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Feline Conservation Federation



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FCF list moderator**

Cover picture:

Blitz the lynx grts a hug from his human,
Randee. Photo by Mace Loftus.



Mace Loftus

Randee shares a moment with Blitz.



Feline Conservation Federation

This magazine is published bi-monthly by the LIOC Endangered Species Conservation Federation, Inc. d/b/a as the Feline Conservation Federation. We are a non-profit (Federal ID# 59-2048618) non-commercial organization with international membership, devoted to the welfare of exotic felines. The purpose of this publication is to present information about exotic feline conservation, management, and ownership to our members. The material printed 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 organization. FCF's Statement of Intent is contained in our bylaws, a copy of which can be requested from the secretary. Reproduction of the material in this magazine may not be made without the written permission of the original copyright owners and/or copyright owner FCF. We encourage all members to contribute articles. Articles concerning exotic felines are preferred and gladly accepted. Articles involving other related subjects will also be considered. Letters and responses to articles may be included in the Readers Write column. Submission deadline for the next issue is the tenth of odd numbered months. Please submit all photos and articles to the editor. Persons interested in joining FCF should contact the term director in charge of member services.

Letter from the President	4
Genetics or Coincidence?	4
Playa de Oro Trail Cutting Project Underway	6
Introducing Adult Servals	7
Laser Declaw	8
Waterfall Habitat Odyssey Reaches Completion	10
Donations Help Bring Literacy to Playa de Oro Kids	12
Simple to Build Feed Port	13
Blast from the Past... Kabuki and Son	14
A Serval to be Cherished	18
Tristan's Tale	22
Lakota's New Digs	30
In Search of the Perfect Cage	32
Bobcat Cage Building 101	36
FCF Fourth Quarter Meeting Meeting Minutes	37
MEFES Meeting Minutes	38
Rusty Spotted Cat in Panna, Central India	39



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Letter from the President

Love and Gratitude

I like to think that love and gratitude are like my two hands working together. Love is for the beauty in nature. Gratitude gives us the eyes to see it.

My mother is part Native American and Native Americans teach their children to wake up being thankful for the nature that surrounds them. Their philosophy has expanded my well of gratitude. I try to find something new and precious to appreciate in nature every day. When I get up in the morning and go outside, I look up to the sky to see the beauty in the white clouds covered with blue with the birds singing. I try to find something new and precious to appreciate in nature every day but I do not have to look very far to find it. I find it every time I see my servals and bobcats. Every time I set my eyes on them, it is like seeing them for the first time. What beauty there is under that soft fur. Seeing them fills me with thanks for the privilege of being able to share my life with nature's miracles.

Elaine Hibbard wrote that gratitude is one of the great positive motions because it creates magnetism. A magnet draws things to itself and, therefore, giving heartfelt thanks for all the good around us makes us attract more good into our daily lives.

Life's journey is never totally smooth.

We all will encounter mountains and valleys along the way, but in the hard climb up the mountain or the difficult descent into the valley, we learn life's lessons and become stronger. Be grateful for the challenges you face because they help you grow, understand, and soften your heart, and they give you strength.

In 1975, I came down with Hodgkin's Lymphoma, a cancer of the lymph nodes that ended my auto-racing hobby at a time when I was ready to win the championship. I could have let that be a negative, but instead, I wake up to appreciate the beauty in this world that made me a better person.

I'm so thankful for a very pretty loving wife and being able share my life with the beautiful cats and my human friends and loved ones. I'm also very thankful to be the FCF president and to work with a great group of FCF officers and directors this past year. I'm proud of the FCF donations to the wildcat conservation projects we have gave this past year and the gain in the FCF membership. I'm also so thankful and pleased with the new

website that Irene Satterfield has set up for us. I feel that we will have the best year in FCF growth in membership in 2006 due to our new excellent website. Please visit the new web site as often as possible.

Finally, I like for you remember that love surrounds us like the soft, comforting,



refreshing rain and let gratitude help you find the power of that love and see all your experiences with nature.

May you have a safe and joyful journey through the Christmas holiday.

Robert Turner

Genetics or Coincidence?

By Shelleen Mathews

Are you one of the people whose lives would not be "complete" without sharing it with a spotted and furred friend? There are those to whom the thought of owning an exotic is merely a passing fancy. Then there are the people who would go to any length to share their lives with, care for, and protect these wonderful creatures.

If you own an exotic, I suspect you have been asked, "Why?" by people who are interested or confused about your choice. What is your answer? It's not easy to put into words. Suffice it to say, we love and adore them, but that is hard to translate into words that will make someone else under-

stand.

Consider this: The first time I actually came face to face with a bobcat, around 1970, I was fascinated and smitten. Maybe even a bit possessed. To make a long story shorter, I eventually wound up caring for over 130 of them (exotic cats) in various sizes and colors.

Now the interesting aspect to consider: I was adopted as an infant into a loving family. They were not really "animal people" and I was always rescuing every kitten I possibly could which the family perhaps did not understand.

After growing up and leaving home, I acquired my first bobcat and the numerous

others followed. In my mid-30s I wanted to search for my birth family. When I found my mother's side (and numerous siblings) I learned that my birth mother had passed away a few years previously. The family filled me in on the fact that she was a known cat-rescuer and furthermore, her dearest wish in life had been to have an ocelot! Years previously to this I was frequently in the news about the exotic cats (and the occasional wolf) that found its way to our sanctuary. It turns out that my mother had actually seen me on the news (not knowing I was her daughter) and said, "Oh I wish I could do that!"

Odd coincidence... or genetics?



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Playa de Oro Trail Cutting Project Underway

FCF funded Conservation Patrol Begins in 2006

Rosa Jordan

I do not think I am exaggerating when I say that the funds raised by raffle at the recent FCF convention and those donated by the organization for a “conservation patrol” to guard the boundaries of Playa de Oro have saved the reserve. And that’s before the actual patrols have even begun!

As you might know, all of Playa de Oro’s territory has been designated by the community that owns it as a protected area for all species of neo-tropical felids. The reserve consists of 10,406.86 hectares (25,715 acres). The border, which is about 30 miles long, has been recently surveyed and is well marked. Only on the southeast side, where Playa de Oro borders the million-acre Cotacachi-Cayapus Biosphere Reserve, is that border secure.

On the northwest side, logging companies had cut right to the property line, and were hungrily eying Playa de Oro’s virgin forest. On the southwest side, Chachi Indians had cleared their own land for farming and were making occasional incursions into Playa de Oro to cut trees for house construction. On the northeast side, scores of squatters had moved onto Playa de Oro land.

Playa de Orans were deeply concerned about these threats to their land but did not see how they could protect it. Dependent as they are on hunting and gathering, they must work daily, fishing, hunting, digging roots, gathering wild fruits, and tending plantain patches to feed their families. They could no more stop gathering food and go off to guard their territory than we could leave our jobs to go guard the border between the US and Mexico—not unless border patrol was our job and we were being paid to do it.

Once the threats to the Playa de Oro reserve were brought to the attention of FCF, funds were raised and earmarked for just that: to pay a “conservation patrol” to regularly hike the 30 mountainous miles, through the densest kind of rainforest, to observe incursions, report back to the community, and come up with strategies for preventing trespass.

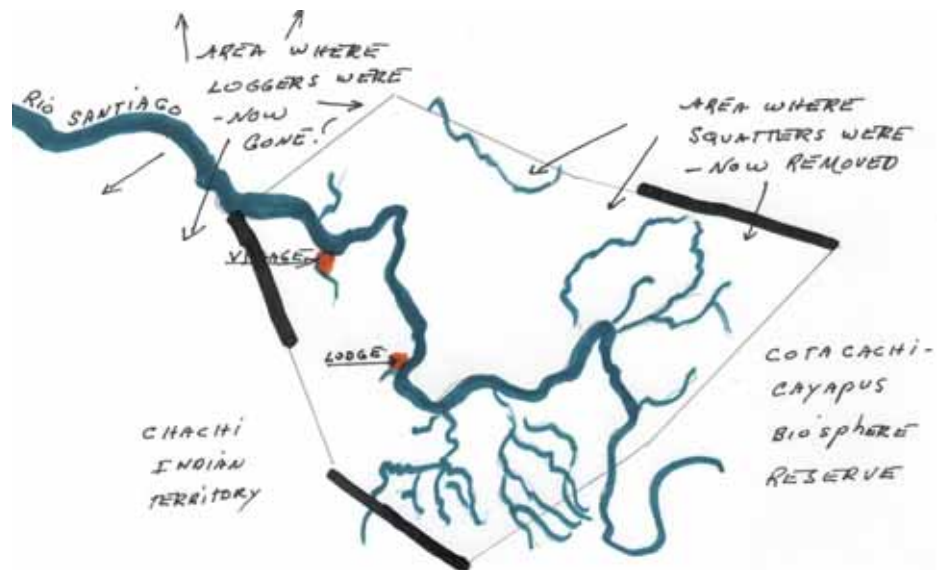
In September, Tracy Wilson carried the \$1800 raised for the patrol to Playa de Oro. It was left up to the reserve’s director, Mauro Caicedo, to work with the community as to how the patrol would be organized, ensure that it performed its duties, and provided regular reports to the community and to FCF.

These patrols did not begin immediately because Mauro (like some of you) felt that the community should also contribute something, and since it has no money, that something must be labor. He called upon the community to organize mingas (volunteer work parties) to cut a trail around the entire border, so that when the patrols went out, they would not be making the trek under such dangerous conditions. (Note: in addition to rugged terrain, with steep, muddy slopes covered in vegetation denser than anything we have in North America, there is an abundance of poisonous snakes, spiders, scorpions, and conga ants—very real dangers if one is not walking a clean trail with a certain amount of visibility!)

When I arrived at Playa de Oro in November, I discovered that three exciting things had happened. First, mingas had been organized, and the work of clearing trails along the boundaries was in progress. Second, the community had met four times with the several dozen squatter families who had settled in their territory, showed them their title, and had persuaded them—all of them—to leave! Third, they had

informed the two logging companies working on their northwest border that they would not, under any circumstances, sell their trees, and what’s more, they planned to put a patrol along that border to prevent tree theft. Soon thereafter, the companies finished logging adjacent lands, and packed up and left! (Note: It is probable that the companies made simultaneous offers to other communities and some of those sold out, so there was no reason to pressure Playa de Oro. However, it can be expected that in the future, when those other areas have been clearcut, the logging companies will return. The people of Playa de Oro insist that they will never sell their trees. They do have a 500-year history of “just saying no,” so we can reasonably assume that protection of their ancestral forest is a strongly-held cultural value, and with our support, they will continue to reject offers. There was never a question as to whether the Playa de Orans wanted to protect their forest. The question was how they could afford to do it when they were being threatened on three sides and did not have the resources to employ people to patrol the borders, spot trespassers, and prevent tree theft. The arrival of funds from FCF solved that problem. Just knowing that money was available to pay a patrol inspired the community to organize mingas to create the trails that would make patrols practical. It is

Continued on next page



Introducing Adult Servals

By Evelyn Shaw

We were chosen by the owners of an adult serval to give her a good home. She was not abused or neglected but it was illegal for them to own her where they lived. Her name is Azreal.

The hardest part was that her previous owner was very sad. She was very healthy



My, what big ears you have! Azreal shows her holiday spirit.

and obviously loved. They did everything right when choosing a new home for her. They came to our house and visited and asked for references before placing her with us.

When she arrived, Azreal was frightened. She stayed up on top of our cabinets for the first night. We only allowed her to be with our two servals, Leo and Leola, when we were home. Azreal went in my bedroom at night or when we were gone.

Playa de Oro cont.

not possible for men to work continuously on the trail cutting, so the work is going slowly. Mauro thinks they will have a trail cut around the entire perimeter by the end of the year and the patrols can commence in January. Thus the funds taken down should cover the patrol's \$5 per day salaries for the first six months of 2006.

The mayor and village council asked me to convey "saludos y gratis profundo" (greetings and profound thanks) to the members and board of FCF for your support of this project.

She avoided us for the first few days so we started hand feeding her. She still was not happy with us touching her but she would get closer and closer. She then would start checking us out at night. I would wake to her sniffing my hair and I would lie very still and talk quietly to her. She then started sleeping with us. We would invite her to play with our other two servals and us. She would watch, but not jump into the game. I would then play ball with Azreal by herself. Slowly she began jumping in and playing. We slowly backed away and let her play with Leo and Leola.

We would feed them together, but Azreal did not eat well, so we still fed her some by herself. At her former home, she was fed cooked meat and we feed a raw diet here. We adjusted her diet by gradually cooking her chicken less and less until she had her switched to eating raw meat.

We would take toys and put them in the bathtub she would watch and then joined the others in making a water mess. Once they had all splashed and played, she began licking and cleaning herself with Leo and Leola. We were witnessing the process of them slowly becoming pals. They began sharing toys and love.

She began getting closer to us also. She started letting me pet her. One night while I was sitting on my bed, she walked up to me and head-butted me. She began letting me pet her and kiss her and give her love. I would invite Leola in to join us. She started sharing the bedtime attention with Leola and then Leo joined us after a couple of weeks. Now our hour before bed is spent loving three servals. It is a rewarding and relaxing time. Then they are off to bed.

We spent hours making sure Leola and Leo knew they were still loved and that Azreal also needed love. They accepted her. At first they would blame her for some of the mischief though. The first time we left them alone together, they found an entire pack of toilet paper I had left out. They toilet papered our entire house. I was only gone for 15 minutes and came home to a mess. They were all three on the couch when I walked in. I thought how cute until I saw the mess. It was so funny because I yelled who did this and both Leo and Leola looked at Azreal. She kept looking at them.

I could not be mad and had to laugh.

Leo has never been one to purr and Azreal always purrs. Just recently Leo started purring! It has been very rewarding to express her happiness to her previous owners who call and check on her. They know that they can always visit her and that Azreal is well taken care of. The sad part is that legislatures do not realize how the laws can tear a family apart.



Azreal teaches antlers a lesson



Chewy strikes serval listening pose

Sara Comstock

Laser Declaw

By Shelleen Mathews

The practice of declawing any cat is controversial. While it is something I have never considered doing with any exotic feline I've had since 1971, I have learned that in life you should never say "never."

When I ran a sanctuary for big cats in the 70s and early 80s, we received many cats who had, indeed, been declawed. Many presented no apparent ill (physical) side effects from the procedure, however there were those individuals who experienced difficulties such as the occasional cat which required surgery to repair feet and correct claws painfully regrowing in various ways.

Fast forward to the present and "Cartouche" my male serval. When I took him as a baby, I knew he had a "difficult" personality. Indeed, the facility he came from was concerned about finding him placement because from birth he exhibited earmarks (no pun intended) that could mean he was not going to be the most tractable. During the weeks and months that followed his arrival (at six weeks) he lived up to his reputation. His nickname became "The Slasher". (Indeed, there is a sign on the door to "our" bedroom that says, "Blood-Letting by Cartouche. No Appointment Needed.") Nail trimming was not a safe option any longer, although I had diligently clipped all along. I became concerned for our ability to maintain a fearless bond. Additionally, I feared what would happen in his future if he should need handling in an emergency. I fretted over the situation for a long time and began thinking that we may need to consider declawing him. I became aware of a relatively new procedure called the laser declaw.

During investigation of the laser declaw, I read what I could find about the procedure and talked with owners who had it done. I saw several cats and was impressed that the cat's toes looked no different than before the declaw. The procedure itself is done with a beam of light, sealing nerve endings and blood vessels resulting in less pain and little blood loss. Additionally, it is accomplished relatively quickly so there is no prolonged period of anesthesia. Not every veterinarian is trained or equipped to use this method. Some investigation is

needed to find a qualified veterinarian in your area.

Now to our actual experience, an incredibly nerve-wracking day for all involved. The surgery went well and was quick. The vet I had chosen usually keeps his patients overnight, but given Cartouche's "attitude" (serval-tude in our house), it was decided he would be better off at home. When I picked him up at the veterinarian's office I was surprised to find that his feet were bandaged. I had read that this was often not a necessity. The vet felt that in Cartouche's case it might be a wise thing to have bandages for a couple of days. He felt that Cartouche would remove them himself. He didn't. After three days we made another

trip to our regular vet to have them removed. This, of course, required anesthesia again. Upon examination of the bandaging, there had been no post-surgery bleeding. The research I had done indicated that patients were usually back up to speed within a matter of days. We did not find this to be the case with Cartouche. It was actually four weeks before he began to resume a somewhat normal routine. I don't know if this was caused by his age when the surgery was done or some other factor.

Is declawing controversial? Most certainly. Would I recommend it in most situations? No. Will you have incredible guilt? Yes. However, in some cases it may be the safest thing.



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The waterfall habitat odyssey reaches completion

Brian Werner

After a year of construction—and reconstruction—the waterfall habitat is completed. Now the water-loving tigers will have an area in which they have a pond, cave, and area on which to climb. While they have had water troughs to play in while in the larger exercise yards, that can't compare to the running water of the waterfall and pond habitat! We began construction the summer of 2004.

Our interns were involved in construction from the beginning. We didn't see one intern most of the summer because he spent his time shaping concrete to make the cave area smooth and safe for the animals! (Thanks Mike!) The work on shaping the concrete into rocks continued into the spring of 2005. The concrete was stained this past summer. Fencing the perimeter began in the spring and was completed in the fall 2005. There were several setbacks on completing the fencing—but we didn't let a little thing like a hurricane named Rita stop us for long! Construction was not easy; there was delay after delay. The first contractor was fired so we were set back about six months while we found someone who

could fix it for us. Billy Williamson was hired to complete the project but we had to wait until he found time in his schedule to come work on it. Billy has done work at many zoos designing and building their natural habitats. Billy then discovered that

some of the pipes were going to be exposed so more "rocks" were added to ensure the animals could not damage the pipes. The photos below show the journey of waterfall habitat construction. As you can see, it has been a lengthy process!



Rock Water Odyssey at Tiger Creek

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Donations from FCF members help bring literacy to Playa de Oro kids

Rosa Jordan

FCF members visit Ecuador in order to see first hand the jungle cat reserve we are helping protect. But they also see the children who live in that reserve, and more than a few visitors come away wanting to help them, too.

Just as in our country, it is the government's responsibility to provide teachers but it rarely has bothered to send teachers to poor little Playa de Oro. When FCF first began taking groups there three years ago, the village school, a two-room cement-block affair, was being used as a storeroom. The few parents—including most of the employees of the reserve—who could afford to send their children to stay with relatives in nearby towns did so, spending much of what they earned on their kids' schooling. The rest of the community, most of whom are illiterate themselves, watched their children grow up without basic reading, writing, and arithmetic skills.

Our first contact with Playa de Oro's children was usually when we paid a visit to the village to watch a dozen or so perform some of their traditional African dances to marimba music. The children were so lively and cute, it was hard to accept that most could not read or write and might never have a chance to learn. A few visitors made up their minds to change that situation. One was FCF member Grace Lush of Toronto. When she found out that it would be possible to hire a teacher for a mere \$100 per month, she began collecting donations from her friends and soon had enough to pay the salary of a teacher for an entire school year. This project started last September and is now into its second year, with enough funds remaining in the kitty to pay the teacher on through the end of this school term.

Meanwhile, another visitor donated money to paint the dreary cement-block classrooms and still others donated supplies. Suddenly the community began to feel that it was possible to have a decent school even without government assistance. They soon began funding two untrained assistants. One helps the teacher they had, and the other looks after the pre-school. With all this in place, the town council contacted the government and demanded a second teacher for their older children. At last

the government complied, so the community now has two full-time teachers plus the two assistants to work with their 87 children, covering kindergarten through grade 6.

Meanwhile, the marimba-dance group, that initial attraction to Playa de Oro's children, sort of broke up, so the school took it over. The \$25 paid for each performance now goes to the school to use for supplies.

When I was there in November, I was told by the head teacher that she has located a master marimba maker who, for \$150 per month, will spend four months in Playa de Oro teaching classes in marimba-making. He will help them first build small marimbas then a large one to use in their dance performances. In the process he will give

the children music lessons. So if anyone out there has a particular interest in traditional folk music, this might be something you would want to support.

I realize that this is not "cat-related", but education is not unrelated to conservation. By supporting the local school, we are able to require them to incorporate a strong conservation message into their daily lessons.

This will ensure that the youngest members of the community grow up knowing the importance of protecting "tigrillos", and can take pride in the fact that the land they own is perhaps the only reserve in the world devoted exclusively to the protection of ocelots, margays, oncillas, and jaguarundi.



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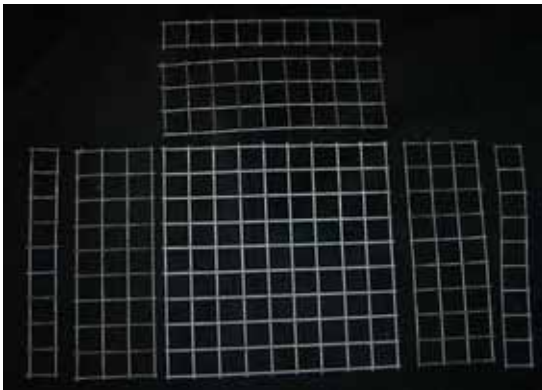
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A simple to build feed port

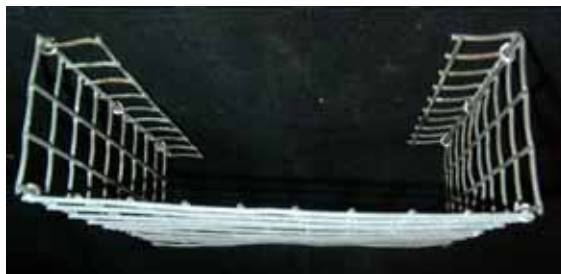
Kevin Chambers

Here is a cheap and simple feed port that I use for all small cats from Geoffroy's up to Siberian lynx in size. It is good for cats that are not tame or trustworthy at feeding time. It's also great for those times when you have someone else feed your cats to ensure both the cat's safety and that of the person doing the feeding. I use thin plastic feed dishes from Wal-Mart that are more or less square in shape. I have also used the thicker walled round plastic dishes and they work fine, too.

For the feeder holder, I use 1" x 1" weld-



ed wire. Start with a piece 9" x 9" for the bottom. Attach pieces 3" x 9" for the sides on three sides.



For the top, you can use a piece 9" x 9" and cut out a square 8" x 8" from the middle or just attach pieces 1" x 9" on top of the three sides and across the top of the side with no side piece. What you want is a 1" lip all around the top facing inward to keep the feeder from being pulled upwards. In the cage wall where you want the feeder, cut a hole 3" x 9". Attach the feeder holder you just made to the cat side of the cage wall so that the side with no sidepiece lines up with the hole you just cut. I then get a piece of welded wire 4" x 11" and attach it to the outside of the cage wall. I ring it so that it hinges on the top wire of the hole

just cut and I attach a latch to it so that I can securely hold it in place over the hole cut in the cage wall. I place the feeder holder such that it rests on a feeding platform, but any kind of support could be made to help hold it up using wire or wood. All you have to do to safely feed is to open the little door, slide the feeder bowl in through the hole and into the feeder holder, and latch the little door. All is done safely from the outside of the cage.

I have had some cats that learned that they could get in the right position and reach through the hole in the cage wall when I opened the door. This is also simple to stop. I cut the vertical wires on top of the top wire of the feed opening. I don't remove them entirely, but just enough allow me to slide a piece of fiberglass (thin plywood or anything solid would work) through the opening, covering the top of the



feeder holder. This keeps the cat from having access to the opening as I open it and slide the feed dish in. One other note from experience, it is best to attach a piece of wood to the slide piece to keep the cat from being able to hook it and pull it in the cage. I just use a piece of 3/4" x 3/4" wood 11" long attached to the slide 9" from the front. I make the slide 9" x 11".

It is kind of hard to describe this just with words, but you should be able to figure it out. This feed port/feeder holder has worked beautifully for me and it only cost a couple of bucks and a few minutes to make.



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Blast from the Past. . . Kabuki and Son

Long Island Ocelot Club

Volume 13 Number 5—September/October 1969

Wanda and Wendell Mull, Sherman Oaks, California

Born approximately July 31, 1967 in the jungles of South America. Captured and sent to a pet shop in Southern California at the age of four or five weeks. Spent the first eight months of her life with a family of three: one three-year old boy, two adults and a German Shepherd dog.

Janet Giacinto (World Pets Society) purchased Kabuki in April 1968. The original owners were moving and felt they could no longer keep Kabuki. Jan mentioned that she had a tame jaguarundi for sale. I couldn't resist going over to see this tame jaguarundi.

We are now the proud owners of a very tame, very lovable jaguarundi. We decided that since tame tractable jaguarundis are so scarce and that since, to our knowledge, no jaguarundi kittens have been born in captivity, we would attempt to breed Kabuki.

We found a mate for her in a very round-about way. While at Jan's house filming a documentary for television on exotic pets and their owners, the photographer mentioned to us that ours was the second cat of her kind he had ever seen. A friend of his had the other one. We asked if the cat was male or female. He wasn't sure. He took our name and address for his friend. We received a phone call the next night from

Pierre Riolland. Pierre told us he had a male jaguarundi named Rajah, and was interested in finding a mate for him. He assured us Rajah was very tame.

Rajah came over to see Kabuki the next night and immediately fell in love. He talked to her and followed her around. She ran away, playing hard-to-get. (It should be noted here that Pierre is an experienced and knowledgeable handler of exotic cats. His own jaguarundi testifies to this fact.) After finding a prospective mate, we brought Rajah to our apartment each time Kabuki came in heat: November 12 and January 15. Finally, during her March 10 heat success was indicated.

This involves more than one would expect. Although the cats were together during these periods of time, Kabuki wouldn't accept Rajah. Strange as it seems, they only mated when someone was around. On March 10, Wendell was sitting on the floor talking to me (Wanda) on the phone and petting Kabuki. Our jaguarundi falls in love with Wendell (or other men she is used to) when she comes in heat. While Wendell sat there rubbing Kabuki's head, Rajah sneaked up behind her and they mated. They mated several times on Both March 10 and 11.

On April 1 we crossed our fingers because Kabuki was getting fatter, eating more and her milk glands had started swelling. This continued and she slowed down and played less toward the middle of the month. By the end of April she had slackened her pace even more and was nervous and jumpy. By May 2 we thought she would never have her kittens, but she started removing fur around her nipples. The kittens were obviously kicking violently. They had been moving for about three weeks.

On Friday 23 at about dinnertime, Kabuki started calling to us and stayed near the closet where we keep the linens. Deciding it was time, we made her nest in the bottom of the closet where she would feel secure. She started having labor pains shortly after 6:45. The time between each pain was about 11/2 minutes until 7:30 when they started coming every minute. From 8:30 until 8:45 they

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were half minute apart and we started worrying since she was showing no visible signs of success.

We tried to locate the veterinarian, but he was unavailable. Wendell went out to search for him and in his absence Pierre arrived. Kabuki finally had her first kitten at 9:25, large, perfectly formed, but born dead. Pierre tried artificial respiration and everything else he and I could think of, but



Jim Broadbent

couldn't breathe any life into the kitten, which was born feet and tail first, and probably suffocated. Kabuki instinctively knew the kitten was dead. She didn't try to clean it but cut the umbilical cord and cleaned herself, just before Wendell arrived home.

Kabuki immediately started having contractions one minute apart. After fifteen minutes they were half minute apart. At 10:05, the second kitten was born (also backwards). She cleaned it only for a short time, and then proceeded to cut the cord and clean herself. We could detect no movement in this kitten either. We were about to try to take the kit away from Kabuki and attempt to revive it, but Kabuki wouldn't let us. She started washing it around the face and all of a sudden the kitten let out a squeak and started moving its feet. Kabuki cleaned it a little more and left it.

The kitten was breathing, but having difficulty doing so. Pierre took it, cleaned it and removed some mucus from its nose and mouth. It then started breathing normally. We turned on the furnace next to Kabuki and put the kitten there on a towel to dry. She started to take back the kitten very roughly and might have killed it had we not taken it away from her immediately. We moved it into the kitchen and put it on the oven door to keep warm, feeding it some Spf-lac (for new-born animals) in a small baby bottle. It drank its fill and went

right to sleep. We continued this procedure about every half hour until returning the kitten to Kabuki.

Meanwhile, Kabuki seemed to be finished but was still very large. By palpating her we could feel another kitten. She began contractions again at 11:30, which continued until 2:15. Then, with each contraction, the kitten's tail and back feet would show and be retracted. Finally, at 3:00 after 4-1/2 hours of labor and with our assistance, she again gave birth. This kitten really never stood a chance. The afterbirth and cord were wrapped around its head at birth. It was also the largest kitten of the three. We were all glad it was over.

At 3:30, after giving her a rest, we brought her live kitten to her. She immediately grabbed it and ran into the bedroom taking it up on the bed (which is where she always sleeps) We stayed with her to calm

her as she proceeded to clean it again, this time in her own way, and let it nurse. We were thankful for this, as the kitten would stand a better chance of survival getting food from its mother. Wendell and I took shifts staying awake with the new mother and kit.

Saturday afternoon she decided she didn't like the kitten in our bed any longer so she moved him into a corner next to the

bed on the floor. We put a blanket down for them and she seemed happy with the situation. She would get up on the bed and look down at her kitten, satisfied he was all right. The next day we bought a heating pad for their bed. Kabuki seemed to like this very much. Every time the kitten strayed off it, she would pull him back by the neck or the tail, whichever was closest.

Monday, May 26 we weighed the kitten for the first time. He weighed 4.25 ounces. By that time we could also determine for sure that the kitten was a male. He was eating and sleeping well. We felt he had a good chance of surviving. For a while we weren't so sure about Kabuki. She wouldn't eat so we force fed her as much as we could. Finally on Sunday, June 1 she started eating her usual amount of chicken necks again. The kitten doubled his weight in the first week and weighs 10 ounces today, June 4.

Also on Sunday, June 1, the kitten's eyes started opening. By Wednesday, they were all the way open and he could see a little. He also started purring on Sunday while he was nursing and sometimes when he is petted.

Kabuki is very good with her kitten and with us. We can pick him up and pet him and she tolerates it. We are very thankful and fortunate to have a very lovable, tame jaguarundi and her healthy growing kitten.



Jim Broadbent

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FCF Board of Director Nomination period January 1 to March 20, 2006

Every two years, according to the FCF Constitution, nominations for all board positions are open from January 1 to March 20. Election ballots are mailed out in October and those elected serve a two-year term beginning January 1, 2007. (The FCF Constitution can be viewed on the FCF web site at the About Us hyperlink. It is also contained in the Membership Handbook)

Presidential candidates must either have previously served on the board of directors, or be FCF members for at least ten years. Life Director candidates must have served at least one term of office to be eligible for nomination.

It takes two signatures to be properly nominated. Anyone interested in serving this organization can nominate another member, or even themselves and ask any other FCF member they know, or any director, to second the nomination.

Serving on the board of directors is challenging, but rewarding. FCF is a diverse group that strives to represent all types of exotic feline care giver, from the individual animal owner, to the large-scale sanctuary and everything in between.

Help make the next board of directors the best ever. Help FCF be more productive, responsive and effective. Consider volunteering your valuable time and expertise to serve the members. Mail in your nomination to the secretary by March 20!

African Safari Raffle Fast Facts

The six-day African Photo Safari trip for two is the grand prize in an effort to increase the funds available to the FCF conservation grants program. All net proceeds will go to wild feline Conservation.

The Safari was launched in mid September and last day to mail in a ticket is February 1, 2006.

The winning ticket will be drawn in public on February 12, 2006

The grand prize is transferable.

International airfare is included in this prize. Airfare must be booked at least two weeks in advance and must be booked through Unlimited Fun Safaris, Inc. travel agency.

The total number of tickets sold determines the odds of winning the African Photo Safari. By the time you receive this magazine, the odds of holding the winning ticket will be approximately 1 in 300.

Based on the member's interest in conservation, the organizers of the African Safari believed most FCF member could sell at least four tickets easily.

For every ten tickets sold by you, or referred by you, a ticket will be entered in your name.

The FCF member who sells the most tickets will be awarded three nights stay at the Convention 2006 Hotel and their registration fee paid.

This is the last FCF magazine you will receive with African Safari Tickets before the deadline of February 1, 2006.

As you sell your tickets, please send payment and ticket stub by mail as soon as possible to the FCF treasurer.

Additional tickets can be downloaded from the FCF web site, or requested from the FCF secretary or vice president.

Don't miss out on this great chance to experience Africa - for as little as a \$10.00 donation to the FCF Conservation Fund

*Time is running out to purchase African safari raffle tickets!
Last day to purchase raffle tickets to win international airfare and
a six-day photo safari for two is February 1. The winning ticket
will be drawn February 12.*

*There are three lodges to choose from and all are in the heart of
Zululand, the richest cultural and wildlife regions for enjoying
game viewing, horse trails, hiking, boat cruises, bird watching,
and much more.*

Here's a description of Zulu Nyala Game Lodge: From its hill-top location Zulu Nyala Game Lodge commands endless views over game-filled plains to the Indian Ocean seaboard, providing comfort and hospitality in the heart of one of Africa's most diverse conservation regions. Accompanied by well-trained and armed rangers, guests explore the hills and plains for rhino, buffalo, cheetah, zebra, and herds of giraffe, kudu and the spiral-horned Nyala. Zulu Nyala private game reserve provides a unique and authentic taste of the African bush in the heart of South Africa's most diverse conservation regions.

*But don't take our word for it—read excerpts from internet
reviews from real travelers*

From the Trip Advisor web site.
Jul 6, 2005: From daryl

I stayed at two of the properties: Zulu Nyala Country Manor and Zulu Nyala Game Lodge. The service at the Country Manor was tremendous, the staff went out of their way to make my stay there unforgettable. I like that the staff are professional yet have a casual nature that makes one feel at home. I had dinner on the "BOMA" that night. It was fantastic dining under the African sky at night with a fire going and lanterns in the trees.

The game lodge was marvelous. Every feature of the game lodge is very African so that you never ever forget where you are. I had room overlooking the sky blue pool and being the middle of summer, it was great because I could literally jump in. The best feature for myself was the dining area. It is quite extravagant and featured Zulu dancers while we ate dinner making it more unforgettable. I rate it a 5 out of a possible 5.



From Fodor's Forums web site:

Author: Lincoln Date: 10/26/2005, 01:07 pm

We stayed in the game lodge. I also checked out the safari lodge and tents. I'd recommend the game lodge—nice rooms, beautiful views, relaxing game room, and by far the best chefs. (Each lodge has their own chef. We ate at the safari lodge one night and it paled in comparison to the game lodge.)

Our guide was Sebastian. I highly recommend him. Low key, down to earth, very accommodating. He was great at spotting animals in the distance (especially in the dark) and was willing to drive anywhere, on or off road, to get you to a good viewpoint.

The rides are great—typically one around 7:30 AM and one around 4:30 PM—each lasts around 1-1/2 hours. You'll see pretty much everything (elephants, alligators, rhinos, hippos, giraffes, nyalas) except cats -- you need to go to Hluhluwe for that. I must admit that by about the fourth day, I got a little tired of the same rides. Needed some kind of diversion. You can also request a walk instead of ride—it was a nice change of pace.

Expect to spend the whole week with the same group of 6-8 people. You'll do game rides together, eat together, and go on day trips together. If you get a good group, you're golden. If you get a bunch of people with very different expectations ("we'll see whatever we see" vs. "I need to check off every animal on my list") or different politics, it can be a bit straining.



Day trips: You'll need to go on some to keep yourself from going bonkers. Day trip to Hluhluwe was nice (although 5:00 AM drive in open jeep was freezing.) St. Lucia day trip was also nice. Horseback riding into a field of giraffes—awesome! Our best trip was to a local Zulu village with just me, my wife, and Sebastian. This was completely off the beaten track—not some touristy gimmick, but an actual walk through the village (they call it a "village" but it's really thousands of folks spread out over a mountainside.) In fact, this was not a trip offered by Zulu Nyala; we requested a chance to meet some locals, and they arranged it specifically for us. They hooked us up with a guide, a very nice young man that lives in the village who took us to the high school to meet the teachers and kids, to the local general store, and to a 78-year old woman living in a stone hut. It was fascinating, moving, and sad. After seeing thousands of animals, it was nice to actually meet some real South African people. I forget the name of the village, but it was very close to the entrance of the Hluhluwe national park. I'm sure Sebastian will remember.

Finally, if you can extend your stay, do so. We had to go home right afterwards, but most people stay in Africa to tour around. Prime destinations seem to be Cape Town, the battlefields where the Zulus-Boer-British wars were fought, or to safaris in Botswana.

*Tickets can be purchased using PayPal from the FCF web site at
www.thefcf.com. Or FCF members may log onto the members'-only
section and download ticket forms with four tickets to a page.
Remember when you sell these tickets to others, have the buyer print
your name in the "referred by" line. For every ten tickets you sell
(even to yourself) we will enter a free ticket in your name.*

African safari raffle tickets generate funds for the FCF conservation grants program. You show your support of wildcat conservation when you purchase these tickets.

A Serval to be Cherished

By Caroline Kneip

During the month of May, I noticed some unusual weight loss in my 3 1/2 year old female serval. This was especially unusual because she tended to carry a little extra weight and was a hearty eater. She had even picked up a few extra pounds during the winter. Some weight loss could be expected due to the advent of warmer weather. But it was quite noticeable, even my husband noticed.

Her name is Cherish and she was housed with another female serval named Zoey. They tolerated each other and even cuddled on cold nights. They both seemed to be cutting back on the chicken in their diet. Red meat and Zupreem were still eaten in the normal amounts. I changed the brand of chicken and that seemed to help. Then the occasional vomit began. Nothing serious, just a vomit every week or so. Cherish was always friendly and sociable but was becoming less and less so every day.

At the beginning of June, I sat her on her den box so I could examine her more closely. Since she showed the early signs of dehydration, I immediately went inside to make a vet appointment for the next morning. When I came back out, I found three piles of vomit. Concern turned into urgency. Because my attending vet's office was closed for the day, I took her to my alternate



vet. I wanted to have blood work done on her immediately. Because I didn't want to knock her down just to take some blood, I restrained her. The restraining was traumatic enough that subcutaneous injections (sub-Qs) where not attempted. The vet did manage to inject antibiotics/steroids. I was sent home with bubble gum flavor liquid antibiotics. I don't believe that any of the flavored antibiotics made it down Cherish's throat either time administration was attempted. The next morning all seemed better when she ate a couple of tablespoons of Zupreem

and no vomiting occurred. Because the liquid antibiotics were a flop, I went back the vet that day to get Clavamox in pill form. Her blood work came back normal.

I setup a 6'x 6' enclosure in my air-conditioned garage and placed her in there. I put her in there hoping that she would do better out of the heat. She got worse instead of better, though she never lost her interest in food. However, she would gag whenever she got close to the food. She continued to gag any time I attempted to encourage food or fluid. It got so bad that just the smell of the food would make her gag in a way that appeared to be related to acid reflux. It got to a point over the weekend that she would begin to gag any time she moved. Although she seemed quite sickly, she seemed quite spry and jumped three feet in the air when I attempted to sub-Q her. There was never a sign of any diarrhea. It seemed as if her Clavamox might be causing her nausea, because her nausea seemed to increase soon after the Clavamox pill was given. I changed her to Baytril just in case. My vet also prescribed Reglan to help with the nausea.

After phone support from Lynn Culver and Bobby Bean, it looked like the next step was to knock her down and get more aggressive with tests and treatment. We injected her with 1/2 cc of Valium before her ride to the vet. While waiting for the valium to take hold, she had her first bowel movement in over a week. So we had a



fresh fecal to take to the vets. Nothing was found in the fecal.

She was taken in for sub-Q fluids and another round of blood work. The blood work again came back negative. While she was under, she was given her antibiotics, Reglan, B-complex, and Pepcid. This seemed to be the easiest time to have her microchipped as well. This time, just like several other times during her illness after getting fully hydrated, she acted like a new kitty for the next 24 hours. Never question the importance of hydration! The blood work came back negative, again. She was treated for a possible ulcer. Cherish was being treated with Sulcralfate and Pacid for the ulcer, while also taking Valium for pain and an appetite stimulant. While showing signs of being very hungry, she would not eat without the Valium. After a few weeks, she seemed to have improved so much, that we stopped the Valium. She quickly reverted back to vomiting for the following three days. Her vomits were so violent that she would lose bladder control. As soon as we put her back on Valium, she improved. The odd thing is that Cherish has good mornings, but bad evenings. It is as if she heals somewhat through the night, but continues to get more uncomfortable with eating and moving around. Now our concerns were being on Valium too long. Not to be confused with myself being on Valium, but boy could I have used it. I continued the Sulcralfate and Pepcid, while weaning her off of Valium and onto Cyproheptadine (appetite stimulant.) By this time I had switched from pill form Valium to transdermal gel Diazepam. I was already giving her enough pills for the day, so having an alternative of just being able to rub it into her ear was a nice alternative. I had the Cyproheptadine also made up in gel form as well. The funny thing is, Cherish and I became a perfect team at popping pills down her. Though pilling a gagging and vomiting serval is no easy task, it soon became the easiest part of treatment. I always knew that if I needed a positive reinforcement for Cherish, it would be grass. This was the only thing that would get her immediate attention. She quickly learned that she would get a little grass after swallowing her pills. The grass helped in a few of ways. It would help with a swallow-

ing behavior instead of a gag or vomit response. It would help get something in her when nothing else would. It would also put a better taste in her mouth I am sure. And it definitely lifted her spirit. My one concern was how grass stimulates regurgitation, so I stayed with very small amounts and was successful on that front. Well, after all of this she seemed to have improved about 90%, but things were still not right. With or without drugs she still had an occasional vomit once or twice a week and no weight gain even though she was eating a lot: a can or two of salmon or tuna, raw chicken, talapia, Zupreem, KMR, goat's milk, etc.

She was taken to Texas A&M on the referral of my vet. A few days prior to her appointment, she vomited half a dozen times so violently that she had no bladder control. Once at Texas A&M, they performed every test they could: urinalysis, endoscopy, biopsy, x-rays, ultrasound, and of course more blood work. We had a five-hour trip home and she did great after vomiting once due to coming off the anesthesia. When we got her home, we could not get the food to her quick enough because she was starving. She ate great for a week and did not vomit until the seventh day. All test

**Now our concerns were
being on Valium too long. Not
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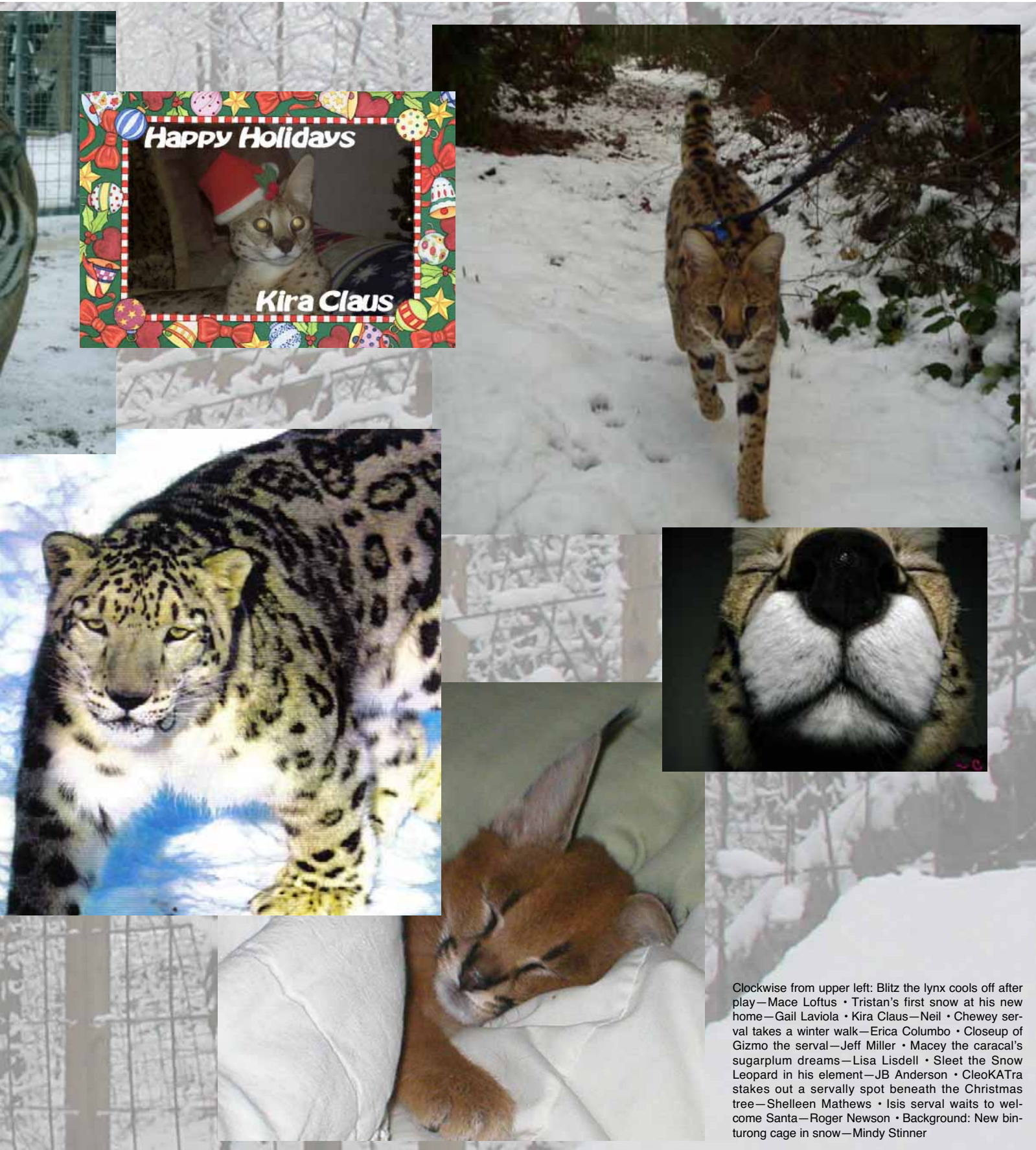
results from Texas A&M came back non-conclusive. The only thing that came up was a thickening of the stomach wall and very low cobalamin. This just meant her inflamed stomach was not able to absorb the B vitamins. The only logical treatment seemed to be for IBD (Inflammatory Bowel Disease). She was already back to vomiting before treatment began so it looked like anything would help at this point. Now I am back to giving several pills a day. No animal should ever have to go through all of this, but she has the most loving spirit about her. If she is willing to fight this hard,

then so am I. Each day that I medicated her with her new prescription, she got sicker. With phone support from the vets, we cut her back on the meds. Now the vomiting was up to six times a day. So the vets agreed to pull her off all meds. Even after stopping the meds, she still vomited and had urine shooting out the other end. You could tell she was hungry, because she would try to eat, but immediately vomit. Sometimes I could help hold her head just right and she would burp instead of vomit. Poor girl! As weak as she got, she did not want to let me give her sub-Qs. She would only tolerate her B-12 injections that Texas A&M sent me, probably, because it was only once a week. Now back to my vet for fluids. We hated to knock her down again for this, but this is the worst she has been since I had been keeping daily, detailed records of her for the last four months. She got 420cc of fluids plus injectable meds. The vets and I decided to let her system rest. No food and no pills for a few days, just Reglan and Pepcid injections. She didn't like being stuck every twelve hours, but we got through it.

Because this has gone on too long, it was time to be more aggressive with treatment. I took her into the vet to insert an IV catheter and put her on an IV drip all day. She also came home at night. The vet knew that Cherish is extremely trusting with me, so he suggested I place the mask over her and we just administer gas. What a relief that she did not have to get knocked down again just to insert the IV catheter! My sweet serval did just great. All administered medications were given through the IV along with some glucose so we didn't need to worry about feeding her. After the third day of this, she actually began to purr again. Since then, we have slowly introduced more and more solid food and she has been keeping it down. She was 30 days vomit free and drug free, which is a huge record! She has since only vomited twice, but nothing like before and continues to have an excellent appetite.

At this point, I still do not know exactly what was wrong with Cherish. Since Cherish is still in her recovery phase, this story is to be continued...





Clockwise from upper left: Blitz the lynx cools off after play—Mace Loftus • Tristan's first snow at his new home—Gail Laviola • Kira Claus—Neil • Chewey serval takes a winter walk—Erica Columbo • Closeup of Gizmo the serval—Jeff Miller • Macey the caracal's sugarplum dreams—Lisa Lisdell • Sleet the Snow Leopard in his element—JB Anderson • CleoKATra stakes out a servally spot beneath the Christmas tree—Shelleen Mathews • Isis serval waits to welcome Santa—Roger Newson • Background: New bin-turong cage in snow—Mindy Stinner

Tristan's Tale

Lynn Culver

The project started nearly a year ago. An FCF member and acquaintance asked me if she could hire me to locate a property in my county suitable for her and her tiger and then hire my husband to design and build the feline enclosure. Gail lived in Florida and the four hurricanes of 2004 and the rising cost of living and a desire to just simplify her life led her to the decision that she wanted to move to Arkansas.

I love where I live—the climate, the low cost of living, the beauty of the land, and the lack of exotic animal ordinances. People don't bother us and we have raised cougars and the smaller exotic cats for 20 years. There is also another facility in our county that started a few years ago, housing cougars and small cats. We have good neighbor relations and receive many calls from local farmers offering us their downed livestock to feed our cats.

But I know that tigers are viewed differently by a lot of people—they are so big, their markings so striking, their voices can be either friendly chuffing or deep guttural growls—they bring out great fascination as well as great fear. Bart had reservations about helping a tiger move into our quiet world, realizing it might rock our boat and leave us struggling for our own existence in a tidal wave of public outrage.

And so I had to consider many things before I committed to this project. I agreed with my husband on the possible risks to our profession, but I also believed strongly that the tiger had just as much right to live here as I. And if I was going to help close-minded people enforce prejudice against this most incredible of God's creations, then I was helping the enemy. So in the end we agreed to take on the project.

Where do you put a tiger? Well, certainly not in town, and our starting point was to contact real estate agents and look for some acreage with privacy, level wooded land and a decent house. Last December I began viewing property and rejected them all for various reasons: neighbors too close, house not situated correctly, or no privacy for the tiger compound were the usual reasons. In late January one place with great promise was lost when another buyer slipped in and made a full price offer just an hour before

Gail's agent got her offer to the owners.

Meanwhile, Tracy Wilson and I were well aware that the Arkansas legislature was scheduled to go into session in January and would be addressing the exotic animal issue again and so we spent time with the Arkansas Game and Fish Department in an attempt to convince them to regulate large cats and preempt any state legislative ban bills. January 2005 Tracy spoke to the G & F commissioners and then we visited the capitol that afternoon to speak with Representative Prichard about our work with G & F. In February we attended the monthly G & F Captive Wildlife Committee meeting to

son's bill, FCF representatives made up for lost time. Senator Jackson called my house the day before the bill was to be heard by Community Affairs Committee to negotiate amendments. He agreed to include several exemptions that had been suggested by the G & F Commission, namely, USDA Class C exhibitors and G & F permitted Breeder/Dealers. While this was not a perfect answer, it at least left a window of opportunity open. This amended version eventually passed both houses and was signed by the governor in April.

This month-long legislative battle was a snag in the plan, but not the end of hope.



Gail Lavioia

make our presentation and we invited Representative Prichard to listen in.

We thought we had our bases covered as we had Prichard's word he would not introduce a ban bill if G & F took on regulations, however what we didn't know was that Prichard's very good friend, Senator Jackson, had introduced a bill that banned lions, tigers, and bears (oh my) and it was heard in senate committee and passed before we even got word of it. After four months of property hunting, it appeared the state of Arkansas was about to pass a law that would close the entire state for tigers.

While the house was considering Jack-

Gail was USDA licensed and therefore could still enter Arkansas. I continued looking for property. Another suitable site was located. A beautiful 11 acres of woods could be made to work, though it did have some neighbors in view including a Mena attorney. Gail and I felt it prudent to speak to the attorney before putting earnest money down. When I met with him about Gail and Tristan his response was to ring his hands and look nervously over at his cattle, stating his bull was worth \$30,000. He asked that I give him a couple of days to think about it. A few days later I stopped by his office in town and he told me he would not try to

stop Gail. Then he indicated he wished Gail to sell him the back 5 acres to use as additional land for his calving operation. Gail and I did not feel comfortable knowing this man wanted her land. That, combined with a couple of other reasons led Gail to pass on this place.

Several more months passed with no new real estate listings that fit our requirements. We were taking second looks at properties we had rejected earlier, when a call to a new realtor on a property advertised in the local paper led her to tell me about another place she thought was perfect. Total privacy, couldn't see the property from the public road, near town, but in the country. Joan, the realtor, took me there the next day and immediately I knew this was it—a neat little house and four acres of land, divided into two acres cleared to park-like effect and fenced for a horse, and two acres left naturally wooded. No neighbors in sight, in fact the adjoining two properties were weekend-use cabins. While the horse fencing would have to be dismantled and the fence lines needed to be chain sawed and cleared a bit more, for the most part, site prep for a tiger compound would be minimal.

It was a smaller amount of acreage than I had envisioned for Gail, but it had all the qualities I had been searching for. I shot lots of photos and e-mailed them to Gail to see if she agreed with my assessment. She did, and just 30 days later in August, it was her place. By the middle of September the for-

mer owners were moved out. Bart had already begun dismantling the horse's barbed wire fence and cut down a number of trees to widen the fire and windbreaks required around the perimeter fence.

I arranged a meeting with the local G &

one afternoon and I showed him building materials on our property as examples of what Bart would use and he approved everything. We then showed him the plat map showing the location of the property. He knew where it was because he had at



F officer to discuss the construction materials and facility design and get everything pre-approved. While Gail would be importing Tristan to Arkansas on her USDA license, the long-term plan was to be licensed as a breeder/dealer, required by G & F if one intended to provide sanctuary and be available as a G & F placement option.

The new G & F regulations were based upon the FCF model for state regulations and I was on the committee that wrote those suggested regulations, so I was very familiar with them. Officer Abernathy visited

one time desired to purchase the adjoining property, but a friend of his bought it instead. Officer Abernathy asked that I contact his friend, Terry Lunsford, a law enforcement officer for the Forest Service and "give him a heads up" on what we were doing.

Not wanting to go against any request from the G & F I did as asked and called Mr. Lunsford. He seemed to take the news ok, and I invited him over to our place and assured him the USDA facility would be built well above standards and safety would be assured. However four days later his attitude had taken a turn for the worst and he called me up quite hostile, stating that he had done a lot of research and contacted the G & F Commission, the state Attorney General, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the county sheriff and while Gail was welcome to move to her property, her tiger was not. Then he called Gail and delivered the same hysterical message.

This man was a classic example of irrational fear. Even though he was an employee of the USDA Forest Service, he had no faith in USDA APHIS, the regulatory agency in control, to do its job and insure public safety. And Mr. Lunsford had absolutely no respect for the assessment of his friend, the Arkansas G & F officer that had approved the location and construction materials of the tiger's cage.

What a mess. She had sold her home in Florida to buy this place. Over \$5,000 in



Tristan's Tale continued

steel panels had been purchased. And this guy did not even live next to her—he lived on another property—but he felt he had the right to control how Gail used her property. While his response was quite troubling, we had no real choice but to proceed and face this new obstacle head on.

And so I visited the county clerk of the court and asked to be told of any animal ordinances that might be put on the monthly agenda. And even though nothing was officially on the agenda, I attended the September meeting and sure enough, so did Mr. Lunsford. He was introduced at the end of the meeting. He waved a petition with what he claimed were over 100 signatures to stop the importation of a Bengal tiger into the community. He expressed his concern for the safety of his grandchildren, for the possible loss of property values. The cat was definitely out of the bag. But then I stood up to address the JPs and I summarized the new state law and the new G & F regulations and how in both instances, Gail was an exempted entity. I explained the new federal Captive Wildlife Safety Act and how it restricted interstate transport to

licensed professionals only. And I explained that Gail was not a pet owner, but a professional educator with many years of husbandry experience. I assured them that she would be regulated by the federal government's USDA inspectors and would also be abiding by the Arkansas G & F caging and contingency regulations.

The request to create a county ordinance to target one person was not popular with the JPs. They ended the meeting with a decision to turn the matter over to the county prosecutor, who was not present that evening, for his legal opinion on the matter. As I left the court room that evening one of the JPs spoke to me and told me I had friends on the quorum court and that this was still America and he felt that Gail had a right to keep her tiger.

I wrote letters to every JP and included a copy of the FCF magazine to better help them understand the need for private-sector education and conservation. I visited with JPs and was assured by several that Polk County is not in the habit of passing ordinances and in fact, I was told "this is why people move to Polk County, to enjoy the

freedom to do what they please on their own property."

At the next month's meeting the prosecutor explained the new state laws and G & F regulations, much as I had the month previously, and then he passed around copies of these laws to the JPs and then also presented for their consideration a possible ordinance that basically said the exact same thing as the new state law and would accomplish nothing new. Existing tigers in Polk County would be allowed, new tigers forbidden, except for state-exempted tiger owners, of which Gail was one. Once again the JPs asked questions and expressed concerns over the obviously selective nature of this proposed ordinance. The meeting ended by passing a motion to table the issue until next month on the grounds that three justices of the peace were not present.

Progress on the cage had been slow at first. September was a very hot month and western Arkansas had been experiencing a major draught all summer. The day the tractor arrived to dig 130 postholes, it was 100 degrees and I thought I would have heat stroke as I assisted in the project. The



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ground was so hard and dry the tractor drilled many of the exercise area holes to a depth of only 8 inches deep. Fortunately, the perimeter fence and cage holes fared better, but even then, when Bart returned from his trip to Ecuador, he had to rent a hydraulic posthole digger and deepen all the cage holes.

The cage is divided into two parts: one side is 1,000 sq feet and the other 320 sq feet. The 8-foot tall perimeter fence encloses 15,000 square feet and eventually a 7,000 sq foot exercise area will be fenced 12 feet tall for Tristan.

Construction on the compound began in late September. Our friend Brad was hired to set the 70 perimeter fence posts and Bart set thirty 4 x 6 inch cage posts in concrete. Then Bart directed his attention to welding the gates. Seven gates, including two for the drive-thru entrance to the perimeter fence that were 8 feet by 8 feet, and five other walk-thru gates were needed. There are so many steps to welding, the chop sawing of the steel, grinding off the galvanizing, welding, more grinding, cutting the panels to fit, grinding, welding, grinding, and then painting over all the welds, over and over, for each gate. It took many days to accomplish.

Finally the big day came when all seven gates were transported over to Gail's property and hung in place. So impressively strong, the silver galvanized metal shined under the intense sun that it lit up the azure blue sky and caused the trees to glow with brilliant fall colors. Certainly the rest of this cage building project would go quicker I thought.

I never realized about how many hours this project would take, or how much money it would cost, or how many trips to the hardware and building supply store I would make. Bart took the assignment very seriously and the added pressure of knowing that some in this community were concerned about safety and the possibility of ice storms or high winds causing trees to crush the cage and let Tristan escape led him to design everything with exceptional strength.

The cage has a built-in tornado shelter, since it is one of the weather hazards possible in Arkansas. The chances of a direct hit

are remote, but high winds and falling trees are something that every big cat compound in the Midwest needs to have contingency plans for. In Tristan's case, we have a 4-foot high, by 4-foot wide, by 8-foot long

portable walking into it. And above this enclosure is a framed wooden top that serves as a loafing platform and on both sides of this structure is a pair of 3/4 inch plywood walls that can be slid open or



pass-thru that connects the two sides of his cage. It is a complete 6-gauge wire panel box that has two massive steel slide gates at either end. Since it has to be used constantly by Tristan to access both sides of the cage, he should become completely com-

closed. In the event of severe weather, Tristan can be locked down and the walls slid closed to provide additional wind protection. Above this structure is a welded cattle panel roof and above that a sheet metal roof and holding everything up is a custom-

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Tristan's Tale continued

welded steel truss that is rated for over 6,000 pounds. Major tree limbs, or even whole trees can fall upon the cage, and the roof will hold them. If damage occurs, Tristan can be safely confined inside his tornado shelter until repairs can be made to his enclosure. And should Tristan need veterinary care, the enclosure will also be useful for examination or administering medication by injection.

Gail's arrival date was set for November 18. We had two weeks to finish construction and it developed into a seven day a week project. We hired our friend Brad again and he and I stretched the eight foot field fence to the perimeter fence posts while Bart labored to raise the steel roof beams and rafters for the cage. Once we were done with the perimeter fence, Brad joined us to finish construction of the cage. The week of Gail's arrival was stressful. We needed every available minute to work and the weather had to cooperate. A period of rain could ruin everything. I had trouble sleeping nights; the project was constantly on my mind. Each day we set goals to accomplish in order to meet the deadline. It was a tremendous amount of work, and when Ray Thunderhawk's 16-foot box truck arrived, Bart was still on the top of the cage, still screwing the sheet metal roofing into the steel rafters.

Ray had three assistants with him and they rolled Tristan's cage down the ramp and up to the entrance of his new home. Tristan was pacing back and forth; clearly he anticipated what was about to happen. Finally the gate to the travel cage was slid open and Tristan suddenly stopped pacing and went to the back of his cage, laid down and looked out, deliberating his next move. Gail called to him to coax him out, and then Tristan stood up and calmly walked through the door into his new home in Arkansas. It was very uneventful, as any well-planned transfer should be. The cage was slid away, the enclosure door closed and padlocked shut and we all breathed a sigh of relief. Eleven months of preparation and hard work had reached fruition with the safe arrival of this incredible cat.

Gail finally got her first walk-thru of her new home and property. I hoped that Gail would be satisfied, I had sent her many photos and personally I loved her place. It

is a very beautiful setting, with big pine and oak and sweet gum trees in the yard area and a two acre mixed pine and hardwood forest beside. The best part is that there is not another house in sight, it's very quiet, and yet only four miles to the Super Wal-Mart and with the rising price of gas, that is a plus. Gail seemed pleased with everything and went about making her house into a home.

Only one hurdle was left to jump: the November Quorum Court hearing. The following Tuesday Gail and her friend Carl and the realtor Joan and I attended. An "Emergency Ordinance to Prohibit Certain Carnivorous Animals in Polk County" was the first agenda item. Being declared an



emergency meant it could be read three times and passed all on the same evening. I wasn't worried, since it exempted Gail, however, it bothered me greatly that the county might set a precedent that could easily be amended to add other exotic animals in the future.

I wasn't alone in that thought, as one JP voiced a similar concern that they could be facing requests to prohibit additional animals monthly if this passed. And another JP wanted to know if passing this ordinance would open the county up to a lawsuit since the tiger owner had obviously invested considerable funds to move here. But the major issue was still, "If they passed this ordinance would it stop the tiger from entering Polk County?" And the answer given by the prosecutor was evasive—not a clear yes or no. I can't really summarize it. He noted that there were

exemptions to the ordinance.

Then a JP waved a copy of the recent issue of Parade magazine, supplement to the Sunday newspaper, containing an article titled "Danger in your Neighbor's Back Yard" illustrated with a photo of Kenny Hetrick feeding two young tigers. Kenny is a long-time friend of mine, whose whole life is a testimony to his dedication to his animals. His photo illustrated the bond of trust he has with his great cats, but it was used to sell hysteria in that Sunday paper. The JP stated he was originally against this ordinance, but after reading the article in Parade, he for it. Fortunately other JPs didn't base their decisions upon what one JP referred to as an "entertainment maga-

zine."

The JP who pushed for this ordinance stated that people did not want a "flesh eating carnivore" living in their neighborhood. Such a colorful description of Tristan. Only problem was, he ate the same flesh as all of us—cows and chickens, and it would be purchased at the same flesh-peddling store that we all shopped at—Super Wal-Mart. And I hoped that the JPs would make the connection that most of Polk County's economy was based upon the rearing of flesh for all the flesh eating humans to eat.

Finally I was given the opportunity to speak on Tristan and Gail's behalf. First thing I pointed out was that the ordinance definitely exempted Gail and Tristan. Then I explained, "There is no emergency. The tiger is already in Polk County and the quorum court can slow down and think before they act."

Then it was time for the JPs to vote. A JP who was friendly to us, and friendly to freedom, proposed an amendment to the ordinance, adding several other species: constrictors, alligators and pit bulls. Not that there were any reptile problems in Polk County, but certainly the addition of a common dog species would drive the underlying issue home hard. It was designed to show everyone what a can of worms this ordinance was, show them just how quickly it can evolve from targeting one lady and her tiger, to your neighbor's dog and maybe even next it could be banning your pet!

The maneuver appeared to me to be pre-planned and the amendment was quickly seconded and then passed by a vote of 7 to 3. Next they voted on the newly amended ordinance. One by one the JPs voted "no", until it came to the JP that sponsored the original ordinance, who asked, "What are we voting on? This includes pit bulls right?" And then she paused, wondering if

any in her district would be affected by the inclusion of the dog species, and declared, "I will abstain." The final count was 10 no votes and one abstention. The ordinance failed.

The room was basically empty. For all the supposed opposition, there was only one other citizen present to witness this event, and it wasn't Mr. Lunsford. When the meeting was adjourned, a reporter from the Fort Smith Times Record walked over to us for an interview.

I said, "I haven't seen you here before, since when does the Times Record cover little Polk County's monthly quorum court meeting?"

He answered, "I'm new on this route, and this is my first time here."

And then I said, "You figure the tiger is going to sell some papers?"

And he answered, "I sure hope so."

And the next day, we made the front page of the paper with the headline, "JPs Grab Tiger Ban By Tail."

Just like the old Grateful Dead refrain, "What a looong, strange trip it's been." Tristan's tale was reaching a conclusion.

Gail's two neighbors met with her the next day and Mr. Lunsford conceded she had won fair and square and she had legally brought the tiger into the community. He promised he would not cause her any trouble.

The local G & F officers made an unannounced visit the following day to examine her fencing, cage and contingency plans and found them to be without fault.

And the following week two USDA inspectors arrived and there were no "non-compliant items" identified.

Ray Thunderhawk had commented that is was the strongest tiger cage he'd ever seen, and both USDA inspectors expressed the same opinion, adding, "They wished all cages were this well-built."

As they say on the Denny's breakfast menu, it was a perfect "grand slam."

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Lakota's New Digs

By Nancy Nighswander

Like all of us, Bud and Peg Grohe are animal lovers. And, just like all of us, their hearts melt when they see a sick or injured animal. That's why, on April 2004 when they saw a sickly little eight week old cougar at the exotic animal auction, they knew they had to do something to help him. So began the journey of their life with Lakota and this story is about that journey and how Lakota got his new digs.

Lakota. For the next 30 days, Lakota was in quarantine/ICU to the tune of \$500 per day. He received two pints of oxyglobin and had around the clock care. Day by day he became stronger and stronger until the day came when Bud and Peg got the words they had been waiting to hear. Lakota could go home for the first time in a month on the condition that the Grohe's kept him in quarantine for another four months. During that time Lakota was fed and pampered by the

he knew that he needed to be educated on the proper diet and discipline for his growing cougar. He developed a friendship with FCF member Phyllis Parks. Bud and Phyllis wrote back and forth to each other frequently and Phyllis helped Bud and Peg with any problems that arose during Lakota's terrible twos.

In May of 2005, tragedy struck the Grohe family. Bud had a heart attack and needed surgery. The duties of caring for Lakota were now on Peg's shoulders and she handled the task very well. But Lakota was becoming a real handful for Peg to manage on her own. He was over a year old now and Bud and Peg knew it was just a matter of time before Lakota would have to be moved to an outside enclosure. They kept putting off the inevitable until it was clear to them that the time had come. At the same time, Bud had some trouble with one of his neighbors not wanting him to keep Lakota. Bud was feeling pretty defeated by all of this so he asked Phyllis to see if she could find a new home for Lakota. Phyllis made a post on the FCF list that there was somebody in Ohio who needed help. When I realized that Bud and Peg only lived about an hour from me I decided to contact them to see if we could help them build a new outside enclosure so they could keep Lakota. I called FCF conservation/education director Carol Bohning to ask her to talk to Bud about what kind of enclosure he needed. Then I called legal director Evelyn Shaw to see if there was anything Bud could do to build a better relationship with his neighbor.

After all the plans were in place and a workday was set up, my husband Beau and I arrived at Bud and Peg's with our tools and an eager attitude. Bud already had all the 4x4 posts set in concrete when we got there so we spent the morning planning out what we were going to build. I modeled the enclosure after my macaque enclosure. Macaques are very destructive and strong so I figured anything that could keep a macaque safe would be able to keep a cougar safe. We made a trip to the local supply and lumber stores for our building supplies. With the help of some of Bud and Peg's family members and friends, we started the construction of Lakota's new digs.



The day after Bud and Peg brought Lakota home from the auction, they took him to see their vet. Lakota tested positive for Panleukopenia and they were told that if they decided to try to save him, he had a 50/50 chance of survival. Their vet also said that the treatment would be expensive. Bud and Peg talked it over and decided that fate brought them all together and that they needed to do whatever it took to save him. Their vet contacted the vet at the Cleveland Zoo for information on how to treat little

Grohe's. He was thriving from living and sleeping with his "family" and soon he became a normal, rambunctious cougar child. The bond between Lakota and Bud and Peg was extra strong due to the care and love required to get him through his illness and on his way to a happy and healthy life.

When Lakota was about three months old, Bud made a post on the FCF news-group that he needed help in raising Lakota. Bud had never raised a cougar before and

We used 6 gauge wire panels with 4x4 mesh and stapled the wire on the inside of the treated 4x4 wooden frame.

There is a covered awning for shade in the summer. The outside enclosure is hooked to a small barn for inside access with a guillotine door and a double door entry on the inside. There is a feeding station in one area of the inside enclosure and a safety door for cleaning. Future plans include expanding the outside enclosure to give Lakota more room to run and building a perimeter fence around the whole area.

We had a blast working together and Beau and I met some really great people. I got to actually touch my very first cougar too. Lakota is beautiful and Beau and I are so proud to be a part of his future. Next spring, when Bud and Peg add onto Lakota's enclosure, Beau and I will be there to help with that also. I think it is important for all exotic owners to take the time to help each other when there is the need. It is amazing how much fun it can be and what great people you have the chance to meet in the process. The best part of this whole thing is that Lakota gets to stay with the family that loves him and where he feels secure.

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FCF welcomes Carlyne Clendinen as Membership Services Director

Donna Verba was elected last year to serve a two-year term as FCF Membership Services Director starting Jan. 1, 2005. Donna was doing a good job as Membership Services Director, but resigned due to personal reasons. The FCF Board asked the FCF membership for volunteers to submit applications to the FCF Board to fill out Donna's remaining term that ends Dec. 31, 2006. The Board had three excellent FCF members submit their names for consideration for the open position.

They were: Debi Willoughby from Massachusetts, Carlyne Clendinen from Florida, and John Chuha from Ohio. The Board held a Special Board Meeting to vote on which one of the three to fill the position. It was a close vote with no one candidate getting the majority vote, so the Board had a run-off vote between the two top vote getters which were Carlyne and Debi. The Board elected Carlyne to fill the remaining term of the Membership Services Director position. Carlyne's term started 12-10-05. Congratulations goes out to Carlyne and special thanks to Debi and John for running for the position.

Bob Turner, FCF President



In search of the perfect cage

By Mindy Stinner

We have spent a great deal of time experimenting with cage construction materials and methodologies in the past few years. We wanted a secure but roomy space, with plenty of enrichment and a cozy den for a cheap price.

Right.

We began with standard chain link construction. We were moving to a new location, so we agreed to try temporary cages in the form of chain link panels for some of our small cats. We used purchased panels and donated gates to make these cages. With a lot of added ties on the top and bottom, and by adding a secure roof, we had a cage that could hold pretty much any small cat we had. But it was very small.

We had inherited a nifty dome cage that looked great on display, but it was made from untreated wood and was already showing wear. However, for the amount of materials used, we should have gotten much more floor space. And there is no way to lock a cage when any side can be a door.



So we moved on to chain link panels we made ourselves. After discovering that thin-walled rail pipe does not weld well (at least by non-experts like ourselves), we settled for bolting them together. It was nice to be able to determine a size we wanted, but with all the supports and hardware, it was still an expensive option. And we were limited to six or eight foot height, based on fence size. My partner, Doug, hates it when his hair catches on the ceilings of the cages. And since some of our sanctuary animals are not thrilled with company, it seemed unwise to make many spaces where we could be caught hanging by our hair or clothing from the ceiling by an angry bob-

cat or caracal.

We built a lovely chain link cage that was sponsored by a family who placed their serval with us. It has 12 foot tall ceilings, platforms, landscaping (much nicer than my yard), and really nice insulated den boxes. This was more like it, but it was a lot of work by many people. Much of the upper space is wasted still because we haven't put in enough enrichment up high for them to make use of it. Perhaps if they were primates they might enjoy it more...



We had seen the Big Cat Rescue (formerly Wildlife on Easy Street) cage design online, and one of our volunteers went down to take a look at them in person. He returned very enthusiastic, and we launched the building of a cage with Barker panels. These are thick (6 gauge) wire panels welded into 6 foot by 20 foot sheets with either 4 inch square, 6 by 4 inch rectangle or 2 by 4 inch rectangle openings. We chose 4 inch squares to save money and still adequately contain our animals. We followed their posted plan and made a cool bean-shaped cage with built-in safety and shift.



We had a couple of setbacks. First, our land is not flat. Not even close. So, there was a lot of prep-work on the land required. Second, the doors concerned me. The design called for a flat piece of panel to

overlap on all sides of a doorway. It was attached on one side by hog rings or other small clamps. Then it was clipped closed. As long as it laid perfectly flush, and the door had no warp. It seemed OK. Yet we were able to pull at it and create openings that made me nervous. Most small cats—no problem. A really mean small bobcat or upset male serval—maybe a problem. We soothed my angst by adding more clips at the top and bottom of the door, just in case. The Barker panels are definitely easier to work with than chain link, though they pack a mean backlash if you don't pay attention when moving them (as the scar on my brother's chin can attest). Also, no poles were used to make the cage, which saved us a considerable sum.

Bart Culver had discussed with us years ago his idea for a panel arch cage, sort of longhouse style. It seemed the best use of panels in order to give plenty of floor space, but we had not used the plan because we like to be able to stand up all the way to the edges of our cages. So we adapted it. Instead of using a single panel to make an arch, we added an extra half-panel to the length, so we could go higher and wider. We lost some stability by doing this, so we used enrichment in the center of the cage to stabilize it. It lacks the perfectly clean line of a flat-roofed cage, but the usable space inside is excellent, and we could stand up all the way to the edges of the cage. These have been our fastest cages assembled to date for the smaller animals on site. We continued the use of the flat panel door, with extra clips. This would be my only criticism of the cage: the door is hard to open quickly. Anyone who has worked with sanctuary animals knows this can be a serious consideration. However, there is no reason we cannot replace this door with a more traditional one. This is now our favorite design, relatively low cost, with a high



space return and enrichment built in.

We also had some much smaller animals to house here. Our genets (a small spotted Viverrid that looks like a ferret on steroids) need room to run and play, but they are so little that panels and chain link would not contain them. We decided to use hardware cloth, which is a welded metal weave with very small openings, in this case only half-inch. It comes in shorter heights, and is difficult to attach to uprights with anything other than staples. Any small hole would mean escape. We decided a wood frame was our best option, and we built a structure that would let us run two lengths of the wire, one above the other. We ensured the staples would not fail by overlaying a second piece of wood, sandwiching the edges of the fencing between. I think this design would suit a very small cat such as a Geoffroy's or leopard cat fairly well.



We engaged in this same process for our larger animals, the lions and tigers. We began with standard chain link and explored options in overhang hardware, drop doors, and den boxes. Our first cage had modified muffler pipes (powder-coated for longevity) as overhang supporters. We poured a concrete pad as the base for the shift cage. A volunteer hired an engineer to design a very nice, very expensive and innovative drop door. We designed a feeding slot to deliver food with no risk to people and no need to shift the animals. There were several problems with this cage. First, it was very expensive for the space. The cage materials alone ran \$8000, not counting the den box. Second, the lovely drop door operated on a pin and spring system that was counterintuitive (so every new operator had to have specific lessons) and that did not work in icy weather. Last, the feeding slot was again

beautiful, but too expensive for us to justify reproducing.



So we adapted. We built several cages with Barker panels of various sizes. We went up at least twelve feet, and we used poles to support the roofless cages. We experimented with concreting the poles, concreting in a steel sleeve to hold replaceable poles, and finally ended up buying equipment to pound poles in for us. The equipment was expensive, and it takes real strength to operate (try standing up a 15 foot tall pole held plumb with a 200-lb weight on it), but it works very well.



The panel design is now our favorite for open-topped cages. It goes up quickly, is very secure, and looks really nice. One of our Barker panel cages that gave us almost twice the floor space of the \$8000 chain link cage cost us just under \$3000 to erect. We went with an oval design, avoiding having 90 degree corners since the panels are stiff and could potentially support a climbing cat if they had a good corner to brace in.

For this same reason, we used metal support poles instead of wood, knowing that the weight of a tiger attempting to climb the panel could pull u-nails loose and potentially break a wooden post more easily than a steel one. We were able to save a bit by alternating the height of the poles, since even our tigers did not truly have leverage above 8 feet. So, we alternated full height poles with 8.5 foot poles, and we found that there was little sag and no compromise in strength.



We also upgraded from hog rings, which eventually rust and fail, to large U-bolts. While these may also rust over time, they will rust into a solid piece and not disintegrate like a hog ring. This may buy you a little more time to spot the problem and replace the bolt.



We also explored different ways of anchoring the bottoms of the panels, just in case we had a very ornery cat come in. We tried bending rebar into a U and concreting it hooked over the bottom of the fence. It worked, but look awful and was a pain to weed whack over. We pounded in smaller

In search of the perfect cage continued

poles and hooked brace bands to it. In the end, we determined that in most cases the panel itself plus a little ground level reinforcement is sufficient to hold it to the ground, assuming your support poles are about ten feet apart. There may be some small play in the panel that allows it to move in and out a bit, but it will not simply lift up as chain link can. The larger the openings in the fence, the more risk of an animal bending it. Our two by four opening wire panels have withstood a lion protecting his females in heat for a few years now, and are none the worse for wear.



While we prefer the space provided by open-topped cages, they do come with some risk that must be controlled. First, only limited species can be housed in this design reliably. Second, all such cages should have a secure, roofed lockdown space, just in case. We have several cages with trees within, and we watch them carefully for signs of disease or damage. One leaning tree can become a ramp for a determined cat. So, be sure to assess the risks carefully and know your cats before you decide to go with a design like this. It can be difficult to provide adequate shade in such an enclosure, so enrichment that can provide it is important. However, platforms (including dens) that give a cat height access should obviously not be built anywhere near the wall of an unroofed cage.

We experimented with panel cage arch designs under the guidance of another person for our quarantine cages. We wanted the panels' strength for holding whatever came in, and we wanted the cages to be roofed, and as roomy as we could afford.

We found the high roof tended to list to the downhill side, and had to make reinforcer bars to help keep its shape. The walls were strong, but knowing they would be holding adult large cats who would rub on the walls repeatedly encouraged us to put extra horizontal supports on them. We were not thrilled with the end product, though it is sound and roofed. We thought we could modify the cage design to make better floor space with fewer materials, while still hav-



ing an arched roof.

On a recent trip to the Exotic Feline Rescue Center, we found they had discovered the right balance of height, strength, and ease of construction we had been seeking in our roofed panel cages. They supported an outside wall with heavy timbers, then created a self-supporting low arch roof most folks can walk on. It made excellent use of all the materials and gave the most floor



space possible.

Back home, we needed a new drop door design, and we experimented with several.

Some were very heavy, making them hard to lift and very quick to drop. I hated having a guillotine suspended open above my animals, even with a tailstop in place. These doors' tracks often needed maintenance, and the doors could not be interchanged easily the way we were making them. The real breakthrough for us came when we determined to make them roll doors, not drop doors. With the help of a determined and creative volunteer we call "Mr. Wizard," we got our door system. Tony Teague modified some rollers and unistrut to make a simple track that would not be exposed to weather and debris. The doors, though made from schedule 40 galvanized pipe and heavy duty fencing materials, are so light in their tracks we can slide them with a finger. The mounted track system operated kind of like a rolling barn door, with security posts keeping them from swinging and pins to keep them from sliding too far. Eureka!

We also wanted to modify the feeding slot so it was less expensive, easily maintained, and posing no risk of animal escape or human injury. Our prototype had been made of chain link fence years ago. The newer, expensive model was made from stiff sheet metal. For the modified version, we split the difference and began using sections of Barker panel. We located a corner of a cage (in a roofed section) and simply attached a piece of panel diagonally across the corner. We kept the bottom of this piece about sixteen inches off the ground. A couple of feet higher, we cut an opening in the fence large enough to put in food. The cats wait at the bottom opening for the food, as they cannot reach through the panels to get at the opening, and cannot maneuver up the chute. I would not rely on this design for leopards or more flexible cats, but it works very well with adult lions and tigers.

We have made a few discoveries by trial and error that we share with anyone who



cats mentally active and alert. Give them enrichment that suits their needs and temperaments. Remember to build to suit the final size of your cats!

If possible, think multi-purpose. We have several beautiful den boxes on-site that could have served a secondary purpose of providing a platform, but the roof was angled too steeply for multiple cats to use it at once. (A peaked roof also asks to be eaten).

There have been many wonderful articles about enrichment in this magazine. Take some time to peruse back issues for new ideas.

will listen. We had noticed long ago that it was easy for any large cat to rotate a U-shaped door latch, no matter how tightly we bolted it. So, we compensated by inserting a metal self-tapping screw with a thick radius into the latch base to keep it from rotating. We also have stuck firmly to our practice of using chains both top and bottom on each door. We also had seen that wear and tear on door hinges would loosen them over time, and so we also screwed those in place and, just in case, added a chain around each hinge. We had one cage with very active young lions in it, only about 60 pounds each. When we built it, both Doug and I thought the other person had put the screws in the hinges. We both looked over the cage before use, and noted the chains were in place. Good thing...we came out one day to find the bottom hinge had slipped. The door then dropped off the

If you are interested in seeing additional photos of our successes and our learning experiences, look for this article expanded on our web site at <http://www.conservatorscenter.org>

Right: Remember to build to suit the final size of your cats!
Below: Caracal panel cage.



top hinge, and slid to the side so the latch disengaged. Seven little lions remained in their cage because of those four chains.

Enrichment is a critical part of a cage, so consider it when you build. Good enrichment serves many purposes, from providing shade and a viewpoint to keeping your



Bobcat Cage Building 101

Neat design even a novice can construct

Diana Davis

Early in 2005 a car hit a bobcat. The brave and compassionate woman who hit her picked her up and took her to a vet. Fortunately for the woman, the bobcat was severely injured so she could be handled safely. The bobcat was transferred to an exotic animal veterinarian, who realized that this poor cat did not act like a wild bobcat. It was decided that she was either an escaped pet or had been raised from kittenhood by someone who lacked the necessary skills and training for this complicated specialty of wildlife rehabilitation. The bobcat was transferred to a carnivore sanctuary.

Here she got lucky. One of the volunteers at the sanctuary had a soft spot for native species and understood how miserable the poor bobcat was in her very small temporary cage. She named the bobcat Reno and took on the task of funding and constructing a new, much larger cage.

Reno's cage was constructed of 6'x 20' wire panels (openings are 2 x 4 inches) in the shape of a Quonset hut (a long arch). The living space is 18 feet wide, 8 – 10 feet tall and 30 feet long. It contains both a double door safety entrance and a shift area. Construction took about four days (exclud-

ing site clearing.) Both the sponsor and most of the volunteers completely lacked experience constructing animal cages.

The first end wall and arch took a whole day to put up, and was constructed under the guidance of a more experienced individual. It was definitely the hardest part of whole construction, but even so, it only took two people (with a third jumping in during a critical time.) To start, a panel was laid on its long side and leaned against existing trees and posts. The first arch was constructed by connecting a full panel and a half panel end-to-end with U-bolts. The arch was lifted into place using wood beams and small diameter tree trunks and attached to the end panel with U-bolts. The end wall panel was not high enough for the arch, so a second section of panel was cut and attached to the top of the first end panel to fill in the space and support the top of the arch. After this point the experienced individual only helped with spot-checking the work.

Since this end includes the shift and double-door safety entrance, a second wall was added to the first arch. This only took two people a few hours. At lunchtime a fabulous group of inexperienced volunteers showed up to help. The remaining arches and the further end wall were finished in time for supper.

It is important that U-bolts be used about every foot to connect sections of panel. Between the U-bolts, hog-rings were attached to reinforce the connections. Since the location of the cage is wooded, a few panels had to be cut around trees. These areas and areas where the cage didn't quite meet the uneven ground were secured with small pieces of panel. U-nails attach the cage to trees where there are contact points. Where the soft ground allowed movement of the cage against the earth, three-foot sections of rebar were driven two feet into the ground and the cage was secured against them with 9-gauge wires. Because of the weight of 2 x 4 panels, the roof does require some support. This comes in the form of medium-diameter tree trunks dug about 18 inches into the earth and wedged against the roof.

Finishing securing the cage, and adding doors (made of sections of panels slightly larger than the opening and attached on the "hinge" side with hog-rings) took two volunteers one day. They also started the deluxe climbing tower.

The last day of construction was mostly dedicated to the deluxe climbing tower. This structure reaches from the ground to the roof and was completed by a small number of brand new volunteers who lacked experience with power tools. The first step was in digging six medium diameter tree sections about 18 to 24 inches into the ground. These six supports also help to support the roof. The structure of the deck is similar to a standard deck. Joist hangers hold 2 x 8 pressure treated lumber and sections of pressure treated 2 x 4 are used for the deck surface. The tower consists of three levels of deck, a low area only a few feet above ground, a medium area about five feet about ground and a high area, almost to the roof.

At the end of construction day number four, the bobcat was crated (itself an adventure), and transferred to her new quarters. Since moving to her new quarters, she appears to be happier. She comes out of hiding to attack the cleaning tools, she has begun to cache her food, and for the first time since arriving at CCI, her toys are moving around during the night.



Mindy Stinner

FCF 2005 FOURTH QUARTER MEETING MINUTES

On October 21, President Robert Turner opened the fourth quarter meeting to be conducted for the first time on the FCF Website Forum. Due to the president's workload at GM, Bob assigned the chair for the meeting to V-P Kevin Chambers. The motions and voting by the ten officers are listed below. The officers participating are Bob Turner, Kevin Chambers, Harold Epperson, Evelyn Shaw, Carol Bohning, Marcus Cook, J.B.Anderson, Bobby Bean, Lynn Culver and Tracy Wilson.

Motion by Bobby and Second by Evelyn : THAT FCF ACCEPT JIM SANDERSON'S GRANT APPLICATION (\$1000). Ten (10) YES votes and Zero (0) NO votes, Motion Passed

Motion by Lynn and Second by Bobby : THAT WE MAKE IT STANDARD FCF POLICY THAT ALL BOD MEMBERS BE LISTED AS OWNERS OF ALL FCF INTERNET CHAT LISTS. BOD MEMBERS SPECIFICALLY WISHING NOT TO BE LISTED CAN REQUEST SUCH. THIS IS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE PROGRAMS AND POLICIES. Six (6) YES votes and Four (4) NO votes, Motion Passed

Motion by Kevin and Second by Bobby : TO RATIFY THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING HELD THIS FALL. Eight (8) YES votes and Zero (0) NO votes, Motion Passed

Motion by Bobby and Second by Kevin : THAT FCF ACCEPT THE OCELOT RECOVERY TEAM'S GRANT APPLICATION. (\$1830). Ten YES votes and Zero (0) NO votes, Motion Passed

Motion by Lynn and Second by Evelyn : THAT FCF APPROVE OF \$500.00 TO IRENE SATTERFIELD FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND SET-UP OF THE FCF WEBSITE, AND APPROVE THE SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT AND HOSTING AGREEMENT FOR THE THEFCF.ORG SITE.

Seven (7) YES votes and Zero (0) NO votes, Motion Passed

Motion by Kevin and Second by Lynn : TO FORM A COMMITTEE OF 3 TO REVIEW AND REVISE THE MEMBERSHIP HANDBOOK , WITH LYNN CULVER ACTING AS CHAIR AND APPOINTING THE OTHER TWO COMMITTEE MEMBERS TO JOIN HER. Nine (9) YES votes and Zero (0) NO votes, Motion Passed

Motion by Lynn and Second by Bobby : THAT THE FOLLOWING FCF BY-LAWS THAT ADDRESS THE KEN HATFIELD MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND BE RESCINDED

ARTICLE 14 – THE KEN HATFIELD MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

14.1 UP TO FOUR (4) MEMBERS FORM THE KEN HATFIELD MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND COMMITTEE, APPOINTED BY THE FCF BOARD OF DIRECTORS, TO OVERSEE THE OPERATION OF THE KHMSF. THE PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT WILL BE FOR FOUR YEARS, AND MAY BE RENEWED INDEFINITELY. THESE KHMSF COMMITTEE MEMBERS SHALL ACT AS THE TRUSTEES OF THE FUND.

14.2 ANY CHANGES TO THE CHARTER, ADMINISTRATION, OR STRUCTURING OF THE KHMSF MUST BE APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS BY A TWO-THIRDS (2/3) VOTE PRIOR TO IMPLEMENTATION.

14.3 THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS SHALL ANNUALLY REVIEW THE FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS OF THE

KHMSF AND DETERMINE WHETHER AN AUDIT IS WARRANTED. SHOULD AN AUDIT BE CONDUCTED AND THE TRUSTEES FOUND IN BREECH OF FIDUCIARY DUTY OR VIOLATION OF THE TERMS OF THE TRUST, THEY MAY BE REMOVED BY A TWO-THIRDS (2/3'S) VOTE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS. SUCH ACTION WOULD SIMULTANEOUSLY TERMINATE ANY OTHER POSITIONS HELD WITHIN THE FCF.

14.4 THE KHMSF COMMITTEE SHALL FURNISH THE EDITOR OF THE NEWSLETTER A LISTING OF THE RECIPIENTS OF THE KHMSF NAMES, ADDRESSES AND THE INSTITUTIONS FOR PUBLICATION AND GIVE A REPORT AT THE ANNUAL MEETING.

14.5 SHOULD THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FIND THAT THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND IS NO LONGER NEEDED, OR IS NO LONGER CARRYING OUT ITS OBJECTIVES, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS BY A VOTE OF TWO-THIRDS (2/3'S) OF ITS MEMBERSHIP MAY TERMINATE THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND AND INSTRUCT THE TRUSTEES OF THE KHMSF TO PERFORM THE NECESSARY LEGAL PROCEDURES. IF ALL FUNDS HAVE BEEN EXPENDED AND THERE IS NO PROSPECT OF ADDITIONAL FUNDS BEING RECEIVED, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MAY TERMINATE THE FUND BY A TWO-THIRDS (2/3'S) VOTE.

14.6 SHOULD THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND BE TERMINATED, ANY FUNDS REMAINING SHALL BE USED IN A MANNER SELECTED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

Nine (9) YES votes and Zero (0) votes, Motion Passed

Motion by Lynn and Second by Evelyn : THAT THE BOD MEETING BE EXTENDED ANOTHER WEEK, TO NOVEMBER 27. Nine (9) YES votes and One (1) NO vote, Motion Passed

Motion by Tracy and Second by Robert : THAT THE MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR, THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY BE LISTED AS LIST OWNERS OF THE FCF YAHOO GROUP MEMBERSHIP CHAT LIST, WITH THE MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR BEING IN CHARGE OF REGULAR MAINTENANCE OF THE CHAT LIST. This Motion was ruled Out of Order since it was in conflict with a motion already on the floor and the voting had not yet ended.

Motion by Bobby and Second by Evelyn : THAT THE PRINTER AND CAPTURE NET BE DELIVERED TO THE NEW DIRECTOR OF CONSERVATION AND EDUCATION – CAROL BOHNING. This motion did not receive a second until three hours prior to adjournment and too little time for action by the board. It can be submitted at the next meeting unless it no longer requires action.

VOTING ON APPLICATIONS FOR THE OFFICER POSITION OF MEMBER SERVICES ENDED WITHOUT A MAJORITY VOTE. The applicants are Carlyne Clendinen, Debi Willoughby and John Chuha. Carlyne and Debi received four (4) votes each and John received one (1) vote. A special meeting will be conducted to determine a majority winner from the two candidates receiving the most votes. John has been eliminated from contention.

The Fourth Quarter Meeting was adjourned at midnight on November 27, 2005.

MEFES Minutes for October 29, 2005 Meeting at Lisa Merrilees, Indpls., In.

The October meeting was an afternoon meeting with a pitch-in wiener roast. After everyone had roasted wieners and eaten all the delicious food, President Pam Hotle started the meeting by thanking Lisa for hosting the meeting, and then recognized new members and guest.

She brought up the need for current and correct e-mail addresses.

The October meeting is the officer election meeting and Pam asked for nominations. Bill Johnson was nominated for treasurer with Harold Epperson as the incumbent treasurer. Pam, as the incumbent president, had no one running against her. Carey Nodley and Lisa Merrilees both volunteered for vice president as the incumbent Peggy Epperson did not care to run again. Mary Oatess was nominated for secretary as the present secretary; Patty Turner did not want to run again. The voting took place later in the meeting.

Treasurer Harold Epperson then gave the financial report. The balance on October 29 is \$1,961.42, and the previous balance on July 16 was \$1,569.46. We received \$610.00 from dues, and a \$10.00 donation from Mike and Theresa Taylor. We paid \$91.92 for printing and postage on the July newsletter plus \$136.08 for printing envelopes and postage on the October newsletter.

Pam asked if everyone was receiving their newsletters o.k. Chris Worley has been graciously printing them for us at no charge other than the printer ink. Carey Nodley asked if possibly the newsletter could be electronic. Chris said it would be quite large if we did.

Bob Turner mentioned the need for an updated membership list.

On the educational interest, the FCF Husbandry Course is planned for February 25 at the Holiday Inn located in Cloverdale, In. at Highway 70 and 231. It will be an all day course and the first one in our area in a couple of years. It is good not only for animal owners, but vets, police, animal control, firemen, humane societies, people who arrive on the scene of a problem first, all would benefit from the course. The class can accommodate about 20 people. J.B. Anderson mentioned the course contains about everything that can be crammed into an 8-hour course. He said in the future it

might come to requiring the course to obtain a permit. Harold Epperson mentioned the USDA does not totally endorse the course, but do have their field representatives take it as being helpful. He said the course really benefits cat owners.

Our guest speaker was Greg Dye of the Department of Natural Resources. He gave a very informative and helpful talk on exotic ownership and wildlife management. He stated his own personal feelings about exotic ownership are, if you do it right, he approves of it. He said you need to plan for all the requirements such as safety, financial, etc. to provide total care. He passed out several copies on rules, regulations, and helpful information. He said his experience with bobcats was limited. In 20 years he has heard of no problems concerning bobcats other than turkey hunters don't like them (competition). As of July 2005, bobcats were off the endangered list. They still cannot be hunted or trapped, and are now on the protected list. He said some of the bobcat sightings turn out to be large feral cats.

The public is welcome to DNR meetings. The notices on meeting are in the newspapers. He also spoke of all the news media on the confiscation of Dennis Hill's cats. He said the cats were in filth and inadequate caging. He said they had no choice but to remove them for the welfare of the cats and the public. He said they try to work with owners as much as possible.

More information on endangered species is on the web site, or you can e-mail him any questions you may have. www.ai.org/dnr/fishwild/endangered and www.in.gov/dnr His own E-main is gdye@dnr.in.gov

Slips were the passed out for voting. Pam retains the position as president, Lisa Merrilees as vice president, Harold Epperson retains treasurer, and Mary Oatess as secretary.

As the meeting closed a small auction of beautiful cat prints that were donated by Carey Nodley were auctioned off. Everyone had fun bidding on a favorite print. The proceeds were donated to Jann Bohl Tonyan for her feral cat facility.

Lisa thanked everyone for attending and then we were treated to an old fashioned hayride.

Membership Participation period for proposing Constitutional Amendments begins February 1

According to our FCF Constitution, the months of February and March of an election year are the period when constitutional amendments may be submitted. The FCF Constitution states:

2. Every two (2) years, the months of February and March of the second year of the term of the current elected officers, shall constitute an interval of time during which all valid Feline Conservation Federation members may introduce motions concerning the future actions of the corporation. These motions must be undersigned by three (3) valid Feline Conservation Federation members and mailed to the directors. Upon decision of confirmation that the submitted motion conforms to the properties of a general meeting motion, as prescribed by the accepted authority of parliamentary procedure, the directors shall authorize that the motion be published in the May issue of the corporation's newsletter. For the duration of five (5) weeks after distribution of the May edition of the corporation newsletter, members may mail their votes concerning each motion to the directors. The results of these votes shall become effective August 1 in the year of the voting and shall be announced in the July edition of the corporation newsletter.

The last constitutional Amendment passed changed the organization's name from LIOC Endangered Species Conservation Federation to Feline Conservation Federation. The requirement for a balanced budget was another amendment passed in the late 1990's.

Rusty spotted cat in Panna, Central India

The carcass of a juvenile female rusty spotted cat was found on 25-11-2005 at location N 24° 44.690', E 080° 00.993'. The cat was dead for not more than 12 hours and the cold temperatures of the night slowed the decomposition process. This allowed careful, detailed examination of the carcass. The cause of death was assessed as bite to the skull and was caused by feral dogs. The rest of the carcass was intact and there was no other injury on the body. The tongue was twitched to an angle that allowed it to sit between the premolars indicating a sudden death.

The below measurements were recorded from the specimen.

1. Dentition:

Upper	Incisors	Canines	Premol	Molars	
	6	1 + 1*	4	None	
Lower	6	2	4	2	Total: 26

* The milk canine dropped and a permanent canine was just emerging.

2. Age of the rusty spotted cat is assessed at around 3 months or 12 weeks.

3. Measurements:

Pad
Skull measurements:

	Left fore	Left hind
Total length	1.5cm	1.8cm
Total width	1.7cm	1.5cm
Pad height	0.6cm	0.6 cm
Claw length	0.4cm	0.2cm

(Measured from the end of the cuticle to tip of the claw along the curve.)

Start of the cranium to the tip of the nose along the curve. 6.6cm
Width of the skull at the widest. 4.2cm
Ear: Base to tip of the left ear; 2.5cm

Body measurements:

Total length of the cat measured along the curve: 57cm (including the tail.)
Tail Length: 22 cm
Body length: 35cm
Body height at shoulder: 23cm
Length of the hind left leg up to the knee: 16.1 cm
Neck circumference: 10.1 cm with out the insertion of the index finger.
Neck circumference: 16 cm with the insertion of the index finger in between the neck and the tape.

Kolipaka Srinivas Shekhar
Principal Investigator
India- Small wildcat Project
Society for Nature Conservation and Education-India





Feline Conservation Federation

FCF Upcoming Events

Board of Director nomination period:
January 1 to March 20, 2006.

See page 16 for details

African Safari deadline:
February 1, 2006.

See page 16 for details

**Membership participation period for
proposing constitutional amendments:**
February 1-March 31, 2006.

See page 38 for details

Playa de Oro Tours:
February 17-24, 2006 with tour guide Ramiro
Buitron

May 19-26, 2006 with tour guide Ramiro
Buitron

June 16-23, 2006 with tour guide Tracy Wilson
Contact Tracy Wilson

Husbandry Course:
February 25, 2006. FCF Basic Husbandry
Course, Holiday Inn Express, 1017 N Main
Street, Cloverdale, IN 46140. Hosted by Mid-
west Exotic Feline Educational Society and
Exotic Feline Rescue Center. Contact Pam
Hotle, MEFES or Carol Bohning, Director of
Conservation & Education

July 26, 2006. Cincinnati, Ohio Hosted by the
Feline Conservation Federation

FCF Annual Convention
July 27 – July 29, 2006, Cincinnati, Ohio.
Reserve your vacation time now. Look for hotel
info and other details on our web site and in the
Jan/Feb issue of the FCF magazine



Hush visits Marvin in the nursing home Christmas 2005.

Please keep Marvin in your prayers as his health is continually declining. I took Hush for a Christmas visit with Marvin today. Hush was so excited and he was decked out in his Christmas collar and looked so handsome. Unfortunately Marvin was totally incoherent today. He opened his eyes a couple of times and told Hush what a good boy he was one time. Other than that, he didn't acknowledge our presence. Hush was a perfect gentleman and jumped up and laid in the bed with Marvin for quite a while, licking his hand. He gave me kisses too. Hush visited with a couple of the other residents and we left with a heavy heart today.

I was hoping for a more joyous visit for the holidays. I only hope that Marvin realizes we were there and knows that Hush watched over him for a while today. On a positive note, Hush never ceases to amaze me. He will be 19 in March. Some days, when I watch him playing with his toys, I think he's aging backwards. When I took him in back in February, I was afraid that he would be lost without Marvin. I expected him to grieve himself to death and I certainly never expected him to bond with me. I can't imagine that I could love him as much as Marvin did after spending 18 years with him and I feel guilty even assuming that I could, but every time he greets me with his funny little noises, his head butts and his teeth on my chin, I love him as much as if I'd spent the last 19 years with him.

— Leann Montgomery

Marvin has visited and shared Hush at over 735 different nursing homes with over 5000 revisits. Marvin and Hush traveled over 30,000 miles a year and over 400,000 miles in the past 11-1/2 years visiting nursing homes. Sadly, Marvin himself is now in a nursing home... but Hush still comes to visit.