

# WHALE TALES

The Newsletter of The Children's Museum and Roaring Brook Nature Center

FALL 2010

## Family Science Sundays Heat Up The Children's Museum **Combustion Sunday next, on October 17**

The hottest installment yet of Family Science Sundays occurs October 17 at The Children's Museum as part of Fire Safety Month. And if you've been to any of our past three Family Science Sunday programs – held every third Sunday (no program in September), you know it's bound to be an exciting, educational and fun day for children and families.

On October 17, there will be demonstrations on the science of fire, including hydrogen-filled bubbles, the flaming vortex, the imploding whoosh bottle, and many more. The event also will include a chance for visitors to make their own candles out of beeswax. The Museum will distribute fire-safety information and the West Hartford Fire Department will bring a fire truck for children to explore, hand out fire helmets, and have firefighters on hand for children to meet.

The past few months have featured exciting and educational programs around themes including the science of Mark Twain, animals and bubbles. Upcoming events on the third Sundays in November and December will be designed around art and robots.



## Museum Icon **Conny the Sperm Whale** Turns 35

On July 28, children and parents alike celebrated Conny the whale's 35th birthday. Conny – a 60-foot replica of a sperm whale – has long resided on the lawn of The Children's Museum for passers-by to marvel at, but on this special day, Conny was more than just a curiosity for Museum guests.

At age 35, Conny is at the point in his life that live sperm whales would be considered middle aged. His amazing story was discussed and a video of his creation was shown at the Museum so that guests could marvel at Conny as a part of the rich heritage of the Museum. It took hundreds of people over 5,000 hours of volunteer work to build Conny, between 1975 and 1976.

The seemingly impossible undertaking of building a life-size sperm whale on the front lawn of The Children's Museum started as a design based on a sperm whale skeleton on display at Harvard University. In Conny's early stages, he was little more than a whale made of a wood frame covered in chicken wire.

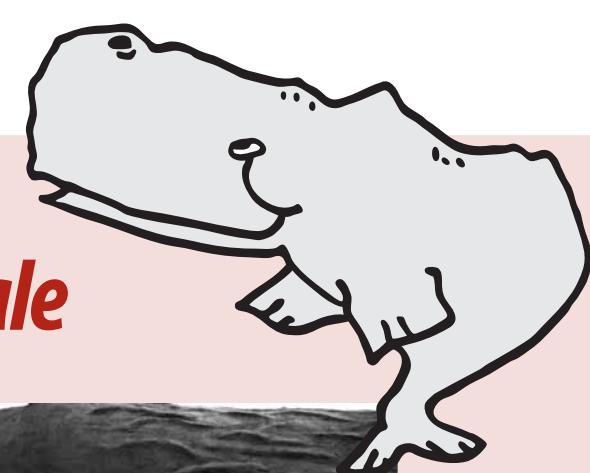
*continued inside*

### Claws for a Cause!

Join us at the Rotary Club of West Hartford Lobster Fest on Saturday, September 25. This event benefits The Children's Museum. More information is on the back cover.

### Homeschool Day

The Children Museum's third Science Education Day dedicated to homeschool families is coming up on Tuesday, September 21. Find out more inside.



Robins Barstow, Conny's designer, and his wife, Meg, attended Conny's birthday party and presented the Museum with an original set of blueprints created in the mid 1970s.



### President's Corner

**Kevin Sullivan**  
President and CEO of  
The Children's Museum

Children across Connecticut are back in school again and the Museum continues to be a vital resource for science and nature education. Today this is all the more important since the new statewide science assessment shows insufficient progress overall and huge disparities in achievement among school districts that we can serve. As I've written before in this column, every bit of research tells us that a visit to The Children's Museum, a TCM program at school or after school, our vacation science camp, and our preschool all make a difference. Plus, kids and families have fun learning together.

#### How can you help?

- Be sure your family membership is renewed for the new year. It's still a great deal since it's also a free family passport to children's museums and science centers all over the state, nation, and world.  
[www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org/membership.asp](http://www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org/membership.asp)
- Make a contribution. No amount is too small to help. Even \$25 can really help.  
[www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org/giving.asp](http://www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org/giving.asp)
- Send me the home address or e-mail addresses for just five people you think might be interested in learning more about us.  
[ksullivan@TheChildrensMuseumCT.org](mailto:ksullivan@TheChildrensMuseumCT.org)
- Spread the word about what's going on at The Children's Museum and our Roaring Brook Nature Center to friends and neighbors, as well as the teachers, parent-teacher organization, and scouting leaders where your children go to school.

So what's happening at TCM as we head into fall? Our NASA grant moves ahead, including plans for an outdoor climate simulation chamber and the capacity to develop our own Science Dome shows. More special Family Science Sunday programs – focusing on fire, art, and robots – will be held the third Sundays of October, November and December. Fall birding and foliage walks can be enjoyed at Roaring Brook Nature Center. And that's just for starters!

Come visit us, bring family and friends, and tell everyone you know what a great place The Children's Museum is for learning, fun and inspiration.

### Flight Day Takes Off

Flight Day, on July 30, featured a variety of flight-related activities and demonstrations, including the launching of homemade rockets created by Vacation Science Camp students. The next quarterly Flight Day is on Columbus Day, October 11.



# Get Your Hands on Science

An Experiment You Can Do at Home from  
The Children's Museum

## Will it float?

This experiment couldn't be simpler. Fill a bowl, or pot or large piece of Tupperware with a decent amount of water. Select some random item, then drop it in to answer the titular question: Will it float? Be creative, but only use stuff that you don't mind getting wet (don't use your cell phone!) A few of the many possibilities to try: canned meat (i.e., Spam), pens, crayons, a sealed Ziplock bag partly filled with sand, LEGOS, paper clips, plastic spoons...the possibilities are endless. Here are two items that are rather interesting:

Try a lump of modeling clay, squished into a ball. It sinks. Flatten the clay into as thin a sheet as you can, then curl up the edges to make a raft. This will float.

Try an orange. Then peel it and try again. Then eat the orange.

## Why do things float or sink?

It's not necessarily because of how heavy they are. A penny, which is light, sinks. An aircraft carrier, which is heavy, floats. Items sink or float because of **density**.

Density is mass divided by volume. In other words, it's how much stuff you've got in a given amount of space. If something is less dense than water, it floats on water. If it's denser than water, it sinks. The same applies to other liquids, and gases, too - the air in a hot air balloon is less dense than air, so it floats on top of air.

Take the clay example, above. Your clay had the same weight both times - it was the exact same clay. When you squeeze the clay into a ball, you're packing it into a small space, making it denser - denser than water - so it sinks. When you spread it out into a thin raft shape, it weighs the same, but takes up more space. So it's less dense than water and it can float.

## Homeschool Day offers something for everyone

On Tuesday, September 21, The Children's Museum is hosting a Science Education Day dedicated to homeschool families. Special programs and Science Dome planetarium presentations are planned. You'll have the opportunity to tour our hands-on exhibits and network with other homeschool parents.

Our workshops and planetarium shows are appropriate for children ages five to 13. We have selected a variety of classes and shows for every grade level. Children in grades K to 2 can learn about bugs, sound, and the Moon. Third through fifth graders can experiment with static electricity and circuits, gain insight into the world of amphibians and reptiles, and explore constellations and their myths. Older students in grades six through eight can investigate clean sources of energy, learn about stream ecology, and delve into the history of telescopes and the discoveries they've made.

Program descriptions, a schedule of the day, and online registration can be found at [www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org](http://www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org). You can also register by calling 860.231.2830 x 44 or e-mailing [Events@TheChildrensMuseumCT.org](mailto:Events@TheChildrensMuseumCT.org).



## Coming Soon

# From the Blue Planet to the Red Planet: The Exploration of Mars

## Join our NASA exploration mission – from Earth to Mars

As part of this spring's new programming, Museum guests will be able to explore an interactive Mars Exploration Timeline. The timeline includes a video tour of past, present and future Mars explorations – missions, equipment, discoveries from the earliest astronomers to the latest planetary landers, and an interactive "Fact or Fiction" quiz.

**From the Blue Planet to the Red Planet** will be created with a grant from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). The Museum was among nine institutions chosen nationally as part of NASA's Competitive Program for Science Museums and Planetariums, and the only Connecticut and New England grantee. NASA's goal is to enhance educational outreach related to space exploration, aeronautics, space science, Earth science and microgravity.

**From the Blue Planet to the Red Planet** will include educational programming at the Museum and in our planetarium, Website links and teacher professional development. Features also include a virtual reality planetary exhibit, a planetarium film showcasing Mars and NASA missions, as well as production of a new planetarium show comparing Earth and Mars. The Museum will develop new Mars pages on our Website, including an interactive "Ask the Expert" forum with NASA scientists and engineers. Hands-on activities at free family events will include pressure experiments, growing plants in Earth and simulated Mars soils, and building model Mars rovers.

# Sky Watchers

A Look at What's Happening in the Night Sky  
from the Travelers Science Dome

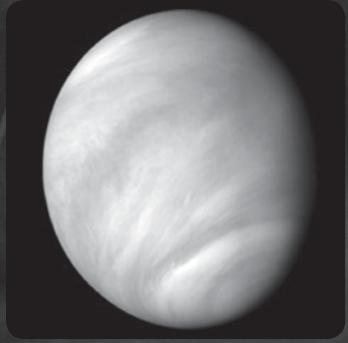
## Vanishing Venus

By now, most people have noticed the bright white object in the sky low in the West near sunset. It's not a star or a satellite or a spaceship. It's the planet Venus. Venus shines more brightly than any of the nighttime stars and almost as brightly as the Moon. It is one of the closest planets to the Earth. Since it orbits between the Earth and the Sun, in the sky it is always seen near the Sun. Since January, Venus has been visible to us at sunset.

This year, in the last week of October, Venus will seem to vanish. For a few days, it will be hidden in the glare of the Sun. When it returns to our view around November 4, Venus will be seen at sunrise instead. It will be visible every morning until August 2011. Compared to our 365 1/4 days, it takes 223 Earth-days for Venus to go once around the Sun. Venus' behavior is caused by the difference in length between Venus' and Earth's orbits. As they move, Venus and Earth pass each other in space.

Venus looks so bright because its thick, dense atmosphere reflects the light of the Sun back to Earth. The carbon dioxide collects the Sun's heat and brings Venus' surface temperature up to 900°F. It has miles of sulfuric acid clouds, and the ground is coated with lava flows, both old and new. Venus is slightly smaller than the Earth, and it has no moons, although it could have had one billions of years ago.

Venus looks very different in a telescope than it does to the eye. The Sun's light is never able to reach the entire side of Venus that faces the Earth. For this reason, Venus has phases like the Moon. Sometimes a crescent is visible, at other times half or three-quarters of the face. Very rarely, when Venus crosses in front of the Sun, it can be seen as a black disc on the Sun's face. A Transit of Venus occurred in June 2004 and will happen again in June of 2012. Most of us will not live long enough to see the next transit in 2117 so, make a note in your calendars for June 6, 2012.



# The Children's Museum Preschool: Enriching Children with a Lifetime Love of Science and Nature

**The Children's Museum Preschool**  
is accepting registrations for classes.

Call 860.523.7449.

The Children's Museum Preschool introduces children to science early in life with their unique programs during the school year and in the summer. The preschool program prides itself on being a place where children ages three to five play, explore and discover, complete with field trips and weekly visits to different parts of The Children's Museum. "Weekly lessons at the Museum focusing on science and nature enhance the preschool curriculum and introduce children at a young age to the wonders of the world around them," says Joyce Cowles, director of The Children's Museum Preschool.

The Children's Museum Preschool has a philosophy of challenging children towards mastery of the world in which they live, says Cowles. They accomplish this with eight experienced teachers, each with early-childhood development degrees, and most with 15 or more years of experience. "As Early Childhood Educators it is our responsibility to provide children with a variety of classroom experiences designed to enrich their learning," says Cowles. "It's an invigorating, fun and creative program that establishes an excellent foundation for future learning."

Each of the school's three classrooms are full of science and nature areas and hands-on sensory activities to create a fun, comfortable environment. Cowles adds that the goal of these colorful and stimulating classrooms is to let each child experience social, intellectual, emotional, and physical growth along with other children.

Close to 100 families enroll annually in both the fall to spring and summer programs, which include free unlimited admission to The Children's Museum and other participating museums, as well as the discounts that members enjoy.



Photos by Rick Harrington

# the Children's museum

To register for the programs you see here (unless otherwise noted), call 860.231.2830 x44 or e-mail [Events@TheChildrensMuseumCT.org](mailto:Events@TheChildrensMuseumCT.org).  
Online registration is also available for many of our events.  
Check our Website at [www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org](http://www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org).  
Member prices are for The Children's Museum/Roaring Brook Nature Center members.  
All prices are per person.

**Tuesday, September 21**

## Homeschool Day at The Children's Museum

Join us for our third Science Education Day dedicated to homeschool families. Enhance your children's educational experiences with one or more of our classroom programs or Science Dome planetarium presentations. Tour our hands-on exhibits and network with other homeschool parents in this unique learning environment. Our workshops and planetarium shows are appropriate for children from five to 13 years old.

Registration information and the schedule for the day are available on our Website. We have selected a variety of classes and shows for every grade level. It is our goal that your children receive the maximum learning enjoyment from our programs.

**Monday, October 11**

## Flight Day

11:00 am to 3:00 pm

This is a special day dedicated to flight-related activities and demonstrations, including ballooning.  
*Free with general admission.*

**Sunday, October 17**

## Combustion Sunday

11:00 am to 4:00 pm

Meet the firefighters from the West Hartford Fire Department, check out their fire truck, see spectacular demonstrations on the science of combustion, make your own candles and learn about fire safety.  
*Free with general admission.*

**Sunday, November 21**

## Art Sunday

Science and art are linked in surprising ways. Get creative by making art with metal, polarized light, dissolving inks, and centripetal force, watch Bobby the Box Turtle paint his latest masterpiece, and help West Hartford's Claypen create a mosaic to display in our museum. *Free with general admission.*

**Friday, December 10**

## Wolf Night

6:00 pm

Atka the Arctic gray wolf returns. Get up close to him during a presentation by experts from the Wolf Conservation Center. Pre-registration is recommended. \$8 for members, \$10 for non-members.



**Sunday, December 19**

## Robo Sunday

11:00 am to 4:00 pm

The robot roll call includes a visit from the 12-foot-tall, 800-pound security robot Aexeus! On a smaller scale, you'll get to command our squad of miniature robots and assemble a host of electrical circuits. *Free with general admission.*

## Join the Junior Keepers Club

Go behind the scenes and learn what it takes to be an animal keeper. Work with the Wildlife Sanctuary director, curators, and volunteers. You will help feed and groom, and learn general animal husbandry. Get a private animal demonstration and have your picture taken holding an animal at each session. The program is for ages 10 to 14 and has a limit of six participants.

Prices for four sessions: \$80/person for members, \$100/person for non-members.

### Four Wednesday Sessions

**3:00 pm to 4:00 pm**

October 13, 2010

November 10, 2010

December 8, 2010

January 12, 2011

## Educator Open House

**Thursday, October 14**

4:00 pm to 6:00 pm

Teachers, administrators, and PTO representatives are invited to meet with education staff from The Children's Museum and Roaring Brook Nature Center to learn about our many programs and tour the Museum. One lucky participant will win a free program for his or her class.

We recognize that teachers face cutbacks, larger classes, less time for hands-on learning, less professional development, and fewer resources in subject areas like science. With all these constraints, teachers can't do it alone. By partnering together we can spark the interest and motivation of students for learning about science and nature. Join us October 14 to learn how. Pre-registration is recommended.

### The Children's Museum's Hours of Admission

**Tuesday - Saturday** 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

**Sunday** 11:00 am to 4:00 pm

The Museum is *open* on Columbus Day, Monday October 11.

The Museum is closed on Thanksgiving Day, November 25.

## Tales & Tails

**Wednesday, September 22**

9:30 am to 10:15 am

Tales & Tails is an interactive, animal-themed, six-week class that includes arts and crafts, animal demonstrations, related stories and music and movement. The class is for children ages 18 months to three-years-old, each accompanied by an adult.

Pre-registration is required. The cost is \$80 for members, \$100 for non-members. Fees include admission to the Museum for the day.

## Vacation Science

Join us for action-packed days of scientific investigation, crafts, games, Museum exploration, amazing planetarium shows, up-close encounters with live animals, and more. For more information on Vacation Science, visit [www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org](http://www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org).

9:00 am to 4:00 pm • For children in grades 1 to 5

\$60/day for members • \$70/day for non-members

Ask about our multiple-day discount for December Vacation week

## October 11, Columbus Day Crazy Contraptions

There's nothing ordinary about what you can build using unusual materials during this wacky day of gadgets and gizmos.

## November 2, Election Day Science Stew

In our kitchen you need a lab coat. Explore a little bit of everything from heating and cooling solids, liquids, and gases to creating concoctions with everyday household items.

## December Vacation Week

### Monday, December 27 Science in the Fast Lane

Experience fast and furious fun. From roller coasters to dragsters, we'll race to the finish line on this day that never stays still.

### Tuesday, December 28 Starstruck

The stars are yours as you learn the legends behind the constellations and the science about what makes the night sky so amazing.

### Wednesday, December 29 Scales & Tails

Love animals? Then you're in for a treat as you discover all about our furry, feathered, and scaly friends.

### Thursday, December 30 Mad Scientists

Protective goggles required! Count on us to show you the weirder side of science as we conduct crazy experiments.

### Friday, December 31 Get Zapped

No experience necessary to start the flow of bright ideas. Delve into circuitry and electricity as you experiment with motors, lights, switches, and buzzers.

### Monday, January 17 Martin Luther King Jr. Day Down and Dirty Science

Icky experiments. Disgusting demonstrations. Stomach-churning science. We'll do it all as we examine the truly gross side of science.



Go to [www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org](http://www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org) to connect with us on Facebook.

# Fall 2010 Programs

Roaring Brook Nature Center

70 Gracey Road, Canton, CT 06019

860.693.0263 [www.roaringbrook.org](http://www.roaringbrook.org)

## Nature Center Hours

Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 am to 5:00 pm; Sunday, 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm.

Closed Labor Day, September 6 and Thanksgiving Day, November 25.

Trails through Werner's Woods are open daily dawn until dusk.

All costs are per person unless stated otherwise.

## ANNUAL HOBGOBLIN FAIR

### October 30 (rain or shine)

Join us for our annual Hobgoblin Fair, featuring the "track-and-treat" walk, children's crafts and a delicious lunch of homemade soup, bread and apple cider. The event is suitable for children ages 3 to 8 and parents. The cost per child is \$5/member, \$6/non-members. Fee includes the track-and-treat walk and two activity tickets for crafts. (additional activity tickets on sale the day of the Fair). Pre-registration with payment is required. You may register in person or by mail. Please specify morning (10:00 am to 12:00 pm) or afternoon (1:00 pm to 3:00 pm) session. Children are encouraged to wear costumes if suitable for walking in the woods and participating in crafts. Parents should plan to stay with their children. Please note there are no refunds and participants should attend the session for which they register.

## HOLIDAY GIFT & CRAFT FAIR

### November 21 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Start your holiday shopping with our nature-related gifts for all ages. There is no charge to visit the Nature Center or to attend the Fair on this date.

## FALL BIRD SEED SALE

### Saturday, November 13

Call the Center at 860.693.0263 to receive your order form.

## FALL WEEKEND EVENTS

Check our Website for details on these programs and events.

### Saturday Morning Bird Walks

#### September 11, October 2 and 9 7:30 am to 9:00 am

Join us as we wander the trails through Werner's Woods during the fall migration season. Binoculars and footwear for wet ground conditions are all you'll need. Geared for all levels of birding expertise, these walks are not for very young children. Cost is \$2/member, \$3/non-member. Pre-registration is not required.

### Mushrooms with Mushroom Marlene

#### Saturday, September 11 10:00 am to 12:00 pm

Join Marlene S necinski of the Connecticut Valley Mycological Association for a talk and stroll along the trails of Werner's Woods. Learn fascinating facts about fungi, which ones are sought after as delicacies and which ones not to touch. Photography is encouraged. The walk is jointly sponsored by the Canton Land Conservation Trust. There is no charge to Land Trust and Museum/Nature Center members; \$5/non-members. Pre-registration is requested.

### Migration Day

#### Sunday, September 12 10:00 am to 2:00 pm

Bring a picnic lunch and join us in the fields of Werner's Woods as we watch for migrating hawks and other birds. Stay for a short time or as long as you'd like. This is the height of the fall migration and there is no telling what may fly by including birds, butterflies or dragonflies. Pre-registration is required. \$6/member, \$10/non-members.

### Gnoming Around

#### Sunday, September 19 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm

Join us for an afternoon of nature-inspired art and exploration with Avon teachers, Jan Cohen and Barbara Daly Byrnes, the author and illustrator of *Gnoming Around*, who have collaborated to bring art and writing together in a children's book. Learn about the process of creating a children's book, listen to their story, see a demonstration of how the illustrations were created, and make your own gnome house. Together, we will go on a nature scavenger hunt and maybe even find a gnome!

### Evening Walks

#### Friday, October 1 and 15 7:30 pm to 8:45 pm

Our evening walks provide a relaxing end to the busy work/school week and an opportunity to observe a wide range of animals that become more active in the cooler evening temperatures of autumn. Dress for cooler weather and bring a flashlight. Pre-registration is not required. \$4/member, \$6/non-member, half-price for children.

## Aliens in Our Backyards

### Sunday, October 3 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm

What is taking over your yard? Oriental bittersweet? Japanese knotweed? Garlic mustard? Where did they come from, why are they here and what can you do to stop them from taking over? What's happening beyond our backyards? What new aliens are on our doorstep? Join us for a presentation on these alien plants (and animals) and a walk on the trails of Werner's Woods in search of these alien species. \$4/member, \$6/non-member.

### Yoga/Hiking for Children

### Sunday, October 3 3:30 pm to 5:00 pm

Explore the outside wonders of nature with an autumn hike, and then stretch, move, and chill out with some fun and soothing yoga with instructors Leslie Gordon and Julie Erasmus. The event is suitable for ages 6 to 12. No yoga experience is necessary. Bring your own mat, if you have one. Pre-registration is required. \$8/member, \$10/non-member.

### From Bedrock to Stone Walls

### Saturday, October 16 10:00 am to 11:30 am

Join us as we take a trip back in time to learn how your backyard might have looked 100, 500 or 10,000 years ago. Find out what changes have occurred in our area and how geology, ecology and human history have combined to create the landscape as we know it. Pre-registration is requested. \$4/member, \$6/non-members, half-price for children.

### An Ever-Widening Circle:

### The People of the Barkhamsted Lighthouse

### Sunday, October 17 2:00 pm

Ken Feder, Professor of Anthropology, has, along with his students from Central Connecticut State University, excavated the village of what has been called the "Lighthouse Tribe" in what is now Peoples State Forest. Dr. Feder will speak about the things he found there that illuminated the lives of the village's residents. \$4/member, \$6/non-member.

### Fall Foliage Day

### Sunday, October 24 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm

Join us for a guided fall foliage walk through Werner's Woods and the Nature Center's gardens. Learn why the spectacular fall color show happens each year and why some years are more colorful than others. Find out why trees lose their leaves and what happens to them when they hit the ground. A short program on fall leaves will be followed by a hike to view the colors. Pre-registration is required. \$4/member, \$6/non-members, half-price for children.

### Family Nature Quest

### Saturday, November 6 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm

Discover what fall treasures can be found in Werner's Woods as you brush up on basic orienteering skills and follow clues deciphered through riddles and rhymes. This event is for families with children ages 8 and up. Pre-registration required. \$4/member, \$6/non-members, half-price for children.

### Birds in Litchfield

### Saturday, November 13

This is a special tour of the Livingston Ripley Waterfowl Conservancy in Litchfield followed by birding at the White Memorial Conservation Center. Meet at the Nature Center at 9:30 am to carpool, or meet us at the Waterfowl Conservancy. Bring a picnic lunch after which we will go birding on the grounds of one of the largest privately held nature preserves in the State. Pre-registration with payment is required for this trip and reservations are limited to 12 participants. Cost is \$20/member, \$25/non-member and this includes a donation to the Waterfowl Conservancy. Call the Nature Center for details. This trip is not appropriate for young children.

### Preparing for Winter

### Sunday, November 14 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm

Find out how plants and animals prepare for the coming winter season on this leisurely hike along the trails through Werner's Woods. Pre-registration is not required. \$4/member, \$6/non-members, half-price for children.

## MEET MATT MESSINA – WILDLIFE ARTIST

On Saturdays this fall, Nature Center visitors will have an opportunity to watch Avon High School student and up-and-coming wildlife artist, Matt Messina, at work. Last spring he won the Connecticut State Duck Stamp for students. He is a student of well-known wildlife artist Kathy Goff. Matt will be here most Saturdays during our regular hours.

# ROARING BROOK NATURE CENTER



## FALL DISCOVERY DAYS PROGRAMS

Discovery Days is the Nature Center's enrichment series for children in pre-school and in grades K to 3. The cost of each four-week session is \$40 for members, \$50 for non-members. Discounts are extended to families with multiple children attending during the same time period. Portions of the program are held outdoors; please dress accordingly.

### Nature For Little Ones (2- and 3-year-olds and a parent)

#### Thursdays, 9:30 am to 10:30 am

Programs for two- and three-year-olds and a parent (or grandparent) will provide the young child with an introduction to the world of nature through seasonal autumn topics.

Session I: September 23, 30; October 7, 14

Session II: October 21, 28; November 4, 11

Session III: November 18; December 2, 9, 16

### Exploring Together (3- and 4-year-olds and a parent)

#### Fridays, 1:15 pm to 2:15 pm

The program introduces pre-school children to seasonal changes in the natural world and gives parent and child an opportunity to learn together. A younger sibling may attend for a \$10 discount, no charge for siblings under age 2.

Session IV: September 24; October 1, 8, 15

Session V: October 22, 29; November 5, 12

Session VI: November 19; December 3, 10, 17

### Programs for 4- and 5-year-olds

#### Thursdays, 1:30 pm to 2:30 pm or

#### Fridays, 10:00 am to 11:00 am

These are programs for kindergarten students and children in kindergarten readiness programs.

### Bugs, Slugs and Other Ughs

There are many fascinating creatures lurking under rocks, leaves, logs and at the bottom of the pond. Come explore their worlds.

Meets Thursday afternoons September 23, 30; October 7, 14 or Friday mornings September 24; October 1, 8, 15.

### Marvelous Mammals

What is a mammal and does it differ from other animals? What kinds of mammals live here in Connecticut? Meets Thursday afternoons October 21, 28; November 4, 11 or Friday mornings October 22, 29; November 5, 12.

### Home for the Holidays

Where will animals be spending the holiday season and the rest of the winter? Will they be staying home or traveling? Meets Thursday afternoons November 18; December 2, 9, 16 or Friday mornings November 19, December 3, 10, 17.

### Programs for Students in Grades 1 to 3

#### Wednesdays, 3:45 pm to 5:00 pm

### Alien Invaders!

New plants and insects have been arriving in our woods. What are they, where are they from, and how are they changing our environment? Meets September 22, 29; October 6, 13.

### Before The Pilgrims

Learn about the Native People who lived here long ago. What did they eat, where did they live and what kinds of tools did they use? Meets October 20, 27; November 3, 10.

### The Animals of Werner's Woods

Mink, beaver, deer, fox and bear are but a few of the animals to be found in Werner's Woods. Find out about the animals that share our backyard habitats. Who is new to our area and who used to live here long ago? Meets November 17; December 1, 8, 15.

### ADVENTURE STORY TIME

#### September 20, October 18, November 15, December 20

Adventure Story Time for children ages 2 to 5 will be held this fall on the third Monday of each month from 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm. Adults and children can participate in a shared story with a craft and short walk. Children must be accompanied by adults. There is a charge of \$2/child with a maximum \$5/family. Pre-registration is requested.

# All About Animals

Get to Know Our Friends in the Wildlife Sanctuary

## Leopard Geckos

The Children's Museum Wildlife Sanctuary is home to four female leopard geckos and two male leopard geckos. All of the geckos used to be pets that were given to the Museum by owners unable to care for them. Most of them were healthy when they arrived except for Slim. Slim arrived at the Museum in July 2007. His owner was going to college and needed to place the animal. Unfortunately, his owner was unaware that his gecko was very sick.



**Slim, a Leopard Gecko**

At first, the staff were not sure they would be able to save his life. Slim weighed only nine grams and was very dehydrated. A healthy adult gecko should weigh about 50 grams. He had a fractured tail and had lost his sight and some of his toes. The staff hand-fed Slim special prescription food and gave him water through a dropper every day. Although Slim is still blind, and he cannot catch his own food, he pulled through and now weighs a healthy 45 grams.

Because of their small size, leopard geckos are very common pet store lizards. They come in multiple color phases and albinos are becoming quite common.

Most are spotted as adults – which is why they are named after the leopard. Although hardy animals, they need proper housing and care to stay healthy. An adequately sized tank with enough room for exercise, consistent temperature, and a special UVA/UVB lightbulb from a pet store are musts. This lightbulb keeps animals warm and helps them to produce certain vitamins. The correct food with special vitamin supplements is needed to keep their bones strong. Geckos are not a wise pet for small children as they can be hurt easily by squeezing hands. They can also easily live more than 10 years. That means a 10-year-old child will have to find a new home for the pet when going to college, which is not an easy thing to do.

## News from the Wildlife Sanctuary

During the hot summer months, staff filled up pools with swimming goldfish or set up the sprinklers to keep the large cats who live in the Sanctuary cool. Rufus the bobcat had his outdoor area increased and also now has access to an indoor enclosure, where he can be seen napping. Getting him to use the doggie door took some coaxing, but he finally got it.

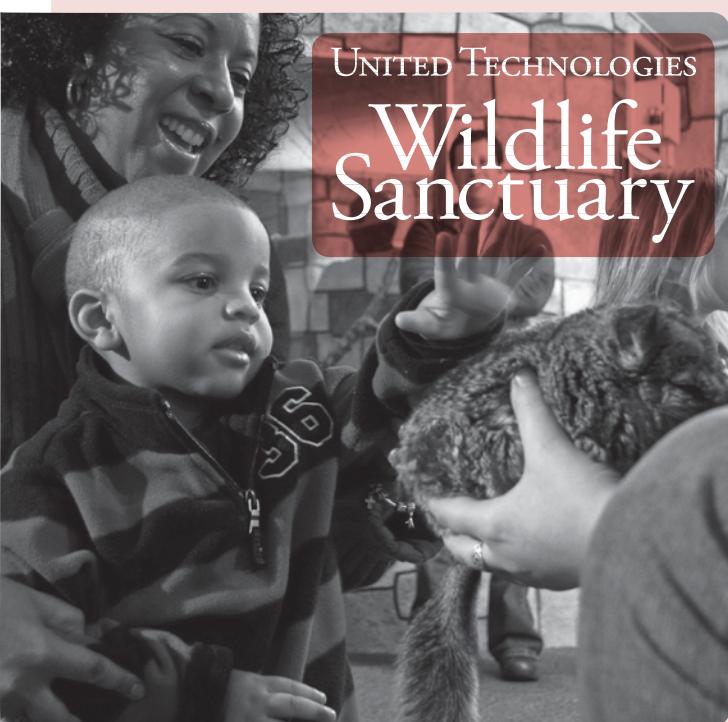
Dr. Chase from Advanced Veterinary Clinic in Farmington comes out to the Museum every year to provide physicals and give the cats their vaccinations. Because the cats can be dangerous, they are tranquilized for the check-up. LittleFoot had gained so much weight (up 15 pounds to 36 pounds) that the tranquilizer was not having the desired effect. Dr. Chase and his crew had to try on three different days before we finally got him down, and LittleFoot could get his physical.

We recently received one green tree frog from a florist in town. Often small frogs live unnoticed on plants in greenhouses and then get shipped to florist shops. The Sanctuary has received many frogs this way; green tree frogs and Cuban tree frogs are the most common.

The Museum has three new red-eyed tree frogs. These were bought as a gift from a grandfather to his grandson. Unfortunately, no one asked Mom, so she asked us to take the little amphibians. We

were also given two baby garter snakes and two tarantulas from Riverside Reptiles.

We also released some animals - wood frog tadpoles. Every year, staff member Tom Anderson collects wood frog eggs from his backyard pond and brings them to the Museum. Visitors can see the eggs hatch, watch the tadpoles develop, and eventually see the froglets jumping around. The frogs are then released back to the pond they came from.



Our favorite troublemaker, Loki, the raccoon, continues to challenge us. A couple of months ago, Loki was often seen spending a lot of time doing what looked like digging. Of course, Loki lives on a wood floor covered in pine mulch so, staff did not notice the first hole in the floor until it was the size of a half-dollar. After noticing this hole, we began to move the mulch and discovered three more holes! Since then, Loki has been removed from his house, and his floor has been covered with concrete. He still has his soft pine bedding, and we are hoping he doesn't figure out a way to dig through concrete.

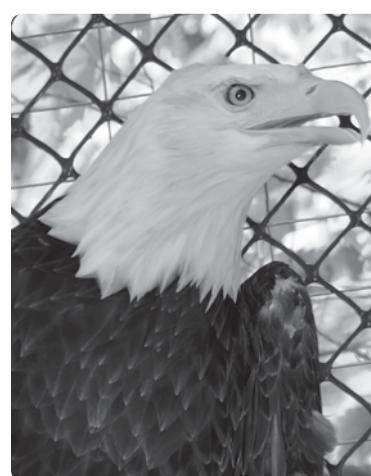
## Explore Fall Migration at Roaring Brook

As the summer comes to a close and the cooler, autumn nights arrive, species like birds and butterflies begin to drift away as the migration season begins. Migration is an intriguing period for animal and nature lovers alike; in this turbulent time of changing seasons, countless species of birds, bats, and butterflies head toward warmer grounds to avoid the cold and often unforgiving Connecticut winter.

The Roaring Brook Nature Center in Canton is a prime place to watch the migration season this year. With several migration-themed events coming this fall, Roaring Brook guests can understand the science behind migration and witness the wonder first-hand. Migrating bird species include blue jays, robins, Canada geese, ruby-throated hummingbirds, hawks, as well as the occasional non-native species that drift off course and end up in Connecticut.

Migration Day on September 12 comes at the peak of migration season, inviting nature and bird enthusiasts to come watch the skies for birds, insects, and bats alike. Morning bird walks on October 2 and October 9 allow Nature Center guests to continue enjoying the beauty of the changing seasons and the migration of many of Connecticut's birds. The Birds in Litchfield program on November 13 lets guests see the bird species that are still around, and The Home for the Holidays programs starting December 2 explore the species that don't migrate each fall and how they survive the winter months.

For more information, contact Roaring Brook Nature Center at 860.693.0263.



## Nature Explorers

Exploring in Your Own Backyard

### Migration Fun Facts

Many native Connecticut birds leave the state in the early fall in search of more hospitable climates where food is readily available and not buried under snow and ice.

Birds are not the only creatures that migrate through our area; several species of bats, monarch butterflies in transit to Mexico, and even dragonflies head south in early fall.

Scientists have long wondered about what "tells" animals when it is time to go and how and where to travel. Everything from weather patterns, decreasing daylight, changes in the magnetic field, and internal biological clocks and GPS-like systems have been linked to migration.

Migration is a dangerous period for animals. Severe weather, predators, and collisions with buildings in their path all contribute to what is often a hazardous trip south.

Occasionally, vagrants from another part of the continent are blown off course and wind up in Connecticut. Unusual species that have appeared in Connecticut over the past year include white-tailed kites from south Texas, broad-billed hummingbirds from Arizona, and white ibis from the southeastern states.

**From Your Friends at Roaring Brook Nature Center**

## Susan Duncan Docent

**Susan Duncan has been a volunteer for several years as a teaching docent; she also helps with special events and is a member at large on RBNC's auxiliary board.**

**Why do you volunteer at Roaring Brook, and why would you encourage others to volunteer there?**

I love the outdoors and teaching young children. I want to encourage them to learn about, and respect, the environment around them. I would encourage others to volunteer here because it helps to bring nature to children and you play a part in helping them understand it. It's also a great group of people I get to work with.

**What do you like best about volunteering?**

Getting to be outside, and leading the children on our nature trails.

**What do you like most about RBNC?**

The giving attitude of the staff and volunteers.

## Volunteer Spotlight

### Conny's Birthday continued from Page 1

Four miles of donated steel rod and over 15 tons of cement later, this lofty idea began to materialize, bringing Conny from an image on a blueprint to a real-life 18-foot-tall representation of Connecticut's state animal. From the hand-crafted life-sized teeth and hand-blown glass eyes, Conny was made with care from the time and materials donated by whale lovers.

Conny's birthday was also marked by the passing of blueprints from Conny's designer, Robins Barstow, to The Children's Museum President and CEO, Kevin Sullivan. The day included a visit from several members of the Cetacean Society International (CSI), some of whom helped build Conny.

CSI is an all-volunteer, non-profit conservation, education, and research organization which exists in over 25 countries. They support and promote benign activities such as regulated whale-watching, non-lethal and humane research, and widespread educational, environmental and observation programs relating to free-roaming cetaceans internationally. - S. Rosenthal

# the children's museum

950 Trout Brook Drive  
West Hartford, CT 06119-1437

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org.  
US Postage  
**PAID**  
Hartford, CT  
Permit No. 2469

## Where Science and Nature Are Fun

Visit us online at [www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org](http://www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org) to register for programs, find us on Facebook, see our event and show schedule, learn about our animals and more.

## Claws for a Cause!

The Rotary Club of West Hartford is holding its 3rd Annual Lobster Fest on Saturday, September 25 – and they have picked The Children’s Museum as the beneficiary charity! Tickets can be purchased at the Museum or on our Website.

### Rotary Club of West Hartford Lobster Fest

Saturday, September 25, 2010

2:00 pm to 5:00 pm

at the American School for the Deaf

Live entertainment provided by The Street Vipers

\$45 per person - choice of Lobster or Steak dinner

\$15 per child - choice of Hot Dog or Hamburger Dinner

No tickets will be sold at the door.



Visit [www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org](http://www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org) for more details and to purchase tickets online.

**We hope you'll support the Museum and enjoy a great lobster dinner!**

## Shop for your favorite cause: The Children's Museum

The Children's Museum is participating in Macy's Shop for a Cause on Saturday, October 16. The next time you visit us, pick up an All-Day Shopping Savings Pass for a \$5 donation (available at the front desk), then head over to any Macy's on October 16 to shop.

Your exclusive shopping pass entitles you to save 10-20% on most items, plus a full day of special events and entertainment. Get passes for your friends, too, and make a day of it shopping for your favorite cause – The Children's Museum. *Please note:* in order to support the Museum, you must purchase your shopping pass from us.

See the FUNdraiser page on our Website for information and more ways to support The Children's Museum.

**SHOP  
FOR A  
CAUSE**

## United Way Community Campaign

The United Way will be conducting its annual Community Campaign during the next few months. If you participate in your employer's campaign, please remember that you can choose to designate The Children's Museum as the recipient of your charitable contribution. Talk with your employer's personnel office to learn how.

**Help introduce children to the wonders of science and nature! Designate your United Way contribution to The Children's Museum.**

## Wiremold/Legrand Brings Science to Our Youngest Friends

Thanks to an \$8,000 grant from Wiremold/Legrand, The Children's Museum will enhance our *Science Achievement For All* education initiative with a great new planetarium program for pre-K and young elementary grades. The company's gift will bring *One World, One Sky: Big Bird's Adventure* and corresponding activities to classrooms across the community that cannot afford a paid Museum field trip.

Celebrating its 15th year, *Science Achievement For All* focuses on state curriculum-aligned, hands-on science education for younger children and families. From preschool to middle school years, we reach tens of thousands of students in high-need schools every year. *Science Achievement For All* was the first program of its kind in Connecticut to offer science learning programs free of charge to urban classrooms.

We thank Wiremold/Legrand and all our *Science Achievement For All* partners in bringing important hands-on learning into classrooms and helping to close the science achievement gap in Connecticut.



Charitable Foundation



Fisher Foundation J. Walton Bissell Foundation, Inc.

Pfizer Foundation Wiremold / Legrand The Ellen Jeanne Goldfarb Memorial Charitable Trust

## Explore the Benefits of Corporate Membership

Do you work for one of these companies?

**Aetna**

**Farmington Bank**

**Hamilton Sundstrand**

**The Hartford**

**LAZ Parking**

**Travelers**

**UTC and its companies**

**Wiremold/Legrand**



If so, you can visit The Children's Museum and Roaring Brook Nature Center for FREE. Bring friends and family with you and receive \$1 off each of their admission fees. Receive 15% off memberships, too. Just show your company ID at the admission desk and let us know you work for one of our corporate members.

Corporate membership is a great way to support the Museum while providing benefits to your employees.

Visit the "Join Us" section of our Website for more information.