

A FEW WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

President's Message

John Kanzia, Environmental Quality Manager, Brookfield Zoo



I have heard the term “dumpster fire” used a lot to describe 2020; a global pandemic, economic uncertainty, televised police brutality, protests and marches for racial and social equity often overshadowed by opportunistic and catastrophic looting and burning, hurricanes, floods, wildfires, and the list goes on. Now we have the presidential election, politicization of the pandemic, the leveraging of American votes for much-needed economic stimulus relief, healthcare, and a COVID-19 vaccine, and large rallies that could very well facilitate the continued spread of this devastating virus.

In these frightening and uncertain times, it is reassuring to know that we have friends and colleagues out there that we know we can trust and depend on. Do not hesitate to reach out to fellow AZFA members via phone, email, text, or the website forum if you need anything. Through all that has transpired this year, AZFA members have come together like never before to network and not only help one another get through the shutdowns, lay-offs, re-openings, and the virtual annual conference

but also through the difficult loss of friends and loved ones. I could not be more proud to be a part of this organization and all of those working hard behind the scenes to keep things running, and who stepped up to host and participate in chats and conference sessions when we are all so very busy and stretched thin. Look for our chats to start up again after the holidays.

I would like to take a moment to recognize Sean Woods, Grace Rettig, Samanthe Peterson, and Nikki Myers. Sean worked hard to put together what was gearing up to be a fantastic conference this year in Louisville. I look forward to rescheduling when we are able to meet in person again. Grace came out of retirement to help with this year's conference hotel contract negotiations, and then also negotiated the cancellation of that contract without penalty (she has earned that “second retirement”). We appreciate the roadmap that she has left us to follow for future contract negotiations. Samanthe stepped up and hosted weekly COVID Zoom chats, put together slides for and managed the virtual conference, and also ran the virtual election. I do not know what the AZFA would do without her. Nikki stepped into the Treasurer position and implemented some changes that will allow for easier transition to future Treasurers. She also helped out with the COVID

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Zoom chats and virtual conference preparation.

I would like to thank our virtual conference sponsors: Dude Solutions, Thermeq, Hayward, Cemrock, IPEX, and COST of Wisconsin for your continued support, sharing your knowledge and expertise, and for making our first virtual conference a success. We could not hold our annual conferences without your support and I look forward to when we can gather together safely again. Your generous support will also allow the AZFA to waive professional membership dues for 2021; we know that 2021 is going to be another challenging year, but we will get through this together.

Let's keep the networking and conversations going as

we work our way towards next year's virtual conference! You do not have to wait until after the holidays when we resume scheduled Zoom chats to reach out to colleagues. The forum page on the website is a powerful, yet underutilized resource. I urge you to subscribe to as many forum topics as you can; you will receive an email notification when a post goes up on one of your subscribed topics.

Congratulations to Trisha Crowe, Fred Ramey, and Florence Tang, who are new to the AZFA Board of Directors. I am looking forward to a great year and I look forward to working with all of you. Thank you for the opportunity to lead our organization. We network, we build, we protect!

PAST PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Past President's Message

Tommy Bryant, Vice President of Facilities, Oklahoma City Zoological Park and Botanical Garden



Wow, what a year! There have been numerous changes and many of them have upended our lives as we know it. Personally, I have had set backs, losses, and gains and through it all I survived. The resilience of people in difficult situations

has always amazed me. We roll with what we are dealt and make the best of any problems that present themselves. We band together and come to the aid of family, neighbors, and friends.

There always seems to be more to do and more to handle. We think we will reach out to thank those folks that have helped us out once it is over, but soon get busy and forget. Let's not forget! I have contacted several of my fellow Directors and Vice Presidents for help and advice, and all have been helpful and accommodating. I hope we remember to keep this in

mind when asked for help. As we move forward in these unstable times, let's reflect on the people that we depend on, make sure we thank them properly, and return the favor if at all possible.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one who helped make this year bearable, and jumped in to participate in the COVID-19 sessions we held. Hearing from those who are going through the same struggles as you are helps us band together and learn from each other. If we do not have the answer, we can glean from others what works and what does not.

Looking back, with all the problems and issues, time has passed quickly. One morning you think how will we ever get through this? Then six months down the road, there are a whole new set of problems, and the others do not seem as bad as we thought. We will survive.

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My time as President has been a great experience, full of challenges and opportunities I never thought I was up for. Thank you Brian Timm, for getting me involved and thank you to the people behind the scenes that keep us going. There are way too many to name and I would hate to miss anyone, but these folks ROCK. I missed seeing all your faces at the conference and getting to chat with everyone, but

there will be other opportunities.

I look forward to what lies ahead and wish John Kanzia the very best of luck. I know he will do a fantastic job and I hope you will all support him any way you can. So for now, my wish is that everyone has a great holiday season and a great new year.

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE RECAP

2020 Virtual Conference Recap

Samanthe Peterson, Sustainability Coordinator, San Antonio Zoo

This has been a year of challenges, and the annual conference was no exception. Polling the membership this summer showed that most facilities no longer had funds for travel, even if it were deemed safe to do so. The Board reluctantly decided to cancel the Louisville conference and host a virtual event instead. We are extremely grateful to the Seelbach Hotel for waiving the cancellation fee and hope to bring the conference back to Louisville in the future.

Based on positive feedback from the Zoom chats created to discuss the COVID-19 response, we opted for a month-long series of presentations that included vendor spotlights and a participant raffle sponsored by COST of Wisconsin. Bob Wengel kicked off the sessions with a fascinating recap of the Shedd Aquarium's experience trying to reopen safely amidst the dual challenges of the pandemic and civil unrest. The following week, Nikki Myers gave an insightful presentation on diversity and inclusion that generated some great discussion on the chat. Florence Tang and Erin Donato inspired the group in week three with their summary of sustainability efforts at Houston Zoo, including a look at their masterplan and brand-new Pantanal exhibit.

The final session included the annual Business Meeting, where the 2021 budget was approved and officer election results announced. The 2021 Board members are:

President - John Kanzia, Brookfield Zoo

Past President - Tommy Bryant, Oklahoma City Zoo

President-Elect - Trisha Crowe, Houston Zoo

Vice President - Fred Ramey, Point Defiance Zoo

Secretary - Dean Violetta, Cincinnati Zoo

Treasurer - Nikki Myers, Denver Zoo

Treasurer-Elect - Florence Tang, Houston Zoo

Director-at-Large Year 1 - Bob Wengel, Shedd Aquarium

Director-at-Large Year 2 - Allmon Forrester, John Ball Zoo

Director-at-Large Year 3 - Mark Fisher, Cincinnati Zoo

The meeting confirmed that next year's conference will also be virtual due to the ongoing impact of the pandemic. Members are encouraged to get involved and provide feedback to help make the 2021 event successful.

The big surprise of the conference was the announcement that individual professional memberships will be free in 2021! This was made possible by the generosity of our 2020 conference sponsors Thermeq, Hayward Flow Control, Cemrock, IPEX, and Dude Solutions.

The conference ended on a hopeful note with a panel discussion about the ways AZFA facilities have adapted and generated positive changes during the pandemic. The session highlighted the value of collaboration, a running theme in the AZFA this year. Thank you to everyone who has participated in the weekly chats, shared information on the forum, given a presentation, or sponsored the conference.

For anyone who was not able to attend the Zoom sessions, recordings of all four conference videos are available on www.azfa.org. Watch, share, and make plans to register for next year.

GET INVOLVED FOR 2021!

Get Involved for 2021!

With no in-person sign-up sheets this year, we are asking members to contact sam.peterson@sazoo.org to join committees. If you were on a committee last year, the chairperson will include you again for 2021 unless requested otherwise. Serving on a committee is a great way to network with fellow members and generally does not require a massive time commitment. Take your pick of one or more and make your mark in the AZFA!

Conference Committee (includes Programs & Education, Site Selection, and Fundraising) – organize sponsors, presenters, raffles, auctions, and hosting logistics for the annual conference

Publications – quarterly newsletter and website

Membership – outreach, communication, and benefits

Conservation – evaluate projects submitted for the Clark Waldram Fund conservation grant

Professional Relations – liaise with vendors and other industry organizations (e.g. AZA)

Honors & Awards – evaluate nominations for annual awards

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New Members

Associate

Michael Beglinger, NZP Planning and Programming
- Deputy Associate Director, National Zoological
Park / Smithsonian Conservation Biological Institute

Commercial

Greg Dykstra, Principal, CLR Design

Dave Haas, Project Executive, Pepper
Construction Company

Professional

Kat Echevarria, Manager of Animal Care &
Training, St. Louis Aquarium at Union Station

Rick Holzworth, Director of Support Services,
Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens

Antonio Knighton, Director of Maintenance,
Chehaw Park & Zoo

Melissa Lewkowich, Vice President, Risk
& Facilities Management, Chicago Zoological
Society - Brookfield Zoo

Ron May, Director of Facilities Management,
Chicago Zoological Society - Brookfield Zoo

Trenida Norment, Project and Sustainability
Manager, John Ball Zoo

Ben Roberts, Director of Project and Risk
Management, The Zoo at Chehaw

William Scott, Director, Flint RiverQuarium

Brad Smith, AIA+NCARB, VP of Facilities-
Construction-Design, Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG
Aquarium

THANK YOU to our vendor sponsors!
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by supporting the annual conference:



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Calendar

Deadline for articles for the next newsletter: January 18th

Editor's Note

Jennifer Golden, Operations Project Manager, Zoo New England

I would like to take a moment to express thanks to our Commercial Members for their support throughout the year and to our 2020 virtual conference sponsors (Thermeq, Hayward Flow Control, Cemrock, IPEX, and Dude Solutions) for underwriting individual AZFA professional memberships for 2021.

Advertising in The Outlet is a great way for companies to target our unique group of professionals dedicated to the construction and maintenance of aquarium and zoo buildings, exhibits, and systems. If you are a Commercial Member interested in advertising please contact me at jgolden@zoonewengland.org