

Welcome Robert Griesmer New President and CEO

Robert R. Griesmer joined The Children's Museum in September after serving as Chief Operating Officer for 21 years at the Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk, where he nearly doubled attendance and ushered in a new IMAX Theater complex.



Bob was welcomed to his new post at The Children's Museum with a reception at the Pond House in West Hartford on October 18. Enjoying the reception at the Pond House are (l-r) new trustee Steve Adler of United Healthcare, Bob Griesmer, Emily Peregrin of Aetna, and Richard Alleyne of The Hartford Financial Services Group.

Whale Tales sat down with Bob to get to know him better and find out what he has in store for The Children's Museum.

Q: What about The Children's Museum made you want to become the President and CEO?

There are many reasons I decided to accept the offer to lead The Children's Museum. First of all, the uniqueness of the institution captivated me. I am not aware of any other children's museum that combines live animal exhibits, hands-on interactive exhibits, a planetarium, and a preschool, and has a 165-acre nature preserve with five miles of walking trails. The Children Museum has a rich heritage that dates back to 1927 and I was impressed with the community's love of this institution. This community wants the Museum to survive and prosper. We have our challenges, but we also have our opportunities.

Q: What has impressed you the most in the time you've been here?

I have been impressed by the commitment of the board and staff. The last several years have been difficult, as they have been for most museums across the country. While the staff was forced to work with less, their dedication and commitment to our mission and the community we serve has been quite impressive. The Board of Trustees has been totally supportive of doing what is necessary to achieve our objectives. A President and CEO could not ask for much more.

Q: Museum leadership has been working toward building a new facility in town for a while now.

How will you bring this project to fruition?

We have the challenge of repositioning the Museum in the market and building attendance and earned revenue, as well as planning for a new home in West Hartford. I had success with this during my 21 years at The Maritime Aquarium. I plan to lead this institution on a path that will result in a much more vibrant visitor experience. In the short term, we will reposition the institution in the market and set the stage for our move to a new location. The planning started the day I arrived and we are fast-tracking site selection, financial feasibility studies, design, and content development. We are going to develop a plan to build a new Museum that will not only serve our community, the region, and the State of Connecticut, but will garner national attention for how the content is utilized by children and their teachers, parents and grandparents.

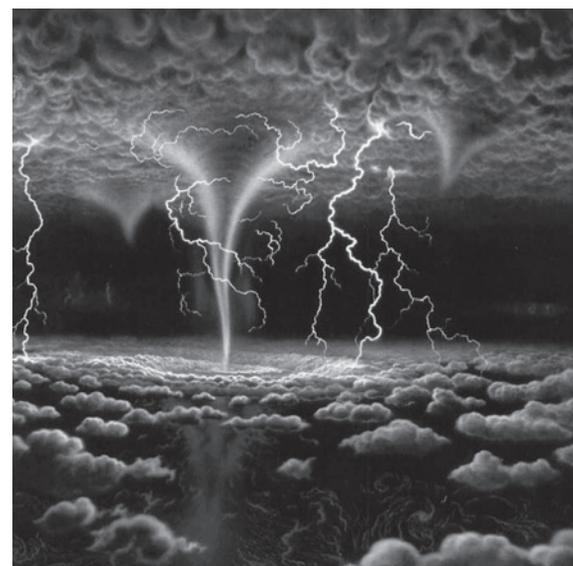
WILDEST WEATHER IN THE SOLAR SYSTEM

New Show Premieres in the Travelers Science Dome

Join National Geographic on a spectacular journey to witness the most extraordinary, powerful and mysterious weather phenomena in the Solar System.

Experience weather extremes in space as never before. Fly through the dense atmosphere on Venus, methane storms on Titan, and centuries-old anti-cyclones on Jupiter. We'll explore the Solar System alongside our specially designed imaginary spacecraft so sophisticated that it can take us into the fiercest of planetary cauldrons - bringing us up close with the most beautiful, powerful and mysterious weather phenomena in the Solar System. From lightning 10,000 times stronger than on Earth, to 1,200-miles-per-hour winds nearly twice the speed of sound, to five-mile high dust storms that could engulf entire planets, this weather will make audiences glad they live on Earth.

Packed with breathtaking visuals and state-of-the-art CGI, *Wildest Weather in the Solar System* is an original production created by National Geographic's award-winning giant-screen production team. Check our website for show times. Because of the unique nature of this program, tickets are \$4/person for members and \$5/person for reciprocal and non-members. No coupons or passes will be accepted. A planetarium show is still included with general admission.



A lightning storm on Jupiter is just one example of the *Wildest Weather in the Solar System*.

Give the Gift of Membership

Membership to The Children's Museum allows a family to enjoy our exhibits and daily activities as often as they like, for a full year, as well as generous discounts on programs and events. To purchase a membership, call 860.231.2830 x51 or go to www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org and click on **Join Us**.

Save the Date for

**A Child's World Gala
Saturday, May 5, 2012**

For more information, contact Robin DeBerry at 860.231.2830 x23.

Calendar of Events

Winter 2011

To register for the programs you see here (unless otherwise noted), call **860.231.2830 x44** or e-mail **Events@TheChildrensMuseumCT.org**.

Online registration is also available for many of our events and programs. Visit our website at **www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org**.

Member prices are for The Children's Museum/Roaring Brook Nature Center members. All prices are per person.

the children's museum

Vacation Science

Join us for action-packed days of scientific investigation, Museum exploration, amazing planetarium shows and up-close encounters with live animals. You'll have such fun you'll want to come back for more.

9:00 am to 4:00 pm • For children in grades 1 to 5
\$60/day for members • \$70/day for non-members

Monday, December 26 **Downright Dirty**

Dig up the dirt on soil science. Find out why all living things need it to survive.

Tuesday, December 27 **Time Travelers**

Take a look back at some of the great inventions and create your own for the future.

Wednesday, December 28

Poachers, Pollution, and Predators, Oh My!

Meet some precious animals and find out why they are disappearing from our ecosystems.

Thursday, December 29 **Bouncin' Bodies**

Learn the science behind how your body moves. Exercise your body and your brain. Find out what makes you tick.

Friday, December 30 **Frosty Friday**

Chill out with icy investigations. Be a cool chemist and fuel some frigid fun.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Monday, January 16

Lords and Ladies of the Science Lab

Discover the science behind the amazing architecture of medieval castles. Launch into a catapult challenge.

We're planning exciting explorations and awesome discoveries for February Vacation Week, February 20 to 24.

The Children's Museum Preschool December Vacation Program

Monday, December 26 to Friday, December 30

A Winter Wonderland

9:00 am to 12:30 pm • For children ages 3 ½ to 6
\$35/day for members • \$40/day for non-members

To Register, call the Preschool at 860.523.7449 or register online.

Mars Madness

Invite your friends to our monthly community Mars evenings. There's free admission for everyone from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm. Each month, we'll have different space-related activities and planetarium programs to complement our Mars exhibits. Museum exhibits close at 4:00 pm. Activities continue in the planetarium and classrooms.

No pre-registration is needed.

December 28 • January 25 • February 22

Hours of Admission

Tuesday to Saturday 9:00 am to 4:00 pm **Sunday** 11:00 am to 4:00 pm

The Museum is **open** on Monday, December 26; New Year's Day, January 1; Martin Luther King Jr. Day, January 16; and President's Day, February 20.

The Museum closes at 1:00 pm on December 24 and is closed on Christmas Day, December 25.

Family Science Sundays

Thanks to a generous grant from **Northeast Utilities Foundation and Connecticut Light and Power**, we've planned another year of monthly Family Science Sundays. Monthly Family Science Sunday programs run from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm on designated Sundays and are **free** with general admission.

December 18 **Electromagnetic Sunday**

We'll have spectacular demos of electricity, plus strange hands-on experiments with magnets, batteries, and static charges.

January 15 **Old School Sunday**

Go retro with a look at old technology, movies FX, and video games. See presentations by the Mark Twain House, Sturbridge Village, and the Noah Webster House.

February 19 **Forensics Sunday**

Meet the West Hartford Police K9 unit and try activities with fingerprinting, blood typing, code cracking, DNA, and more.

Northeast Utilities
Foundation



Connecticut
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Saturday, December 17

Winter Solstice Celebration

6:00 pm to 8:00 pm Snow date: December 18

The Museum's halls will be decked for the holidays. In the planetarium, we will explore the science behind our year's shortest day. Afterwards we'll celebrate the season with crafts, a bonfire, and telescope viewing.

\$5/person for members • \$6/person for non-members



Saturday January 28

Wolf Night

4:30 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/person for members

\$10/person for non-members

Saturday, January 21

Chinese New Year

6:00 pm to 8:00 pm

We will celebrate Chinese New Year in the Science Dome with traditional food, crafts, and stories. If the weather is clear, we will use our telescopes in the courtyard.

Pre-registration is required.

\$5/person for members • \$6/person for non-members

Museum Shares in Bequest from West Hartford Friend

The Children's Museum was one of several charities to receive a bequest from the estate of Lucille Diorio, a longtime West Hartford resident. A former art teacher at Duffy Elementary School, Mrs. Diorio was 89 when she died in April 2009. The Museum is very grateful for Mrs. Diorio's generosity.

An estate plan is an easy and wonderful way to support The Children's Museum. By simply naming The Children's Museum as a beneficiary in your will, you provide support for the hundreds of thousands of children we serve.

If you would like to include the Museum in your estate plans, please contact Susan Stoppelman at 860.231.2830 x28 or ssoppelman@TheChildrensMuseumCT.org.



ROARING BROOK NATURE CENTER

70 Gracey Road • Canton, CT 06019 • 860.693.0263

For a full list of winter programs, please visit the website at www.roaringbrook.org.

Nature Center Hours

Tuesday through Saturday: 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. **Sunday:** 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. The Nature Center will close at 3:00 pm on December 24 and is closed on December 25 and January 1.

Winter Discovery Days

Enrichment programs are available for 3- and 4-year-olds accompanied by parents/caregivers, and for children in kindergarten readiness programs and grades K-3.

December Vacation Program

Tuesday-Friday, December 27-30 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Where is the WILD in Winter? (Grades K-1)

Tracking the Wild (Grades 2-4)

Connecticut Explorers (Grades 5-8) - Includes 9:00 am to 3:30 pm all-day field trip to the CT shore to look for seals and visitors from the far north. Pre-registration is required. Visit our website for fees and additional information.

Full Moon Hike

Saturday, January 7 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm

Dress warmly as we'll head to the open field for some moon gazing, astronomy, and listening for great horned owls, followed by hot cider and cookies in the auditorium. \$5/members, \$7/non-members. Pre-registration required.

Winter in the Woods

Thursdays, January 12, 19, 26; February 2 9:30am to 11:00 am

Designed for homeschool families, this is a hands-on, active exploration of nature in winter and is appropriate for children ages 3-8 with an adult. \$40/child for all four sessions. Discounts extended to families with multiple children attending this program. Pre-registration is required.

Curious Kids

Monday, January 30 1:00 pm to 2:15 pm

Take a walk on the trail in winter. This class includes a story and a craft and is for children ages 3-6 accompanied by an adult. \$8/members, \$10/non-members. Pre-registration with payment is required.

Family Winter Survival

Saturday, February 11 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Lost in the woods in winter? Learn to survive a night outdoors. This program includes fire building and shelter construction and is not geared for children under age 9. Dress for winter weather. \$5/members, \$6/non-members. Maximum \$15 per family for members, \$18 per family for non-members. Pre-registration is requested.

February Vacation Program

Tuesday-Friday, February 21 to 24 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

February Nature Carnival for Grades K-5 includes snow and ice, animal tracking and, depending upon weather conditions, snowshoeing or even maple sugaring in this four-day vacation program. Pre-registration with payment is required for these programs. Visit our website for fees and additional information.

Maple Sugaring in Your Own Backyard

Sunday, March 4 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Our annual demonstration teaches you how to make maple syrup the easy way. \$4/members, \$6/non-members. Half-price for children 12 and under. Pre-registration is not required.

Save the Date: Tuesday, March 27, **Flatbread Company in The Shoppes at Farmington Valley** Fundraiser for Roaring Brook Nature Center

Volunteer Spotlight



Janis Kjellquist has volunteered with the Roaring Brook Nature Center Raptor Program since 2004. She says of her experience, "These birds rely heavily on their senses to survive, even in captivity. Working with them allows you to develop great insight into an individual bird and its behaviors. Volunteering puts me more in tune with nature that is all around me. It's a wonderful experience."

Canopy Clues: Mysteries of the Rainforests Starts January 27

We know you're never ready to leave The Children's Museum when the time comes. Now you don't have to! Spend the night instead. Our new season of overnight programs for scout and youth groups starts soon.

Each evening combines an indoor, overnight adventure with exciting, interactive science education. Campers assume the role of rainforest detectives as they uncover the mysteries of the world's tropical rainforests during two specialized workshops. The fun continues as they investigate the Museum's exhibit halls, take part in a scavenger hunt through our Wildlife Sanctuary, and experience a live planetarium tour of the stars, planets and Moon of the current night sky. Visit our website for dates, times, fees and detailed information.

If you are a high school student excited by science and intrigued by this overnight experience, consider volunteering for our Overnight Program. Contact our Volunteer Coordinator at 860.231.2830 x38 or our Education Director at 860.231.2830 x35.



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Where Science and Nature Are Fun

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news and event information.

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**Dinosaurs Alive &
Jurassic Treehouse**



Need a great gift for the person who has everything? Use the enclosed envelope.

Make a donation to The Children's Museum in someone's honor. It's a great feeling to know that because of you, The Children's Museum can continue its good work. We will send a certificate to your honoree so he or she can enjoy your special gift. Thank you for considering The Children's Museum during your holiday shopping.

It's easy. Use the enclosed envelope or go to www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org and click on **Donate Now**.

Celebrate Your Child's Special Day at The Children's Museum

Choose from a variety of party themes to make your party memorable and educational. A traditional party includes a tour of our hands-on exhibits, a visit with an animal friend, and a show in the Travelers Science Dome. Upgrade your party to include a special themed activity. Become a paleontologist for the day and make your own fossil, or learn about Connie, our sperm whale, and make a take-home sealife friend.

Choose a private party and the Museum is yours to enjoy before we open to the general public. For more information on these party options and more, visit our website and click on **Birthday Parties**.



Attention Teachers

If you're thinking of taking a field trip or booking an outreach program at your school this year, look no further. Our Education Program Guide is the perfect resource for you, and it's available any time with one quick, easy download.

Go to thechildrensmuseumct.org/pdf/TRG.pdf to download the guide and learn about the field trip and outreach opportunities available from The Children's Museum and Roaring Brook Nature Center.



Registration Open for September 2012 Classes at The Children's Museum Preschool

Classes are available for children ages 3, 4, and 5. The Preschool is unique in how it uses the many resources offered at the Museum to enhance and expand children's learning. Weekly lessons include live animal interaction, physical science lessons, planetarium shows, and Museum exhibits.

Call the Preschool at 860.523.7449 for additional information.

Turtle Power

Wildlife Sanctuary Animals Weather the Power Outage at Mr. Science's House

In place of his usual *Hands-on Science* experiment, outreach manager Jonah Cohen – our own Mr. Science – shares how he and his wife, planetarium director Kristie Mazzoni, hosted some special house guests.

When the snowstorm on October 29 knocked out power to The Children's Museum for eight days, we were left with a problem. With no heat, and no electricity for heat lamps, what to do with the scores of cold-blooded animals in our care? Littlefoot the Canada lynx might scoff at chilly temperatures, but our ball pythons and others surely did not.

Many Museum staff members and friends stepped up to provide temporary homes for over 50 reptiles and amphibians. Electricity returned to Kristie's and my home after a mere 2½ days, and thus it was that a half-dozen water turtles ended up camping out in our bathroom. Actually, they started out in our spare bedroom, but they wasted no time climbing out of their bin and scattering to all corners of the room – under chairs, under the bed, behind a TV. So, off to the smaller (and uncarpeted) bathroom they went.

We have worked with turtles for years, yet the blackout gave us the opportunity to learn more about our shell-laden coworkers. For example:

- Turtles seem to enjoy crawling underneath empty shoe boxes.
- As a rather anti-social red-eared slider demonstrated, turtles can make noise. They can hiss, and make a sound vaguely like a growling house cat. Speaking of cats, they are evidently unable to figure out just what turtles are.
- The red-eared slider also made quite an impressive racket for a small (dessert-plate sized) animal, by climbing over objects and his fellow turtles, and back down onto the linoleum floor.
- It turns out that a turtle can vertically wedge itself behind a computer hard drive tower.

We're not sure how useful this information will be. But in any case, once power returned, our reptilian guests returned home to the Museum, none the worse for wear, and hopefully having learned a little about us, too. Or possibly not.



Red-eared slider