

Around Town

By Bob Ruggiero



When Aquarium conservation horticulturist Gwendy Womble was invited to speak at a regular meeting of the Community Appearance Commission (CAC), she immediately accepted but invited the CAC to have the meeting at the aquarium. On Wednesday, January 20, the CAC group was met at the front door by Gwendy who led them on a walking tour of the aquarium and grounds while she talked about the day to day operations of Aquarium plant life. She explained that they use cisterns to collect rain water for plants and to wash cars because it keeps the pH level down. The overflow goes into a rain garden where the inkberries grow. When leaves and limbs fall from the many native plants in residence, they are left on the ground to produce organic material. The Aquarium consists of 265 acres, including a wildlife preserve as well as an additional natural preserve in Salter Path. The tour continued to the greenhouse where Gwendy explained that plants appearing dead are just dormant. In front of the Aquarium, Gwendy pointed out a variety of plants: button bush; hydrangea in the wet area; needle rush, which is native; blue flag iris; heavy metal grass; sweet betsy; and a French tree from the piedmont.

Although CAC chairperson Bob Curry had served as a part-time staff member of the earlier facility, he found the current Aquarium to be a whole new experience. The array of heavy duty equipment, the beautiful background murals, the three story waterfall that greets Aquarium visitors, the tank of playful river otters, and the numerous exhibit rooms were just a few of the features that made this meeting a unique experience. As Bob noted, "The entire experience carried me back to when times and the equipment were much simpler."

Overall, the trip to the Aquarium was classified as a real treat for all involved.



Fred Payne, Ike Pipkin and Fred Fulcher were sworn in at the January 25 meeting of the Pine Knoll Shores Planning Board. They join existing members: Doug Browne (Chairman), Dominic Baccollo, Roger Middlesteadt, Bill Strube and Kathy Werle.



The Public Service crew, pictured left to right David Watts (In the bucket), Ernie Guthrie, and Howard Henderson had the task of cleaning up broken or damaged tree limbs after the Big Snow.

The Book Nook

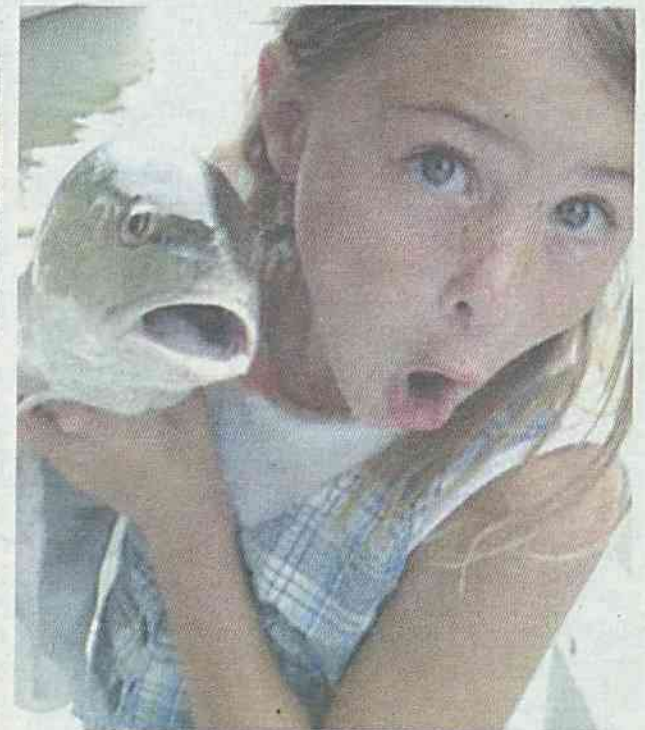
By Dot Miller

Members of the Friends' Board at Bogue Banks Library are pleased with the success of a recent innovation, an on-going sale of newer books at The Book Nook. This gives residents of Pine Knoll Shores a chance to purchase books before they appear in the regular April and August used book sales. Since its inception last spring, sales have been going very well, enhancing the current year's income and making other book offerings possible. The Book Nook is across from the door as you enter the library, and a receptacle for money is handy. Members of the Friends' Board are taking turns managing the place, keeping the books orderly and the shelves well-stocked with a steady display of new offerings.

The Winner Is

Put your fins and flippers together to applaud the finest "fish face" that the North Carolina Aquariums found in a year-long competition. Kayley Ireland of Merritt mimicked the mouth on a puppy drum that she had caught to win the "Show Us Your Fish Face" grand prize. Kayley chose "Big Mouth" as her Fish Face name. The package for Kayley and her family includes a two-night stay at the Hampton Inn and Suites in Pine Knoll Shores, dinner at a local restaurant, a behind-the-scenes tour at the Aquarium and a family membership in the North Carolina Aquarium Society.

Throughout the past year, people of all ages puckered, pouted and puffed their way onto the Aquarium contest website. Judges scrutinized an ocean of entries and top vote-getters to choose one winner per month. Those 12 each enjoyed a \$25 North Carolina Aquariums' gift basket of goodies, and moved on to compete for the grand prize



Kayley caught the 22-inch puppy drum shown in her winning photo while fishing with her grandparents. She didn't know at the time that her pursed-lip pose could be a potential prize-winner.

"She loves to make people laugh, so she made her fish face and knew we would get a kick out of it," said her mother, Heather Ireland. "It wasn't until afterwards, when I was sharing the hilarious picture with friends at work, that I found out about the contest. It's a great honor, and we are truly appreciative."

The announcement of the grand prize winner ended the competition, but the winners and other fish faces can be viewed for a limited time at www.showusyourfishface.com.