

A letter from the President

By David Whitaker
President, ZAG
Director of Retail Operations, North Carolina Zoo

It is with great excitement that I start this year as the ZAG President. I have met so many people within our industry both buyers and sponsors who I consider friends, it will be an honor serving you all. I have big shoes to fill with Judy stepping down as President, thankfully she will still be serving as Secretary/Treasurer for 2023. We will also be joined by Tommy Brown as Vice President, a role that he has held previously, and Rose Domas will serve as our Communications officer. Also pictured are board members Sheila Wewers, Samantha Halligan, Elie Johnson, Shelby Salestrom and April Terranella.



Image from the Las Vegas Market

It's hard to believe it's the start of a new season, with 2023 upon us we are anticipating another great year. As we move into spring, we are dotting our i's and crossing our t's hoping to get off to a fast start.

ZAG is made up of dedicated retail professionals – like you and me – who are happy to share ideas, contacts, success stories and sometimes failures with their peers. Since we do not directly compete with one another, we benefit from everyone performing well. ZAG is a resource for all to use, or not, depending on need. For new buyers, it's a ready-made group of people to ask questions – “how do I navigate a trade show” or “how do I plan a seasonal buy?”; but for more seasoned buyers it's also a great resource to quickly problem solve - “does anyone know where I can find “x” product?”. We are all more successful in the long run!

When we begin the 2023 trade show season, ZAG will again be making travel offers available to those who are interested and able to travel. Watch for email notification in advance of the markets to learn what the offers are. I look forward to seeing many of you in the coming year!



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MERCHANDISING WITH TOMMY: ZAG FIXTURE WINNER

Shawne Sheldon, of Washington Park Zoo, was one of our ZAG fixture award winners, and her story is as follows: I was one of the lucky winners of the ZAG fixture award from the 2022 IGES show in Tennessee! When I first won, I had no idea what I was going to get. I came back to my gift shop and wandered around to see what would benefit us the most. Our gift shop is small, a total of 800 sq feet. When this building was first built in 2005, they only made the gift shop 400 sq ft. which at the time was a ton bigger than the little cart we had of items out in the zoo. However, it has so many doors, windows and a spiral staircase, so it is broke up on space.

Very quickly we grew out of that and converted the conference room attached to that area into extra space for the gift shop which added the other 400 ft. One wall of that room had built in cabinets, so we built a wall to cover those up. We have tried many different things over the years to use that wall. Currently we have some bookcases there to put toys on.

After shopping around a bunch, I finally found the displays pictured to the left, which I could



By Tommy Brown
Vice President, ZAG
Retail Manager/Buyer of Conservation
Goods, Saint Louis Zoo

COMING SOON



put up against this wall. These displays will give us options, we can either put shelves, baskets or hooks on them and will pretty much give us another wall of slatwall. Which is a huge deal. We all fight to use every inch we can to put out product. They also have storage built into them at the bottom. Which is always a problem for me, where do I put all the stuff I ordered!

While I do not have the displays yet. I am anxiously waiting to be able to go pick them up and put them in place. They should be available in the next couple of weeks. We open for the season on April 1st and I am excited to see what beautiful displays we can create with them. If it wasn't for ZAG, I would have never ordered these displays as they are pricey and our budget for those items is small. I feel very lucky to be a part of ZAG, I love the great support system, all the wonderful people I have met over the years and all of the great advice I have gotten from talking to other buyers and ZAG roundtables. I will give an update later in the season once I have the displays in place and of course send pictures. Thank you again to ZAG for having this opportunity.

THANK YOU!

Shawne for sharing your story and photos with us!!



Before
Photos

TO BE CONTINUED...

March 1, 2023 | The Association for Merchandise Buyers of Zoos, Aquariums & Gardens | www.zagift.com

ZAG ON THE MOVE

Photos below of ZAG board members attending annual meeting in Las Vegas, ZAA conference, IGES Sustainability Shopping Tour, Sip and Shop at the Las Vegas Market and presenting at the Coastal Connections Conference

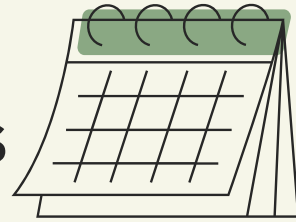




ZAG ON THE MOVE



UPCOMING TRADE SHOWS



Atlanta Spring Market March 1-3

New England Made Giftware & Specialty Food Show March 11-13

Dallas Apparel & Accessories Market March 21-24

SF Now April 27-28

One of a Kind Spring Show April 28-30

Dallas Total Home & Gift Market June 21-27

Las Vegas Market July 30- August 3

Atlanta Market July 11-17

NY Now August 13-16

ASD Market August 20-23

Surf Expo September 7-9

Las Vegas Souvenir Show October 4-7

Ocean City Resort Gift Expo October 29-31

IGES November 7-11

Smoky Mountain Gift Show November 8-11

Grand Strand Gift & Resort Merchandise Show December 3-6

NEW 2023 ZAG SPONSOR LICENSE PLATES ARE IN!!



Featuring capybara, corpse plant and a manatee!

MAXIMIZING YOUR RETAIL PRODUCTIVITY



By Sheila Wewers
Board Member, ZAG
Associate Director of Retail Operations
Garden Safari Gifts
Como Park Zoo and Conservatory

Now that supply chain issues have stabilized, we can all get back to controlling our own sales destiny by utilizing best practices and tools to increase and maintain our retail productivity. Deciding on, and using, key metrics helps inform many aspects of your retail environment including buying decisions and merchandising placements.



Sales per Square Foot is a great metric to determine if you have allocated enough, or maybe too much, space to a product or category of products. Sales per square foot is calculated by dividing your total sales by the available square feet of sales space. Drilling down to categories, take the total sales per category and divide it by the total square feet of sales space devoted to that category of merchandise.

For example: If your plush category takes up 50% of your store's display space but using a sales per square foot metric accounts for only 30% of your sales, you may want to consider giving plush a smaller footprint. Conversely, if your display space is only 30% of your store space but plush accounts for 50% of your sales, you may want to increase your plush footprint.



The result of using this key metric for merchandise planning may not only be higher sales volume, but also an improved store layout that focuses on what your customers want to buy!



Want to be featured in the ZAG Newsletter? There are many ways to be involved!

We are looking for ZAG Members to share their story and be featured in the Sustainability Scoop: Member Spotlight! You can read the first edition on page 7! Please reach out to April aprilterranela@fotzkc.org or Elie at Elie.Johnson@zootampa.org to be featured next quarter.

We are looking for Zoo & Aquarium Baby Animal Photos! Send photos of your new Zoo or Aquarium Babies directly to Elie.

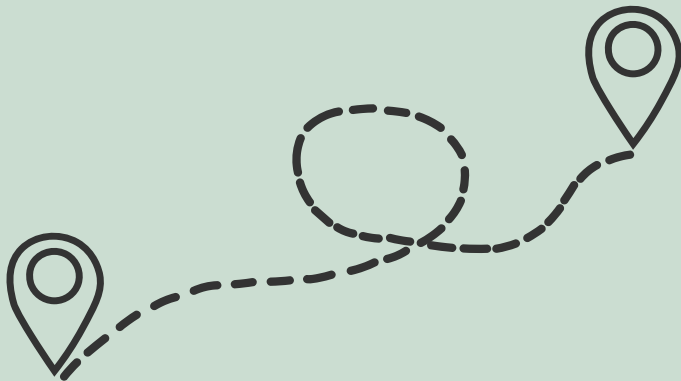
Have ideas for garden buyers? New Plant photos? Great new Merchandising Techniques?

Want to see something different in the next newsletter, have ideas or articles you would like to submit?

Reach out to Elie.Johnson@Zootampa.org for more information or to submit your photos, ideas and/or articles!

Travel Scholarship Opportunities

Be on the look out for more details on travel opportunities in the Summer to attend the Las Vegas Souvenir Show and the Fall to Attend the Smoky Mountain Gift Show and IGES!



Follow ZAG on Social Media



Facebook: ZAG (Zoo and Aquarium Buyer's Group)

Instagram: @zaggift



LinkedIn: Zoo, Aquarium & Garden Buyer's Group

SUSTAINABILITY SCOOP: MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Sustainability is a hot topic in our daily lives within the zoo, aquarium, and garden world. As we all continue to grow our sustainable products and processes within our institutions, we also want to take time to get to know some of our ZAG members. We are featuring members and getting their scoop on sustainability. In this edition we will meet Brea Schmidt and Jessica Molitor from the Topeka Zoo.

Brea Schmidt and Jessica Molitor are Guest Services Supervisors/Buyers for Topeka Zoo and Conservation Center in Topeka, Kansas. Brea started as a Guest Services Associate when she was 16 as her first part-time job. She stayed for 4 years until she left to attend school and explore other careers- but found the zoo is where she belongs. She came back to become a buyer/supervisor in October 2021. Jess also grew up in Topeka and joined the zoo as a part-time Guest Services Associate over the summer of 2021. She was promoted to her supervisor/buyer position in January of 2022.

What is your favorite sustainable product?

“Our favorite sustainable product that we carry is honey cultivated by our own beehive that is on zoo grounds. The hive is managed by our horticulturist year-long. Honey gets collected from the hive and then bottled in travel-sized, name-dropped glass bottles.”

Bestselling Sustainable Products:

“The honey doubles as one of our bestsellers. Guests love that it is local, and collected from a hive that they can see. They appreciate that the money they spend to purchase the product goes back to conserving its source- honeybees. Our plush is also becoming more and more sustainable as we move towards lines that use recycled plastic to fill/stuff their plush as opposed to the usual polyester.”

What do you like about what you do?

Brea loves what she does because she gets to share a work environment with fun-loving people as well as animals. She can go to work every day knowing that what she does makes a difference in the environment and our community. Jess loves working with people and helping guests create positive, long-lasting memories.

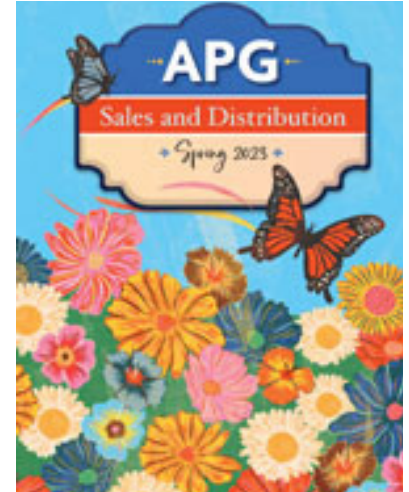
Any advice for new buyers?

“Take time to get to know your customer base. Are you visited mostly by local families or out-of-town tourist? Find items that can satisfy both. Tourists really like name-dropped items to collaborate with their trip; local families tend to like items that can be used on the day-to-day basis or are items they can't find in other stores. Get to know what their needs/demands are and work from there.”

Thank you to Brea and Jessica for taking time to let us get to know them better and sharing their favorite and bestselling sustainable product. Love that their favorite is a local product as well! We would like to continue to “spotlight” members in our future newsletters. Please reach out if you would like to be featured in a future newsletter. Contact April at aprilterranela@fotzkc.org or Elie at Elie.Johnson@zootampa.org

Welcome new ZAG Sponsors!!

NATURE'S ARTIFACTS



bebemoss ♡



Nestled Pines
WOODWORKING

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ACTION
TOYS

GENESEE
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TROUVAILLE

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TROUVAILLE



Trouvaille, which means ‘a lucky find’, is a small business founded by Candelaria and Greg, a couple of globetrotters who left the 9-to-5 to create high-quality gifts (sustainably and ethically produced in Europe) through which they could make a difference.

Our products are inspired by our thirst for adventure and love for nature, and each of them is carefully designed always keeping the planet in mind. Trouvaille’s mission is to bring extraordinary travel memories to life’s ordinary moments, like sipping fresh coffee in the morning in a mug that will remind you of a fun adventure or lighting a candle to wind down at home after a stressful day.

As part of our commitment to sustainability, all Trouvaille products come in recyclable packaging and the company offsets its employees’ annual carbon footprint. Our tote bag collection contributes to tackling poverty and the effects of the climate crisis in Africa by growing trees and restoring and protecting land.

Since 2021, Trouvaille is supporting the World Land Trust’s Buy an Acre programme (a charity under the patronage of Sir David Attenborough) through the sales of the Save The Planet candle collection. We have the ambitious goal of protecting 64 acres in 2023, which you can be a part of.

Contact for ZAG members:
Greg Waloszczyk, Director
greg@trouvailleglobal.com
www.trouvailleglobal.com



We are excited to bring our years of experience to the ZAG Buyers Group!

Since 1999, Logo Brands has been a leading manufacturer of licensed hard goods for more than 500 organizations including collegiate, NFL, MLB, NHL, NBA, MLS, and NASCAR. Our product assortment includes drinkware, bags, home textiles, folding tents and chairs, coolers, and sports balls.

We specialize in a wide product selection, innovation, and unmatched quality with any custom logo. We make custom products easy with minimums as low as 6 and turn times between 2-4 weeks. We'll be attending the Smokey Mountain Gift Show and hope to meet you soon!

Catalog: logobrandz.com/specialty

Contact: ashley@logobrandz.com



GOLDEN, CO – Genesee Candy Land, an experienced wholesale manufacturer of specialty snacks, introduces a new flavor in its chocolate-covered bacon products. “In addition to Applewood smoked chocolate coated bacon, we now offer spicy flavored chocolate bacon. You first taste the chocolate and the bacon – that great salty sweet combination. Then the heat builds from our secret ingredient...and people are loving it,” says Alden.

About Genesee Candy Land

Genesee Candy Land is dedicated to crafting unique creations of the highest quality to surprise and delight customers every day. From its humble beginnings providing Colorado-made sweet treats for locals and tourists alike in our retail store to becoming a specialty snack manufacturer famous for chocolate-dipped bacon, Genesee Candy Land has grown.

Since 2015, Genesee Candy Land has been producing innovative goods for wholesale and is the only food manufacturer in the United States to receive USDA certification to sell full slices of extra thick-cut Applewood smoked bacon enrobed in smooth dark chocolate. Obtaining this designation was a rigorous process and it sets us apart.

Learn more at www.geneseecandyland.com or our Facebook Page at www.facebook.com/Genesee-Candy-Land

bebemoss[♥]

Bebemoss - a Fair Trade, Women-Owned, Social Enterprise

About Bebemoss

Bebemoss employs over 120 women, welcoming refugees from Syria, Iran and Afghanistan, new to Istanbul and impoverished women in the Istanbul metro area.

Providing mothers with dignified fair trade employment with the freedom to manage work life balance.

Bebemoss practices slow and sustainable manufacturing. Using organic cotton and filling from recycled water bottles.

As a WFTO guaranteed member, Bebemoss is fully committed to the 10 Principles of Fair Trade and is also a verified social enterprise by the Social Enterprise World Forum.

Izabela Erşahin, the founder, started her design journey back in Paris working for luxury design brands. She became a social entrepreneur after settling in Turkey.

Ersahin advocates for women's rights, equality and the integration of refugees into host communities, volunteering for numerous organizations. As part of MADE51 implemented by UNHCR, she works to generate income for refugee artisans and developing ethical businesses and global partnerships.

A small brand with big values

Bebemoss began as founder Ersahin's dream to support women in need. The Fair Trade Certified(TM) brand is ethically and sustainably handmade in Istanbul by mothers and refugees. Bebemoss provides consistent, dignified work for these women. They craft high- quality, organic stuffed animals, dolls, and accessories for babies and children.

Simple designs capture the imagination

Bebemoss's soft and huggable handmade toys evoke nursery rhymes and nature themes bringing comfort and security to children with their huggable playmates. Our materials are premium organic cotton with detailed superior handmade craftsmanship.

Classic toys that inspire joy

Simple, familiar designs inspire the imagination for hours of joy. Choose a pillow-like tiger to decorate a room. Play with a zebra the perfect size for toddler adventures. And for a new baby, a tiny sleeping bunny will fit right in. Bebemoss's toys are both durable, beautiful and machine washable.



Founded by in 2019, TriAction Toys is aimed at servicing the true specialty market by bringing European design and quality to the US at incredible prices. Our strategy is to make items affordable for everyone and avoid online discounting. This concept draws specialty stores to partner with us, as it brings both freshness to the market and supports the stores' full margins for long term commercial sustainability. We both manufacture toys and puppets designed by famous toy designer Tim Clarke and distribute lines of plush from Europe that have been famous for decades. In Europe both Teddykompaniet and Les Deglingos (The Wackos from France) are hugely popular lines with loyal social media followers. In the US they are true specialty lines as they have only been introduced since 2019 on a major level. Most items retail under \$40 with many items under \$25 retail. TriAction, which stands for "innovate, design and play," is driven to work with manufacturers to innovate, design, and bring products to market. TriAction strives to work with Zoos and Aquariums offering European design to consumers whom have never had access to the lines.



Nestled Pines
WOODWORKING

Working together with State & National Parks, Zoos, Aquariums, Big Cat Rescues, nonprofits, and other souvenir locations small and large for over 15 years, Nestled Pines Woodworking has developed an extensive line of detailed and unique custom laser cut wood ornaments, magnets, and keychains. With such a diversity of animal designs (think Binturongs, Caracals, Endemic reptiles), creating a custom name dropped collection for your gift shop couldn't be easier. By collaborating with you to create new designs just for your city, exhibit or distinct animals, we can go beyond our existing collections to create something truly unique and special for your location. Offering USA designed AND made products with low minimums and an experienced design/production team, we strive to be a supplier that our clients look forward to working with now, as well as many years into the future.



NATURE'S ARTIFACTS

Nature's Artifacts - Bringing The Natural World To You

Nature's Artifacts was founded in 2004 with the vision of sharing the beauty, metaphysical healing power and life enhancing energy of Mother Nature's natural resources in the form of crystals and gemstones. At Nature's Artifacts we specialize in wholesale of beautiful, high quality, ethically sourced and hand-picked crystals, home decor and natural health care products – we serve the gift industry in Canada and North America that includes metaphysical stores, gift shops, spas, museums, zoos, aquariums, national parks etc.

Nature's Artifacts' Head Office is based in Toronto, Canada and houses a magnificent collection of more than 1200 unique and mesmerizing crystals in its showroom. Our products range from a variety of healing crystal in different shapes like Towers, Spheres, Tumble stones, Raw Crystals to Mineral and Fossils, Ready to Retail Gift Sets, Lamps, Candle Holders, Wind Chimes, Book Ends and much more. We have strategically located warehouses in Canada(Ontario) and USA (New York) to serve our retailers on both sides of the border.

Our Research and Development teams bring hundreds of new products to our clients annually with the sole purpose of combining nature with science and to offer innovative healing, decor and gift items. Nature's Artifacts' strong relationships with suppliers around the world, built over a period of 17 years, allow us to source products without distribution channels, hence enabling us to offer quality products at the best price.

We adhere to the principles of fair trade and work with reputable vendors & artisans who follow the essential criteria of minimum wage for workers, no child labor and environmental responsibilities such as hand mined crystals for minimum impact on environment. Our team travels globally throughout the year, ensuring that our clients receive crystals that are sourced with utmost love, care and respect, ethically and sustainably. We take pride in offering our divine range of crystals at the most competitive prices. Our commitment is based on the foundation to provide best quality products to attain clients' trust and satisfaction.

Harris Zia | Founder

Bringing The Natural World To You
Head Office – Please Note our New Address
5044 South Service Road- Burlington Ontario L7L5Y7
T: 1-905-823-3003 Ext 203 | F: 1-888-747-5424

USA Office
3842 Harlem Road, Suite #400-289, Buffalo, NY, USA 14215
T: 1-888-895-3017



APG Sales & Distribution is a distributor for nearly 50 publishers and has been in business in Nashville, TN for over 25 years. We carry a broad assortment of titles and genres for children and adults and sell to all markets nationwide. Highlighted below are just a few of the bestselling items that we believe would have interest to visitors in the zoo, aquarium and nature center shopping environment.

We offer standard industry terms with freight and discounts and would be happy to send catalogs or discuss details at your convenience. Please call Debbie Felt, Sales Manager, at 615.254.2488 or email at dfelt@apgbbooks.com

Choose one of the titles on the attached flyer and send an email request to Debbie for a Complimentary review sample sent to your member address!

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