

## MAMEA MEMBERS VOICE THEIR NEEDS:

### Focus group results from MAMEA 2009 Mini-Conferences



In reactivating MAMEA's Mentorship Committee, the Board seeks to develop programs and services that best serve the Association's members. The more than 110 attendees of the 2009 Mini-Conferences in North Carolina, Virginia and Maryland served as member "focus groups." They responded to open-ended questions including:

- \* What kinds of activities and opportunities would they like to see MAMEA provide at mini-conferences?  
At annual conferences?
- \* What kinds of benefits would keep them involved in the Association?

#### Collated responses from Maryland and Virginia Mini-Conferences:

1. Individual schools may not have sufficient numbers to bring in major workshops.  
With its broader reach, could MAMEA facilitate regional or national representatives to offer workshops like:
  - \*Horseshoe crab rearing/training (e.g. Green Eggs & Sand) with experts from DE or MD
  - \*Project WET or WILD workshops, perhaps host Project WILD Facilitator trainings.
2. MAMEA should continue hosting workshops that directly give teachers information and resources that will have a direct impact on classroom instruction. Teachers need activities and materials that they can put into immediate use their classrooms.
3. Teachers would like additional kinds of MAMEA workshops, focused on fieldtrip opportunities.  
Suggestions included:
  - a) Continue or offer additional sleepovers at regional aquariums and museums that feature exhibits on diverse habitats and marine life.
  - b) Offer trips to field sites so teachers can experience and compare maritime ecosystems and habitats in their state.
  - c) Offer field trip opportunities that focus on oceanographic technology, e.g.:
    - \*Tour a university oceanography department or marine lab facility
    - \*Science on a Sphere presentations
    - \*Tour NOAA research offices, like the Hydrographic office, or research vessels
4. Marine science lecturers on topical issues: e.g. climate change, polar ocean research,
6. Teachers need information on good distance learning opportunities/resources.  
Could MAMEA could help connection teachers with institutions that have distance learning programs, e.g. Nauticus, NOAA Monitor Sanctuary and others.
7. Could MAMEA reach out to Home School parents and conduct professional development with this audience in mind?

We were gratified that several veteran MAMEA members reported that MAMEA offers the best professional development they do. We want to maintain and expand our service to members through relevant conferences and activities.

#### The North Carolina MAMEA Mini-Conference on January 23 held a Round Table Discussion

addressing "Goals for Successful Field Trips - Making the Most of Informal Education Resources."

The exchange between classroom teachers and informal educators resulted in an outline that covered:

- What teachers are looking for from their visit to a museum, aquarium, or science center;
- Tips from facility informal educators that can help teachers get the most out of their visit; and
- Some realities and challenges faced by both fieldtrip providers and users. One of the most important conclusions was that successful fieldtrip planning and implementation requires lots of communication! For the complete outline, visit the MAMEA website Conference page, scroll down to the North Carolina entry at \_\_\_\_\_ .