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Wild Connections

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December 2009

New exhibits and facilities under construction

Simon and Garfunkel sang about *It's all happening at the zoo* and that's certainly true at many of our partner's facilities.

The El Paso Zoo recently re-opened its **South American Pavilion**, which features two-toed sloths, a prehensile tailed porcupine, saffron finches and a white-lined tanager. The **What's in a Name?** exhibit recently opened at **Zoo Boise**. This exhibit encourages visitors to think about what images an ani-

mal's name conjures up. Renovations on a food facility are occurring at the **Reid Park Zoo**. **Faces of the African Forest** exhibit will open in May at the **Minnesota Zoo**. **Houston Zoo** has started work on an **African Forest** exhibit, recreating western equatorial Africa.

SSA and zoo officials



Many kudos were given to SSA for providing the meerkat costume as well as refreshments at the Honolulu Zoo groundbreaking. The mascot was Jason Mason, from the culinary team.

at the **Honolulu Zoo** were on hand to spread the news about a new front end entrance and a 2,000 square foot gift shop. The mayor of Honolulu was joined by the zoo's mascot, **Manny the Meerkat**, during the ceremony.

Guests at **Denver Zoo's** groundbreaking ceremony for its new exhibit, **Asian Tropics**, were treated to an event of elephantine proportions when a front-end loader was used rather than traditional shovels.



Dave Parsons, Denver Zoo

A former concession stand at the Denver Zoo was razed by a front-end loader before a cheering crowd to make way for Asian Tropics. The new \$50 million conservation center will feature endangered Asian species, such as elephants, Indian rhinos and Malayan tapirs. The exhibit will take two years to build.



Words of Wisdom



Kevin McNicholas

Soon it will be Christmas Day!! And then the New Year appears; and it is time for some new resolutions. How about these. I'm going to concentrate on them.

1. Start with the realization that we are very far from perfect.
2. Stay alert, watch what works and what doesn't and remember it.
3. Stay dedicated to the desire to improve badly enough to keep putting any constructive ideas to work until they get to be a habit.

I truly hope you all have the very best of the holiday spirit and keep in mind that in helping the less fortunate, you are helping all of us. We're all in this world together!

Retail staff identify popular products

Monterey Bay Aquarium members kicked off their holidays with the annual "Holiday In Store" event. The Gift and Book stores displayed special merchandise, including unique items not available to the public. Authors, artists and photographers signed their works, Guests sampled wines from local vineyards as they shopped for the per-



During the annual Holiday In Store event, members as well as gift shop staff (pictured is Elizabeth) can interact with artists, such as Susan Bradshaw. Her company, Woven Time, is one of the aquarium's successful glass gift vendors.

SSA sponsors an elephant-sized party

Newborn elephant Daizy, one of the most popular animals at the Rio Grande Zoo, recently had a baby shower - two months after her birth. From water hoses to bug zappers, even a DVD player- Daizy was literally showered in gifts.

eco connections

The SSA Gift Shop Staff has joined and taken an active part in the Minnesota Zoo Green Team. They recently gave a power point presentation at the zoo's all staff meeting. The presentation shared the Gift Shop Green Practices and highlighted eco-friendly merchandise available for sale.

MOSI staff report that their recyclable tote bags are seen at the local grocery store on almost every visit. GM Laura Marvin Jacobs reported that she recently saw one at a local art fair, proudly carried by a mom whose daughter had the matching backpack. There were thousands of people there - and yet the two big purple walking billboards for MOSI really stood out!

fect holiday gifts. Of course, Santa made a special appearance at the aquarium.

Staff report that Chuckle Buddies have captured the hearts of guests at the **Museum of Science and Industry (MOSI)**. These goofy dogs and monkeys roll around on the floor, making guests laugh and raise spirits. With families spending more time together, science kits have doubled in sales from a few years ago. Also at MOSI, SSA staff are

looking beyond the holidays to the excitement of February 2010 when *Da Vinci's Genius* opens. The traveling exhibit features forensic discoveries identified from scans of Da Vinci's pictures. The gift shop for the exhibit will be outfitted with an Italian theme.

Popular sellers at the **Minnesota Zoo** include custom dolphin plush, a weasel ball and squirmels - anything the staff can demonstrate.



Rio Grande Zoo SSA staff made a cake fit for an elephant-size appetite.

Employee promotions, new hires and honors

At the **Pretend City Museum**, **Krista Adams** was promoted to Retail Manager, and **Michael Nam** was promoted to Assistant Retail Manager.

At the **Sacramento Zoo**, **Joy Enriquez** is the new Retail Operations Manager. She transferred from the San Francisco Zoo. Also, **Hollie Gallaway** will become the new Culinary Director after the New Year.

Scott Rowzee joined the Information Systems Department at Corporate. Scott is an information systems professional, who's worked with several large firms, such as IBM Global Services.

MOSI Assistant Store Manager **Laurie Pinna** will again be a feature



Keeping the streets green in Minnesota! **Bill Bellmore**, the Retail Manager at the Minnesota Zoo, worked with the City of Apple Valley to schedule two Adopt a Street Cleanup Events in November. Bill coordinated a staff signup with the zoo and the SSA. Participants reported that they found a lot of interesting items on the street, including a wood sword, a tent and shoes along with normal trash.

artist in the 16th annual Lake Worth Street Painting Festival. Laurie has been a chalk artist for many years and even initiated a local festival. Last

year, Laurie's life-like tiger was sponsored by Palm Beach's Mayor.

Kari Gonzales is the new Retail Manager at the **Houston Zoo**.



Zoo Boise offers the best day-time Halloween event in town! On the Saturday before Halloween, costumed characters passed out candy, and guests participated in costume contests for all ages, and they also enjoyed other activities, such as a bat toss, pumpkin patch photos, face painting and astrojumps. SSA staff joined in the festivities by wearing special uniforms.

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and news items to:
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Employee profile
Jason Stover
Reid Park Zoo
General Manager

To read, go to
kmssa.com

Customer Service Tips

Always find a way to leave the customer feeling like you did everything possible to help them and make them smile.

*Krista Adams,
Retail Manager,
Pretend City Museum*

When you take care of your staff, your staff will take EXTRAordinary care of their guests.

*Laurel Wright, GM,
Minnesota Zoo*

News from our partners

There is baby news at the **Minnesota Zoo**. Allie, an Atlantic bottlenose dolphin, is expecting a calf next summer. The pregnancy was confirmed during an ultrasound. Semo, the father to be, has been at the zoo since 1991. He is 45 and is thought to be one of the oldest male dolphins in human care.

The staff at the **Pittsburgh Zoo and PPG Aquarium** is working overtime to raise a litter of African painted dogs. The biggest problem they are having is that the tiny puppies don't have



The Fort Wayne Children's Zoo welcomed its 15th reticulated giraffe calf when female giraffe Zuri delivered a girl October 17.

Also, a female giraffe calf was recently born at the Miami Metrozoo.

At birth, these giraffe calves weigh around 150 pounds and stand almost six feet tall.

their mother. Their mother died two days after giving birth to them. As a result, staff is using a dog as a surrogate mom, a process that has not been done before at a zoo. Only 3,000 to 6,000 African painted dogs remain in the wild.

A young boy became the one millionth visitor to the **Pittsburgh Zoo and PPG Aquarium** for 2009. For being the one millionth visitor, the boy received a \$500 shopping spree at the gift shop as well as lifetime passes for him and his family.

The **Los Angeles Zoo** announced that Randa, a 40-year-old, 4,000 pound Indian rhinoceros, has successfully completed treatment for skin cancer. Zoo veterinarians worked



Monterey Bay Aquarium has added a new Pacific Sunfish or Mola Mola to its Outer Bay tank.

When new animals are added to an institution's collection, it generally impacts gift shop purchases. And this was the case as the Gift and Bookstore staff reported increased sales of mola plush as well as other gift items.

closely with oncologists from UCLA Medical Center to administer an electronic X-ray-based therapy directly to the cancer site with minimal radiation exposure to surrounding healthy tissue.

Congratulations!

Monterey Bay Aquarium Executive Director Julie Packard was named one of nine 2009 California Coastal Heroes by Sunset magazine and the California Coastal Commission. She and her fellow honorees were profiled in the September issue of Sunset and honored at the California Coastal Commission's 25th anniversary celebration. Packard was recognized for her leadership of an institution that "has been the standard by which all other aquariums are measured."