

THE EXHIBIT

The Newsletter of UL Lafayette Science Museum



Letter from the Director

DR. JENNIFER E. HARGRAVE, UL LAFAYETTE SCHOOL OF GEOSCIENCES



Greetings from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette Science Museum. As I write the last Director's Note of the year, I am filled with pride for what we were able to accomplish, as well as gratitude for all of you, our generous museum supporters. We developed our monthly STEM Saturday event, experienced our highest-ever attended event, brought back the fan-favorite Documentary Date Night, created several important partnerships, and are on track to exceed 20,000 visitors for the year! My heart-felt thanks to all of you who have supported our museum this year.

We also learned a lot this year and are making some updates. We are simplifying the Membership tiers and expanding the levels of giving. We are hopeful these will be available for purchase on our website soon. Consider giving the gift of STEM to family and friends this year by giving a membership. As a reminder, all memberships may be counted as charitable gifts for tax purposes.

While we revel in our successes, we don't have plans to slow down! We have new exhibits in the works for the spring, including one that will highlight our local fossil finds. We will continue our current events and are planning additional events for both members and non-members. Be sure to check back for more information.

Best wishes,

Dr. Jennifer Hargrave, Museum Director



New Museum Membership Levels

MORE BENEFITS & WAYS TO SUPPORT SCIENCE IN LAFAYETTE

With new membership options at general and premium levels, you can support our educational mission, outreach efforts and the creation of new exhibits. Visit anytime with your membership and never miss an exhibit, planetarium show or event. Memberships are valid for 12 months from the purchase date and count as charitable gifts for tax purposes.

CORE BENEFITS FOR ALL GENERAL MEMBERSHIPS

- Unlimited free visits to museum & planetarium;
- Receive our e-newsletter *The Exhibit*;
- Invitations to member-only previews & events;
- Free admission to over 360 museums and science centers worldwide through the ASTC Travel Passport Program
- Museum Store Discount (varies by level); &
- Discounts on camps, classes, & some events.

INDIVIDUAL \$65 - 1 adult, core benefits + 10% store discount.

DUAL \$100 - 2 adults, core benefits + 10% store discount.

FAMILY \$125 - 2 named adults + your children or grandchildren (age 17 & younger), core benefits + 10% store discount.

SUPPORTING \$275 - Family benefits + a VIP Gallery Tour of special exhibitions upon request.

*Additional Adult \$45 - Add to any membership level.

*Current UL Student, Faculty, Staff - 10% off any level.

PREMIUM MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

These membership levels provide crucial support for all Museum activities. Members in this distinguished group enjoy exclusive privileges and opportunities in addition to the Core Member Benefits.

CURIOSITY LEVEL \$500

Family Membership with Core Benefits plus:

- Four one-day passes to share;
- 15% Museum Store discount;
- Sponsors membership for one local family.

INQUIRY LEVEL \$1,000

Family Membership with Core Benefits plus:

- Six one-day passes to share;
- 15% Museum Store discount;
- Invitations for a behind-the-scenes experience;
- Sponsors membership for 3 local families.

EXPLORATORY LEVEL \$2,500

Family Membership with Core Benefits plus:

- 10 one-day passes to share;
- 20% Museum Store discount;
- Invitations for a behind-the-scenes experience;
- Sponsors membership for 5 local families.

DISCOVERY LEVEL \$5,000

Family Membership with Core Benefits plus:

- 12 one-day passes to share;
- 20% Museum Store discount;
- Invitations for a behind-the-scenes experience;
- Sponsors membership for 7 local families.



**WE'RE
HIRING**

Event Supervisor



Job Summary:

Part time, experienced Event Supervisor to oversee external and internal events at the Museum. Must be willing to work during university hours or after hours and weekends for events, as needed. May provide clerical support when events are not scheduled. The ideal candidate will be highly organized, deadline driven and eager to create new and exciting experiences for Museum visitors in collaboration with Museum colleagues.

Qualifications

- Three or more years of experience in event coordination and/or office management
- Proficient in MS Office
- Outstanding communication skills
- Well-organized with multi-tasking skills
- Able to handle stressful situations in a calm manner
- Problem-solving and trouble-shooting ability
- Committed to customer needs and retention
- Must have a professional and courteous demeanor, positive attitude, and superior customer service at all times
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team
- Dependable through good attendance and adherence to timeliness
- Must have flexible schedule to work evenings and weekends, as needed
- Moderate level of physical activity required including lifting, loading equipment, climbing stairs, and long spans of time on your feet

Responsibilities

- Act as on-site contact and manager for regular and after-hours external and internal events at the museum to oversee event happenings and act quickly to resolve problems
- Coordinate with various Museum departments to fulfill internal meeting, programming, and event requests, as well as event details and logistics from Events Planning staff
- Maintain master calendar of events and ensure areas of security, custodial, and vendor/contract employees are appropriately assigned
- Compile necessary event forms and create a weekly production schedule distributed to all staff members
- Lead a weekly programming meeting to go over schedule and confirm key staff are clear on upcoming programming and event requirements
- Ensure museum regulations are followed throughout all events
- Oversee organization, cleanliness, and proper storage and handling of internal event supplies

Please send your resume and cover letter describing your relevant experience to

lafayettesciencemuseum@louisiana.edu. For full consideration, your resume should be received by December 1.



Documentary Date Night

SCIENCE FILMS IN THE MUSEUM GALLERY

Through a generous sponsorship by Aqueos, we have revived Documentary Date Night! At this fun event, we'll show a documentary film in the museum gallery. Bring a date, bring a friend or just yourself for an evening at the museum. Attendance for the educational film screening is free and will be followed by a discussion led by UL faculty.

On Thursday, Nov. 30, at 7pm, we will screen the documentary "Science Fair." Winner of the audience award at Sundance and SXSW, National Geographic Documentary Films' Science Fair follows nine high school students from around the globe as they navigate rivalries and setbacks on their journey to compete at The International Science and Engineering Fair. As 1,700 of the smartest, quirkiest teens from 78 different countries face off, only one will be named Best in Fair.

The film screening is free, donations are accepted and concessions and museum memberships will be for sale at the event. Doors open at 6:30pm and the film starts at 7pm.

Our next Documentary Date Night is scheduled for Jan. 25, 2024, and the film will be announced as that date approaches.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**STEM SATURDAY:
CHEMISTRY - NOV 11**

**MUSEUM CLOSED - NOV
22-24**

**DOCUMENTARY DATE
NIGHT: SCIENCE FAIR -
NOV 30**

**STEM SATURDAY: MATH -
DEC 9**

**VERY MERRY MUSEUM:
HOLIDAY CELEBRATION -
DEC 9**

**MUSEUM CLOSED - DEC
24 AND DEC 31**





Vote for the Museum's Window Wonderland

UL Lafayette Science Museum has been paired with local illustrator and designer Blake Lagneaux for the Downtown Window Wonderland contest. This year's window display theme is "Nature's Noel." Blake will be designing and installing a window display for the holidays in the front windows of the museum. The display will aim to celebrate the science of the season and nature's wintery wonders.

The window installation will be up at the end of November and voting will open on December 1, 2023. We hope you will visit us to see the completed windows and vote for UL Lafayette Science Museum in the contest. Look for updates on our Facebook and Instagram pages. We'll share the link for voting when it opens.

STEM Saturdays: Chemistry & Math

Join us Sat., Nov. 11 for STEM Saturday: Exploring Chemistry. Students from UL's Chemistry Department will ignite your passion for chemistry through captivating experiments, chemical reactions, and hands-on demonstrations of fundamental principles. Learn about the fascinating world of molecules and reactions and witness the magic of chemistry!

Then on Sat., Dec. 9, we'll focus on math for STEM Saturday: Puzzled. Solve brain teasers with UL's Math Department. Challenge your STEM skills with hands-on puzzles, including Euler and Pythagorean puzzles, and learn how a few basic math principles can solve so many problems!

STEM Saturdays are made possible through a grant from Halliburton and offers extra hands-on, educational activities related to a science topic. Extra activities are included with regular museum admission.



In the Planetarium

NOVEMBER & DECEMBER SCHEDULE

The universe awaits in our state-of-the-art, all-digital, full-dome planetarium! Currently, we have a weekday planetarium show Friday at 4 p.m. and weekend shows beginning with a Saturday morning children's program at 11:15 a.m. Programs continue Saturday and Sunday at 1:30, 2:45 and 4 p.m.

NOVEMBER	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
11:15 a.m.		Flight Adventures	
1:30 p.m.		We Choose Space	We Choose Space
2:45 p.m.		Larry Cat in Space	Larry Cat in Space
4:00 p.m.	The Sky Tonight	From Earth to the Universe	From Earth to the Universe
DECEMBER	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
11:15 a.m.		Flight Adventures	
1:30 p.m.		From Earth to the Universe	From Earth to the Universe
2:45 p.m.		Larry Cat in Space	Larry Cat in Space
4:00 p.m.	The Sky Tonight	We Choose Space	We Choose Space

**As we work to grow our planetarium team, our live planetarium show "The Sky Tonight" or an alternate special children's program will be shown based on staff availability.*

The Museum Store - Downtown Gift Destination

SHOP SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY AND EVERY DAY!

Did you know that UL Lafayette Science Museum has a gift shop? We do, and it's so much more than a souvenir stop!

Our store has unique STEM items that make great gifts for people of all ages. No need to drive all over Lafayette for a perfect gift – stop by to shop with us anytime you visit downtown and find a gift to remember. The store is open during normal business hours and museum admission is not required to visit and shop all the unique items we have to offer. You're sure to find something you'll love!

Like the museum, our store is open Wednesday-Friday 9am-5pm, Saturday 10am-6pm and Sunday 1pm-6pm. Shop our sale on Small Business Saturday, Nov. 25 and get 10% off storewide.



Annular Solar Eclipse Viewing Event

HUNDREDS OF VISITORS WITNESSED THE EVENT WITH US

An Annular Solar Eclipse was partially visible in Acadiana on Sat., Oct. 14, 2023, and more than 330 visitors attended UL Lafayette Science Museum's viewing event. Our planetarium guides worked for many weeks in advance of the eclipse training with retired planetarium curator Dave Hostetter to safely use the museum's solar telescopes and to present an educational solar eclipse program in the planetarium. On the day the eclipse, The planetarium crew and volunteers Charlotte Guillot and Josh Sonnier helped distribute solar eclipse glasses and assist visitors with pinhole box viewers and telescopes.

The term annular refers to a ring of sunlight that surrounds the silhouette of the Moon. This occurs when the Moon passes between the Sun and Earth while the Moon is at or near its farthest point from Earth. Because the Moon is farther away from Earth, it appears smaller than the Sun and does not completely cover the Sun. Although Lafayette was not in the path of annularity, it was still an exciting celestial event to observe. In Acadiana, we saw the moon cover 76% of the sun.

The next solar eclipse that will be visible here in Lafayette is on April 8, 2024, so mark your calendars!





Trick-or-Treat at the BOO-seum!

STEM ACTIVITIES, TRICK-OR-TREAT, COSTUME CONTEST AND SPECIAL GUESTS!

Trick-or-Treat at the BOO-seum was a whole lot of SPOOKY FUN! Guests of all ages dressed in costume for trick-or-treating. Students and volunteers presented STEM activities in chemistry, math and geosciences. Families and kids searched the museum for a pumpkin scavenger hunt. The afternoon culminated with a costume contest. Winners were awarded in four categories, Best Overall, Most Scientific, Spookiest and Silliest.

Prizes and treats were provided by Outback Steakhouse, Cumulus Media, Super 1 Foods and Rouses's Market. Pumpkins and decor were generously sponsored by All Seasons Nursery. Guest appearances were made by members of the Star Wars 501st Legion - Bast Alpha Garrison. Special thanks are due to our guest judges, UL Homecoming Queen 2023 Faryal Atif; KLFY Meteorologist Heath Morton; VP of Consulting Services for CGI, Will LaBar; and Robotics Expert Ben Black and his droid R2D2.



Meet Rene Sonnier

SOCIAL MEDIA, MARKETING, EVENTS AND PLANETARIUM GUIDE

We interviewed Rene Sonnier. As the part-time coordinator of museum experience, Rene works to plan events, promote the museum through social media, and write and design the newsletter. Most recently Rene has been training as a planetarium guide to present live programs and work with the museum's telescopes to help visitors safely view the recent solar eclipse.

What is your field of study and expertise?

I studied Mass Communications with a concentration in public relations and graduated from UL Lafayette. I started my career in state government working for the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals focused on primary care and rural health. I worked in public information for Children & Family Services and the Louisiana Workforce Commission for many years before returning to Lafayette, starting a family and working at the museum.

Tell us a bit about yourself?

I grew up in Abbeville in a large tight-knit family. I lived in Baton Rouge for a while, but have always been drawn back to this area not only because it feels like home, but because there's just a special sense of community here that is unique. I met my husband here, a scientist and mathematician. We have two children who are 8 and 3 years old. When I'm not working, my children keep me very busy. I love reading, travel, festivals, music and learning new things.

What is your role at the museum?

I work part-time as a coordinator of museum experience, and I do a little bit of everything, from social media and marketing to events, and recently began training to help out in the planetarium, which has been really interesting and rewarding.



Describe your history with the Museum?

I've always loved museums. After reading "From the Mixed Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler" by E.L. Konigsburg as a child, I think I became fascinated by museums and their collections and thought about being a museum curator. After my daughter was born, I was looking for change and a new direction in my work, something I could do locally. The timing was right, and an opportunity opened up at Lafayette Science Museum. I started working as an Education Coordinator in 2017 with the goal of promoting the museum's educational content and resources.

Tell us about your favorite exhibit?

I want more people to know about the *Basilosaurus*, a 50 ft prehistoric whale fossil that hangs from the ceiling in the atrium. One, because the first *Basilosaurus* fossil was discovered in the late 1800s by a landowner in North Louisiana, which is an incredible bit of history. Second, because the entire thing was built right here at the museum using molds of the original. Volunteers mixed, poured and cast and painted each part. Then they assembled it on a metal armature and lifted it on cables to hang from the ceiling. It was a huge job and really exciting to see it come together.

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Tell us something we may not know about the museum?

Many people don't know that our museum has been a hallmark of the community for more than 50 years. It began as a science education program by a women's group called Les Deux Douzaines (the two dozen). A member of the group traveled to a brand new planetarium in Texas, this was the 1960's at the height of the space race. She returned home and told the club that Lafayette needed its own planetarium. They raised the funds, worked with a local architect and opened the Lafayette Natural History Museum and Planetarium in 1969. After years, they sold the museum and its collection to the City of Lafayette for \$1. The museum was moved to the newly renovated Heymann Department Store in downtown with more than 10,000 square feet of exhibit space and renamed Lafayette Science Museum. After the closure in 2020, UL Lafayette entered an agreement with LCG to operate the museum as UL Lafayette Science Museum, and it was reopened.

Why is a science museum in Lafayette important?

The women of Les Deux Douzaines were visionaries. They saw the value of a museum for science education. They built something unique right here in Lafayette. At the time, it was unusual for a city the size of Lafayette, still very rural back in the late 60's to have its own science museum and planetarium. It's still true today. What we have here in downtown Lafayette provides a special opportunity to cultivate a love of science and interest in STEM fields for children and young people in the local and surrounding areas.

What is your earliest memory of the museum?

I remember visiting the museum when I was a child in the mid-80s at the original Girard Park location. The building was so interesting and other-worldly. Seeing the night sky in the planetarium was quite an awe-inspiring experience as a kid. It still is today.

How can the University continue to inspire people of all ages through the museum?

Through UL Lafayette, I think the museum can be a hub for science education and outreach. As part of a top-tier research university, UL Lafayette Science Museum can be a place to highlight the work of faculty, staff and student researchers to inspire the next generation of scientists with engaging and interactive exhibits that expand horizons and spark curiosity in the wonders of science.

What is your ideal vision for the future of the museum and its mission in the years to come?

Ideally, I want to see the museum grow and thrive with full support from the community, local leaders, businesses, schools, the University, patrons and donors. Maintaining the museum's presence and legacy is one thing, but growing it to its full potential will take collaboration and willing support from many sectors. Amenities like a science museum can bolster the community by attracting visitors and businesses and retaining and attracting young talent. Properly staffed and funded, the museum can truly focus on its mission to provide inspiring experiences in STEM fields for students, innovative research opportunities and preserve collections for exhibits, classrooms and scientific research.

What's the best thing you've heard from a visitor?

At our Halloween event, I wore a Ms. Frizzle costume from the children's series *The Magic School Bus*. I presented a live planetarium program about The Sky Tonight in costume and in character. Afterward, two little girls dressed as a princess and a mermaid came up to me with big smiles and wide eyes and just wanted a hug. An older girl raised her hand from her chair and when I called on her to ask her question, she said, "Space is so cool!"

Curiosity Corner

GROW A CRYSTAL SNOWFLAKE

Materials

- Borax powder
- Pipe cleaners
- Food coloring (optional)
- 3 mason jars
- Pencils

Instructions

1. Boil 6 cups of water in a pot on the stove.
2. Add 3 cups of borax powder to the boiling water and boil until the water turns clear. If there are a few pieces of borax at the bottom, it's OK! That means your solution is saturated and perfect for growing crystals.
3. Divide the water and borax solution between the 3 jars, about 2 cups per jar, depending on the size of your jars. Pour the liquid into jars and let it cool a little before allowing kids to handle the solution.
4. For colored crystals, add a 4-5 drops of food coloring to the solution.
5. While the borax solution is cooling, form pipe cleaners into snowflake shapes. Snowflakes have six points. Make sure the snowflake is small enough to fit easily through the mouth of the jar.
6. Add a long pipe cleaner or string and attach to a pencil to suspend the snowflake in the jar.
7. Lower the snowflake into the solution. Don't let the snowflake touch the bottom of the jar at all.
8. Set the jars aside and wait at least one hour. If you let it sit longer, more crystals will grow.
9. Pull the snowflakes out of the liquid and let them completely dry on a paper towel before handling the crystals.

