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Feline Conservation Federation

This newsletter is published bi-monthly by the Feline Conservation Federation, Inc. We are a non-profit (Federal ID# 59-2048618) noncommercial organization with international membership, devoted to the welfare of exotic felines. The purpose of this newsletter is to present information about exotic feline conservation, management and ownership to our members. The material printed in this newsletter is contributed by our members and reflects the point of view of the author but does not necessarily represent the point of view of the

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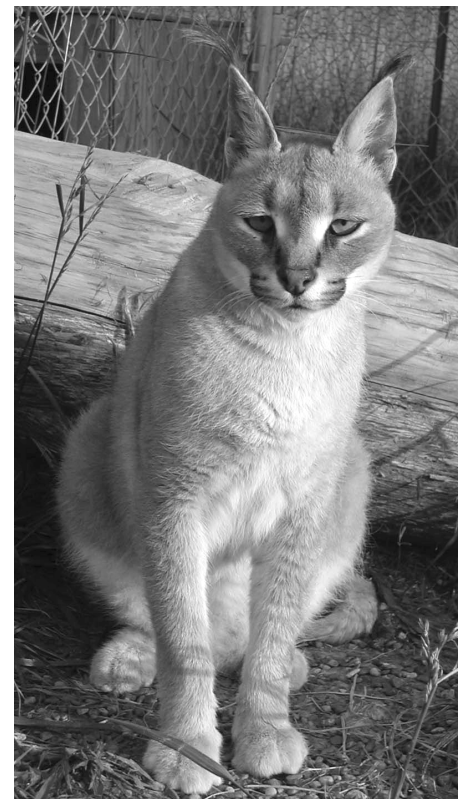
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The Status of the Caracal in India

Caracal caracal schmitzi (CITES Appendix 1) or the Indian Caracal is a medium sized felid also referred as shea gosh (black eared cat) in its western Indian range. In India the Caracal's geographic range spreads from the western dry states of Rajasthan, Gujarat and Southern Punjab to the dry deciduous habitats of Central India. Historically the Caracals were referred from as far as the deccan plateau in the south of the country and historical records also point to the cats being caught locally in Northern Madhya Pradesh kingdoms of Ajaygadh and Panna and tamed by the royalty. However this is not the status of the Caracal in India this day.

The Caracals are one of the rarest species of felids found in India and their geographical distribution is rather scattered and the animals are very rare to sight. No zoo in India holds the specimens and their overall distribution in the country remains uncertain. My self and Mr. S.M.Hassan (IFS, M.P) planned and initiated a survey in Madhya Pradesh (Central India) to understand the presence and status of the Indian Caracal and were lucky to sight our first specimen in chatterpur dist of M.P. A further detailed survey in the western and drier parts of Central India helped us understand the species distribution in these parts. In all 6 individual sightings of the caracals were recorded in 1.5 years of fieldwork.

Nomadic, hunting tribes found in many parts of the caracals range quickly recognise the animals name and may be only people who sight the rare caracals occasionally during their hunting runs, although most times their narrations can be exaggerating and undependable. Hunting or trade in the species was never documented during our studies.

So the question why are caracals so rare in India while they are considered a pest and often persecuted in their African ranges?

A. India is the caracal's eastern most global home range. Caracals prefer dry, open scrub to dense jungle habitats. As one travels from the western desert region of India to the east, across central India the drier regions slowly turn into denser jungle and caracals were never reported in these regions. So this change in vegetation could be one limiting factor for the animal range in India. Further the drier regions of India are not so agriculturally productive and the growing population adopted intensive low yield cattle that can sustain with the scanty grass growth found in the region. Livestock are closely guarded and villagers customarily accompany the cattle to the jungle for grazing along with their trust worthy dog packs. High numbers of feral dogs could have had made a great impact on caracal populations. We have recorded around 40 wildcats (different species) killed by feral dogs during our study period.

B. Fragmentation of habitats: The effect of fragmentation of habitats on species is a topic under study. We have recorded an elimination of certain species from fragmented habitats.



caracal , Exotic Feline Breeding Compound, photo by Nancy Vandermey

By comparing old forest registers where animal sightings were documented with current species inventories we found that certain species of wildlife were eliminated from the fragmented jungles. Jungle cat (*Felis chaus*) for instance has been a lucky adapter and is one of the most commonly sighted Indian small wildcat species. The Caracals were not so lucky.

C. Lack of knowledge: Caracals were never studied in detail in India and we have little knowledge of their current geographic range in the country or their populations. Dr. Ravi Challam (WII) studies wolves in the drier regions of Gujarat state and mentioned sighting caracals periodically in the Little Rann of Kutch wildlife sanctuary. Occasional and chance sightings of these rare wildcats happen and often

these sightings are not documented. So our knowledge on the rare Indian Caracals remains uncertain to this date.



The attached map of Central India where the surveys on the caracals were conducted between 2000- 2002 identifies areas in Central India where the caracals were sighted.

Marked in Black:
Caracal sightings

Marked in Red: Caracal sightings reported by other researchers and forest department officers.

Marked in Blue: Potential sites where caracals may exist but presence not established.

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Accounts of Caracals

by Mindy Stinner

The first time I remember seeing a caracal was at the Carnivore Preservation Trust in 1993. I had only recently found out that places like an exotic animal sanctuary or breeding facility even existed, and I was so excited to be able to visit. On the day I was first scheduled to volunteer it was pouring rain. I went out anyway. I ended up getting a solo tour in the rain, but that was fine with me. One of CPT's founders, Kay Reames, showed me around the facility and introduced me to some of the many animals on site. We slogged through ankle deep mud while I met tigers, leopards, jaguars, ocelots, servals, binturongs, kinkajou, sunbear, and caracals.

Quite honestly, the caracals didn't stand out on the tour. My head was too full of tigers and those weird binturongs (Asian bearcats). Many of the flashier small cats and been more eye-catching.

Then we went into the house and I met the other founder, Michael Bleyman. He was a bit gruff in the tired way people get when there's too much going on all the time. He was sitting alone in the kitchen with his hands full of bottles and kittens. Kittens with spots. And more with florets. And others with tiny ear tufts. He had me wash up, sat me on the floor with a bottle, and stuffed a kitten into my hands. "Here, hold it this way, and feed it this way. Good."

I was in heaven. The five day-old baby serval was happy to eat and burp and eat and fall asleep. I had a hard time relinquishing him, but they traded him for another, a caracal. Her little pointy ears were still folded down. I sat on the floor in one spot until both legs went to sleep, but I really didn't mind at all. I was hooked.

I began volunteering doing construction, watering, feeding, cage cleaning—anything they would let me learn. I brought my best friend Gina out and she got hooked, too.



The facility was very successful in breeding its animals. Eventually kittens and cubs overran the house and they began to foster them out to experienced volunteers. Gina came home with two caracal kittens. Michael liked to name them, but he was running low on names after such a busy season. He looked in the newspaper and saw it was Studs Terkel's birthday, so the two became Studs and Terkel. I swore to myself while I babysat

these angels on occasion that if I ever got babies to foster I would come armed with name suggestions.

Shortly, I did get to foster my own animals. When a nasty virus began to affect the animals on site, the highest priority was to protect the infants. I got three 5 day-old caracal kittens and a quick lesson on subcutaneous shots in the same day, then was told not to bring them back until the virus was gone from the site. Since I was a teacher then, I had the summer free to spend with the cats. They had their own room in the house and I probably spent 6 hours a day with them. It was very hard to take them back when it was time. Michael didn't name them, but my fiance did—Nenya, Scylla and Anatoly. They taught me many things: that caracals more than 5 weeks old can poop by themselves, that they will eat kitty litter if given the option, that catnip does not mix well with caracals helping you cook, and that the bonds infants forge with their caregivers set the tone for their relationships with people for the rest of their lives.

More animals came and went in my foster care: binturongs, servals, ocelots, and caracals. I think I was happiest when I had two binturongs and two caracals at home at the same time.

What an amazing and wild time that was!! With more than 25 servals, 20 ocelots, 2 pairs of snow leopards, 55 binturongs, 25 kinkajous and 40 caracals breeding away at the facility, it was

I learned so much from these babies. Because I had such strong guidance from Michael and Kay and later from Sharon Ziegler, the then-curator, no babies got very ill or died in my care in the first year. I learned how to adjust the formulas slightly for desired health results, how to unstop plugged up babies, how to give shots and fluids and how to check for sharp bones in slurry. I learned how caracals speak by flicking their ears, what an ocelot grumble means by the pitch of it, how fast a serval can strike when it's *really* excited. I thought I was doing OK on the learning curve.



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BIG CATS, EVOLUTION, AND POLITICS

John Williamson and John Burkitt

In late 1999 CBS News put forth a quote: "For the sake of the animals, people and animals have to walk into the millennium together." Unfortunately, it was not to happen — but because of political, not rational reasons.

The Federalist Patriot in August 2004 notes that: "For 30 years, the [political] Left has used the "safety" claim as the foundation for its strategy of "incremental encroachment" on the Second Amendment to achieve its ultimate goal of gun confiscation." Clearly, the left leaning "Animal Rights" zealots bought into this strategy with a vengeance. Just substitute 'animal' for 'gun' in their agenda.

Actually, the AR use of "safety" issues is more appropriate than its use by the anti-gun zealots. The AR community mistakenly adopted the somewhat dated but firmly ensconced notions of Darwin (circa 1850) to justify their stand — that "wild and dangerous" animals remain that way for thousands of generations. So it follows a "wild" animal is always a danger to people. And, in true leftist fashion, "safety" has become the foundation and emotional force driving AR politics.

What will they fall back on when their beliefs are pushed aside by new advances in the understanding of evolution? Its more complicated than anyone could imagine a decade ago. Except, of course, the followers of Lamarck (circa 1800) who insisted that changes in an organism quickly adapting to a new environment could be passed on to its progeny. Lamarck could not account for the mechanisms which effect this "looking to the future" so evolution theory became fixated on Darwinism, a much simpler theory of random genetic mutation and natural selection. Darwin did not embrace "looking to the future." Neither, it would seem, have the politically inclined.

People look for some change in the genome to explain the mechanism of Lamarckian evolution. We don't necessarily think so. That harkens back to the idea that everything inheritable is encoded in DNA. Maybe it's time we opened our minds and considered that DNA was the main method of transmission just like we do the majority of our communicating with voice, not email.... And yet we just communicated with you by electronic means. So let us outline a thought exercise which may help to understand where science has taken us.

Assuming DNA is the only possible route for parents to pass traits to their offspring is something that in a small way flies against all the stuff we have on our website about CUB REARING. Let's see, for three months the tiger cub is suspended in the mother's fluids. We know that fetuses "drink" the amniotic fluid though they receive all their moisture from the placenta. Then it drinks the mother's milk, gets her scent and is groomed by her. We now know that many potential avenues for biochemical exchange. Genes do build structure, yes. And they get passed down intact, yes. But we know there is a strange and scientifically unexplained habit some genes have



being "dominant" while others are "recessive." Is this necessarily always a fixed process? Or is it to some degree dependent on the presence of certain hormonal clues and precursor chemicals in the amniotic fluid? Are there switches that determine how genes are expressed during embryonic development? Are these switches flipped by hormones? Nutrients? Stress steroids? Let's tell a story from two perspectives: Darwinian and Lamarckian:

DARWINIAN: There is a fox in Malta that can either have a blue tipped nose or a black tipped nose. This is genetically controlled. In areas where there are bears, the blue tipped nose attracts the bears and the foxes are promptly eaten. In areas where there are no bears a blue tipped nose attracts a certain type of squirrel close enough to get snagged so all the fox has to do is sit out in the open and be easily visible. So where it is evolutionary advantageous, blue tipped noses are passed down through the genes. Where it is not, they aren't. This is called NATURAL SELECTION.

LAMARCKIAN: There is a gene in the Maltese Fox that will make a developing fox pup's nose blue in the presence of arsenic. Squirrels concentrate arsenic. Pregnant mothers eat squirrels and have blue nosed pups who likewise become great squirrel hunters. One of the blue nosed vixens went to the part of the island where the bears live, and by being very careful managed to learn how to stalk toads at night and live long enough to have offspring of her own, which had black tipped noses because she couldn't sit around in the open attracting arsenic laden squirrels. She passed the OPTIONS to her offspring genetically. She passed the CHOICE OF OPTIONS to her offspring environmentally.

Think about it.... Milk... amniotic fluid... saliva... Is this the mechanism of Lamarckian evolution? An

continued page 8

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Big Cats, Evolution, and Politics, *continued from page 6*

Finally let us consider the “random” mixing of genes during meiosis. How do we know it is totally random? How do we know that the biochemical environment of the cell doesn’t affect the likelihood of certain exchanges? Or, the survival of certain embryos to maturity?

While this is a speculative model at the moment, science has identified no less than four processes – so far including internal prion activity — whereby environmental input switches the expression of genes within the genome such that they are passed on. These known biochemical processes add up to what is referred to as EPIGENETIC EVOLUTION or evolution that leaves the genes themselves intact but adapts the organism and its progeny rapidly to environmental influences which will benefit the following generations both physically and behaviorally. If we humans had had to depend only on random gene mutation and natural selection, we wouldn’t be having this discussion. Why should our animals be any less blessed?

Our culture’s notions of an organism’s “intrinsic” behavior are largely drawn from the more familiar Darwinian model of evolution modified by nurturing factors. However, it



turns out that an organism’s behavior isn’t just the result of nature OR nurture. It isn’t even just nature AND nurture. Those old arguments are no longer relevant — It’s way more complicated

than that. This is where epigenetic evolution shines.

Refreshingly, epigenetic evolution is rapidly building a new paradigm of biological and behavioral evolution, a worldview where desirable behavior traits can be produced in one generation and passed on to the next. In essence, this recently understood and documented process is a more ancient one whereby biochemical responses to environmental factors alter the genome, which doles out instructions, but not the crucial integrity of the genes themselves. A simple example should suffice.

Melissa C. Stoppler, M.D. explains: “The hormone cortisol, which is released in the body during stressed or agitated states, has gained widespread attention as the so-called “stress hormone.” But this hormone is more than a simple marker of stress levels — it is necessary for the functioning of almost every part of the body. Ex-

A “wild” tiger, for example, must maintain a high level of cortisol just to deal with the every day rigors of getting food, defending territory, and mate selection. It lives highly stressed, has a dangerous disposition, and dies young. Bring a tiger cub into a loving, caring, well provided captive situation offering people based emotional bonds and it will adapt to that environment by switching appropriate genes to call for less cortisol production. It will become far less “dangerous,” and healthier, happier, and likely die from old age twice its “wild” lifetime later.

Importantly, it will pass on its good fortune to any offspring by biochemical “looking to the future.”

In other words the tiger keeps its stripes and seductive good looks but rapidly alters its behavior driven biochemistry to reflect the demands of its environment — be nice and you’ll survive better. Lamarck would be delighted. This should soon erode the shaky underpinnings of our culture’s relentless political agenda to eliminate the keeping of exotic animals such as big cats based largely on their assumed unchangeable “dangerousness.”

Let’s just give the whole thing a name and call it human society’s evolutionary FIX-ATED CONCERN WITH BIG TEETH (FCWBT). With some small effort this could be fixed, not further amplified – through epigenetic processes, of course.

Tiger Touch Inc.



Accounts of Caracals *continued from page 5*

The second year I lost a premature serval with underdeveloped lungs, which had never really stood a chance. That didn't stop us from trying, but it was a sad thing when we lost him after only one day. I had named him Quark because of his size.

I knew Quark's death wasn't my fault, but I still was a bit sensitive when I got my next caracal kittens. Asha and Gabriel were the gentlest of souls caught up in manic little caracal bodies. They were wonderful and eager to live and I had no idea the ordeals I would go through with them.

First, they tried to eat EVERYTHING. I had gradually baby-proofed my house so the animals I was fostering could have full run instead of being limited to a single room. Apparently my baby proofing was not adequate. I found Gabriel under the sink trying to eat cleaners. Asha had the toilet brush. Then Gabriel had a box of mint cookies he somehow got out of the upper kitchen cabinets. Then Asha was crunching moths at the windowsill at night. Then Gabriel wanted coffee and any old beer bottles he could find in the garbage can.

Then one day when Asha was only about four weeks old, we had returned to the facility to day camp with other cats and get checked by the curator. She noticed a small tear in Asha's neck. I was devastated I hadn't seen it—how could I have overlooked it? We started antibiotics, and I agreed to watch it closely and keep the babies separated, since it was possible he had caused the damage or would

For three days I flushed the wound several times a day. Asha was actually rather pleasant about it, which just fed my fears that she was dreadfully ill. I was so focused on her that I had to do a double take at Gabriel one morning when he showed up entirely gray.

Not dirty gray, but *actually* gray. He had lost his gold overcoat overnight. All that was left was a lovely thick gray undercoat. He had no other odd symptoms, but I called Sharon anyway to ask what I should do. She was bewildered. She asked about his nutrition, what he had gotten into lately, what toys he was playing with. The only change we had made, which I finally thought of after several minutes of relentless questioning, was bringing the banana tree into the house that week to protect it from the cold. Sharon sighed, and explained to me that these trees are toxic to cats. When I checked the tree, I saw that Gabe had been climbing up and down the trunk, and then apparently cleaning his feet. I felt like an idiot, and sheepishly moved the tree.

That night as I flushed the quarter-sized hole in poor Asha's neck, a strange small chunk of what looked like tendon or gristle came up out of the skin along her neck. It was the size of an eraser on a pencil. I collected it and took it to Sharon, who stared at for a while before shrugging and tossing it out. "Maybe that was it," she said. She was right. After that, the hole closed itself in a matter of days.

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HURRICANE FRANCES

The winds were tremendous at the compound, registering over 80mph in gusts. Sustained winds here were about 40-60 mph for 24 hours. Many limbs fell, narrowly missing my house. In fact, I'm amazed that one of the huge walnut trees surrounding the house didn't come crashing down on it. One of my trees did fall toward the neighbor's house (they have zebras and capybaras) and smashed through their privacy fence, destroying the top portion of my perimeter fence. Many pines fell on my wolf cages, but did little damage to the fencing and luckily missed the wolves. There are, however, large trees littering the cages that must be removed. Mick Manoram, my head curator, used his chainsaw to chop them from the outside, so the tops fell into the cages leaving the larger portions outside. Some tree parts are 20 feet long. My front yard is still an ocean of broken trees, as is the animal compound. It was an absolute mess here.

If I'd left the chickens and guinea pigs outside, they would have drowned. They spent the next few days by my pool in the back yard on high ground. Java, my Siberian tiger, received the worst damage to his cage. The rooftop on his cage caved in from the water pressure. Mick and I had to pull off three of the 5x10 roof panels, straighten them, and then put them back. It took many hours in the high winds. During one gust, Mick was lifted off the top of the cage and almost landed in the lake! Java had a good time, however, who viewed Mick atop his cage as a large pinata, and spent much time trying to grab his shoes (at least someone was having fun throughout all this!).

We were without power and phones for 6 days. At least my generator allowed me to have lights and run my fridge, but it wasn't powerful enough to run the A/C. I was near the end of my patience and sanity when the power finally came back on. I drove around and photographed many of the downed power lines, rooftops ripped completely off, flooded streets and general chaos.

And we weren't even in the middle of the hurricane! We were on the fringes, in the "safe" zone. I can only imagine what happened to those unfortunate people who were in the path of Frances.

I'm just glad to be alive and I'm thrilled that no animals



escaped. The tigers didn't seem a bit concerned about the hurricane. They sat on top of their den boxes, watching the show. All of my servals were petrified, of course, and stayed out of sight. My leopards didn't seem to care either. Oh, and I rescued 4 baby rats, abandoned by their mother in the hurricane. They barely had fur when I found them as they were floating in the water, their little noses poking out into the air. They were cold as ice, so I took them in; now their eyes are open and they're eating like, well, rats. I named them Frances, Charlie, Ivan and Floyd.

HURRICANE JEANNE

Well, we survived Hurricane Jeanne, as well. The winds were MUCH stronger and the rains heavier than Frances, although neither lasted quite as long as Frances. I watched



in awe as a huge pine with a massive trunk bowed to the ground, touching it, under the forceful winds. Three more thinner pine trees snapped and smashed my perimeter fence (which surrounds my animal compound) in 3 places, plus a HUGE walnut tree growing in my front yard fell toward the neighbors, taking out my privacy fence AND the rest of theirs (Hurricane Frances destroyed a portion of it previously). If the tree had chosen to go toward my house instead, my guest bedroom would have been kindling.

My chickens were drowning so I had to scramble around, capturing wet hens (now I know where the term "madder than a wet hen" comes from), attempting to find enough small cages for them by my pool where they'd stay dry. I had to bring in the bush baby and ferrets, and rescue the

guinea pigs from the flood in their pen. My covies were actually swimming, and my two servals (Egypt and Nubia) were so upset, they were sitting up on their perches, shivering, soaking wet. Their cage floor was under a foot of water. They were so angry, I couldn't get near them or I would have risked serious injury, since they're fully clawed. So I had to sit with them for a couple of hours until they calmed down and waded over to their dry igloo filled with straw. Then they settled down and stayed inside the igloo for the rest of the night.



Most of the tarps on the cage tops (I have over 50 cages) were shredded like confetti; all have to be replaced. My driveway is a mud wallow; I have to put my truck in 4-wheel drive to get out. The compound is so muddy, I can only drive my golf cart

half way around the animal cages or I'll get stuck. I have to walk the rest of the way in to get food to the animals near the back.

Of course, I was without power, this time for 4 days.

Currently, we've been receiving donations of kind individuals, including the use of a bobcat tractor, along with two large loads of lime rock. Now we can repair the driveway and also fill in the mud holes near the cages so that we can again drive our golf carts back to the animals during feeding time.

I am thankful that none of the animals were injured. I just hope that the next hurricane passes us by. My nerves can't take too much more excitement!

Thank you,
Deborah Warrick, Founder
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Candidate Platforms

President

I ask for your vote to be the FCF President for the 2005 – 2006 term. Feel my experience as one of FCF Directors, current position as Vice President, and co-founder and past President of Midwest Exotic Feline Educational Society, which is a branch of FCF, will enable me to work with the FCF board and officers effectively to lead FCF for the next two years.

Have attended the past eight FCF national conventions and have owned exotic cats since 1993. My wife Patricia and I own and operate Cheetah Preservation and Research Center that is a federal 501-3c USDA facility.

Developed, designed, and in the final stages of assembling a high speed cheetah exercise system to help eliminate the medical problems of the cheetah that I feel is mainly due to their lack of high speed running exercise in captivity.

My goals as President:

- Continue and expand the FCF participation in wildcat habitat conservation projects.
- Increase FCF membership by minimum of 10% per year.
- Finalize and implement the FCF Accreditation Program.
- Obtain discounted group liability insurance for FCF members.
- Continue and expand the excellent FCF Husbandry Course.
- Continue the excellent increase in members attending the FCF National Convention that has accrued the past two years.
- Continue to fight for private exotic cat ownership.
- Work to get past members to rejoin FCF.
- Be a good conflict moderator.

I enjoy serving the FCF members and will work to help manage FCF in an effective, efficient, and professional manner.

Robert L. Turner – FCF Vice President

Vice President

I am running for the office of vice president of the FCF. I have been raising cats and other exotics for over 20 years. At one time or another, I've ad 19 different species of cats, both large and small, and over 130 different species of wildlife in general. In cats, I currently have Siberian lynx, European lynx, Amur leopard cat, and white lions.

I have served on many different boards and in all offices possible and have an excellent knowledge of Roberts' Rules of Order and board procedures in general. I have served the FCF on the bylaws review committee, the accreditation committee, and for the last 2 years on the convention committee. The last one has been particularly gratifying working with Bobby Bean and helping

him to set 2 consecutive records for attendance as well as helping him in bringing in the advertisers and commercial sponsors to the newsletter and at the convention. I look forward to continuing to work with him.

I have a good working knowledge of both US and international laws on wildlife through my occupation as an animal importer/exporter. I have been active with different governmental agencies in working with them to bring about reasonable laws that maintain the right for private ownership.

I look forward to continuing to help make FCF stronger and more influential in the areas of conservation and legislation, as well as maintaining our friendly atmosphere.

Kevin Chambers

Secretary Treasurer

The office of Secretary-Treasurer was unopposed but I will continue to submit informational and financial reports as well as processing your membership dues in timely fashion. In addition, I have a project that I hope FCF will pursue in the interest of captive animal husbandry. The project is for FCF to unite with all interested animal groups with the goal of preventing animal rights organizations from eliminating the rights of animal owners.

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President George Stowers and Legal Affairs Director Lynn Culver stated during convention that FCF must become Proactive instead of Reactive. I spoke to Lester Kalmanson during convention about the need to combat the AR groups and he advised that many groups are contesting AR already and that FCF doesn't need to "invent the wheel" it just needs to climb aboard. The only mechanics I have in mind is (1) for FCF to contact organizations to determine interest and (2) select one or two officers from each organization to form a coalition for leadership.
Harold Epperson

Membership Services

My name is Donna Verba and I own "Walk on the Wildside", a small non-profit, exotic feline rescue, located outside of Mena AR.

Being a non-profit myself, and knowing too well the meaning of non-Profit. I know the importance of volunteers. I know without volunteers the FCF would have a hard time making things work. This is one of the reasons I accepted the nominations for membership services. I feel I have working knowledge of how things run, due to the fact every newsletter you have received for a long time now has been stuffed addressed and ready for mailing from my kitchen counter. I know what is involved in getting these out to you on time, Lynn and I have been working together hard to make this happen.

I strongly believe in the way the FCF has changed, not just in the name but also the deeds. The way the FCF is now working harder than ever to help fight changing laws and protects the right to own exotics. I support the involvement in the Playa De Oro reserve and commend the members who selflessly give to continue the work of the FCF.

I have watched the membership expand in the past few years, working together and giving freely of oneself on a volunteer basis has made a whole new FCF. If elected I will make sure our Membership Directory is published and I will make sure renewal notices are mailed in a timely manner.

Donna Verba

Liz Hatton has reluctantly pulled out of the race for Membership Services because of her recent marriage and the increased mother duties that comes with her four new step-children. Congratulations Liz - good luck and hope you can volunteer for the FCF in 2005!

Conservation & Education

My name is Leann Montgomery and it is my honor to have served as your Member Services Director for the past three years. However, I am truly looking forward to the opportunity to serve the membership in a different capacity. I am running for the position of Conservation and Education Director because that is where my true passion lies. Tracy Wilson has

phenomenal job as our current Conservation and Education Director and it will be hard to ever fill her shoes, but I am up for the challenge. The job of Conservation and Education Director has grown tremendously under Tracy's leadership. The Playa de Oro project continues to be an amazing project for FCF and it has kept Tracy very busy over the past few years. As a lead instructor for the FCF Wild Feline Husbandry Course I have tried to fill in for Tracy whenever needed over the past 2 years, acting as lead instructor for half of the Husbandry Courses offered. As Conservation and Education Director, I will continue to represent FCF and to get our conservation and education message out there by offering more Husbandry courses and finding new ways to support conservation efforts of wild cats around the world. My dedication to FCF is solid and I look forward to being able to continue to serve this organization and further our cause. Thank you for your vote.
Leann Montgomery

As a USDA licensed educator for Wildlife Wonders Zoo to You, and owner of a variety of zoological animals including exotic felines, I have an intense interest in conservation and education. I want to help FCF focus on creating educational materials for members and the general public. This will coordinate with the FCF legislative message and help increase public acceptance of our felines and private ownership.

I am excited about working with Deborah Rabinski and the educational Coloring Book project. New state and federal regulations are mandating that more of us gain licensing from the USDA and engage in responsible breeding and educational exhibiting. I look forward to helping you develop your educational programs.

FCF has made great strides in in-situ conservation with Playa de Oro. I want to help FCF develop programs in the US that build the same awareness, appreciation and respect of our special felines. Education is the key to conservation.

Hope Bennet

Legal Affairs

Whether we like it or not, I believe that each of us as individuals, and combined as a group, must be involved in politics. Those we elect and support must understand that we are educated and concerned for animal welfare and public safety. We need to fight ban laws locally and work *with* our police departments and local officials.

Often times bans are proposed because community leaders lack the manpower or resources to address exotic animals and feel they have no choice. This is why I started Hunter and Lea's Project. This very successful Ohio based grass-roots coalition help educate police departments about exotic felines and assist when the presence of exotic animals are causing difficulties within a community.

I have been involved with felines for the past 6 years. I have become very politically involved and have had the opportunity to

work against several ban laws. I have gained the support of many community leaders and police departments though my work with Hunter and Lea's Project.

I am interested in educating those that do not understand us, to overcome fears that AR groups have created. I look forward to working with each of you to meet these goals.

Evelyn Shaw

Candidate Platforms Continued

Ever since I was a little girl, I've always had an unconditional love for all animals. Over the years, I've found my passion and interest in felines has grown tremendously. In the past 6 or so years, I've independently researched and studied wild feline species, and overall feline health, behavior, and husbandry through friends, family, internet, books, and documentaries. I've become a member of the FCF, SAOVA (Sportsmen's and Animal Owners' Voting Alliance), and various other animal related groups/organizations, and have been a seasonal volunteer for an AZA zoo. Last year, I formed and became Director/President of a local feline rescue organization for domestic cats that also assists in exotic feline rescue and placement. I do not own any exotic felines at this time but visit, play, and work with them several times throughout the year at friend's homes and facilities (more particularly the smaller species).

Along with the knowledge I've gained through the FCF, its Husbandry Course, online email groups, individual members, and others, it was impossible for me not to notice the legislative trend and battles that exotic feline owners are facing today on every level of the government. I wanted to do something. So I started by diving in head first against the federal Captive Wildlife Safety Act. Then with several states being bombarded with proposed bans and Animal Rights based legislation every year, I coordinated with others (especially Lynn Culver) to give a hand wherever and whenever I could. I've learned much with the help of Lynn and the many federal and state legislator aids concerning government and legislative processes, amateur lobbying, PACs, AR tactics, and how one person CAN make a difference.

The more I learn, the more interested I become and hope to recruit others along the way. It's a serious matter that I am wholeheartedly willing to fight for. Not just for myself, but for every responsible owner/breeder/keeper out there.

Sara Schimke

Advertising and Publicity

I would like to introduce myself to everyone; I'm running for advertising and publicity director. My background has been in the arts for the past twenty-four years, I have worked as an art director, art consultant and independent art curator. I have affiliations with London Museum of Natural History, The Metropolitan Museum NYC, and Leo Russell School of Art NJ. In the recent nine years my focus has been in the Lehigh Valley Pa. Engaged in activities associated with artistic and cultural development in the city of Easton, PA. During this time I have owned and operated an art gallery (de Arte' Magick gallery.) Presently I'm working as an art consultant and arts project facilitator for the city of Easton, and art curator at the David A. Portlock gallery, Lafayette College for 41/2 years now complete. My professional activities include travels included research

and study in indigenous arts, religion and mythology. Animal history My love for animals goes back to childhood I seen my first ocelot at the age of five in 1957 in a pet store NYC from that time on I had thoughts of owning an exotic cat. I worked with Ray McPeak a zoo vet in 1973-77 on his animal compound in N.J. I breed show cats 1974-80 1972-1974 long Island ocelot member. 1993-1997 worked for Make peace with animals, Greyhound rescue as director in N.J. 2001-2002 worked part time V.C.A. animal hospital as vet tech. I would now like to concede from the running for advertising and publicly director, to open an officer for fundraising and grant writing. I feel that FCF can grow with grants and help with education/conservation through funding. I feel I can be the most help in this by research in foundations giving grants and writing the grants with the help of our legal director.

Deborah Rabinsky

I have been privileged to be working with such animals, non-stop the last 15 years, working many years in zoo management, including AZA facilities, exposing me to "both sides of the fence". I am experienced in training staff members on big cat safety and ERT procedures, as well as supervising marine mammal diving operations and care, and do much public speaking with such animals. I also moderate several AZA Internet discussion groups.

One thing is certain, and that is that the animal-species may never change,...but we must stay aggressive and up to date with our methods of delivery for teaching the general public what these animals are all about.

A person responsible for advertising and public relations should be experienced in the industry and truly believe in what it is all about. There are many people and organizations out there today that wish nothing more but to stop private ownership, stop zoo's from exhibiting, and basically stop each of us from devoting our life to what we love the most,...our animals. These people and originations will do most anything to distract us from our true love with animals. This includes fabricating lies and untruths all the way down to persuading law enforcement officials to file "one sided" stories/reports in attempts to get their way. I myself have been introduced to this new tactic, being named in the newly "Great Animal-Owner Witch Hunt", (a/k/a the Kraft indictments)

If elected to this position I can pledge to you very strong, sound, and aggressive performance that will always be based on the principal of "100% in the right!" Teaching the public about what organizations like the FCF are all about.

Marcus Cook

Life Director

Over the years it has been my privilege to serve first the members of the LIOC-ESCF and now the FCF in a number positions; members, Director Legal Affairs, Director Conservation and Education, Vice President, and most recently as President. While the demands of my professional life did not allow me to seek re-election to the very demanding position of President for a third term, I would like to opportunity to serve the membership as a Term Life Director.

Cordially, George N. Stowers, President FCF.

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Visiting the White Tigers at the Arklahoma State Fair



Marcus demonstrates for Thunder how to feed Gita

Fall is the time for state fairs and near the boarder of Arkansas and Oklahoma in Fort Smith Arkansas is the combined Arklahoma State fair. I had intentions of making this year's event, mostly because I wanted to visit with Marcus Cook, FCF member and candidate for Director of Advertising and Publicity. Marcus's company, Zoopros had a contract to appear with their white tigers.

My friend's son Starlin Thunder was turning 12, so to celebrate, Thunder and his mom Cheryl and I spent the day at the State Fair. And like all fairs, it was crowded and noisy; a sensory overload of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, thrills and challenges. Thunder managed to win all sorts of games and before we left we were lugging around every size stuffed Scooby Doo dog known to man, including the giant, bigger then life version. He also won a stuffed tiger for me.

Along the midway, amidst the rides and games was a tiger striped curtain wall with large letters proclaiming *Extinction is forever – get involved in conservation today.* The screen hid a living display of rare white tigers. For a \$2.00 admission you could spend unlimited time viewing these massive carnivores whose wild cousins prey on Sambar deer and water buffalo in their native India. For another \$10.00, you could have your photo taken while you played 'tiger trainer' for a moment and actually fed a morsel of meat to one of the largest, rarest, most beautiful creatures ever created by nature.

I watched with interest as this tiny enclave of nature competed with all the flash and technology of modern society for the public's attention. Spending almost 3 hours with Marcus, I witnessed a steady stream of visitors stand in awe and smile as

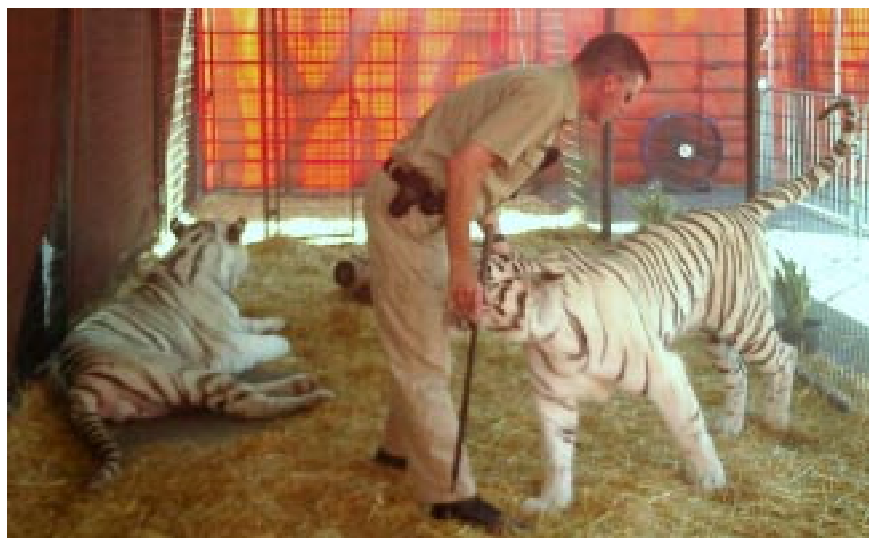
various families had their portrait taken next to an adult white tiger that stood up ever so gently to nibble the bite of meat on the end of a long wooden skewer.

On display was Splash - at over 500 pounds, 'impressive' is an understatement. He was not as active as his cage mate, he spent most of the time plopped right in front of the swamp cooler set up to provide air-conditioning for the cats.

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A family poses for a portrait next to Gita as their little daughter gets to be 'tiger trainer' making Gita stand for a bite of pork roast on a skewer.



Marcus enters the enclosure to search for feces and is greeted by Gita

Playa De Oro from my eyes to yours

by Donna Verba

Have you ever felt that something in your life was missing? No matter how you tried nothing seemed to fill this void. I have surrounded myself with 90+ tropical plants, and taken in the uprooted and unwanted exotic cats. Giving them the love they deserve as if they were mine since their birth. But still with all this, life was still missing something. An empty feeling still filled me, there was a void that needed to be filled; it was yearning for something that I could not find. Then one day I heard of this place far away, on another continent, a place far away from civilization, a step back in time, to the way things were meant to be. Where the people lived as one with the earth, the animals and jungle that surrounded them. This place called Playa de Oro.

This has always been a dream for me to go to the jungle and walk the trail of the rainforests, a place untouched by time, and unspoiled by modern man. This is a place where the people are still pure of heart and spirit, and welcome all of those who come to their land. Those who have been blessed enough to go there, will return to their home, changed in spirit, deep down into their souls. You cannot come back without feeling you have been giving a gift by the people there. Their gift of simplicity, kindness, purity of soul, and peace within yourself, a blessing offered to you by these gentle souls. I was sure that I would never be able to fulfill this dream to walk the jungle and see the rainforest. But some-

things happen when we least expect them, and doors of opportunity open for us when we have given up all hope. My dream was soon to become a reality, I would be making this trip and I would be able to walk the jungle trails and listen to the sounds at night, as they lulled me to sleep, a deep peaceful sleep.

First step was to overcome the dislike of flying; this was the only way to get, there. So I had no choice if I wanted to go. I made it through the flight and spent several days in Quito, it was a city filled with so many wonderful things. But I wanted out and into the jungle. After several days of exploring Quito and the rest of the group arrived we headed out of the mountains and down into the rainforest.

Once we entered the rainforest, it was all that I imagined and more. The site of the rolling hills and deep lush green, clouds hanging over the hilltops, just takes your breath away. The trip upriver the reserve was wondrous, the palms, and bamboo that lined the rivers edge, and all the small villages along the way, were so peaceful and tranquil. We made our way along this thick lush green world, upriver to the reserve. Once we arrived on the shore it was as if we had stepped back in time, back to the way life was meant to be, a feeling of peace filled me, emotions stirred deep within, feelings you never knew existed.

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Candidate Platforms cont. from page 14 Life Director

I have served for the past 4 years on the FCF board as Director of Education & Conservation. While I have immensely enjoyed working in this avenue, I feel that it is time to let someone else have a turn at this position. But at the same time, I would like to continue to serve on the board and work to help make FCF better and better.

On a personal note, for those who don't know me yet, I live in Arkansas and I care for 16 exotic cats. Some are pets, some are educational animals, and the majority are placements that needed a new home for various reasons. I am USDA licensed, as well as a state licensed wildlife rehabilitator. I think education is the key to responsible ownership and well cared for cats.

Therefore, I am here to provide assistance to you and your cats however possible. I also want to help encourage our membership to be involved in felid related conservation efforts, because all species of cats are in critical danger of losing their habitats at a rapid rate. It is not enough to just have our pet cats and give them a good home anymore, we must take action to help their cousins in the wild survive and have a place to live in the world as nature intended.

There is so much to do, and so many possibilities, in both avenues of education and conservation, that it is really a bigger job than one person can do justice to. Because of that, I think that as a Life Director, I can better assist the next E&C director by helping shoulder the weight of keeping all our current E&C related projects going, as well as launching new projects. I am especially interested in getting FCF more involved in other conservation

projects in the future. The board is a team, and it takes a team effort to be successful. I would be proud to be elected as a 2-year term Life Director and continue to serve the FCF membership and their cats. Thanks for your support.

Tracy Wilson

We have two excellent candidates nominated for Legal Affairs, so I am comfortable to leave that position and run for Life Director.

I am interested in legislative and regulatory matters. I am excited about the FCF accreditation program and the school Coloring Book project. I hope to help FCF re-start the studbook registry, as I have extensive experience with that software. FCF needs to produce a promotional video or PowerPoint presentation on the importance of private ownership and our commitment to the Playa de Oro project for our members to use in their educational presentations.

As a Life Director, I will gladly assist in any of these projects and I will work on written FCF materials that will function as both educational and promotional to distribute to legislators and regulatory agencies.

This has been a very creative time for this organization. Changes in by-laws and board structure and improvements in services to the members have demanded many volunteer efforts from the present 8-member board. I look forward to being part of the progress that will begin next January with a full 11-member board. I wish to help FCF be the leading voice for responsible captive husbandry.

Lynn Culver

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Tropical Trouble

by David Tetzlaff

Hurricane Apathy. It's a malady we *formally* suffered from in Southwest Florida. The summer of 2004 altered our attitude forever. Historically, the west coast of Florida, with a few exceptions, has been spared from the catastrophic damage hurricanes present. These violent storms have consistently churned up through the Gulf of Mexico with their eye on Florida's panhandle or points west, bypassing our area. However, make no mistake, we have had our share of scares. Hurricane Andrew tore an east/west path across Florida in 1992 causing damage over much of South Florida including the Naples area and since we have had several near misses causing flooding and minor damage. That being said, we still managed to remain in a state of false security.

When my parents, Larry and Nancy Tetzlaff, took over stewardship of the Caribbean Gardens in 1969, Hurricane Donna, which hit Naples in 1960 was still a fresh memory. With this in mind my father had solid concrete roofs placed on all buildings during the construction process. Since the initial opening of the zoo new enclosures and holding areas have been added but have predominately been made of chainlink with metal roofing since the threat of tropical storms had been minimal, relatively speaking, over our thirty five year history. This summer, of course, has given rise to changes in future designs of all animal holdings.

To prepare for tropical storms we do have a Hurricane Action Plan that details every element of preparation for the zoo and its specimen collection. Each spring prior to the June 1st to November 1st Hurricane Season we review our policy and add or delete changes in the animal collection and exhibits, ensure we have the adequate amount of crates, kennels, snake bags, etc., and make sure generators are operational.

Our Hurricane Action Plan outlines what measures must be taken depending on the category of storm we expect to encounter. For example, all lemurs are removed from the monkey islands regardless of storm strength. Larger primates are removed when winds higher than a category 2 storm are anticipated. All venomous snakes are bagged, boxed and locked inside their building. Small mammals, birds and other reptiles are crated or kenneled and placed in secure buildings. All large felines are brought into their buildings. Our 1.1 African Lions and 2.0 Indochinese tigers have chainlink holding areas so these four large cats were placed in movable cages on wheels such as circuses use and shuttled to a secure area. Hoofed animals and macropods are left to weather the storm in their exhibition yards. Confining these types of animals under these circumstances could cause more stress than the actual storm itself.

Prior to an expected strike we pump our lakes down in order to control excessive rainfall and flooding. We gather anything that could become flying missiles including trash cans, cleaning tools, lumber and numerous other small items. We save all of our used 55-gallon disinfectant containers and line them with clean garbage bags for water storage in the event we lose power which you can probably count on. All gas or diesel containers are filled and we purchase lots of ice. The ice is mainly to keep drinks cold for thirsty, post hurricane clean up crews. We have a large generator on hand that will maintain the meat freezer and the 15,000 lbs. of beef and carnivore diet within.

It usually takes approximately 1 ½ work days to prepare for a hurricane. By the evening of August 12th, all storm prep was completed and staff, save the night watchman, was sent home. On the morning of Friday, August 13th, the winds started reaching tropical depression strength of 40 plus m.p.h. General Curator, Bill Freeman and myself were on site to monitor conditions of the animals and grounds during the storm.

Hurricane Charley taught us how dangerously unpredictable these storms can be. The forecasts continually indicated that it would hit the Tampa Bay area but Charley suddenly and inexplicably slammed into the Southwest Florida coast. We were prepared for a Category 2 storm. However, Charley revved up to a Category 4 quickly. By that time it was too late to alter any storm preparations and we would have to ride it out as best as possible.

Bill and I were especially concerned for the monkeys and lesser apes that remained on our island system that is comprised of ten islands on a five acre lake. By late morning the winds were increasing to gusts that encouraged me to clutch a tree on several occasions to avoid being knocked down. Each time we checked the primates they seemed remarkably unfazed by the threatening weather. The spider monkeys were as active as children on a playground and the colobus monkeys were swaying to and fro fifty feet in the air clinging onto the Australian pines on their island. The white-handed gibbons and siamangs were either in or under their sleeping huts as they would be on any rainy day.

During the morning we spent most of our time outside checking the animals, buildings and fence lines. At one point, a large mangrove tree fell on our back fence and we immediately removed it with a chainsaw as the tree could have become a ladder for an escaped animal. As we drove back to the maintenance barn to watch the small television we had set up to monitor news reports, two trees snapped, hit a power line and blew out a transformer right beside us. Up to that point we still had power and but after the first transformer blew out, one on the street went also and the zoo was without power. Damage had been minimal as the north side of the storm passed by, but that would soon change.

After the eye of the storm went by the storm intensified and that is when most of our damage occurred. We had gone back to the gift shop to check on the status of the animals housed there during the hurricane and heard outside the sound commonly used to describe a tornado which is that of a speeding locomotive. At that time I was grateful Bill and I had gone back inside. After the winds subsided we ventured out and I feel my tornado guess was correct. In nearly a 150 yard straight line heading southeast to northwest the awning on our freezer was thrown over the freezer and into our show stage, a section of the maintenance barn roof was peeled back, the metal roof of an unoccupied leopard enclosure was thrown onto the nearby animal commissary, a podocarpus tree 2 ft in diameter was snapped in half, four 30 ft. high Poinciana trees were uprooted and tossed like wedding bouquets into the alligator lake and a 60 ft. kapok tree was uprooted and

thrown down. This was a disturbing example of Mother Nature's authority!

All being said, we had much to be grateful for. We had our power restored in four days and were open to the public by the fifth day. But it did take the better part of a week to get the zoo cleaned up enough to be operational. We are fortunate to be blessed with a dedicated, hard working staff who displayed unmatched team work in clearing trails, cutting and removing debris, and getting their, and the animals' routines as close to normal as possible.

Aside from Hurricane Andrew, the "Storm of the Century" not long after and now Hurricane Charley we have learned applicable lessons after each event. The most useful lesson regarding the monkey islands is that despite the beauty of viewing the primates in a very natural habitat we are now considering removing some of the taller trees and replacing them with man-made climbing structures. Crate training potentially dangerous primates in a free contact environment is simply not an option but lowering the height of their aerial access would facilitate easier captures should the need arise. However, other specimens housed in more traditional

environments would benefit from crate training and staff has been and will continue with that process. Once time is committed, animals seem to cooperate rather quickly. For example, due to "Hurricane Apathy", our Indochinese tigers were never trained to enter a crate or rolling cage so our veterinarian had to anesthetize them for transport prior to Charley. However, by the time Hurricane Frances threatened us a few weeks later, the animals were willingly entering the traveling cages.

Naples was thankfully spared the 140 mph winds that devastated northern Lee County and Charlotte County. Our top winds were clocked at 86 mph in Collier County according to our emergency officials.

Other facilities in the state were not as fortunate as we were. After getting the major debris removed and reopened to our visitors, select staff members and myself spent several days at an AZA certified facility north of us to assist with their post hurricane clean up.

The summer of 2004 will have an impact on all of our lives, the emergency management of our facilities and a greater appreciation for the human spirit in the face of adversity.

Blast from the Past. . . .

Long Island Ocelot Club

Volume 19 Number 2 March/April 1975

The cover of this LIOC newsletter depicted a terrified cougar being dragged by catch poles by California G & F officers. Inside The Ballad of Ari, part one of a two-part saga on Ginny Story and her feline confiscation problems, riveted readers. In a lighter piece, Danny Treanor introduced 'Bounce' in his The Oncillas are Coming. A Legislative Report by LIOC president Ken Hatfield analyzed proposed changes to the Lacey Act, alerted members of state ban laws and reminded readers to donate to the Legal Fund. Branch meeting reports centered on legislative problems; the Cascade Branch elected a representative to keep track of new laws, the Exotic Cats of North California chapter invited Bob Coleman of the Hawking Club, speak about 'fighting for your rights to keep your animals', the Mid Atlantic States Branch was visited by attorney Edward Feurey, who was retained by members Stevenson and Neuhaus to help them regain possession of their confiscated ocelots.

Update from the Hatfield Compound

We had a pretty good year last year, all things considered. We had 33 births of various species with 23 surviving. This included 15 ocelots, one margay, 3 Geoffroy cats, 3 cougars and 11 jaguars (there would have been more of the jags, but we put big daddy Merg by himself - Lady's last litter was the result of exactly 5 minutes work!) We started building a new ocelot facility that will eventually replace our old compound; unfortunately we ran out of funds before we ran out of needs. Such is life. Anyway, the new cages are 8x16, completely roofed, with shelves all around and with houses up high near the roof. When we get set and moved to a new area we plan to add a run of about 8x20 or 24 feet long onto the end of the floored structure. For shade from the extremely hot Florida sun, we have put palmetto fronds on the sides, which also incidentally, add to the looks of the whole area.

We are happy to report that a female ocelot named Teki, received here in September of 1971, at the age of approximately 4 1/2 years, had her first kitten on January 6th. This would put her at about 7 1/2 years of age and she

coming in season quite often and in fact, Sylvester had gotten so used to her hollering he began to ignore her, which is why we put her in with Lancie. She is the first cat we've ever had to have her first kitten at that age, so I guess the conclusion is not to ever give up. Teki also had another "first" to her credit (for us anyway). She is the only one we have had to take away from her baby for medical reasons (an abscess from an infected scratch), kept her separated from him approximately 20 hours, then put back with her 2 1/2 week old boy! And don't you know we were holding our breath when we let her out of the carrier and she headed for the den-box the baby was in. Talk about heart stoppers: We were just convinced, though that as he had not been removed or been to the vet's that she would just go back to him as though she had only been away a few minutes.

Of course, we've had our share of sickness and deaths due to one thing or another. But that is life, especially on a "cat farm". And then the pleasure of watching the mothers and their babies and the fact that there are babies sort of makes up for the unpleasant side. All in all, it was a pretty good productive year at the Compound.

Playa De Oro from my eyes to yours con- tinued from page 17



chariot to the reserve

The staff quickly became like family, they are by far the gentlest, kindest people you will ever meet. It was hard to leave them when it was time to go home. Life in the jungle is so simple and pure; you live in peace with the jungle around you. It was so easy to forget all you left behind you, and so hard to leave once you were there.

We spent time exploring the wonders of the jungle around us, the long trail to the waterfall, the swim in the pool beneath the falls. Our boat ride upriver gave us a chance to see the Bush Dog, one of the rarest canine on earth, an animal rarely seen even by the villagers who live in this rainforest, and we were fortunate enough to see 3 of them. The walks through the jungle being lead through the trail by Mishi, aka Little Chief, he took you to the stream and guided you back to the reserve, he was your leader, and stayed with you during the entire walk in the jungle.



View of the river from the reserve



Blue rock walkways lead to the village homes of Playa de Oro

Early mornings before others awoke, I sat at his cage and talked to him, in return I got my face washed, nose kissed, and tons of love from him. After my morning face wash, I would sit on the stairs by my room and watch the Toucan and parrots fly overhead, and stare into the jungle around me, just listening to the sounds and feeling at peace.

The time we spent with the people of the village was so wonderful, such gentle souls, so willing to share their way of life with you and welcome you with open arms into their village. Their homes were a work of art, the skill it takes to work with the bamboo and build the homes as they do is awesome, their talent to use what they have, and turn it all into this warm and wondrous village, a village filled with smiling faces, deserves so much respect. The smiling faces of the children as they preformed with pride their dances for you, then when they finished you became a part of the dance with them.

Some of the best times were spent in the dining room with the staff as we laughed and had fun together. The highlight of one evening was when we corrupted the men and taught them how to string beads. A simple thing like this brought so much pleasure to them and we had so much fun just watching them intensely making their necklace and bracelet, and to see the pride they had when they finished, was so heart warming. These were the same strong hands that wheeled machetes and cut the grass, downed trees, and guided the boats in the river. These same strong hands were now holding tiny beads and forming one of a kind necklaces and bracelets for themselves and their children.

I was asked to write 2 pages about the reserve, but I find it hard to tell how I really felt in just 2 pages. I do know that I did something I have been yearning to do most of my life, whether I could afford it or not. I knew I had to go, knowing when I got back home I would be rushing to finish cages for 2 rescue cougars, I put it on hold to make this trip happen. I had to go I was being called to the jungle and I knew no matter



to happen. Sometimes we have to just listen to that little voice in our head and do what it tells us to do, mine had been screaming at me, and it didn't shut up until I booked my flight and I knew for sure this was a go.

To anyone who has even thought of going, I say run to the jungle don't look back. This is something everyone needs to do for themselves at least once in their life. Go to the rainforest, see life the way it was meant to be, meet the people who live as one with mother earth. Step back in time to Playa de Oro, life is so simple



shadecloth covers protect the garden vegetables from heavy rains.

is beautiful there, life is there. I feel I have been given a chance to see the gates of heaven and the privilege to meet the keepers of heavens gates, the people of Playa de Oro, and Little Chief. When you return home from these gates, you will look at life around you differently, your values in life will change, you cannot spend time in this paradise at the gates of heaven with the people we care for it and not be changed. You will carry this with you for the rest of your life. A simple life void of greed, jealousy, contempt, filled with kindness, purity of spirit, simplicity, pride, and respect for the mother earth, in return she embraces them and fills all their needs. This is something modern man lacks, these simple pure values that could change the world back into a better place, the way it was meant to be. I for one did not miss computers, phone, elec., cars or any of these modern things. Playa de Oro and her people are real, we live in a world filled with illusion, nothing around us is what it seems to be, but there deep in the rainforest all is at peace, all is real, life is simple there.

I say, RUN TO THE JUNGLE, do it for yourself and your peace of mind. What is important and real is hidden deep in the rainforest, a way of life that must continue in all its simplicity, honesty and beauty, uncorrupted by the modern world. These are the people who have been blessed, and their way of life must continue in its entire simple splendor. I sit here now thinking back to my time there, it was not long enough, I miss the many shades of green, the soft earth under my feet, the gentle rain high above you as it touches the canopy of the jungle, but can not reach you far below the dense tropical growth, and most of all the gentle kind people that make this their home, and the early morning face wash from Mishi, our Little Chief, and his proud way he would guide you through his jungle home.

If you do only one thing for yourself in your life, do this.



all photos by Donna Verba

Contemplate

There is a natural order to all life -
a precise and delicate balance that human intervention can so easily destroy.

We cannot build our houses too close to the water's edge
and then condemn the lake as a destroyer when it reaches to its natural height.

We cannot strip a bluff of all its trees and keep the land intact -
for in the natural cycle the rains will come and wash away the sand.

Even as change is the only permanency on earth -
man has no right to make irreversible changes nor try to move against the natural cycles

For day and night will never change - nor will the tides - the moon - or sun.
Death will always follow life - it is the natural cycle.

Winter - spring - summer and fall will follow their eternal pattern
bringing the renewal of life in springtime - the fulfillment of summer -
the harvest of autumn with all its glory and the crystal beauty of winter..

Each season overlaps the other - day reaches into night -
as all cycles intermingle - yet even among all the variables the pattern remains unchanged.

Still there are some who will always try to conquer all the elements -
to change day into night - stop the cycle of the lakes and govern the rains and the storms.

For man is not a passive creature - whatever he has is not enough -
however things are they should be different.

He cannot see the beauty of a little flower without picking it and making it his own
or watch wild grasses blowing in the wind without cutting them to make a lawn
edged with trees trimmed to suit his fancy.

How could one see a tiny bird born blind and featherless become a thing of wondrous beauty
that can fly uncharted skies and back again and have one doubt
that life is not unfolding as it should - without our counsel?

Or watch a hard brown speck burst into life and become a tree
and believe that we could make it better?

Slowly the tide of our thinking is changing -
slowly we are beginning to recognize the gigantic force that we must join rather than conquer.

We will blend the richness of our intelligence with the natural cycles of life
and reach our full potential - a free and loving being.

And in our dreams lies the seed of a civilization that will find the cosmic balance
between need and use - what we dream today will be tomorrow's reality.

"Best Buds with Trooper"

by Lauren Bean

Hello, My name is Lauren Bean (Bobby Bean's daughter). I am 12 years old. My parents have owned exotic cats since before I was born. I have had much experience taking care of kitten's (after they're off the bottle), taking care of Trooper, cleaning out cages, preparing the food, (etc.) I have been to the Raliegh-Duram, North Carolina convention, the Wichita, Kansas convention, and the Cincinnati, Ohio convention meetings. I hope to come to next year's convention in Miami, Florida. Anyway the reason why I'm writing is to tell my story of a special caracal named Trooper who I'll never forget and will always be in my heart.

The first time I met Trooper was when he was a kitten. (He was born at our facility.) He stayed with us for about two or three months. Then he went out on a breeding loan. He came back with his friend Missy when he was about 2 years old. Trooper and Missy both stayed in the house (quarantine) for a little while in case of fleas. Then they went outside with our other females. Later on Missy had a litter and so did one of our other females.

Soon we found that Trooper had some major problems like asthma (which his mom died of), a calcium deficiency as well as some others. When it was hot and humid outside, that's when his asthma kicked in. We noticed he started wheezing and having breathing problems. So we brought him in the house. That's when we became best buds. I saw him prissing around so I went to go see him. He started purring and talking to me. Whenever he used the bathroom

in his folding cage I was the first one to tell my parents. So they started letting me change it out. (The person who had him on the breeding loan declawed him and raised him around kids.) Soon I was the one taking care of Trooper. I enjoyed it so much! He was such a joy to be around!



For his asthma he got oxygen treatment for 30min. twice a day, Theophylline (a bronchial dilator), and Prednisone (a steroid). We also weighed him every day. Most of the times he weighed 29 to 36lbs. Towards the middle/end of the summer his asthma started getting really bad and he became very picky over his food. We put him on Clavamox (an antibiotic) and Terbutaline (another bronchial dilator.) Including all of his medicine (1/2 to 1 pill twice a day) he was getting 9 pills a day. I didn't like this at all but it did work. We stayed with that for a while. As he started getting better we weaned him off his Clavamox then his Terbutaline.

It started getting cooler so we moved him outside, right next to Missy! He was so glad and I think he knew I was as well. One of his favorite things to do was to just lie in the sun. He was so funny when he did that! Another thing he did was spray me. (This

continued on page 37



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Deja and Tico

My first cats were a pair of neutered serval brothers born one year apart. They were very bonded to each other and seldom had any type of disagreements. Any difference of opinion was mild and short lived.

They were both declawed on all fours when I rescued them. Teco was 2 years old and Deja was 3. I don't know how old the younger one was when they were originally introduced, but I believe he was a kitten.

They were seldom more than a foot or two apart at any time, except when I was playing with Teco. I had only had them about a year when Deja collapsed without warning. When I came home from work I found him in a heap at the base of their house, unable to move, with Teco by his side trying to comfort him. I scooped him up and raced him to the vet 2-1/2 miles away. He died as the vet took him out of my arms.

Deja was very bonded to his previous mom, and although he accepted me for the most part, we never developed the special closeness that Teco and I did. Teco was my special boy and Deja seemed to accept it with no problems. He was content to sit by and let his younger brother get the attention without any jealousy, only occasionally entering into a little playtime interaction with me.

Teco and Deja had never been separated and when I brought Deja's body home from the vet's, I wanted to let Teco say good-bye to him, hoping that he would understand why Deja was gone. I didn't want him to think that I had taken Deja away from him and just not brought him back. When I showed him Deja's body he went ballistic. He screamed at me and ran around his enclosure tearing into everything in his way.

He cried and cried and in the morning every toy — everything in his cage that could be destroyed by a serval, was demolished. He also made it clear that I was not welcome in his cage, or in his life. My sweet, loving boy came at me, ears pinned back, threatening to bite me and tear me into a million pieces — a fitting end for someone who betrayed him and killed his best friend. There was about a weeklong hunger strike and unfriendly growls and hisses at the sight of me. When he started to eat again, he made me invisible. Although he would accept the food I gave him and allow me in to clean, he acted as if he could not see or hear me. His only response to me was to turn away from me. In what I consider to be a calculated attempt to drive him point home, he started acting friendly toward my boyfriend who he previously disliked. He would make a point of walking up to him (on the other side of the wire) and looking at him and acting very friendly. It was obvious to both of us he was taunting me — punishing me.

After several weeks of this, I decided I needed to do something to get my boy back. One of his favorite things was his swimming pool. He had trashed the first one in his fit of rage, so I bought him a new one and a dozen feeder goldfish to stock it. For the longest time I sat on the ground beside the pool

pretending to try to catch the fish with my hand, and of course, failing miserably. Finally he couldn't stand it any longer, and he slowly came to the pool and stood beside me watching my awkward attempt at fishing.

In a few minutes he joined in, demonstrating the technique he had developed for scooping fish.

Then, a big head-butt and a purr, and we were ok again. ;o)

Previously, throughout my life, I had only had single animals and I was not prepared for the devastating effect that the loss of that close bond would have on the surviving serval. I had hoped that because of our close relationship he would view me as a source of comfort, but instead, he blamed me and viewed my attempt to help his brother as a betrayal of the worst kind. Fortunately, he found it in his heart to forgive me, and we had a few more good years before his passing. He is buried beside his brother, together again.

Shirley Malar =^..^=

Candidate Platforms **cont. from page 17**

Life Director

I have been a member of LIOC / FCF since 1987. I've been dealing with wild animals for 43 years and had non-domestic cats 18 years.

Our facility has close to 50 non-domestic cats. We have experience with over 13 species of felidae. We specialize in non-invasive research. Simply put, anything that helps us learn more about these animals, which in turn helps them reproduce (diet, enrichment, etc.).

The past 2 years I've served as the "Director of Advertising & Publicity" and "Chairman of the Convention Committee". During my tenure I was able to:

- *Get advertisers for our newsletter thus allowing us to expand our newsletter and include color pictures.
- *Get corporate sponsors to participate in our conventions helping set new records in fundraising.
- *Get more membership involved setting new attendance records for the conventions.
- *Worked closely with Lynn Culver in developing FCF press releases helping FCF become a known private possession/conservation organization for felids.
- *Served on the Conservation Committee helping support conservation of cats in the wild (in-situ).
- *Served on the Accreditation Committee helping lay the foundation for an accreditation program for FCF.

I have enjoyed serving FCF these last 2 years. My voting record on the BOD has always been represented by member feedback. I feel that I still have contributions to make in helping FCF grow and become a force in private possession and conservation of felids.

I would like to serve the FCF members another 2 years and would appreciate your vote to the 2 year term of Life Director

Bobby Bean

Accounts of Caracals *continued from page 9*

Gabriel and Asha were happily reunited and continued to crash through the house together. I returned them to CPT to join the rest of the mob of kittens on site getting ready to day camp. I went back to work, and resumed normal life for more than a week.

Then I got a phone call that I should come to CPT immediately. Asha had been a bit depressed that morning and over the day had gotten progressively less responsive. Sharon had filled her with antibiotics and fluids, but she was warm and limp when I arrived. I was devastated. She picked her head up a little to look at me from the carrier where she had been placed so she'd be separate from the others. Her ears flicked a bit in greeting and she made a soft chirp. She couldn't even stand. In an hour she was limp and unresponsive. I cried and held her, knowing she was going to die. Finally, my friends there made me leave her and go get dinner with them. We all knew she'd be dead when we returned, though no one said it out loud.

I jogged back into the house after being gone for a little over a half-hour. I expected to lift the towel over the crate doorway and see her little body. I lifted the towel and Asha sat up and trilled at me. Then she promptly began biting the door in an attempt to get out. When we let her out, she greeted me casually and then marched to the refrigerator. She leaped up at the handle, knowing there was caracal food inside. We fed her. She ate. She lived.

It's been more than eight years since that day, but I am still overwhelmed by how I felt then. I picked her up to hug her and she struggled with that "Put me down, Mom, I wanna play" attitude all healthy babies have. She put up with a few kisses before insisting she get down.

Asha and Gabriel grew and thrived. Asha got in trouble a few times as a teenager for beating up her roommate, but she was only telling us she wanted a cute boyfriend. Gabriel grew into a handsome blonde male with huge ear tufts. They grew so long and thick they actually caused his ears to flip and hang down at the tips. All the local girl caracals called out to him. I knew he was going to have a good life.

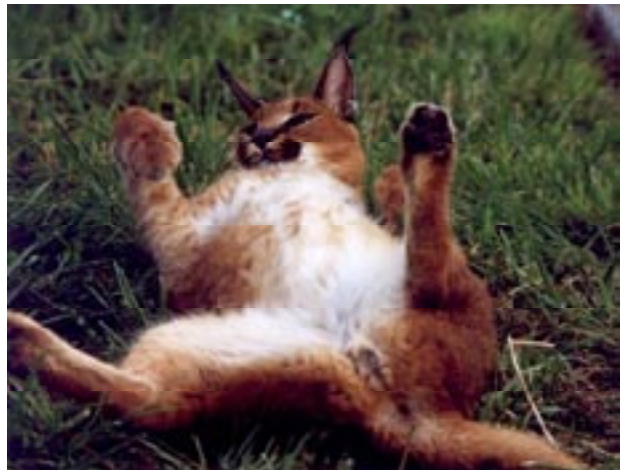
Eventually I got too comfortable. I think some part of me believed life could continue forever this way. Such amazing babies coming and going in my life, and such a luxury to be able to watch them grow up and become adults and have their own babies.

Life changes. Michael Bleyman, CPT's founder died of cancer, and not long after, his beloved Kay left the facility. The political changes that accompany the loss of a charismatic leader can have a devastating effect on the people who are tied to such a place. Many of us had gone there because we didn't deal with people as well as we did animals, and we weren't able to cope well with all the change. Oh, many of us stuck it out for a while because we loved the animals. I even went to work there for a year or so. But, eventually there was an almost complete change of the staff

I spent a couple of months in shock at the sudden separation for the animals I had dedicated my life to. It felt like all 270



of my children had died at once. In the end, I decided that if I really felt this committed to these species and to conservation work, I should continue to work with these animals in different circumstances. I found others who wanted to start a place with



I was working on the side at a small area zoo, and I agreed to foster two caracal kittens. I fell in love. I knew better than to do that. I was willing to part with them to a good home, but the first person that seriously inquired about buying one of them wanted to raise one with his

baby mandrill. Doug Evans, my partner and co-founder of CCI, took out a personal loan to buy them from the zoo. It just felt too much like losing the almost 30 animals I had fostered before and had to leave behind, and it was in my power this time to stop it.

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Experts say mystery cat is mountain lion

By CASEY S. RACE - Staff Writer

ZANESVILLE, OHIO— Over the past two months, 25 people reported signs of a large cat in the southwest portion of Muskingum County. Local authorities have investigated the sightings and, in some cases, injury to area livestock. But the animal remains on the loose.

The Wilds Veterinarian Dr. Mark Atkinson said descriptions of the animal definitely match a mountain lion. "There are few other cats that fit that description," he said. "A cat that size with those features is pretty much going to be a mountain lion."

Adult mountain lions can range from 6 to 8 feet long, weigh 60 to 150 pounds and are tawny colored. They have a long tail that can stretch the length of the body, and their ears and tail are black-tipped.

The mountain lion differs from the bobcat, Ohio's native large cat. Bobcats are considerably smaller — weighing at most 30 pounds. They are rusty-colored or a tawny gray, and some have spots on their body. Another noticeable difference between the two, Atkinson said, is that a bobcat's tail is only 6 to 7 inches long, Atkinson said.

This is not the first large cat sighting in Ohio in the last few months. Stark and Franklin County sheriff's offices have had reports of large felines roaming their territories.

In July and August, Franklin County residents reported seeing a lion running loose in Gahanna and Canal Winchester, Sgt. Mark Pappas of the sheriff's office said. It was last spotted on the southeast side of the county. Pappas said the animal was described as a 200-pound male lion.

Major Rick Perez said the Stark County Sheriff's Office received three to four calls in July about a large cat roaming around the northwestern part of the county. Descriptions by eyewitnesses match a bobcat. It was never caught though, and no other reports were made.

Authorities say it is possible these animals could be the same as the Muskingum County cat.

"These animals can travel long distances," said Dave Swanson, forest wildlife research biologist at the Waterloo Wildlife Research Station in New Marshfield. "They are capable of moving several hundred miles."

And although mountain lions are not indigenous to the area, Atkinson said it is not unusual to find such animals roaming the state. "But there have been reports of mountain lions being seen in Michigan and Pennsylvania. The woods in southeastern Ohio is a great habitat for a mountain lion," he said.

On the trail of a BIG CAT - Exotic animal rescuers hope to capture mountain lion

By CASEY S. RACE Staff Writer

JOHNSTOWN, OHIO — A group of exotic animal lovers is assisting local law enforcement with cornering and capturing a large cat roaming the area.

The group, a collection of Licking County residents who own a variety of exotic animals, became involved in the search for a large cat at the request of the Muskingum County Sheriff's Office.

Folks around the county have spotted the large feline in the southwestern portion of Muskingum County over the past few months. Twenty-five incidents — sightings and attacks on livestock — have convinced authorities that a mountain lion is wandering the county, Muskingum County Sheriff's Office Chief Deputy Wes Elson said.

County authorities brought in the exotic animal owners after failed attempts to locate and tranquilize the cat, Elson said. It was thought the owners might have more knowledge of how to capture the animal than deputies, and all want to make sure the animal is not killed.

The group goes by the name of Hunter and Lea's Project. It was formed recently at the behest of a Pataskala cat owner whose two cats, Hunter and Lea, escaped. She worked with other exotic animal owners and the local sheriff's office to find her animals. But they were found dead after a long search.

One of the exotic animal owners in the group, Carol Bohning of Johnstown, has owned large cats for a decade and she is one of three exotic cat owners in the group, which also includes a reptile owner, a primate owner, an exotic bird owner and an animal control officer. Their goal is to help authorities find and capture escaped or wild exotic animals and take them in. As soon as a sighting of the large cat is reported, members of the group head out with tranquilizer guns and their own knowledge of the animal's hunting habits in an attempt to trap it.

"Right now, we're focusing on getting as many traps as we can out and keeping them baited with chicken," Bohning said. "If we have a sighting by people, we try to get out there and find the animal and shoot it with a dart gun." The organization worked with Wesley Chapel Road residents and placed a trap near the woods on private property. One of the residents checks the trap daily and keeps the group apprised of any changes or sightings they have. Bohning said their group is convinced the animal is a mountain lion or puma, based on descriptions of eyewitness accounts.

No one has claimed ownership of this cat, and no one has

reported missing one to local authorities. The desire to own exotic animals can be strong, Bohning said. They are readily available, too, as they are sold in at least five different auction houses around the state.



"They are so cute — you see one and you just can't get around it," Bohning said. "When people see them, they buy them on impulse, or they get them as a status symbol."

But owners should keep in mind that as the animal grows, more equipment and expertise is needed to care for exotic animals.

"You have to have the right kind of property, caging, and many safeguards to be able to have one," Bohning said. "Also, veterinarians have to have special knowledge of the cats to administer medicines. And you need to have contingency plans — what you will do if the cat bites somebody, what will happen if it escapes."

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The address to send donations to conservation projects such as Playa de Oro is: tracy@felineconservation.org. Please make a note in the subject line that your donation is for "Playa de Oro" and there is a comment section if you need to include more information. Then just follow the instructions to complete your transaction. You will receive a confirmation email from Paypal

that your donation went through, or you can send an email directly to tracy@felineconservation.org and ask us to verify if we received the donation for you.

Next Group Tour to Playa de Oro

Feline Conservation Federation's next group tour to the Ecuador reserve, Playa de Oro, where FCF has been maintaining a wildlife surveillance camera project, will be January 28 - February 6, 2005.

Because of rising costs of services, the trip fee will be increasing from \$650 to \$700 effective in January 2005. The reserve lodge ☐ to ☐ overnight visit to the Andean community of Otavala.

The cost for this 10-day adventure is \$700 excluding airfare. (Fly to Quito, Ecuador) This includes 2 nights at a charming bed & breakfast in Quito (breakfast included), 1 night in Otavala at another unique B&B, 5 nights at the Playa de Oro Reserve Lodge (all meals included), boat transportation, private van transportation, visit to Otavala market, village tour, village children dance performance, most of your meals, and jungle guide service. (Your out of pocket expenses are a minimum of \$85 or less, while in Quito & Otavala)

Your trip fee supports the Playa de Oro Reserve by bringing income to their village and providing them with work, and also assist ☐ ancient rainforest as you have never imagined while being safely guided by local men through the jungle, seeing and experiencing their land and it's inhabitants as they do.

Space is limited on each tour, so please sign up as soon as possible to reserve your space. Mail a deposit of \$350 to hold your spot on the tour, with your final balance due by December 30th. Your deposit is nonrefundable if you cancel attending the trip or leave the tour early for any reason. If FCF has to cancel the entire trip for any reason your deposit will be refunded. You are required to have a passport to travel to Ecuador.

Visiting the White Tigers *cont. from page 16*

His lady friend, Gita, about 100 pounds smaller, did most of the eating that day, perhaps due to her pregnancy-induced hunger. But when Splash took a turn, the folks posing got an incredible photo. His massive head contained teeth the size of railroad spikes and he stood only three feet away from their bodies.

Why show tigers at a state fair? It's an interesting question and Marcus answers, "these cats draw the public and state fairs, corporate trade shows, community events – they all hire Zoo-pros to bring in the crowds."

What is the conservation value of this experience? Marcus answers, "we remember little of what we read, but almost everything we experience. It is those memorable times that spark curiosity to learn more; go to the library and read a book, look up a web site on the Internet, reach out to organizations that fund conservation, write letters to legislators, volunteer time and donate money - becoming conservation in action."

Zoopros cats were perfect in every way, beautiful blue eyes, pink nose and tongue, excellent confirmation all around. Marcus has analyzed this pair's genetics, going back five generations and found no relatedness between them. He is anxiously awaiting their first litter, hoping for a snow-white cub.

We also had some time to discuss the situation with the recent US Government indictment of Nancy and Ken Kraft and nine other defendants including Marcus. In the case of Marcus, he has been charged with buying generic tiger cubs from the Krafts.

The Federal judges ruled against the federal prosecutor in an earlier indictment against Nancy Kraft ordering the charges be dropped. Now this couple is facing 55 more counts on a variety

of species - tiger, leopard and grizzly bear. Everyone in the exotic animal community should be watching as this legal drama unfolds.

In the case of tigers, as reported in several FCF articles, back in 1992, the US Fish and Wildlife Service published its intentions to remove the CBW permit requirement from a variety of birds, hoofstock and mammals. From start to finish, this process took seven years to complete, but finally October 13, 1998 the final rule removed the CBW permit requirement for a single species of duck, some pheasants and the generic sub-species-mix tiger.

I have had numerous conversations with Mike Carpenter, senior biologist for the F & W S and he has assured me that this generic tiger ruling stands and nothing has changed. So why is this happening? I suspect that the mounting number of tiger incidents and mounting animal rights pressure exerted upon the federal government are major factors.

In this national spotlight case, the federal prosecutor will have to prove there actually was a sale, and that the tigers sold and bought were not generic, or if it concedes they were generic, then prove the transaction was *not for breeding purposes*.

The Endangered Species Act operates under the 'Rebuttable Presumption' of guilt. What this means is that if you do not have to have a registration and you aren't participating in a recognized program, you have better have paperwork that verifies your breeding intent, such as proper state and federal licenses to breed tigers. Rebuttable presumption goes against the '*innocent until proven guilty*' premise of American jurisprudence. Fortunately we are protected by another piece of American jurisprudence that mandates that you must be found *guilty beyond a reasonable doubt* to be convicted.

by Lynn Culver

Playa de Oro Camera Trap Update

During my visit to Playa de Oro in early September, one of our camera traps caught 4 clear photos of an Agouti. There were also several photos with toads in them, but they are not very clear. No photos of more cats yet.

However, we did see several cat tracks while we were out on trails, as usual. We know the cats are there, but they sure are proving to be elusive to our cameras! It's also good news to find the digital camera traps to continue to be functioning well in the environment. Jim Sanderson sent me a different brand of 35mm camera trap to try out at the reserve. I set it up and left it for the staff to try for a few months. I'll check the progress of this new camera model when I return in November and see if it is still functioning. In the meantime, I discussed some options with the reserve staff for moving the digital camera traps around to try and increase our chances of catching a cat on film. Hopefully in November we will have caught a cat on film!

Tracy Wilson



Agouti, (cat food) caught by the Playa de Oro camera traps

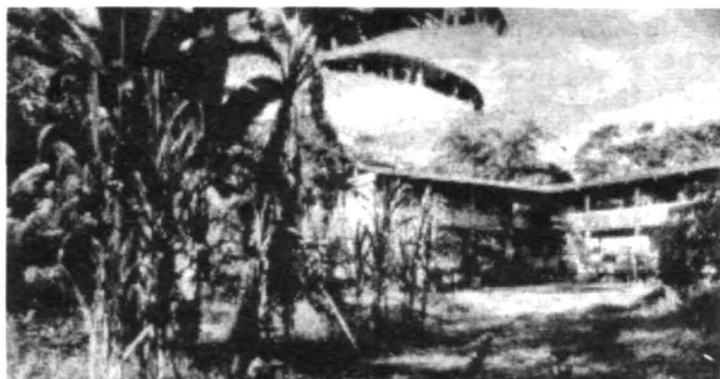
New Lodge Roof Funded by FCF members!

Dear Gail and Carl Maier,

I'm writing to thank you, on behalf of Proyecto Tigrillo and the people of Playa de Oro, for your generosity in donating funds to replace the roof on the lodge at the jungle cat reserve. You have no idea how important this was to the community and the project!

The history of the lodge, and why it should need a roof after only being open four years, is pretty interesting. You might say it all started in the early 20th century, when a British mining company was licensed to extract gold from the upper reaches of Rio Santiago, a river which runs through what is now the Playa de Oro Reserva de Tigrillos. Within two decades the British had cleaned out most of the gold and left the area.

In the 1960s, the Ecuadorian military sent a unit that included geologists and mining engineers up Rio Santiago to see if more gold could be found. The unit stayed in the area several years, and during that time, built the 14-room barracks that now serves as the lodge. In that time the military men found no significant amount of gold, so in 1974 they pulled out. When they left they donated the barracks to the community of Playa de Oro. However, as it was a two-hour hike from the village (and in those days there were no boat motors in Playa de



Oro) local people had no use for the building. It was simply abandoned.

In the mid-1990s, I came to Playa de Oro on behalf of Earthways Foundation, looking for a rainforest region that could be made into a jungle cat reserve. Playa de Oro held title to 25,000 acres of almost-untouched rainforest, and agreed to designate all of its territory as a protected area for jungle cats, in exchange for help in developing ecotourism, which could provide their tiny community

(362 people, about half children) with a source of sustainable income.

They wanted to renovate that old barracks and make it into a lodge. They did all the work on this themselves, including the building of furniture for the lodge, using trees from their own forest, hauled out by hand, cut into dimensional lumber with a chainsaw, dried, and ultimately turned into beds, tables, etc. This arduous work took them a couple of years. Donors provided the funds to pay the men, who worked for \$5/day. The lodge opened in 2000. As yet there are only a trickle of visitors, but that trickle is growing because the local people provide excellent services, and do truly enjoy having guests.

One thing that didn't get repaired during the renovations, because funds were not available, was the building's old metal roof. Last year we raised enough to repair one corner, which in turn made it possible for another donor to purchase and install two solar panels. But the rest of the roof was in sad shape, so rusty that it was impossible to go up there to repair leaks without causing more! It was at that critical point that your donation came along—and roof repairs are underway as we speak.

The people of Playa de Oro have asked that I write to thank you for your generosity—and I do, most sincerely.

Rosa Jordan, Earthways Foundation
Facilitator, Proyecto Tigrillo

2004 FCF SEMI-ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT By Harold Epperson

For the period January 01 thru June 30
\$ 20978.69 income receipts
\$ 16119.78 expenses
\$ 4859.52 net income gain

The Global Assets on 06-30-04
\$ 19234.50 Main Checking
\$ 1870.00 KHMSF Checking
\$ 9995.48 KHMSF Savings
\$ 12321.50 Smith Barney Money Fund
\$ 43421.48 Total Assets

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2004 FCF CONVENTION BOARD MEETING MINUTES

President George Stowers opened the Board of Directors meeting held in Las Vegas on 08-28-04. He acknowledged three guest members in attendance followed by a request for reports and agenda items from the Officers.

Harold Epperson presented the financial report that will be printed in the Sept/Oct newsletter. A motion to accept the report was made by JB Anderson, seconded by Lynn Culver and the motion passed 8-0.

Leann Montgomery announced the signing of 105 new members which were the result of our efforts thru the animal auction booth in Missouri, three husbandry courses, mass mailings of FCF literature, the AFG advertisement and our website. Lynn Culver announced the acquisition of database information from various states to target addresses for mass mailing.

Bobby Bean mentioned the increase of corporate advertisements in our newsletter and recommended that FCF accept advertising only from corporations who are supportive of FCF. He suggested the FCF establish a database for maintaining a record of advertisers.

Tracy Wilson recommended that FCF be supportive of Mazuri to show appreciation for their donation of funds to print the husbandry course textbooks. Tracy expressed appreciation to Leann and Lynn for replacing her as instructors of the husbandry courses. Tracy announced that the USDA approved the FCF husbandry class outline at their regional meeting and she recommended that FCF conduct a class exclusively for USDA officers. The class fee would be waived but USDA would be responsible for expenses.

Tracy requested suggestions for locations to conduct future courses, possibly in the New England area that George could pursue. Tracy mentioned the FCF acquisition of a projector and a refurbished laptop. Several donations to Playa de Oro have been received and guides are needed to lead tours to the reserve. Cameras at the reserve need repair or replacement and Tracy recommended that FCF purchase cameras for Jim Sanderson to replace the ones he loaned to FCF for use at the reserve.

A motion for executive session was made by Bobby Bean, seconded by Tracy Wilson and the motion passed 8-0.

Lynn Culver announced that AR groups have contacts in federal and state legislatures and FCF doesn't. Legislation to prohibit private ownership of various species had been introduced by AR in the states of Oregon, Washington, New York and Minnesota. She recommended that FCF formulate a legislative package for mailing to states targeted by AR and provide funding for it. She cautioned that private owners must become Proactive instead of Reactive. Lynn made a motion that FCF as an organization develop and propose legislation to preserve private ownership rights, based on the FCF adopted model regulations. She has identified legislators in Arkansas to approach about sponsoring it in Arkansas. The motion was seconded by Tracy, which passed 8-0.

After a break, Harold recommended that ownership of the website be transferred to FCF. A motion was made by JB and seconded by Bob that George will contact the present owner of the website to arrange transfer of ownership to FCF. The motion passed 8-0. Also, Harold suggested inclusion to the website of the PayPal Account and the FCF Renewal Application. Lynn

agreed to handle arrangements. Funding and guidelines on participation at the animal auction shows by FCF officers/members was discussed. No motion was made nor action taken.

Bob made a motion to remove the word Scholarship from the Ken Hatfield Memorial Scholarship Fund after KHMSF has been dissolved and that the KHMSF funds be used for conservation and education. Single expenditures shall not exceed 10% of the account balance. JB seconded and the motion passed 8-0.

George discussed the incident involving the accidental or intentional release and subsequent death of the tiger in Florida. JB was selected to request information from the Florida Fish & Game to confirm that the FF&G officer took appropriate action. George will respond to the FF&G based on the determination by JB.

Lynn presented two conservation projects for discussion, which were tabled due to the shortness of time. The projects are (1) A research study by James Godsmark to increase the success rate of artificial insemination in endangered felid species by improving the semen samples, and (2) A research project by Shekhar at the Namdapha Tiger Reserve in Arunachal Pradesh, East India to determine necessary measures required to protect and preserve approximately ten species of wildcats and other carnivores.

JB mentioned the lack of response from previous Lotty recipients to his requests for nominations of worthy candidates and their vote on the ones nominated. Removing them from the mailing list was considered. No motion was made nor action taken.

Tracy made a motion to accept the Wild Feline Conservation Fund Application. The FCF Board of Directors would act as liaison and the applications would be renewed annually. Leann seconded it and the motion passed 8-0.

Lynn presented information on the Conservation Coloring Book project funded by Crayola. FCF will be required to continue funding. No motion was made nor action taken.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Leann. Bobby seconded it and the motion passed 8-0.

After the General Membership meeting, the Board held an evening meeting to review the proposed budget for 2004 / 2005. The Board appropriated \$2000 for Education & Conservation projects, \$1000 for Legal Affairs, \$500 for Membership Drives and \$585 to improve the Newsletter.

A motion was made by Tracy to donate \$1000 to Jim Sanderson for repayment of his loaned cameras. Leann seconded it and the motion passed 8-0.

Leann made a motion to accept the budget. Tracy seconded it and the motion passed 8-0.

Bobby made a motion to select Miami as the site for the July 2005 FCF Convention. Bob seconded it and the motion passed 8-0.

JB made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Bobby seconded it and the motion passed 8-0.

In a special meeting conducted via email between 08-17-04 and 08-25-04, Tracy made a motion to appropriate \$500 to each of two conservation projects that were presented during the BOD meeting held on 08-28-04. Lynn seconded it and the motion passed 8-0. The projects are (1) Research study by James Godsmark and (2) Preservation project by Shekhar at the Namdapha Tiger Reserve in

Notes on Animal Rights (AR) Views Towards the Private Ownership of Non-Domestic Felids

- James Godsmark, B.A., B.Sc

Hearst's Law: "Never argue with a man who buys ink by the barrel."

Recently, an article appeared in the Seattle Times, where the writer was discussing a recent case, where some orphaned cougar kittens were sent to a Wildlife Sanctuary known as PAWS, and subsequently placed with the Memphis Zoo. In the original article, the spokeswoman of PAWS was asked for her take on these efforts, and buried within her words, I found a very common example of hard-line AR rhetoric. I include below the original e-mail to the list, and my response to it. When the response appeared, several members suggested that I forward it to the Seattle Times for consideration for the 'editorial' or 'letters' page. Quite predictably, not only did it never appear, it was never even *acknowledged*. Of course, with the definite pro-AR slant of the controlled (and carefully managed) media these days, I wasn't the least surprised by that.

Quoting the original article:

"The state's choice was either to find a permanent home for the cougars in a zoo or wild-animal orphanage or to euthanize them. PAWS spokeswoman Lynn Fitch said the wildlife organization would have chosen the latter."

[snip]

"When animals can't be rehabilitated and don't have an opportunity to live in the wild, the center chooses to euthanize them."

"Wildlife is wildlife, and it belongs wild and free," Fitch said. "We are faced with this life-and-death situation every day."

Quoting my response to it:

Oh, OK. Thank you for educating me! So it's up to Ms. Fitch to decide what the definition of a 'rehabilitated' animal is: i.e., one that can "live" in her definition of the "wild". And, if the animal(s) in question can't fulfill this arbitrary definition, they receive the death penalty. This is then "justified" with an appeal to authority fallacy, where the "authority" in question is Ms. Fitch's spurious definition

Well, let's just examine this for a moment, shall we? I think Ms. Fitch should be challenged on several of her statements and ideas. The first is her definition of "Nature", and whether or not any of it in fact even EXISTS in the continental United States, or for that matter, the rest of North America anymore.

Quite simply put, I might successfully counter-argue that there is no such thing as true, unspoilt nature left. On the flipside, there are some who would successfully argue that EVERYTHING is a part of nature, and

hence, even if those cougar kittens were placed in a captive situation, they were still 'surviving in Nature'. But of course, that does not appear to be what Ms. Fitch was trying to say. It looks like what she was trying to say really boils down to a very old, and very mouldy piece of Animal Rights (AR) rhetoric. That is, if so-called 'wild' animals cannot live in a completely 'wild' state, i.e., with absolutely no contact, interaction, or interference from human beings WHATSOEVER, they are better off dead.

Well, here is the funny part. When that particular 'argument' is seriously examined, it becomes patently false and ridiculous. Why is that? Quite simple. Because the moment a human being endeavours to decide what the 'ideal life' for an animal happens to be, they have already removed that animal from their idealised concept of nature!

The only way for an animal to live in the idealised 'wild and free' state that Ms. Fitch clearly envisions would be for NATURE to decide when that animal's death is to occur, NOT a human being.

Ergo, Ms. Fitch's argument is a complete and utter fallacy. And I would go much further in my assertion and state that not only is euthanising the animals that it is believed will 'fit in' to Nature so far OUTSIDE the realm of anything natural as to be a gross obscenity in my opinion, but it is almost like the ultimate 'F**K YOU!' to Nature. You are basically telling Nature that YOU have decided what it [Nature], is all about, and in so doing, are exercising a god-like control over life and death to re-model it to your own liking, or idealized vision of it. I'm sorry, but wanton killing (and I would have considered euthanising of those kittens to have been a wanton killing) is almost never a feature of any definition of Nature that I have ever come across. Rather, it is something practiced almost exclusively by HUMAN BEINGS, who for the most part, have tried to remove themselves from nature.

* * *

In any form of media, sensationalism is what sells. Hence, in a story where a young child is unfortunately injured by a captive wild cat, if the child is under fifteen, she immediately becomes a *baby*, and her injuries become a *mauling*, and the captive cat (for the sake of argument, a tiger), becomes a *pet* tiger, if it is privately owned, for whatever reason. So, instead of the boring old truth: "Eleven year old girl ignores warnings, and is scratched by a captive tiger", the headline will read, "Baby mauled by "pet" tiger!"

Many AR activists point to Peter Singer's 1975 book, *Animal Liberation*, as the seminal work of the modern Animal Rights movement, and go so far as to state that Singer himself attacked zoos and private ownership of exotic animals in this book, and called for their banning, and/or elimination. In fact, he did nothing of the sort. Singer's most direct mention of zoos is contained in the following quote:

“Even if we were to prevent the infliction of suffering on animals only when it is quite certain that the interests of humans will not be affected to anything like the extent that animals are affected, we would be forced to make radical changes in our treatment of animals that would involve our diet, the farming methods we use, experimental procedures in many fields of science, our approach to wildlife and hunting, trapping, and the wearing of furs, and areas of entertainment like circuses, rodeos, and zoos. As a result, a vast amount of suffering would be avoided.”

So, Peter Singer, the father of the modern Animal Rights movement really didn't say *anything* about banning or eliminating the keeping of non-domestic animals in captivity, whether in public or private hands, nor did he call for the elimination of pets of any kind, as Ingrid Newkirk, the leader of PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) has done on many occasions. Nay, all Singer really called for is a change in the way they are treated.

The current speechwriter for George W. Bush, Matthew Sculley, published a book in 2002, called *Dominion*, which is a poignant, heavily emotional, and incredibly effective (and convincing) plea for animal rights. And as part of his argument, Sculley (unlike Peter Singer before him), points his finger directly at private owners of non-domestic animals, and makes an argument of incredible emotional power that links private ownership with the abomination known as the “Canned Hunt”, and in the process, quite heavily smears *Animal Finder's Guide*.

Sculley in many ways, especially with his careful, and masterful use of inflammatory terms, actually manages to hit one out of the park with what follows: (bold-face italics are my own)

“The *San Jose Mercury News*, in a two-year investigation found that ‘Of the 19,361 mammals that left the nation's **accredited** zoos from 1992 through mid 1998, 7,420—or 38 percent—went to dealers, auctions, hunting ranches, **un-identified** individuals, **unaccredited** zoos, or game farms...” “...Zoos were also found to be advertising surplus animals in *Animal Finder's Guide*, a newspaper of the exotic trade where **hunting ranch owners** post notices of sales and auctions. Any **trophy animal** you want, the *Finder's Guide* will get you. From **private owners**, from zoos, from the **native habitat**, however remote...”

It took me several readings of Sculley's work to really appreciate how effective, and hard to argue against it really is. Not because it is completely fact-based, and logical... It actually is not. Sculley does indeed use facts that he can back up, but like any political speechwriter with the level of talent that he clearly possesses, the facts he chooses to use are very carefully spun. It was Sculley's book especially, which reminded me of Hearst's Law, which I have placed at the start of this article. And as part of that, when

someone is able to construct a masterful smear article, the writers do not need to prove what they have written. Instead, the one who has been smeared is forced into a position, where they have to prove themselves innocent of what the smear has alleged. And if there is even a grain of truth to the smear, even if 90% of it is pure lies, exaggeration, and speculation, God help you. I find it no coincidence that many of the current (and for the most part, very successful), campaigns that the AR groups, in tandem with sympathetic elements in government, seemed to have begun in earnest around the same time that *Dominion* first appeared. And to be perfectly blunt, I believe that it should be required reading for anyone in the private community who seems unable to understand just *why* it is that the AR activists are winning all the battles. In short, they have perceived moral superiority on their side, they never sleep, and above all, they never give up.

However, if all this weren't bad enough, there is still another, less visible, but perhaps even more formidable bugabear that private owners need to deal with head-on. And this is quite simply, our traditional, ancestral feeling as human beings, towards predators. David Quammen, a writer for National Geographic, recently published a book called *Monster of God*, which, along with *Dominion*, I feel should be required reading for all private owners of non-domestic felids. My reason for this is not that Quammen makes, or takes any sort of strong AR stand. In fact, he does not. However, Quammen *does* illustrate just *why* many of the emotional arguments that AR activists make with regards to private ownership are as effective and as charged as they are, and why the large cats especially seem to be the easiest, most effective, and most popular point of attack for the Animal Rightists.

Quite simply, it gets right back to our traditional caveman anxiety, and hatred towards, and quite often fearful worship of the few animals who on occasion eat us, and all of the complex attitudes and rituals, which have sprung from this combination of fear and awe.

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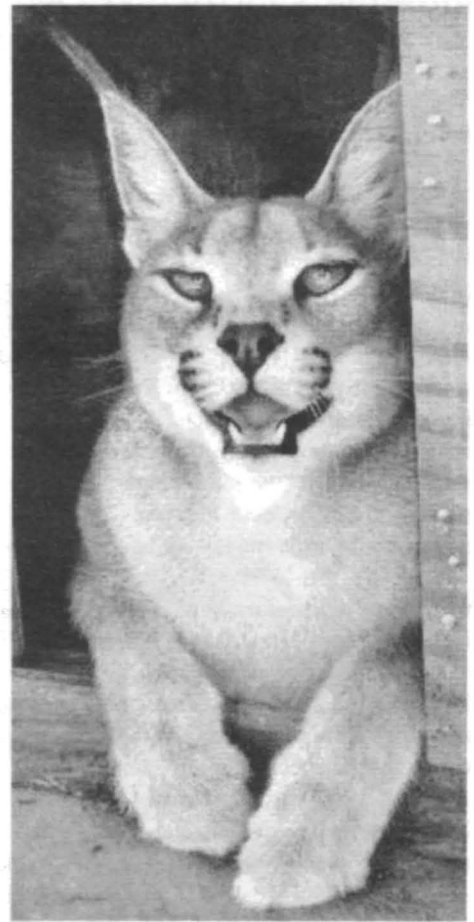
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*caracal bottom of page32 and left on
page33 is Mali, resident of
Wildtrax Sanctuary.
Photos by Tracy Wilson.*

*Photo to left is Batman,
photo by Lynn Culver*



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Supreme Sacrifice & Dedication

By: Robert Turner

I want to point out that FCF has two members who have shown supreme sacrifice and dedication to our wildcats and to our country. These two members are Keith and Tracy Wilson from Searcy, Arkansas.

Will start with Keith:

Keith is in the Army Reserves and a couple of years ago was called up to active duty and served a year in the Middle East. In October 2003, Keith was called up again to active duty and sent to Iraq. Keith is currently a First Lieutenant serving in a captain's slot and will be promoted to Captain officially October 4, 2004. He is the company commander of his company of 155 men and is stationed at Camp Cooke in Bravo Company, 3rd Battalion and his unit patrols Baghdad and surrounding areas.

A couple of Keith's men have been killed in bombings since they have been stationed in Iraq and he's really torn up about the loss of his men. During one of the battles, Keith received an injury to one of his hands that is OK now. They are stationed around the area of Sadar City where there has been a lot of violence lately.

Keith does not have e-mail, and only very briefly gets to call home to Tracy about every 2 or 3 weeks. Keith works 14 to 16 hour days 7 days a week in a very hot lonely environment. Being Commander of his company keeps his mind very focused on performing his job and at the same time trying to keep his men safe. Keith says he does not have much time to think about other things. Keith's tour in Iraq was recently extended from March 2005 to May 2005.

Keith was interviewed by a Little Rock, Arkansas newspaper journalist while Keith was visiting with a local Sheik to discuss how the US military can best help the



Keith and his pet kitty Laos, aka Kung Fu Kitty. Keith says she is playful but will take an afternoon nap on your lap.

community and what are some of the problems they have been facing, and what their other needs are. Keith was a special guest of the Sheik. When Keith gets back home, he can tell us about the Little Rock journalist drinking flies in his warm Pepsi while covering Keith's visit with the Sheik.

Keith and his men very seldom get a standard cooked meal. They basically live off of K-type rations that they carry with them. Keith can use about anything they can take to the field and not go bad in the heat. Canned items are good, like nuts and hard candy. Please consider sending some items to Keith in appreciation of his duty to our country. Just use your imagination on what to send him, or if you want more details on what Keith may need, contact Tracy at wildcat@ipa.net.

Keith's address:

1Lt Keith Wilson, 3/153 In B Co. 39th Bct, APO AE 09378

Now to Tracy:

Tracy is Keith's wife left behind to take care of their 14 exotic cats, several domestic cats, dogs, llamas, and other animals, run their animal supply business called Wild Trax Supply, and keep up a home on 18 acres of land that needs mowing more often than she likes. Tracy has to take care of all this stressful work above while worrying about Keith's dangerous military duties in Iraq.

Along with the above responsibilities, Tracy is also the Education and Conservation Director of "FCF". Tracy has taken her Directors duties way beyond what was expected of her when she took on the Education and Director duties. Under conservation, she organized and set up FCF's involvement and support of the conservation efforts at the Playa de Oro Margay Reserve in Ecuador, South America. Tracy planned and set up the fund raising tours down to the Reserve. She personally spent time in Ecuador helping set things up and trained the local village people in animal care. Tracy has lead several fund raising group tours to the reserve and is responsible for several thousands of dollars being raised to help support the reserve. Just this mid September, Tracy took a group plus \$3,000 in donations to the reserve.

Under education, Tracy is responsible for setting up and running the FCF Husbandry Course that is offered during the FCF National Convention and given all around the country. A few years ago, George Stowers who currently is the FCF President, organized and wrote the course that Tracy teaches along with other FCF certified instructors. Without Tracy's hard dedicated work, this course would have not been offered around the country like it has been. Several FCF members have taken this great course and we owe Tracy great gratitude for all this wildcat training that is being offered around this country. The above does not take into account all her other hard work she does for FCF in support of the exotic cats. For her exceptional dedication to FCF, Tracy was awarded the 2004 Lotty Award, which was presented to her during the 2004 FCF National Convention.

This past spring, Tracy was awarded a big Thank You gift for her sacrifice and dedication. Two of her special servals, Piper and Radar presented Tracy a little furry girl named Sundari. Tracy now has a helper to help her get through each day while Keith is away. Tracy says she has spoiled Sundari, but I think it is the other way with Sundari spoiling Tracy.

FCF extends a gracious Thank You to both Keith and Tracy for their dedication and sacrifice for our country and animals.

Caracals - one of my favorite feline species

Robert (Bobby) Bean

We have had Caracals (*Caracal caracal*) since 1989 and been producing Caracals since 1990. At one time we were producing more Caracals than anyone in the U.S. Of the 13 species of wild cats that we have experience with, the Caracals are one of my favorites. While the Cheetah is the fastest cat on earth, the Caracal is undoubtedly the quickest. They are one of the more intelligent felid species, yet affectionate and very trainable. We've raised many Caracals from babies to adults. The young Caracals are the least troublesome of all the species we've raised indoors. They don't seem to be as destructive when indoors and when faced with a no-no, they usually obey. Some people are put off/discouraged by their hissiness. In my experiences, hissing is just their means of communication. While we know of instances of Caracal lap cats, they can be a little high strung which means they need lots of stimulation / enrichment. You can say this about most non-domestic cats.

Caracals are a little more flexible in their diets. They have been recorded eating grass, vegetables and fruits in the wild. Some of our Caracals would eat anything they saw my wife or I eating.

We have noticed that some Caracals are hair pullers. I've seen some pluck themselves almost naked and do the same to their cagemate. We've tried enrichment, had dermatological tests, blood tests, etc. to try and find what causes this. All to no avail. The few we've had and others we've consulted on seem to be more seasonal which would point to allergies, yet the allergy tests were negative. There are no easy answers. Below is some

The name "Caracal" comes from the Turkish word *karakal*, which means "black ear." They are essentially creatures of wide-open country, but their range also covers scattered woodlands and thorn scrub. In India, where Caracals once sat at the feet of princes, only scant numbers remain.

Like Cheetahs, Caracals were once trained by Indian and Arabic nobility as hunting animals, used to chase down small antelope, hares and birds. The owners of the cats would sometimes wager on which of their cats would be the more successful hunter. The winner was the cat that knocked down the most birds during one attack. Totals sometimes numbered a dozen birds per cat!

Long before this, Caracals appeared to have held some religious significance for the ancient Egyptians. Caracals were found in wall paintings, their bodies embalmed, and sculptures of Caracals (and other felines) guarded tombs (Kingdon 1977).

Caracals feed on a variety of rodents, lizards and ground birds to small antelope. Caracals regularly kill even larger animals of moderate size such as reedbuck and blackbuck. In India, both the Caracal & Blackbuck are rare.

The population status of caracals in the wild is generally good, being very numerous in South Africa and Namibia.

In fact

their range is expanding in these countries to the point they have been legally declared a "Problem Species" and are often killed by farmers while preying on small livestock and poultry. Farmers responding to a government questionnaire in Namibia reported killing a total of 2,800 caracals in 1981. Yet, despite these losses, the caracal continues to spread in these

countries. They are less common in West and Central Africa, where commercial hunting for "bushmeat" and skins for the tourist trade continues. Caracals are fairly rare in the Asiatic regions and little is known of their habits and status there. The FCF is contributing to research being done in India to hopefully help fill this void.

In the Middle East, Caracals often prey on wild goats and sheep, which is in direct competition with leopards. They sometimes take Ostriches while nesting and have been known to take Tawny & Martial Eagles while on the ground. Few predators are so adept at catching Hyraxes. Hyrax is a rabbit sized creature of Africa and the Middle East that can scramble about trees and pop in and out of rock piles with elfin nimbleness.

Caracals are "polyestrous" meaning they are not seasonal and can reproduce year round. Caracals reach sexual maturity in less than 2 years. First litters have been recorded at 1-½ years (18 months) of age. Their cyclicity lasts from 3-5 days and seems to peak in Feb., March and August. Gestation is 69-79 days. Litter sizes vary from 1-6 with an average

The captive status of caracals is very good throughout the world. They are commonly seen in zoos and a large number are kept in private facilities. There is a Population Management Plan (PMP) instituted by the AZA to help manage the genetics. Several wild caught caracals have been brought to the USA in recent years and are producing in both zoos and private facilities.

Caracals are flat-headed and brown to red in color, with tassled black ears. Their body length is about 70 cm. and their height about 45 cm. Males weight about 35 pounds, female are about 5 pounds lighter. They can live up to 17 years in captivity.



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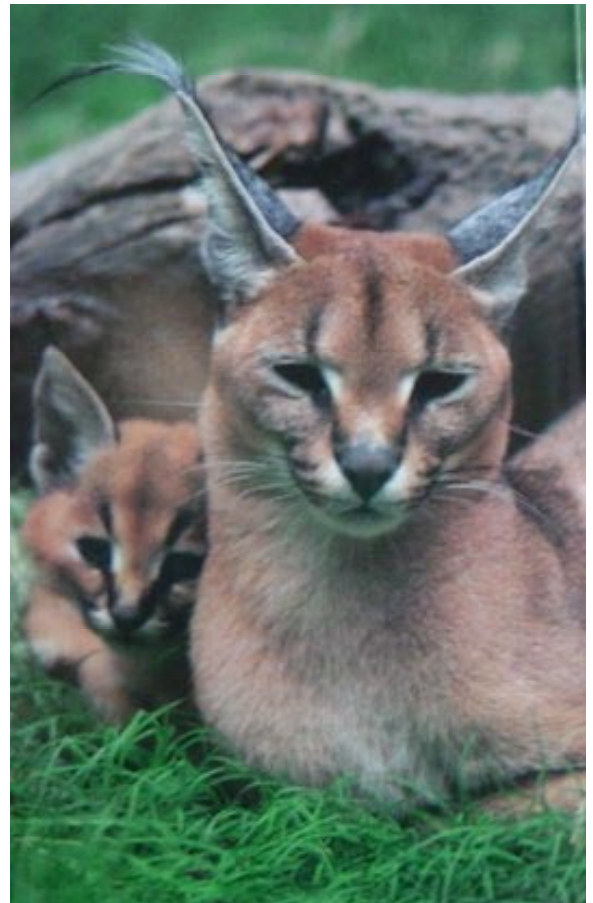
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Best Buds with Trooper *continued from page 23*

happened quite frequently.) I didn't like getting pee on me but I did like that he was so thoughtful and loving.

Soon we put him with Missy. They stayed together for about three weeks then they went in a bigger cage with the other female Caracals. He stayed with them for the rest of winter and then spring. We then separated them. Two of the females had litters (including Missy.) When it became summer we brought him back into our house when we noticed him having breathing problems. We put him back on his oxygen treatment, Theophylline, and Prednisone. Soon I noticed his ears were bothering him. When he shook his head I could hear tons of fluids in his ears. Our vet prescribed him some Cephalexin (an antibiotic.) This seemed to help a little. He did well for a good while but then he started urinating a lot. This got us worried that he might be going into kidney failure. He became so dehydrated that we had to start giving him fluids. I tried to keep him as relaxed as possible while giving him fluids. After we did, I let him sit in my lap. He purred up a storm! I tried to make it to where he wouldn't dread getting fluids. Some times I would read him poems about cats, which kept him relaxed. Sometimes he would sit in my lap and sleep or purr while I did my homework.

His health just kept getting worse. He was still the same loving Caracal that he'd always been bringing joy into this crazy world. He got to where he had no muscle tone, could barely walk without swaying, and would barely eat anything. This was heartbreaking to see him going through this but he was trying his best. We tried just about all the meats, Friskies, liver, ground beef and turkey (etc.) Just about the only thing he would eat was watered-down—milk, liver and every once in a while, chicken necks. (When he did eat/drink these things it was very little.) But like my dad always tells me "As long as the animal is trying we will too." One Saturday night we noticed he had an infection in his nose. (He had yellow mucus running out of it.) So we put him on antibiotics, which didn't seem to make a difference. The next day Sept. 5 his breathing was horribly unbelievable! It sounded like he was purring only he wasn't, it was his lungs! We called the vet again. He was out of town but his wife did answer who is also a vet. She told us to give him a big dose of Prednisone. She also said we could give him Albuterol. (We already had that in my inhaler.) So we used it on him. Suddenly he stopped breathing! My dad tried to do mouth to nose resuscitation but the air wouldn't go through because of the infection. A couple of seconds later his heart stopped beating! This was devastating! So all I could do was just burst out in tears. I just couldn't believe that my best bud just died right in front of me.



On necropsy, our vet said it was a miracle that Trooper lived as long as he did. His lungs were in horrible shape, which caused his heart and other organs to fail due to lack of oxygen.

Though it is comforting to know that one-day I'll see him again where he'll be asthma/problem-free. But still to this day it breaks my heart just to think that I can't go to see him priss around or to hear him purr.

Accounts of Caracals *cont. from page*

Charlie and Aretha were ours. Within a few weeks, Charlie had developed horrible seizure symptoms. He soon died of an inheritable type of cardiomyopathy. We knew then that we could never breed Aretha, as she would possibly pass on this trait. We incorporated CCI as a non-profit and Aretha became our first cat of many. She didn't qualify as a breeder, and she certainly wasn't a rescue. We call her a resident.

And she was. She lived in our house at night for almost a year, day-camping outside in the good weather and even some snow, which she disdained.

She had never been a dependent cat, but beginning shortly after Charlie's death she climbed in the bed at night and demanded a finger to suck on. I let her; happy she wasn't peeing in the bed instead (which she also occasionally did).

Today Aretha lives pretty happily with a neutered male caracal we took in as a placement when his owner had to move to Georgia, where exotic cat pets are illegal. She trills to me when I walk by, or when she thinks its dinnertime. She and Taz hunt our dogs and the nearby songbirds, coordinating their creeping and bursts of speed with ear flicking. When I go in to visit and sit with her, she greets me by tasting each finger and making her little special noises to me. Sometimes when all is quiet in the compound she will sit with me on the swing and suck my thumb, still.

Just a couple of weeks ago I went back to my roots at CPT, an invited guest. I marveled at the kindness of the volunteers and the maintenance staff, the cleanliness of the facility grounds, the abundance of cats I remembered. My Asha's name had been changed to Sandy by adoptive parents while I had still been there. She was not on the tour route, and I am unsure if she is still at the site. I did see Gabriel, though. He is happy and healthy and has a girlfriend named Marchella, one of my favorite other caracals from when I had worked there. He still has the biggest ear tufts I have ever seen. When I called hello he ran to the fence to greet me, even after almost seven years. He rubbed the fence and trilled to me, sounding a lot like Aretha.

We can't go home again, but we can take the best parts with us wherever we go.

Spirit of the Hills Hosted August Husbandry Course

Pete Bergerson

I took the FCF basic husbandry course on Aug. 28th in Spearfish, S. Dakota (Black Hills). I was impressed with the course, quality of material and instruction, the people who attended and the spontaneous discussions which took place during class, breaks & after course completion.

Attendees included a large number of volunteers at the Spirit of the Hills Sanctuary (the tour the next day), a couple of folks who have donated materials to the sanctuary, an animal control officer (very much on our side) and the Sanctuary vet.

I would recommend the course to people from those seriously considering their first "exotic" cat to those with ownership experience. While much of the course material might seem rather basic, new 'slants' on some things (e.g., capture, behavior & handling) are always helpful. It also helped clarify some basic laws which can sometimes be a little confusing. Also, it's sometimes so easy for us to get 'wrapped up' in our own particular, narrower, and immediate concerns & general activities that taking a 'step back to the basics' can be refreshing, relaxing and beneficial (also in any area of life).

People generally liked the layout of the manual, even though it is essentially an 'outline' format. There is plenty of room to add our own notes and any further explanatory comments. It contains a lot of very timely and good information in a concise format.

The spirit of 'volunteerism' and community support for the Sanctuary was extremely impressive, which added much to the questions during class and at other times as mentioned above. I think these factors added a 'neat' dimension to the course.

The next day was a tour of the Spirit of the Hills Sanctuary. The weather was great. It's a beautiful place, even though much work still needs doing, from perimeter fencing to more enclosures for more animals being anticipated. Ken and Nancy Kraft have moved some of their cats there and are trying to clear the way with the state to move the rest out there.

I thought the tour was one of the best I've ever experienced. Rather than a simple 'walkthrough,' people took their time, evoked some fairly thoughtful questions and discussions and a few of us enjoyed some amount of interaction with some of the cats.

After the class the previous evening, Carol (the instructor) and I had a drink and got a bite to eat. We tossed a few ideas around for a few modest alterations in a couple segments of the basic course. We also tossed out a couple of thoughts regarding a more advanced 'course' (more a topic structured round table discussion format?) which would delve deeper into a few of the basic segments - notably health care and the training and behavior segments.

I wonder how much interest there might be in this 'advanced' approach. I also wonder how much interest there might be in 'seminars' (talks and panel discussions) in dealing with pending legislation, built around tactics and P.R. approaches that people and 'exotic' groups have used with some marked success.

Given the way the activists are marching across this country and many of their tactics, a few more questions crossed my mind. Should we urge other people to go with us who are or might become supporters, to strong supporters of ours, if they better understood our views on responsible (any) animal ownership (inc. public safety issues), the commitments of the large majority of 'exotic' owners to broadly defined responsible ownership, the knowledge that we already possess and our desires to learn more? Possibly at a greatly reduced course fee?

Others we might consider asking could include animal control people who at least are not clearly our 'enemies,' vets and maybe even some legislators (during their non legislative season)?

For owners who are not FCF members, I like the approach of putting \$30 of a \$95 course fee towards FCF membership.

Batman the caracal

by Bart Culver

We didn't need him. We didn't want him. We didn't expect him. We just found him lying on the ground cold and motionless, hours old, while his mother, herself abandoned in the wild, did the same to her son. We rushed this tiny caracal into the house and warmed him up, but he had no will to live. He had no colostrum and was too weak to suck.

For the first few days of his tenuous life, we tube fed him and he hated it and didn't think too much of us either. In our eagerness to pump him up, we overtaxed his delicate digestive system. He became constipated and was rushed to the vet for a life saving enema. He was such a pathetic little foundling, with his thin fur, wrinkly skin, poverty belly and bulging eyes.

Except for the ears, he didn't look like a proper caracal at all. But the force was strong in him. That's why I decided to call him Yoda. His little eyes gleamed fiercely when he fought against every meal we forced down him. But we could feel him growing stronger. My worry now was that he would live, but deprived of the early bonding experience of bottle-feeding, he would regard us as tormentors, and never tame down.

But I under estimated his intelligence. He began to take the bottle. He began chirping and playing normally. And the magic moment came when he gazed into my eyes and I could see the realization on his tiny face. He knew that I loved him and suddenly I couldn't keep him out from under my feet. All his stubbornness and fear melted away, but for one thing. He absolutely refused to accept the name Yoda. He could tell by our inflection that the name expressed a pathetic condition he was determined to outgrow.

The spirit in him told him that he was a cat with wings for ears and he was learning to fly. As he taxied around the house at near lift off speeds in pursuit of a beam of light, he earned his new name, Batman. He liked that name and readily answered to it. A beautiful personality began to manifest itself.

Batman was a kisser. He would lick my lips and beard for as long as I would let him and we trilled happily to each other and fell quite in love. And I do believe that this was not a love of surrogation, or any kind of trickery. Batman understood that he was loved by another kind of animal. And he chose to return that love.

I decided to clicker train Batman. I clicked every time

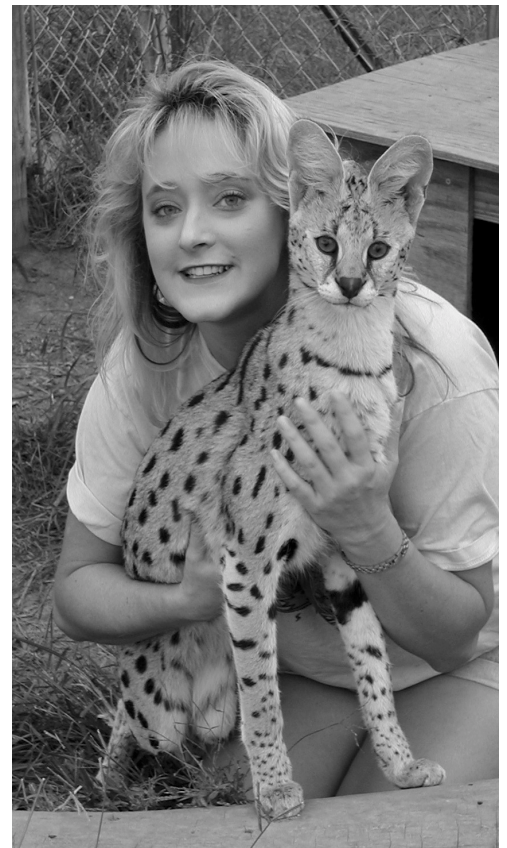


Batman was raised with a serval buddy and our black domestic Bikini

I fed him, to associate food with the clicker. Then I decided to train Batman to come when called with no visual cues. The hard part was getting out of Batman's sight long enough to call him. But when I called he came running. I crouched down and got ready to click. Batman screeched to a halt and kissed me, so I clicked for that and gave him a chicken neck. After three days of this routine Batman's learning ability was inadvertently tested when I fed him in haste, and did not wait for my kiss. It was half past dinnertime and he was hungry, but Batman ignored the food and spun around in circles at my feet until I finally remembered the most important part of the trick. I have never forgotten it since. Yes, caracals are highly intelligent and I believe they can clicker train people faster than any other cat.



Bart plays with Batman's parents, Rowdy and Sweetie in their exercise yard.



a few of the FCF Board candidates with their felines. Top left going clockwise: Bob Turner next to Peppermint serval; Kevin Chambers holds Liberty, white lion cub; Tracy Wilson hugs Piper serval; Leann Montgomery poses with Buckwheat caracal at convention; Bobby Bean kisses Maisy bobcat; Donna Verba holds geoffroy kitten Molly; Sara Schimke stands next to serval friend: Lynn Culver kisses Hercules cougar.

