

 **NATIONAL AQUARIUM IN BALTIMORE**

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**NATIONAL AQUARIUM IN BALTIMORE'S WEB SITE NAMED BEST
OF CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN
NINTH ANNUAL WEBBY AWARDS PEOPLE'S VOICE AWARDS**
www.aqua.org Receives Top International Honor for Web site

Baltimore, May 19, 2005 – The Webby Awards, hailed as the “Oscars of the Internet” by the New York Times, has announced that www.aqua.org, the National Aquarium in Baltimore’s Web site, won The People’s Voice Award for Best Cultural Institution Web site.

More than 200,000 people from around the world cast their ballots for this year’s People’s Voice awards. The Aquarium will accept the award on June 6 in New York City.

“We designed the Web site with the philosophy that we could create connections between people and the aquatic world in meaningful and lasting ways, that a visit to the Web site could be a reflection of a visit to the Aquarium,” explains Aaron Watkins, the Aquarium’s Web content manager. “The site uses rich language, vivid photos and multimedia experiences and the content is constantly evolving.”

For this year’s awards, judges selected five nominees; individual voters weighed in to determine the People’s Voice winner. “The award reflects the support of an online community that believes in what we are doing,” Watkins said. More than 12,000 people subscribe to Aqua Mail, a monthly e-news publication that highlights Aquarium activities and the latest content on the site.

The Aquarium’s Web site was redesigned in 2003; it was produced by The Berndt Group, Ltd., based in Baltimore, and is managed by the Aquarium. This was the first time the Web site was entered into the Webby competition. The Aquarium’s Web site has won several other awards including an Horizon Interactive Award for The Best Consumer Web site and a WebAward from the Web Marketing Association.

The Berndt Group has been a leading Web development and brand communications firm since 1991. Based in Baltimore, MD, the company service a diverse international and regional client base, including: The Maryland Science Center, General Electric, The Federal Aviation Administration, Raytheon, Rolls

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Royce, U.S. Forest Service, Mercy Hospital, The Abell Foundation, and Johns Hopkins Institutions. For more information, visit www.berndtgroup.net. The Webby is the leading international award honoring excellence in Web design, creativity, usability and functionality. The Webby Awards is presented by The International Academy of Digital Arts and Sciences. For more information, visit www.webbyawards.com.

The National Aquarium in Baltimore, a non-profit organization, is Maryland's most exciting and popular cultural attraction, as well as one of the region's leading conservation and education resources, hosting more than 1.6 million visitors per year. The Aquarium's mission is to connect people with aquatic life in order to create a better world for both. It is dedicated to education and conservation through more than a dozen programs that serve the environment and the community.

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