



# Cape Cod Museum of Natural History

# Tidings

March &  
April '09

869 Route 6A, Brewster, MA 02631 Ph 508-896-3867 Fax 508-896-8844 - [www.ccmnh.org](http://www.ccmnh.org) E-Mail [info@ccmnh.org](mailto:info@ccmnh.org)

*The mission of the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History is to inspire appreciation, understanding and stewardship of our natural environment through discovery and learning.*

## UPSTAIRS, DOWNSTAIRS...The Remodeling of Museum Exhibits

While you were trying to keep warm this winter, staff and volunteers generated their own heat by revising and upgrading several exhibits.

### UPSTAIRS - The Marshview Room

The terraria have been located on the lower level for many years, primarily for the ease of caring for all the Museum's living creatures in one spot. As their natural association is with other land animals, e.g. birds and mammals, they have been moved to the Marshview Room. You can now enjoy seeing turtles, frogs and snakes upstairs in their handsome bowfront aquaria.

Also new to the Marshview Room is a display of photographs of "Birds Nesting on Wing's Island." Susan Finnegan, the Museum's licensed bird bander, has counted 45 bird species that nest on or very near to Wing's Island. Counting nesting birds involves more than finding nests; it means finding signs of eggs or juveniles or females with brooding patches.

The pictures of the birds were taken by local photographers. Beside the photographs are copies of Roger Tory Peterson's drawings of the birds with "field mark" arrows, making identification in the field easier.

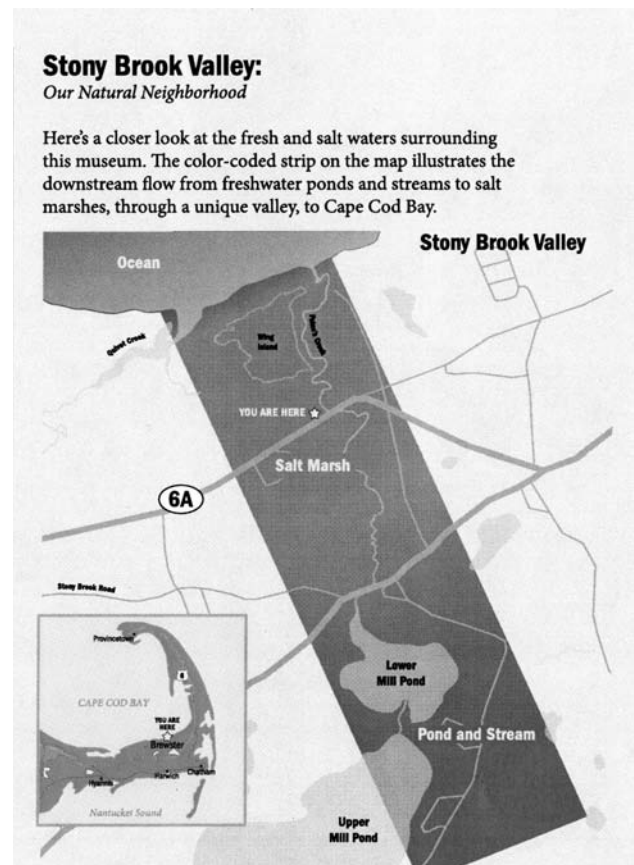
This bird display has been planned in conjunction with the Roger Tory Peterson exhibit in the Clarence Hay Library: a collection of pictures of RTP at different times in his life; an arrangement of many of his books; and an exhibit comparing him with other bird artists. Bookmarks and a pamphlet about RTP are also available. Three prints of his paintings borrowed from the Roger Tory Peterson Institute are displayed at the library entrance.

As we are featuring BIRDS this spring, the Museum is exhibiting "OWLS" designed and sculpted by students at the Lighthouse Charter School. Don't miss this delightful display in the first bay on the right.

**Just a reminder: The Museum will be open to the public from 11 am-3 pm Thursdays through Sundays until the end of March.**

## One Cape/Many Waters

The theme of the new aquarium graphics program is One Cape/Many Waters and through the use of a transect (seen below) depicts the habitat of our historic and environmentally sensitive Stony Brook Valley Preserve. Drawing the visitor in through a series of questions on what comes to mind when they think of Cape Cod, the complexity of the area is broken down to clear and concise explanations of melting glaciers forming kettle ponds to what the land looks like today and the creatures that reside here.





## From the Executive Director

The common theme in Tidings is what new project(s) we're working on, projects we've just completed, activities of the volunteers and staff, and our programs. This issue doesn't disappoint. While these cold wintry days have been going by slowly, the pace inside the Museum has been anything but slow.

You'll read about improvements in the auditorium, Marshview Room and aquarium, the publication of a new field guide, 2009 field guide training, a description of wildlife activities happening while we're all inside watching a PBS special on nature, insight into our volunteers and staff, some great upcoming programs, and a call for more volunteers as we enter our busy season.

In reviewing past Tidings it is clear that for the past few years the Museum family has been working hard to establish a new vibrant identity on the Cape. We have gone from a long-range plan meaning three to six months down the road to actually planning exhibits two years in advance. Incredible work has been done to our infrastructure to ensure building integrity. Our volunteer base, along with the Friends, is a vital part of our operation. We have been laying the groundwork to plan for the future - even in these uncertain times.

And that brings me to what has been on all our minds for the past six months - how do we survive the times and ensuing financial chaos?

Chaos brings opportunity. That was my firm belief when I started my adventure here in July, 2006 and I still hold on to it. We will continue to operate by appraisal, decision, and action, and constantly asking, "Where's the opportunity?"

### 2009 HOURS OF OPERATION

#### February 1 - March 31

Thursday through Sunday 11 am-3 pm  
(open daily during Massachusetts school vacation week)

#### April 1 - May 31

Wednesday through Sunday 11 am-3 pm  
(open daily during Massachusetts school vacation week)

#### June 1 - September 30

Every day, 9:30 am-4 pm

#### October 1 - December 30

Wednesday through Sunday 11 pm-3 pm  
(open for Christmas vacation)

**Closed Memorial Day, Labor Day, Independence Day,  
Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve and Day,  
New Year's Eve and Day**

Check Web site for schedule changes.

[www.ccmnh.org](http://www.ccmnh.org)

## Staff

### *Executive Director*

Robert Dwyer

### *Volunteer Coordinator*

Pam Fearn

### *Office Manager*

Julie O'Neil

### *Gift Store Manager*

Donna Durkee

### *Administrative Associates*

Joan Hood

Claire Tyner

Susan Jasinski

### *Senior Aquarist*

Doug Smith

### *Aquarists*

Kathy Sherman

Jim Dudac

### *Custodians*

Norman Gallagher

David Fox

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## Tidings

### *Editor*

Julie O'Neil

### *Committee*

Sue Carr

Ellie Johnson



The Museum is very grateful to the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a State agency, for its support.



The Museum is handicapped accessible.

## MUSEUM NEWS

### Naturally Speaking.....

#### Notes from our Volunteers



I have no idea what prompted me to come to a volunteer "recruiting" meeting, unless my beloved wife Jean was hosting a coffee hour. However, I did, and Rosemarie Angus "sweet-talked" me into a front desk job. Now I'm hoping for tenure in this position. Many situations have moved me. All of our guests are fun, but at this moment, none stand out.

Not much time for "interchange" (pun intended) as hordes of interesting visitors pass by. Rather, the camaraderie of the staff and volunteers, their dedication and flexibility so favorably impress me that they, each of them, get my vote for MVP.

**Kip Snow, Front Desk Volunteer**

### Looking for Summer Volunteers During June, July and August!!!

**Gift Shop:** Mondays. Morning: 9:15 am-12:45 pm or Afternoon: 12:45-4 pm. Good people skills. Training provided.

**Greeters:** 1 shift per week. Morning: 9:30 am-12:45 pm or Afternoon: 12:45- 4 pm. This is a fun position if you enjoy children. Training is provided. Stamping hands, getting guests oriented to the Museum and helping with questions about the area are some of the main duties. You'll be at the front desk area. Seating can be arranged so you won't be standing for three hours.

**Front Desk Volunteers:** 1 shift per week. Choose morning or afternoons. Training provided. Some knowledge of cash registers is welcomed, but not necessary.

**Aquarium Volunteers:** Learn about the wonderful creatures that inhabit our marshes, bays and ocean. Interact with guests who are eager to learn and explore.

**Museum Docents:** Help our guests inside the Museum on the theme of change in our front corridor, new exhibit hall or Marshview Room. Training provided. 1 shift per week. Mornings or afternoons.

**Museum Library:** 1 shift per week. Training provided. Former training in a library setting is appreciated, but not necessary. We use a card catalog.

**Telephone help:** 1 shift per week. Helping our busy office staff with telephone calls. Training provided.

If you want to help the Museum but don't want a long term commitment, now is the time to join the family. Who knows, you may love it so much you'll want to stay! Volunteers are ages 14-114. There is an application and interview process. Please call Pam Fearn, Volunteer Coordinator, 508-896-3867 ext. 119. I'm looking forward to your call.

**Pam Fearn, Volunteer Coordinator**

### Do You Know.....

#### Doug Smith, Museum Senior Aquarist & KidSummer Extreme Science Teacher?



Doug loves water and kids. His work at CCMNH keeps him involved with both-- whether he's leading a KidSummer class through a marsh or figuring out a plumbing problem in the aquarium. As senior aquarist, he oversees all facets of the aquarium including maintaining exhibits, training

docents, and acquiring specimens, sometimes from local fishermen. He is pleased with the way the new aquarium signage tells the story of our Stony Brook Valley. But his favorite thing is working with kids during KidSummer and teaching special science classes in local elementary schools. After majoring in biology at Manchester College in his home state of Indiana, Doug did graduate work specializing in aquatic and terrestrial ecology at the University of Wisconsin through a National Science Foundation grant. Doug and his wife Nancy moved to Brewster in 2002 after he retired from 35 years teaching biology at Sandy Spring Friends School in Montgomery County, Md. While there he also led student trips to such places as the Galapagos Islands, taught kids to sail 51 foot boats in the British Virgin Islands, and lived in a Mayan village in Belize. Doug loves to sail, kayak, hike and camp. As a youth he played violin and was a gymnast and a cheerleader for basketball and football during high school and college. Although we haven't seen him doing hand springs in the aquarium, you can't miss his infectious enthusiasm for CCMNH!

### Harriet E. Sears

The Museum lost a true friend in Harriet Sears, 79, of East Dennis who died December 27, 2008. As written in her obituary, Harriet was "an ardent and early advocate of enviromental causes." Memorial donations in her name can be made to the Museum.

### Admont Clark Book Collection Donated to the Gift Shop

As Manager of the Gift Shop and on behalf of the Museum, I would like to express my thanks and appreciation for the generous gift of books written by Admont Clark from his daughter Susan Shealy to the Gift Shop. The books are a wonderful addition to our book section and all are for sale.

**Donna Durkee, Gift Shop Manager**

## The 2009 Field Guide Training Course

We are looking for "lovers of nature" who would like to become field guides to share this interest walking the trails at CCMNH. This year's Field Guide Training course will consist of 8 sessions from 9 am to 3 pm, starting Thursday, March 19 and ending Thursday, May 7. Field guides are prepared to take out school groups in the spring and fall, and lead tourists during the summer.

The morning sessions will concentrate on information about the natural world and techniques for being a successful field guide. There will be special speakers, activities and field walks in the afternoons. This is an opportunity to share your love of nature and continue the learning that never ends. More details to come. For further information, please call Bobbie Williams at 508-240-2338, or e-mail at [bjwill@gis.net](mailto:bjwill@gis.net).



## Sunday Family Nature Programs 1- 2:30 pm Free with Museum admission

- March 1** *A Closer Look at Marine Science*  
**April 5** *Let's Look at the Weather*  
**May 3** *All About the Earth*

Hands-on activities at learning stations  
for families of all ages!

**Mark your calendars** for Saturday, May 30 for the **13th Annual Cape Cod Maritime History Symposium**, a leading event of Cape Maritime Days, which has found its new home at the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History.

We're still putting the finishing touches on our speaker lineup but we will update you when all details are confirmed. Four illustrated presentations will explore and commemorate the Cape's extensive maritime heritage. Breakfast begins at 8:30 am and the day ends at 2:30 pm. The cost is \$20 per person and includes breakfast, lunch [catered from Ardeo's!] and four lectures.

We hope to see our friends at this special event!

## The Friends of CCMNH - Programs

*Friends/free, Guests/\$3*

- Tuesday, March 10** 1:30 pm  
*Weir Fishing on Cape Cod: a present-day perspective of Cape Cod's historic fishing industry.*  
Shareen Davis, photographer & fisherwoman
- Tuesday, April 14** 1:30 pm  
*In the Footsteps of Thoreau* with Adam Gamble

## Who's Around the Museum?



On a day that many would consider cold and dismal with little to see or do, I spent extended time observing in the silent restful places that are sacred to me. I journeyed from the Stony Brook Conservation site to the South Trail and then to Wing's Island. At Stony Brook Conservation I was searching for Great

Horned Owls and was under a tall pitch pine that had a nest in its crown when a Red-tailed Hawk silently drifted away from its perch. Here deer have carved their trails into the steep sides of the Stony Brook Valley and water seeps out from under a large rock at the bottom of the banking. Not so long ago this would have been considered a "boiling spring".

While on the footbridge to the South Trail, a Northern Harrier repeatedly hovered over me followed by a Kingfisher's lengthy chattering, declaring his fishing rights to the brook. Earlier that morning coyote had adeptly moved along the icy trail through the beech trees. On top of the hill amongst the pines raccoon, red squirrel and rabbit all passed by each other from different directions, leaving their tracks over the day-old tracks of human and deer. This is a regular spot for Great Horned Owls as well as Red-tailed Hawks drifting the thermals or perched on a wire along 6A to Betty's Curve.

I was inclined to call it a day until I noticed track signs in the thin layer of snow on the icy south parking lot. It was the clearly defined tail drags and belly slides of otter. The tracks came from the Museum side and ended with a belly slide down the banking into the brush pile created by the trail crew near the beehives. Otter will take shelter under fallen trees even though an aquatic weasel can take refuge away from water. At the bottom of the brush pile there were two separate raccoon scats but no more obvious evidence of otter. Though we have disdain for Asiatic bittersweet, it was the berries of this plant that raccoon had been eating. I backtracked on the otter sign and in the middle of the Museum parking lot there were more tail drags with tracks and belly slides. Like penguins, otter will lie down on their bellies and push themselves along the ice. These tracks led back through the side gardens and out on to the marsh.

After studying all the signs, this is how the story goes: otter came up out of the ditch near the Osprey pole, wandered and slid around the frozen marsh. Its tracks mingled with squirrel and rabbit on the trail by the Marshview Room and then followed the main trail along the boardwalk until turning with a slide back toward the Osprey pole. The otter exited the marsh through the gardens, crossed 6A to the other parking lot and down into the woods where it may have taken shelter though I could not stir it out of the brush pile. Over on Wing's Island two Great Blue Herons were roosting in the pines while Northern Harriers passed over me again. There were day-old skunk tracks, white-footed mouse tunnels in the snow, active rabbit, red and gray squirrel with raccoon scat, tracks and signs of raiding a red squirrel drey (nest) in a pine tree.

So at a time of year when there's nothing to see, here's a sample of just who's around the Museum.

**Todd M. Kelley, Field Guide, Naturalist**

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CCMNH wants to join others who are gathering data on the population of **Horseshoe Crabs** on the Cape. We need volunteers! (It's not time intensive.) More details to follow. If you're interested, please contact the Museum.

## From the Aquarium

Many changes have taken place during the past several months - some more visual than others. With a \$62,000 grant, from the Bilezikian Family Foundation, exciting new text and graphics have been developed by Lyons/Zaremba Inc. and were put in place as of January 16. Much volunteer help from Charles Firnhaber, Bob Smith, Bruce Beane, Al Williams, Fred Budreski and others was needed to knock down walls, spackle, take out old displays, and paint before the exhibit could go in. Many thanks to all who helped!

The box turtles, snakes, and terrestrial amphibians have been moved upstairs into the Marshview Room. The animals should be happy in their three new 6 foot long bow tanks. The old display in the Aquarium has been taken out and replaced with a new whale BONE exhibit. We want to thank Majorie Mellor for creating a stunning whale mural for this new exhibit.

This is the 4th year in a row that we have had the privilege of taking part in a diamondback terrapin headstart program. The two 5-gram babies will be with us until some time in the summer when they will return to the marsh where they were born. Last year's turtles were about 400 grams (about the size of a number 5 can lid) when they were released.

Behind the scenes there have also been some helpful changes. A new protein skimmer and an additional sump with added biofiltration have helped our water quality. Thanks to Bruce Beane a chiller has been added to our salt water holding tanks to help us better keep animals which are not on display. Late last winter the freshwater room went through several improvements including a new laminated counter and sink built by Bob Smith along with stands for new freshwater holding tanks built by Bruce Beane. By the middle of August a new commercial dehumidifier was finished which helped greatly to keep condensation from forming on the saltwater tank surfaces on humid days.

Water quality is very important to the health of our fish. I must thank Nancy Hipp for jumping in and volunteering to check our water chemistry each week during the past year. She is also doing some training for animal feeding. She is a joy to have on our team!

**Doug Smith, Senior Aquarist**



***Samantha and Michael Walsh, grandchildren of long-time volunteers Diane and Bob Smith, are fascinated by the marine life in one of the saltwater tanks of the newly renovated Museum Aquarium. Come by and see our many residents and the handsome new display.***

## Introducing the CCMNH

### ***MUDFLAT MANIA FIELD GUIDE***

This spring the Museum will publish, through Rowley Bridge Press, a new field guide based on the popular summer program "Mudflat Mania!" The book was conceived by book developer and author Irene Ledwith, who approached Museum staff last summer about the project. Needless to say, the project was enthusiastically endorsed. Volunteer naturalists Bud and Betsy Ferris, who currently provide training and guidance to future mudflat guides, worked with Irene on the publication. In addition to escorting Irene and her family onto the mudflats and working with her on what animals to include in the book, Bud provided photos of invertebrates he has taken on Wing's Island mudflats over the past several years. He and Betsy helped with information about the animals and the Museum.

Irene Ledwith has been developing books for twenty years. Works she wrote and designed are in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art and the Victoria and Albert Museum. As a creative director for Scholastic and Reader's Digest she created numerous nonfiction titles in nature and reference. Ledwith's Rowley Bridge Press specializes in books for nonprofit institutions offering educational programs for children and adults.

Ledwith came to the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History as a big fan of its programs especially Mudflat Mania! "From my first walk out on the mudflats four years ago, watching the sand move with life, I was hooked. Every summer since then my family and I have returned with cousins and friends to accompany us for another walk. I realized though, trying to retell the experience weeks later, I wanted a field guide to refresh my memory of all the interesting information that the naturalist had provided and to relive the fun."

*The Cape Cod Museum of Natural History "Mudflat Mania!" Exploring the Ocean When the Tide Pulls Out* will be published in the spring and will be available for use in this season's Mudflat Mania training sessions and for purchase in the Museum gift shop. The book is fittingly dedicated to Claudia Kren, long-time museum naturalist and teacher, and creator of Mudflat Mania!

**Irene Ledwith, Bud Ferris**



***See you at Mudflat Mania!***

## Wednesday Walks With Connie Boyce

**March-April 2009**

**10 am-12 noon**

**Approximate length of walks: 3-4 miles**

**\$4/M - \$6/NM Van trip - \$2**

### MARCH

- March 4 Eastham Conservation  
Area/AschetinoProperty/Bike Trail, Eastham.  
Leave CCMNH 9:20 am
- March 11 Historic Dennis, Dennis.  
Leave CCMNH 9:40 am
- March 18 Coy's Brook Conservation Area  
and Lee Baldwin Trail, Harwich.  
Leave CCMNH 9:30 am
- March 25 Maple Swamp, Sandwich.  
Leave CCMNH 9:20 am Van Trip.

### APRIL

- April 1 Bud Carter Trail, Yarmouthport.  
Leave CCMNH 9:30 am
- April 8 Sagamore Hill/Scusset Beach, Bourne.  
Leave CCMNH 9 am Van Trip
- April 15 Kent's Point and Paw Wah Point, Orleans.  
Leave CCMNH 9:15 am
- April 22 Hawksnest/Olivers Ponds, Harwich.  
Leave CCMNH 9:30 am
- April 29 Foss Woods Walk, Provincetown.  
Leave CCMNH 9 am

Heavy rain or snow cancel walk.  
If there are any questions, walkers can call  
Connie at 508-394-2683  
or email at [crafty02664@yahoo.com](mailto:crafty02664@yahoo.com)

### Explore! Observe! Celebrate! April School Vacation Program

**April 20-24**

**Monday through Friday 1-2 pm  
Free with Museum Admission**

Join us for exploration, observation and celebration  
combining Earth Day, Arbor Day, and signs of Spring!  
Family programs bursting with hands-on  
and self-guided activities will be presented.

### Erica Wheeler in Concert

**April 25 4 pm  
\$12/M \$15/NM**

The Museum will become a mellow coffee house when  
we host this prize-winning singer/songwriter whose work  
is inspired by conservation issues and evokes a sense of  
place. Ms. Wheeler's critically acclaimed CDs will be available.  
Refreshments included. Reservations are accepted now at  
508-896-3867, Ext. 133.

**Saturday, March 28 3:30-6:00 pm**

**Murder at the Museum!**

**Fund-raiser for CCMNH**

**\$25/per person**

**includes a wine and hors d'oeuvres buffet  
Pre-registration required. Tickets are limited.  
Make your reservation by phone now.**

**508-896-3867, Ext. 133**

**No admission at the door**

The Cape Cod Murder Mystery Players, a team of  
professional actors, will present an original murder  
mystery for CCMNH. The mystery will involve elements  
of the Museum through storyline, references and  
themes. The "murder mystery" will be an interactive  
experience between players and guests and will end  
with limericks showing who is innocent and guilty.  
Certificates for a variety of solutions will be offered.  
Be part of the mystery and support your Museum!

### Book Discussion

**Wednesday, April 8 2 pm**

**Timothy, or Notes From  
an Abject Reptile**

by Verlyn Klinkenborg.  
Thoughts of a tortoise -  
a wise and gentle soul  
- kept by Gilbert White,  
English naturalist  
(1720-1793).

Discussion leader:  
Marcia Dalton



### Nature Photography for Digital Photographers with Stan Godwin

**April 1, 8, 22 & May 6: 9-11 am at CCMNH**

**April 18 & 25: 7-9 am In the field**

**\$100/M (of CCMNH or CCAA), \$125/NM**

**Registration through the Cape Cod Art Association.**

**Maximum: 18 in the class Phone: 508-362-2909**

**Website: [www.capecodartassoc.org](http://www.capecodartassoc.org)**

An introduction to the technique of fine nature  
photography using digital capture. Students with basic  
DSLR knowledge and/or students from any of Stan's  
previous classes are welcome. Knowledge of shooting  
and handling RAW images is highly recommended!  
Note: the schedule allows for two Saturday field trips!

This will be a shooting class. The ideal student has a  
deep love of nature, a photo quality inkjet printer and  
Photoshop® or Photoshop Elements® on their home  
computer. We will discuss the techniques and  
aesthetics of shooting in nature as well as archiving and  
printing your images on your home computer and/or  
through your local professional lab.

Materials List for each class session:

Digital camera and lenses Tripod and/or monopod  
Owners manual for your camera!  
Memory card(s) Charged batteries



# MARCH 2009

Open to the public  
**Thursday-Sunday**  
**11 pm-3 pm**  
 and for scheduled events.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 1 pm Family Nature Program	2	3 9:30 am Friends Board Mtg.	4 9:20 am Wednesday Walk	5	6 9 am-12 pm Nauset Garden Club Wkshp 1 pm Lighthouse Charter Schl.	7
8	9 7:30 pm Cape Cod Bird Club	10 1 pm Friends Membership Meeting 1:30 pm Program	11 9:40 am Wednesday Walk	12	13	14
15	16	17	18 9:30 am Wednesday Walk	19 9 am-3 pm Field Guide Training	20	21
22	23	24	25 9:20 am Wednesday Walk	26 9 am-3 pm Field Guide Training	27	28 3:30-6 pm Murder at the Museum
29	30	31				



# APRIL 2009

Open to the public  
**Wednesday-Sunday**  
**11 pm-3 pm** Open daily for Massachusetts school vacation week and for scheduled events.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 9:30 am Wednesday Walk 9-11am Digital Photography	2 9 am-3 pm Field Guide Training	3 9 am-12 pm Nauset Garden Club Wkshp. 1 pm Lighthouse Charter Schl.	4
5 1 pm Family Nature Program	6	7 1 pm Friends Membership Meeting 1:30 pm Program	8 9 am Wednesday Walk 9-11am Digital Photography 2 pm Book Discussion	9 9 am-3 pm Field Guide Training	10	11
12	13 7:30 pm Cape Cod Bird Club	14	15 9:15 am Wednesday Walk	16 9 am-3 pm Field Guide Training	17	18 7-9am Digital Photo Field Trip
19	20	21	22 9:30 am Wednesday Walk 9-11am Digital Photography	23 9 am-3 pm Field Guide Training	24	25 7-9am Digital Photo Field Trip 4 pm Erica Wheeler Concert
	<b>April School Vacation Programs</b>			<b>1 pm each day</b>		
26	27	28	29 9 am Wednesday Walk	30 9 am-3 pm Field Guide Training		



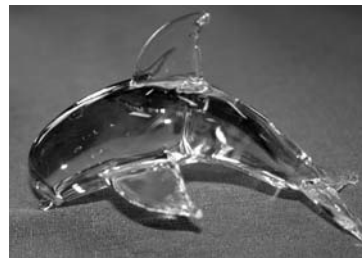
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2009 KidSummer brochure inside!



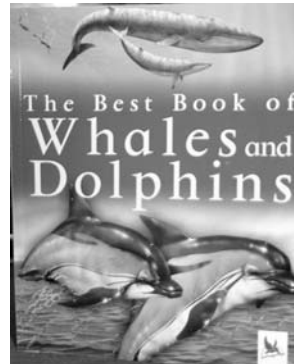
**Give Yourself  
a Lift!**



**Visit the Museum Gift Shop!**



*Members receive  
a 10% discount  
(purchases over \$5.00,  
sales items not included)*



**Become a member!**  
Join us  
for a continuing  
journey  
of exploration  
at your  
Cape Cod Museum  
of Natural History.

For information  
about membership  
call the Museum at  
508-896-3867.

Check our website  
[www.ccmnh.org](http://www.ccmnh.org)  
for  
on-going programs.