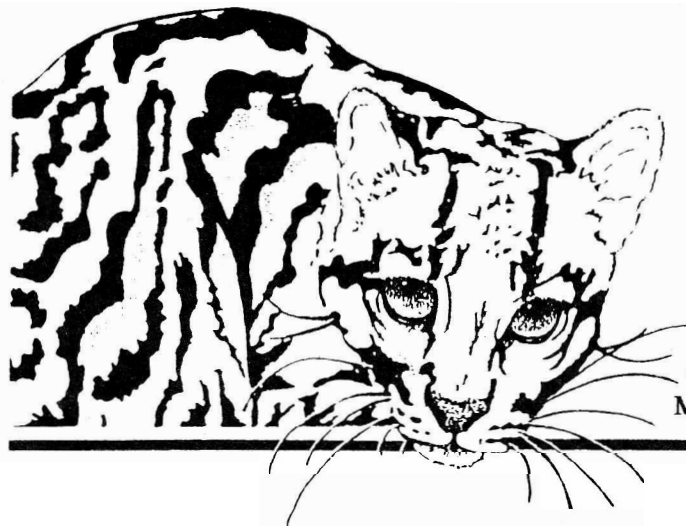
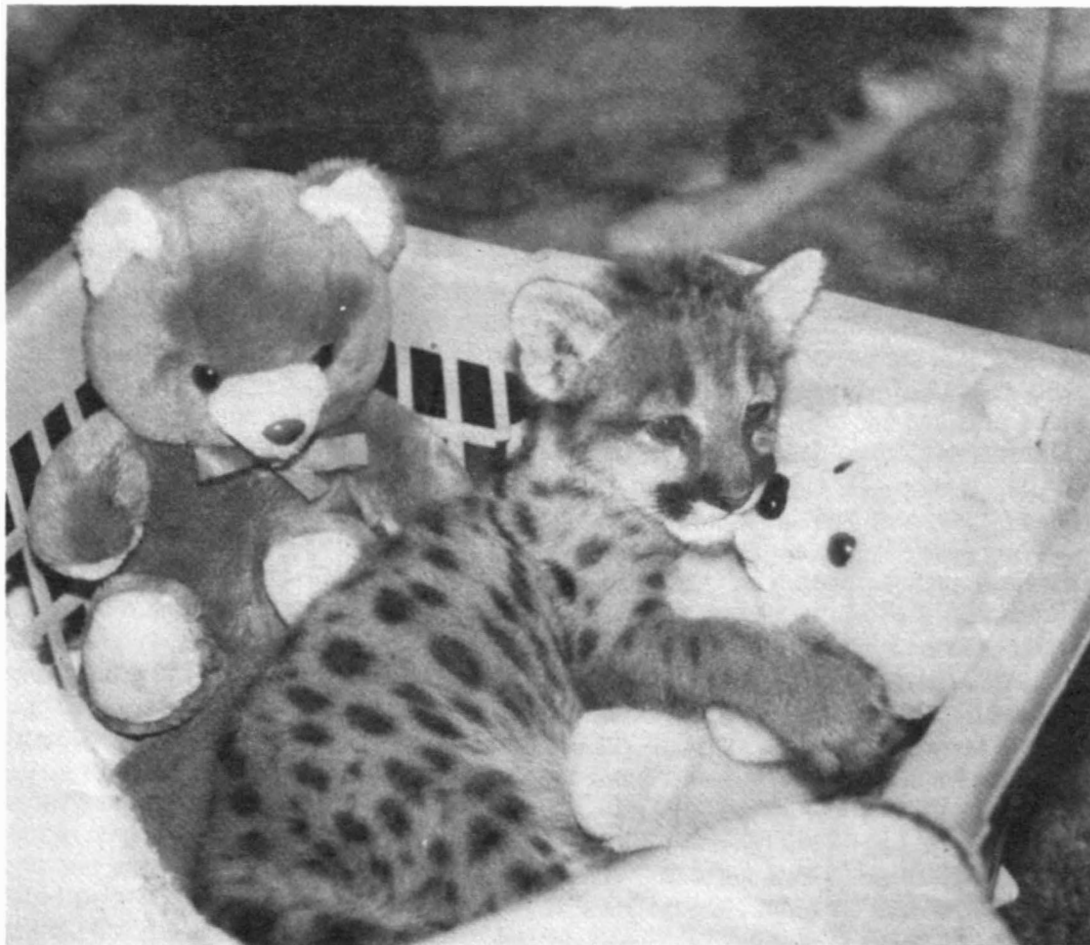


L.I.O.C. Endangered Species Conservation Federation Incorporated.



Newsletter

4101 Penn Ave., Pittsburgh PA 15224
May/June 1989 , Volume 33, Number 3



One of our members -- Lynn Culver -- has prepared an article on the cats she raises. This cover shot is a photo of one of her cougar kittens at the age of four weeks.

Information about LIOC ESCF Inc. and this Newsletter.

This newsletter is published bi-monthly by the LIOC Endangered Species Conservation Federation Incorporated. We are a non-profit, non-commercial organization, international in membership, devoted to the welfare of exotic felines. The purpose of the newsletter is to present information about exotic-feline conservation, management, and ownership to our members, and to allow our members to publish their points of view on these topics. The material printed in this newsletter is contributed by our members and, in many cases, reflects the point of view of the person whose name appears on the article, rather than the point of view of the organization. The organization's statement of intent is contained in our by-laws; a copy can be requested from the Secretary/Treasurer. Reproduction of the material in this newsletter may not be made without written permission of the authors and/or the copyright owner LIOC.

Since the newsletter consists of articles, photos, and artwork contributed by members, we depend on you for our material. We can only publish what you send us. Articles of all types concerning exotic felines are gladly accepted. We also have a reader's write section for letters or responses to articles. Please send materials for contribution to the newsletter editor.

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The first order of business is to report the results of the LIOC elections. We now have a new set of officers and a new set of term directors. The winners are:

President: John Perry

Vice President: Suzi Mutascio

Secretary/Treasurer: Connie Hatfield

Term Director for Member Services: Barbara Wilton

Term Director for Education and Conservation: Al Porges

Term Director for Legal Affairs: Mary Parker

Term Director for Advertising and Publicity: Jeff Bellingham

Congratulations to all of our new board members! May we all look forward to two productive years of LIOC leadership through their combined efforts.

The addresses and phone numbers of the new board members are listed on the inside front cover of this newsletter. If there is anything you would like to tell them, or if you have any questions for them, please write them or give them a call. The board will be having several meetings during convention, so if you want something brought up at convention, please get the information to the board ahead of time.

I would also like to report a change in the Member Services Assistant position. While this is not an elected office, the person who is assistant to the Term Director for Member Services traditionally does a lot of work. For the past year or so Gwen Oberlin has been responsible for much of the membership services work. She has cleaned up the mess with the computerized membership list and updated all the records. She has provided me with all sorts of complicated mailing lists, and she has gotten our renewal system back on track. I'd like to thank Gwen for all of the work she and her husband Steve have done. They've been a tremendous help.

Gwen's successor is Dr. Anvi Kadish, 1012 E. Jackson, Medford OR 97504. His phone numbers are 503-773-3191 (work) and 503-846-7157 (home). For the time being, all membership applications, renewals, inquiries and changes of address should go to our new Term Director for Member Services: Barb Wilton. She'll forward the information to Dr. Kadish, who will enter the information into the computer. I would suggest sending changes of address to both Barb and Dr. Kadish so that you'll be correctly listed on the membership list.

In our last mailing, we sent "final dues notices" to a number of people. Some of these people responded, but others didn't. After removing the people who did not respond from the list, we found that we had just under 300 members in good standing. The last time I printed newsletters, I had to produce over 550, so we were giving away a lot of issues! On the other hand, 300 is a low figure, so this is a good time to revitalize branches and see if we can't get some more new members.

Finally, convention is approaching and our convention coordinators -- Suzi Mutascio and Shirley Wagner -- are cooking up all sorts of fun for us to have in New Orleans during the second week in August. I've been to some of the past conventions and I can report that they've been terrific. I urge everyone to register for this one.

Felis Concolor

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FELIS CONCOLOR - AMERICA'S GREAT FELINE

written by Lynn Culver, director of NOAH, Ark.- Natural Order Animal Husbandry, Mena, Arkansas

STATUS OF COUGAR IN U.S.

Felis Concolor, otherwise known as the panther, puma, mountain lion or cougar was once native to all fifty states but extensive bounty hunting and habitat destruction by logging and farming has extirpated this great predator from all the east coast and central states, with the exception of a verified remnant population in the Florida Everglades. The cougar is occasionally sighted in Louisiana, Mississippi, Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Virginia and West Virginia, but experts disagree as to whether these sightings represent a return of the cougar to the eastern mountains and swamps. Cougars are also native to Canada, Central and South America, with Patagonia, in South America, believed to have the greatest concentration of this feline.

Of the twelve western states that are home to this feline, California is the only state to offer protection from big game enthusiasts, as a moratorium on hunting was enacted in 1973. Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming all issue permits for controlled seasonal "harvest" of their lions. And they all allow any suspected domestic livestock killer to be destroyed during any season. State biologists determine the number of cougars to be killed in a given area in order to manage the cougar for a continuous "harvest". Arizona has the dubious distinction of being the only western state that has no closed season on mountain lion hunting and allows the purchase of lion permits at any time of the year, which "allows shooting now and paying later", according to Steve Johnson, of Arizona's Defenders of Wildlife organization. Arizona State residents pay only \$1.50 for a lion permit. The total number of permits sold in 1988 in Arizona was 8304. The other eleven states combined sold 5750 permits in 1988. Texas has no hunting season or permit system for its population of Felis Concolor Stanleyanas. Their cougars have not been elevated to "Big Game" status with the associated permits and regulations. Instead they are regarded as varmits, and the state offers no protection whatsoever. Some experts feel that the Texas cougar is becoming endangered and it is time for this state to enact protective laws for its cougar population.

In extreme irony, while big game hunters pay big bucks to track and shoot western cougar, on the east coast, millions of federal dollars are being spent in a last ditch effort to save the only remaining eastern sub species of cougar. The total Florida panther (felis concolor coryi) population hovers around two to four dozen total. These smaller cousins to the western cougar live in the swamps and pine/palm forests of the Everglades National Park. They feed primarily on wild deer and hogs. The major threat to their existence is the constantly increasing

automobile traffic across Alligator Alley, which slices through the Everglades and connects Florida's east and west coast. Several panthers die crossing that highway each year. After years of analyzing data collected from radio-collared panthers, Florida biologists proposed that Alligator Alley be fenced and strategically placed animal under-passes be constructed. When completed, one of the major threats to the panthers' continued existence will hopefully be eliminated. This federally funded project cost millions of taxpayer dollars and demonstrates the value that people now place on this once hated and feared predator. As public opinion and education programs spread this new appreciation, it is hoped that illegal hunting, the second most common cause of panther deaths, will also decrease. Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission and the State Park Service are both working to boost the panther's prey base of deer by habitat improvement and a deer hunting ban in Collier County. They are researching captive-breeding and eventual release programs in the hopes of creating wild populations of Florida panthers in other suitable locations. But the Florida panthers' problems are not over, as their seriously depleted numbers challenge scientists and biologists alike with the complex problems of long-term survival when only a limited gene pool exists.

WILD COUGAR PHYSIOLOGY AND BEHAVIOR

Wild cougars have been categorized into 29 different sub species, based primarily on skull, skeleton and various teeth measurements. Cougars living close to the equator are consistently smaller, with males and females being under one hundred pounds. Further away from the equator, either north or south, supports increasingly larger and longer furred cougars, some weighing over 200 pounds. Size difference between sexes, called sexual dimorphism, is pronounced with males weighing about 1.4 times more than females.

Wild cougar populations are linked to the native deer populations, as that is their major food source. Although perfectly capable of taking down elk, or full grown deer, they also kill and eat wild hogs, rabbits, turkeys, beaver and various other smaller mammals and occasionally prey upon domestic livestock.

Cougars patrol their home range and mark it by sharpening their claws on fallen or standing trees. They leave scent markers by urinating upon the ground at the same spot, renewing the scent when necessary. In this way they can announce their presence to any transients or neighboring cougars. Regular marking will leave the leaf litter black. When a cougar comes to a scent mark he will take several deep sniffs and then lift his head, open his mouth, and make the "flehmen" face. This behavior enables the cougar to better analyze the scent, extracting information about the identity and sexual status of the individual leaving the mark. Radio-collared panthers in Florida have revealed that they often share parts of their home range and it is through these

urine stations that the panthers know how recently another has passed through the overlapping territories. This enables them to avoid each other. Adult cougars are thought to be loners, except for temporary sexual encounters, and are believed to form no friendship bonds. Transient cougars are sub adults that have left their mother. They must wander through the home ranges of the surrounding resident cougars, looking for a suitable unoccupied home range containing food and shelter. It is during this maturing time that young cougars are most vulnerable, as any smell left behind by them will be interpreted as "intruder" by the resident cougars. They will not enter the breeding stage of life until they find a home range of their own.

CASE STUDY OF CAPTIVE COUGAR REPRODUCTIVE BEHAVIOR

Tara, our female cougar began cycling at the age of eighteen months. She cycled nine times in five months. Her first estrus cycles were only a few days long and the average time between estrus was twelve days. Towards the end of her five month sexual period, she was remaining in estrus for closer to nine days and averaging 21 days in between. After a six month lapse in sexual behavior she began another cycle in January of 1988. She cycled January 21 to 27, February 6 to 10, February 23 to 28, March 24 to 31 and April 7 to 17. During an estrus cycle she would call frequently. Mercury was extremely attentive to her moods and would follow her closely. We nick-named this ritual, the "six-inch string game" because it seemed to us that Mercury's nose was glued to her tail by an invisible six-inch string. Her last estrus was the longest and most sexual. She and Mercury, who was seven months older than her, copulated seven times in two hours on numerous evenings. They would copulate throughout the day, peaking in the early evening hours, and average over 25 matings a day.

Tara usually rebuffed approaches by Mercury after each estrus period, but I observed the opposite behavior in these cougars once Tara was pregnant. Tara was especially solicitous towards Mercury, licking his head and neck, to the point of bothering him, which would result in growls by Mercury. Tara also initiated a more affectionate relationship towards me. Formally, my husband Bart, was her favorite person. At six weeks pregnant I noticed a slight swelling of her nipples along with a pinker coloration.

She coexisted with Mercury throughout her pregnancy, being separated only a few days before, as her maternal obsession with licking Mercury had progressed to the point of frequent quarreling between them. On July 12th she secreted a pink mucus outside her vagina. She was continuously purring, licking us at every chance and panting frequently all that day. We kept a close watch on her, checking every hour, throughout that day and night.

On July 13th, she delivered three male cubs. I was inside her house throughout her labor and delivery. She seemed to want both my husband and I present. During her labor she purred continuously, except when she would cry out from the pain of a contraction. She began labor contractions at 10:00 a.m. and

proceeded to have usually three in a row, within seconds of each other, followed by a three minute rest period. She secreted a watery substance after 40 contractions and delivered her first cub after five more contractions at 11:30a.m. She delivered in a crouching position, and immediately began licking and stimulating the cub, causing it to squeak within seconds of being born. It was nursing within 45 minutes and Tara resumed contractions ten minutes later. She only had five contractions before delivering a second cub, which was a breach birth, but all right, at 12:25 p.m. It too was licked and stimulated and nursing within 45 minutes. Tara delivered the third cub while laying down and it actually squirted out of her at 1:20 p.m.

The cubs' weights at birth were 589, 553 and 536 grams. They gained 91, 76 and 71 grams in forty-eight hours. At one week old they weighed 868, 824 and 812 grams, averaging between 45 and 55 grams increased weight per day. By the time they were 10 days old they were gaining closer to 100 grams a day. At age two weeks they weighed 1352, 1227 and 1207 grams. Their claws had fully retracted and their eyes and ears had opened.

A CASE STUDY IN CO-REARING CAPTIVE COUGARS

We planned to co-rear the cubs, sharing the cubs with their natural mother Tara, so that we could observe natural behaviours between mother and offspring. We discussed this decision with several experts, and received the advise from Pat Quillen that it is best to co-raise with an inexperienced mother so that there would not be any anxiety and possessiveness by her thinking we would take her babies. We permitted Tara to nurse for weeks, with us visiting them for hours daily, to accustom them to our smell, sounds and sight. At the age of 19 days, we removed one of the male cubs for hand rearing. It adjusted to the bottle and the new environment in forty-eight hours. At first it would only accept formula from an eyedropper while it sucked my finger, but eventually it began to suck a puppy nipple. This cub, named Cinnabar, or Cinni for short, cut his incisors by age 21 days. His brothers were several days behind in this development, and I theorize that Cinnabar cut his teeth while sucking my fingers. Cinnabar also developed superior coordination while living in our home. His environment was much richer than his brothers, who lived almost exclusively inside their mothers' den. Cinnabar lost weight while adjusting to the bottle, and after he accepted the hand-feeding, he continued to lag in weight gain. I feel that part of the reason for this was his running around our house, consequently burning up valuable calories that should have added weight.

The other two cubs, Arjan and Sharu, both removed from Tara at age 31 days, took considerably longer to adjust to the sights and sounds of home life. Arjan began sucking the bottle after five days. I changed nipple sizes, trying both puppy size and baby size, as well as different baby nipple brands, finally succeeding with the playtex nurser, which had a much more natural nipple feel. Sharu never did learn to suck the bottle, instead he

developed his own style of biting the nipple to milk out the formula. They were fed formula consisting of one half cup powdered esbilac, one cup distilled water, one eighth cup heavy cream and one eighth cup plain yogurt and one jar of strained chicken baby food, mixed together in the blender. The last ingredient was added to the formula when the cubs reached four weeks. The meat content in the formula was gradually increased over several weeks, and additional feedings of strained chicken baby food mixed with powdered esbilac, offered off my fingers was added to their diet. They began eating raw chicken necks, wings, livers and gizzards at eight weeks of age and weighed 10, 9 and 8 and a half pounds respectively.

At age ten weeks the cubs were considered graduates of "human school". They had successfully bonded with us, learned important domestic behaviours and adjusted to life with humans so they were reintroduced to Tara. She hadn't forgotten them during the five and a half weeks they lived in our house and she was extremely patient and loving to them when reintroduced. Sharu immediately took to her, purring and jumping on her but Arjan and Cinnabar were initially frightened. Within only a half an hour the fear had begun to be replaced with curiosity. We allow Tara and the cubs contact several times a week, insuring their continued bond with us and Tara. All three cubs have well-balanced, though individual, personalities full of love for us, their "human parents" as well as their cougar mother, Tara.

We chose to co-raise Tara's cubs for several reasons. Since they were not going to be sold, we wanted to maintain the mother/child relationship between Tara and her boys. It was our hope that Mercury would also express an interest in his cubs. Basically he hasn't and we have not forced the issue with him. But Tara continues to ask that we walk her over to the cubs' 'Big Top' compound for visits. Her first loyalty is to Mercury and she sleeps with him at night. Tara has not returned to estrus, another benefit of co-raising. We have experienced the joy of watching mother cougar with offspring. And we are also human mother to three little cougar boys. They deeply love us, I have no doubt.

Removing Tara's babies was much harder on us than her. We made the decision to begin human school when they stopped purring for us. Tara voluntarily left her nursery and was leash walked to the exercise area with Mercury. It was while she was gone that we removed the babies. Pat Quillen suggested that the transition was easier on the mother if she was removed from the nursery for a few days. Tara was not returned to the nursery for three days. It was almost unbelievable to me, but she did not ask to be returned, and instead she rebonded with Mercury. I know she missed them while they were with us, but she knew that we were caring for them. She would smell the cubs on me and talk to me about it. We reintroduced the cubs to her when Sharu, the hold out, had surrendered his love to us. I feel that Cinnabar, who had been with us since he was 19 days old, helped his brothers adjust to human school. And Sharu helped Arjan and Cinnabar adjust to Tara, since he never forgot her. If we had taken all three earlier, the transition to human school would have been easier, but Tara might have returned to estrus, something we didn't want. But mostly, we

just didn't want to interfere with Tara's nursing her cubs. If we had removed them all later, perhaps it would have been even harder for them to accept the change. Co-raising can be dangerous since you have more cougars in the same enclosure with you. Jealousy and dominance can be a problem. You must examine your female cougar's personality before deciding to co-raise. Tara has gradually adopted the attitude that when she visits the kids, she's the mom, and we must be careful not to upstage her. I understand her feelings and except them.

Our cubs were immunized with a killed feline panleukopenia virus at nine, thirteen and seventeen weeks of age. This shot also contained killed calicivirus and rhinotracheitis viruses. At six months they were vaccinated with a killed rabies virus. All shots will be boosted yearly.

The cubs were declawed at eleven weeks of age and they weighed around twelve pounds each. They were anesthetized with a ten percent solution of ketamine and acepromazine and atropene at the rate of 10 ml per pound. The vet cauterized their blood vessels, stitched up the skin flaps with dissolveable sutures and pressure bandaged their feet for the night. Twenty-four hours later they were unbandaged and released to us. The cubs slept most of the day for four days after the operation, which is nature's way of healing. After a week they began to resume much of their rough-housing. Within two weeks the paws were mostly healed up, but it took another six weeks for the healing process to be finished.

COUGAR VOCALIZATIONS

Cougars have a wide variety of vocalizations suggestive of a language. They trill when very young and this sound gradually changes to a lower pitch bird-like whistle. They also 'gurren', which sounds sort of like a purr, but is louder and lasts less a second. When first waking up and seeing me the cubs would gurren, trill and purr to me. This gurren gradually becomes lower pitched also and now, at age eight months is closer to a "errraahh" sound. When Tara makes this vocalization it sounds sort of like a long belch. This gurren is the equivalent of a tigers' prusten or a leopards' puffing. It is a close range vocalization denoting a friendly greeting, appeasement and/or reassurance. According to Gustav Peters, who wrote his thesis on this sound, the sound in German is termed 'gurren' because of its similarity in sound with the staccato element in the cooing of pigeons which in German is also called gurren. 'Gurgle', is the Amercian term for this vocalization. Cougars have a variety of whistles varying in syllables from a very short chirp, a long chirp, a two syllable wolf whistle (like the whistle used for pretty girls) and the opposite sound, a "you who" two syllable whistle. Arjan also had a multi-octive trill. These whistles gradually become lower pitched with age and hormone development in the male cougar. Mercury, their father, still whistles, but more often he will "roaw" for me. He also has very sweet, two syllable pleading

calls. Tara doesn't whistle but instead "Aroaws" to us and her cubs. And when Mercury wants someone or something he can let forth a blood curdling, hair-raising scream that sounds like a long "Oaw". This is most likely the scream people report that they heard from a wild cougar. Mercury sometimes makes this scream in the middle of the night, and believe me, I wouldn't want to be camping and hear a wild cougar scream. He also screams for Tara when she has been visiting the cubs for several hours and he wants her returned to him. Tara doesn't have the equivalent scream, but instead if she feels urgent about attracting our attention, she increases the volume on her "aroaws". I recently had the opportunity to visit the National Zoo in Washington, D. C. and much to my surprise their female cougar was constantly screaming, so I guess either sex can make this sound and we are just fortunate that Tara doesn't. Its a very demanding sound that will put a guilt complex on you fast. When Tara is being penetrated during copulation, she will loudly vocalize a deep raspy continuous scream. This is just the tip of the cougar vocabulary, and it seems that each cougar, or perhaps each sub species of cougar has his own dialect. Mercury and Tara have extremely different voices and words.

CAPTIVE COUGAR DIETS

Cougar's can be fed a variety of diets, from canned Zoopream to raw meat. Our adult cougars eat about five pounds of fresh, whole, skinned and gutted chickens, beavers and calves. I also buy them chunk horse meat and beef hearts and livers. They do not like chunk beef meat very much, too fatty I think. They would love more deer in their diet, but I have only had deer to offer them a few times. I add chapparral vitamins and calcium carbonate to each meal.

ENVIRONMENTAL NEEDS OF CAPTIVE COUGARS

To raise a non-nuerotic adult cougar, one will need to provide a tremendous amount of mental and physical stimulation. Cougars can be successfully leash trained. This one-on-one close contact with your cougar is a rewarding and mutually benefiting activity. But it must be approached in a thorough, controlled manner in insure the safety of you, your cougar, and the public at large. Adult cougars are best housed in their own environment where any activity is acceptable instead of in your home where you must make considerable effort to insure non-destructive behavior. They are generally well-behaved, but they like to rough-house sometimes and unless you have a special room where anything goes your cougar's personality will suffer from constant behavior control.

A suitable environment is one close to your home, or maybe connecting to your home. They are curious creatures, and

enjoy watching your daily activities. Build a house that is insulated from the cold and heat, as well as suitable shelter from the rain. Cougars like to be up high, so it is a good idea to provide ledges or a tower for them. Ours have a four level, 14 foot tall tower that they use daily. Cougars need room to run and if you build their environment large enough for such activity, you will benefit as your cougar will not be so in need of running around when you spend time with him. I would suggest a cage no smaller than 1800 square feet and I would also suggest using the ground instead of pouring a cement slab. Be sure to locate the cage in a well drained sight if you are going to use the ground. We poured four foot square cement slabs for their food and they usually do not remove their dinner from them.

It is important to provide a mentally stimulating environment for your cougar while it is growing so that you will have a more intelligent adult animal. Cougar cubs raised in small cages or other environmentally poor surroundings will develop dull mental capacities. Do not neglect a young animal. Cougar cubs can be integrated into family life, some enjoy riding in cars, ours learned to enjoy riding on our boat, they all love to swim and many befriend the family dog.

When we only had one cougar, we sincerely thought that he wanted to be the sole object to our attention. But as he matured his demands for attention became harder and harder to satisfy. When Mercury was fourteen months old, we bought Tara, then seven months old, to keep him company. The joy that those two share chasing, playing and grooming each other has changed my mind. I would strongly suggest that those wishing to raise cougars, consider caring for two. They can play with each other like no human can. And they do not become any less affectionate, but in fact, being happier and more fulfilled, they have more love to give you. Cougars are a lifetime responsibility, living well past ten years in captivity, and the decision to adopt a cougar should not be taken lightly. You need to meet captive cougars, talk to their owners and learn all you can about cougar behavior, diet, and medical needs. You need to find a veterinarian with an interest and ability to care for your cougar.

Cougars are very affectionate beings, and when raised with a human family develop a deep need for contact with their humans. They purr easily and loudly. The mother-child bond which develops between a captive raised cougar cub and its human caretaker will carry over into the cougar's adult life. My first cougar Mercury, still nurses on my hand, purring deeply and kneading me with his paws. These loving sessions can last up to an hour at a time, and never cease to remind me of how special, sensitive and alive these animals are. Cinnabar is also a hand nurser. Other ways cougars show affection are licking, vigorously rubbing their head and body against you and nuzzling faces with you. If I had to describe a cougars' personality in one word, it would be "sweet". I bend over and give a big hug to each of my cougars every day and they always respond with a big purr.

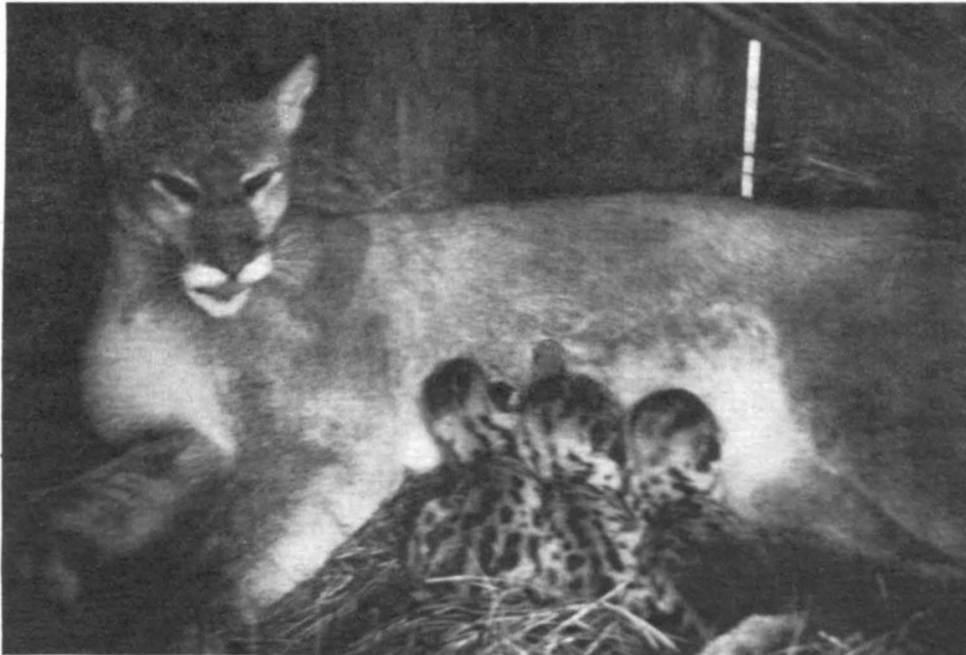
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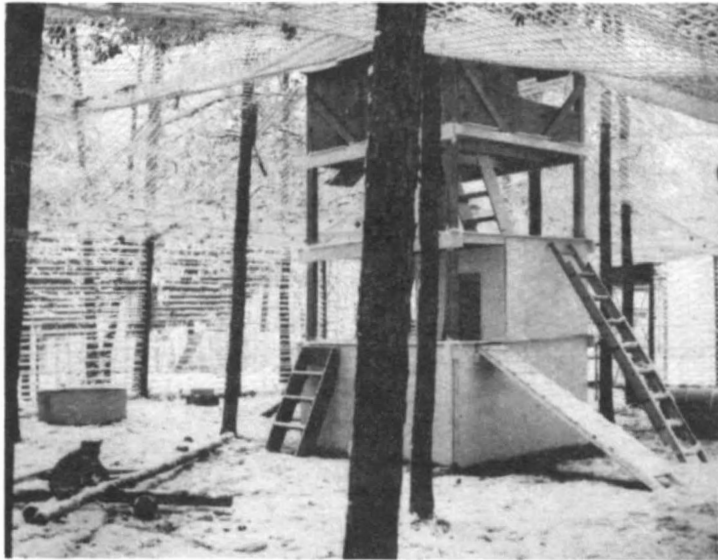
Defenders of Wildlife
13795 N. Como Drive, Tucson, Arizona 85741
Steve Johnson

Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission
Coryi Newsletters

Personal Correspondence with Gustav Peters



Tara and kittens -- one day old.



**Top left: Bart with Tara and Sharu at 14 weeks, Top right: Sharu and Arjan at 12 weeks
Bottom left: The compound, Bottom right: six weeks old and bottle feeding**

Why Convention? -- An Historic Overview

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In the infancy of LIOC, it was Catherine's club, and Convention as we know it today was non-existent. What did occur annually was Catherine's picnic, held in her backyard in Amagansett, New York on Long Island in September.

I attended the last such gathering and there met Catherine Cisin, face to face, for the first time along with other historically significant (to LIOC at least) characters, among them Gene Brill, LIOC's first Secretary, Mike Balbo, and others.

Catherine's picnic included her famous deviled clams, a local delicacy (of which Catherine did not partake) but which this southern gal found delicious! Since the picnic was "potluck", and I was determined to contribute, I hauled six pecan pies aboard the airplane from Mobile, Alabama to New York. They must have passed as I took none home.

At that meeting in 1971, Catherine turned the editing and production of the Newsletter over to Robert Peraner. Roger Harmon, President of the South-Western Branch was also there and suggested that the gathering be moved around the country to let folks from around the country ~~be~~ attend more easily. Having made that suggestion, Catherine in her wisdom, announced that Roger and the South-Western Branch would be the perfect ones to host the 1972 gathering - and so it was.

The first convention was held in Dallas, Texas. The convention logo, used to this day, prominently features a jaguar in honor of Dr. Harmon and his cat, Safari. Roger's idea to attract a larger geographic sampling of LIOC members worked - it was there I met David Salisbury of Florida, D'Arcy Bancroft of Canada with Audry Khadikin also a Canadian member. John Jackson from California, Robert Leeds of Illinois, Bob & Lil Smith from California and many, many more.....seventy people in all as well as three ocelots, a blackleopard, cougar, bobcat and two margays. The human attendance ~~was~~ over double what we had at our last few conventions.

Because of the drop in convention attendance, you might ask how has it changed? Because of the "formalization" of LIOC, the adoption of by-laws and governing by a Board of Directors rather than Catherine alone, we now have two formal meetings- the General Membership Meeting and for the Officers, Directors and Branch Reps, the Executive Meeting. The General Membership meeting is designed to let the members ask questions and state their wishes directly to the Board - surely this doesn't prevent folks from attending? Then what does?

Of course, back in those days, LIOC had no formal programs - no indexes, no formal educational goals, it was all very informal - today, chances are if you go to convention, you might be asked to DO SOMETHING. ^{Monday}

But, is that such a high price to pay for the privilege of an exotic? Or is it more than offset by the camaraderie of other folks ~~how~~ ^{who} understand spotted fever?

Some have complained that when they went to convention they felt "left out". Could it be that was because they didn't join in? We are all strangers the first time we go anywhere - but in LIOC it is never for long. Those who come and join in will never be excluded - they might be asked to do something and that is a true form of acceptance - or is it ^{that} those who claim to be shut out WERE asked to do something - and REFUSED?

I do know that over the years there are many people, no - close friends, who were first met at convention. It is only there each year that I get to see them. Perhaps in this hectic effort to catch up and visit with each of them, that new friends are slighted, not intentionally, but slighted all the same. If that is the case I am truly sorry. Convention is an all too short span of time.

Some others have complained about the lack of formal educational programs on the convention program. Lack of FORMAL programs perhaps - but there is no lack of educational material - spend one hour conversing in earnest with Ken Hatfield and you can learn more than is printed in any book you can find. The old adage - "Seek and ye shall find" is certainly applicable at convention - the whole thing is a learning process, the sources are varied and endless.

You meet folks whose names you see frequently in the newsletter, and I guarantee that after those 3 or 4 days you'll have made many lifelong friends. Folks who will be available to you at any hour of the day or night (they are now, but you don't know it).

This year convention is in New Orleans. The room rates are half ^{those} that you could expect to pay in this unique city. That in itself should be an incentive. Yes, it will cost to get to convention, stay for 3 nights, cover the care of your cats for a few days, eat while you're there. However I can remember taking a cooler and "snacking" in the room a lot in my younger (and poorer) days. If there's a will there's a way. Besides my involvement on the Board which mandates my attendance, I wouldn't miss convention for anything short of an emergency. I have a payroll deduction dedicated to financing it - yes it's that important to me! I can proudly say I've never missed convention (thank you to friends who have helped make this possible over the years!)

Admittedly, there were a few years when political wranglings made it a less enjoyable time than others. But worth it? You bet!

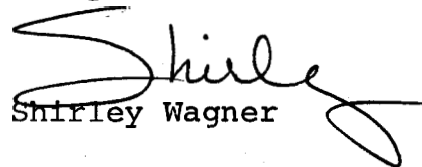
Yes, it was worth it to meet Khayam, the cheetah from World Wildlife Safari and Laurie Marker who trained her to hunt on her own in person; to listen to renowned genetist Dr. Centerwall; to see slides of and learn of the artificial insemination work being done by Dr. Steve Seager. These are some of the stars of past conventions.

Yes it was worth the sleep lost (you just can't escape the hospitality room at a reasonable time it seems), the money expended (who needs that cruise to the Bahamas anyway?) What it amounts to I guess is priorities. How important is LIOC, and your cats to you? Without LIOC and folks you've met or found through LIOC how much would you know, would you even have your cat?

Involvement is a price that should be willingly paid. We constantly preach that you get out of LIOC what is put in it. So very many special people have put so very much into LIOC for so many years. Each and everyone is a goldmine and a source of devotion to the exotic. Those who attend convention especially are priceless. Each is a friend, whether you know them or not. And to think, you too can be counted with this group.

Come to convention, join the fun, you might be asked to do something, and I guarantee you'll learn something too! Please come up and introduce yourself, I'd love to meet you,

See you in August in New Orleans


Shirley Wagner

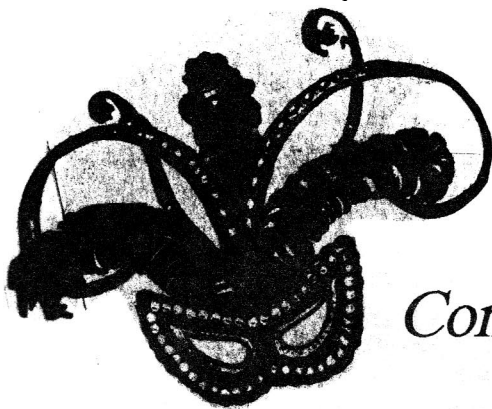
The Tacky Cat Contest!!!

One of the highlights of this year's convention will be the Tacky Cat contest. This event will take place at the pool party on Friday night. A prize will be awarded to the person who appears in the most outrageous and obnoxious cat get-up. No holds barred! Anything with spots or stripes that you can wear goes!

This one sizzles ! ! !

Come marchin' in and join the festivities of New Orleans and all that jazz!

From the very heart of the French Quarter, LIOC ESCF presents . . .



Convention '89 on Bourbon Street

The dates are August 10th through August 13th. Accomodations will be provided by the Landmark Bourbon Street Hotel, 541 Bourbon St., New Orleans, LA 70130. Tel: 1-800-535-7891. Rates for rooms are \$55 for a single, \$60 for a double, \$65 for a triple and \$75 for a quad. Rooms with private Bourbon Street or Pool Court balconies are available at \$5 additional charge. There is an airport shuttle service to the hotel at \$7 per person. Call the hotel directly to reserve a room and specify "LIOC Convention."

Thursday: A walking tour of the French Quarter, beginning at the world famous French Market Cafe du Monde, with an optional breakfast of cafe au lait and beignets. The tour will continue with a tour of Jackson Square, St. Louis Cathedral and other historical landmarks. There will be a few hours of free time for shopping, etc., before the scheduled 5 PM pool party cocktail hour and Tacky Cat contest (cash bar). In the evening, explore the city!

Friday: In the morning we'll have a general membership meeting, in the afternoon, an educational workshop (speaker and topic to be determined) and, in the late afternoon, the executive board will hold it's annual meeting. The evening is open for more meeting time, if necessary, and for time on the town.

Saturday: A Misissippi River Cruise, including five hours of river sight seeing. We'll tour the Chalmette battlefield (Battle of New Orleans), we'll make a stop at the Beauregard Plantation, and we'll pass through the Algiers locks into the bayou cajun waters of Jean Lafitte National Park and Bayou Barataria, both of which offer views of local wildlife and exotic, tropical foliage. In the evening, we've planned another cocktail hour in the hospitality room (cash bar), which will be followed by our annual banquet and auction.

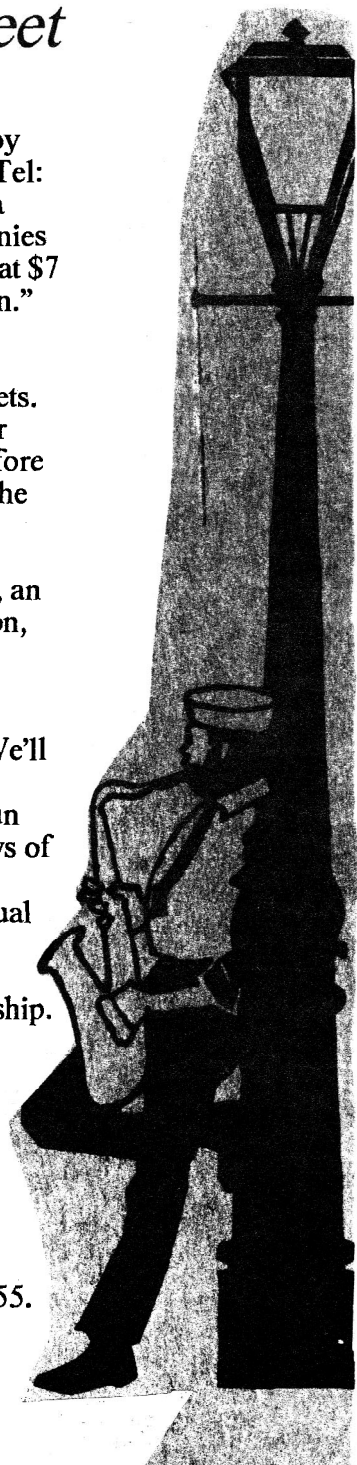
Sunday: A farewell quiche breakfast and the executive board report to the membership.

We'd like to mention that city ordinances prohibit bringing exotic felines into city limits, so this will, unfortunately, be a catless convention. We'd like to encourage everyone to attend and please consider arriving on Wednesday to be in time for Thursday morning events.

Send auction items to: Shirley Wagner, Rt. 4, Box 377, Mobile AL 36619.

Send registration checks to: Suzi Mutascio, 6 E. Lake Circle Dr., Medford NJ 08055.

**PLEASE REGISTER WITH THE HOTEL AND WITH SUZI
AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.**



Letters of Intent From the New Board Members

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From the President, John Perry:

6684 Central Avenue NE
Fridley, MN 55432
April 17, 1989

Spring is Here!

As the newly elected President of LIOC ESCF, thanks to you all for participating in the election.

Spring makes me think of new things and growth. As a club, our primary priority is growth. There are many of you who have expressed an interest in doing something for the club. We need new members. And not just any members. We need members committed to preserving cats and willing to be active to do so. I ask all of you to actively recruit new members. This is our opportunity to grow in numbers and influence. A second priority is to revitalize the branches. Branches are the local representatives of the organization. The contacts one makes through branches are the people near you who can most readily help in an emergency. The branches are the life blood of the organization and provide reassurance that we aren't alone with our problems.

As a new administration, with many new members on the board, a major priority is to complete putting our records in order and assure all of your addresses and information is correct. Please be tolerant as we get it together and correct the remaining errors. Please remember that these are volunteers working on straightening out the records. Let them know, not just when things are wrong, but when they're fixed.

As outward oriented action, our first activity is to deal with the USDA and their proposed regulations. Hopefully by the time you receive this, we will have sent out a mailing, but if not, be aware that anyone with a USDA license should check with APHIS for a copy of the proposed regulations.

I look forward to seeing many of you at convention. Lets have a good time there as we plan how to direct our energies toward helping each other.

John Perry

From the Vice-President, Suzi Mutascio:

My first priority as your Vice President is to facilitate a restoration of unified spirit within the executive board, in order that the combined energies be utilized and directed toward viable feline conservation, full spectrum.

My project focus is to see our blueprint plans for educational literature on in-depth topics such as nutrition, hand-raising exotics, management of the difficult animal, training and other important aspects of caretaking become a reality and readily available to LIOC members. Collectively, there is a virtual wealth of information and experience within our organization. As public literary institutions do not supply this specialized, much-needed, much requested, grass roots information, the burden of responsibility rests with those of us who can produce such material. All exotic owners, past and present, will be asked to contribute their knowledge to this project.

I will also continue to promote the open-door invitation for participation to our newer members. Even though some of us may be more seasoned to the exotic world than others, I maintain that there exist no ultimate, absolute, know-everything experts in the field. We all, hopefully, are willing and continue to learn every day. New energy, enthusiasm and fresh ideas enrich the entire organization. At the bottom line who benefits from diversified contribution? The cats.

Lastly, the challenging motto for my term as Vice President is: How much do you care?
Yours, Suzi Mutascio.

From the Secretary/Treasurer, Connie Hatfield:

No response was submitted.

From the Term Director for Member Services, Barbara Wilton:

Dear Friends,

I thank you for your vote of confidence. I do not plan any big changes in member services -- just restoration and rejuvenation of services that have been lost in the last couple of years.

New members will receive acknowledgement of their membership and all members will be notified when they are to renew. All branches and officers will receive an up-to-date list of members and inquiries with their newsletters. If there is anything special you need or would like to see implemented, please let me know. Thanks again. Barbara Wilton.

From the Term Director for Conservation and Education, Al Porges:

I would like to see LIOC ESCF establish Endangered Species Breeding Programs on grants or with government or zoo coordinated programs to gain recognition for what we really stand for. Education programs are extremely important to spread "the gospel" so to speak for human awareness of the world wide crisis that endangered exotic felines face. Educating the public is essential, because they are the future -- to back programs tomorrow, to save what is left today. Remember, if everyone does just a little, little bit, it all adds up to a lot in the long run, and that's what we are all about, isn't it? Yours truly, Al Porges.

Letters of Intent From the New Board Members

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From the Term Director for Legal Affairs, Mary Parker:

I'm trying to gather information regarding laws of each state and any I can obtain from city and county regarding exotic ownership. This information will be available for members and future term directors to use, as ongoing information. We do not have references available should one need it prior to the purchase of an exotic or should one need information prior to a move. If you could forward information to me hopefully I will have information available by convention. If you don't have information available, please forward the name and address of the controlling office I should contact so that they can send me information. Many thanks for your help. Mary Parker.

From the Term Director for Advertising and Publicity, Jeff Bellingham:

Members of LIOC, I thank you for your votes and confidence in me and for electing me Director of Advertising and Publicity for the coming term. I will do my best to carry out the duties of my position and hope that during my time in this position we can grow to become a more important voice in the preservation of the animals we all love so much. Thank you again and I hope to see you all at convention. Jeff Bellingham.

Notes from the Membership Assistant . . .

" LIFE MEMBERS

We would like to thank those life members who have returned renewal forms. In the last year we have put the old card files on computer. Through inevitable human error the process of entering these files introduced some typos and omissions, particularly information on who has what experience with exotics. For those life members who have not returned renewal forms, please do so. The post office does not do "return mail" on our bulk mailings to give us feedback. We need to know that you are receiving and are interested in receiving the newsletter in the future."

"Thanks for your very generous contributions:

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Peraner	\$100
Mr. Daniel P. Treanor	\$180 "