young lighthouse keepers can peer out at the bay, and activate the light with a button. Attached to the lighthouse and utilizing the area under the stairs to the Discovery Room loft will be the Keeper’s Cottage. Here young children can dress up as the keeper and his wife. They can peruse the children’s books in the “lighthouse library” and play with vintage toys from the toy chest. In front of the cottage will be a strategically placed bench where “old” children can sit and nap in the afternoon.

At the far end of the room we shift to Creatures from the Sea. The mural there will illustrate the rich abundance of life under the water. This is where the new Touchtank will be installed, coming out in a horseshoe from the back wall. It will have two sections, one containing brackish water, the other having salt water. We are designing the tank to expose all of the life-support systems necessary to maintain the creatures inside, providing another teaching opportunity. Along the back wall, there will be other displays, such as live fiddler crabs and other small marsh animals, a tank growing algae along with information about the aquatic food chain, and a tank demonstrating how oysters clean water by filtering it.

The Discovery Lab, located in the loft, will be opened on a regular schedule when there are trained interpreters or volunteers on duty. It will also be used intensely for fieldtrips and workshops. The primary purpose of the Discovery Lab is to provide a place for older students to learn about environmental stewardship of the bay. An EnviroScape, which uses an interactive model to teach the watershed concept in addition to point and nonpoint source pollution, will be installed in the spring. Long-term planning includes the creation of an interactive computer game tentatively called Reclaiming the Chesapeake Bay that will give students a chance to grapple with the challenges facing environmentalists and scientists who are committed to saving the bay.

Funding: This past summer, the core staff chose the Discovery Room to be the recipient of proceeds from this year’s CMM Ball. These funds will be used
to match a grant from the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network program for the touchtank, as well as contributing to other aspects of the restoration. One of our enthusiastic educational supporters, Mrs. Barbara Benning, stepped up to provide the funding needed for the Creatures from the Sea zone. Another member, Doug Wood, donated funding for the EnviroScape.

**Schedule:** The Discovery Room will close in January for renovation. We will create a temporary Discovery Place on the upper level where children can still hunt for fossils and row the boat, as well as watch the work in progress below. Our goal is to reopen the Discovery Room at the end of March 2006. The Discovery Lab will come later.

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**CAMP CMM EXPANDS TO INCLUDE MIDDLE SCHOOL**

There will be two middle school summer programs this year, both two weeks in duration. **Bay Trek** is designed to take young explorers out into the world of the Chesapeake Bay where they can experience for themselves the amazing diversity of life to be found there. As junior scientists, they will confer with senior scientists as they help to collect data on the current “state of the bay,” explore the problems and challenges that threaten the health of this remarkable body of water, and propose ideas to our elected officials for addressing the problems. Field trips include a visit to Battle Creek Cypress Swamp to give a freshwater perspective, a kayaking trip up Parkers Creek, and a trip on the Wm. B. Tennison. This camp is for middle schoolers who like to learn by being out in nature.

The museum has also partnered with the Calvert County Public Schools through Chespax to offer a Maryland Department of Education Summer Center Program for gifted students. This program will give young people a chance to be junior paleontologists exploring and analyzing the fossils of Calvert Cliffs. Registration will be handled by Chespax. For information, go to [http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/giftedtalented/centers](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/giftedtalented/centers) or contact Tom Harten at 410) 535-2960; email: hartent@calvertnet.k12.md.us.

Camp CMM offers programs for elementary age children entering K – 5th grades. These one-week sessions start the last week of June and run through the first week of August. Topics range from “What Floats Your Boat?” to “Lighthouses” to “Indians and Colonists.” For full descriptions, times, dates and fees, please visit the web site: [www.calvertnemuseum.com](http://www.calvertnemuseum.com). We will be accepting registration beginning February 1, 2006.
VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

CMM MODEL CLUB VOLUNTEERS AGAIN HOST REGATTA

On September 23 to 25 the museum was the scene of another exciting Traditional Watercraft Regatta, a combined effort of the U. S. Vintage Model Yacht Group, the Great Schooner Model Society, and the Solomons Island Model Boat Club. Models arrived on September 22 on boat trailers and other vehicles, to begin the events on the following day. Thirty skippers and fifty-eight models were registered and assigned to six classes on September 23, with practice runs followed by a “Welcome Aboard” gathering that evening under the Drum Point Lighthouse. Regatta activities began on Saturday. Despite a brief shower on Friday afternoon, the weather during the weekend on the museum cove was generally good, with adequate wind both Saturday and Sunday.

A skippers’ meeting early on Saturday morning brought the focus to the race course, the frequency board, and the very tight schedule of racing classes. There was static judging of some models, rated on a variety of criteria. Six classes raced in the regatta, as follows: Vintage Marblehead Class, nine models registered and raced; Schooner Large Class, nine models registered and raced, with seven in the static judging (Richard Rogers brought his Pride of Solomons but did not race her); Schooner Class (50” and Less), eleven models registered, nine raced, and eight in the static judging; Open Class, with six models registered, six raced, but three with insufficient laps for scoring; Vintage 36 Class, with eight models registered and six models raced, but there was only time for four races; and the Skipjack 48 Class, with sixteen models registered but only eleven were raced after five were either withdrawn or suffered casualties that could not be repaired.

The “first mates” of the SIMBC, particularly Sandy Younger and Melissa Damon (from Annmarie Garden), worked together to produce a nifty cookbook in which all first mates were invited to contribute their favorite recipes. (A copy may be consulted in the museum library.) An added event for the first mates was a VIP tour of Sotterley Plantation.

The support of museum staff and volunteers for this event was much appreciated by all regatta participants.

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The Solomons Island Model Boat Club and CMM’s education department are planning an outreach event for next summer for people, possibly fathers and sons or daughters, who are interested in learning more about radio-controlled model boats. The weekend, two-day program, using model sloops owned by SIMBC, will teach students the care and use of radio-controlled model sailboats. Sessions are planned tentatively for June 3–4, July 1-2, and September 2-3. Further details about the program, including the cost, will appear in the spring 2006 Bugeye Times.